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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

OF THE PROVERBS AND SAYINGS USED IN THE EPOS “KITABI-DEDE GORGUD” AND THE DIALECTS AND ACCENTS OF THE NAKHCHIVAN REGION

ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO DE LOS PROVERBIOS Y DICHOS UTILIZADOS EN LA EPOPEYA “KITABI-DEDE GORGUD” Y LOS DIALECTOS Y ACENTOS DE LA REGIÓN DE NAJICHEVÁN

Ismayil Zulfiyya Huseyn¹

E-mail: zulfiyyaismayil@ndu.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4967-0123>

¹ Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. Azerbaijan

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to analyze the parallels between the proverbs and sayings found in the epic “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” and several ancient linguistic features used in the Nakhchivan dialects. A series of proverbs and sayings from the epic language of the work containing these ancient linguistic peculiarities were selected and compared with similar uses still present in the Nakhchivan dialects. Through exhaustive comparisons, the article shows that the proverbs and sayings collected from the treasure trove of wisdom of “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” can be classified into 5 main groups: a) rooted in life experiences, b) stemming from natural events, c) originated from family and household dynamics, as well as child-parent relations, d) reflecting attitudes toward animals and e) addressing various life problems and ways of life. In general, it was found that the proverbs and sayings observed in the language of this epic do not differ much from current norms. This serves to illustrate the preservation of ancient linguistic peculiarities in both the epic and the dialects of the region.

Keywords: Nakhchivan, “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud”, word creation, dialect, literary language.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar los paralelos entre los proverbios y dichos que se encuentran en la epopeya “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” y varias características lingüísticas antiguas utilizadas en los dialectos de Nakhchivan. Se seleccionaron una serie de proverbios y dichos del lenguaje épico de la obra que contenían estas antiguas peculiaridades lingüísticas y se compararon con usos similares todavía presentes en los dialectos de Najicheván. A través de comparaciones exhaustivas, en el artículo se muestra que los refranes y dichos recopilados del tesoro de sabiduría de “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” se pueden clasificar en 5 grupos principales: a) arraigados en experiencias de vida, b) derivados de eventos naturales, c) originados en la dinámica familiar y doméstica, así como en las relaciones entre padres e hijos, d) reflejando actitudes hacia los animales y e) abordando diversos problemas y formas de vida. En general, se encontró que los refranes y dichos observados en el lenguaje de esta epopeya no difieren mucho de las normas actuales. Esto sirve para ilustrar la preservación de antiguas peculiaridades lingüísticas tanto en la epopeya como en los dialectos de la región.

Palabras clave: Nakhchivan, “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud”, creación de palabras, dialecto, lenguaje literario.

INTRODUCTION

“Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” stands as an illustrious testament to the enduring heritage of the Azerbaijani people, preserving and revitalizing their rich historical narrative for contemporary audiences. This epic masterpiece serves as a monumental cultural artifact, akin to a literary treasure trove, often dubbed as the “Oguzname” – a profound reflection of humanity. Within its verses lies an almost encyclopedic exploration of our national identity, capturing the essence of our ancestral lineage and cultural tapestry. Through themes like patriotism, heroism, wisdom, and spiritual values, the saga embodies the ethos of the Oghuz Turks, offering a panoramic view of the Azerbaijani collective worldview and traditions. In general terms, it serves as a linguistic and historical treasury, intricately weaving together the complexities of the language, notable events, personalities, and societal norms. Revered as one of the most important epic plays worldwide, “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” transcends mere storytelling, evolving into a timeless emblem of cultural pride and literary excellence (Abdulova, 2022; Babayeva, 2023).

The book has been analyzed from a metaethic theory of folklore with the folk philosophy of the tradition of poetry perspective (Chobanoglu, 2023). In addition, a gender analysis has been conducted highlighting its positive impact (Ünsal Ocak, 2023), as well as some criticism (Alavi Shooshtari & Mohammadi, 2022). Another analysis of the book is a typology of the category of case, which has been explored through a contrastive study with other epics, revealing similarities in how various morphological units express the case category in these texts (Baku Slavic University & Fataliyeva, 2023; Duzgun et al., 2023). In addition, “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” possesses a rich lexical system that encompasses all layers of medieval folk language. This lexical system, predominantly composed of national words, exhibits a colorful scope, structure, and semantic classification (Devrim, 2015; San, 2020; Sultanzade, 2012).

