THE ETHNIC STEREOTYPE OF TATARS IN RUSSIAN LINGUISTIC CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the paradigm of ethnic stereotypes related to the ethnonym Tatars in Russian linguistic culture using the data from the National Corpus of the Russian Language (http://www.ruscorpora.ru). The theoretical foundation of our research can be found in a number of works based on cultural approach to the study of language in relation to the culture and consciousness of its speakers. The ethnonym “Tatars” is ambiguous in the Russian language, and it has a variety of associations due to certain developments in the history of Russia.

In the mental field of Russian linguistic community, two paradigms of sustainable images of Tatars have been found to coexist. The first one is related to the stereotypes of Tatar warriors in the collective mind of the society. The second one is the all-in-one image of Turkic peoples in Russia; it includes the groups of stereotypical judgments which are significant from the cultural, social, cognitive and psychological points of view. The results of research and the empirical material itself will be useful for lexicographers working with the ethnic stereotypes, linguistic, cultural and country-studying references, teachers of humanitarian disciplines at secondary and high school. Our findings can contribute to ethno-cultural education, and to the development of multiculturalism and tolerance.

Keywords Ethnic stereotype, ethnonym, Tatars, Russian linguistic culture, National Corpus, semantic layer, multiculturalism, linguistic consciousness

INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, language is defined as a major nationally specific phenomenon which accumulates and transfers the cultural background, traditions, world view, and the system of moral and ethical values of native speakers from generation to generation. Ethnic stereotypes are being studied actively. Each unit of language helps interpret the reality from the ethno-cultural point of view: acoustic and graphical appearance of a word [Mardieva 2014], the morpheme as its minimal significant part [Fatkhutdinova 2014], its usual reproducible combinations [Fedorova, Fattakhova 2015; Bochina, Miftakhova 2014], and categories of grammar [Murzina, Hayrutdinova 2015]. However, ethnonyms are especially important from the cultural and symbolic point of view because these elements within the system are inseparably linked to the ethnic groups and enduring stereotypes existing in the minds of other peoples and nations.

Among various ethnonyms in the Russian language, the ethnonym “Tatars” is perhaps one of the most difficult to comprehend. On the one hand, it is ambiguous; on the other, its systemic meaning (as reflected in lexicographical sources of different types) is complicated with additional meanings and connotations determined by the historical memory of the Russian people. The last semantic layer of the word Tatars, designated in our research work as ethnic stereotypes, presents the subject for the study and discussion. Ethnic stereotypes are understood as generally accepted, stable, often preconceived value judgments about the
cognitive and psychological characteristics, mental and physical qualities, the external appearance of people and their cultures. There is a long tradition of studying the ethnonym Tatars, among other approaches, from the linguistic point of view. It has also frequently been the subject of thematic studies [Baksakov 1969, Zakiev 2006, Bushakov 1996 etc.]. However, authors have previously focused on the denotative level of word semantics, while the semantic layers determined by the historical memory of the Russian people, the cultural and historical traditions of cooperation between these two nations (i.e. linguocultural information) have not been the subject of a special study yet.

METHODS

Language is the main source, as well as means of building ethnic stereotypes, because "there is nothing so deep, sophisticated and integral in a human being that doesn’t enter into the language and that is not cognized through it" [Humboldt, 1984: 57]. The major methodological principle of our study is to view stereotypes – including ethnic unconscious archetypes – as rooted in mythological oppositions, in particular, in the dichotomy of "us" and “them"[Mardieva 2014: 635].

L.P. Krysin has suggested that the study of ethnic stereotypes involves two approaches. Firstly, it is important to discover which aspects of life and personal features (intellectual, psychological, or anthropological) of the stereotyped group undergoes evaluation. Secondly, modern researchers have to define specific linguistic units which reflect ethnic stereotypes [Krysin 2005: 450]. In the latter case, it would be more productive to reveal non-systemic layers (not included into the dictionaries) that are reproduced in the language of this people on a regular basis.

The source base of our research includes proverbs and sayings, as well as fragments of literary and non-fiction texts extracted from the database of the National Corpus of the Russian Language [http://www.ruscorpora.ru], which reflect stereotyped representation of the ethnic group related with the ethnonym Tatars in the Russian linguistic consciousness.

