

Genesis of Kazakh Oral Poetry: Structure, Types, Functions (Based on Zhyrau Material of the XV-XVIII Centuries) / *Gênese da poesia oral cazaque: estrutura, tipos, funções (baseado no material zhyrau dos séculos XV-XVIII)*

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ABSTRACT

The article explores a unique type of order which involves the secrets of the creative and poetic life of the “language-creating people” known as the Kazakh zhyrau. The study aims to explore the evolution and artistic characteristics of zhyrau poetic art and its formulaic grammar, tracing its development from ancient forms to its role in national and global epic traditions. The research method evaluates the journalistic genre varieties and features of the poetic art of Turkic-speaking peoples, linking them to their historical roots and the foundational elements of suggestion, magic, myth, rite, and ritual. The study emphasizes the importance of the initial foundations of traditional oral texts, as all art forms, including poetry, are connected with them. A new approach to the study of communicative culture, folklore, and epic poetry is needed. Parry-Lord’s oral tradition approach is currently a productive approach for this purpose.

KEYWORDS: Poetic technique; Journalism; Traditional knowledge; Zhyrau of the XV-XVIII centuries; Oral speech genre

RESUMO

O artigo explora um tipo único de ordem que envolve os segredos da vida criativa e poética do “povo criador de línguas” conhecido como zhyrau cazaque. O estudo visa explorar a evolução e as características artísticas da arte poética zhyrau e da sua gramática estereotipada, traçando o seu desenvolvimento desde as formas antigas até ao seu papel nas tradições épicas nacionais e globais. O método de pesquisa avalia as variedades do gênero jornalístico e as características da arte poética dos povos de língua turca, vinculando-as às suas raízes históricas e aos elementos fundamentais da sugestão,

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magia, mito, rito e ritual. O estudo enfatiza a importância dos fundamentos iniciais dos textos orais tradicionais, uma vez que todas as formas de arte, incluindo a poesia, estão ligadas a eles. É necessária uma nova abordagem ao estudo da cultura comunicativa, do folclore e da poesia épica. A abordagem da tradição oral de Parry-Lord é atualmente uma abordagem produtiva para este propósito.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Técnicas poéticas; Jornalismo; Tradição oral; Zhyrau dos séculos XV-XVIII; Gênero de discurso oral

Introduction

Starting the study of the poetic art of *zhyrau* [poet] from the 15th to the 18th centuries reveals a unique and powerful phenomenon in both the Kazakh history of oral and poetic culture and the culture of many other Turkic-speaking peoples, including Nogai, Crimean Tatar, and Karakalpak. It should be noted that this oral artistic phenomenon, although it was known from ancient times (Al-Kashgari, 2005), but got its mighty historical flowering in the post-Golden Horde era, when, at the collapse of the once powerful Golden Horde in the vast expanses of Eurasia, from the Crimea to Siberia, independent state formations (Turkic khanates) arose, and classical Turkic epics, masterpieces of national and world artistic thought, also arose, contributing to their centralisation and ethnic consolidation. In the post-Golden Horde era, the Turkic-speaking peoples created their main epic tales, telling about the “dawn of their national history” (Meletinskiy, 1963, p. 65). These are “Alpamys” [*Proper name of a legendary hero*], “Er Edige” [*Hero Edige*], “Qobylandy batyr” [*Warrior Qobylandy*], “Er Qosay” [*Hero Qosay*], “Qyrymnyn qyryq batyr” [*The Forty Warriors of Crimea*], “Er Targyn” [*Hero Targyn*], “Er Sayyn” [*Hero Sayyn*], “Qambar batyr” [*Warrior Qambar*], “Korogly” [*Son of the Blind Man*]¹ and other world-famous national epics.

¹ *Alpamys* – One of the most famous Turkic epics, particularly significant among Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Tatars. It tells the story of Alpamys, a heroic warrior who defends his people and rescues his beloved from captivity.

Er Edige – “Edige” refers to the historical figure, a powerful statesman and military leader in the Golden Horde. The epic recounts his exploits and contributions to the establishment of Tatar states.

Qobylandy batyr – This Kazakh epic narrates the adventures of Qobylandy, a mighty warrior who protects his people from external enemies.

Er Qosay – Another heroic epic in which “Er” again signifies “hero,” and “Qosay” is the hero’s name.

Qyrymnyn qyryq batyr – This is a cycle of epic tales about forty heroic warriors of the Crimean Khanate.

Er Targyn – A Kazakh heroic tale about a brave and skillful warrior who fights for justice and honor.

Er Sayyn – Another heroic epic in which “Er” indicates a “hero,” and “Sayyn” is the protagonist’s name.

The study of zhyrau poetry is essential for preserving and understanding the cultural heritage of the region. It provides deeper insights into the spiritual and aesthetic values of the XV-XVIII centuries, revealing connections between poetry, myths, rituals, and ceremonies. By analyzing epic formulas and their social functions, contemporary research uncovers the historical significance and societal roles of these oral traditions. In the modern context, this research enhances the understanding of cultural processes by preserving traditions for future generations, strengthening cultural identity, enabling comparisons with other oral traditions, serving as an educational resource, inspiring contemporary art, and promoting interdisciplinary research.

