Functioning of Toponymic Lexis in Turkic Epic Literature

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Abstract
This paper aims at exploring the role and functions of place names from a Kazakh and Tatar versions of the famous
Turkic epic poem *Edige*. A total of 69 proper names denoting places such as settlements and localities, water objects
and surface relief were analyzed qualitatively with the intensive topology approach. The findings show that
toponymic lexemes perform five main functions in the epos: localizing, informative, accumulative, symbolic, and
individualizing. In the Kazakh and Tatar versions of the epic poem *Edige*, toponyms can act as the main reference
points in time and space, referring to some specific characteristics of the geographic objects, conveying the historical
and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples, and revealing connection to the religion of Islam. Moreover, in the
national versions of the epos under analysis individual toponyms, i.e. those found only in one version of the epos
and typical of the area where the storyteller lived, add authenticity and a local flavor to the events described in the
text. The study enables a better understanding of the national and cultural originality of ideas about space, which
can be transformed according to toponymic data.

Keywords: toponymy, lexis, folklore, epos, linguacultural

Introduction

Each genre of folklore is characterized by a special relationship to reality and a particular way of its
artistic depiction (Propp, 1976). In this regard, heroic epic poems occupy a central place among other genres
of oral folk art. The heroic epos of Turkic peoples is an artistic and valuable branch of the Turkic folklore,
which is of historical nature. By heroic epos, we mean large epic poems, the plot of which is taken from the
life of a country, from the people and images which are created on a large scale and with perfection. Often,
they are built on a heroic or love plot. The most important social functions of the heroic epos are educational
and aesthetic. Heroic epos serves to reflect well-known historical events, preserve traces of historical

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geography, describe heroes with historical names, and reflect interesting and valuable historical events that are not preserved in other sources (Kravtsov, 1972). Being formed as a special form of historical consciousness and knowledge in the nomadic Turkic society, heroic epos is closely related to folklore and a nation's everyday life (Zhumabayeva, 2022).

Toponymic lexis, or place names, are recorded in heroic epic poems. The events of the epos are confined to certain places, so epic poems have a well-defined toponymic composition. Toponyms mark locations and landforms that are associated with historical events (Hedquist et al., 2014) and represent a nation's collective memory (Hakala, Sjöblom, & Kantola, 2015). Toponyms bear relevant information on the historical past of a nation, on the borders of its resettlement, on its cultural, trade and geographical centers (Boribayeva, Madiyeva, Medetbekova, Mambetov, & Ingamova, 2018). Place names have a significant historical value, as they serve the chronological evidence of important events in the past and reflect various elements of a nation's material and spiritual culture (Turaevich, 2021; Zhirmunskiy, 1974). Most places in Kazakhstan and Tatarstan, including rivers, lakes, mountains, hills, winter or summer camps, have their own legends, history, traditions; and these names are an integral part of the spiritual culture (Karabaev, Duzmagambetov, & Bayadilova-Altybayeva, 2021) of Kazakh and Tatar people. Being "persistent" linguistic symbols, toponyms reveal a considerable amount of information about specific locations in the time(s) when they were settled and named (Penko Seidl, 2019), being influenced by such factors as cultural traditions, religious beliefs, aesthetic taste, and socio-political life during a particular historical period (Kalkanova, 1999). In epic poems, toponyms make it possible for readers to discover characteristic features of the national way of life of a certain nation, which is determined by a specific geographical position (Hadieva & Akish, 2015). According to Baker (1972), although place-name legends may lack accuracy in details, they still enable obtaining valuable information through the explanation of "the people who live in a place and use its name", and "what the name means to the people" (p. 369).

Toponymic lexemes have received considerable attention in recent years. Often toponyms are studied from the point of view of their morphological structure (Köhnlein, 2015), historical genesis (Rácz & Tóth, 2019) or distribution of a certain ethnic group (Qian, Kang, & Weng, 2016). In this study, we attempted to address the specific ways of using place names in a literary text through the prism of the anthropocentric theory in linguistics. Based on von Humboldt's ideas of the role of language in forming worldview (Underhill, 2009) and the linguoculturological paradigm as "a complex field of scientific knowledge about the interconnection and interplay of language and culture" (Karasik, 2002), our analysis showed how the storytellers as representatives of certain ethic groups and cultures perceived the world and how the toponymic data recorded in the literary work aligned with the anthropological principle "language - culture - ethnos".

