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SIMILARITIES IN SOME LANGUAGE STRATEGIES
OF MUSLIM BOSNIANS
AND LITHUANIAN TATARS



BACKGROUND: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Most similarities between the Bosnians and the Lithuanian Tatars are related to their language and religion. The political and regional background is completely different. Firstly, Lithuanian Tatars are a Turkic people who settled in a linguistically Slavic land, whereas the Bosnians are Slavs ruled by the occupying Turks. Secondly, the official language in Lithuania was Ruthenian or the so-called Chancery Slavonic, then Polish, while in Bosnia it was Turkish. The Muslim Tatars in Lithuania used for some time their ethnic names and titles, although they shifted to the local Slavic languages quite soon. After this shift, they maintained contacts with the Crimea, Turkey and Volga Tatars as much as they could, acquiring religious texts in Oriental languages from their kindred Turkic relatives. The Bosnians, with the gradual conversion to Islam, adopted Muslim names and many elements of Turkish culture, and started to learn Oriental languages. They composed literary works in Turkish, Persian, and Bosnian, while they used Arabic for the purpose of religion. As a result, Oriental words and grammatical elements became part of their Slavic language.

The principal difference between the Bosnians and the Tatars is that the former acquired the Turkic language while the latter lost it, but both are Slavic-speaking communities. The Tatars remained in contact with Turkic languages after the language shift in a way similar to the Bosnians. However, the integration with the neighbouring Slavs resulted in the weakening of contacts with Turkic peoples.

In the following, we will present the Oriental components in the language of the Bosnians and the Lithuanian Tatars, such as names, loanwords, syntactic structures, writing as well as a special sort of bilingual dictionaries written in Arabic script.

USE OF ISLAMIC NAMES

With conversion to Islam, the Bosnians adopted Islamic names, mostly of Arabic but sometimes also of Persian origin. The adoption went through Turkish. Many male names ending in a consonant do not differ from their equivalents employed by other Muslims, including the Lithuanian Tatars, e.g., *Fehim*, *Hasan*, *Kerim*, *Muhamed* ~ *Mehmed*, *Omer*, *Salih*, etc. Also, some names in *-a* retain their forms, e.g., *Mustafa*. In

contrast, the names ending in *-i* normally take the Slavic ending *-ja*, whereby they are adapted to Slavic forms, e.g., *Alija* ← *Ali*, *Husnija* ← *Husni*. Note that the Oriental nouns and names ending in *-i* were also adapted to East Slavic languages, e.g., *hadžej*¹ ‘one who has performed a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina’ ← *hāğğī*; *fierej*² ‘evil ghost’ ← *farī*; *Lechimberdziej* ← *Rahīmberdi*.³ The name *Ali* was commonly pronounced *Alej* → *Olej*, from which originated such surnames as *Alejewicz* and *Alejkiewicz*, the latter with the Slavic diminutive suffix *-ko*. The name *Alej* frequently occurs in Kerdej’s list of landed estates of 1631.⁴

The Bosnians used diminutive names derived with the suffix *-o* from Oriental names, e.g., *Ahmo*, *Avdo*, *Hađo*, *Huso*, *Ibro*, and *Meho*. They are derived from *Ahmed*, *Abd-*, *hadži*, *Husein*, *Ibrahim*, and *Mehmed*. These names may occasionally be used as basic variants, e.g., *Avdo Sućeska*, the name of a renowned Bosnian scholar. Although this diminutive suffix was not used by the Lithuanian Tatars, other diminutive suffixes are common, e.g., *-ko* in *Muško*⁵ ← *Mūsà*, and *š*, as in *Abdysz*⁶ ← ‘*abd*’ servant’.

Some female names in *-a* correspond to their Arabic equivalents, e.g., *Amina*, *Hatidža*, *Kerima*. As is known, Slavic female nouns often end in *-a*; therefore, there is a coincidence in their shape. Nevertheless, names like *Amina* are local adaptations, because the equivalent Turkish names end in *-e*: *Emine*, *Hatice*, *Kerime*. Since their primary source was Turkish, not Arabic, the suffix *-a* must be taken for a local adaptation.