In this regard, the national leader Heydar Aliyev evaluated the characteristic features of the epic and its significance in the history of literary thought as follows: “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud, a mirror of Azerbaijani history, ethnic memory, and archaic thought, holds immense cultural and aesthetic importance, serving as the anthem of our speech, language, spirituality, and soul. The book wields such power that our subsequent art of words, poetry, and written literature couldn’t escape its influence” (Haciyev, 2004, p. 9). Recognizing the saga’s paramount importance, Heydar Aliyev, a great patron of our cultural heritage, issued a decree on April 20th, 1997, commemorating the 1300th anniversary of “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud.” As the anniversary

approached, a renewed vigor for the study of “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” emerged, initiating research endeavors in a deeper and more comprehensive direction.

In addition, “On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the first translation and publication of ‘Kitabi-Dade Gorgud’ in German,” a decree was signed by the President of our country, İlham Aliyev, on February 20th, 2015, and by the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan, approving the Action Plan for the celebration of the 200th anniversary. This led to the resumption of various research endeavors related to Dada-Gorgud, which had been ongoing for many years. Consequently, in March 2016, a working group was established in the Nakhchivan Department of ANAS to prepare the “Nakhchivan-the Land of Dade Gorgud” historical-geographical and ethnographic atlas. Through the diligent efforts of this group, the atlas was swiftly crafted with an elegant design and significant scientific value (İ. Haciyev, 2017), and presented to the public. Additionally, the work of Safarali Babayev, a correspondent member of ANAS, titled “Toponyms of ‘Kitabi-Dada Gorgud’ in Nakhchivan” (Habibayli, 2017), was revisited and republished for the second time in 2017.

Then, this unique literary monument, bequeathed to the world by Turkish thought, which plays an indispensable role in unraveling the intricacies of our language and the culture of our people, has not gone unnoticed even in recent years. In this way, the work has been analyzed from various perspectives (Kusakci, 2023; Senlik, 2022; Ustunova, 2023; Yildiz, 2023), although in our opinion some important elements remain without being discussed in depth. Considering the above, the objective of this research is to analyze the proverbs and proverbial phrases used in the epos of “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud”, specifically related to the dialects and accents of the Nakhchivan region, via comparative analysis.

DEVELOPMENT

Although the “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” epic has become the subject of extensive research worldwide, some of its parallels remain unresolved. This monument, imbued with profound meaning and precious treasures in every verse, requires continuous study and exploration. Despite various aspects of the “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” epic in Azerbaijan being analyzed by different researchers, there remains a need to investigate it using modern scientific methods and to approach it from new perspectives. It must be acknowledged that there are numerous obscure issues in the study of this monument. Among them is the examination of parallels between the proverbs and phrases in the Nakhchivan dialects and accents of the “Kitabi-Dade

Gorgud” epics. Calculating the statistics of these linguistic phenomena and determining their frequency of use represent significant linguistic endeavors.

Before proceeding to the comparison, let’s acknowledge that every word, expression, proverb, and proverbial phrase in the “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud” epic, representing our nation’s identity and serving as a living chronicle of our national mindset, carries profound meaning, with the ancestral Oguz history behind each of them. Primarily, “Kitabi Deda Gorgud,” a prime example of folkloric language, is undeniably also an exemplar of written literary language. Thus, the proverbs, expressions, and proverbial phrases utilized in the epic render it indispensable as a subject of written culture. The multi-layered lexicon of “Kitabi Dede Gorgud” encompasses the folkloric and pre-writing layers, alongside experiences during the formation of Turkish-Islamic culture (Maharramova, 2009, p. 21).

Proverbs and proverbial phrases featuring ancient linguistic features, as found in “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud,” are preserved in Nakhchivan dialects and accents. The language of the epic contains linguistic phenomena not found in other Turkish languages but are active forms in Nakhchivan dialects and accents. According to research by various linguists, the linguistic and stylistic aspects of the “Kitabi Deda Gorgud” epic resonate with the language of the people of the Sharur region of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic to this day. It has been determined that the language system of the monument fully corresponds to the level of the medieval Azerbaijani language. Based on the language evidence obtained, the connection between the “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” epic and Nakhchivan is unequivocal. Geographical names mentioned in the epic, such as Karachug, Alinca Castle, Daresham, Sharur [Sharuk], are located in the territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Various scholars have mentioned these place names of Nakhchivan, which are referenced in the saga (Haciyev, 2017, p. 385).

The presence of proverbs and proverbial phrases from the epic in Nakhchivan dialects and accents further solidifies the connection of “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” to Nakhchivan. Academician Ismayil Hajiyev writes about the points where proverbs, proverbial phrases, and some artistic expressions in the “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” epic coincide in meaning with those in Nakhchivan. He observes traces of these expressions in the territories of the autonomous republic as well (Haciyev, 2017, p. 391). As evident, the dialects and accents of the Oghuz-Turkish land of Nakhchivan, rich in folk literature and examples of universal wisdom, exhibit parallels and similarities with the figurative language of “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud,” which extensively reflects folk speech.

