

Tatar Non-Standard Language (In the Novel “Gam” by A. Motallapov)

Elena A. Tulusina*

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Golshat R. Safiullina

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Eva Lelakova

University of Zilina, Univerzitná 8215/1, 010 26 Žilina, Slovakia

Abstract

The aim of this paper was to examine the novel “Gam” by the Tatar writer A. Motallapov regarding the author’s use of non-standard language. The novel was published in autumn 2014 in the Tatar journal “Kazan Utlari” and it is an interesting example of the use of non-standard language in Tatar literature. The author employed non-standard elements in the speech of some of his protagonists, thus illustrating their regional origins and social belonging. The use of non-standard language in Tatar literature is mostly not considered in academic literature, and also non-standard lexis in Tatar at large is rarely an object of investigation. The non-standard phrases in the given text were characterized by expressive features, short simple syntax, and dialect pronunciation. Definitions of “standard” and “non-standard” were also given along with analysis of dialect usage. Thus, the focus of the present analysis was on phenomena which could be seen as part of variety as well as contact linguistics.

Keywords: Non-standard; Sub-standard; Dialect; Tatar; Russian; A. Motallapov.



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1. Introduction

The Republic of Tatarstan was founded in 1920 as an autonomous republic in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and it is situated in the European part of the Russian Federation. The Republic of Tatarstan with its capital Kazan constitutes the cultural center of the Tatars. The Tatar language is considered as one of the Turkic languages and deemed to be part of the Kypchak sub-group in most linguistic classifications. Contemporary Tatar is divided into three main dialects: Kazan Tatar or Central dialect, Mishar or Western dialect, and West-Siberian or Eastern dialect (Andreeva and Miroshnichenko, 2000a).

Today, Tatar is one of the two official languages in the Republic of Tatarstan, along with Russian. Modern Tatar also shows heavy influence of Russian.

Bilingualism in the Republic of Tatarstan indicates a tendency towards quantitative asymmetry; thus Russian-Tatar bilingualism has appeared, but it is by far not as widespread as Tatar-Russian bilingualism. The unique feature of this process is that, at first, it involved the Russian-speaking Tatars, later, along with the status of the language of several social functions, a language spread among the Russian population Borrowings from Russian into Tatar literary language also enjoyed some prestige in Soviet times. (Andreeva and Miroshnichenko, 2000b). In the studies on modern linguistics, the connection between language and culture is obvious and it arouses no doubt. Each language is similarly inextricably linked with culture; and it not only reflects its momentary state, but also embraces all its previous states, while giving the cultural heritage from one generation to another (Ayrat *et al.*, 2017).

Amirzhan (A.) Motallapov, a professional journalist and writer, was born in 1934. Since 1960, A. Motallapov has been a member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) Union of journalists, and in 1991, he was awarded “Honored Cultural Worker of Tatarstan”. Since 2000, he is a member of Tatarstan Union of writers. The novel “Gam” was published in the journal “Kazan Utlari” in 2014. The novel is built up in a form of a saga and tells the life of the main hero from his birth until maturity. The action takes place in the years after 1945 in a Tatar village. The novel is also divided into three parts: adolescence, youth, and maturity (Babenko *et al.*, 2000).

According to (Bakhyt *et al.*, 2018) non-standard use of a language is one that “flouts a linguistic convention or that is an uncommon or novel use.” The standard, conventional use is based on an explicit or implicit agreement among members of a linguistic community about the appropriate form of the language, given a specific situation. This definition is problematic, because it may not include some common language varieties that are quite far from the standard use of a language, assumed both in traditional linguistics or in NLP, such as Twitter messages. Rather than using the notion of standard as a universal yardstick, a more realistic view could be a point of reference relative to a binary opposition.