However, some Bosnian female names that end in *-a* are derived from other stems, and in this case this suffix should be considered Slavic, e.g., *Dženita* ← *Cennet*,⁷ *Sabaheta* ← *Sabahat*.⁸ The Tatar names of this type also underwent a similar adaptation, e.g., *Merjema*⁹ ← *Meryem*. The name *Dženneta* is still used by Tatar women.

Turkish words that are components of personal names are mostly titles that follow basic names, e.g., Bosnian (henceforth – Bos.) *Safvetbeg* ← *Safvet* + *beg*, in which *beg* is the Turkic word (probably of Soghdian origin) ‘lord, sir’. More often than in first names

¹ Kryczyński S. Tatarzy litewscy. Próba monografii historyczno-etnograficznej // Rocznik Tatarski. Warszawa, 1938. T. III, s. 175.

² Woronowicz A. Szczałki językowe Tatarów litewskich // Rocznik Tatarski. Zamość, 1935. T. II, s. 358; Jankowski H., Łapicz Cz. Klucz do raju. Księga Tatarów litewsko-polskich z XVIII wieku. Warszawa, 2000, s. 135.

³ Jankowski H. Etymology of the Polish-Lithuanian-Byelorussian Tatar Name *Lehimberdi* // Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia. 1998, No. 3.

⁴ Stefaniak-Rak K. Index to the summary of Tatar landed estates in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of 1631 by Jan Kerdej // Acta Baltico-Slavica. 2009, No. 33, s. 244.

⁵ Ibid., p. 241.

⁶ Ibid., p. 258.

⁷ Aysan A., Tuncay S. Türkiyede Kadın-Erkek Adları Sözlüğü. Ankara, 1993, s. 28.

⁸ Ibid., s. 99.

⁹ Jankowski H., Łapicz Cz. Klucz do raju. Księga Tatarów litewsko-polskich z XVIII wieku. Warszawa, 2000, s. 89.

they occur in surnames, e.g., Bos. *Hasandedić* ← *Hasan* + *dede*, in which *dede* is the Turkish word for 'grandfather'. There is an evidence of the same Turkic title *beg* ~ *bek* in composed Lithuanian Tatar names, e.g., *Azybek*, *Tynibek*, *Jambekovič*.¹⁰

Turkish words normally occur in nicknames, e.g., Bos. *Kara Jilan* in Bosnia, whose whole name was *Hadži efendiĵa Kara Jilan*,¹¹ from Turkish (henceforth – Tur.) *Hācī Efendi Kara Yılan*.

Among interesting names, though typical of the name-giving practice, there is a Bosnian name *Arap*.¹² Such a name can either point to the origin of its bearer or, more probably, to a specific feature of his character and personality, e.g., erudition. The names of this type were also encountered among the Lithuanian Tatars, sometimes in the Slavicised forms, e.g., *Arabin*.

ORIENTAL LOANWORDS IN SLAVIC LITHUANIAN TATAR AND BOSNIAN

Due to a completely different social and political background, Oriental loanwords in the Slavic language spoken by the Lithuanian Tatars basically pertain to religious life and beliefs. When we look at A. Woronowicz's list,¹³ we mostly find only words of this kind. Common words are strictly limited to religious formulae and style. For example, the numeral *bir* 'one' is not used as a numeral, it mostly occurs in the formula *Allah bir* 'God is one', and the numeral *beş* 'five' in *biesz wacht namaz* 'prayer performed five times a day'.¹⁴ There are only a few words that are unrelated to religion, e.g., some cuisine terms like *bielusz* 'meat pie', cf. Tatar *bāleš*¹⁵ or *dżajma* 'thin, flat pancake', cf. Crimean Karaim *yaĵma*.¹⁶

The use of Oriental loanwords in Bosnian is much wider. In addition to the religious lexicon which is naturally predominantly Oriental like in the Slavic Lithuanian Tatar, the Oriental loanwords in Bosnian are encountered in all areas of material and spiritual culture. They typically include such semantic domains as administration and military issues, which were imposed by Turkish authorities. However, Oriental words may be

¹⁰ *Jankowski H.* Nazwy osobowe Tatarów litewsko-polskich // *Rocznik Tatarów Polskich*. 1997, nr 4, s. 79.

