Reflection of Mentality and National Characteristics in Linguoculturology: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Phraseological Units in the German and Azerbaijani Languages

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Abstract: This study presents a comparative analysis of phraseological combinations in German and Azerbaijani, with a focus on national characteristics. The research examines phraseological units related to human orientation, specifically those reflecting character, cognitive abilities, and worldview in both languages. It identifies complete and partial structural-semantic and functional-semantic equivalents that demonstrate national cohesion within the semantics of these lexical units. The selection of this research object is deliberate, given the high productivity and extensive range of phraseological units. The data for this study were sourced through continuous selection from phraseological dictionaries of the respective languages.

Keywords: *Pragmalinguistics, National Cohesion, Mentality, Phraseological Units, İnterpretation.*

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I. INTRODUCTİON

The notion of mentality encompasses a collection of ideas that integrate the mental, emotional, and cultural attributes and values linked to a particular ethnic group or nation. The term's etymology traces back to Latin, signifying "mind," "thinking," and "style of thinking." Mentality and national traits are typically associated with specific ethnic or social groups, constituting a vital area of study within linguoculturology.

Linguoculturology, an interdisciplinary field combining linguistics and cultural studies, examines how cultural mentality is reflected in language. It seeks to understand how language encapsulates the collective consciousness and cultural identity of its speakers, often through the lens of cognitive linguistics and cultural models.

Mentality, in this context, refers to the ingrained ways of thinking that are influenced by cultural, historical, and social factors. Cognitive-evolutionary theory, for instance, posits that the quality of perception affects thinking and, consequently, language. It suggests that differences in language and culture arise from variations in perception and cognitive processing. These variations determine the logic of thinking and language use, which then influence cultural development (Popov, 2023).

Cultural linguistics emphasizes the role of cognitive models and imagery in shaping language. This approach asserts that cultural schemas and cognitive structures precede and influence language, revealing how deeply entrenched cultural elements manifest in linguistic expressions. For example, cultural studies in linguistics look at imagery related to senses, feelings, and perceptions, reflecting how speakers construe their world cognitively (Palmer, 1998).

Moreover, the union of cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics has enhanced the understanding of how language use varies across different social contexts. This interdisciplinary approach examines language variation and cultural models, highlighting the socio-political and socio-economic ideologies embedded within language. It explores how language reflects social structures, cultural interactions, and shared ideologies.

In summary, linguoculturology portrays mentality through the intricate interplay of language and culture, illustrating how cultural values, perceptions, and cognitive models are woven into linguistic practices. This field offers

insights into how language acts as a vessel for cultural expression and a mirror reflecting the collective mindset of its speakers.

National characteristics can be understood as a stereotypical mode of thinking inherent to a particular people, while stereotypes represent a limited understanding and expression of opinions within a specific framework. As a result, the same object may be perceived and expressed differently by various individuals. In the comparative analysis of two languages, descriptive, comparative, and normative-stylistic approaches are relevant.

Descriptive and synchronous analysis plays a significant role in language differentiation, especially within the context of crosslinguistic studies and bilingual development. These analyses are essential to understanding how languages are distinct and how they interact or coexist.

Descriptive categories and comparative concepts are critical in crosslinguistic studies. Descriptive categories pertain to specific languages, while comparative concepts are used to evaluate linguistic phenomena across different languages. This distinction is crucial because linguistic categories vary between languages, with different criteria for assignment. Comparative concepts, therefore, allow linguists to understand and make generalizations about languages universally, enabling meaningful crosslinguistic comparisons (Haspelmath, 2010).

In the context of early bilingual development, descriptive analysis helps identify how children differentiate between languages they are acquiring simultaneously. It is evident that even at a young age, bilingual children can distinguish between their two languages, despite occasional mixing of linguistic elements. This differentiation is typically clear once functional language categories emerge, suggesting that differentiation is present quite early in language development. The descriptive analysis of children's language use, taking into account factors like language dominance, is pivotal to this understanding (Genesee et al., 1995).