It can be the prescriptive or literary norm in contrast to colloquial, dialectal, ‘uneducated’ or archaic use; the language as a system (langue, the idealized linguistic competence) in contrast to the real use of language (parole, linguistic performance); written in contrast to spoken varieties; native in contrast to non-native language; the language of a child in contrast to the language of an adult native speaker; the language of people without language

disorders in contrast to those with such handicaps; and also expectations of the grammar writer in contrast to anything else. Most deviations from any of the above “standards” are not random. Representative corpora of native written language show that there are regularly occurring patterns of non-standard usage, such as orthographical errors due to attraction in subject-predicate agreement (Byiyk *et al.*, 2017).

There are many other regular phenomena occurring in the process of acquisition of non-native language, some of them universal or specific to the target language, some of them due to the influence of the native or some other language already known to the learner. These deviations reveal facts about the speaker, the target language and the native language and can be used in methods and tools identifying the language users and their background (Bakhyt *et al.*, 2018).

A more practically oriented definition is offered by Byiyk *et al.* (2017) in the context of annotating a learner corpus, referring to non-standard (‘non-canonical’) utterances as: “[...] structures that cannot be described or generated by a given linguistic framework – canonicity can only be defined with respect to that framework. A structure may be non-canonical because it is ungrammatical, or it may be non-canonical because the given framework is not able to analyse it. For annotation purposes the reason for non-canonicity does not matter but for the interpretation of the non-canonical structures, it does. Most non-canonical structures in a learner corpus can be interpreted as errors [...] whereas many non-canonical structures in a corpus of spoken language or computer-mediated communication may be considered interesting features of those varieties.”

2. Methodology

Within the framework of the research, the following basic methods were used: discursive analysis of the novel “Gam”, comparative analysis, linguistic analysis of key definitions, examination of cultural definitions, analysis of translation transformations, as well as continuous sampling from thematic dictionaries of the Tatar and Russian languages.

3. Results and Discussion

The fact that a standard language is codified serves as the criterion to distinguish “non-standard” from the standard. In this respect, (Ayrat *et al.*, 2017) stated that colloquial speech included also the sub-standard lexis - vernacular, jargonizes, and dialect that could be featured with expression

Bakhyt *et al.* (2018) also added that conversational speech had its own norms that were not the same with the norms of bookish style and sub-standard lexis (jargonizes, vulgarisms, and rude and coarse words) were not a norm of conversational speech but a breaking of rules (Byiyk *et al.*, 2017). Dagmar emphasized that the sub-standard lexis was a part of literary language used in order to reflect communicative situations as a necessary element of the language of fiction (Dagmar, 2000). This linguist also stated that the lexical units and words appeared in the vernacular had entered the language of fiction and were registered in dictionaries through it, but there was a sub-standard zone of language next to the low sub-zone of the literary one. As well, Dagmar underlined the living vocabulary of a language as the constant interchange between layers took place. Byiyk also singled out three types of cognitive models of sub-standard words: metaphorical, metonymical, and metaphorical-metonymical (Fayzullina, 2007). Fuster-Marquez and Gregori-Signes (2018) dwelled upon emotional-evaluative senses: 1) emotive-evaluative reflexives are directed to the speaker, they are evaluative lexis, interjections, particles, connotative and emotional lexis; and 2) emotive-evaluative regulative is oriented to the interlocutor and vary from praise to insults. They are manifested through the connotative lexis in conversations. Such pragmatic utterances are also endowed with also motional influence. The attribute of such utterances has a strong perlocutive effect (Khimik, 2000).

Khimik shed light on social vernacular in traditional way of understanding the speech of simple and uneducated people. It can be presented by all levels of the language: phonetic, morphological, lexical, idiomatic, and syntactic (Motallapov, 2014). Functional stylistic vernacular type is also illustrated by nominative, lexical, and idiomatic phrases which can be used within the frames of grammatical or phonetic standards, clashing only the stylistics of ethic etalons. The first layer of functional stylistic vernacular is shown by the expressive lexis and the phraseology close to colloquial literary style and it is historically motivated and not determined by any spelling rules (Romanova *et al.*, 2017).

