

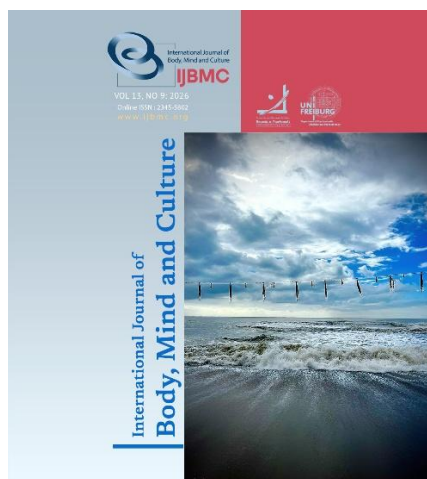
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The Psychology of “Awakening” in Turkic Poetry: Transformation of Consciousness and Identity

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examined the motif of “awakening” in Turkic poetry as a psychocultural process through which individual consciousness, historical memory, cultural identity, and collective self-understanding are symbolically reconfigured.

Methods and Materials: A qualitative comparative literary design was used. Selected poetic and prose-literary texts from Ottoman-Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, and Uzbek traditions were examined through close textual reading, thematic analysis, stylistic interpretation, and historical-comparative contextualization, with particular attention to the Jadid and related enlightenment movements.

Findings: Across the selected traditions, awakening repeatedly emerged through contrasts such as sleep–wakefulness, darkness–light, ignorance–knowledge, silence–voice, and dependence–freedom. Although its local forms differed, the motif consistently linked personal transformation with collective renewal, language preservation, education, historical memory, and national identity. In early twentieth-century poetry, these symbolic oppositions frequently converted literary discourse into a vehicle for social reflection and cultural mobilization.

Conclusion: The awakening motif functions as more than a recurrent literary image: it operates as a shared psychocultural framework for representing transformation of consciousness and identity across the Turkic world. Its durability reflects the continuing role of poetry in preserving cultural memory and articulating aspirations for intellectual, spiritual, and social renewal.

Keywords: Awakening, Turkic Literature, National Consciousness, Cultural Memory, Identity, Poetic Texts.

Introduction

Since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the theme of “awakening” has occupied a prominent place in the literature of Turkic peoples. Concerned that their nations might lag behind the progress of civilization, poets emphasized national unity and spiritual integrity in their works. The literature of Turkic peoples possesses a rich oral and written heritage shaped by profound historical processes, migrations, wars, and cultural interactions. One of the most significant themes within this heritage is the phenomenon of “awakening,” which has acquired different layers of meaning throughout various historical periods. In a psychocultural reading, awakening can also be understood as a symbolic shift from passivity to agency: poetic language converts memory, language, and inherited values into resources through which individuals and communities reinterpret themselves. Recent work on Turkic-Kazakh poetic culture and broader Turkic cultural integration similarly emphasizes the interdependence of cultural memory, spiritual identity, language, and collective meaning (Manapbayev et al., 2026; Mukhamedzhanova et al., 2026).

In linguistic sources, the concept of awakening carries a variety of meanings. Classical dictionaries define it as “opening one’s eyes,” “escaping indifference,” or “discovering truth and striving for knowledge.” This linguistic foundation provides the basis for interpreting the theme of awakening in literary texts both as a process of individual spiritual development and as a form of collective revival or rebirth. Beginning with the Tanzimat period, narratives of social criticism and renewal became increasingly prominent in poetry. The notion of “awakening” emerged as an expression of national consciousness, attachment to the homeland, and self-awareness. From Namik Kemal’s conception of patriotism to Mehmet Emin Yurdakul and Mehmet Akif Ersoy’s calls for awakening, one can observe the

close relationship between social awakening and literary discourse. In Mehmet Akif’s work *Safahat*, the symbolism of awakening in opposition to sleep is particularly explored within the context of social consciousness. Literary analyses of this period highlight both the rhetorical and ideological functions of the awakening motif.