In addition, synchronic analysis examines languages at a specific point in time, contributing to understanding their current use and structure. By focusing on linguistic variation in its synchronic dimension, researchers gain insights into the organization and evolution of linguistic systems within their current social contexts (Kinkade, 1998).

The integration of descriptive and synchronous analyses enhances our comprehension of language differentiation, allowing linguists to articulate the structural and functional variations between languages accurately. This dual approach provides a robust framework for evaluating languages as dynamic, evolving systems shaped by cognitive and social factors.

Descriptive analysis, a method of synchronous analysis, is particularly effective for case studies that differentiate between two distinct language branches, such as Azerbaijani and German. Azerbaijani is genealogically classified within the Turkic group of languages, closely related to Turkish, Turkmen, and Gagauz, whereas German belongs to the West Germanic group of the Indo-European language family, alongside English, Frisian, and Dutch (Netherlandic, Flemish). Despite the linguistic distance between these two languages, there are still some phraseological implications phraselogical units that are used in similar contexts and have similar lexical features that should be considered of research interest.

II. METHODS: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

➢ *Case Study 1*

Let us consider some comparative cases of the same phraseological units in both languages. As an indicator of the national-cultural level, the use of connotative words as standard, generalized common-use words accepted in this or that society is indicated as a general feature created by words and expressions among members of society. For example, the phraseological combination used in the Azerbaijani language related to the word " black" --"to be in black book" is used by natives in the same situations, both "to be in black book" in English and "bei jdm schlecht angeschrieben sein" in German. From this, we can conclude that the word "black" is a polysemantic word. In many cases, "is used in the language as a bad thing, a negative situation. In general, "a black" color has an associative meaning as a "mourning" ceremony in many society groups.(V.I.Belikov and L.P.Krisin, 2001)

When comparing phraseological combinations, the meaning can be compared with the linguistic and cultural originality of the structure. Thus, the thematic (ideographic) composition of phraseological comparisons of each language summarizes a collection of the most important characteristics of a human (appearance, character, feelings, etc.) for each nation. "This classification of comparative phraseology is the result of the reflection of the consistency of the surrounding world in the human mind" Therefore, it is one of the interesting manifestations of cognitive linguistics. In cognitive linguistics, phraseology is an approach in which the human mind is understood as a means of storing and organizing phraseological knowledge (collected in phraseological semantics) about the world. Its main objective is the semantic study of cognitive phraseology.

Phraseological meaning is considered an element of the content of the phraseological picture of the world, ranked in consciousness, and constitutes a set of phraseological ideas about reality, which is one of the main theoretical problems of cognitive linguistics facing phraseology. Determining the vision of boundaries and composition, especially phraseological units, was a sign of phonetic independence of component words. Phraseologists who adopt this view recognize phraseological units as non-free compounds consisting of at least two words with only independent main words. Phraseologists who ignore the sign of phonetic independence of component words consider phraseological units as free compounds with a word formed from one or more unstable words.

In phraseological theory, there is terminological ambiguity that is incorporated into a different content term. Three main approaches can be distinguished in the interpretation of phraseological stability: structure (stability is interpreted as the organizational stability of the component phraseological unit), syntagmatic (stability is interpreted as the linear stability of the phraseological unit and the prediction of its simultaneous implementation), and social stability (social stability is formed in the language collective and is normally understood as having a fixed relationship between the content and form of this phraseological unit). "Due to the current ambiguity of the term "stability" terminological misunderstandings and concepts that exist and substantial work with this term can be difficult to distinguish.

