

STRUCTURAL TYPES OF EPITHETS IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK LANGUAGES

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Structurally, epithets can be viewed from the angle of:

- a) composition
- b) distribution

From the point of view of their compositional structure epithets may be divided into four groups:

1. Simple epithets
2. Compound epithets
3. Phrase epithets
4. Sentence epithets

Simple epithets are ordinary adjectives: true love, dark forest, classic example, deep feeling, etc. **e. g.** He looked at them in animal panic.

Simple epithets are created from adjectives, nouns and participles. In Karakalpak language there are many literary works which are full of simple epithets:

e. g. Qara duman qaship keter,

Jabiqqan qara kunlerim. (Berdakh)

Qa'ne, tolqin-tolqin qiriq o'rim,

Qa'ne, jang'an otli na'zerler. (G. Matiakupova)

In these examples “qara ku'nler”, “otli na'zer” are simple epithets. The poets used simple epithets as the main tool in giving a picture of characters.

Let us investigate the following examples: “On the bottom of the huge and glassy lagoon was much pearl shell, and from the desk of the schooner, across the slender ring of the atoll, the drivers could be seen at work”. (J. London)

The author uses simple epithet “glassy” to show that the water in this lagoon was pure.

e. g. “His wife has been a great beauty and she was still a great beauty in Africa, but she was not a great enough beauty any more at home to be able to leave him and better herself and she knew it and he knew it”.

A simple epithet “a great beauty” employed to characterize a woman contributes to the elevation and still remoteness of this image.

On the other hand, we can also observe the following:

“You keep your damned scientific eyes open” (E. Hemingway)

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Here in this sentence by the epithet “scientific eyes” it is implied that the characters were scientists doing a research work. It is interesting to note the use of the epithet “scientific”, i. e. a hat belonging to the scientists or researchers:

e. g. “Someone has stolen my scientific hat” (E. Hemingway)

This example illustrates how the writer uses an adjective metaphorically.

Compound epithets consist of several components and are built like compound adjectives:

e. g. “... Wilson noted his crew-cropped hair, fine eyes only faintly, shifty, good nose, thin lips and handsome jaw”. (E. Hemingway)

In the cited example, the writer describes Wilson, one of the characters mentioning “his crew-cropped hair” i. e. a short haircut. The metaphoric epithet “crew-cropped” gives the picture more emotional colouring. I run for it and got into my Governesses House, whither some quick-eyed People followed me; (p. 212, M.F.). But were shap’s by a Hawks-ey’s journeyman. (p. 199, M.F.).

Let us investigate examples in Karakalpak language:

e. g. “Alma ju’zli Alma-atanin’ qizlari”

“Ko’mir qara shashi qayisin tolqip,

Mis ren’ jelkesin aymalar quyash”. (I. Yusupov)

As you see, the compound epithets in Karakalpak language are built like in English language. In these examples the epithets “alma ju’zli”, “ko’mir qara” are giving a picture of the characters. Chains of compound epithets are very well presented in the next sentence describing a drink:

“... of all the things he had enjoyed and forgotten and that came back to him when he tasted that opaque, bitter, tongue-numbing, rain-warming, stomach-warming, idea-changing liquid alchemy”.

It is not just a drink which is described, but “liquid alchemy” showed from different sides both positive and negative. It is “warming” but “bitter”, and “opaque”. It is “idea-changing”.

Taken all together, they produce an effect for more impressive and moving than any description of the same scene in ordinary, careless style. The tendency to cram into one language unit as much information as possible has led to new compositional models for epithets which we shall call phrase epithets. A phrase and even a whole sentence may come an epithet if the main formal requirement of the epithet is maintained, viz. its attributive use. But unlike simple and compound epithets which may have pre-or postposition, phrase epithets are always placed before the nouns they

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refer to. These epithets help not only to reveal the individual view of the writer and his characters but at the same time to do it in a rather economical manner.

e. g. “In the cold, gray, street-washing, milk delivering, shutters-coming-off-the-shops early morning, the midnight train from Paris arrived in Strasbourg”.