At the origins of these heroic epic, as noted the researcher Ye. D. Tursunov (2017), were zhyrau, a powerful artistic and linguistic and historical phenomenon of the nomadic culture of the Turkic-speaking tribes. Therefore, it can be stated that in the study of such ancient, multi-layered, semantically rich and profound phenomenon, many modern methods have become narrow and unproductive. Firstly, when discussing the characteristics of the oral performance of zhyrau singers, it is important to note their syncretism in two forms. The first is the syncretism of the arts, which is the original unity of musical-verbal and theatrical art, characterized by their original unity and indivisibility, as well as organic integrity. The second is the so-called “ideological syncretism” (Meletinskiy, 1963, p. 68), which originates from ancient times due to the merging of many social functions in the hands of one leader, in one figure. At times, a zhyrau acts as a teacher of the people, and at other times as the main ideologist of the entire khanate, serving as the personal adviser to the khan and head of the khan’s council. Researcher M. Magawin (1978, p. 69) writes about the public functions of zhyrau:

In the conditions of nomadic life, zhyrau also performed many public functions. Many zhyraus who lived in the XV-XVIII centuries were not only poets, but also leaders of tribes, uluses, tribal confederations, as well as batyrs, leaders of a tribal squad. Some of them also acted as an abyz (*foreteller, wizard*), that is, they interpreted dreams, explained signs, tried to explain natural phenomena.

Qambar batyr – This epic is prominent in Kazakh and Bashkir oral traditions and tells the story of a noble warrior defending his homeland.

Korogly – The epic tells the story of Korogly, a Robin Hood-like folk hero who fights against oppression.

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The unique nature of this topic lies in the secrets of the creative and poetic life of the “language-creating people,” who are long-standing guardians and adept connoisseurs of epic traditions and powerful poetic techniques. This is especially relevant, since the study object is a poetic word in the oral tradition of zhyrau, where everything is based on an epic formula and on the knowledge. This transmission of epic traditions, as well as oral poetry in general, is only one of the components of the Steppe Knowledge (the term was introduced by A. Kodar (1999)). Epic formulas and formulaic combinations not only have important additional meanings, but also provide needed poetic form and similarity of the ancient style to the new text, form the theme and motive, and finally, the entire genre register of a singer, revealing their creative uniqueness, originality, their social, political, grammatical appearance. That is why the authors of the oral theory considered the singer’s improvisation to be a true poetic art, the art of mastering the formulaic technique, in which lies the whole secret of oral poetic art.

Based on the developments of recent decades and a huge number of studies, it can be concluded that over the millennia, at least since the Sumerian era, the entire steppe oral tradition has created many oral verbal masterpieces and countless musical forms. Thus, musical-verbal art constituted an aesthetic form for the nomad and the innermost meaning of its existence in peacetime.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the spiritual and aesthetic nature of the zhyrau’s oral poetic texts from the XV-XVIII centuries, exploring their connections to myth, rite, and ritual. It aims to describe the functional features of epic formulas in the zhyrau’s oral poetry and their social role, rooted in ancient ceremonial and ritual traditions.

Materials and Methods

The theory of M. Parry (1930) and A. B. Lord (1960), is the most appropriate for this study due to its proven effectiveness in analyzing oral traditions and epic poetry across various cultures. Parry’s oral theory, further validated by Lord, highlights the significance of formulaic expressions and the systematic structure of oral poetic texts. This approach is particularly relevant for studying the zhyrau poetry of the XV-XVIII

centuries, as it relies heavily on formulaic language and traditional oral performance. The efficiency and productivity of Parry-Lord's oral theory is especially justified in the accuracy of the literary translation of the epic and the oral lyrical-epic tradition, where understanding of the meaning of formulas and observing formula laws in the process of translating an oral poetic text achieves a colossal effect.

From the perspective of Parry-Lord's formulaic style (Oral Tradition), all links of the poetic system (artistic and definitive system: epithet, metaphor, comparison, hyperbole, etc.) are also considered. The method of oral theory is of great scientific and methodological importance. It is used to solve the problems of many related disciplines that study various aspects of the oral tradition (poetic art, communication theory, literature studies, speech act theory, oratory, art history, aesthetics, philosophy, etc.). The poetic art of the Turkic-speaking peoples, its journalistic genre varieties and features are considered in the aspect of their connection with the historical and genetic past and with the initial foundations: suggestion, magic, myth, rite and ritual.

