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The Representation of the Epic Time Concept in Yakut Olonkho and Turkic-Mongolian Epics of Siberia: Structural Models

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Abstract

The relevance of this article is justified by the increasing interest in studying epic texts; in this regard, the problem of conceptual structure still requires some insight. The present study discusses a novel topic in which fixed formulas of epic TIME serve as the object of cognitive analysis. These fixed formulas have not yet been studied from the point of the EPIC TIME concept.

The purpose of this research is to single out the concept structure of EPIC TIME in Yakut olonkho and Turkic-Mongolian epics of Siberia and to compare their universal and national features. The following sources served as the basis for the analysis: three olonkho texts, which represent the main regions where the Yakut epics take place and *A Guide of Typical Heroic Epic Locations of the Peoples of Siberia* by E.N. Kuzmina.

The study of the concept structure of EPIC TIME was achieved using the method of singling out lexicographic definitions of the epic formula components in the macro-context. Implementing the method of structural modeling in the research, models of concept structures which form the basis of the epic TIME semantic formulas were singled out. The temporal concept structure is based on the rhythmic and syntactic parallelisms and literal repetitions in the epic TIME formulas. The correlation of rhythmic and syntactic parallelisms and literal repetitions helps to explain the aspects of epic TIME. The singled out concept structures are further compared using the concept analysis method.

Having analyzed the definition to the concept of EPIC TIME in Yakut olonkho and Turkic-Mongolian epics of Siberia, it became apparent that there is a convergence between the two epics on the grammatical level of analysis. However, there are also instances of implicit differences in the analyzed concepts. These instances are located in the deep structure of the concepts. First of all, TIME measurement units do not coincide with each other; secondly, the initial storyline points and the directiveness of the EPIC TIME do not match; thirdly, the secondary and indirect attributes, which assist in positioning the EPIC TIME, do not coincide.

Keywords: Rhythmic and syntactic parallelism, Temporality, Epic TIME formula, EPIC TIME concept, Structural model of the concept, TIME directiveness, Loop-structured TIME, Points of TIME continuum.

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Introduction

The importance of this research is justified by the increased interest towards the study of world epic heritage, in particular the comparative study of Yakut heroic epic olonkho and Turkic-Mongolian epics of Siberia, where the problem of concept structure has not been thoroughly studied yet. Respectively, G.E. Govorukhin and O.V. Dudchenko note that the value of a literary artwork which was created further back from our timeline is precisely in the historical facts of mentality and perception of the world surroundings concealed in these literary artworks. These aspects are exceptionally valuable in the study of the evolution of human consciousness and process of thinking. In this sense, the study of epics represents a great interest (Govorukhin & Dudchenko, 2014, pp.82-83).

The purpose is to single out the concept structures of EPIC TIME in Yakut olonkho and Turkic-Mongolian epics of Siberia and compare their universal and individual (national) features.

This research represent a novel topic by presenting epic TIME formulas, which have not been studied yet, as the object of cognitive analysis.

The significance of the study is based on the fact that epic TIME formulas are the first and foremost temporal markers of epic worldview; they immerse the listener or the reader of the epic text into the wonderful heroic epic world at the initial stages of human civilizations establishment.

In epic texts, such concepts as *the beginning*, *ancestor*, and *former* are regarded as categories of time and value (Shirokova, 2012, p.382) and the depiction of the past is a central point of the perspective view in epic poetry. The depiction of the past is predominant because, as a rule, it is not connected to the present and, moreover, it is not connected to the future. The depicted perspective of the epic world positions itself on a completely different level of values and time, which is difficult to reach and which is separated from other levels by the distance category in the epic text (Rubert & Dolgova, 2003, p.57).

Linguistic world view is a verbalized component of the conceptual world view, the structure of which comprises of various linguistic units created through the explanation of key concepts and conceptual complexes. The latter create a specific method of putting the existing reality into a concept form (Minakova, 2010, p.129).