Within the broader Turkic world, the concept of awakening is not confined solely to the Ottoman-Turkish context. In the poetry of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tatars, Bashkirs, Azerbaijanis, Uyghurs, and other Turkic peoples, awakening appears as a significant call for independence, renewal, and rebirth. For example, in Kazakh literature, the works of poets such as Magzhan Zhumabayev and Mirzhakyp Dulatuly, as well as the writings of Gabdulla Tukay in Tatar literature, directly associate awakening with national revival. Comparative studies demonstrate that the metaphor of “awakening” transcends geographical boundaries and forms a shared literary discourse among Turkic peoples. Awakening signifies not only individual consciousness and spiritual enlightenment but also serves as a powerful metaphor for the political, cultural, and social revival of entire nations. In this sense, the theme of awakening reflects both historical experience and aspirations for the future within the collective memory of Turkic peoples.

From the end of the nineteenth century onward, political and social transformations throughout the Turkic world brought significant changes to the thematic orientation of literature. Under the oppressive policies of political powers such as the Russian Empire, China, and later the Soviet Union, literature became a means of resistance, cultural preservation, and the transmission of national consciousness to future generations. The Jadid movement, which emerged during this period, profoundly influenced the representation of awakening in literary texts through its emphasis on modern education, language reform, and cultural renewal. Jadid poets portrayed the awakening of the

people, their emergence from darkness into light, and their transition from ignorance to knowledge through metaphorical language and symbolism, employing literature as a tool for raising public consciousness.

By emphasizing education, language, and cultural reform, the Jadid movement strengthened the discourse of consciousness throughout the Turkic world. According to literary scholar Diakhan Qamzabekuly, Jadidism sought not only to improve education but also to promote the political and cultural integration of Turkic peoples. Jadid intellectuals advocated the adoption of Western scientific and technological achievements while simultaneously preserving national values. As [Qamzabekuly \(2002\)](#) notes, one of the fundamental principles of the Jadids was to “learn from what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful.”

The scholar further emphasizes that the Jadid movement constituted a broader phenomenon across the Turkic world. He examines the historical connections between the Alash movement in Kazakhstan, Milliy Uygʻonish in Uzbekistan, Musavat in Azerbaijan, Milli Firqa in Crimea, and Ittifaq al-Musulimin in Tatarstan. These examples demonstrate that Jadid ideas were shared not only by Kazakh society but by Turkic Muslim peoples as a whole. From this perspective, the theme of awakening assumed a worldview-oriented and didactic function within Jadid literature. Literary scholarship frequently notes that Jadid intellectuals sought to alert and educate society through journals, articles, and poetry, while their calls for awakening coincided with broader campaigns of cultural renewal. Consequently, studies of the influence of Jadidism on poetry have examined both formal and thematic dimensions, demonstrating the close relationship between the concepts of awakening and modernization.

Methods and Materials

This study used a qualitative, comparative literary design to examine the motif of “awakening” across

selected Turkic poetic traditions. The corpus was purposively assembled from canonical or historically influential works in Ottoman-Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, and Uzbek literature in which awakening, enlightenment, education, freedom, national consciousness, language, or cultural renewal functions as an explicit or closely related theme. Selection was guided by three criteria: historical relevance to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernization context, clear thematic connection to awakening or collective renewal, and representation of more than one regional Turkic literary tradition.

The analytical procedure combined close reading, thematic analysis, stylistic interpretation, and historical-comparative contextualization. First, recurrent semantic oppositions and images—such as sleep and wakefulness, darkness and light, ignorance and knowledge, silence and voice, dependence and freedom—were identified. Second, these images were interpreted in relation to individual consciousness, collective identity, cultural memory, and social reform. Third, poetic strategies such as direct address, exhortation, symbolism, allegory, and mythic-historical imagery were compared across traditions. Finally, interpretations were situated within the historical contexts of Jadidism, colonial pressure, modernization, language reform, and post-Soviet cultural renewal. Because the study is interpretive rather than quantitative, no numerical coding or inferential statistics were used.