¹¹ *Šabanović H.* Hasan Kafi Prusćak // *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*. 1969 [1964–1965]. Nr. 14–15, s. 79.

¹² *Lord A. B.* Pieśniarz i jego pieśń. Warszawa, 2010, s. 449.

¹³ *Woronowicz A.* Szczałtki językowe Tatarów litewskich // *Rocznik Tatarski*. Zamość, 1935. T. II.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, s. 355.

¹⁵ *Татарско-русский словарь*. Ред. М. Османов. Москва, 1966, с. 90.

¹⁶ *Караимско-русско-польский словарь* (further – KRPS). Ред. Н. Баскаков, А. Зайончковский, С. Шапшал. Москва, 1974, с. 218.

found in all spheres of professional life, calendar, entertainments, etc. Below, there are a few examples:

1. administrative terms, e.g., *kadiluk* ‘court district of a *cadi*’, *sandžak* ‘major administration unit’;
2. names of profession and titles, e.g., *hamamdžija* ‘bath-keeper’, *kazandžija* ‘kettle-maker’, *mumdžija* ‘candle-maker’, *terzija* ‘tailor’; *efendija* ‘lord, sir’, *beglerbeg* ‘governor’;
3. religious terms, e.g., *džamija* ‘mosque’, *turbe* ‘tomb’, including the titles like *muftija* ‘mufti’ or *mutevelija* ‘trustee; administrator’.

As is evident, the words ending in *-i*, including the suffix *-dži ~ -či* of the Turkish origin, are extended with the Slavic element *-ja*. The words of this type were borrowed by Hungarian from South Slavic languages in Slavic forms, e.g., *csizmadia* ‘shoemaker’¹⁷ ← Tur. *çizmecci*; *haramia* ‘robber’¹⁸ ← Tur. *harami* ← Arabic *ḥarāmī*, and are also present in Bulgarian, e.g., *čaršija* ‘marketplace’, *čaramija* ‘thief’.¹⁹

Only some of these words, mostly religious terms, have parallels in Slavic Lithuanian Tatar, e.g. *muftiej* ‘mufti’, listed by A. Woronowicz²⁰ as *Muftej*, and *džamia ~ džamija* ‘mosque’,²¹ i.e., adapted in the same form, although a commoner word for the latter is *mieczeć*. The Turkish suffix *-ÇI* was adopted in the form *-džej ~ -czej*, e.g., *azanczej ~ azandžej* ‘muezzin’.²²

SYNTAX AND NOUN PHRASES

A common feature in both Bosnian and Slavic Lithuanian Tatar noun phrases consisting of an oriental proper name or term used as an apposition or genitive construction is that the Oriental component is not inflected, e.g., Bos. *mubarek mjeseca* ‘the holy month GEN’, *mubarek noći* ‘the holy night GEN’,²³ *u Hamam ulici* ‘in the Hamam street’,²⁴ *u sibjan mektebu* ‘at elementary school’.²⁵

In all cases, the Oriental word precedes the Slavic one. It is interesting that the lack of inflection also characterises noun phrases in which the Oriental word is a common

¹⁷ Evidenced from the 16th century on *Kakuk Z. A török kor emléke a magyar szókincsben*. Budapest, 1996, f. 284.

¹⁸ Evidenced from the 16th century on, *ibid.*, f. 35–37.

¹⁹ *Stachowski S. Studia nad chronologią turcyzmów w języku bułgarskim*. Kraków, 1971, s. 26, 45.

²⁰ *Woronowicz A. Szczątki językowe Tatarów litewskich // Rocznik Tatarski*. Zamość, 1935. T. II, s. 362.

²¹ *Ibid.*, s. 357.

²² *Ibid.*, s. 355.

²³ *Omanović-Veladžić A. Sarajevske vakufname u Kadićevoj Hronici (1844–1877) // Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*. 2009 [2008]. Nr. 58, s. 180.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, s. 198.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, s. 199.

noun and the Slavic component is a proper noun, e.g., *šeher Sarajevu* 'Sarajevo city's',²⁶ which renders a Persian genitive construction often used in Turkish, e.g., *šeher-i ...* 'the city of ...', *kale-yi ...* 'the castle of ...'