As research material, we chose the heroic epic poem *Edige*, which, in our opinion, allowed us to fully explore the possibilities of using toponyms in epic literature. First of all, it is considered one of the pearls of the verbal creativity of the Turkic peoples, one of the most famous legends over the centuries about the historical personality of Edige Batyr. The heroic epos is widespread among many peoples like Kazakhs, Nogais, Tatars, Bashkirs, Karakalpaks, Uzbeks, Turkmens and other Turkic peoples who inhabited Kazakhstan and Central Asia, Siberia, the Volga region, the Caucasus and Crimea. Another outstanding feature of this epos is that it describes a real historical fact - the adoption of Islam by the Turkic peoples, and a real historical figure - Edige, who went down in history in the second half of the 14th century, when the Golden Horde had weakened, the country was freed from the civil strife of the rulers who had fought for the khanate, and the once strong state had begun to disintegrate. He was an authoritative people's adviser, mediator in disputes and a hero at the head of the country, who made efforts to strengthen the Golden Horde again.

In 1398 CE, the combined army of Lithuania, Poland and Western Russia tried to separate the territory of the Golden Horde. Temir, the Khan of the Golden Horde, met in an area called Borsykty, in what is now western Kazakhstan, bordering Russia. Edige, who headed the ulus between the Volga (Yedil) and the Urals (Zhaiyk), showed great courage in this war. Unfortunately, the history of the Golden Horde in Soviet times has not been explained correctly, saying that it was connected with the Mongols. The territory of the Golden Horde is the land of the Turks – the eastern part of Russia and the western part of Kazakhstan. Such a heroic person subsequently became a legend, and so the epic poem *Edige* appeared.

Edige ranks first among the heroic epic poems of the Turkic peoples in terms of the number of variants, about 50 of which are currently known, as well as in terms of content. The epic poem *Edige* was first published in 1905 in St. Petersburg by Professor P.M. Melioransky under the title *The Legend of Edige and Tokhmatysh*. The oldest version of the epos was written down by Chingiz Valikhanov (Kongyratbay & Kongyratbay, 2013). The first studies of the works of oral folk art of the Turkic peoples belong to Berezin, who examined the content of folklore and their artistic features (Urmanche, 2015). Contemporary studies of the epic poem reveal the archaic nature of the epic monument and convincingly present the history of its formation (Assanov, Pangereyev, Baltymova, Borash, & Idrissova, 2016), analyzing in detail the artistic and poetic features of different versions (Zhanpeissova & Kuzembayeva, 2019), focus on religious-mythological aspects of content and linguistic application (Nurdauletova, 2012).

However, despite the acknowledged significance of the epos *Edige* in Turkic culture, few studies have examined the functions and cultural meanings of toponymic lexis in the epic poem. The present study seeks to provide insight into the roles fulfilled by toponyms in two versions of the epos *Edige* – in Kazakh and Tatar languages. Our purpose is to determine, through toponymic lexis, the area of the distribution of the epos and to identify the patterns of functioning of toponyms in the Kazakh (*Edige*) and Tatar (*Idegei*) versions of the epic poem. In this paper, showed how place names can serve as elements of the linguistic worldview of the storytellers as representatives of particular ethnic groups and reveal valuable data about the history and culture of the Turkic peoples that lived and interacted with each other for several hundred years.

Literature Review

- *Motivation for naming in onomastics*

The etymological analysis of toponyms belonging to a particular territory enables revealing the ethnic impact in the course of exploration of this territory (Zamorshchikova, Khokholova, Ikonnikova, Samsonova, & Lebedeva, 2021). The most diverse methods and principles of linguistic analysis that exist in onomastics are based on the laws of the nomination process and the characteristics of motivation. The process of motivation reflects the ethno-linguistic and historical-cultural context of the emergence of a toponymic nomination. However, linguistic motivation does not always coincide with folklore, in this case it is worth talking about the folklore re-motivation of the toponyms. The essence of folklore re-motivation is that the inner form of toponyms is explained with the help of folklore (Berezovich, 1991). Thus, the motivation for naming geographical names is an important indicator of the originality of people's self-consciousness, worldview, and toponymy itself demonstrates a powerful layer of spiritual culture that depicts the mentality of an ethnic group.