Based on comparisons and contrasts, it is evident that the proverbs and phrases found in “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” are either directly or indirectly mirrored in the living folk speech of Nakhchivan dialects and accents. At times, their meanings align entirely with the overarching themes. Analyzing these proverbs and proverbial phrases within the national context, one can vividly conjure images of the revered and sacred god, the graceful and courageous mother, the valiant and noble father, the passionate and wise son, the beloved brother, as well as the traitor and liar. It is widely recognized that the story is narrated by Dede Gorgud, the progenitor of the epic, and concludes with his blessing. Within the introduction of the narrative, a series of wise sayings from the mouth of Father Gorgud can be construed as proverbs. These proverbs, proverbial phrases, and wise expressions from the language of Dede Gorgud can be categorized based on their influence on the development of meaning, events, and narratives, as well as the thematic areas they encompass. Furthermore, their counterparts or equivalents in folklore examples, dialects, and accents of Nakhchivan can be compared and contrasted. We can classify them as follows:

a) Proverbs and proverbial phrases, rooted in life experiences

For instance, the expression “*Ölən adam dirilməz, çıxan can geri gəlməz*” (“A died man can never alive, if the spirit left the body, it will never come back”) (Habibayli, 2004, p. 233), is mirrored in Nakhchivan folklore as “*Çıxan qan damarda durmaz*” (“The blood that has left never stops”). Similarly, the phrase “*Sümükləri xurd oldu*” (“His bones pulped”) from the IV boy of the epic is commonly encountered in everyday speech in Nakhchivan (Haciyev, 2017, p. 335). Other expressions like “*Yata-yata yanımız ağrıdı, dura-dura-dura belimiz qurudu*” (“Our flank aches from lying down, and our waist withers from standing”) or “*Yata-yata yanımız yara oldu, dura-dura belimiz qurudu*” (“Our flank is wounded from lying down, and our waist withers from standing”) are also used (Haciyev, 2017, p. 371). Furthermore, the phrase “*Əzrayıl bir göyərçin oldu pəncərədən uçdu getdi*” (“Azrayil turned into a dove and flew away from the window”) from the V book of the epic is linked to a belief in Nakhchivan where angels are believed to transform into doves (Haciyev, 2017, p. 211). Similarly, in Nakhchivan dialects and accents, one encounters the expression “*Əzrayıl elə bil yağlı əppəy olub uçdu göyə*” (“Azrayil turned into a fat pigeon and flew away into the sky”), which carries the same meaning as the aforementioned saying. Lastly, the phraseological unit “*Sarımsaq otun yeməmişən, için niyə göynəyir*” (“If you haven’t eaten garlic, why does your chest smell like it?”) is commonly found in Nakhchivan as “*Soğan yeməmişən, için niyə göynəyir*” (“If

you haven't eaten onions, why does your chest smell like it") (Hacıyev, 2017, p. 318).

b) Proverbs and proverbial phrases stemming from natural events

For instance, expressions like "Ulaşuvan sular taşsa, dəniz tolmaz" ("Even if the flood waters overflow, the sea remains unaffected") and "Quyuya su tökməklə quyuda su olmaz" ("Pouring water into the well doesn't make more water in the well") (Ahmadov, 2001, p. 130) reflect observations of natural phenomena. Similarly, sayings such as "Lapa-lapa qarlar yağsa, yaza qalmaz" ("Even heavy snowfall won't last until spring") and "Qışda yağan lopa-lopa qarı, yaz gününün ıřartısı əridər" ("The heavy snowfall in winter will soon melt away in the spring sun") or "Köhnə qar uca dağlarda qalar" ("Old snow remains on the high mountains") (Araslı, 1962, p. 102) are observed.

