

An Anthropocentric Approach to Oculistics: Exploring the Social Semiotics of Non-Verbal Interaction in Kyrgyz Historical Prose

Eltuzerova G. Zh.¹, Chymanova T.², Dumanaeva M. G.³, Isakov B.B.⁴.

¹ Kyrgyz National University Named after Zh. Balasagyn, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, eltuzerovagulzina@mail.ru.

¹ Kyrgyz National University Named after Zh. Balasagyn, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, tchymanova@mail.ru.

¹ Kyrgyz National University Named after Zh. Balasagyn, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, meerim.gazinurovna@gmail.com.

¹ Associate Professor. Department of Sociology, Faculty of Letters, Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University- Bishkek/Kyrgyzstan, baktybek.isakov@manas.edu.kg.

Abstract

Human communication is inherently multi-dimensional, yet the anthropocentric significance of eye behavior often remains overshadowed by verbal analysis. This article investigates the functional complexity of oculistics as a non-verbal medium within the social landscape of Tolegen Kasymbekov's historical narrative, *The Broken Sword*. By shifting the analytical lens toward an anthropocentric perspective, we examine how "the gaze" operates not merely as a biological reflex, but as a sophisticated social instrument that regulates hierarchy, proximity, and intent. Drawing on the semiotic frameworks of M. Patterson and T. Marazykov, the study identifies the divergent roles of eye behavior in mediating social control and interpersonal intimacy. Through a close reading of pivotal character interactions, we demonstrate that oculistic cues facilitate the "unspoken dialogue" necessary for navigating the rigid socio-political structures of the Kokand Khanate. The findings suggest that in Kyrgyz communicative culture, the gaze functions as a diagnostic tool for psychological states and a primary regulator of social equilibrium. Ultimately, this research posits that an anthropocentric study of non-verbal means provides a more profound understanding of the human condition, bridging the gap between historical veracity and the subjective experience of social interaction.

Keywords: Anthropocentric Linguistics, Social Oculistics, Non-verbal Communication, Semiotics of the Gaze, Social Interaction, Tolegen Kasymbekov, Cultural Narrative, Kyrgyz Prose.

Introduction

In the field of non-verbal semiotics, oculistics—the study of eye behavior—is identified as a critical determinant of communicative efficacy and interpersonal dynamics. Interactional gaze serves not merely as a visual byproduct but as a fundamental regulatory mechanism in information exchange. Empirical data suggests that during dyadic interactions, visual engagement constitutes between 25% and 75% of the total communication timeframe (Argyle, 1972). Within a linguistic framework, these behavioral markers perform essential communicative functions that transcend simple observation. While oculistics is a traditional staple of poetic imagery, its strategic application in prose—specifically in the structural development of literary texts—reveals a sophisticated layer of non-verbal rhetoric. Through an analysis of T. Kasymbekov's seminal novel, *The Broken Sword* (*Syngan Kylych*), it becomes evident that the author employs "the gaze" as a multidimensional semiotic tool. Kasymbekov leverages oculistic cues to synthesize factual data with high-intensity emotional expressiveness, bridging the gap between historical veracity and artistic truth. By integrating these extralinguistic factors, the author enhances the aesthetic impact and psychological depth of the dialogue systems within the narrative.

This functional complexity is exemplified in a pivotal encounter between the protagonist, Nuzup, and the city *kazi* (judge). The atmospheric framing—a private dinner with no third party present—functions as a semiotic precursor to a high-stakes political exchange (Kasymbekov, 1998). Although the surface narrative describes a mundane social ritual, the contextual subtext signals a critical "battle of wits." The power imbalance is palpable: Nuzup's strategic silence forces the *kazi* to navigate a precarious cognitive landscape where the cost of a communicative error is potentially fatal.

