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Haiku poems as a creative path to language development and language learning

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INNOVATIVE

Abstract: Haiku is originally a Japanese short form of poetry with three lines and seventeen syllables. It is a momentary poem containing nature allusions or depictions of the environment, impressions and emotions and also an element of insight or surprise. This concise form of poetry became famous internationally more than a century ago and it is still highly popular. Thousands of people write haiku and participate in haiku meetings and competitions globally. In recent years, Tatar language haiku poetry has become an integral part of multilingual haiku activities of a group based in Finland. The poems are discussed during online meetings alongside other languages and mixed-language poetry. They are then published on a specialised website, Haiku Colorit. Within only a short time, the original Tatar haiku poems have gained a following of hundreds of readers.

Encouragement of creativity is the foundation for these activities, but parallel with writing also the translation activities are important. The haiku poems are published with translations in at least two but often four or five languages on the website. Writing, translating and editing poems are activities which develop language skills. Haiku poetry is also used worldwide for language learning. The short poems are easy to understand and readers receive a feeling of success while reading. For language learners the poems are useful tools for acquisition of vocabulary and for expression and translation exercises. Writing original poems also activate and support the development of language knowledge in a new language. Experiences gathered globally and by the Haiku Colorit team through innovative language teaching, introduction of haiku poems into schoolbooks and work with migrants show that the short poems are an easy and quick gateway to learning and creating motivation for acquisition of a new language.

This article documents several aspects of the use of haiku poetry. The haiku poem and its goals; form and contents; writing and creating haiku in Tatar; translation; language learning with haiku poetry; and recent developments and innovative practices using haiku poems as a path to support and inspire language users and learners are presented. Part I provides an overview of haiku poetry by Sabira Stahlberg, with examples in Tatar, English, Finnish and Hungarian from the Haiku Colorit online meetings and poems published online. A first-hand description of original Tatar language haiku poetry writing, editing and challenges before a haiku poet are presented by Fazile Nasretidin in Part II. Orsolya Kiss analyses haiku poetry as a tool for language learning in Part III. The aim of this three-part article is to map out how haiku poetry can be used in widely different contexts to support, develop and teach a language.

Keywords: haiku, Tatar poetry, creativity, language skills, language development, language learning

Dil gelişimi ve dil öğrenmeye yönelik yaratıcı bir yol olarak Haiku şiirleri

Özet: Haiku, aslında üç satır ve on yedi heceden oluşan bir Japon kısa şiir biçimidir. Çok kısa bir şiir olarak; doğaya göndermeler veya doğrudan çevre tasvirleri, izlenimler ve duygularla birlikte ayrıca bir içgörü veya sürpriz unsuru içerir. Bu özlü şiir biçimi, bir asırdan fazla bir süre önce uluslararası alanda ün kazandı ve bugün hala oldukça popüler; binlerce insan haiku yazıyor ve dünya çapında haiku toplantılarına ve yarışmalarına katılıyor. Son yıllarda, Tatar dilindeki haiku şiirleri, Finlandiya'daki çok dilli haiku etkinliklerinin entegre bir parçası haline geldi. Şiirler, çevrimiçi toplantılarda diğer dillerde ve karışık farklı dillerdeki şiirlerle birlikte tartışılıyor, ayrıca özel bir web sitesi olan Haiku Colorit'te yayınlanıyor. Kısa bir süre içinde, yüzlerce okuyucu orijinal Tatar haiku şiirlerinin takipçisi oldu.

Yaratıcılığın teşvik edilmesi bu faaliyetlerin temelini oluşturuyor, ancak haiku şiirleri en az iki olmak üzere genellikle birkaç dile tercüme edilerek yayınlandığından, şiirlerin yazılmasının yanı sıra çeviri faaliyetleri de önem taşıyor. Şiirlerin çevrilmesi ve düzenlenmesi dil becerilerini geliştiren etkinliklerdir. Haiku şiiri dünya çapında dil öğrenimi için de kullanılmaktadır. Kısa şiirler kolay anlaşılır ve okuyucuya okurken bir başarı hissi verir. Dil öğrenenler için şiirler, kelime bilgisi edinme ve ifade ve çeviri alıştırmalarında faydalı araçlardır. Özgün şiirler yazmak, yeni bir dilde becerilerin gelişimini harekete geçirir ve destekler. Küresel olarak toplanan deneyimler ve ayrıca Haiku Colorit ekibinin yenilikçi dil öğretimi ile birlikte haiku şiirlerinin okul kitaplarına eklenmesi ve göçmenlerle yapılan çalışmalar, kısa şiirlerin yeni bir dil edinimi için motivasyon oluşturduğunu ve öğrenmeye geçişte kolay ve hızlı bir araç olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bu makale, haiku kullanımının çeşitli yönlerini açıklamaktadır. Haiku ve biçimi, içeriği ve amaçları, haiku yazma ve oluşturma, çevirisi, haiku şiiriyle dil öğrenme ve dil kullanıcılarını ve öğrencilerini desteklemek ve ilham vermek için bir yöntem olarak haiku şiirindeki son gelişmeler anlatılmaktadır. Dil desteği, geliştirme ve öğrenme için haiku şiirlerini kullanarak yenilikçi uygulamalar sunulmaktadır. 1. Bölümde, Haiku Colorit çevrimiçi toplantılarından ve web sitesinde yayınlanan Tatarca, Fince ve İngilizce örneklerle Sabira Stahlberg'in haiku şiirine genel bir bakış verilmektedir. 2. Bölümde Fazile Nasretdin, orijinal Tatar dilinde haiku yazımı, düzenlemesi ve zorluklarının ilk elden bir açıklamasını sunmaktadır. Orsolya Kiss, 3. Bölümde dil öğreniminde bir araç olarak haiku şiirini analiz etmektedir. Üç bölümden oluşan bu araştırmanın amacı, Haiku şiirinin dili desteklemek, geliştirmek ve öğretmek için çok farklı bağlamlarda nasıl kullanılabileceğinin haritasını çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: haiku, Tatar şiiri, yaratıcılık, dil gelişimi, dil öğrenimi