To strengthen interpretive credibility, readings were repeatedly compared across authors, regions, and historical periods, and claims about literary context were cross-checked against relevant scholarship. Particular caution was applied when working across languages and transliterations, because lexical nuances may shift between original Turkic forms and English renderings. The aim was therefore not to construct a single homogenizing model of Turkic poetry, but to identify recurring

psychocultural functions of awakening while preserving historically and regionally specific meanings.

Literature Review

In recent years, a community of Turkologists and young scholars engaged in systematic research has emerged with the aim of conducting in-depth analyses of the literary heritage of Turkic peoples and formulating scientifically grounded conclusions. Possessing advanced knowledge of Turkic languages, including Uzbek, Tatar, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Bashkir, Kyrgyz, and others, these scholars seek to examine the literary space of Turkic peoples at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as an integrated whole and to reveal the foundations of contemporary Turkic cultural and spiritual continuity.

Scholarship on the literary modernization of the Turkic world has often developed within distinct national traditions. In Kazakh literary studies, [Qamzabekuly \(2002\)](#) situates Alash literature within the intellectual and political transformations of the early twentieth century. In Turkish literary scholarship, discussions of Tanzimat-era modernization and later awakening discourse illuminate the interaction between literary form, social criticism, and civilizational self-reflection (Tuncer, 1996; Alagöz, 2024). Recent studies of cultural memory and Turkic psychocultural integration further show that language, historical memory, and shared symbolic repertoires remain important to the preservation and reconstruction of identity ([Manapbayev et al., 2026](#); [Mukhamedzhanova et al., 2026](#)).

A similar pattern can be observed in Tatar and Kyrgyz literary scholarship. Contemporary work on Gabdulla Tukay identifies enlightenment, civic, religious, and national forms of authorial consciousness within his lyric poetry ([Ibragimov, 2026](#)), while research on the development of modern Kyrgyz literature emphasizes the role of early

intellectuals, education, and print culture in the formation of new literary consciousness (Aşlar, 2018; Aşlar et al., 2025). Taken together, these strands of scholarship suggest that “awakening” is most productively understood not as an isolated metaphor but as a cross-regional cultural structure whose meanings are reshaped by local history.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into individual national literatures, fewer works approach awakening as a comparative psychocultural motif across several Turkic traditions. The present study addresses this gap by examining how poetic images of waking, illumination, education, language, freedom, and rebirth simultaneously organize literary meaning and represent transformations in individual and collective consciousness.

One of the dominant ideas in early twentieth-century Turkic literature was the notion of “awakening the nation from sleep.” Mirzhakyp Dulatuly’s *Oyan, Qazaq!* [Wake up, Kazakh!] (1909) became one of the clearest literary formulations of this idea and an influential expression of national enlightenment ([Dulatov, 1909](#)). Similar exhortative structures appeared across the Turkic world, linking education, language, moral responsibility, and collective renewal.

In Kazakh literature, this idea was not confined solely to Dulatuly’s work. Following the publication of *Oyan, Qazaq!* in 1909, Baybatyr Erzhanuly’s *Tur, Qazaq!* (Rise, Kazakh!) appeared in 1914, followed by Abilqasim Arghyni’s *Zhatpa, Qazaq!* (Do Not Sleep, Kazakh!) in 1917. These works display a clear ideological affinity in both content and structure. Similarly, Sultanmakhmut Toraygyrov’s famous declaration, “I will climb into the dark Kazakh sky and become the sun,” reflects the poetic mission of awakening the people and illuminating their path toward progress.

At the core of this intellectual movement lay the perception that Turkic peoples had, for several centuries, become increasingly detached from

education and scientific advancement, thereby falling behind the course of modern civilization. As a result, the ideals of enlightenment and scientific progress became central themes of Turkic written literature. The frequent appearance of poetic and journalistic calls for education, knowledge, and national renewal in the literature of the early twentieth century serves as compelling evidence of this broader cultural and intellectual transformation.