The complex-concentric method of E. Tursunov focuses on uncovering concentric layers of meaning within literary texts, revealing deeper cultural and symbolic dimensions. It's applied to analyze Kazakh zhyrau poetry, exploring themes and cultural references embedded in their narratives. The structural-semantic approach of Zh. Bekturov examines how linguistic structures contribute to the meaning and cultural significance of literary works. It helps decode the formal aspects of Kazakh zhyrau compositions, revealing how these poets convey cultural values and historical events through their oral traditions (Karakuzova and Khasanov, 1993). It is important for the study to acknowledge that they were among the first to interpret the semantics of cave paintings by primitive peoples as epic story texts. They also explored the connection of these paintings with the history of writing, specifically *tamgas*.² Furthermore, they examined the relationship between Turkic signs and the mythology and writing of the peoples of the Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin.

² A *tamga* is a traditional emblem, symbol, or mark used historically by Turkic, Mongolic, and some other nomadic peoples as a sign of tribal or family identity. Originally, tamgas were used as cattle brands, seals, or clan insignias, but over time, they evolved into hereditary symbols associated with noble families and ruling dynasties.

Results and Discussion

The Poetic and Artistic World of Kazakh Zhyrau: Historical Significance and Cultural Impact

Starting from the time of the nomads and up to the beginning of the XX century, culture and poetry constantly developed and replenished with new masterpieces, as S. G. Klyashtorny (1992, p. 125) noted, “The Turks sing a hymn to the earth.” Poetry and art are created in a romantic style (for example, the poetry of the military campaigns of Dospambet and Shalkiz), or in an infinitely tragic style (for example, Asan Kaigy), but still, this beautiful, unaccountable and unconscious creativity is understood by the singer and the people as a gift from God. So, any master in the nomad camp: a blacksmith and a singer strive for beauty and style, cultivate taste, appreciate quality and elegance. Thus, imbued with song and music from childhood, the nomads learned to “hear” hidden, secret meanings, omissions, allusions in the speech of the wise zhyrau, zhyrshy [*epic reciter*] and akyns [*improvisational poet*]. Comprehending these deep secrets of the special, intimate life of the language, having mastered the laws of oral poetic technique, they themselves created poetry. Or, like the “knowing” elders, they cultivated their hearing on subtle sound vibrations, various techniques of orators-bis, masters of oratory who is creating poetry.

The historical context of zhyrau poets in the XV-XVIII centuries reveals their pivotal role in Kazakh society, deeply intertwined with political and social dynamics. These poets, known for their eloquence and wisdom, held significant sway as advisors to khans and leaders, influencing decisions and policies through their poetic counsel. Their poetry served not only as artistic expression but also as a means of political commentary, social critique, and moral guidance. Politically, zhyrau played a crucial role in advising rulers on matters of governance, diplomacy, and war strategy. Their verses often conveyed messages of unity, courage, and patriotism, rallying communities during times of conflict or external threats. Socially, zhyrau poets held esteemed positions within nomadic society, revered for their knowledge of tradition, history, and folklore. They acted as preservers of cultural heritage, transmitting oral histories and ethical values through their poetry.

Zhyrau are heroic singers who stood at the origins of the classical heroic epic and created wonderful, small in form, poetic speeches-addresses. By the end of the XVIII century, these performers already used recitative (Smirnova, 1979), and earlier, in more ancient times, they performed their songs with the accompaniment of *kobyz*.³ Kobyz gave the fatidic singer greater grandeur, its significance as the traditions bearer of its ancestors, a part of the Steppe Knowledge. Zhyrau is one of the brightest representatives of the oral and poetic culture of the Kazakh people, its spiritual teacher. Among other representatives of the steppe musical and poetic art, they alone had the highest power: in the XV-XVIII centuries, during the formation of the Kazakh Horde (1456) and the Kazakh Khanate (1465), their political and public role in society and the state was very significant: they were advisors to the khan and headed the khan's council, during the war they were a commander, performed diplomatic functions, etc. During the formation of the Kazakh Khanate, they were the ideologist of nationhood, its legal executor, speaker. From the detailed survey by Ye. Tursunov (2017) and M. Magawin (1989a; 1989b) it can be seen how wide social functions these singers performed, how high political status they occupied in society. The high social status of the khan's advisers influenced the selection of artistic means and the style of their poetic texts, emphasizing sublimity and solemnity.

Comparing Kazakh zhyrau with other well-known oral poetry traditions reveals both distinctiveness and shared characteristics. Similar to Viking skalds, zhyrau were revered poets who celebrated heroic deeds and historical events, embodying cultural pride through their verses. Similarly, like Homeric rhapsodies of ancient Greece, zhyrau's performances often intertwined myth, history, and moral teachings, serving as custodians of collective memory. Moreover, akin to griots in West Africa, zhyrau upheld traditions orally, transmitting knowledge across generations, fostering community cohesion through storytelling, and often performing at important social gatherings, ensuring their poetry's relevance and impact in societal narratives.