Folklore consists of works that depict interpretation of events, including the origin of particular places, through fiction containing specific epic information based on historical and ethnographical aspects (Sattorov, 2021). Folklore is based on legends, which reflect a nation's artistic and aesthetic attitude to the material world, historical and social events, as well as location. Toponymic legends are mostly a product of folk etymology. According to Tolstoy and Tolstaya (2013), folklore material is able to expand the scope of folk etymology both in a quantitative and structural sense and shed new light on the mechanism of the very phenomenon of folk etymology and the nature of the etymological consciousness of native speakers.

- *Toponyms in literature analysis*

In their analysis of toponyms used in poetry from different parts of the world, Koopman and Jenkins (2016) distinguish between "high-density" poems and "Low-density" poems. The former consists of a large number of place names, and the latter contains a very few or no place names. The results of the examination of toponyms used in Japanese poetry enable Simonova-Gudzenko (2018) to conclude that place names are an integral part of the names of deities, emperors, and their family members, and they largely contributed to the determination and fixation of the state.

Recent studies on toponyms used in epic literature show their significance for preserving the historical and cultural specificity of the places they refer to. In his study of proper names in the Karakalpak epic poems, Tolibayev (2020) treats toponyms as ethno-cultural texts that carry relevant information about the historical past of the people, the boundaries of their distribution, and their culture. In their analysis of the use of toponyms in one of Auezov's epic novels, Kadina, Sateeva, and Akhmetova (2022) highlight the connection of toponyms with people's lifestyle and existence conditions. Mengkai (2019) focuses on the geographic distribution and historical value of toponyms in the Kalmyk heroic epic Jangar. The analysis allows the researcher to trace the ethnic and migration processes in the Volga Region, to identify cultural contacts between different ethnic groups living in that area and to recreate their ethno-cultural background.

- *Functions of toponyms in a literary text*

In literature, the functions of toponyms have a particular significance not only for the embodiment of a special geographic and political model of space in the artistic reality of the writer, but also for the depiction of the inner world of the characters, their destinies, for the formation of the subtext of the work and the development of the plot (Ayupova, 2011). Ayupova (2011) identifies the following functions of toponyms in the prose: world-modeling, mystification, orientation, poetic, plot-forming, symbolic, and bibliographic. Kolesnikova and Rodyukova (2021) state that the functions of toponyms in a literary text depend on the sphere of use and the writer's artistic intention. Thus, toponyms as structural elements of creating space can play an important role in shaping the real geographical and historical space of the text or reflect the individual author's perception of the events described in the literary text (Ivygina & Galieva, 2014). Apart from establishing the fictional space in a literary work, toponyms can perform additional functions like indicating the character's social status (Kohlheim, 2018), or, acting as iconic signs, real toponyms can help to create an illusion of pseudo-documentary (Aleksenko, Chikarkova, Skobnikova, Stehnitska, & Davydenko, 2022). In a poetic text, toponyms can gain a special aesthetic significance and expressiveness, acquiring specific evaluative connotations and new additional meanings, receiving a figuratively expressive interpretation (Ubushieva & Omakaeva, 2013).

So far, little is known of what roles are performed by toponyms in epic literature. This study addresses the role of place names in an epic poem and seeks to answer the following questions: "What functions do toponyms perform in an epic literary text?" and "What do these toponyms tell us about the linguistic worldview?"

Methodology

- *Research design*

This study used a qualitative research design with the intensive topology approach suggested by Tent (2015), which consists in writing the "biography" of toponyms by answering wh-questions on their etymology and meaning. While examining the corpus of toponyms, we sought answers to the following questions: (1) What does the place name mean? (2) Why was the place called in this particular way? (3) Where is this place located? (4) What function(s) does the name of this place perform in the text? The answers to these questions enabled gathering an in-depth understanding of the sample of toponyms collected from the national versions of the epic poem under consideration.

