

Problems of Linguoculturological Analysis of Epics

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issue of linguoculturological analysis of works of fiction based on the texts of the epics "The Book of Dede Gorgud" and "Beowulf". The study addresses the analysis issues arising from the differentiation of linguistic units used in the process of describing parallel phenomena in the two epics, as a result of their connection with national culture. The differences are evident in the consumables used in everyday life, in the expression of time by different numbers. The societies described in the two epics have their own rules. In these societies, there are similarities, similarities in the behaviour of individuals performing similar tasks, in relation to the work performed. The study shows that the linguo-cultural systems identified in the process of linguo-cultural analysis of epic texts are not unambiguous. As a result, certain difficulties arise when translating them from one language to another.

Keywords: Linguoculturology; Dede Gorgud; Beowulf; epic; Oghuz society.

INTRODUCTION

Linguoculturology has become one of the fastest growing scientific fields since it emerged at the intersection of cultural studies and linguistics at the end of the 20th century. This interdisciplinary science field deals with the interaction between language and culture and is closely connected with linguistics, ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics. The emergence of linguoculturology was a result of the rapid development of philosophy and the theory of linguistics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its aim is to study the reasons for the inclusion of cultural elements in linguistic units, and the ways and means of transmission of this cultural information.

The main unit of linguoculturological analysis was given the name linguoculture and defined as a dialectical unity of linguistic and extra-linguistic content [7, p. 44]. Artistic texts describe various events from everyday life. These events take place in a certain time and space, becoming participants of their spatio-temporal context. An artistic text can tell us about the events of a wide and narrow national-cultural environment. Therefore, both the spatial and temporal boundaries of the linguocultural milieu covered by artistic works differ from one another.

As one moves from the distant past to the modern era, there is an expansion of intercultural contacts, indicating a change in the linguocultural environment. The emergence of written literature led traditions, ways of life, attitudes towards events, ideas about nature and society to begin to be recorded in human communities. The way of life and culture of an ethnic group,

which historically goes back to ancient times, has preserved its traces in oral and written records. Linguoculturology can study the development of culture and the changes that occur in it using these sources as reference.

From this point of view, if the linguocultural analysis of epics is of particular importance in itself, then their translation from one language to another is important in the sense of investigating the specifics of transformation and transmission of linguocultural units belonging to one culture into the sphere of another. The study of the above-mentioned issues on the basis of "The Book of Dede Gorgud" and "Beowulf" epics and translations of ancient Azerbaijani epics into English and, conversely, of Anglo-Saxon epos into Azerbaijani language undoubtedly attracts attention as an extremely urgent linguocultural problem. However, it is important to note that the epics are involved in linguocultural research in a comparative form at an earlier stage.

The linguocultural analysis of an artistic text involves identifying various linguistic units that directly point to the ethno-linguistic environment, expressing or indicating the reasons for their origin and existence, clarifying the features of functioning of linguistic means, carrying a pronounced national connotation, expressing ethnic reality, and, finally, acting as indicators of a national picture of the world.

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT BOTH EPICS

"The masterpiece of the Azerbaijani Turkic people, the main book, is the epic of Dede Gorgud. To enter the world of Dede Gorgud means to see the enslaved and legendary reflection of geographical names, historical events, clan, tribal names, traditions, forgotten words still living today, related to the roots of our language, and other equally extremely important issues" [4, p. 25]. Dede Gorgud speaks about ancient Oghuz society, its traditions, and sheds light on beliefs and relations between its members, thereby describing a national cultural picture of the Oghuz world in the language of the epos. From this viewpoint, the epos is rich in linguo-cultural markers, cultural markers.

"The epic world of ancient Germans, formed during the Great Migration of Peoples, was most vividly and deeply reflected in the epic "Beowulf", the creation of which the vast majority of researchers attribute to the 8th century" [4 p. 74].