Findings and Results

Throughout history, the association of the concept of “Turkicness” with the theme of “independence” is not merely a metaphorical interpretation but is regarded as one of the fundamental defining characteristics of a nation. For the Turkic peoples, the notion of independence does not imply acts such as conquest or the assimilation of other nations, which are incompatible with humanistic values. On the contrary, it is evident that the most peaceful values of human civilization are reflected within Turkic-Islamic culture.

Lamartine summarizes this idea with the following words: “In my opinion, being the enemy of the Turkic people, who have brought honor to humanity, is equivalent to being the enemy of humanity itself.” Similarly, Hammer emphasizes this distinctive aspect of Turkic-Islamic civilization, stating that “History has learned much from the Turks. There are such works produced by them that they are considered precious treasures of civilization” ([Türk Standartları Enstitüsü, 1994, p. 18](#)). Undoubtedly, contributing to world civilization is possible not through subjugation but through independence. Freedom is the most essential prerequisite for the formation of original and high-quality civilizational values.

This idea is also reflected in the poetic lines of the prominent Turkish writer Nihal Atsız in his poem *Türklerin Türküsü* (“The Song of the Turks”), where he expresses the spirit of freedom and national consciousness.

«Dilek yolunda ölmek Türklere olmaz tasa,

Türklere boyun eğdirir yalnız töreyle yasa,

Yedi ordu birleşip karşımızda parlarsa,

Onu kanla söndürüp parlarız yeneriz»

Translation:

Sacrificing one's life for a righteous cause is no cause for sorrow for the Turks;

What can make the Turks submit is only justice and law;

Even if seven armies stand united before us in full splendour,

We will extinguish them with blood and emerge victorious in glory.

The connection between homeland and independence is clearly reflected throughout Turkic history. In his article on the homeland, Namık Kemal expresses the nation's devotion to independence as follows: “Just as lion-hearted men, infants suckling their mother's milk, children playing in their yard, young people earning their livelihood, the elderly who have lost all worldly ties and live in solitude, a child loving his mother, and a father loving his family each cherish their respective bonds, so too does a person love his homeland with the same feeling” ([Tuncer, 1996, p. 105](#)). This profound interrelation between the essence of the Turkic people and the concept of independence constitutes the core of Turkic-Islamic civilization.

The theme of independence is undoubtedly central to Turkic literature, which has contributed positively to the development of human civilization across various geographies and laid some of its most fundamental foundations. The recurrence of this theme in literature and poetry through similar metaphors demonstrates that, despite geographical diversity, the spiritual unity of the Turkic world remains intact.

The tendency in Turkic poetry to adopt a tone that is sometimes imploring and sometimes warning in order to awaken the nation can be interpreted through Mehmet Akif's notion of devotion to “independence.” Poets and writers who incorporated

epic elements into their works in such periods sought to provide moral direction. Prioritizing ethical values and sincerely calling upon their people to resist threats to independence and the future of the nation, these writers consistently employed the concept of “awakening” as a shared thematic framework. In such poetic discourse, “awakening” is often contrasted with notions such as “sleep,” “ignorance,” and “death.” Psychologically, this recurrent rhetoric of awakening shifts the speaking subject from resignation toward agency and frames collective identity as something that can be consciously recovered and renewed. The poem becomes a symbolic space in which memory is reorganized, cultural continuity is reaffirmed, and the imagined community is invited to act (Manapbayev et al., 2026; Mukhamedzhanova et al., 2026).

Mehmet Emin Yurdakul made the theme of awakening central to his literary production, transforming it into a poetic program. In the critical edition of his collected poems prepared by Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, the section titled “III. Ey Türk Uyan” forms part of a broader poetic discourse of national unity and renewal (Yurdakul, 1969). The poems revive the historical march of the Turks through direct appeals to collective consciousness and frame awakening as both a moral and civic imperative. Written in an accessible language for a broad readership, Yurdakul’s poetry gives the awakening motif aesthetic, socio-political, and pedagogical significance.