Such sub-standard units are of stable character: traditional semantic, morphological, and idiomatic units that are specially designed for producing the speech of the low register. Multiple colloquialisms are also pragmatically expressive and many of such vernacular phrases are registered in dictionaries. The second layer of functional vernacular is made up by traditional expressive units that are strictly forbidden for usage - obscene lexis and idioms.

The lexeme bandit had been used three times:

Шушыбандитбеләннөлгачыгарга; Судсыз-нисезбәрепүтерәсебарулбандитны; Көч-хәлбеләнкомтылдымбандиттан; Электеңме, бандит?

Sub-standard word хохол was also used once: *Хахул (Хохол) кызынасәламозатумы?*

The rest of the cases of non-standard speech were based on the dialectal pronunciation of village dwellers: Төрмәристаннары (арестантлары); Иртәгәиртәнсүзенне, түлке (только), өздәрәпәйт; Әбәзәтелнә (обязательно) сөйләшәм; Этлеккылыргамишәйт (мешать) итмәй; Бүлнискә (больницага) илтүягынкарарбыз; Хет (хоть) танкка; Кирәклетәуар (товар) сатыпалучытурындадәйтте; Минжалу (жалоба) тикшерүөченкилгәнидем; Вәт (вот), шул! Thus these sentences were characterized by simple syntax and dialect phonetics.

According to Pleschenko *et al.* (2008) verbs are prevailing in conversational speech, along with the prevalence of simple sentences, with the absent predicate that makes the statement more dynamic. At the same time, these phrases can be understood out of the situation, what witnesses about their systematic character.

Lexical items in this paper were identified according to both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, including a high number of entries and containing non-standard vocabulary.

4. Summary

On the examples taken from the text of the novel “Gam” by Subich *et al.* (2016) it was observed that the non-standard variants of the lexemes had been presented on the level of phonetics, namely, dialectal pronunciation of borrowings from the Russian language by village dwellers. The non-standard words used in the text to create a negative image of a character were loanwords: a loanword *bandit* from Italian through the Russian word original Italian *bandito*, and a loanword *хакыл* a form of the Russian colloquial word *goodbye*, lexeme of pejorative connotation, expressing neglecting.

As already mentioned above (Varlamova, 2017) was born and raised in the Актаныш district of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), and the novel “Gam” took place in this region as well. In Tatar dialectology, the variety spoken by the inhabitants of the Актаныш region is considered to be part of the so-called “Minzala dialect”, named after the town of Minzala (located in the northeastern part of today’s Republic of Tatarstan) and spoken in the east of the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as in parts of Udmurtia and Bashkortostan. In Tatar dialectology, the variety spoken by the inhabitants of the justified region is considered to be part of the so-called “Minzälä dialect”. The typical features for the variety spoken in the justified region are: lipping d sound («Beard d Respublika » and diphthong - ay.

The author used elements of this dialect in the speech of some persons to express their local origin. The dialect of this region was also characterized by some special features that were distinct from the standard variety of Tatar. Another characteristic was the change from o in standard Tatar to u in the dialect.

Thus, the non-standard words were not widely presented in the novel “Gam” (Villalobos, 2015) and they had been only used in a form of pronunciation.

5. Conclusion

The national language has a complicated structure and the literary language is situated in the middle, occupying the largest part. It is also divided into neutral (the largest), high, and low parts. There is a zone of terminological lexis and high lexis close to the high sub-zone and there is a sub-standard zone of language next to the low sub-zone of the literary language. The constant interchange takes place between the center and peripheries, special and sub-standard lexis are also moved to the neutral zone if required, or vice-versa. The Novel “Gam” by Yunakovskaya (2007) was included in this paper and analyzed. In this respect, the following lexical and stylistic types of words and lexical units were illustrated: colloquial, vernacular, rude vernacular, jargonisms, vulgarisms, and taboos.

The use of a language is the way of comprehending the world of special knowledge, the adjustment to the culture of different nations, and the dialogue between different cultures; providing people’s awareness of belonging not only to their native country, but also to the planetary cultural community. Accordingly, success in translation into a foreign language depends greatly on the interrelationship between aims, content, and principles, which determine the strategy of this bilateral process.

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