

Characteristics Of Formation Of National Folk Game Terms

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Abstract: The role of national folk games in children's lives is significant, and the specific features of how game terms are formed is also an important issue on its own. Therefore, the formation of national folk game terms is not only based on affixation and compounding methods, but also frequently observed through the process of lexicalization.

Keywords: National folk game terms, lexicalization, word compounding, affixation, “shúy taslamaq” (stone throwing), “arqan tartispaq” (tug of war), “lángi” (a kicking game), “quwalama” (chasing game).

Introduction: Traditional active folk games—such as friendly wrestling and other contests among teenagers—play an important role in nurturing discipline, agility, quick thinking, physical strength, teamwork, and the overall development of young minds.

Playing folk games with ceremony and tradition serves to increase our people's ability to work diligently and responsibly. Therefore, when selecting games — especially for younger children — we should prioritize those that help develop mental abilities and physical health, taking into account the age-specific characteristics of the children.

Among national folk games, such as “Arqan tartisiw” (Tug of War), “Qasharman top” (Brave Ball), “Mańlay shertpek” (Forehead Flick), “Lángi tebiw” (Kick the Lángi), and “Búrkít keldi” (The Eagle Has Come), many are considered both fun and suitable for school students to play at school or at home.

When we examine the structure of these games' names, each term displays unique patterns of formation. These terms are usually created through the addition of affixes, word compounding, or specific syntactic arrangements.

In modern Karakalpak literary language, new words are generally formed through four main methods:

affixation, word compounding, lexico-semantic, and lexico-syntactic approaches. The morphological structure of national folk game terms in the Karakalpak language varies: some appear as root words, while others are in compound or derivative forms. Therefore, it is essential to determine which specific method has been used in the formation of each term.

We studied in greater detail the words denoting national game terms that were formed through lexicalization, and we identified that these serve as the basis for the formation of many such terms. For example: shúy taslamaq (throwing stones), qasharman (wrestling contest), túye bastı (camel press game), tayaq jıǵıldı (fallen stick game), tez artqa tur (step back quickly), dawısinan tanıp bil (recognize by the sound), qawındı qaqshı (melon tapping), and others.

Example:

“They moved away again, and the mark of the wrestling match turned into a ‘túye bastı’.” (U.Pirjanov “Aq tal astındaǵı aqsham”, (Evening Under the White Willow,) p. 4).

In the sentence above, the word “túye bastı” is one of the names of a Karakalpak national game. It carries two meanings:

1. The name of a game;
2. A place where a large number of people have

gathered — a crowd or assembly.

[Reference: Karakalpak Explanatory Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 302]

Shúy Taslamaq (throwing stones) Game

The word shúy refers to a small piece of wood used to block or hold something in place on objects such as carts, boats, sledges, cattle equipment, etc.

In the game shúy taslamaq, the word “shúy” refers specifically to such a wooden piece that is thrown during the game. The name of the game, therefore, comes from combining the noun “shúy” with the verb “tasla” (to throw), along with the action noun suffix -maq (equivalent to “-ing” or “to [verb]” in English). Thus, it literally means “the game of throwing the shúy.”

In short, this term is formed from:

- shúy (noun) + tasla (verb root) + -maq (verbal noun suffix)

→ Shúy taslamaq = “A game played by throwing a shúy.”

Lángi Tebiw Game (Traditional Lead-Ball Kicking Game)

Lángi refers to a small object made by inserting lead into a piece of leather or wrapping hard materials into fabric, used by children to kick with their feet.

The name of the game — lángi tebiw — is derived from:

- lángi (the object used in the game)
- tebiw (the act of kicking)

Together, they form a compound meaning “to kick the lángi” — i.e., the game in which players kick the lángi in various ways.

In this game:

Two players stand side by side and move forward, kicking the lángi between them without letting it fall to the ground. The second pair of players must each stand on one leg and kick the “lángi” without touching the ground with the other foot. The third pair must kick with the right foot, then use the outer side of the left foot to keep it in the air without dropping it. The fourth pair kicks with the inner side of the right foot and then jumps while continuing to kick the lángi using a technique called “lar” jumping. The fifth pair must kick the lángi 10 to 20 times without dropping it using a combination of the outer side of the left foot and inner side of the right foot.

Each level of play demonstrates increasing skill, balance, and precision, reflecting the complex movement-based learning embedded in traditional games.

Mañlay Shertpek (Forehead Flick Game)

Boys and girls are divided evenly into two teams. Players sit facing each other, with about 10 meters of distance between the two teams. Each team takes turns calling a player from the other side. Before the called player arrives, all members of the calling team must close their eyes. One player lightly flicks the forehead of the called player with their finger, after which the player quietly returns to their seat.