Ali Canip Yöntem’s poem Eastern Horizons attempts to dismantle the semantics of lethargy through a critical portrayal of the “East” and conceptualizes awakening as a civilizational step forward. The repeated exhortation “O East! Have you not been deceived by your centuries-long sleep?... East! Awake, it is enough!” combines the diagnosis of sleep as cultural and psychological stagnation with a call to action. Contemporary studies highlight the poem’s contribution to the discourse of social awakening (Alagöz, 2024, pp. 125–138).

According to Ziya Gökalp, awakening is systematically transformed into an ideological language through the mythic-historical framework of “rebirth” (palingenesis). The poetic structuring of the Ergenekon legend, which symbolizes emergence from a closed space and collective rebirth, aims to awaken collective consciousness. Scholarly studies on this tradition interpret Gökalp’s poetics within the framework of the “theme of rebirth” (Kaplan, 1971, pp. 1–18).

In modern Azerbaijani poetry, the theme of “awakening” developed around national consciousness, the ideal of freedom, the intellectual movements following the 1905 Revolution, the republican experience of 1918, and the cultural reforms of the Soviet period in the 1920s. The most direct poetic term for this theme in local literature is *intibah* (“awakening”). Poetry in this context acquired a slogan-like discourse aimed not only at individual consciousness but also at social unity and civic rebirth.

One of the founding figures of Azerbaijani romanticism, Muhammad Hadi, explicitly formulated “awakening” through the concept of *intibah*, transforming it into a poetic program. His poem *The Historical Sorrows of Humanity or Alvah-i Intibah* from his collection centers on an ethical and philosophical call to awaken reason, worldview, and national will in times of “historical catastrophe.” Comprehensive bibliographic studies of Hadi’s work demonstrate that his poetry modernized classical forms by enriching them with the idea of “social transformation and national awakening.” Thus, Hadi’s romantic poetics can be regarded as both foundational and transformative within a national worldview. Monographic studies and anthologies confirm that the poet’s emphasis on freedom, knowledge, and progress is closely associated with the rhetoric of “raising consciousness,” and that the idea of “awakening” is consistently sustained in both his poetry and essays.

Ahmad Javad, in his texts, represents the concept of “awakening” through symbolic and poetic signs such as the flag, colors, wind, and dawn. As the author of the lyrics of the Azerbaijani national anthem that reflects the spirit of the republican era, he places particular emphasis in poems such as *Çırpınırdın Qara Dəniz* (“The Black Sea Was Roaring”) and *Azərbaycan bayrağına* (“To the Azerbaijani Flag”) on imagery of the Turanian horizon, gathering around the flag, and national rebirth. In the translation of *Azərbaycan bayrağına*, lines such as “I met you on the path of Turan, may your shadow never fall upon my head” present the flag as a symbol of collective awakening. The poet’s dedication in *Sevgili* (“Beloved”) and the dissemination of *Çırpınırdın Qara Dəniz* further demonstrate the historical context of national and regional awakening in literary expression. Ahmad Javad’s biographical notes also emphasize his poetic profile, concluding that his engagement with the national anthem and related poems is closely connected to the theme of awakening (*To the Azerbaijani Flag*). (Javad, n.d.)

The poetry and drama of Huseyn Javid (Romantic modernism) seek “awakening” through ideals and historical-mythological narratives, examining the destinies of the individual and society through the prism of existence and freedom. Museum-based sources describe Javid as a leading poet-dramatist of Azerbaijani Romanticism, noting that themes of freedom and idealism in his works deepen the philosophical and aesthetic language of “awakening” (Huseyn Javid House Museum, n.d.).

In Kyrgyz literature, the concept of “awakening” occupies a significant place in the formation of national identity and the revitalization of public consciousness. In particular, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, under the colonial policies of the Russian Empire and later Soviet ideological pressure, Kyrgyz intellectuals employed literature as a means of awakening the people from ignorance, preserving national values,

and promoting modernization. In this regard, Togolok Moldo (1860–1942) addressed the idea of awakening within a moral and religious framework in his poems, warning the people against laziness, ignorance, and moral decline. In his poem *Sabak* (“Lesson”), he emphasizes that the only way to overcome ignorance is through education and science (Moldo, 1985).