- *Sampling and research procedure*

The material for the present research was drawn by continuous sampling from the two Turkic versions of the epic poem *Edige*: the Kazakh national version by Ch. Valikhanov that was recorded from the lips of the narrator Zhumagul and was included in the 39th volume of the hundred-volume *Babalar sozy* (Babalar sozy, 2006); and the Tatar version *Idegei* (Idegei, 1990). The research procedure comprised examining the selected toponyms in terms of their meaning and role in the text of the epic poem and relating it to the system of primary and secondary functions based on Rutkowski's approach to the definition of functions of proper names (Rutkowski, 2001; Włoskowicz, 2017).

- *Data collection*

From the original texts of the epos of the versions under analysis, we selected all the examples that contained names of different places such as settlements and localities, water objects and different types of surface relief. As a result, a research corpus was obtained, consisting of 69 toponyms. The study took into account not only the functions listed in the system of primary and secondary functions of proper names (Rutkowski, 2001; Włoskowicz, 2017), but also the functions described in the studies of other literary works in prose (Ayupova, 2011; Ivygina & Galieva, 2014).

- *Data analysis*

The obtained data was analyzed and systematized in accordance with their types: macro-toponyms as names of parts of the world, states, localities, winter and summer wanderings; astionyms, as names of towns and palaces; hydronyms, as names of water objects; oronyms, as names of objects of a surface relief. When considering toponymic material, we distinguished two groups of geographical names: common toponyms, i.e. names found in the two versions by various storytellers and folk poets (akyns); and individual toponyms, i.e. names of geographical objects that are characteristic of the work of an individual storyteller and exist in the area where the storyteller lived. We looked at the forms and functions of the toponyms under analysis, searched for their definitions and/or descriptions in works by etymologists, as well as possible roots or connections with other Turkic languages.

In the etymological analysis of toponyms from the epic text belonging to the versions in the Kazakh and Tatar languages, cultural-historical and comparative methods were also used. The names of places selected from the heroic epic poem were regarded as elements of the linguistic worldview in accordance with the anthropological principle "language-culture-ethnos".

Results and Discussion

As a result of the work carried out, 69 toponymic lexemes were identified, including 9 macro-toponyms, 17 astionyms, 9 oronyms, and 34 hydronyms. The distribution of toponyms belonging to the four types between the versions of the poem *Edige* in Kazakh and Tatar is uneven with a noticeable predominance of toponyms in the Tatar version (55 over 14 toponymic lexemes, which is 79,7%). In terms of the quantity, the most representative type of toponyms in both the national versions under consideration, is hydronyms, or names of water objects, which can be justified by the significant role of water in the cultures of the Turkic peoples.

The following subsections contain a brief overview of the origin and meaning of the place names selected from the epos *Edige*, which contains all the four types of toponymic lexemes. A particular attention is paid to the differences between the Kazakh and Tatar versions in terms of the narrators' choice of toponymic lexemes and the functions of the toponyms in the texts.

The functions of the toponyms in the epic poem were divided into primary and secondary functions (Rutkowski, 2001; Włoskowicz, 2017). The primary function is the nominating-identifying-differentiating

function, which is present in all proper names occurring in a text. Among secondary functions are, inter alia, the information function (conveying specific information, including specific properties of a feature or an object), emotional function (expressing the narrator's attitude towards the object), accumulative function (conveying specific information on the culture and history of the people who had given this name to the object). One lexeme can combine the primary function and one or several secondary functions. In what follows below we will provide an account of the functions of the toponyms collected from the text of the epos representing the four main types of place names represented in toponymic lexemes: macro-toponyms, astionyms, oronyms, and hydronyms.

1. Localizing function

Toponyms are used to indicate the place of the epic action, serve to express the general concepts of the narrator. The events described in the epic poem *Edige* are deeply historical, but the plot and motive of the epic are involved in the mythological chronotype. Thanks to the feat of Edige, listeners (readers) get acquainted with the vast expanses of the Eurasian steppe. His travels pass through the most important and sacred habitats of the Turkic peoples. Through the protagonist's journeys, the narrator manages to show the maximum number of toponyms. The functional significance of toponyms in the poem is to specify the places of the events.