RESULTS

Ethnonym tatars and its lexicographic presentation

Most modern dictionaries of the Russian language include two basic definitions of this lexical unit: 1. The nation, the main population of the Republic of Tatarstan // The representatives of this people. 2. The name for various Turkic, Mongolian, and other tribes united in the 13th – 15th centuries within a single state – the Golden Horde [Concise Academic Dictionary 2000: 342]. The Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language (ed. by D.N.Ushakov) includes four definitions: 1. Turkic peoples living in Tatarstan, in some districts of Bashkiria, Volga region and in some areas of Siberia. 2. The Turkic ethnic group living in Crimea. 3. Inaccurate identification of the Turkic peoples of Caucasus and some other areas, such as Azeris (Caucasian Tatars), Khakases (Abakan Tatars), etc. (pre-revolutionary period). 4. Various Turkic tribes united in 13th century under the rule of Genghis Khan and holding sway over Russian principalities until the 15th century (hist.) [EDRL 19: 658]. It is also important to keep in mind the interpretation of the ethnonym suggested by Russian Turkologist N.A.Baskakov: "The names "Tatars" and "Tatar language" incorporate a variety of former names for smaller ethnicities or dialects: Crimean, Astrakhan, and Kasim Tatars, Mishars, or Meshcheryaks, Kryashons (Russian "christened"), Nagaibaks, and West Siberian Tatars: those living along the Tura, in Tyumen, Ishim, Yalutorovsk, Irtysh, Tobolsk, Bukhara, Chatsky, Baraba, Tomsk" [Baskakov 1969: 12].
Our analysis of the source base indicates that the ethnonym Tatars tends to be broadly used by native speakers of Russian in two meanings: 1) Turkic tribes, also known as the Mongols, united in the 13th century into the Golden Horde; 2) Turkic tribes (of the Volga region, Siberian, Crimean, and sometimes, according to tradition, Turkic tribes of the Caucasus).

**Ethnonym Tatars as Turkic tribes, also known as the Mongols, united in the 13th century into the Golden Horde: the stereotypes of its perception in Russian culture.**

The history of the Golden Horde determined the perception of Tatars as warriors. These warriors:

1) possessed great strength and were true masters of the military: A Tatar can break a stone (proverb); A Tatar can hammer a nail into a stone (proverb); Now I noticed that the Tatars are fine warriors and good snipers (Jan. Genghis Khan, 1939).

2) were delicate to religious feelings of the vanquished people: Tatars... respected the religion of the defeated (S.M.Stepnyak-Kravchinskii. Russia under the rule of the kings, 1886);

3) contributed to the development of Russian culture: Tatars joined Russia to the nation-wide Mongolian system of post roads .... <which> remained in Russia for a long time after the Tatar yoke (N.S. Trubetskoii. A look at Russian history not from the West but from the East, 1929); Tatars helped to keep the Russian spirit. Through hardship to the stars! (V. Kornilov. Demobilization. 1969 – 1971).

Also the Golden Horde determined the perception of Tatars in Russian culture as ‘others’, as people with its own peculiarities: He writes from the wall (i.e., he writes not from left to right but vice versa); What is good for Russians is like death for Tatars (proverb).

**Ethnonym Tatars as Turkic tribes (the Volga region, Siberian, Crimean, and sometimes, according to tradition, Turkic tribes of the Caucasus): the stereotypes of its perception in Russian culture.**

As the lexeme Tatars is used broadly in Russian linguistic culture, it is rather difficult to define the particular Turkic tribe or ethnic group culture which the literary on non-fiction text refers to. This fact indicates that the ethnic stereotype Tatars has the essential quality of syncreticism in the minds of Russian speakers. The Tatars in this case is a generic name of the Turkic peoples of Russia.

Russian-speaking people pay attention on the appearance, intellectual, mental qualities, social status and other characteristics of the Tatars as members of a particular ethnic group.

**Physical appearance**

of this ethnic group is defined with the help of the set which involves an indication of the distinctive features, for instance:

– narrow, sometimes squint eyes: the slitty eyes (Kuvaev. The Territory. 1970 – 1975); narrow little eyes (Melnikov-Pecherskii. On the Hills 1875 – 1881; Herzen, My Past and Thoughts, 1855); swivel-eyed guy (Kozyrevа. Lady hunt, 2001);

– the presence of beard: bearded face (Tolstoy. The Road to Calvary, 1922); sparse wedge-shaped beard (Melnikov-Pecherskii. On the Hills, 1875 – 1881); white-bearded Tatar (Gorky. The Life of Klim Samgin, 1928); thin gray beard (Alekseev. Green shores, 1983 – 1984);
shaven head: A Tatar ... with blue shaved head (Kataev. Sir Henry, 1920); clean-shaven head (Melnikov-Pecherskii. On the Hills, 1875 – 1881).

– obligatory tubeteyka (skullcap) ‘small cap with four-wedged top or in the form of a truncated cone with a flat top’ and long khalat (robe): Tatars in skullcaps and long robes (Oseeva. Dinka, 1959); a typical Tatar junkman in the skullcap (Kuritsyn. Tomsk slums, 1906). The appearance of Tatar women is represented in the studied texts very sparingly; it involves two long braids (a young girl – a bride with long serpentine streamers to toe – Charskaya. Notes of schoolgirl, 1901) and the presence of the national headdress – a velvet cap with some sort of bag thrown to the side (Boborykin. Vasilii Terkin, 1892).

Ethnic stereotype always contains the information about the habits and typical forms of non-verbal behavior of people from another ethnic group: Golovin was sitting tall on a folding chair, Tatars on the rug, with their legs crossed (Tolstoy. Peter the First, 1934, Kn. 2); We don’t eat horse meat, and Tatars don’t like pork (M.E.Saltykov-Schedrin. The Golovlevs, 1875 – 1880); At the tables there are long-bearded Tatars. How slowly they are drinking, how sparingly they are talking, how solemnly they are moving (I.Tsvetaeva. October in the car, 1917).