Haiku şigirläre telne üsterü häm tel öyränü öçen icadi ber yul

Referat: Haiku – Yaponiyada çığa başlagan kıskaçä yazılğan şigriyät isulı. Haiku öç yuldan häm uncide icektän tora. Ul tabigättä yäki äylänä-tirädä tujan hislärne tasvirlep başlana häm hiç tä kötelmäğän uy-fiker belän tämamlana. Kıskaçä haiku isulı belän yazılğan öçyullıklar ber asırdan artıq inde halıkara tanılıp, bügenge könnä bik tä popolar bulgannar; dönya külämendä meñnärçä keşelär haikular yaza, tüğäräklärgä häm bäygelärgä katnaşa. Soñğı yıllarda Finlandiyädä tatar telendä haiku yazu küptellek şögileneñ ayırılmas ber öleşenä äverelde. Şigirlär mahsus internet sahifäsendä bastırıla, häm alar turında onlain oçraşularda katnaş tellär häm bütän tellär poeziyäse belän yänäşä fikerläşü ütä. Kıska vakıt eçendä tatar telendäge haikular yözläğän ukuçılarnıñ igtıbarın cälep itte.

İcadi maksat möhim bulsa da, yazu belän berrättän tärjemä itü eşe dä möhim, çönki şigirlär iñ azında ike yäki kübräk tellärgä tärjemä itelä. Haiku poeziyäse törle illärdä tel öyränü äsbapı bulıp taullanıla. Kıska şigirlärne añlau ciñel häm ukuçıda uñay hislärlər uyata. Haiku yazu telne aktivlaştıruda häm tärjemä itüde faydalı koral. Finlandiyädäge Haiku Colorit törkemeneñ häm başka illärneñ täcribäläre kıska şigirlär yaña telne öyrätüde häm öyränüde ciñel häm tiz ber isul ikänen kürsätä.

Bu mäkälä haiku şigriyäteneñ berničä kullanu aspektın dokumentlaştıra: haiku narsä ul häm anıñ yasalış forması nindi, icat itüe häm yazuı, tärjemä itüe, tel öyränü ölkäsendä soñğı üseşe, tatar telen kullanuçılarga yärdäm häm ilham uyatu ömete. Mäkälä öç öleşän tora: katnaş telle haiku häm tatar telendä bulgan haiku belän tanıştıru (Sabira Stahlberg), tatar telendä haiku yazu turında berençe täcribälär (Fazile Nasretdin) häm haiku yärdämendä tel öyränü (Orsolya Kiss).

Хайку шигырьләре телне үстерү һәм тел өйрәнү өчен ижади бер юл

Реферат: Хайку – Японияда чыга башлаган кыскача язылган шигърият ысулы. Хайку өч юлдан һәм унҗиде иҗектән тора. Ул табигатьтә яки әйләнә-тирәдә туган хисләрне тасвирлап башлана һәм һич тә көтелмәгән үй-фiкер белән тәмамлана. Кыскача хайку ысулы белән язылган өчюллыклар бер асырдан артык инде халыкара танылып, бүгенге көнне бик тә популяр булганнар; дөня күләмендә меңнәрчә кешеләр хайкулар яза, түгәрәкләргә һәм бәйгеләргә катнаша. Соңгы елларда Финляндиядә татар телендә хайку язу күптеллек шөгыләнең аерылмас бер өлешенә әверелде. Шигырьләр махсус интернет сәхифәсендә бастырыла, һәм алар турында онлайн очрашуларда катнаш телләр һәм бүтән телләр поезиясе белән янәшә фикерләшү үтә. Кыска вакыт эчендә татар телендә хайкулар йөзләгән укучыларның игътибарын җәлеп итте. Ижади максат мөһим булса да, язу белән беррәттән тәрҗемә итү эше дә мөһим, чөнки шигырьләр иң азында ике яки күбрәк телләргә тәрҗемә ителә.

Хайку поэзиясе төрле илләрдә тел өйрәнү әсбапы булып та кулланыла. Кыска шигырьләрне аңлау җиңел һәм укучыда уңай хисләр уята. Хайку язу телне активлаштыруда һәм тәрҗемә итүдә файдалы корал. Финляндиядәге Хайку Колорит төркеменең һәм башка илләрнең тәҗрибәләре кыска шигырьләр яңа телне өйрәтүдә һәм өйрәнүдә җиңел һәм тиз бер ысул икәннен күрсәтә.

Бу мақалә хайку шигъриятенең берничә куллану аспектын документлаштыра: хайку нәрсә ул һәм аның ясалыш формасы нинди, иҗат итүе һәм язуы, тәрҗемә итүе, тел өйрәнү өлкәсендә соңгы үсеше, татар телен кулланучыларга ярдәм һәм илһам уяту өмете. Мақалә өч өлештән тора: катнаш телле хайку һәм татар телендә булган хайку белән таныштыру (Сабира Сталберг), татар телендә хайку язу турында беренбче тәҗрибәләр (Фазилә Насретдин) һәм хайку ярдәмендә тел өйрәнү (Оршоля Киш).

I. Haiku poetry

• Sabira Stahlberg

Haiku has been called the world's shortest poem. This originally Japanese form of poetry contains seventeen syllables, divided into three lines with five, seven and five syllables each. Several forms of songs and poetry, many of them satirical, such as *renga*, *waka*, *hokku* and *haikai* contributed to the development of modern haiku. The name *haiku* was established by Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902) at the end of the nineteenth century. Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) is revered as the father of haiku, and he is probably the most famous of all haiku writers for the past 400 years. This poetry form, together with *tanka*, has been highly popular among the educated elite in Japan, and haiku is also taught in schools in many countries (see Yasuda 1957; Hakutani 2009: 7–36; Higginson 1985: 7–47; Addiss 2012). Haiku poems can be combined with pictures, traditionally paintings but nowadays also photos, into *haiga* ('haiku-picture'; see Addiss 2012 for classical examples). Here is an example of a Tatar language haiga:



*cloud ribbon
drawn on the blue sky
have a good trip*

Translation and photo: Sabira Stahlberg

Haiku poetry is today a worldwide phenomenon. These short poems gained international popularity especially during the second half of the twentieth century. The first translations and original efforts of haiku creation in other languages than Japanese were published already at the beginning of the 1900s by mainly French, English and American writers (modernists, see Hakutani 2009). In the 1950s and 1960s the beat poets and others interested in Zen Buddhism discovered haiku. They created their own variation of the poetry which often moved in a direction far away from the original idea of haiku. In Western Europe and North America many writers and also general audiences are fond of the haiku

form because of its concentration and “here and now”-attitude (see Higginson 1985: 49–76). Even persons who claim that they do not understand poetry often find haiku poems easy to connect with. What are the aspects or factors which make haiku poetry so interesting for such a wide range of readers and writers, not only poets, but also ordinary people and language learners?