The majority of macro-toponyms fulfill the function of localizing the events or people in the poem *Edige*. Thus, the terms *жұрт (йұрт)*, *жир* are often found in Turkic epics that appeared in the 14ᵗʰ -17ᵗʰ centuries, and especially in the epos *Edige* (Syzdikova, 2014). In the Kazakh version the place name *ноғайлының жұрты* is used in the meaning of a country – the country of the Nogais, and *ноғайлының ауыр жұрт* or *ауыр ноғай жұрты* stands for 'a large country'. In the Tatar version of *Idegey*, the place name *Идел йұрт* is interpreted as the Volga region, the toponemic lexeme *Төштек диғән жир* means 'the land of Tushtuk', and *данлы Кыпчак жиренде* denotes 'on the glorious Kipchak land'. It is believed that *жұрт* 'yurt', *жир* 'land' serve in the function of a term denoting a country, or a certain ethnic group and the place of its resettlement, or a people with a specific name. Another toponym *Сат Тимир Канның йұрты* is translated as 'the land of Sat Timir khan', which indicates the belonging of the territory to a real historical person. All the above names reflect the trend of naming individual states by the names of rulers and the names of the tribe.

The most common place names in the group of astionyms are the lexemes *Сарай* and *Болгар*. In most cases, these astionyms in the epic act as a scene, as a certain geographical concept: *Сарай диғән каласы, Болгардаен шәһәргә. Сарай белән Болгардан (*In the towns of Saray and Bulgar). These geographical names are both the capital and the residence of Toktamys Khan: *Болгар белән Сарайда, Мин Туктамыш хан икән (*If I khanate in Bulgar and Saray). In the epic there are descriptions of cities that clarify and concretize the place of action: *Сарай диғән каласы; Сиксән күчә арасы; Әзгәри суккан Болгардан (*Glorious is the capital city of Saray; Eighty streets there; Bulgar, where Azgars are minted). *Сарай* and *Болгар* are real toponyms that were the capitals of the Golden Horde and the state of the Kama-Volga Bulgars. The toponym *Самарканд* (Samarkand) is mentioned in the epic as the capital and residence of Temirlan (Aksak Temir): *Сәмәркандта утырган, Әмир Бырлас Шаһ Тимер (*Temir owned Samarkand, Shah came from Birlas Emir).

The toponymic lexeme *Кумкент* 'Kumkent' is widely used in both national versions of the epic. In the Kazakh version, through this toponym, the narrator points to the place of birth of the hero, it is used as a kind of landmark in space (Assanov et al., 2016): *Ніл дариясының басында, Құмкент қасында. Мені сонда Баба Түкті Шашты Әзіз атам тауып алып...(*At the source of the Nile River, near the city of Kumkent. Father Baba Tukti Shashty Aziz found me...). In the Tatar version, there is no direct indication of the place of birth of Edige, however, there is a connection between the homeland of Edige and the city of Kumkent: *Комкәнт диғән каламны. Комга түгеп бетердең! (*My city is Kum-Kent. How did you scatter the sand!).

The oronym *Сары тау* (Sary Tau) is mentioned in the poem to localize the place of residence of the people: *Идел сырты Сары Тау Илем кунган йорт иде (*Sary Tau, the ridge of the Idel River, Was the home where my people lived). The name of the mountain *Джуке тау* (Dzhuke Tau) cam be translated as 'linden mountain'. In the epic narrative, it does not indicate the place of action, but the direction of the hero's route: *Чулманны кайта кичәрмен, Җүкә Таудан үтәрмен (*I will swim across the Chulman River, I will cross the mountain Dzhuke).

Two large rivers were mentioned in the epos throughout: *Есіл* (Ishim) and *Ертіс* (Irtysh). In the Kazakh version of the epos, the hydronyms *Есіл* and *Ертіс* tell us that Edige travels in the north-eastern part of the country. Here are more excerpts from the epic text, which describe the hydronyms of interest: *Есілдің екі жағы қызыл жар. Ертістің басы қара дөң (*On both sides of Esil is a red yar. Top Ertis black hill). It is significant here that in the epic the valley of these two rivers is described as the space where the action of the heroes takes place, where the main event unfolds. In the Tatar version, the hydronym *Есіл* (Ishim) was not mentioned, however the hydronyms *Иртеш (*Itesh) and *Чулман (*Chulman) were employed more than once, in parallel with *Идел* 'Idel' and *Җаек* 'Zhaek'. These toponymic lexemes are used to time the action to a certain place for greater authenticity of the epic narrative.