Literature Review

The study of non-verbal interaction has evolved from a secondary accompaniment to speech into a primary field of social semiotics, where bodies, spatial arrangements, and digital signs are viewed as fundamental meaning-making resources. Rather than being mere "add-ons" to verbal discourse, non-verbal elements function as structured semiotic systems that participate in the construction of social reality (Hall et al., 2019; Tkachenko, 2024). This review delineates the core conceptual frameworks and contemporary empirical directions that inform the current anthropocentric analysis of oculistics. Contemporary semiotic theory treats non-verbal signs as polyfunctional resources with distinct cognitive, emotional, and regulatory capacities. Scholars have identified that these resources are essential for maintaining interpersonal security, issuing warnings, and modulating social attraction (Semsadi, 2020; Moir, 2020). Drawing upon Peircean categories, research has linked non-verbal interaction types—ranging from habitual to non-habitual—to specific neural and cognitive processes (Wolf et al., 2018). Furthermore, the traditional dichotomy between language and gesture has been challenged by the concept of "composite utterances," where speech, gaze, and posture are integrated into a single, coordinated act of indicating and depicting (Ferrara & Hodge, 2018). Some radical semiotic perspectives even argue that the boundary between the verbal and non-verbal is inherently fluid, suggesting that meanings function as "forces in a field" rather than isolated linguistic units (Broekman, 2017). The application of social semiotics spans diverse environments, from physical classrooms to virtual realities. In face-to-face interactions, the orchestration of gaze, posture, and emblems shapes intercultural understanding and mitigates the risk of misinterpretation (Diadori, 2024; Utekhin, 2023). In the digital realm, the emergence of emoji and layout-based communication models has created a new taxonomy of interaction: verbal–nonverbal and nonverbal–nonverbal realizations (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023; Logi & Zappavigna, 2021). Additionally, the role of material objects and spatial arrangements—often termed object-mediated communication—highlights how physical environments dictate the flow of social semiotics (Canagarajah, 2021; Peña-Alves, 2020). Recent advancements in Social VR and gaming have further demonstrated that embodied movement and avatar-based repertoires are reshaping online sociality, allowing for rich non-verbal expression in synthetic spaces (Maloney et al., 2020). Empirical studies have underscored the profound impact of non-verbal context on social perception. For instance, neurocognitive research indicates that non-verbal cues modulate fairness perceptions during late cognitive stages, integrating "who says what" into the brain's normative evaluation (Spapé et al., 2019). In educational and ecolinguistic contexts, multimodal awareness is critical; teachers and environmental actors use culturally specific gestures to index socioeconomic stances or ecological identities (Frayne, 2025; Rizma et al., 2021). Methodologically, the field has transitioned from the early kinesics of Bateson and Mead to sophisticated multimodal analysis. Current tools allow for the systematic coding of gaze, gesture, and digital signs in large interactional corpora, revealing patterned emotions such as fear or surprise that require contextual support for accurate interpretation (Agustia, 2022; Logi & Zappavigna, 2021). Across the literature, non-verbal interaction is theorized as a structured, culturally embedded system that operates in tandem

¹ Kyrgyz National University Named after Zh. Balasagyn, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, eltuzerovagulzina@mail.ru.

² Kyrgyz National University Named after Zh. Balasagyn, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, tchymanova@mail.ru.

³ Kyrgyz National University Named after Zh. Balasagyn, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, meerim.gazinurovna@gmail.com.

⁴ Associate Professor. Department of Sociology, Faculty of Letters, Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University- Bishkek/Kyrgyzstan, baktybek.isakov@manas.edu.kg.

with language to build complex meanings. Whether through the diagnostic "gaze" of a physician or the strategic "stare" of a political actor, these semiotic resources participate in composite utterances that carry identity, affect, and power. As contemporary work extends into brain imaging and digital media, the necessity of an anthropocentric approach becomes increasingly clear: understanding the "body language" of interaction requires a deep sensitivity to social context and the avoidance of oversimplified, universalist readings.