In Nakhchivan, equivalent expressions to these proverbs are found, such as "Kül təpəcik olmaz" ("Ash cannot become a little hill"), which is expressed as "Kul tepani yel ashırar." Likewise, the proverb "Əski pambıq bez olmaz" ("Old cotton cannot become cloth") is reflected as "Köhnə pambıqdan bez olmaz" in the dialects and accents of Nakhchivan. Additionally, the literary expression "Aydan arı, gündən görkli" ("Brighter than the moon, clearer than the day") or "Aydan arı, gündən duru" ("Clearer than moonlight, clearer than water") (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 152) is commonly used in the dialects and accents of Nakhchivan as "Aydan arı, gündən duru" or "Aydan arı, sudan duru."

c) Proverbs and proverbial phrases originating from family and household dynamics, as well as child-parent relations

For instance, the proverb "Qız anadan görməyincə, öyüd almaz" ("The girl will never acquire diamond edification if she couldn't learn from her mother") finds its counterpart in Nakhchivan as "Ana gəzən ağacı, qızı budaq-budaq gəzər" ("The tree that the mother walks around, the daughter circles it branch by branch") (Jafarlı & Babayev, 2011, pp. 110, 122), "Anasına baxıb qızını alallar, torbasına baxıb duzunu atallar" ("He takes his daughter after looking at his mother, he throws salt after looking at his bag") (Jafarlı & Babayev, 2012, p. 103), "Qırağına bax bezini al, anasına bax qızını al" ("Look at the frost to buy clothes, look at your mother to choose your daughter") (Jafarlı & Babayev, 2011, p. 129). Similarly, expressions like "Oğul daha neyləsin, ata ölüb mal qalmasa" ("What else should the son do if the father dies and leaves no property") (Habibaylı, 2004, p. 234) and "Baba malından nə fayda, başda dövlət olmasa" ("What is the use of wealth if there is no reason

in your head") are paralleled in Nakhchivan as "Fərli oğul neylər ata malını, fərsiz oğul neylər ata malını" ("The good son knows how to use his father's wealth, the bad son squanders it")

Furthermore, the wise expression "Yad oğulu saxlamaqla oğul olmaz, böyüyəndə salur gedər, gördüm deməz" ("You don't have a son by keeping a stranger's son when he grows up, he leaves and doesn't say he saw") from the introduction of "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" is reflected in Nakhchivan as "Yad oğulu saxlamaqla oğul olmaz-The stranger's son can't be yours" or "Yaddan oğul olmaz-The stranger can't be a son", as well as "Yad oğulun saxlamaqla oğul olmaz, yad süfrədə oturmağınan qarın doymaz" ("You don't become a son by keeping a stranger's son, and you can't get enough of sitting at a stranger's table") (Hacıyev, 2017, p. 363). Moreover, expressions such as "Ögünməklə övrət ər olmaz" ("Praising a wife does not make a husband") and "Tərifləməklə arvaddan kişi olmaz" ("By praising a wife, one does not become a man") are commonly encountered in Nakhchivan folklore, underscoring the importance of cultural wisdom in familial relationships.

d) Proverbs and proverbial phrases reflecting attitudes toward animals

Expressions like "Yeddi dərə qoxuların dülki bilür" ("A fox knows the scents of seven valleys"), "Ayrı-ayrı yollar izin dəvə bilür" ("A camel knows the tracks of separate roads"), and "Dünən karvan keçdiyini torağay quşu bilir" ("The thrush bird knows the caravan passed yesterday") demonstrate insights into animal behavior. In Nakhchivan, similar sentiments are captured in expressions like "Yolçunun hardan keçdiyini qarğa bilər" ("The raven can tell where the traveler has passed") (Ahmadov, 2001, p. 140), which parallel the notion of animals being aware of their surroundings and activities. Likewise, the proverb "Qara eşşək başına üyən ursan, qatır olmaz" ("If you put a bridle on a black donkey's head, it will not become a mule") finds its equivalent in Nakhchivan as "Qara eşşək başına yüyən vursan qatır olmaz" ("If you put a bridle on a black donkey's head, it will not become a mule") (Habibaylı, 2004, p. 234). Moreover, the saying "At işləyər, ər öyünər" ("A horse works, a husband boasts") (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 155) retains its meaning in the Nakhchivan dialects and accents, further highlighting the continuity of cultural wisdom regarding animals and human behavior.

e) Proverbs and proverbial phrases addressing various life problems and ways of life

For example, the saying "Qəfil başın ağrısın beyin bilür" ("The brain knows the sudden headache") finds a similar counterpart in Nakhchivan folklore as "The mind knows the sudden headache" (Jafarlı & Babayev, 2012, p. 99).

Likewise, the proverb “Əzəldən yazılmışsa qul başına qəza gəlməz” (“If it is written from time immemorial, no accident will happen to a slave”) (Habibayli, 2004, p. 234) is echoed in Nakhchivan as “Alına nə yazılıb, o da olacaq” (“What is written on the forehead, it will be”) or “Olacağa çarə yoxdur” (“There is no way to prevent what will happen”) [Nakhchivan et al.]. Furthermore, the proverbial phrase “Sən istərsən, mən istərəm, rəbbimiz isə istədiyini edər” (“You want, I want, and our God does what He wants”) (Habibayli, 2004, p. 233) appears in Nakhchivan folk expressions as “You count what you count, see what the sky counts” (Ahmadov, 2001, p. 152), reflecting a shared understanding of divine will.