2. Informative function

The analysis of the ways toponyms are used in the Kazakh and Tatar versions of the epos shows that a considerable number of the place names are transparent and named according to the characteristics of the landscape. In other words, they perform an information function to convey specific properties of place names. This function of toponyms is particularly visible in languages with productive word formation procedure of compounding (Włoskowicz, 2017), and compounding is among the most common word building patterns in Turkic languages (Grezsa, 2017; Kunduraci, 2019). Thus, among the names of water objects (hydronyms) are mainly descriptions of the color, size, current, for example: *Ақкөл* (from *ақ* 'white' and *көл* 'lake'), *Көкілді көл* (from *көкілді* 'blue' and *көл* 'lake'). Among the names of mountains are, for instance, *Alatau* (meaning 'great mountains', 'motley mountains', 'skewbald ridges', *ala* 'motley, piebald' and *tau* 'mountain') and *Karatau* (meaning 'black mountains', from *kara* 'black' and *tau* 'mountain'). The Alatau mountains seem motley because of the snow on their top, while the Karatau mountains are considered low, and in summer they are not covered with snow.

3. Accumulative function

The geographical realities recorded in the national versions of the epic poem designate the space preserved in the historical memory of the Turkic peoples. The epos *Edige* in the Kazakh and Tatar versions provides significant material for the restoration of some pictures of the ethnic history of the peoples. The epos uses the names of real toponymic objects that perform an accumulative function and are associated with events that took place in the history and culture of the Turkic peoples. According to Jordan (2014), toponymic lexemes not only reveal spatial attributes, but also support emotional ties by highlighting aspects that seemed of great importance to the people who named these places. Place names described in the national versions of the epic poem remind the Turkic peoples of land, water, localities that are essential to them, and in this way contribute to the construction of the nation's identity and knowledge (Gin & Cacciafoco, 2021). As a result, toponyms in folklore perform the accumulative function, being the means of conveying the historical and cultural heritage of the Turkic people (Boribayeva et al., 2018) and acting as indicators of time in the written culture (Simonova-Gudzenko, 2018).

Since ancient times, the Turkic peoples have treated water with respect. Turkic tribes settled in the territories of the Eurasian space, abundant in water sources (Mindibekova, 2020). Hydronymic names in the epic are represented by the names of rivers and lakes, which are found in the epic much more often than other geographical proper names, for example: *Ніл, Еділ, Жайық, Ертіс, Есіл, Ақкөл, Телікөл, Көкілдікөл, Қарғалы, Каратун, Чулман, Нократ, Актуба, Ашыт, Жекенді көл, Ик, Илек, Инджу, Банджу, Сырдарья, Калтурган, Уйыл, Киыл, Ирмышал, Нура, Сабакуль, Ағун, Алтысу.*

The rivers *Еділ* (Volga) and *Жайық* (Oral) form the core of the epos. The fact that these two hydronyms are widely used not only in the *Edige* epic, but also in other epic poems, confirms that they are an integral part of Turkic folk art. Despite the fact that the names of these rivers are mentioned separately in the epic, we considered them as a single image. In the epic, the functions of these rivers are associated with the actions of Edige, which are described as follows: *Осылайша Едіге ел арасында жүріп, Тоқтамыс ханның өзіне деген қастандығын есітіп, Еділ мен Жайық арасынан өтіп, кете барады (*Thus, Edige, having learned about the plot of Tokhtamys Khan against him, leaves through Yedil and Zhaiyk).