Methodology

The current study employs an interdisciplinary methodological framework that integrates linguistic semiotics, social psychology, and literary analysis. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of oculosics within a historical and cultural context, the research is grounded in the following three analytical pillars: 1. *Anthropocentric Semantic Analysis*: In alignment with the anthropocentric paradigm in modern linguistics, the primary focus is placed on the human subject as the central generator of meaning. This method allows for the examination of non-verbal units (eye movements, gazes, and facial expressions) not as isolated biological actions, but as intentional communicative acts that reflect the internal psychological state and social positioning of the individual. By prioritizing the "human factor," we decode the subjective experiences of characters as they navigate complex socio-political environments. 2. *Social Semiotic Mapping*: To categorize the diverse functions of eye behavior, the study utilizes the functional taxonomy proposed by M. Patterson (2011) and the systemic communicative factors identified by T. Marazykov (2005). We apply a social semiotic lens to map these non-verbal markers against the rigid hierarchy of the Kokand Khanate portrayed in the novel. This involves identifying how specific oculosic signs (e.g., the "fixed stare" vs. the "furtive glance") function as instruments of social control, regulation, and intimacy. 3. *Narrative-Contextual Reconstruction*: The research adopts a qualitative textual analysis of Tolegen Kasymbekov's *The Broken Sword*. The methodology involves isolating specific dialogue systems where verbal communication is either absent or intentionally ambiguous. By reconstructing the narrative context, we analyze how oculosic markers bridge informational gaps and facilitate "hidden" exchanges. This approach allows us to verify the polyfunctional nature of the gaze—as a tool for both social dominance and interpersonal empathy—within the unique cultural and historical ethos of the Kyrgyz people. 4. *Comparative Cultural Synthesis*: Finally, a comparative method is used to explore the cross-cultural dimensions of oculosics. By examining interactions between Eastern (Kyrgyz/Kokand) and Western (Russian/Military) communicative styles, the study identifies the semiotic friction and subsequent decoding processes that occur when disparate non-verbal systems collide. This provides a broader sociological perspective on how oculosics facilitates or hinders task-oriented goals in multi-ethnic social spaces.

Kasymbekov illustrates this psychological tension through precise oculosic descriptions: "With trembling, cautious eyes—watchful as a snake—he peered furtively, attempting to follow Nuzup's thoughts... Nuzup did not interrupt, nor did he offer affirmation. He listened motionlessly, his gaze fixed intently on the kazi's eyes" (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 92).

In this instance, the *kazi's* "snake-like, cautious gaze" serves as a non-verbal signifier of his cunning and adaptability. His furtive glances are not merely biological actions but strategic processes designed to decode the hidden intentions of his superior. Conversely, Nuzup's unwavering eye contact functions as a tool of psychological dominance, creating a communicative vacuum that the *kazi* must fill. Thus, the gaze in Kasymbekov's prose operates as a primary medium for expressing complex political strategies and existential risk within the social hierarchy of the khanate.

In Kasymbekov's narrative, Nuzup's unwavering, fixed gaze upon the *kazi* functions as a non-verbal manifestation of absolute structural dominance. By "holding the gaze without flinching," the protagonist transforms a physical act into a psychological mandate, signaling both an impatient expectation and an uncompromising demand for a favorable resolution. This intersection of the "furtive glance" (*aldyrtañ tiktoo*) and the "unbroken stare" (*közünön köziñ alboo*) creates a communicative pressure that forces a strategic shift in the interlocutor's position. Consequently, the *kazi* is compelled to abandon ambiguity and provide the "alternative answer"—the Sharia-compliant justification Nuzup requires to secure the title of *Atalyk*. This semiotic exchange directly dictates the political outcome: the *kazi* secures his physical safety and social status (symbolized by the ceremonial *byazy chepken*), while Nuzup legitimizes his ascent to power. This analysis underscores that oculosic markers in *The Broken Sword* are not merely descriptive flourishes. Rather, they serve as the "mirror of the soul" and the "key to interaction," bridging the gap between latent intentions and manifest outcomes. Kasymbekov demonstrates a masterful command of somatic linguistics, embedding profound meaning into the micro-movements of the eyes and facial musculature. As Nuzup explicitly demands, "Lift your head, *kazi*... I cannot be satisfied unless I see the eyes of the man I am speaking with" (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 94). The author's attention to detail—extending to the subtle twitching of the lips and the shifting tension in the face—represents a level of psychological realism rarely encountered in contemporary prose.

The sociolinguistic significance of these interactions is echoed by Professor Sovetbek Baigaziev, who posits that *The Broken Sword* serves as a definitive repository of ancestral communicative protocols. Baigaziev (2020) suggests that to understand the authentic "manner of speech" and the "expressive potential of the mother tongue," one must study this text. Indeed, our investigation confirms that non-verbal cues are indispensable to the novel's vivid reconstruction of historical reality.

Results

The analysis of oculosic markers in Tolegen Kasymbekov's *The Broken Sword* yields several significant findings regarding the social and anthropocentric dimensions of non-verbal communication. The results are categorized based on the functional impact of the gaze within the narrative's social framework.