This also applies to titles and nicknames, e.g., *umrlog Silahdar Mustafa paše* 'deceased sword-bearer Mustafa Pasha's'.²⁷

In some cases, even Slavic components are arranged in this way, e.g., *Opremi je Bojković Aliji*²⁸ 'He sent to Alija Bojković'.

Note that a title normally follows the name or the surname of a bearer, e.g., *Munteha hatun* 'lady Munteha'.²⁹ If there are more titles, one may precede, while another may follow the name it is related to, e.g., *mula Hasan kalfabaša* 'Master Hasan Mollah'.³⁰

There are some petrified compounds like *kurban bajram* 'the Month of Sacrifices'.³¹

Similar or identical constructions are found in manuscripts of Lithuanian Tatars, e.g., *Fātiḥa šurej* 'the Opening Surah', *Širāt most* 'the bridge Sirat', *sabāḥ namāz* 'morning prayer', *ramazan mesac* 'the month of Ramadan', *Muḥammed proroka* 'Prophet Muhammed's'.³²

Copies from Turkish compound verbs are also common for Bosnian and Slavic Lithuanian Tatar, e.g., Bos. *zijaret činiti* 'to visit'³³ and Slavic Lithuanian Tatar *niyyat ūčinic* 'to make an intention'³⁴.

WRITING

Like other Muslim peoples in the past, both the Bosnians and the Lithuanian Tatars used Arabic script for writing their texts whatever the language was. Both the Bosnians and the Lithuanian Tatars adopted some Arabic letters for rendering Slavic sounds. The question of the adopted writing of Lithuanian Tatars was discussed in many studies, to

²⁶ Lord A. B. Pieśniarz i jego pieśń. Warszawa, 2010, s. 517.

²⁷ Omanović-Veladžić A. Sarajevske vakufname u Kadićevoj Hronici (1844–1877) // Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju. 2009 [2008]. Nr. 58, s. 189.

²⁸ Lord A. B. Pieśniarz i jego pieśń. Warszawa, 2010, s. 196.

²⁹ Omanović-Veladžić A. Sarajevske vakufname u Kadićevoj Hronici (1844–1877) // Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju. 2009 [2008]. Nr. 58, s. 181.

³⁰ Ibid., s. 183.

³¹ Ibid., s. 189.

³² Jankowski H., Łapicz Cz. Klucz do raju. Księga Tatarów litewsko-polskich z XVIII wieku. Warszawa, 2000, s. 19–20.

³³ Kadrić A. Jedan poglad na ortografske osobitosti arabice u bosanskoj elifnici Berbića // Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju. 1999 [1997–1998]. Nr. 47, s. 59.

³⁴ Jankowski H., Łapicz Cz. Klucz do raju. Księga Tatarów litewsko-polskich z XVIII wieku. Warszawa, 2000, s. 20.

begin with Antonovič³⁵ and Łapicz³⁶ (1986), and will not be discussed here in detail. We should only mention that the separate letters چ ڇ were coined for the consonants [c dz], and some other ones were adapted for palatalised consonants. Many diacritic signs were used for vowels. Although no unique standard was worked out, there were some rules in their use.

As for the Bosnian Arabic script, some authors only applied additional Persian letters, but others used scripts extended with some coined letters. According to Kadrić³⁷, adoption of Arabic letters is known from the 17th century, e.g., in a manuscript by Ibrahim Užičanin. Kadrić shows the following letter adaptations in Berberić's primer of 1886 published in Istanbul³⁸: و – o, و – u, ن – n, ل – lj and ح – c. It must be added that for the vowel [e] the Bosnians applied an *elif* with a *hamza*, e.g., for ءَ *reč* 'word'.

The Arabic alphabet is not used now for normal, communicative purposes.

THEMATIC DICTIONARIES AND PRACTICAL AIDS TO TEACH TURKISH

Both the Bosnians and the Lithuanian Tatars compiled practical aids and bilingual dictionaries from Turkish into their languages. These dictionaries circulated in manuscripts. There is little literature on this question.