The time category is one of the fundamental world view categories. Functioning together with the category of space as one of the axis of existence, it is characterized as simultaneously an inert category and one that is liable to change. The inertness of temporal consciousness manifests itself in the fact that the basic foundations of linguistic temporality remain unchanged in the human consciousness and form a cognitive map of time, which is complex in its structure (Nilsen, 2012, p.59).

V.A. Chervaneva and E.B. Artemenko also note the dual character of the time category in the folklore world view: "Archaic and genetic foundation of time is seen as a cosmological perception of time (cosmological model), which is opposed to the historical (modern) model of time, i.e., the concept of cosmological consciousness implies that there is correlation with an initial condition, which is always present: its emanation is always apparent in any time category" (Chervaneva & Artemenko, 2004, pp.93-94).

In this article, the conceptualization refers to the fictional time. This conceptualization plays a significant role in the integration of information processes of the recipient and, first of all, in "exercising" the simultaneous process of diverse memory levels, on which, due to the generated associations and especially when it is necessary because of special semantic features of the text, the time category provides the poetic text with the right shade of sensitiveness that it requires in accordance with its status of a "special art object" (Petrov & Mazhul, 2011, p.86).

E. V. Dubovaya states that in order to depict time parameters of an event in an epic text, a traditionally established chain of events is used, in which the time continuum is provided along with the other stereotypical expressions of the epic text coinages (Dubovaya 2015, p.56). The scholar notes that "time parameter depiction formulas of actions are just as fixed and ready to be used and they have a status of their own: they can always be used to frame any depiction in any context. These formulas recreate the process of timeflow" (Dubovaya, 2015, p.58).

Regarding the epic texts of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples of Siberia, E.M. Meletinsky claimed that introductory depictions which later formed into strict standard formulas are identical in the folklore of all the Turkic and Mongolian peoples of Siberia, including the folklore of the Yakut people who have long since started developing as a separate cultural group. E.M. Meletinsky writes: "The similarity in the opening passages confirms the theory of cultural and historical unity of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples of Siberia epic texts. At the same time, the universal character of these formulas points to their ancient origin. Their content also reflects their ancient origin" (Meletinsky, 1998, p.360).

Epic TIME formulas of the Yakut olonkho were analyzed by I.E. Alekseev who regards them as "*t-formulas* with a past simple TIME connotation" and claims that apart from the past simple TIME, the key words *ebit*, *ebite*, *uhu*, *suoga ebite uhu* together with the Att *(-byt)* components are manifested in real events and actions in which Ś also takes part. I.E. Alekseev comes to the conclusion that the TIME formula in olonkho is a syntactic component, the structural and semantic image of which correlates with the various temporal markers of the storytelling structure (Alekseev, 2016, pp.48, 50).

Materials and Methods

Three olonkho texts served as the sources for the research; they represent the main areas in which the events of the Yakut olonkho take place: *The Mighty Er Sogotokh* by V.O. Karatayev (Viluyskiy region), *Woman Warrior Dzhyrybyna Dzhyrylyatta* by P.P. Yadrikhinsky (Central region) and *Khaarylla Mokhsogol* by V.V. Atlasov (Northern region). Formulas of epic time were taken from the Buryat, Tyva, Khakass and Shor epics; these formulas were listed in the *Indicators of Typical Places of Heroic Epics of the Peoples of* Siberia, an experimental book edition by E.N. Kuzmina and used in the study to carry out a comparative analysis.

In the present study, we base our understanding of a concept as a central functional notion of cognitive linguistics on a definition of this term suggested by E.G. Belyaevskaya, who suggests that a concept is a basic mental unit which serves as a component of concept structures set in the semantics of language and speech units, in which the semantic content of a language is regarded as a two-leveled structure (Belyaevskaya, 2008, p.143).

It is a well-known fact that on the external or top level of such a structure, lies something that scholars usually refer to the field of semantics of a linguistic or speech unit. On the deep structure level, lies a concept structure - a particular time of language semantics frame which builds all the semantic features in the order of importance and, consequently, it defines the national and cultural perception of the implied concept in a particular language system (Belyaevskaya, 2008, p.143).