(E. Hemingway)

From the cited example, viz. one simple sentence, we receive much information. Despite the fact that is an “early morning”, “the cold” and still “gray” one, it is also the time of morning when the streets are washed (“street-washing”) and milk is delivered (milk-delivering). It is an early morning when shutters are finally opened after the night, and shops begin their daily work routine (“shutters-coming-off-the-shops”). The last phrase epithet is an attributive describing “early morning”. (E. Hemingway)

Phrase epithets include into one epithet, an extended phrase or a completed sentence. It must be said that a phrase may become as an attributive to the word. Very often such constructions serve to produce an original impression. The tendency to cram into one language unit as much information as possible has led to new compositional models for epithets which are called phrase epithets. A phrase and even a whole sentence may become an epithet if the main formal requirement of the epithet is maintained. But unlike simple and compound epithets, which may how pre or post-position, phrase, epithets are always placed before the nouns they refer to.

e. g. Robert Jordan swallowed down the last of the absinthe, feeling it, gulped that way, making a warm, small fume rising, wet, chemical-change-producing heat in him and passed the cup of wine”. (E. Hemingway)

So, it may well be included that phrase epithets, viz. such as “shutters-coming-off-the-shops” and “chemical-change-producing heat” give specifying characteristic description to the things.

We can see the epithets in Karakalpak language formed by the phraseological word combinations such as:

“Olar paydasina pu'tin og'ada,

Suwdi bo'gep turip isher sag'adan” (I. Yusupov)

Here, the epithet “paydasina pu'tin” means “they are very concerned people”. The author described them as they are crafty people, they think of only themselves. Here are some examples of phrase epithets:

“It is do-it-yourself attitude that has thus far held back real development of the Middle East's river resources”. (‘New York Times’ Magazine)

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“There is a sort of “oh-what-a-wicked-world-this-is-and-how-I wish-I-could-do-something-to-make-it-better-and-nobler” expression about Montmorency that has been known to bring the tears into the eyes of pious old ladies and gentlemen”. (J. K. Jerome “Three men in a boat”) “Freddie was standing in front of the fireplace with a “well-that’s-the-story-what-are-we-going-to-do-about-it” air that made him a focal point”. (L. Ford)

An interesting structural detail of phrase epithets and sentence epithets is that they are generally followed by the words “attitude”, “expression”, “air”, which describe behavior or facial expression. In other words, such epithets seem to transcribe into language symbols a communication usually conveyed by non-linguistic means.

Another structural feature of such phrase epithets is that after the nouns they refer to, there often comes a subordinate attributive clause beginning with that. This attributive clause, as it were, serves the purpose of decoding the effect of the communication. It must be noted that phrase epithets to the temporary structure of the compound word.

Sentence epithets and phrase epithets are very close. A phrase and even a whole sentence may become an epithet if the main formal requirement of the epithet is maintained, viz. its attributive use. This inner semantic quality of the attributive relations in lexical combinations, perhaps, most striking in the phrase and sentence epithets.

e. g. “Personally I detest her (Giaconda’s) smug, mystery-making, come-hither-but-go-away-again-because-butter-would-not-melt-in-my-mouth expression”.

These two structural features have predetermined the functioning of phrase epithets. Practically any phrase or sentence which deals with the psychological state of a person may serve as an epithet. The phrases and sentences transformed into epithets lose their independence and assume a new quality which is revealed both in the intonation pattern (that of an attribute) and graphically (by being hyphenated).

From the point of their distributional structure their kind of epithets as string epithets, transferred epithets, reversed and oxymoronic epithets. Sometimes three, four and even more epithets are joined in chains. They are called string epithets. The structural type of string epithets is like enumeration. As any enumeration, the string of epithets gives all-round depiction of the object. Strings of epithets present a group of homogenous attributes varying in number from three up to sometime twenty and more. Let us look through the examples. The following example demonstrates the animal:

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“He put a hand out and felt of the hares, that lay limp, long, heavy, thick furred, big-footed and long-eared in the snow, their round dark eyes open”.

(E. Hemingway)

Hares are described by enumeration of three compound epithets formed by such model as Adjective + Noun+ “ed” suffix: “thick furred, big-footed, and long-eared”. Thus, we have obtained a complete picture of the image.

Another examples to string epithet:

“Such was the background of the wonderful, cruel enchanting, bewildering, fatal, great city. (O. Henry)

“... a plump, rosy-checked, whole some apple-faced young woman”.