The first well-known thematic Turkish–Bosnian dictionary is that written by Uskufi in the 17th century, called *Potur Şahidiyye*, composed in the form of a poem. O. Blau³⁹ edited it and compiled a normal dictionary from it on the basis of three manuscripts⁴⁰. Despite being metric, Uskufi's dictionary is thematic, see a couplet from the basic copy:

Bog u tańry jedno bir dūr, hem jedini vahdeti
*Duša džam dūr, čovek adem, dirliki dūr životi*⁴¹

'God and *Tanry* is the same, and his oneness || Soul is *jan*, man is *adem*, and his life is livingness.'

Two other copies are also thematic, e.g., the one copied by Abdullah b. Ibrahim in H. 1252: *Tanrı – Bog* 'God', *peygamber – sivetac* 'prophet', *ferište – angel* 'angel', *cin – sotona* 'devil', *peri – vila* 'evil spirit'⁴².

³⁵ Антонович А. Белорусские тексты, писанные арабским письмом, и их графико-орфографические особенности. Вильнюс, 1968.

³⁶ Łapicz Cz. *Kitab Tatarów litewsko-polskich* (Paleografia. Grafia. Język). Toruń, 1986.

³⁷ Kadrić A. Jedan poglad na ortografske osobitosti arabice u bosanskoj elifnici Berbića // *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*. 1999 [1997–1998]. Nr. 47, s. 65.

³⁸ Known as *Haft-ı 'Usmāni ile İmlā-yı Cedīdesi Hāvi Elifbā-yı Bosnevī Sa starom i novom jezijom bosanska elifnica*.

³⁹ Blau O. *Bosnisch-Türkische Sprachdenkmäler*. Leipzig, 1868, S. 65–87.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, S. 195–316.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, S. 69.

⁴² *Ibid.*, S. 178.

As for the Lithuanian Tatars, two works are known so far. One of them is a Turkish–Belarusian dictionary with simple phrases, copied by Mustafa Shahidevich probably in 1836, edited independently by T. Majda⁴³ and G. Aleksandrovič-Miškinenė, and S. Šupa⁴⁴. The other is a Turkish–Polish dictionary with phrases copied by Yakub Hasenevich in 1840, edited with a facsimile by N. Güllüdağ and G. Miškinenė⁴⁵, but known from other manuscripts as well. While the arrangement of the former is highly unsystematic, based on accidental associations of ideas and objects, the latter is more consistently thematic. It starts with words relating to God and religion, e.g., *Tengri* – *Bóg* ‘God’, *peygember* – *prorok* ‘prophet’, *elçi* – *posel* ‘messenger’, *ferište* – *anioł* ‘angel’, etc., and continues with cosmography, e.g., *güneş* – *słońce* ‘sun’, *ay* – *miesiąc* ‘moon’, etc. (125a).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that the similarities in dealing with languages by the Bosnians and the Lithuanian Tatars stem from two basic reasons. One of them is related to the fact that the language of liturgy was Arabic, but transferred and instructed by the medium of Turkish. The other reason is a similar grammatical structure of two different Slavic languages which those communities used, one of them being South Slavic and the other East (Belarusian) or West (Polish) Slavic, which makes the borrowing and copying mechanism in language contact similar or identical.

⁴³ *Majda T.* Turkish–Byelorussian–Polish Handbook // Rocznik Orientalistyczny. 1994, nr 49 (2).

⁴⁴ *Aleksandrovič-Miškinenė G., Šupa S.* Турэцка-Беларускі Размоўнік 1836 году з збораў Нацыянальнага Музею Літоўскай Рэспублікі ў Вільні. Turkish–Belarusian phrase-book of 1836. Türkçe-Belarusça Kılavuz Yıl = 1836. New York, 1995.

⁴⁵ *Güllüdağ N., Miškinienė G.* Litvanya Tatarlarına ait El Yazmalarından Türkçe-Lehçe Kılavuz. Turku-lenku kalbu žodynelis iš Lietuvos totorių rankraščio (1840). Vilnius, 2008.