The events described in the two epics are similar in some aspects. Kh. Khayal, who has translated "Beowulf" into Azerbaijani language, writes: "It is easy to find similarities in folklore examples: they all fight, show heroism, seek treasure, face a dragon or a giant, etc. I would like those who have read 'Beowulf' to see the essential differences between the people and human societies in this epic poem and the people and societies in our epics" [6, p. 13]. A linguoculturological comparison of two epics helps to reveal in them an ethnoculturological picture of two societies of antiquity, the members of these societies and the relationship between them. Of course, revealing the differences and similarities between human relations; the societal structures; and national and cultural symbols, traditions and customs are of greater importance than such similarities as showing heroism, fighting with mythological creatures.

An aspect common to the epics is manifested in the prologue in "The Book of Dede Gorgud" and in the introduction in "Beowulf". These introductory sections present to the reader the society,

its leaders, and its beliefs in one way or another. The introduction to “Beowulf” contains information about the Danes and their famous kings, the last king Hrothgar and the castle of Heorot that he built, as well as about enemies, evil forces, and Grendel. The main development of events begins first after this contextualising introduction.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BOTH EPICS

The introduction of the “The Book of Dede Gorgud” is fundamentally different from that of “Beowulf” as it concerns “Dede Gorgud” himself and some of his words and thoughts. It mentions almost nothing about Oghuz society and the leaders of that society. The phrase “Oghuz people” is used only in one sentence in the introduction, namely: “Dede Gorgud would solve the problem of the Oghuz people. Whatever work they did, they consulted with Dede Gorgud. Whatever he ordered, they would accept, keep their word and do” [3, p. 19]. It follows that the scribe who composed the epic introduces Dede Gorgud and then writes the epic told by Dede Gorgud. Thus, the Anglo-Saxon epic is narrated by a scop and “The Book of Dede Gorgud” is narrated by a bard. “The Book of Dede Gorgud” is divided into sections, and each section has its own short prologue, introduction or introductory part, followed by the section itself and, finally, the ending. The connection between the stories is made through the characters’ identities and the fact that the participants are members of the same society. Although there is a connection between the events of some of the stories, the saga as a whole does not give the impression of a coherent transmission of events. In the “Beowulf” epic, events continue and end in a certain logical order.

In the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, the beginning of each chapter opens with a conversation about the head of society. For example: *“One day Bayindir khan, son of Kam Gan, rose and ordered that his large Damascus tent be erected. His brown parasol rose high up in the sky. Thousands of silk carpets were spread all around. It was customary for Bayindir Khan, Khan of Khans, to invite all the Oghuz princes to a feast once a year. As usual he gave a feast this year, too, and had many stallions, young male camels, and rams slaughtered for the occasion”* [3, p.24]. *“One day the son of Ulash, the young of the feathering bird, the hope of the poor, the lion of Emet Stream, the tiger of the Karachuk Mountains, the owner of the chestnut-brown horse, the father of Khan Uruz, the son-in-law of Bayindir Khan, the pride of the crowded strong Oghuz people, the support of young warriors in distress, Salur Kazan roused himself and ordered that his large tents be erected on the surface of the black earth and that silk carpets be laid in a thousand places. A red canopy was raised skyward. For the ninety divisions of young Oghuz men who gathered there, wine casks with big mouths were opened. Large kettles were set at nine different places, and golden jugs were hanged up. Nine black-eyed infidel girls with polished nails, braided hair, hands hennaed to the wrists, and necks a handspan high served the Oghuz beys red wine in golden goblets”* [3, p. 37].

Let us pay attention to some of the linguocultural features of such introductions. In “The Book of Dede Gorgud,” great attention is given to the artistic designation of the chieftain and the enumeration of his epithets. In Beowulf, this is similarly observed. For example:

“LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings
of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped,
we have heard, and what honor the athelings won!
Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,

awing the earls" [1, p.15].

"Now the Lord of all life, Ruler
Of glory, blessed them with a prince, Beo,
Whose power and fame soon spread through the world.
Shild's strong son was the glory of Denmark"[1, p. 17].

"Dinləyin! Haçandan eşidirik biz.
Danlardan, şöhrətli krallarından.
Nəcib kişilərin sücaətindən,
Skild oğlu Skkefin düşməni qırıb,
Meyxanələrini dağıtmağından" [1, p. 15].
"Sonra hökm sürdü Beo Skildinq
Sevimli kralı xalqın, atası" [1, p. 17].