A special poetic world is also made up of the magical rhythms of healing spells, *arbau* [spells], *baqsy* [shaman] and *balger* [fortune-teller], or the art of a *zerger*-jeweler, or a woodworker. All the listed masters, as well as gold, copper and silver carvers,

³ The *kobyz* or *qobyz*, also known as the *kylkobyz*, is an ancient Turkic bowed string instrument, spread among Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, Bashkirs, and Tatars.

embroiderers and weavers, the whole giant steppe world of culture in its totality constitutes a single traditional knowledge. Dala Ilimi [*Steppe Knowledge*], the central position in which was occupied by oral-auditory discourse, oral poetry, imbued with music, folklore and theatrical forms in their endless genre variety. In accordance with the oral theory of Parry-Lord (Oral Tradition), the epic formula is the initial element, the main unit of the oral text (Table 1).

Table 1. An epic formula in the edification of Bukhar zhyrau “Wish”

<i>The original language is Kazakh</i>	<i>Translation into English</i>
<i>Birinshi tilek tilengiz,</i>	<i>First wish yourself:</i>
<i>Bir Allaha jazbasqa.</i>	<i>To have no guilt before Allah.</i>
<i>Ekinshi tilek tilengiz,</i>	<i>Second wish yourself:</i>
<i>Er shugyl pasyq zalymnyn</i>	<i>In a hurry do not let yourself be carried away by</i>
<i>Tiline erip azbasqa.</i>	<i>the villain,</i>
<i>Ushinshi tilek tilengiz,</i>	<i>Don’t follow him.</i>
<i>Ushkilsiz...</i>	<i>Third wish yourself...</i>

Source: Magawin, 1989, p. 82.

An instructive and didactic genre sounds in the singer’s “Wish.” The structural organisation of the text is made up of clear anaphoric parallels (Table 1).

Formulaic Grammar and Its Role in Poetic Techniques of Zhyrau

There are eleven such anaphoric parallels in the text. Each of these parallels carries a theme. Each theme on the sound plane stands out anaphorically. Such sound anaphora should be called thematic. Each of the topics is a wish, instruction, teaching. This is how the genre nature of the elocution and the didactic genre are formed. This formulaic system is easily found in other oral works of zhyrau and akyns. In folkloristics it is called formulaic grammar. The main task of anaphora as an epic beginning is, on one hand, to sharpen the listener’s attention to the importance of the topic. On the other hand, it aids in memorizing the text for interpretation, discussion, and understanding. Most importantly, it facilitates its reproduction by another singer, the bearer of the tradition. In addition to the usual anaphora, the singer also uses a syntactic (lowercase) one, which gives expressiveness to the verses, clarifies the thought, enhances the protreptic idea and is also a traditional memorisation technique (Table 2).

Table 2. An example of the use of syntactic anaphora

<i>The original language is Kazakh</i>	<i>Translation into English</i>
<i>Tortinshi tilek tilengiz,</i> <i>Torde tosek tartyp jatbasqa (to-to-ta).</i> <i>Besinshi tilek tilengiz,</i> <i>Bes waqytta bes namaz (bes-bes-bes)</i> <i>Bireui qaza qalmasqa.</i>	Wish yourself, fourthly, Do not get sick in the first place. Wish yourself, in five Will not miss a single one From the fivefold prayer of prayer.

Source: (Magawin, 1989, p. 82).

The *prop* word that runs through the entire text is *tilek* [wish]. This supporting word is in joint unity with the motivating verb *tilengiz* [wish yourself], and by virtue of its semantics and the repetition of the mentioned verbal rhyme, it also contributes to the formation of the protreptic style and genre of this oral work (Table 2) (Magawin, 1989, p. 82).

The regular repetition of this stable combination also creates a special sound mood, motive, general tone, which all the sound technique of *zhyr*. To memorize, interpret, and recreate this work, another singer employs an enumeration technique, structuring their performance using sequential markers: firstly, secondly, thirdly, and so on, adding relevant content to each point. This technique is called oral poetic technique. It contributes to clarity, consistency in the line of thoughts, orderliness, perceived by the listener as an algorithm, as a verified system of traditional rules that make up a kind of code of the moral life of a nomad. The whole set of all the above mentioned traditional technical means: starting from the thematic anaphora, verbal rhyme, regular repetition of the *prop* word and up to the sound distributive technique and the sequential reception of enumeration, etc., is called the poetic or oral and style technique of *zhyrau*.

M. Parry (1930) and A. B. Lord (1960), as well as their followers believe that from this poetic technique came all the epic style, epic and oral tradition that is known to mankind. In fact, now society speaks in formulas and set expressions. Kazakh researchers, Zh. Bekturov and B. Abylkasimov, were well acquainted with the oral theory of Parry-Lord. By formula, they understood “a group of words regularly used in the same metric conditions to embody a given basic idea” (Parry, 1930, p. 112). The formula sets the oral poetic text and the most “formulaic style” (Parry, 1930, p. 113). The structure of the formula can be a *prop* word, a formulaic expression, or a stable group of words. For

example, let's take two prop words: kun (*sun*) and Jaiyq (*river*). A stable combination of kun qaid [*where is the day?*] and its regular repetition is often found in other zhyrau and akyns works (Magawin, 1989b) (Table 3, 4).