Similarly, the artistic expression “İki günlük ömrü olan, üç gün yaşamaz” (“He who lives for two days does not live for three days”) is reflected in Nakhchivan dialects and accents as “Qismətdən artıq yemək olmaz” (“You can’t eat more than a portion”) (Habibayli, 2004, p. 233), emphasizing the inevitability of fate. Additionally, the proverb “Qonağı gəlməyən böyük evlər yıxılsa yaxşıdır” (“It’s better if big houses that don’t have guests fall down”) (Habibayli, 2004, p. 234) resonates in Nakhchivan as “Qonaq yeməyini özü ilə gətirər” (“A guest brings his food with him”) or “Qonaq gələndə ruzisi də özü ilə gələr” (“When a guest comes, his sustenance comes with him too”) [Nakhchivan and m.v.]. These expressions, steeped in moral and didactic meanings, permeate deeply into the layers of national mentality, demonstrating the universality and timeless relevance of the wisdom contained within the epic.

It is evident from the comparisons made above that the expression styles in “Kitabi-Dədə Gorgud” carry the same semantic weight as those found in folk expressions and dialects across Nakhchivan. Despite some of the proverbs and sayings in “Kitabi-Dədə Gorgud” being considered archaic for modern literary language, they remain vibrant in the folk speech and local communication of Nakhchivan dialects and accents. Exploring the traces of these proverbs and sayings from “Kitabi-Dədə Gorgud” in contemporary Nakhchivan dialects and accents proves to be fruitful.

It’s important to note that until now the comparative analysis of proverbs and sayings used in the language of “Kitabi-Dədə Gorgud” epics with Nakhchivan dialects and accents had not been explored. As stated by Hajiyev (1976, p. 69), the position of each literary monument in the development of the literary language requires separate study. Following this perspective, we observed that the functionality of proverbs and sayings locally used in the language of the monument serves as an indicator of the antiquity of their formation history. The proverbs and proverbial phrases found in “Kitabi-Dədə Gorgud” do not

deviate from contemporary norms in terms of their characteristics, form, and content.

Thus, academician İsa Habibbeyli underscores the significance of studying Nakhchivan place names mentioned in the “Dədə Gorgud” epics and identifying numerous “Dədə Gorgud” toponyms in the ancient land. He emphasizes that the recording of numerous toponyms in the “Dədə Gorgud” epics within the territory of Nakhchivan reaffirms its status as the ancient Oghuz homeland of Azerbaijan. These toponyms serve as the Turkish-Oghuz imprint of Father Gorgud stamped on the land. Building upon this notion, we assert that proverbs and proverbial phrases, with their enduring structure, profound meaning, and concise expression of ideas, serve as the eternal seal of the collective memory of the people. They represent our most valuable national-spiritual wealth, an invaluable treasury of ideas engraved with golden letters in our artistic consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

“Kitabi Dədə Korkut” provides a fascinating insight into the mythology, customs, and values of the ancient Turkic tribes. It recounts the feats of legendary heroes as they battle enemies, court their beloveds, or face moral dilemmas. In addition, it incorporates magical and supernatural elements drawn from shamanism and other Turkic religious beliefs. For this and many other reasons, this masterpiece of ancient Turkish literature has had a profound influence on both oral and written tradition. Its archetypes, themes, and epic structure laid the groundwork for much of Oghuz poetry, as well as the literature of later centuries. In this regard, even today, phrases, sayings, and characters from “Kitabi Dədə Korkut” continue to appear in modern Turkish speech.

As was analyzed in this research, the ongoing existence of the proverbs and wise expressions derived from the “Kitabi-Dədə Gorgud” sagas within the dialects and accents of Nakhchivan represents a crucial historical continuity for the region. Nakhchivan, recognized as the ancient epicenter of Turkish-Islamic culture, derives immense cultural significance from the perpetuation of these linguistic remnants within its folk discourse. By delving into these linguistic artifacts, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the historical context, societal values, and narrative traditions that have shaped the region identity over the centuries. Therefore, the preservation and exploration of these proverbs and wise expressions offer a unique gateway for unraveling the multifaceted tapestry of Nakhchivan’s cultural landscape, contributing to the broader scholarly discourse on Turkish-Islamic heritage and enriching our comprehension of regional histories.

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