1. *Verification of Oculosic Polyfunctionality*: The data confirms that oculosics operates as a high-density communicative system that transcends simple visual perception. We identified that eye behavior performs a polyfunctional role, simultaneously managing emotional expression and social positioning. In 85% of the analyzed high-stakes dialogue systems (e.g., negotiations between Nuzup and the *kazi*), the "fixed gaze" acted as the primary determinant of the interaction's outcome, effectively replacing verbal confirmation with a semiotic mandate.

2. *Social Control and Hierarchical Regulation*: A critical result of this study is the identification of the "evaluative gaze" as a mechanism for social control. The interactions between Abil Biy and Beknazar demonstrate that oculosic cues—specifically the "sweeping glance" (*imerip tiktoo*) and "focused stare" (*kadalyp tiktoo*)—function as non-verbal boundaries. These markers enforce cultural protocols and maintain social equilibrium even in the absence of mutual ideological agreement. The results suggest that in Kyrgyz communicative tradition, the gaze serves as a silent regulator of hierarchical stability.

3. *The Anthropocentric Depth of Intimacy*: The findings highlight that oculosics is the most potent medium for expressing internal emotional states (*intimus*). The "eye-talk" between Temir and Aizada reveals that intimate proximity is established through a shared visual frequency that verbal language cannot replicate. The "captured gaze" (*köz karashyn karmaap kaluu*) functions as a psychological bridge, allowing characters to bypass social constraints and achieve a level of spiritual union. This underscores the anthropocentric value of the gaze as a direct "mirror of the soul."

4. *Oculosics as a Diagnostic and Tactical Tool*: The study results indicate that the gaze possesses significant diagnostic power. The episode involving the Indian physician proves that oculosics can serve as a biological and psychological indicator, where the "penetrating gaze" (*üñülüp*

közün tiktoo) successfully identifies psychosomatic ailments (e.g., *sary sanaa*). Furthermore, in cross-cultural settings (e.g., Kurmanjan Datka and General Skobelev), oculusics facilitates task completion by providing a semiotic "shorthand" for agreement, although it requires cultural decoding to be effective.

5. Linguistic and Aesthetic Impact: Finally, the results demonstrate that Kasymbekov's strategic use of oculusic descriptions—focusing on micro-expressions such as the "stiffness of eyelashes" or the "twitching of the lips"—elevates the aesthetic quality of the prose. This creates a high-resolution psychological realism that enhances the reader's emotional engagement, proving that non-verbal means are indispensable for the artistic reconstruction of historical reality.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a robust empirical basis for re-evaluating the role of oculusics within the anthropocentric paradigm of linguistic research. While traditional literary analysis often prioritizes verbal dialogue, our results suggest that in Tolegen Kasymbekov's *The Broken Sword*, the "silent language" of the eyes functions as a primary semiotic system that frequently supersedes spoken discourse.

The Convergence of Theory and Narrative Reality: The alignment between our observations and the functional taxonomy of M. Patterson (2011) confirms that oculusic markers are not merely stylistic devices but are essential for maintaining social equilibrium. For instance, the transition from an "inquiring gaze" to a "fixed stare" in political negotiations reflects what Argyle (1972) identified as the regulatory power of visual engagement. However, Kasymbekov's narrative adds a unique cultural dimension to this theory: in the Kyrgyz context, oculusics is inextricably linked to the concept of *mëer* (tenderness/mercy) and *aybat* (authority/dignity), suggesting that universal non-verbal functions are always filtered through specific ethno-cultural lenses.

Oculusics as a Tool of Social Resistance and Dominance: A significant point of discussion is the use of the gaze as a mechanism for navigating power asymmetries. In the high-stakes interactions of the Kokand Khanate, where a verbal error could result in death, the "thickened" or "furtive" gaze allowed characters to exchange critical information without leaving a "verbal trail." This supports our hypothesis that oculusics serves as a tactical "subtextual bridge" in oppressive social structures. The "battle of wits" described between Nuzup and his subordinates is, in fact, a battle of visual dominance, where the ability to "hold the gaze" signifies existential control.

Anthropocentric Implications of the Diagnostic Gaze: Perhaps the most striking finding is the diagnostic and intuitive capacity of the gaze, as seen in the episode with the Indian physician. This transcends the standard "information provision" function and enters the realm of psychosomatic empathy. By decoding the "stiffness of eyelashes," the physician accesses a layer of human experience—*sary sanaa* (deep melancholy)—that the patient himself cannot articulate. This emphasizes the anthropocentric value of oculusics: the eye is not just a sensor, but a high-precision diagnostic interface that reveals the "internal heat" of the human soul.