Considering all the key points of our research listed in the previous subsections, using the method of structural modeling, the deep structure level of the epic time formulas - the concept structure of EPIC TIME, which serves as the basis of the formulae semantics. In our opinion, the basis of concept structure temporality in formulas of epic time is formed by the rhythmic and syntactic parallelisms and word-for-word repetitions, the correlation of which explains the aspects of epic time. Having singled out the temporal concept structure and using the method of concept analysis, we compare the concept structures of the initial epic time formulas in Yakut olonkho and Turkic and Mongolian epics of Siberia.

Concept analysis of structural models of the EPIC TIME concept in the Yakut olonkho and Turkic and Mongolian epics of Siberia

1.   The concept of EPIC TIME in Yakut olonkho:

First, we will overview the variation of the concept in the form of an epic formula in Yakut olonkho. Yakut heroic epic olonkho is represented by three main areas: Central, Viluy, and North regions.
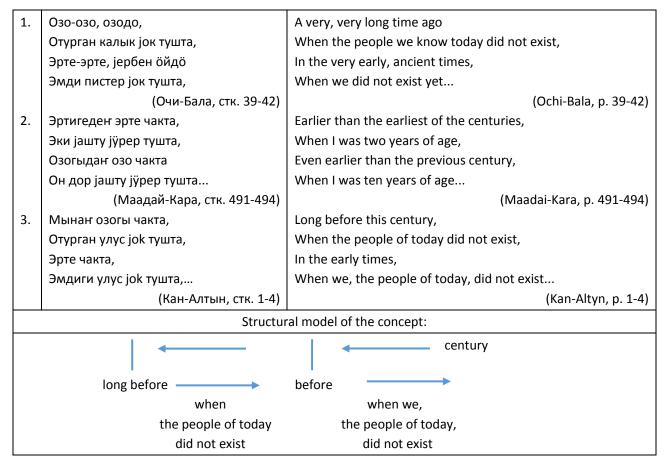

1.	Былыргы дьылым
	Быстар мындаатын
	Быдан ынараа өттүгэр,
	Урукку дьылым
	Охсуһуулаах уорҕатын
	Отой аннараа өттүгэр,
	Ааспыт дьылым
	Анысханнаах айдааннаах күнүн
	Адьас анараа таһаатыгар...
	
	     (Эр Соготох, с. 76).
		Far-far away from
		The final point of the top
		Of all my ancient years,
		Far-far away, on the other side
		Of the spine of my sinful
		And my ancient years,
		Far-far away, beyond the borderline
		Of fruitful, busy days
		And the years that have passed...
		
		     (Er Sogotokh, p. 77).

2.	Былыргы дьыллар
	Быралыйбыт быһылааннаах мындааларыгар,
	Урукку хонуктар
	Уларыйбыт охсуһуулаах уорҕаларыгар,
	Эргэтээҕи дьыллар
	Илбистээх-иирээннээх энэрдэригэр...
	
	   (Дьырыбына Дьырылыатта, стк. 1-6).
		Far beyond the highlands
		Of my ancient, troublesome years,
		Long ago, with all my long
		Ancient year behind me,
		Far beyond the distance
		Of troublesome days...
		
		   (Dzhyrybyna Dzhyrylyatta, p. 1-6).

3.	Былыргы дьыл
	Быдан мындаатыгар,
	Урукку дьыл
	Кулан уорҕатыгар...
	
	   (Хаарылла Мохсоҕол, стк. 641-645).
		Beyond the highlands
		Of the ancient times,
		Beyond the ridges of troublesome
		Long-past time...
		
		   (Translation of the author).