This first part discusses haiku poetry in general and the haiku activities in Finland. The examples are originally written in Tatar by Fazile Nasretidin, whose background is Mishar Tatar, but she writes in an internationally understandable form of Tatar (International Tatar, see Easy to Read article by Stahlberg & Nasretidin, in this issue). Fazile Nasretidin translates her poems herself into Finnish, English, Swedish and Turkish, and her poems have also been translated into English by Sabira Stahlberg and some into Hungarian by Orsolya Kiss. All poems presented in this article have been discussed and edited by a multilingual group at Haiku Colorit meetings during 2019–2021. The Haiku Colorit group was initiated in 2017 by Marianne Stahlberg who has actively encouraged haiku writing in Finland and Sweden and conducted many haiku workshops for the past twenty years. The haiku meetings (since 2020 called *Haikuriltai*) are guided by Sabira Stahlberg, a scholar, writer and creative writing teacher. Until now hundreds of haiku poems in several languages have been published on the Haiku Colorit website by dozens of writers.¹

Form

One important reason for the popularity of haiku is its short form. There are just three lines and a limited amount of syllables. Rhythm, rhymes and other poetic forms or techniques are not applied, and haiku poetry does not contain any aphorisms or metaphors. Only essential words, just enough to convey the meaning, are put into the poems.

A comparison between English and Japanese haiku poems shows that seventeen syllables in English contain on average one third more information than the same syllable amount in Japanese (Reichhold 2002: 28). The language structures are different. Comparing Tatar language poems and haiku poetry in other languages, both Turkic and languages from other groups, would be an interesting task for linguists, literary scholars and language students. Such a study could reveal new information on how different languages transmit information and how far the same meaning can be compressed into a few short lines in different languages.

1 Haiku Colorit website: <https://haiku.coloritrf.eu>

A typical haiku poem contains nature words or allusions to the natural environment or seasons. In this poem, Fazile Nasretidin talks directly about the environment and a specific season, winter:

*Kül katkan – bozlı,
dulkınnarı tınaygan.
Balıklar imin?*

*The lake is frozen.
Waves have fallen silent.
Fish are safe?*

(Fazile Nasretidin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2021)

The writer does not explain why or who is concerned about the fish, but shows the frozen lake and the waves which do not “speak” or move, because the waters have turned into ice. The question about the fish is surprising in the third line and the answer remains for the reader to solve. This is characteristic for haiku: just enough words which fire the reader’s imagination.

Content

A second reason for haiku popularity worldwide is that a haiku poem is anchored in the real world, yet it moves simultaneously on other cognitive levels. A complex Japanese concept, *yūgen*, contains several aspects of human experience and impressions, among them natural grace, release, modesty, concealment, infinity, profundity, depth, darkness and eternity (Hakutani 2009: 11–12).

In another Tatar language poem, the classical haiku style is used for birds setting off for their long journey south in the autumn. A closer reading reveals that the writer says goodbye to summer through this allusion to a season. The readers can decide for themselves if there is melancholy, love and well-wishing for the birds, or some other mood hidden in the third line. The writer remains on the ground observing the cranes taking off. The picture described in the poem offers the reader a strong feeling of suddenness, together with the dynamic picture of leaving:

*Tornalar kırdı –
därräü oçıp kittelär.
İzge säğatlär!*

*Cranes in the field
suddenly spin into flight.
Safe journey!*

(Fazile Nasretidin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2020)

Traditionally a reference to nature or season should be included, but many modern haiku writers are of the opinion that is not necessary. In the Japanese tradition words referring to nature can be either direct terms (summer, autumn, winter, spring) or products (strawberries in early summer, apples in autumn), traditions (celebrations) or other events (bird migration) occurring during a specific season. *Senryū*, a haiku poem without seasonal words, is seen as a valid haiku today mainly outside Japan, although purists do not accept them as authentic haiku poetry (Reichhold 2002: 39).

Here is an example of a typical nature haiku with a clear season. Winter is indicated because of the snow:

Kar tukıması
täräzälärne örtkän.
Bäs çeltäre.

Snow fabric
covers the windows.
Crystal network.

(Fazile Nasretidin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2021)

Some poems are not that clear, as they only allude to the time of year. Dried fruit can refer to winter or spring in the regions where there are four seasons. In the pre-supermarket period, fresh fruit was largely unavailable in shops during winter and spring until the first summer fruits were ripe. In northern Europe dried fruit and nuts are also traditionally associated with Christmas.

The next example talks about a well-known phenomenon: dried fruit are often wrinkled and sweet; the sugar content is high. The fact is expressed and transmitted to the reader together with the idea of ageing: elderly people usually get wrinkles and start shrinking in size (and some become sweeter). The human senses are also present (compare Reichhold 2002: 41), especially eyesight and taste buds. This poem was written on the topic "Fruit" for a Haikuriltai:

Kıpkän cimeşlär –
tännäre böreşkän.
Tatlı, tämlelär.

Dry fruit –
wrinkled skins.
Sweet, tasty.

(Fazile Nasretidin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2021)

Insight

A third aspect which contributes to haiku popularity and the easy understanding of the poems is the action and immediate presence. Something happens now and here and it is explained in common words. The writer appears to take a photograph of the moment. The reader looks at this photograph, discovering many things the photographer wanted the reader to see, but the reader might also find elements which the writer did not necessarily intend to include but simply appear in the picture. In a haiku poem, the reader steps directly into the event taking place in the poem. The reader can catch the meaning instantly or receive a revelation or insight after thinking it over. There is nothing hidden in this haiku and the ideas are crystal-clear and simple, at least on the surface:

*Tın diñgezlärne
katı davıl yarsıta.
Yarlar yuıla.*

*Calm seas –
storm makes them furious
washing the shores.*

(Fazile Nasrettdin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2021)

Here the calm sea is whipped up by a storm which causes the waves to splash onto the beach, but there is another level, too. All seasons are possible, except the time when the sea might be frozen. The poem can be interpreted from the viewpoints of a natural phenomenon but also as anger or other strong emotions in a human. In fact, the poem was written on the topic “Anger” for an online Haikuriltai of the Haiku Colorit group. Parallel with the action the poem also conveys the idea that the storm will abate and the waves wash away the anger.