Among Kyrgyz enlighteners, Kasym Tynystanov (1901–1938) was a major intellectual figure in the standardization of the Kyrgyz language, the development of educational materials, and the formation of modern Kyrgyz written culture. His educational and literary activity illustrates how language reform and pedagogy could operate as instruments of cultural continuity and national consciousness (Aşlar et al., 2025).

In Soviet-era Kyrgyz literature, Aaly Tokombaev (1904–1988) participated in the formation of modern Kyrgyz written literature while negotiating the ideological vocabulary of Soviet modernization and the persistence of national literary motifs. Scholarship on early modern Kyrgyz literature identifies Tokombaev among the writers whose work contributed significantly to the institutional development of Kyrgyz literary culture (Aşlar, 2018).

One of the early heralds of the “awakening” era in Kyrgyz literature is considered to be the poet Moldo Kylych. He transcribed his works and widely disseminated them through oral and written transmission within society. His poems were memorized and passed from hand to hand among the people. As a result, some of his works were not fully preserved, while others reached the present day in shortened or expanded forms. The poet himself was known to recite his works from memory. According to the literary scholar Munduk Mamirov, when Moldo Kylych performed his poem *Zar zaman* (“Age of Lament”), listeners experienced great emotional impact and admiration (Duman, 2015). During the years of Soviet repression, when even mentioning the

poet's name was prohibited, the people played a crucial role in preserving his legacy by memorizing his verses. Today, the complete manuscript heritage of Moldo Kylych Shamyrganuly is preserved in 56 folders in the manuscript collection of the Institute of Language and Literature named after Ch. Aitmatov of the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyzstan. Among them, eight folders contain materials written in Arabic script, four include texts in Latin script and typed versions, and the rest consist of poems and epics written in modern script. The 1911 edition of *Qissa-i-Zilzala*, published in Kazan, along with its photocopy, is also preserved. According to writer and researcher Omar Sooronov, works such as *Zar zaman* (1911), *Qissa-i-Zilzala* (1925), and *Irgelgen kazaldar* (1946) were long excluded from circulation due to Soviet policy and remained stored in archives "in iron boxes" (Duman, 2015). In Moldo Kylych's oeuvre, the idea of "awakening" and "awakening the people" occupies a particularly important place. For example, in his poem *Aldamshy* ("The Deceiver"), he states:

These poetic lines clearly reflect profound meanings such as awakening the nation, calling the people to knowledge, and placing education and art at a higher value. The poet urges his contemporaries to pursue science and education, emphasizing that the primary weapon of humanity is knowledge. His ghazals clearly demonstrate that they laid the foundation for a new direction in Kyrgyz poetry—namely, the tradition of encouraging youth and the broader society toward education and enlightenment. The preservation and later republication of Moldo Kylych's poetic heritage also illustrates how literary memory can survive periods of ideological exclusion and re-enter national cultural discourse (Kylych, 1991; Duman, 2015).

In the post-Soviet period, poets such as Suyunbai Eraliev and Olzhoibai Shakir also explored the theme of "awakening" within the framework of redefining national identity and returning to spiritual values. In S. Eraliev's poem *Tuurugan zher* ("Native Land"), it is

emphasized that national awakening is achieved through the protection of land, language, and history (Eraliev, 1950). Thus, although the theme of "awakening" in Kyrgyz literature has acquired different semantic layers depending on changing ideological and socio-political contexts across various periods, its core has consistently remained a call to preserve the people's national consciousness, cultural identity, and spiritual values.

One of the prominent representatives of the "awakening" era in Uzbek literature is the poet, educator, and public figure Abdulla Avloni (1878–1934). In his works, he called on the people to free themselves from ignorance, strive for knowledge, and aimed to awaken national consciousness and culture. Avloni's literary activity was closely connected with the Jadid movement. His poems and journalistic works promoted ideas of public enlightenment, encouraging youth toward education and arts, and guiding society toward free thought. His pedagogical-ethical work *Turkiy guliston yoxud axloq*, first published in 1913 and issued in a second edition in 1917, likewise connects education, moral cultivation, and social renewal (Avloni, 1917).