Frequent use of water body names *Еділ* and *Жайық* indicates that they serve as a common prototype of the Turkic world. These hydronyms also bring reality to the ongoing event and give informative meaning. In the Tatar version, *Еділ* (Idel) and *Жайық* (Zhayek) act in the image of the homeland of the main characters of the epic, and this is evidenced by the following passage: *Җаек белән ана Идел. Тулыксып урдам кунган йорт*. (My rivers are Mother Yaik and dear Idel. Where is my house). These rivers play an important role in people's lives, being a kind of border between ethnic groups, past and present.

4. Symbolic function

In the heroic epos of the Turkic peoples, there are often names associated with distant lands that are not related to the place of events (Kaksin, 2018), and these toponyms fulfill a symbolic function. The symbolic function of toponyms in the poem is manifested in connection with the Islamic religion. The epic poem appeared during the conquest of Central Asia by the Arabs, and the Turkic peoples converted to Islam. Religious motifs are found in the poem, when Edige quarreled with his father, and in order to cleanse himself of the sin he had committed, he went to Mecca to pray. The precedent toponym *Мекке* 'Mecca' is mentioned only in the Kazakh version and is described as a place of deliverance from sins: *Мекке деген шәһәрінде. Үш айналып күнәйімнен пәк болдым (*In the city of Mecca. Bypassing three times, cleansed of sins). The place of the Muslim shrine *Кааба* (Kaaba) is found only in the Tatar version: *Күзең орып чыгарсам. Тәңре өе Кәгъбәне. Бер әйләнсәм уңармын, Өч әйләнсәм тынармын (*If I knocked out my father's eye, Then Kaaba, the abode of the Creator (Tanir), Three times I will go around).

In the Tatar version, Edige sees in a prophetic dream how he sits on the sacred Mount Sinai (*Тур тавы*), a sacred mountain in Egypt, where the essential events in the Koran and the Bible took place, and the wise

man predicts his victory: *Тур тавына син кунсаң, Тунамый ия булырсың (*If you sat on Mount Sinai, you will be glorified forever). Religious overtones are also seen in the use of the hydronym *Ніл* (Nile) is found only in the Kazakh version: *Ніл дариясының басында, Құмкент қасында (*At the source of the Nile River, near the city of Kumkent). According to the storyteller, this is the place where the protagonist Edige was born. Reference to Egypt (*Mysyr*) is common in the Turkic folklore. According to Tolibayev (2020), the Karakalpaks believed that "for every person, the place where he/she was born is represented by Egypt", which in their understanding is the oldest and most beautiful country. It is no wonder that Egypt is of utmost significance in the spiritual life of the Turkic peoples, as it is the holy place where the religion of Islam originated and the prophet Muhammad was born.

5. Individualizing function

Another essential feature of the Turkic folklore is that, for the sake of authenticity of the events taking place in the epos, along with the names of real geographical objects that exist at the present time, the narrator used individual toponyms. As the analysis of the epos shows, individual toponyms are characteristic of the work of an individual storyteller and exist in the area where the storyteller lived. Thus, the Kazakh narrator added names of the places, mostly the names of water objects and mountains, which were far away from the locations where the events of the poem took place but that were close to his homeland. On the contrary, the Tatar narrator added the names of the countries like India and Yemen that the Tatar people could be aware of at that time because the Silk Road passed through those places. In this way, individual toponyms perform an individualizing function by adding a local flavor to the epos.

In the Tatar version of the epic, we found macro-toponyms *Хиндустан* (India) and *Ямен* (Yemen): *Усталар жыелырга карар итсә. Аның жире Хива, Бохара, Хиндустан яки ерак Йәмән (*If the masters decide to get together. Whose land is Khiva, Bukhara, Hindustan or distant Yamen). According to Seryakov (2012), ties between peoples were carried out not only on the basis of trade, art, architecture, but also in the field of borrowing beliefs, mythology. Thus, it is possible to conclude that *Хиндустан* and *Ямен* are used to indicate the places where the masters for copper mining came from. This is mentioned in the following fragment: *Армый-талмый уйлап чыгарырлар, Көннәр һәм төннәр шаулап торырлар, Бакыр кирәклегенә ышанып (*And tirelessly they will forge, Days and nights will thunder, believing that copper is needed). *Хиндустан* and *Ямен* are precedent toponyms that serve as a means to build a real artistic space (Bystrova, 2021).