Action and a fleeting moment is caught in another poem about dew which evaporates with the sun’s rays in the morning. This is a microcosm in a macro world, a typical feature for haiku poems. This poem alludes to summer, but also to guests who come and leave, and it can further be interpreted as an allegory about human life and its shortness:

*Täk çık çirämdä
yaltrap tora.
Kunakka kilgän.*

*Dewdrop
glitters in grass.
Short visit.*

(Fazile Nasrettdin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2020)

Haiku spirit

A fourth reason for the wide interest in haiku poetry globally is that a poem can be written anywhere in a short moment of concentration and focus, in many ways and in different languages. All the poem needs is the haiku spirit. The haiku spirit means that the poem keeps to the basic principles of haiku poetry although the syllable count may vary. The first two lines tell what is happening and where and sometimes who is involved and how: a situation, picture, setting or an environment. The third line is usually a contrast, surprise or change. A haiku poem is not simply putting words after another or suggesting a picture, but to trigger a momentary feeling, emotion or atmosphere, and to awaken an insight and appreciation in the reader (see Reichhold 2002: 27–81). Adding a photo or a painting and making the haiku poem into a haiga can contribute to the understanding and perception. Here is an example of a photo together with the previous example, making it more complex through the rose:



*Dewdrop
glitters in grass.
Short visit.*

Translation and photo:
Sabira Stahlberg

A poem which contains the haiku spirit can be about anything, including everyday actions and life, small events or changes in consciousness which modify our view of ourselves and everything around us. Humour is a constant companion to help haiku writers and readers in catching the meaning and shifting to another point of view. The readers create the scenery or event in their own minds, adding whatever they need, want or is necessary to understand the scanty words in the poem. A good haiku poem makes the reader look at the world from a new angle and discover the small world inside the big one we live in (see Yasuda 1957).

In the following poem, the writer looks back at her life. The third line is crucial; it lifts the poem to a more abstract level by broadening the scope of observation. The picture is concrete and the writer shares her idea with other people who might have similar life experiences. A slight ambiguity in the fading of the fabric leaves space for various thoughts, for instance how and why the fabric has faded,

has it been washed many times or did the sun bleach it? What were the original colours, texture and patterns? Is the author satisfied with or unhappy about her life? The poem further raises the question of whose truth are we looking at. Here language is at play, too, as the Tatar, Finnish and Hungarian versions all contain alliteration:

Tatar

*Ütkän mizgellär –
tösle-tösle tukıma.
Matur aşalgan.*

Finnish

*Eletyt hetket –
kuin kirjava kangas.
Kauniisti haalistunut.*

English

*Past moments –
like a colourful fabric.
Beautifully faded.*

Hungarian

*Elmúlt pillanat -
mint egy színpompás szövet.
Szépen kifakul.*

(Fazile Nasretdin, Tatar and Finnish; Sabira Stahlberg, English translation; Orsolya Kiss, Hungarian translation 2020)

Haikuriltai: multilingual haiku activities

Today haiku associations, groups and clubs function in many countries and languages throughout the world. There are international conferences, seminars, meetings, competitions, scores of websites and also much research on haiku. Dozens of books, anthologies and translations are published yearly (see Higginson 1985: 77–83). Many writers and ordinary people produce haiku and the concept has been stretched to include even collections of quotations by famous people (see for instance Räikkönen 2018); quotations, aphorisms etc. are in fact not haiku poems at all. Haiku is not anymore just a Japanese-style poem but has become a local and global space where everybody can write, read, discuss, socialise and share their moments and memories (Higginson 1985: 139, 151; Reichhold 2002: 82–106). Haiku poetry reading and writing is also used in language teaching (see Part III).

Ordinarily haiku clubs and organisations use only one or two languages, but Haiku Colorit is an open, international and multilingual group. It welcomes all who write haiku in any language to submit their poems for discussion. The group is part of the non-profit association Colorit ry.rf.,² presently the only

2 Colorit ry.rf.: <https://coloritrf.eu>

regular haiku events organiser in Finland. The group arranges occasional haiku workshops in libraries and during literature festivals and it also regularly presents multilingual haiku at the Helsinki Book Fair. Meetings were previously arranged in a café in Helsinki but since the Covid-19 pandemic began Haikuriltais are organised online.

Haiku Colorit also keeps a website, where poems are published after being discussed and edited during the monthly meetings.³ The website has thousands of visitors every month. It also publishes haiga (haiku with pictures) and information about haiku writing. Tatar haiku poems are included in every Haikuriltai alongside other languages, Finnish, Swedish, English, Hungarian, Turkish, Estonian, etc., and mixed language. Participants can write about predefined topics which are published on the website before the meeting or freely about any topic.

Haiku and language skills

Haiku activities are a highly advantageous method for acquiring or improving language skills. Teaching how to read and write poetry is especially important for several kinds of language users and speakers, learners of language and culture, migrants who are adapting to a new society and everyone else who wishes to improve their expression of feelings and thoughts. Poetry reading and writing improves both vocabulary and grammar (Stahlberg 2020: 32).