	Structural model of the concept:	

The above examples illustrate the fact that they [formulas] were formed on the basis of rhythmic and syntactic parallelism and the word-by-word repetitions and their variations shape the structural epic formula model, which contains and explicitly shows a temporal structure. The following lexical units contain special permanent elements expressing temporality: *dzhyl* (year) and its attributes: *bylyrgy* (ancient)/ *urukku* (long-past). These units indicate the retrospective nature of the epic story-telling style and are used

in the meaning of *century* in general context. Taking this into account, examples 1 and 2 show a variation in the elements of the temporal structure of the third components of the rhythmic and syntactic parallelisms: *aaspyt dzhylym* (long-past days) / *ergeteeghi dzhyllar* (ancient times). Consequently, if we refer back to example 3, where the epic time formula is represented by a two-member rhythmic and syntactic parallelism, and which contains significantly strong (in terms of structure) set and temporal elements, mentioned above, we can conclude that it is an initial variation of the first two examples. In our opinion, the correctness of such a statement is based on the fact that, example 3 being a genuine citation from the north region olonkho (Momsky) could have managed to preserve itself in the initial form due to its isolation from external impact.

Referring back to analysis, it is worth mentioning that all three epic time formulas fit within the framework of cyclic time, which originates from the absolute past ("ancient") time and extends to the moment of epic events ("long-past"), i.e., in the epic time formulas, olonkho is regarded as non-linear time, which extends from the past to the present. Given this, in each component of parallelism there is an individual segment of time, which is expressed using combinations of fixed locative elements, such as: *myndaa* (height, peak) / *uorgha* (mountain range), etc.

Frequently, it can be observed from the epic time formulas, that while telling the olonkho, the Yakut storyteller describes epic time from the first person point of view, as a person who had witnessed the heroic events of that time. The storyteller does so by using the possessive case. This feature is illustrated in example 1.

2.   EPIC TIME concept in Altai epic:

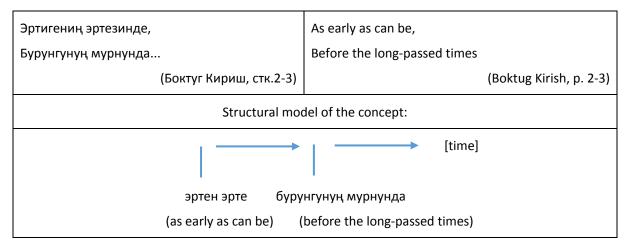| 1.	Озо-озо, озодо, Отурган калык jок тушта, Эрте-эрте, jербен öйдö Эмди пистер jок тушта, (Очи-Бала, стк. 39-42)	A very, very long time ago When the people we know today did not exist, In the very early, ancient times, When we did not exist yet... (Ochi-Bala, p. 39-42)
2.	Эртигедең эрте чакта, Эки jашту jÿрер тушта, Озогыдаң озо чакта Он дор jашту jÿрер тушта... (Маадай-Кара, стк. 491-494)	Earlier than the earliest of the centuries, When I was two years of age, Even earlier than the previous century, When I was ten years of age... (Maadai-Kara, p. 491-494)
3.	Мынаң озогы чакта, Отурган улус jок тушта, Эрте чакта, Эмдиги улус jок тушта,... (Кан-Алтын, стк. 1-4)	Long before this century, When the people of today did not exist, In the early times, When we, the people of today, did not exist... (Kan-Altyn, p. 1-4)
Structural model of the concept:		

In Altai epics, the concept is formed on the basis of a two-member rhythmic and syntactic parallelism. Likewise in the Yakut olonkho, the set phrase repetitions determine the temporal structure of the concept.

The most significant elements denoting temporality are the following: the lexical unit *chakta* (century) and its attributes: *ozo* (at the beginning) / *erte* (early); these units are illustrated in examples 2 and 3.