Detailing and transferring the place of action of the hero from one place to another are typical for epic poems. Usually, the narrator uses this technique to specify the hero's place of movement and make the epic authentic (Ondar, Koshkendey, & Khomushka, 2018). The names of the cities *Сыганак (*Syganak) and *Сарайчык* (Saraichik) in the Tatar version are used in parallel with the toponym *Аждаркан* (Azhdarkan) as the route of the movement of one of the heroes of the epic – the son of Edige – Nuradyn: *Сыганактан чыгып Сарайчык, Сарайчыктан Аждаркан. (*From Syganak to Saraichik, From Saraichik to Azhdarkan). Azhdarkan is known to be an ancient name of the modern Russian city of Astrakhan.

Among other names of the cities include *Атряч (*Atryach) and *Ашлы (*Ashly) found in the Tatar version, when Toktamys Khan escaped but Edige arrived in the cities that were destroyed by him: *Әзгари суккан Әтрәчне. Ашлыгы иксемәс Ашлыны. (*Azgari mints hail Atryach. The land of Ashla is destroyed). *Атряч* and *Ашлы* were large cities of the Volga Bulgaria, where Azgari coins were minted. In addition, the city of *Сивар* (Sivar) in the Tatar version is perceived as a geographical concept, as a city in the Golden Horde, and *Казан* (Kazan), according to the description in the epic, is a city with high gates: *Изге шәһре Болгарны, Астаналы Сиварны. Капкасы биек Казанны.(*The sacred city of Bulgar, And the subordinate Sivar, And the high-gated Kazan). Most individual toponyms, especially those related to the names of towns, were found in the Tatar version of the epic poem, which can be associated with the sedentary nature of the Tatars as compared to the nomadic Kazakhs.

Among individual oronyms is the lexeme *Қаратау* (Karatau) - a mountain where, according to legend, next to the mountain *Мыңжылқы* Edige's father meets a mermaid - Edige's mother, in union with whom Edige was born. In the epic, the names are mentioned precisely in connection with this legend: *Қаратау маңайында, Мыңжылқы деген таудың бауырында. Үш жалаңаш қыз суға шомылып, біріне-бірі су шашып, ойнап жүріпті. Сол үш қыздың бірі талып қалыпты (*In the vicinity of Karatau, near Mount Mynzhylky, three naked girls bathed. One of them fainted) (Allambergenova, 2019). This name is found only in the Kazakh version. This toponym is unique, since we have not seen it in other versions of the epic, and most often it is associated with the area where the narrator himself lived, which is far away from the place where the events of the epos unfold.

Conclusion

The present study addressed the roles that place names perform in Turkic epos. The results show that through toponyms, the folklore text develops a living space of the main characters and marks the most significant geographic objects for the storytellers as representatives of particular ethnic groups that they remember in some

way. In this respect, toponymic lexemes in the national versions of the epic poem *Edige* were considered as a special microcosm for this study, which displays the reality that the ethnic groups are familiar with.

As the results of the qualitative analysis of the lexemes denoting geographical names show, all the toponyms used in the Kazakh and Tatar versions of the epic poem *Edige* perform the primary function reflecting the characteristics of space and describing physical and natural landscapes. Apart from the primary function, toponymic lexemes perform five secondary functions in the Kazakh and Tatar versions of the epic poem *Edige*: localizing, informative, accumulative, symbolic, and individualizing. Thus, they can act as the main reference points in time and space, referring to some specific characteristics of the geographic objects, convey the historical and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples, reveal connection to the religion of Islam, and add authenticity and a local touch to the storyline.

The majority of toponyms, especially those related to the names of cities, were found in the Tatar version of the epic poem, which can be associated with the sedentary nature of the Tatars as compared to the nomadic nature of the Kazakhs. In the Tatar version, there are more individual toponyms, which can be explained by the narrator's desire to individualize and localize the events, assign them to the Tatar land. Finally, this investigation revealed the role of place names as elements of the Kazakh and Tatar linguistic worldview and provided valuable data about the history and culture of these peoples. In this way, the study contributes to the current knowledge of cross-cultural investigations into the specific ways of language use in literary texts.

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