Simplicity and a feeling of connection with the language and with the cultural and natural environments are important aspects of any haiku poetry activity. Haiku writing can also lower stress levels and improve concentration and focus, enlarge the perception of the surroundings, increase satisfaction in life and clarify thoughts and ideas (compare Hakutani 2009: 11–12; Reichhold 2002: 11–26). Scholars have not yet paid much attention to this side of haiku activities, but the results from multilingual haiku meetings, creative writing workshops and other haiku events organised by Haiku Colorit show that haiku writing is helpful for reducing anxiousness and stress in general, and for bringing the mind into the present moment.⁴

3 Haiku Colorit: <https://haiku.coloritrf.eu>

4 See <https://bokpil.eu/sv/skriv-haiku-minska-pa-stress/>

Publishing haiku poetry

Publishing multilingual haiku is one of the aims of the Haiku Colorit group and its publisher Bokpil.⁵ The Tatar haiku poems are also a part of these publication activities. So far Marianne Stahlberg has published a Swedish-language Easy to Read haiku book (see article about Easy to Read by Stahlberg & Nasretidin, in this issue). It was translated by the author herself and Sabira Stahlberg into English as *A hundred poems (Hundra dikter, 2017)*. Poems from this book have been reprinted in schoolbooks in Finland as an example of modern Swedish-language Easy to Read literature. In Sweden and Finland, as well as in some other countries, the Easy to Read haiku book is used as a first reader for migrants, students and others who are learning Swedish, persons who have reading difficulties such as dyslexia and children who are learning to read. The English-language poems are used in language teaching internationally.

In Sabira Stahlberg's multilingual poetry books *Polyglotta Sabirica* (2015, translated into German as *Polyglorica+* and English *Polyglotta Sabirica inglisch* in 2017) and *Wan Sun* (2021), many haiku poems appear in mixed language and include also Tatar and other Turkic languages. The poems have reached a large international audience and they are the object of academic literary research especially within the field of multilingual literature (compare Domokos et al. 2016; Domokos 2018). These poems mix vocabulary and grammatical structures and in addition to the commonly perceived levels of haiku poetry understanding they propel the reader into a multilingual universe.

Fazile Nasretidin's poems are probably the first haiku poetry originally written in Tatar language with Latin script. In the following Part II, the author explains first-hand in Tatar how her haiku poems are created and processed before publishing them online. In Part III Orsolya Kiss analyses the discussion in Part II and presents the utilisation of haiku poems for language learning.

Şıgırneñ az süzendä

küp magnä bulır.

A few words in a poem

can express a lot.

Tatar mäkale / proverb

5 Bokpil: <https://bokpil.eu>, for books see Villa Bokpil: <https://villa.bokpil.eu>

II. Haiku yazu – Creating haiku

• Fazile Nasretdin

*Däftär biteneñ
şakmakların karıymın.
Aç kürenälär.*

*I watch the empty squares
on the notebook page.
It cries: food!*

(Sabira Stahlberg tärjemäse)

Şigriyät – bigräk tä kıskaçä yazılğan, küp mäanäle uy-fikerlär eçenä alğan poeziyä, mine yaş çağımnan birle ukırğa tarttı. Halık avız icatınıñ bäyetläre, mönäcatläre, kıska cırları, dürt yullıkları, kanatlı süzläre, mäkalläre häm başka şundiylar fälsäfi häm ahlaki karaşları belän mine soklandıra.

Dönya külämendä kiñ itep taralgan yapon halkınıñ tanka-haikuları miña oşiy, küñelemä yata. Tatar şigriyätendä saf haiku ahäñendä yazılğan şigerlär oçratkanım yuk. Läkin tatar ädäbiyatında haikularını süzgä alganda talantlı tatar şagire, Därdmänd (1859–1921), iskä töşä. Şigerläre haiku stilendä bulmasa da, anıñ icatında uy-fiker yötetü, osta süz uynatu häm omumi keşelek toygıları tabigätkä kuşılıp açık häm yäşeren çağıla; az süzlär belän tirän, fälsäfi fikerlär kilep çığa.

Misal 1: Därdmänd (Zakir Rämiev)

*Küñel här cirdä göl ezli,
Kadär här cirdä tikän tözli...*

Bolıt ütte. Gömberli kük yıraklarda.

Sil şaulıy, sular görli bolaklarda.

Taviş – kolaklarda...

ozaklarda...

sil = taşkın

*Taulı matur illärendä
Görli agım suları;
Tonık yaltır küllärendä
Kañğıldıy akkuları.*

akku = akkoş

*Ence-almazlar yugalmas
Häm yatıp kalmıs – ütär.*

Bügenge könne haiku şigerlären uku-yazu dönya külämendä kiñ itep taralgan. Minem haikularıma kilsäk, alar iskärmästäñ tua başladı. Könnärneñ berendä haiku tögärägenä çakırılıp katnaşkan idem dä, duslarınıñ etärüe näticäsendä yaza başladım. Bu ädäbi tögäräk ayga ber tapkır cıyıla. Aralaşu häm yazu törle tellärdä bara. Katnaşuçılar yazgan haikuların büleşälär, bergä eşkärtälär, eçtälekläre turında fikerleşälär, ber-bersenä köç-ilham birälär häm çın haiku stilen tabarga yärdäm iteşälär. Härkem üz telägän telendä aralaşa – ber urtak tel härzaman tabıla. Belmägän teldä yazılğan haikularınıñ eçtälekläre tärce-mälär yärdämendä barısına da barıp citä. Tatar tele başka tellär arasında bertigez kabul itelä.

Haiku ıulında uy-fikerlärne yazıp kuyu, miña kalsa, bik caylı. Birelgän ölge buyınça (haiku 5 – 7 – 5 icekle öçyullık), kıskaçça, küpmäanäle fikerläer tabıp, alar belän baş miyen eşlätep toru faydalı häm ruhi yaktan şıfalı da, dip ışanam. Haikuniñ berençe ike yulında äytelgän fikerdän soñ öçençesendä omumiyätlä kötelmägän ber uy äytelä. Bu ayıruçça ber näfislek häm ukuçını uylarga öndi.⁶

Mısal 2

*Teş arasına
aş valçıkları kala.
Üç orlıkları?*

*In the tooth cavity
food crumbs remain.
Seeds of revenge?*

6 Haikular öçen sıltama: <https://haiku.coloritrf.eu/tt/>

*Diñgez dulkınnarı
taşlı yarga bärelä.
Kübege kala.*

*Meren aallokko
törmäilee rantakiviin.
Vaahto viipyilee.*

*Sea waves
bumping into shore rocks.
Foam lingers.*

(Sabira Stahlberg tärjemäse)

Haiku öçen fikerlär tirä-yaknı küzätep, törle hallärgä duçar bulıp tua da, öçyullıka äverelä. Haiku omumiyätlä tabiatka bäyle, läkin min alarnı törle temalarga yazırğa yaratam. Matur küreneş, muzıka, cır süzläre, tämle aşlar, törle mönasäbätlär, yahşı kitaplar, uñaysız häm äybät hislär, hayvannar, hava torışı, gäzitä-jurnal tekstları h.b.ş. yazırğa çakıra häm häväs birep tora. Ber kıska mizgel uylarnı ällä kaylarga iltä. Katı stress bulganda haiku yazırğa utırsañ, arıganlıgıñ häm naçar hisläreñ taralıp yugala. Komaçaulıy torgan yuk-bar närsälärne onıtıp kitäseñ, küñeleñ rähatlänä. Sängat yağınnan yugarı dārəcälänüen başkalardan kötmiseñ, läkin üzeñ uñdım dip toyasıñ da, kanatlanıp kitäseñ.