These poetic lines clearly indicate that the poet's central position is that the future of a nation depends entirely on education. He compares an uneducated people to a "sick body," while describing an educated society as a "great force." The underlying philosophical idea is the conviction that national freedom and development can only be achieved through science and enlightenment. Avloni's work left a profound impact not only on literature but also on pedagogy and the field of enlightenment. In his work *Turkiy Guliston yohud Axloq* (1913), he emphasizes the importance of educating young people in morality, arts, and knowledge. Through this, the poet can be regarded as one of the founders of a new direction in Uzbek literature—namely, the tradition of calling society toward education and intellectual awakening.

In Kazakhstan, the theme of “awakening” in poetic texts is closely associated with the enlightenment and national consciousness movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this period, Kazakh intellectuals, under the pressure of the Russian colonial administration, placed strong emphasis on strengthening national identity, language, culture, and collective consciousness. In this context, the theme of “awakening” represents one of the earliest literary manifestations of national revival linked to the Alash movement and the heritage of Turan. At the beginning of the twentieth century, under the centralized oppression of the Russian Empire, it became necessary to mobilize literary and political efforts to restore linguistic, cultural, and educational consciousness among the Kazakh people. From this perspective, figures such as Abai, Mirzhakyp, Akhmet, Magzhan, and Sultanmakhmut transformed poetry from a purely aesthetic form into a tool for social change.

Abai Kunanbayuly (1845–1904) is regarded as the initiator of the theme of “awakening” in Kazakh literature. Through his Book of Words (especially Words 7, 19, and 25), he called on the people to abandon ignorance and turn toward knowledge and morality. In his poetry, he emphasized psychological transformation through symbolic oppositions such as “awakening” and “blindness.” For example, lines such as “Seek knowledge, do not turn away from it” (Kunanbayev, 1909) reflect this idea. Continuing Abai’s tradition, Akhmet Baitursynuly (1872–1937), who was described in an article as “the chief poet of the Kazakhs,” further developed the theme of awakening in his poetry and essays, emphasizing the importance of knowledge, the preservation of the national language, and the necessity for people to understand their own history. In particular, the poems in his collection *Masa* (1911), such as “Appeal to a Sleeping Nation,” directly target national consciousness (Baitursynov, 1911).

Among the prominent figures who devoted their lives to the future of the Kazakh nation during this difficult historical period, Mirzhakyp Dulatov (1885–1935) is always mentioned with great respect. Through his work *Oyan, Qazaq!* (1909), he issued a direct call for national awakening. Lines such as “My nation has fallen asleep, now it must awaken” aim to strengthen the consciousness of national independence. (Dulatov, 1909)

This work was regarded as one of the most powerful slogans of the theme of awakening in Kazakh national literature.

Magzhan Zhumabayuly (1893–1938), in poems such as *Turkistan* and *Batyr Bayan*, unified the ideals of Turkic unity, national identity, and freedom through the metaphor of “awakening.” Lines such as “Open your eyes, my people” (Zhumabayev, 1922) serve as a clear example of this motif. In his poem *Kazakh Tili* (“The Kazakh Language”), Magzhan constructs national identity around language, stating that “Language is the spirit of the nation, and the spirit is the mother of awakening,” thereby using language as a symbol and slogan of awakening. These poets aimed to strengthen ideas of modernization, national identity, and independence among the Kazakh people, and in their works they addressed the theme of “awakening” at both individual and social levels. Meanwhile, S. Toraigyrov set a lofty goal for himself from an early age, stating, “I will rise through the dark Kazakh sky and become the sun.”