However, in example 1, we can also distinguish another time category, i.e., the word-by-word repetition of attributes: *ozo-ozo, ozodo* (a very, very long time ago) and the word combination: *jerben öi* (ancient times). Interestingly, in examples 1 and 3, the temporality is accompanied by attributive constructions, such as: *when the people [which] we know today did not exist / when we, the people of today, did not exist;* that is, epic time is expressed from the point of view of the entire Altai group of people. At the same time, in example 2, likewise in the Yakut olonkho, the storyteller interprets the epic time formula from the first person perspective, as a person who had witnessed all these epic events; he does so by indicating his age: *when I was two years of age/ when I was ten years of age.* In our opinion, the indicated variations of epic time formulas, which do not encompass the general tendency, serve as the author's individual conceptualizations of epic time.

Nevertheless, all three examples are united into one using cyclic time which extends from the present to the past, i.e., there is a non-linear retrospective time implemented in the plot. Meanwhile, the occurring contradictions in the time continuum are eliminated using a rising scale of temporal attributes, such as: *when I was two years of age / when I was ten years of age*, which form a time loop aimed at the epic reality (see Structural model).

3.   EPIC TIME concept in the Tyva epic:

Эртигениң эртезинде, Бурунгунуң мурнунда... (Боктуг Кириш, стк.2-3)	As early as can be, Before the long-passed times (Boktug Kirish, p. 2-3)
Structural model of the concept:	

эртен эрте   бурунгунуң мурнунда

(as early as can be)   (before the long-passed times)

The example illustrates the fact that the epic time formula expressing the concept is formed using two-member rhythmic and syntactical parallelism. In this type of structure, temporality manifests itself through general context, which is based on a word-by-word repetition of the lexeme stem: *erte* (early) and word combinations: *burungunung murnunda* (before the long-passed times). Thus, all the epic time elements serve as indicators of temporal information, which, however, does not specifies the time expression as it does in Yakut and Altai epics (years, centuries, etc.). In Tyva epic, likewise in the Yakut olonkho, the EPIC TIME concept is cyclic in its nature and extends from the "early" (the very beginning of time) to "long-passed", i.e., to the heroic events of the epic.

4.   EPIC TIME concept in Khakass epic:

1.	Чир пастап пӱткен соонда Чис-пағырлар табыл турған тус полган, Азырлап аххан суғлары,	After the Earth's first creation, There was a time, when piece of red copper were found, [And] fast-flowing rivers, spreading their waters off the shores,

2.	Атығып киліп, аххалапчададыр. Ах тиректің салаалары Узуннааң öслеп парған син полған, Атығып киліп, Ханым талай, Абыдылып киліп, ахчададыр. (Ай Хууӌын, стк. 1-8). Чир пастап пÿт парғанда, Чылтыстар хада тöреен полыптыр. Ах чарыхтың алтында Арғал чон чуртап пастаан. (Алтын Арығ, стк. 1-4).	[Flowed] down the rocks, bouncing off. It was then, when the branches of the white poplar Grew to an enormous length, [And the mighty] Khanym-Talai river flowed, Bouncing off and swerving down its path. (Ai-Khuuchin, p. 1-8). When the Earth was being created, And the stars were born at that same time, they say, In [the whole] wide world People began to live. (Altyn-Aryg. p. 1-8).

<div align="center">Structural model of the concept:</div>

When the Earth was being created → there was a time → it was then →

(when people found red pieces of copper)
(And fast-flowing rivers, spreading their waters off the shores)

(when the branches of the white poplar grew to an enormous length)
(And the mighty Khanym-Talai river flowed, Bouncing off and swerving down its path)
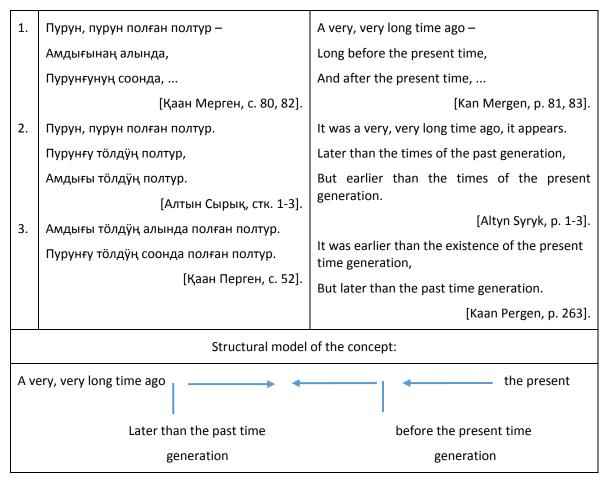
In Khakass epic, the epic time formula, containing the concept under study, is not very stable; this can be seen in example 2, in which there is a complete absence of rhythmic and syntactical parallelism. However, in the first example, there is an especially complex formula structure, similar to that of the Altai epic formula. Taking this into account, both examples are similar in their initial point of time - *chir pastap pÿt parganda/ chir pastap pÿtken soonda* (when the Earth was being created).