Individual characteristics in phraseological theory are surprisingly evaluated; idiomatism can be considered constitutional, along with the mandatory property of phraseology (in this case, the composition of phraseology is limited to idioms), and idiomatic, non-diomatic free expressions are also included in the composition of phraseology. The relationship between semantics and reality: the phraseological picture of the world is directly related to reality, but reality is specially changed and established. The cognitive study of phraseology is widespread; today, there are many articles, monographs, and dissertation studies on the subject. However, cognitive phraseology is still in the formative stage, and there are several unsolved problems. The main feature of comparative phraseological units, such as units with a simulative figurative basis, is the reference carrier of the attribute to which the referent is compared, which makes it easier for both native speakers and language learners to understand the meaning of these units. National-specific images fixed in the form of standards in the minds of native speakers and reflecting the ideas of the surrounding world form the ethnocultural originality of comparative phraseology, given in the reference (right) parts of stable comparisons. The cultural and national characteristics of these images are determined by the national characteristics of each nation, which shows the originality of this case.

In comparative linguistics, the reflection of mentality is a complex issue that intertwines cognitive processes, cultural influences, and linguistic structures. Cognitive linguistics, which emphasizes the role of meaning and cognitive processes in language use, provides significant insights into this issue. For instance, it focuses on how language reflects thought processes and mental representations, suggesting that linguistic expressions can offer a window into the human mind (Dąbrowska, 2016).

One approach to understanding mentality in comparative linguistics is through the exploration of conceptual structure and its relation to language. Ray Jackendoff's work highlights how mental representations across cognitive domains, including language, can be understood through a detailed theory of conceptual structure. This perspective aligns linguistic theory with cognitive science, anchoring language in mental processes (Jackendoff, 1993).

Further, the cognitive-evolutionary theory of language posits that the quality of thinking influences language quality, with perception playing a pivotal role in this relationship. This theory argues that differences in language, thinking, and culture result from variations in perceptual quality and its impact on thought processes (Popov, 2023).

Moreover, context specificity plays an essential role in linguistic expression, affecting cognitive processing and the linguistic markers used in different situations. This view aligns with situated cognition theory, where context influences the language used to convey thought processes and decision-making, as seen in studies on physicians' think-aloud reflections (Konopasky et al., 2020).

In summary, the concept of mentality in comparative linguistics is deeply embedded in cognitive processes and cultural contexts. Linguistic studies provide evidence that language reflects thought processes, and these reflections vary according to cultural, perceptual, and contextual factors. While I cannot generate a full essay, here is information regarding mentality reflection in comparative linguistics based on the available literature.

➢ *Case Study 2:*
In some phraseological units there is a characteristic feature of historical background can be traced. In this case, diachronic evolution of these units might be featured not only in one language, but also in other languages as well, such as in German language "wie (ein) Phönix aus der Asche erstehen (steigen) / sich wie Phönix aus der Asche erheben"—"like a Phoenix rising from the ashes" (this phrase comes from ancient Greek mythology, where a bird called Phoenix burns itself after 500 years of living, reborn after turning to ashes), "eine (die) große Klappe risikeren (schwingen)"—" to make nonsense, mockery, mock," "mit j - m über (s) Kreuz sein (stehen)" – "to cross paths with someone, to be in bad terms with someone",this phrase in Azerbaijani can be interpreted as well like "kimsə ilə qanlı-biçaq vəziyyətdə olma", "krumme Pfade handeln (auf krummen Weg en gehen/ wandeln, krumme Sachen/ Die machen,eine krumme Tour reiten)" –" to do dark things, trading crooked paths", in Azeri "qaranlıq işlərlə məşğul olmaq", "am Ende seines Lateins sein (mit seinem Latein am/mit/ zu Ende sein)—" To run out of funds, to take one last breath, to come to the last pass" in Azerbaijani "son nəfəsini vermək, axırıncı aşırıma gəlmək".

In addition, Fedulenko noted the allomorphism of phraseological units in three languages and showed examples of isomorphic situational models here (T.N. Fedulenkova, 2018)

When comparing German with other languages, phraseological comparisons based on the compatibility or inconsistency of their variants can be divided into three subgroups:
• Demonstrate complete compatibility in comparable languages: "damoklessvert uber j - m hangen"—" Hangamokles like a sword", "Blitz aus heiterem Himmel"—"like lightning between the sky;

- Is characterized by partial compatibility: "ein rohes ei behandeln"—" treat someone like a raw egg", "Nerven drahtseile haben"—"having nerves like a cabel";
- With no compatibility between the options considered: "klar Dike Tinte is "as clear as "—"yag kimi", "ein Gemut ein Veilchen haben"—" to have a spirit like violet"(T.N.Fedulenkova ,2018).