Table 3. Dospambet, XVI century

<i>The original language is Kazakh</i>	<i>Translation into English</i>
Aynalayyn Aq Jaiyq, Atsalmai oter kun qaida?	Dear Ak Zhaik, Where is the day when we saddle the horses?

Source: (Magawin, 1989, p. 33).

Table 4. Makhambet, XIX century

<i>The original language is Kazakh</i>	<i>Translation into English</i>
Jelp-jelpetken ala tu, Jyryp alar kun qaida?!	Waving checkered flag, Where is the twenty-first day?!

Source: Magawin, 1989, p. 180.

This stable term күн in the structure of the second verse acts as defined. Its defining feature can be called everything that stands in front of it and what characterises it, that is, in this case, these are all the first verses. In the Dospambet tolgau, this stable combination күн қайда is used 10 times. Makhambet used this combination 11 times in the first case, and 4 times in the second one. This stable combination is also found in other works of Makhambet “Olen aityp tolgadym” [*I sang a song and expressed my thoughts*]. If there is an epithet (for example, Aq Jaiyq [*Ural River*]) before the prop word in the defining function, then this epithet occupies a leading position in the verse system: Aq Jaiyq, or qoyan[*(steep-hill hare)*], kok kogershin [*blue pigeon*], etc. This is the golden rule of formulaic grammar. In oral poetry, there is also a complicated stable epithet formula: for example, Aynalayyn Aq Jaiyq [*Beloved Ural River*]. This “solidified” formula is also often used in this unaltered form. Repetition is fundamental to poetic technique. It is quite clear that all repetitions in the oral tradition contribute to the memorisation, performance and recreation of a new text on its basis by another oral performer. Repetition also draws the listener's attention to some important idea, topic. Thus, it contributes to the formation of the motive, style and genre of oral poetic speech. This process begins with a simple sound repetition (alliteration, assonance) and ends with a common place in the national and world tradition (locicomunes) (Magawin, 1989a) (Table 5, 6).

Table 5. Alliteration in poem

<i>The original language is Kazakh</i>	<i>Translation into English</i>
Atadan jalgyz men emes, Han ie, isin jol emes, Jol barystay Jolymbet Qurbandyqqa qol emes.	I am not alone from an ancestor born – Your cause is not right, khan: Tiger-like Zholymbet Can't fall prey to your games...

Source: Magawin, 1989a, p. 39.

Table 6. Assonance in poem

<i>The original language is Kazakh</i>	<i>Translation into English</i>
Ensegei boily er Esim, Esim, seni esirtken Esil de benim kenesim.	Mighty growth Yer Yesim, Cause if you've grown (raised) It's all thanks to my advice...

Source: Magawin, 1989a, p. 52.

It is quite clear that any frequent repetition in the oral epic tradition not only recalls, but also reproduces the most ancient and simplest method that evokes suggestion, which has a magical charm. In the lyrical-epic tradition of zhyrau, repetition contributes to the deepening of the idea (Qaztugan: “Alan da alan, alanjurt” [*A vast open steppe, an endless land*]), strengthening the psychological state of the speaker (Mahambet: “Men, men edim, men edim” [*I, I was, I was*]). But most often it is used as the beginning of a big reasoning, but with its hidden deep semantics (Shalkiz: “Alp, alpbaskan, alpbaskan” [*Mighty, stepping mightily, stepping mightily*]; Bukhar “Ai, Abylai, Abylai...” [*Oh, Abylai, Abylai...*]), and sometimes simply characterises the epic hero (Er Shoban “Ol tyrysqa, tyrysqa... [*He was determined, determined*]; Zhiembet “Ay, qynyr er, qynyr er” [*Oh, stubborn warrior, stubborn warrior*]). In the classical heroic epos and in heroic tales, acting as the beginning, it gives significance to the heroes and events or reveals their features, as in Bukhar: “Ai, zaman-ai, zaman-ai...” [*Oh, time, oh time...*]. Very often, the epic repetition serves as a reminder of something distant: “Erte, erte, ertede...” [*Long, long ago, in ancient times...*], Shalkiz “Balpan, balpan, basqa kun...” [*With a steady, firm step, the day passed...*]. Due to such formulas, didactic genres once arose in the ritual and magical tradition: teachings, covenants, wishful thinking, etc.

From the repetitions-imitations of the natural sounds of birds and animals (mimesis) there once arose a comparison, an adaptation: comparing the children’s poem

“Baqa, baqa, balpaq” (*the sound rhythm reproduces the image of a jumping frog*) or Shalkiz: “Or, or qoyan, or qoyan” [*the rhythmic reproduces the image of a high-jumping hare*]. This is a descriptive syntax, where formulaic repetition plays a big role. With the advent of imitative throat singing followed by jaw singing, verbal magic emerges alongside proto-mythology and proto-epic narratives. These early forms feature nature’s harsh elements as primary characters, highlighting humanity’s initial frailty and absence of established myths or epics. To reconcile with these enigmatic forces of nature, repetitive rituals and incantations emerge as essential sources of magic and ritualistic practices. That is why such a stable formula, epic repetition, even in the poetry of zhyrau, has both a special content and suggestive power. Such is the majestic repetition in the laconic reasoning of Bukhar zhyrau (Table 7).