The complexity of the first example is justified by the fact that every component of the two-member parallelism structure in this example contains additional attributes of the temporal component (see the structural model of the concept). That is, each indication of temporality using word combinations such as *tus polgan* (there was a time) and *sin polgan* (it was then), double attributive structures are used to specify the time and broaden the concept structure.

In the Khakass epic, the epic time formula is expressed in the form of a single retrospective continuous time - when the Earth was being created. That is, the temporal components - parallel structure elements are dependent and can be regarded only within the time of the first creation.

5. EPIC TIME concept in Shor epic:

1.	Пурун, пурун полған полтур –	A very, very long time ago –
	Амдығынаң алында,	Long before the present time,
	Пурунғунуң соонда, ...	And after the present time, ...
	[Қаан Мерген, с. 80, 82].	[Kan Mergen, p. 81, 83].
2.	Пурун, пурун полған полтур.	It was a very, very long time ago, it appears.
	Пурунғу төлдÿң полтур,	Later than the times of the past generation,
	Амдығы төлдÿң полтур.	But earlier than the times of the present generation.
	[Алтын Сырық, стк. 1-3].	[Altyn Syryk, p. 1-3].
3.	Амдығы төлдÿң алында полған полтур.	It was earlier than the existence of the present time generation,
	Пурунғу төлдÿң соонда полған полтур.	But later than the past time generation.
	[Қаан Перген, с. 52].	[Kaan Pergen, p. 263].
Structural model of the concept:		

A very, very long time ago → ← ← the present

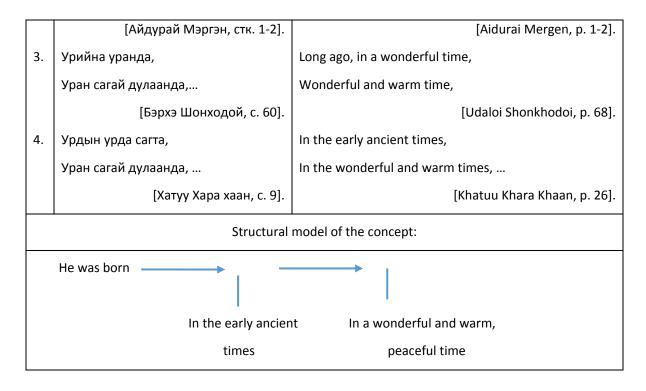Later than the past time generation   before the present time generation

In Shor epic, the concept under study displays itself using indefinite time indications such as "*a long time ago*" in combination with a relatively independent two-member rhythmic and syntactic parallelism. Example 3 indicates that there is in fact a case of independent parallelism, where the initial time is not indicated. The most important element expressing temporality in the concept is the word-by-word repetition of the lexeme *purun*, which can be interpreted as "*a long time ago, before*".

It is also interesting that the point of time continuum between the two time indications is clearly expressed using the following word combinations: *purungu töldÿn* (later than the past generation) and *amdygy töldÿn* (before the present generation), i.e., epic storytelling is aimed at both - the retrospective and the perspective point of view. Moreover, the origin of the Shor people serves as the initial point of time, likewise in the Altai epic.