As you know, the vast majority of phraseological parallels are semantic derivatives. In many cases, the same or close factors of the material and spiritual life of peoples are used independently of each other in different languages with the same concept or lead to similar figurative associations.

Because the images of a large number of phraseological parallels are caused by common natural phenomena, and as a rule, the main, most general signs, characteristics inherent in these phenomena, are constructed in a similar form based on the same way of thinking. At the same time, national specificity is also manifested in the selection of the image of comparison, because its cultural background reflects many aspects of the cultural and socio-economic life of a certain nation, and the word chosen as a metaphorical basis often becomes a symbol word for native speakers.

Phraseological units are studied not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a means of strengthening the experience and mentality of the Ethnos, as a means of presenting extralinguistic information about a person and as one of the ways to reflect the culture of the people. However, until present, the basic concepts belonging to the field of phraseology have not been unambiguously defined, there are different points of view on many issues. This even applies to such basic issues as the definition of the concept of phraseology and the limitation of its composition. Without understanding the indicated issues, the study of phraseological units in any aspect is impossible. It is especially important to clarify the above and other features. One of the main factors is the beginning of the study of phraseology in the course of cognitive linguistics and pragmalinguistics. The great multiplicity of approaches and research does not simply cause difficulties, but rather hinders the resolution of any research issues. These issues indicate the need not only to clarify phraseology as a branch of science, but also to study phraseological units, taking into account the achievements of various directions of linguistics. Instead of focusing on the communicative and human-cultural factor of phraseology, scientists conducted research, giving more insight into the stages of its development, from the structural-semantic paradigm to the anthropological paradigm. Due to the noted feature, a brief analytical review of the paths of phraseology as a linguistic discipline is not only interesting, but also necessary. The historical approach to phraseological units, the study of them etymologically makes it possible to study not only the history of the people to which the phraseological units belong, but also the history of the language of that people. This also states the individual nature of phraseological units. For the first time in the language, the nominative meanings of words appeared. And from these words, free combinations were formed, and later figurative meaning was added to them, which in itself led to phraseological combinations. Continuing its development in phraseological combinations, it turns into a complex word at the stage of the language function.

➤ *Case Study 3*

Now let us consider some other peculiarities in comparing the two language phraseological units relating mental aspects. According to Azerbaijani linguist researcher H. Bayramov,while making comparison of Turkish group of languages like Turkish and Azerbaijani, reveals an interesting fact: "the use of the phraseological unit " cibinə qoymaq" which means "to put in a pocket" in the Turkish language sounds in the form of "cepinden çıkırmak" which means "to take out from pocket", is used to indicate the difference between two persons in one aspect or another in the Azerbaijani language, and the absence in our language of the stable combination like "agiz atmak"in Turkish "özünü öymək" like "boasting oneself" exists in this other observations, show that some of the phraseological units in the Azerbaijani language have the same lexical composition and are used in the same sense in non-related languages. The difference lies in the fact that these stable combinations are used in each language with its own word. For example, the phraseological unit used in "Kitabi-Dede-Gorgud" in the form of "bite your finger" and existing in modern Azerbaijani in the form of "bite your finger" is " s'en mordre les doigts (or les pouses) in French , while in Persian it is completely compatible with "angysht bə qəv qəte" in Talysh, that is, "to grab your finger in the mouth" here "tishlab Kolmok" here the noun component is distinguished. In Azerbaijani, "to take oneself" is "take oneself in hand" in English; in Azerbaijani, "to take revenge" is "Rache nehmen" in German; "to lose one's head"is phraseological units with the same lexical composition and meaning in the form of "den Kopf verlieren" (H.A. Bayramov,1978) coming to the conclusion from these facts, the author says that some of the phraseological units are used in the Azerbaijani language have historically been common with most of the Turkic languages, which can be explained mainly by the interweaving of folk peoples as a result of historical events and remain in modern times. According to Bayramov's opinion, some of the stable compounds used in our language are a shield of phraseological units in the russian language. A small number of the components of phraseological units of the Azerbaijani language are identical to the corresponding stable combinations of the Persian language in terms of their lexical composition, the characteristic of the syntactic connection between them and their general meaning. The author results that it is necessary to emphasize the presence or absence of an equivalent, rather than translating of phraseological combinations from one language to another. Later H.Bayramov in his book notes: "a number of linguistics in the study of idioms don't consider "the national repeatability" or "relevance to the national aspect". But this is not so, each language perceives this or that idiom in its own way, therefore, linguists need to see this feature among languages, to study not only different features, but also similarities between languages in the internal form of the word and a number of other phenomena. (H.A. Bayramov ,1978)