Team members must keep their eyes shut until the flicked player returns and sits down. If one of the team members correctly identifies who did the flicking by saying their name, their team earns a point. If they guess incorrectly, the other team gets the point.

Arqan Tartısıw (Tug of War)

This game involves two teams of six players. The players grab opposite ends of a 10-meter rope. When the signal is given to start, each team pulls in their direction. The team that manages to pull the opposing team across a marked line on the ground wins the game.

Ilaq Tartısıw (Goat Skin Tug / Kokpar Game)

Also known as “Kókpar”, this horseback game involves ten riders entering the playing field. Two players first compete for control of a goat carcass (or its symbolic equivalent), then gallop away with it. The remaining players chase after them, trying to seize the carcass for their own team. The player who manages to take it throws it onto a designated scoring area marked on the field.

Qasharman Oyunı (The Brave Ball Game)

The term “qasharman” comes from the combination of the verb qashar (to dodge, escape) and the noun top (ball). Players are divided into two teams. One team serves as ball attackers, and the other team takes position in the central field as dodgers.

A player from the dodging team is selected to handle the ball. The attacking team attempts to hit the dodging players with the ball as they run and try to escape. If a player is hit inside or just outside the boundary lines, they are considered “hit,” and the round continues with the attempt to hit more players.

If a dodging player catches the ball in the air, without it touching the ground, the game continues without switching roles. Points are awarded as follows:

- 2 points for catching the ball mid-air;
- 2 points for hitting an opponent with the ball;
- the team that successfully scores may also earn the right to serve the ball again.

Búrkit Keldi (The Eagle Has Come)

Ten players line up, standing one behind another, each

linking arms. One player, acting as the eagle, stands at a distance and extends their arms like wings. They then run toward the line of players and try to tag or grab the last player in line.

If successful, the tagged player leaves the line and becomes the next eagle. The game continues in this manner. The first player in the line must raise both hands to block the eagle, serving as the line's defender.

The name of the game derives from the action of the eagle ("búrkit" in Karakalpak), whose role and motion inspired the game's title.

Quwalama (Chasing Game)

The word "quwalama" comes from the verb "quw" (to chase) combined with the derivational suffix -mala, forming "quwmala". However, due to morphophonemic change, the first "m" in the suffix drops, creating the word "quwala", and eventually "quwalama". The -ma suffix turns the verb into a noun indicating a result of an action — hence, "quwalama" refers to "the act or state of chasing."

The game involves five players, divided into two teams. The teams stand about five meters apart. A referee, standing in the center, bounces a ball off the ground. The objective is for each team to retrieve the ball quickly and pass it back to their teammates.

The game emphasizes speed, coordination, and team strategy, as players aim to outmaneuver each other to retrieve and pass the ball effectively.

In addition to traditional national folk games, it is also evident that the names of newer games, which children have enjoyed playing in recent times, exhibit distinct features in their formation. Among modern children's games, terms such as "Qazan" (Cauldron), "Altı Qappaq" (Six Lids), "Top teppek" (Ball Kicking Game), "Jasırınbaq" (Hide and Seek), "Teppek" (Kicking Game), "Poveda" (Victory), and "Ortağa Túspek" (Going into the Middle) have emerged in recent decades. The formation of these names also demonstrates the use of various word-formation processes, including root forms, affixation, and lexical-semantic and lexical-syntactic methods.

For instance: The term "Qazan" has shifted from its primary meaning ("cauldron") to become the name of a game.

In "Altı Qappaq" (literally "Six Lids"), the number "altı" (six) is combined with the noun qappaq (lid), indicating the use of compounding as a method of word formation. In "Topteppek" and "Teppek", the noun "top" (ball) and the verb "tebiw" (to kick) are combined, showing that the names are derived from the action of kicking — specifically:

- "Teppek" involves kicking a small piece of slate;

- "Topteppek" involves kicking a ball.

Both of these games are played on the ground and their names have been formed through lexical-syntactic construction.

The game "Poveda", widely played among children, involves cutting a piece of thick paper into a round shape and placing it on the ground. Two players stand on either side with a ball. A third player stands in the middle and tries to collect the paper circles without being hit by the ball. If they are hit, another player takes their place in the middle. The game continues until all papers are collected. The winner is declared when the player successfully gathers all the pieces, at which point everyone shouts "Poveda!". The term "Poveda" appears to be a borrowed word, possibly of foreign origin, associated with the concept of "victory", and it has entered the language as a new game name.

In summary, the terminology of traditional folk games has primarily been formed through affixation, compounding, and lexical-syntactic methods. Among these, the compounding method has proven to be particularly productive and widespread.

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