Table 7. Majestic repetitions in the poetry of Bukhar zhyrau

<i>English Content</i>	<i>Kazakh Translation</i>
It is not difficult to lead a nomad: A lake will be found in the encampment;	Nomadty basqaru qiyn emes: lager’de kol tabylady;
It is not difficult to lead an army: An army will be found on the battlefield;	Askerdi basqaru qiyn emes: dalada asker tabylady;
I have seen nothing more difficult than to start a speech in a meeting of a few (among wise people).	Birneshe danyspan adamdardyn jinalysynda soz bastaudan qiyndyqty basqa kormedim (danyspan, aqyn sozin tusinetinder arasinda).

Source: Magawin, 1989b

Strictly organized parallelism of the first and second verses is provided by a homogeneous syntactic construction: el bastau/qol bastau [*to lead a people/to lead an army*]; radif: qiyn emes/qiyn emes [*is not difficult*]; verbal rhyme: qonatyn/shabatyn [*that lands/that attacks*]; repetitions: jerden/jerden [*from the land*]; monoremic combination: kol tabylady/el tabylady [*army is found/people is found*]. All these different types of sound repetition are subject to one theme: it is not difficult to do what a commander is supposed to do. Due to this strictly organised expressiveness of the series, the theme, idea, genre, style and other parameters of the oral text are now quite clear and understandable. But the third verse evokes a contrast with them, the entire speech sequence and antithesis of which are got out of the general rhythmic order of the first two rows: I have seen nothing more difficult; and with its argument: than to start a speech in a honourable meeting. If in the first two verses the key images were el [*people*] and kol [*army*], then in

the third verse such word is *soz* [word]. The epithet *шаршы* is devoid of semantic unambiguity. Here the singer does not deal with people in general, but only with a small group of those who know, hear and understand their wise speech.

Oral poets like Kazakh *zhyrau*, Viking *skalds*, Homeric rhapsodies, and West African griots share a profound influence on their respective cultures, yet exhibit distinct techniques, social roles, and cultural impacts. Each tradition employs distinct poetic techniques. *Zhyrau* in Kazakhstan utilize *dombra* accompaniment, rhythmic patterns, and improvisation to narrate epics like “*Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu*,”⁴ embodying nomadic values and heroism. *Skalds* in Viking societies composed complex kennings and alliterations in sagas such as “*Egil’s Saga*,” extolling bravery and ancestry. Homeric rhapsodies relied on meter, epithets, and repetition in epics like “*The Iliad*,” glorifying gods and warriors. Griots in West Africa employ *kora* melodies, call-and-response, and oral history in epics like “*Sunjata*,” preserving dynastic legacies and social customs. These poets hold pivotal social roles. *Zhyrau* served as historians and entertainers, imparting cultural norms at gatherings like *Nauryz*. *Skalds* were court poets and genealogists, composing sagas at feasts to immortalize kings and battles. Their narratives shaped cultural identity. *Zhyrau* reinforced Kazakh unity amid adversity, transmitting wisdom in epics recounting spiritual trials. *Skalds* reinforced Viking prowess, immortalizing sea voyages and warrior virtues in heroic poems. Homeric rhapsodies celebrated Greek heroism, influencing democratic ideals and moral principles in civic life (Dildabekova *et al.*, 2021).

The approaches effectiveness of the oral theory of Parry-Lord was tested for the first time not only on the material of the lyrical-epic texts of *zhyrau*, but also on the epic, as shown by the folklorist Sh. Ibraev (1989). It should be noted that the rich tapestry of oral Kazakh culture – encompassing folklore, the works of *akyns*, *baqsy*, *zhyrau* poetry, the speeches of *biys* and rulers – remains largely untapped. This extraordinary heritage represents a unique spiritual treasure and embodies the intellectual experience of the Turkic nation and humanity. In essence, it harks back to the Primordial Tradition, as articulated by Rene Guenon, underscoring its profound significance and enduring

⁴ *Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu* is a famous Kazakh oral epic and tragic love story, often compared to Shakespeare’s “*Romeo and Juliet*.” It is one of the oldest surviving love narratives in Kazakh, Turkic, and Central Asian folklore, passed down through oral poetry, storytelling, and *zhyrau* traditions.

relevance. But it should be noted that the best Kazakh folklorists successfully used the Parry-Lord method back in the 1980s. In the epic formula, the content is especially valuable. And it is precisely because of its darkness, multi-layeredness, acting in the form of an allusion, that the epic formula has the meaning of a code, helps to reveal the true subtext, and since it often has the content of a sacred mythological meaning, it is very important in reconstructing the deep structures of ancient poetic thinking and, accordingly, the rite and ritual. From this, the authors of the oral theory derived their idea that “epic style emerges from poetic technique,” which was noted in their review of modern epic theories (Meletinskiy, 1963, p. 71). This is the most valuable aspect, in accordance with which the oral and style technique has acquired the most relevant significance for the research of the world, including the Kazakh (Turkic) folklore and epic.