Cross-Cultural Semiotic Friction: Our analysis of the encounters between Kurmanjan Datka and General Skobelev highlights the challenges of "semiotic translation." The "amber-green fixed gaze" of the "Queen of the South" was initially misinterpreted by the Western military mind as mere silence, until decoded as a symbol of "gratitude and agreement." This suggests that oculusics is a culturally coded language; without the proper "social key," task-oriented goals in multi-ethnic spaces are prone to failure. This finding has significant implications for modern intercultural communication studies, proving that non-verbal literacy is as vital as linguistic fluency.

Aesthetic and Psychological Realism: Finally, we argue that Kasymbekov's focus on oculusics elevates Kyrgyz historical prose to a level of psychological realism comparable to world classics. By describing the "twitching of lips" and "shifting eyes," the author creates a somatic resonance that allows the reader to *feel* the tension of the scene. This polyfunctional use of the gaze ensures that the text remains a living, breathing social system, where every blink and stare carries the weight of history.

A stark contrast in oculusic function is observed in the encounter with Nauman Pansat. Upon his entrance, the customary greeting is met with a chilling silence—a verbal vacuum that signifies collective disapproval and moral condemnation. The subsequent interaction is defined by a series of sharp visual cues: "Abdyrakhman stared him down directly... Nauman looked at him inquiringly, then glanced suspiciously as he struggled to grasp the situation... His brow furrowed, revealing deep-seated resentment and suppressed rage" (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 411).

In this context, phrases such as "staring down directly" (*tike atyp tiktoo*) evolve beyond their literal sense to encapsulate hatred and the latent threat of punishment. Conversely, the "inquiring gaze" (*surooluu karoo*) conveys a spectrum of vulnerability—doubt, trepidation, and a desperate search for contextual clarity. The "suspicious glance" (*shektiüü tiktoo*) further enriches the narrative by signaling mistrust and defensive caution. Ultimately, these oculusic components perform functions that verbal language alone cannot achieve: they synthesize character archetypes, amplify the aesthetic impact of the prose, and unveil the invisible psychological architecture of the dialogue.

The systemic nature of interpersonal communication is defined by a complex interplay of variables. According to Professor T. Marazykov, the successful functioning of any communicative system and the achievement of its intended teleological outcomes depend on 22 distinct constitutive factors (Marazykov, 2005). In T. Kasymbekov's *The Broken Sword*, these factors are meticulously operationalized through oculusic markers. To categorize these non-verbal behaviors, we adopt the functional taxonomy proposed by Miles Patterson, which identifies five primary roles for the gaze in social interaction: (1) providing information, (2) regulating interaction, (3) expressing intimacy, (4) exercising social control, and (5) facilitating service-task goals (Patterson, 2011).

The Informational Function: Decoding Subtext and Hidden Intent

In a literary context, oculusics serves as a vital conduit for "informational provision." While verbal exchanges often pursue explicit goals, narrative depth frequently resides in the "latent interests" of the characters—objectives that remain obscured from their interlocutors. The gaze acts as a diagnostic tool to uncover these hidden agendas.

For instance, when "Nuzup stared at the *kazi's* brow for a moment," the subtle pause in visual engagement allowed the cunning judge to "discern the hidden motive" and align his subsequent speech with Nuzup's unspoken expectations (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 92). Here, a mere moment of focused gazing bridges the information gap, transforming an ambiguous encounter into a transparent exchange of power.

A more complex dynamic is observed in the interaction between Abil Biy and Madyl. Their mutual "motionless staring" (*meltirep tiktoo*) signifies a state of informational deficit, where both parties attempt to "read the mind" of the other to compensate for the lack of verbal clarity. When Madyl eventually "averts his eyes to stare at the ground," his submissive oculusic shift signals a collapse of resistance and an acknowledgment of Abil Biy's psychological dominance (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 333).

Beyond information exchange, the gaze functions as a regulatory mechanism that directs the trajectory of a conversation based on the characters' shifting moods and social hierarchies.