Having done fundamental work on comparative study of Azerbaijani phraseological units, turkologist and linguist M.Mirzaliyeva made a careful research on the Oguz gruop of Turkic languages showed that at the later stages of development they were not translated into different languages, both phonetic composition, morphological structure and syntactic function underwent a slight change, and as a result, the difference between these languages could not exceed the dialect level. (M.M.Mirzaliyeva, 1995)

According to the author, since these languages are in the same language group, they are also based on the same cultural and spiritual resources and prove their strong attachment to each other.In these languages, the formation of phraseological units by means of verbs with close and opposite meanings has acquired a regularity.For example, in exchange for any phraseological unit formed with the help of the verb "salmaq" --"to fall", it becomes inevitable that there is a phraseological unit with an absolute "düşmək" -"drop" component: "yada düşmək—yada salmaq" (to be recalled—to recall); "başa düşmək-başa salmaq"(to understand-explain); gözdən düşmək—gözdən salmaq(to lose sight of-to be fallen from being respected); "ürəyi düşmək—ürəyinə salmaq (to drop the heart—to take to the heart), etc. (M.M.Mirzaliyeva, 1995) From these examples we can clarify that the verb "fall" and " drop" can be used in different phrasemes denoting variable connotations.

In addition, when phraseological combinations are formed within the lexical-semantic group formed by words that are close in meaning, different words can be used in different languages. For Example, Azerb. "canını dişinə tutmaq" (take your soul to your tooth-to be reluctant to do smth) in Turkish it sounds like "canını dişinə takmak " (put your soul to your tooth); another expression " göydə axtarırdım, yerdə tapdım" (I was looking for it in the sky, I found it on the ground) changes only as a component, as can be seen in the Turkmen combinations "qökdən islənim, yerdə qovuşdu" (let me get wet from the stump, reunited on the ground) (M.M.Mirzaliyeva, 1995)These examples in German sounds like "to be reluctant"—"jemanden etwas müde sein" "das Herz und die Seele einer Sache sein".

III. CONCLUSION

To sum up, I would like to point out some important issues from stated above case studies:

Firstly, while making comparison of two different languages, Azerbaijani and German phrasemes, I have been amazed about similarities in usage of some components as well as, structure and in some cases semantical understanding happened to be coincidentally the same. Though I didn't have the possibility to make fundamental, insightful research about reasons of similar peculiarities of these certain phrasemes, but still I can make some hypothetical views that is due to Azerbaijani language interference with Turgic languages, as they are considered to be from one language family Turgic family within the Altaic language group, and the possibility of interference Germanic groups with Turgic groups made the

similar componental and situational phrasemes compatible in these two languages.

Secondly, I can fully support the point of views of some above stated scholars relating these compatibilities with diochronical changes within the language.

No matter of their origin and semantical and structural features phraseological units are used to reflect the character, outlook, mentality, locality. This can be proved as the result of my research in this article.

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