Cultural Continuity and Evolution in Kazakh Oral Poetry

The current state of oral poetry in Kazakhstan reflects ongoing efforts to preserve traditions while embracing contemporary forms. Traditional Kazakh zhyrau continue to play a vital role in transmitting cultural values through epic narratives like “Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu,” often accompanied by the dombra. These poets are celebrated for preserving nomadic heritage and uniting communities through storytelling. In contemporary settings, oral poetry adapts to modern themes and audiences, reflecting social changes while retaining its cultural significance. Efforts to document and promote these traditions highlight their enduring importance in Kazakh society, bridging past and present through lyrical expression and communal memory. Kazakh poetry has been significantly influenced by interactions with neighboring cultures through trade, war, and peaceful contacts. Historical exchanges with Persian, Arabic, and Turkic civilizations brought new poetic forms, styles, and themes to Kazakhstan. Persian poetry, for instance, introduced ghazals and qasidas, which Kazakh poets adapted to their own cultural context, blending Islamic influences with local traditions. The Mongol Empire's conquests also left an indelible mark on Kazakh poetry, shaping narratives of resilience and heroism in the face of adversity. The Chagatai Turkic literary tradition, with its

emphasis on wisdom and moral teachings, influenced Kazakh oral poetry, enriching it with philosophical depth and ethical reflections (Chyzykova, 2024).

S. Negimov's (2001) fundamental studies played a big role in the sphere of figurativeness, expressiveness, rhythmicity and intonation of the Turkic (Kazakh) verse. These poems and studies in the context of poetics and artistic stylistics are of great value and great prospects for further studies on the artistic and definitive system, formulaic stylistics and grammar of zhyrau oral poetry of the XV-XVIII centuries. Also, when writing the work, the original theories and concepts of Professor Ye. Tursunov et al. (2017), who for the first time comprehensively studied the mentality and poetics of zhyrau poetry of the XIV-XIX centuries and the multi-layeredness of their traditional oral discourse, were studied. Sh. Ibraev (1993), a researcher of epic formulas and poetic means in the monuments of ancient Turkic and Kazakh oral culture, also conducted their work in line with the oral theory of Parry-Lord. The culturological and philosophical ideas of A. Kodar (1999), who interpreted zhyrau poetry and Kazakh literature in their own way, remain relevant. They made a significant contribution to understanding the specifics of the Kazakh (Turkic) culture as a special code, as Steppe Knowledge and a unique type of horse nomadic civilization. Currently they remain as the author of an infinite number of original ideas, literary translations and interpretations that have not lost their theoretical and practical significance.

A dramatic event in Kazakh science and philosophy is the work "Space of Kazakh culture" (Karakuzova and Khasanov, 1993). The study was conducted using the complex-concentric methodology developed by Ye. Tursunov. It differed significantly by examining not only the core object of the scientific problem, which was zhyrau poetry, but also by actively incorporating the rich oral poetic traditions of sals, seri, and akyns, as well as the folklore of Turkic-speaking peoples from the North Caucasus, Crimea, and Central Asia. Additionally, the study explored the epic art of ancient and modern peoples, providing a comprehensive approach to understanding the oral traditions across diverse cultural contexts (Doszhan, 2023; Denys, 2024). To illustrate and more deeply comprehend the specifics of Kazakh oral folk art and the epic art of zhyrau, the existing classical artistic and scientific and research experience of the best Kazakh poets and writers was used. They left to descendants their valuable observations about oral folk and

individual author's creativity, about the language, style and features of ancient thinking, about the origin and etymology of the language. Among the study that have great scientific and theoretical and methodological value for work, it can be named a number of studies (Tursunov *et al.*, 2017).

Developing the ideas of G. Potanin (1899), researcher independently came to the idea that the rich fairy tale material of the tribes of Central Asia served as a source for the well-known ancient Greek stories. For study, it is important that zhyrau in their poetic practice often used various abilities, magical functions, means and methods of influence of their predecessors, ancient ritual mediators. Ye. Tursunov (2017) also described other previous stages of the zhyrau formation: jauyrynshy [*shoulder blade diviner*], synshy [*expert evaluator*], korigchi [*visionary*], bolzhaushy [*predictor*], etc., endowed with magical features characteristic of ancient ancestors, but preserved by the nomadic Turkic-speaking peoples due to their specific sustainable economic set-up and slowed social development. While acknowledging their high social status in Kazakh and Turkic oral traditions, their significant roles in nomadic society and state, and their historical impact on national and global poetic art, it would be a mistake to attribute exclusive creative uniqueness to them. In the system of traditional carriers of the Kazakh oral poetic culture, no less bright and strong creative individuals, original word artists, no less talented contemporaries are known. Here, in the nomad camp, everything depends on talent, on the art of poetic technique mastering. Amazing artistic treasures are revealed to us in the study of the spells of the Kazakh baqsy [*healers*]. These texts are presented in the book of Ye. Tursunov (2017) "Baqsy-balger." Birzhan-sal's love lyrics leave an indelible impression. But all this is an oral, not a written tradition, that is, the tradition of a singer improviser (Afonina and Karpov, 2023).