The type of activities

proper to Tatars is very significant. Russian see Tatars as (in descending order of frequency):

a) warriors

In war, the Turks and Tatars... will not be easily killed, they defend to the last breath... (Kliuchevskii. Russian history, 1904); Tatars attack as a whirlwind and leave as fast as they came (Tornau. Memoirs of a Russian officer, 1874); But the Tartars were tricky and experienced, using the passthroughs, hiding, disappearing (M. Gigolashvili. Ferris wheel, 2007); Tatars bore arms not out of fear but out of conscience, they had to stand together with all the Russians against the common enemy (Zaitsev. Soldiery, 2002); By the number of the Heroes of the Soviet Union, Tatars rank second after Russians! (An error or a deliberate confrontation // "Life of Nations". 2004. 17.03)

2) merchants, traders

Kara Mustafa was surrounded by Tatar merchants who brought sheep and goat carcasses on bullock-carts (V.Krashennikov. Maltese Cross // Around the World. 1994); Tatars vend rugs right on the streets, sell tubeteykas and chuviaks (Oseeva. Dinka, 1959); Sergei's first wife, the beautiful Tatar, worked as a salesgirl in Mostorg (Katanyan. Touching the idols, 1998); The Tatar girl Aisa was selling fresh fish in a shop called “Foodstuffs” (Lipskerov. Last Sleep of Reason, 1999)

3) farmers, peasants

The Tatars in our county were really endurant and honest reapers... (K.S.Petrov-Vodkin. My story, 1930); Tatars and Turks were the great masters of irrigation (M.Voloshin. Crimea. A guidebook, 1925...); The Tatars cultivated kitchen gardens (D.Bykov. Spelling, 2002); The Tatars since older times dug pits in the rocky soil, brought fertile land from Yayla and cultivated pears and apples that I never met anywhere (B.Vasilev. Look back at the middle // “October”, 2003).
3. The paradigm of the ethnic stereotypes of Tatars includes the image of the Tatar as a citizen. Tatars can be described as either non-abiding: Tatars gather in crowds and wait for a chance to lash out (Durova. The Cavalry Maiden, 1835) or law-abiding and gentle citizens: There are Mosques in Kasimov. Tatars live their neatly and prosperously, very quietly. (Volkonsky. The Diary, 1812-1813); A Tatar is a quiet man, the Koran forbids him to be greedy and scurrying (Gorky. The Life of Klim Samghin, 1928).

**The psychological portrait**

of Tatars provides some important supplementary characteristics

1) tricky and yet honest: A Tatar doesn’t cheat a Tatar; but it is a praiseworthy trickery to deceive the foreigner (Karamzin, History of the Russian Imperial State, 1819-1826, T.4), Tatars – everyone knows – are much more honest than us (Gorky. Summer, 1990); The Tatars work mainly in the Jewish trading firms – they willingly take Tatars into their service due to their sobriety, honesty and hard work (From our correspondents // Odesskii Listok, 1912);

2) neat and order-loving: He and the Tatar woman are very fond of cleanliness (Doroshevich. Sakhalin, 1903); Take, for instance, the Tatar village near Kostroma – Tatars live there, they have everything, they keep everything in order (Sologub. Journalism of different years, 1904 – 1918);

3) friendly, although touchy; hard-working; in general, good people: Tatars worked on highly paid, but also the most difficult jobs, mostly in hot shops, live among themselves in harmony, united ... (Astashiev. Sighted staff, 1978 – 1982); You know, Tatars never forget the harm done to them (Galitsky. Dangerous collection, 2000); Tatars are excellent people, they are honest, they don’t lie, they are neat, brave, excellent born riders and first-class soldiers (Kuprin. The Last Knights, 1934).

**CONCLUSION**

The results and the empirical material collected can form the basis of the Dictionary of Ethnic Stereotypes, linguocultural and other references, and enrich regional corpuses (for instance, the corpus of Kazan region [Galiullin et al., 2014]). These materials will be useful for teachers of humanitarian disciplines at secondary and higher school. They will make a definite contribution to the ethno-cultural education, to the development of multiculturalism and tolerance.

**SUMMARY**

This study revealed two paradigms of the ethnic stereotypes of Tatars in Russian linguistic culture. The first is related to the stereotypes of Tatars as Genghis Khan’s warriors. The second is the undifferentiated image of Turkic peoples and tribes of Russia represented in the Russian linguistic consciousness by sufficiently complete series of images covering the significant cultural, social, cognitive and psychological aspects of different perception of peoples united under the ethnonym “Tatars”. Certainly, the connotations that were formed in the 13th – 15th centuries had their impact on the standards of perception of the ethnonym “Tatars” in the later periods as well. Representatives of Russian linguistic culture for centuries have admitted the national and cultural identity of this ethnicity and respected its representatives, and this is the basis of peaceful coexistence and cooperation of many ethnic groups in Russia.
CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that the data presented do not contain conflict of interest.

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