“... a well matched, fairly-balanced give-and-take couple”. (Dickens)

He was a Quiet, Sensible, Sober man, Virtuous, Modest, Sincere, and in his Business Diligent and Just. (p. 184, M.F)

Began to look a little Womanish, for I was mighty Grave and Humble; very manner, the ladies say I was Pretty. (p. 3, M.F)

As in any enumeration the string of epithets gives a many sided depiction of the object. But in this many sidedness there is always a suggestion of ascending order of emotive elements. This can easily be observed in the intonation pattern of a string of epithets. There is generally an ascending scale which culminates in the last epithet, if the last epithet is a language epithet (great), or not an epithet (young), the culminating point in the above examples is the last genuine epithet. The culminating point in the above examples is at “fatal”, “apple-faced”, and Give and take”.

Another distributional model is transferred epithet. Transferred epithets are ordinary logical attributes generally describing the state of human being, but made to refer to an inanimate object, for example: “sick chamber”, “sleepless pillow”, “restless face”, “breathless eagerness”, “a disapproving finger”, “Isabel shrugged an indifferent shoulder”.

As may be seen it is the force contributed by its position, and not by its meaning, that hollows it into an epithet. The main feature of the epithet that of emotional assessment is greatly diminished in this model: but it never quite vanishes. The meaning of the logical attributes in such combinations acquires a definite emotional colouring.

e. g. “But never a basic in a plan whether that plan was conceived in a sleepless night or on an angry morning or on a gin-aided evening”. (E. Hemingway)

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In description of different parts of the day found in this sentence the writer employs transferred epithets formed of adjectives. (“sleepless”, “angry”, “gin-aided”) that can be referred to a person, his or her state and mood.

Another structural variety of the epithet is the one which we shall term reversed. The reversed epithet is composed of two nouns linked man of phrase. The subjective, evaluating, emotional element is embodied not in the noun attribute, but in the noun structurally described, for example: “the shadow of a smile”, “a devil of a job”, and so on.

e. g. “... he smiled brightly, neatly, efficiently, a military abbreviation of a smile”.

“A devil of a sea rolls in that bay”;

“A little Flying Dutchman of a cab”;

“a dog of a fellow”;

“her brute of a brother”;

“... a long nightshirt of a mackintosh”...

It will be observed that such epithets are metaphorical. The noun to be assessed is contained in the of-phrase and the noun it qualifies is a metaphor (shadow, devil, military, abbreviation, Flying Dutchman, “dog”). The grammatical aspect, viz. attributive relation between the members of the combination shows that the stylistic device here is an epithet.

e. g. “Her hair was the golden brown of a grain field that has been burned dark in the sun”.

In this example, where “golden brown” is both logically and syntactically defining, and “field” – both logically and syntactically defined the word combination “the golden brown of a grain field” is used. Here “of a grain field” is a syntactically an attribute, i. e the defining and “golden brown” – the defined.

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1. My colour came and went, at the sight of the Purse. (p.23.M.F)

2. And with the fire of his proposol together. (p.23. M.F)

3. And how much happier a life of virtual and sobriety is. (p.183, M.F)

4. Such a street went into the Heart of the town. (p. 262, M.F)

When there is no logical-syntactical contradiction, all reversed epithets of a more habitual structure. Moreover, we have also investigated some fine examples in

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the works of English. It is well-known that oxymoronic epithet is based on identification of logically incompatible ideas.

e. g. “The name of the hotel, a colourless polished wood and its colourless polish front stung him like a glance of polite disdain”. (J. Joyce)

Using oxymoronic epithet “polite disdain” the author shows the gloomy ungrateful sight of the hotel.

e. g. “Robert Jordan, looked at the big, brown-faced woman with her kind widely set eyes and her square, heavy face, lined and pleasantly ugly, the eyes merry, but the face sad until the lips moved”.

Here oxymoronic epithet is presented in a combination of two words – an adverb “pleasantly” with an adjective “ugly”. The word can become an oxymoronic epithet only if the main formal requirement of the oxymoron is maintained, viz. the meanings of the two words clash, being opposite in meaning to “ugly” as when something is agreeable it is the right way to talk about “pleasant”, but if anything is disagreeable in appearance the common word to refer to it is “ugly”.

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