Examples related to common places in the national and world epic space are well studied in the work of M. Bayli (2015). The author draws amazing parallels between the heroes of Homer's poem and the ancient Turks, as well as the poetry of zhyrau and akyns. Ethnographer G. Potanin (1899, p. 56), in the "Diary" of 1914 noted:

The whole steppe is infested with poets and singers. Until the Kirghiz ... poetry and music did not separate one from the other; who composes rhymes, the same gives the song and rhythm. In the steppe everyone sings; there are tsars-composers, and horse-stealers-composers... The

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Kyrgyz poets come from any environment, from the environment living in rich yurts, and from the smoky poor huts, from the environment still living in accordance with ancient custom and legend, and from the Kirghiz environment, already in accordance with the European thinking intelligentsia. It can be predicted that the revival of the Kirghiz will begin with music.

Great prospects for relative and comparative study are opened up in the works of the mythologist S. Kondybai (1999), who by identifying the mythsemantics of ancient fairy tales and mythological plots, traces the ancient connections of the proto-Turkic tribes, their influence on the formation of world civilization and outlines the ways of reconstructing the ancient Turkic mythological system. The author pays particular attention to poetic technique, which gives rise to a kind of “formulaic style.” The formulaic style has been extensively studied worldwide in Anglo-Saxon, ancient Turkic, Indian, Spanish, Kyrgyz, Russian, and French epics. These perspectives are explored in Kazakh epic studies in the forthcoming publication titled *The Poetic Dictionary of Formula Unit Frequencies: Zhyrau Language of the XV-XVIII centuries*. Its structural and lexical-semantic sections illustrate specific mechanisms and rules of oral epic technique, highlighting the origins of the zhyrau style during the XV-XVIII centuries.

Conclusions

By using scientific literature, it became possible to comprehend key aspects related to the formation, development, and establishment of zhyrau poetry during the XV-XVIII centuries. This includes the peculiarities of its perception in the context of world cultural codes, the search for conceptual features, and the reflection of the freedom-loving folk spirit of the steppe civilization. Due to the involvement of the structural-semantic and stylistic method, the analysis of the poetic heritage was carried out from the point of view of the artistic and aesthetic variety of expression means: epic formulas, anaphoras, repetitions, epithets, onomatopoeia, technique of enumeration, parallelism, verbal rhyme and others.

Based on the first-time data obtained in this article, several key findings emerge. The analysis revealed significant disparities in the prevalence of online learning

engagement between different socioeconomic groups. Factors such as household income and parental education levels were strongly correlated with the frequency and quality of participation in online classes among students. Additionally, access to reliable internet connectivity and adequate digital devices emerged as critical determinants influencing students' ability to engage effectively in remote learning environments. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions aimed at addressing digital inequalities in education, ensuring equitable access to online learning resources for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

In the process of the article writing, a comprehensive study of the structural parameters, types and functions in zhyrau poetry was carried out, also special attention was paid to the syntactic structure of verses, the use of repetitive text fragments that were used for the purpose of instruction, teaching or wishes and gave the poetic form a protreptic and didactic function. Artistic exemplary fragments were analyzed, key visual means and stylistic figures were shown on specific examples, the method, purpose of their application and functionality within a given genre form were demonstrated. The main concepts and views on the stages of the origin and development of oral Kazakh poetry were also considered with the actualisation of literary and cultural vectors of studies.

In practice, this article can be used in further studies related to the study of the phenomenon of folk culture and the uniqueness of the poetic national tradition, which conveys the intellectual experience of the Kazakh people, to conduct a comparative and conceptual work analysis of various representatives of zhyrau poetry from the point of view of the historical and biographical context, their perception of reality and development of a narratological strategy in a certain historical period. Potential areas for future research include a comparative analysis with other oral poetic traditions, studying the genealogy of zhyrau poetry in the context of global literary trends, analyzing zhyrau works in historical and biographical contexts, investigating the influence of mythological, religious, and ritual motifs on zhyrau poetry, conducting structural and syntactic analysis of poetic texts, exploring the visual and stylistic elements of the poetry, examining the impact of global cultural codes on the development of zhyrau, researching the evolution of poetic techniques and narratological strategies, and studying the role of zhyrau poetry in contemporary times.

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