6. EPIC TIME concept in Buryat epic:

1.	Урайнай уриндо-ло	He was born, they say,
	Урин сагай тÿрÿÿндө-лө;	In the ancient times,
	Сагай югнэй сарюунда, ...	In the best of times, ...
	[Аламжи Мэргэн, стк. 9-11].	[Alamzhi Mergen, p. 9-11].
2.	Уряанай урин сагта тÿрÿбө,	In the past warm time he was born,
	Эртэнэй сагта, энхе сагта тÿрÿбө;	In the early times, in the peaceful times, ...

		[Айдурай Мэргэн, стк. 1-2].
3.	Урийна уранда, Уран сагай дулаанда,…	Long ago, in a wonderful time, Wonderful and warm time,
	[Бэрхэ Шонходой, с. 60].	[Udaloi Shonkhodoi, p. 68].
4.	Урдын урда сагта, Уран сагай дулаанда, …	In the early ancient times, In the wonderful and warm times, …
	[Хатуу Хара хаан, с. 9].	[Khatuu Khara Khaan, p. 26].

Structural model of the concept:

He was born ⟶ | In the early ancient times | ⟶ | In a wonderful and warm, peaceful time

In the Buryat heroic epic, the EPIC TIME concept is verbalized using epic formulas based on flexible two-member rhythmic and syntactical parallelism (examples 1, 2, 4) and anadiplosis (example 3). Given these conditions, the epic time is expressed through the main bogatyr character - from the moment he was born and this makes the epic time structures similar to the examples from other epics. Temporality is expressed using the temporal lexeme explicitly: *sag* (time), which is categorized with the help of temporal attributes: *erte* (early, old, ancient) and *urdyn/uraynay* (former). The concept is also complemented by attributes, expressing features of temporality and creating a stronger effect of temporality perception: *urin* (tender, warm, welcoming) / *enhe* (calm, peaceful) / *uran* (beauty, grace), which are used interchangeably and add specific information to the plotline. The EPIC TIME concept in Buryat epic is represented by a retrospective continuous time with only a single tense label - a long-passed time, which is regarded as "the best time".

Conclusion

Thus, having overviewed and analyzed the nominalization of the EPIC TIME concept in Yakut olonkho and Turkic and Mongolian epics of Siberia, we can come to a conclusion that there is a convergence between them on the external level, where the methods of organizing epic formulas coincide based on the rhythmic and syntactical parallelism and word-by-word repetitions, which correlate into a general connotation of "the absolute past". In Yakut olonkho, the example from the northern region of olonkho origination is the closest to the other concept structures under comparison. This can be explained by the isolation of northern olonkho variants from external influences and, as a result, the initial structure model of the concept was preserved.

However, there were also implicit variations founds in the analyzed concept structures. They were singled out using the method of concept analysis by creating a structural model. Thus, we have found the following variations in the EPIC TIME concept structures:

First, the time measurement units do not coincide. In the Yakut and Altai epics, epic time is measured using the centuries as the unit of time evaluation, while in other epics associative attributes of time are used to achieve this goal, but they do not employ the time category itself.

Second, the initial points of time and the direction of epic time do not coincide. In the Yakut olonkho and Tyva epic, the epic time category is cyclic or continuous and it starts from the point of absolute past and extends to the point of the heroic times in the epic, while the Altai and Shor epic, on the other hand, continuously goes back to the moment of epic events to the absolute past.

In the Khakass and Tyva epics, the EPIC TIME concept is expressed in the form a retrospective continuous time with a single indicator - the long-passed time. It is worth mentioning, that despite the similarity with the Altai concept, the Shor concept of EPIC TIME is of a great interest, due to the fact that it indicates a point of the time continuum which is located between the indicated branches of time positioned against each other.

Third, the secondary and indirect attributes, which help to position the EPIC TIME concept, do not coincide. The Yakut olonkho and partly the Khakass epic, the concept is additionally verbalized using locative indicators, while in the Altai and Shor epics instead of using those indicators, additional temporal indicators are used, which indicate the source of the generations and peoples' origin.

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