*Old age, we say,
increases our experience.
Colours get stronger.*

Translation and photo: Sabira Stahlberg



Miña kalsa, haiku yazı – köndäleک şögileñnän tuktap kalıp uylanı, küñeleñne tınıçlandırı. Utırasıñ, uylanasıñ, bälki dä matur küreneş küräseñ. Kürgän-sizengän äyberlär häm dönyavi mönasäbätlär arasında yaña elemtälär tabasıñ, uyıñnı kileşle süzlär belän gäüdüländeräseñ. Süzlärneñ çaması häm eçtälekneñ baylığı kilep çıksa, rähatlänep kitäseñ. Yazıp kuyganıñ cimeşle bulsın da, başkasınıñ da uynı cälep itsen ide dip teläp kalasıñ. Omumikeşelek toygıların, dönyavi tormış mönasäbätlären añlau öçen yardım itsen dip ömettä kalasıñ.

Saf yañgıraşlı haiku, älbättä, härzaman üzennän-üze tumıy. Anı eşkärtergä häm yaña versiyälär yazırğa yış-yış turı kilä. Kileşle süzlär berdän tabılmasa, uylanıp yöriseñ, süzleklär kariysiñ, yakınnarıñnan

soraşasıñ häm dä, ezlänep torgan süzläreñ akılıña dährüü kilep utıra. Äğär dä haikularıñını başkalarga ukır öçen nindi bulsa räveştä yazıp çıgarırğa teläsäñ, älbättä, alarnı kabat eşkärtergä kiräk.

Misal 3

I Versiyä

*Diñgez tirängä
çumarga yäşep tora.
Vakit äzäyä.*

II Versiyä

*Diñgez çakıra.
Tirän çuması kilä.
Vakit äzäyä.*

*The sea is calling.
I wish to dive deep.
Time is running out.*

(Sabira Stahlberg tärçemäse)

Tatar telennän fin telenä tärçemä itü omumiyätlä ciñel ütä. İkesä dä tözeleş bagımınan agglutinatif tellär bulganga kürä cömlälärne tezü bik zur kıyınlık kitermi. İkesendä dä kuşımçalar (suffikslar) yärdämendä süzgä yaña magnälär häm tösmärlär barlıkka kilä. Bu tellär urtaklığı tärçemä itüne ciñeläytä.

Misal 4

*Tugızau yözä
akkoşniñ balaları.
Ana akkoş yuk.*

*Yhdeksän pientä
joutsenta järvellä.
Ema ei näy.*

*Nine little swan chicks
are swimming on the lake.
No sign of mother.*

(Sabira Stahlberg tärçemäse)

Kübesençä äytemnärneñ karşılığın tabu, kultur ayırmalıkları häm süzlärneñ ozınlıkları avırlık kiterergä mömkin. Teldän telgä tärçemä itkändä berdäm yañğıraş yäki ahäñ tabu kıyınlık kiterä, härzaman mömkin dä tügel. Tatar telennän inglizçägä tärçemä itkändä tellärneñ tözeleş ayırmalığı öçen döres ahäñne buldırırğa başqa yullar saylarga turı kilä.

Misal 5

*Tın diñgezlärne
katı davıl yarsıta.
Yarlar yuıla.*

*Calm seas –
storm makes them furious
washing the shores.*

(Sabira Stahlberg tärjemäse)

Tugan telneñ belüen tiränäytü, süz baylıgın üsterü yäki çit tellär öyrängändä haikular ber östämä tel üzlästerü yulı bulıp tora. Tellärne yaşäter häm üsterer öçen küp uku häm yazu möhim. Ayırucha azçılık yäki yotlu kurkınıçı astındagı tellärdä ukır öçen törle materiallarıñ bar bulı zaruri. Tatar tele häm başka azçılık tellär dönyanıñ törle taraflarında küpçelek tellär yänäşäsändä yaña tösmärlär alsın, yaşäsen häm bayısın.

*Tellär bolıtı
havalarda gel yözsen,
cil-davılda da.*

**Här göl üz sabagında çäçäk ata.
Every flower blossoms on its own stem.
Tatar mäkale / proverb**

III. Haiku composition as an instrument for language learning and development

• Orsolya Kiss

Introduction and theoretical background

This section provides a brief overview of haiku composition as a tool for language learning. It also highlights how haiku writing sessions can support language development and language maintenance among minority language speakers.

Since the 1970s the methods and instruments for language learning have undergone substantial changes. A dramatic shift from the grammar-based to communication-based language teaching has occurred (Nassaji & Fotos 2010: 12). One of the direct outcomes of this process is the approach called *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*. Instead of focusing on teaching grammatical structures, CLT encourages students to achieve communication skills in the particular language. This approach has contributed to the development and implementation of new language learning methods in second language classrooms, including also creative writing.