In Tatar poetry, the concept of “awakening” can be categorized into several layers: cultural-linguistic (Gabdulla Tukay), media-institutional (Dardemend, Shura), symbolic-existential (S. Ramiev), and ethical-resistance-oriented (Musa Jalil). Jadidism (including *usul-i jadid* schools, newspapers, journals, and book publishing) forms the common foundation of these layers. The press and educational institutions along the Orenburg–Kazan corridor combined the idea of “awakening the sleeping nation” with poetic expression. In this regard, the journal *Shura* and the

newspaper *Vakyt* functioned as a kind of “laboratory of awakening.” Gabdulla Tukay emphasized language and consciousness, while the media-based poetics of S. Ramiev and the resistance lyricism of Musa Jalil converged on a shared ideological foundation.

As one of the founders of modern Tatar literature, Gabdulla Tukay (1886–1913) approaches the concept of “awakening” from a threefold perspective:

The revitalizing power of the mother tongue;
The awakening of national consciousness;
The call for social progress.

In his poem *İ, Tuğan tel* (“O Mother Tongue”), the language itself becomes a medium that awakens both the spiritual world of faith and the sphere of cultural values:

“O native language, O beautiful language...

“O native language, O beautiful language... / Through you I have learned many things in this world.” Tukay’s use of the mother tongue as a locus of memory and self-identification is consistent with research showing that his lyric voice integrates enlightenment, civic, religious, and national forms of consciousness (Ibragimov, 2026).

These lines emphasize that language is not merely a means of communication, but also a carrier of “cultural awakening,” extending from cradle lullabies to prayers, and encompassing the entire formation of human consciousness.

One of the texts that directly articulates Gabdulla Tukay’s notion of “awakening” is his famous article written during his period in Ural: “Beznen millat, uldanme, alla yoqlağan ğınamı?” (“Has our nation died, or is it merely asleep?”). Conceptually, the text is built upon the “death–sleep–awakening” dichotomy, and it frames awakening through modern education, the press, and literary production. In this regard, Tukay engages in critical debates against both traditional stagnation and oppressive social structures. In the post-1905 wave of political liberalization, Tukay’s texts interpret “awakening” as a social responsibility, a theme systematically

developed in poems and articles such as “To the State Duma,” “Sarıkortlar,” and “Kitmibez.” These politically charged works must be read in conjunction with their poetic innovation. (Ibragimov, 2026)

Gabdulla Tukay was directly connected to the modernization movement (*usul-i jadid*) and the press culture of the Orenburg–Kazan region. Publications such as *Shura*, *Fiker*, *Al-Islah*, and *Yashen* provided the cultural infrastructure for the dissemination of the idea of “awakening.” The author thus possessed two key instruments of awakening: language and the press. (Ibragimov, 2026)

Discussion and Conclusion

The theme of “awakening” in Turkic poetry represents a manifestation of national spiritual renewal and cultural revitalization. The historical and socio-political transformations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to the simultaneous awakening of both individual and national consciousness in Turkic literature. In the works of Ottoman-Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tatar, and Kazakh poets, the concept of “awakening” is closely associated with ideas of striving for freedom, the promotion of education and science, the preservation of national values, and spiritual resistance to colonial domination. Across the traditions examined here, the recurring transition from sleep to wakefulness is therefore best understood as both a literary device and a model of consciousness: it narrates the movement from unawareness to recognition, from fragmentation to identity, and from inherited trauma or domination toward culturally grounded agency (Manapbayev et al., 2026; Mukhamedzhanova et al., 2026).

The Jadid movement became the principal driving force of this process, transforming poetry into a powerful instrument for calling people toward knowledge, independence, and unity. Thus, the motif of “awakening” in Turkic poetry is not merely a legacy of the past, but also an important foundation of

contemporary spiritual independence and national unity.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study is based on a purposively selected and necessarily non-exhaustive corpus, so it does not represent every Turkic poetic tradition or every historical use of the awakening motif. Comparative interpretation is also affected by differences in orthography, transliteration, translation, genre, and political context. Because the analysis is qualitative, the identified patterns should be understood as interpretive structures rather than frequency-based generalizations. Future research could combine archival close reading with multilingual digital corpora, reception studies, and systematic comparison of original-language lexical fields in order to trace how the semantics of awakening change across time, region, and medium.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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