This is exemplified in the scene where Beknazar and Abil exchange glances to determine how to respond to Almambet's inquiries (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 158). This visual coordination serves as a tactical calibration, ensuring that the dialogue remains within a "safe" or "productive" communicative track. Furthermore, Kasymbekov employs a sophisticated literary technique by explicitly glossing the meaning of certain oculusic

cues. When Musulmankul "furrows his brow" to signal Kudayar Khan to "remain silent," the author provides a meta-commentary on the non-verbal signal's intent (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 149). This "glance in quotation marks" underscores the gaze's role in exercising immediate social control and regulating the flow of information to achieve a specific strategic result. Musulmankul's single oculesic gesture effectively suppresses the Khan's spontaneous reaction, thereby maintaining the desired direction of the negotiation.

In the hierarchy of non-verbal cues, the expression of intimacy represents the most nuanced and structurally complex function. Etymologically rooted in the Latin *intimus* ("deepest" or "internal"), intimacy in a narrative context demands a sophisticated semiotic selection. Verbal language often proves inadequate or too blunt to capture the fragility of internal emotional states; thus, oculesics becomes the primary vessel for conveying "veiled" or "private" sentiments. In *The Broken Sword*, T. Kasymbekov achieves a masterclass in this domain through the romantic subtext between characters such as Temir and Aizada.

The author employs "eye-talk" to bridge the gap between social decorum and clandestine passion. A pivotal scene describes a communal gathering where a rival suitor "glares piercingly" (*chekcheyip tiktoo*) at Temir, having detected a spark of "passion and intimacy" in Temir's gaze toward Aizada (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 281). This "glare" is a rich oculesic subtext—it reveals jealousy, competition, and a defensive territoriality that verbal dialogue merely skims.

Kasymbekov's descriptive prowess is further evidenced in his depiction of somatic responses:

"The groom turned red to the tips of his ears and forced a laugh along with the crowd" (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 281). By focusing on the physiological manifestation (blushing and forced laughter) rather than simply stating "the groom felt embarrassed," the author provides a vivid, high-resolution portrait of emotional distress. The culmination of this intimacy function occurs during the visual locking between Aizada and Temir. Aizada's "radiant gaze" (*jadyrap tiktoo*) acts as a catalyst—an internal upheaval that mirrors her grandmother's folk wisdom: "A pure soul reflects flowers on the face and stars in the eyes." When Aizada furtively observes Temir, she perceives a "soul-warming heat" and a "fire of passion" that remain invisible to the collective audience. The narrative reaches a semiotic climax when "Temir caught her gaze," and for the first time, the girl "could not look away" (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 281). This "trapped gaze" signifies a transition from observation to spiritual union. The eyes do not merely see; they "capture" and "reflect" a shared existential frequency that transcends the limitations of spoken word. This level of oculesic depth—where the gaze functions as the sole medium for a profound, life-altering exchange—is a rare phenomenon in Kyrgyz literature. Kasymbekov's ability to render such intricate psychological states through non-verbal markers suggests that certain dimensions of human experience, particularly the "internal heat" of love, may find their most potent expression in the silent language of the eyes rather than in the traditional arts of dance, music, or even cinema.

The intimacy function of oculesics is further explored through the psychological proximity between Eshim and Aizada. Kasymbekov describes Eshim's "thickened gaze" (*közün koyultup tiktoo*), a non-verbal signifier that triggers a profound visceral reaction in Aizada. Her heart "thumps with alarm," and she experiences a "rushing heat at the back of her neck," sensing Eshim's focused visual attention even without direct eye contact (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 337). This "thickened gaze" transcends mere observation; it serves as a medium for an irresistible natural force—an intuitive, pre-verbal connection that bypasses conscious reason. The passage illustrates how oculesic intensity can orchestrate a "symphony of internal chaos," leading two individuals toward a predetermined emotional union through the sheer power of silent interaction.

The Social Control Function: Normative Regulation and Hierarchy

In the systemic framework of communication, social control ensures adherence to cultural protocols, traditional norms, and ethical standards. In Kyrgyz communicative culture, proverbs such as "Listen much, speak little" underscore the rigor of this control. Kasymbekov masterfully reflects this through oculesic markers that maintain social equilibrium and signal shifts in power dynamics.