Empirical studies show that creative writing in a second language can enhance students' vocabulary learning and support writing skills and self-expression in the target language (Khatib 2011; Hanauer 2012; Kırkgöz 2014). As a form of creative writing, haiku composition has gained a lot of attention as a language learning task and also as a research topic in second language classrooms. Many empirical case studies have been carried out on the topic worldwide. Examples of participants in such studies are students at Japanese universities learning English as a second language (Iida 2011, 2012 and 2017; Lee 2011), university students in Ecuador (Santillán 2018) and primary school pupils in Bulgaria from the Roma minority (Pannacci 2019).⁷

Although many of the students participating in the studies found haiku composition a challenging task, important benefits were identified as well. The results show that haiku composition is a valuable exercise especially for vocabulary acquisition. The researchers agree that this is due to the special

7 Eleonora Pannacci has developed free online materials with haiku poems in Easy Language for English classes, see <https://edu.bokpil.eu/en/activities/>

structure of haiku – seventeen syllables within three lines. The structure encourages the learners to look up synonyms and similar words to be able to express their message within the syllable limits (Lee 2011: 32; Santillán 2018: 110–112). Further, haiku writing increases the awareness of the connotative worth of words and enhances self-expression skills in the foreign language. During classroom haiku sessions researchers/teachers generally apply the following steps (Iida 2011 and 2012; Lee 2011; Santillán 2018; Pannacci 2019):

1. The students learn about the concept of haiku poetry.
2. They read haiku in English.
3. They compose haiku by themselves.
4. The students peer-review and discuss each others' haiku.
5. Finally, they choose an image which they attach to the haiku poem.

Some researchers include additional steps: for instance, in Atsushi Iida's studies, students also keep a diary about their learning process, difficulties and self-evaluation. In addition, Iida publishes the haiku poems of the students (Iida 2011 and 2012).

There are a few controversial topics about haiku composition and they cause certain disagreements among researchers. Specifically, while most researchers encourage students to follow the traditional haiku structure and include seasonal references, Bu Yong Lee (2011: 31–33) advises students to use additional syllables. The extra syllables offer more space for the exploration of new structures and for experiments with freshly learned vocabulary. Lee provides also other important aspects that should be different for haiku poetry composed in a second language. Haiku poetry is traditionally used to capture a specific moment and mostly written in the present tense capturing *the present*. However, Lee proposes that haiku composition in a second language should allow learners to try out various grammatical structures other than the present tense and thus stimulate their learning process. In traditional haiku seasonal references must be mentioned, but in second language haiku composition students benefit more from writing about many different topics and not only of the passing of time. Consequently the learners would experience less nervousness, affective filters and stress when they do not find the suitable synonyms for season words or fail to conform to the syllable limitations (Lee 2011: 39–40).

In the following, I will discuss how haiku composition sessions can be utilised to support minority language speakers, using Fazile Nasretidin's experiences from Part II. Later a personal and empirical experience on how haiku writing can support minority language learning as a second language is presented.

Haiku composition supporting minority languages: Fazile Nasrettdin's experience

In this section, I argue that haiku composition can support the development of language skills both on the individual and the collective minority level. The three authors of this article regularly attend the Haikuriltai meetings of Haiku Colorit. These monthly multilingual meetings have many aspects in common with the haiku sessions organised for students, described in the monolingual case studies mentioned above. During the sessions, the participants share haiku poems they have written before the meeting (most poems are written before; from time to time also instant haiku is written during the session). The haiku meetings are organised online since spring 2020 and they include reading the poems aloud, exchanging thoughts about them and the translations, and a discussion of language, word choice, content and form. Later a selection of the edited haiku poems are published on the Haiku Colorit website. The Haikuriltais are arranged according to the following structure:

1. Before the session the participants compose poems on a specific topic or any theme.
2. Monthly sessions, where participants give each other feedback (live peer-reviewing).
3. During the sessions, language, form and content are jointly improved (group work).
4. The haiku poems and translations are published on the website.

Even if there are several similarities with haiku classroom sessions, at the Haikuriltais the participants are already aware of the concept and spirit of haiku poetry and therefore the pedagogical part is not included. Further, the haiku writing courses in the case studies were organised in order to develop only one language (English), but the Haiku Colorit events are multilingual and develop at least three languages, usually between five and ten. The participants also present their haiku translations or translations are made instantly during the meeting, and the Haikuriltais might include haiku written in more than one language (mixed language). Through translating and discussing different aspects of the poems, the participants actively employ their multilingual skills. Additionally they can also pick up new phrases, words or elements from languages they are not familiar with before.

Although Tatar language is not used as the basis for the conversations (depending on the participants, two or more languages everybody understands are chosen), Fazile Nasrettdin writes her haiku poems in Tatar and translates them often herself (see Part II). She describes the process of haiku writing on her own as follows: "Often you have to work [on the haiku poems] and rewrite the versions. If you do not find the words right away, you think, walk, look up in dictionaries, ask close friends and family members, and then all of a sudden the right word comes into your mind." Fazile Nasrettdin's report in Part II covers several important issues about minority language use during haiku composition. More specifically, all fields of the minority language are actively used:

- *(re)writing* in Tatar during the process of haiku composition
- *reading and increasing vocabulary* while using dictionaries (Tatar and several other languages)
- *speaking, listening and processing* through discussions about word meanings and expressions with family members and friends

According to some researchers, bilingual persons are not supposed to possess the same degree of language proficiency in all fields (speaking, writing, listening, reading). Achieving high writing skills are thought to be especially challenging as it requires more effort (Myers-Scotton 2006: 42–43). Haiku composition appears to be an effective task for practising and developing all fields of language skills although it focuses on writing. Fazile Nasretidin acknowledges that this process deepens her mother tongue skills especially concerning vocabulary.

These qualitative results show similarities with the case studies about haiku composition in second language education: the participating students identified also vocabulary acquisition as one of the main benefits of haiku writing sessions. Fazile Nasretidin extends now her haiku composition further and includes translations in Finnish, English, Turkish and Swedish. She describes translating her own haiku poems as a difficult task, because it is challenging to find corresponding words with the accurate syllable number. She tries to keep to the seventeen syllables, however breaking the rule when necessary. Especially finding phrases about culture-related words can cause difficulties. She also reflects on the writing itself:

*Süzlär havada
çerki ketüe kebek.
Tiñlauçılar yuk.*

*Words fly in the air
like a herd of mosquitoes
with no listeners.*

(Fazile Nasretidin, translation Sabira Stahlberg 2019)

Even if the providing of translations creates several challenges, publishing literary writings composed in minority languages with translations can benefit the whole community. Firstly, translated literature can help majority language speakers to gain a better understanding about the world view of minority language speakers (PEN 2016; see also Domokos et al. 2016; Domokos 2018). Translated literature like haiku poems can also serve as important language learning and language skills development materials. One of the main challenges is the frequent lack of accurate materials, especially if the minority language is a non-standard language variety or a dialect (Villa 2002). The Tatars in Finland live in this kind of situation: they speak the Mishar Tatar dialect and write it in Latin script, in contrast to the more widely distributed Kazan Tatar which is written with the Cyrillic alphabet. According to

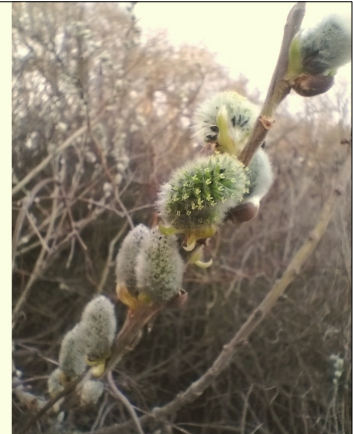
data from semi-structured interviews, most Tatars in Finland find it hard to read Tatar texts in the Cyrillic alphabet (Kiss 2019). The Tatar haiku poems written with the Latin script makes them easily accessible reading materials for other Tatar diaspora speakers and Tatar language learners and these poems can help the speakers enhance their language skills. On the other hand, for readers used to the Cyrillic script, the Latin orthography might create difficulties.

*I went on a long trip.
Suddenly the train stopped.
Spring again outside.*

Translation and photo: Sabira Stahlberg

Ozın yulga çıktım.
Kinät puyız tuktaldı.
Tışta tagın yaz.

© Fazile Nasretdin 2019



Another important aspect is that the Haiku Colorit meetings are organised online. This means that the participants are not geographically limited but can join in freely from any location in the world. Online meetings aiming at advancing language are recognised as a helpful activity for all who wish to improve their language skills. Especially in the case of minority languages which are spoken in more than one country online sessions can offer a uniting experience and an opportunity for maintaining language skills (Caroll et al. 2018).

Taking Fazile Nasretdin's subjective experience as the foundation, I suggest that haiku composition is a useful exercise from which minority language speakers and also their community can benefit. Haiku poems are easy to write, the composition develops the vocabulary, and when meetings are organised online, feedback and communication about the poems is easily accessible. Still, further and long-term research is needed to identify more accurately the potential advantages haiku composition has for the speakers' minority language skills.

Haiku composition for learning a minority language as a second language

In this section I present my qualitative experience about composing haiku poems in Tatar, which I am learning as a second language. I focus on the advantages for my language skills and aspects I have noticed since starting to attend the Haikuriltais of Haiku Colorit. In my experience, the main benefits haiku composition offers is vocabulary enhancement and development of a feeling for the language as well as punctuality.

Below is an example of a haiku poem written for a Haikuriltai directly in Tatar, aiming towards second language development. This is the first draft and as can be easily seen, the syllable number does not match the 5 – 7 – 5 pattern, as it is only 4 – 6 – 6. Additionally, I was unsure which synonyms should be used in the third line: *great* or *fine*? Some words are misspelt; for instance, the word for window, *tezere*, should be *täräzä*.

Version 1

*Tışta taviş,
Min tezerene yabam.
Barısı da yakşı /äybät. (?)⁸*

Self-translation

*Noise outside,
I close the window.
Everything is fine/great. (?)*

In order to fulfil the seventeen syllables and choose the correct words, peer-reviewing the poems, exchanging ideas and discussing meanings with a native speaker can help (Iida 2010: 32; Santillán 2018). Iida (2010 and 2012) argues that group discussion and an exchange of ideas are an essential part of second language learning when using haiku composition. Discussing and peer-reviewing support language development in a more efficient way because they span all language skill areas, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They also help learners, in the view of Hansen and Liu, “to develop communicative competence by addressing sociolinguistic, linguistic, strategic, and discourse aspects of communication” (Hansen & Liu 2005: 38).

8 The question mark expresses the uncertainty and hesitation about the right word choice.

During the Haikuriltais, Tatar is not the main conversation language, as there are participants present who do not know it, so the sessions do not develop my speaking and listening abilities as much as it advances reading and writing skills in Tatar. Spelling and punctuality can emerge through discussion and feedback from others proficient in the target language (Iida 2012), but in my experience with the multilingual group, also persons who do not know the language can give opinions about the rhythm, sound and overall feeling of the poems. Below is the second draft of the same haiku after discussion:

Version 2

Tıŧta bik ŧau-ŧu.

Tärözäne yabıp kuyam.

Barısı da yahŧı.

The syllabic pattern in the second draft still does not follow the seventeen syllables pattern, but now new synonyms and grammatical structures are provided although the meaning remains the same. In the third line the most accurate synonym is chosen, which better acquaints the reader with the exact meaning of a certain word. According to Iida, the effects on second language learning through haiku writing help the learners to find their own voice in the target language and improve self-expression and writing skills both in the personal and academic contexts (Iida 2012).

When creating haiku poems, the language learner benefits from keeping a diary about the different versions and drafts and noting all the words used during the composition. From my experience with writing haiku, I find that it can be very motivating to see the amount of acquired new words and the improvement of language knowledge after working on a poem. Studies about language learning claim that keeping a record during the learning process is an important activity (Darasawang & Reinders 2010).

Conclusions

Case studies on haiku writing in second language classrooms suggest that haiku composition sessions can improve language skills. In this section, some advantages of haiku writing for minority language learning and skills development were identified both for the first and second language. To determine these factors I analysed Fazile Nasretidin's experience in Tatar language haiku writing and my own qualitative experience on haiku composition in Tatar.

Even if this data is small and clearly subjective, a few important conclusions could be drawn:

- Writing haiku and attending haiku sessions improve *vocabulary* and *enhance all fields of language skills* both in the first and the second languages.
- When language learners create haiku poems in a second language, the development of *punctuality* in writing appears to be a more important factor than for native speakers.
- It is essential to make haiku written in minority languages *accessible* for all (for instance on the internet) and to provide translations for them, as the haiku poetry can serve as important reading and language learning materials for the whole community and also for language learners.

These results encourage further investigation on the topic of writing haiku poetry both for language learning and minority language skills enhancement. Much more research should be carried out for instance on how creative writing and haiku writing sessions can benefit and support the minority language speakers and language learners.

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Kägaz – därya, kaläm – köymä.

Paper – sea, pen – boat.

Tatar mäkale / proverb