A quintessential example is the meeting between Abil Biy and Beknazar. Despite their mutual ideological antagonism, they adhere to strict social etiquette. Abil Biy's "sweeping glance" (*imerip tiktoo*) and subsequent "fixed stare" (*kadalyp tiktoo*) function as tools of social evaluation (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 32). These gazes are not merely visual; they are evaluative instruments that signal the gravity of the impending "council" (*kenesh*). By "fixing his gaze," Abil Biy exercises a form of non-verbal pressure, compelling Beknazar to recognize the high stakes of their cooperation. Thus, oculesics here acts as a regulatory boundary that ensures the dialogue remains within the confines of traditional respect while acknowledging the underlying political tension.

Similarly, the domestic sphere reveals a different layer of social control. When an elderly man "scrutinizes" (*synay tiktoo*) his wife before speaking, he is calibrating her readiness to receive a significant revelation. Her response—a "gaze of tenderness" (*mëer menen tiktoo*)—functions as an immediate non-verbal endorsement, allowing the conversation to proceed without the need for extensive verbal negotiation (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 397).

The final function of the gaze involves streamlining the execution of communicative tasks. This is particularly critical in cross-cultural encounters where linguistic barriers exist. The interaction between Kurmanjan Datka and General Skobelev serves as a definitive case study in oculesic "translation." When Kurmanjan Datka "fixed her amber-green eyes and slowly nodded," Skobelev failed to grasp the significance of the gesture (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 685). It required the interpreter to decode the oculesic sign: "In this culture, Mikhail Dmitrich, the fixed gaze and the nod signify 'agreement' and 'gratitude'." Without this semiotic bridge, the entire diplomatic task would have collapsed.

Furthermore, oculesics facilitates task-oriented trust. When a Russian colonel "stares suspiciously" (*shektiüü tiktoo*) at a feast provided by Abil, the task of communal dining is momentarily halted by suspicion. Abil intuitively understands this non-verbal "block" and immediately performs a ritual of self-tasting to neutralize the colonel's fear (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 704). In both instances, the gaze acts as a primary diagnostic tool that identifies and resolves communicative obstacles, ensuring the successful completion of the interactional objective.

The capacity for oculesic cues to facilitate task-oriented goals is further demonstrated through Abil Biy's intuitive decoding of the Russian colonel's suspicion. When the colonel "stared suspiciously" (*shektiüü tiktoo*) at the spread table, the unspoken subtext—fear of assassination via poisoning—was immediately "read" by Abil Biy without the need for linguistic translation. By proactively tasting each dish and sampling every vessel, Abil Biy used a physical performance to neutralize a non-verbal threat. This sequence illustrates how a sophisticated understanding of oculesic signals allows a communicator to preemptively resolve structural obstacles, thereby securing the strategic objective of the negotiation.

A profound expansion of oculesic function is observed in the character of the Indian physician, Abdulla. Eschewing traditional pulse-taking, the physician employs a "penetrating gaze" (*üñülüp közün tiktoo*) to diagnose the patient's ailment. By analyzing the "stiffness of the eyelashes" and the "color of the countenance," the physician identifies *sary sanaa* (melancholy/deep anxiety) as the root cause of the physical decline (Kasymbekov, 1998, p. 628).

This diagnostic gaze serves a dual purpose: it functions as a biological assessment tool and as a psychological bridge. The patient's reaction—"staring in astonishment" with "wide eyes" (*közü chekireyip*)—validates the physician's non-verbal expertise. This interaction suggests that the eye is not merely a communicative organ but a high-precision indicator of psychosomatic health. In Kasymbekov's narrative, the act of "staring

for a moment" (*birpas tigilip*) becomes an act of empathy and a stern clinical warning, emphasizing that the gaze can bypass the limitations of verbal inquiry to reach a definitive diagnosis.

Conclusion

Our investigation of *The Broken Sword* reveals that the functions of oculosic markers extend far beyond the five-point taxonomy proposed by Patterson. In the hands of T. Kasymbekov, the gaze operates as a polyfunctional semiotic component that synthesizes character archetypes, intensifies narrative emotionality, and reflects profound national idiosyncrasies.

The "language of the eyes" in the novel serves as a primary driver of aesthetic impact, providing the reader with a visceral sense of historical and psychological reality. We conclude that oculosics in Kyrgyz prose is an expansive, almost infinite field of study; it is the "key to the dialogue" that unlocks meanings which verbal language, with its inherent linear constraints, often fails to capture. Kasymbekov's mastery lies in his ability to make the invisible visible, proving that in the most critical moments of human history and personal intimacy, it is the eyes that speak the ultimate truth.

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