In the presentation of Salur Kazan, "Son of Ulash," "Young bird of Tulu," "A poor hope for us," "Lion of the Emet stream," "Tiger of the Karajuk," "Master of the chestnut-brown horse," "Father of Khan Uruz," "The son of Bayindir Khan." If epithets such as "luck of the teeming Oghuz", "prop of forsaken warriors" are used, then in "Beowulf" the number of such designations ("glorious king," "noble man," "valiant man," "killer of enemies," "destroyer of taverns") is too low to impress the reader. The epithets recorded in "The Book of Dede Gorgud" serve as a linguistic marker. "Lion of the Emet river," "Tiger of the Karajuk," "owner of a chestnut horse" and other designations reveal ethnocultural content. Comparing the hero to a lion or a tiger, presenting him as the prey of a chestnut-brown horse, is related to factors that are important for ethnos. He boasts of his brave horse, and his horse is in fact partly the reason for his popularity. The hero of Oghuz is not only a noble and brave man, he is also "the pride of the crowded strong Oghuz people," "the support of young warriors in distress", and so on.

Both epics are about fun parties, and these parties are given by the head of the community.

"To hear the din of the loud banquet
Every day in the hall, the harp being struck
And the clear song of a skilled poet
Telling with mastery of man's beginnings" [1, p.18].
"Hər gün saraylardakı şadlığın səsi.
Arfa çalınırdı gah qonaqlara,
Səsi müğəninin gah ucalırdı,
Uzaq zamanlardan söhbət açırdı" [1, p.18].

In this example, the translator used the word "singer". In fact, in "Beowulf" it is not a singer, but a scop, if we draw a parallel; he is a shaman, a minstrel or an ashug. It is not about the songs he sings, but about the depth of our epics. Dede Gorgud is also growing tall and glorifies the family. This parallel can be seen from the meaning derived from the line "he spoke of long ago" in the translation of "Beowulf". In ancient times, representatives and members of the community gathered at the head of the minstrels and scop and listened to songs, tales, and epics.

In the epic "Beowulf", a guard of Hrothgar sees Beowulf's crew come ashore from a ship and blocks their way while patrolling the coastline:

"Hwæt syndon ge searohæbbendra,
byrnum werede, þe þus brontne ceol

ofer lagustræte lædan cwomon,
hider ofer holmas?"
"Who are you
who come thus armed,
openly across the waves?"
"Silahlı-qalxanlı, əyni zirehli
Dəniz küçəsiylə uca gəmidə,
Su aşan insanlar, deyin, kimsiniz" [1, p. 23].

The guard of the Scyldings asks the identity of the arrivals, noting their battle uniforms and the fact that they come in a big ship. The guard first asks the identity of the visitors, and then introduces himself.

Protecting its borders and setting border guards is also described in "The Book of Dede Gorgud." In the chapter about Bagil, the bard says: "Bagil consented. He rose and kissed the ground. Dede Gorgud girded the sword of divine grace round his waist. Put the mace on his shoulder. The bow on his arm. Bagil called for his falcon-swift horse and leaped onto its back. He took his family and his people, he struck his tents and migrated from the Oghuz land. He reached Barda, then Ganja, where he took some grazing land. He moved on to the mouth of Georgia of the Nine Provinces and where he settled and stayed as a warden. When strangers and infidels came he used to send their heads to the Oghuz as a present. Once a year, he would attend Bayandir Khan's court" [3, p. 135].

In "Beowulf", the guard treats the strangers with a certain respect, and says that their leader is not an ordinary man, he is of a noble family, strong, and very tall. Nevertheless, he is at work, fulfilling his duty. Therefore, he stops foreign fighters and asks their identity. The guard protects the sea borders. The fact that he was alone, just as Bagil was during his journey to the border of Georgia, creates a parallel between the two epics. Heroes depicted in epics are always presented as strong, they go alone not against one person, but against a large group.

The fact that a person presents himself as standing against a ship's army indicates his extraordinary strength and fighting skills. If we make a comparison, Bagil and his boys, and the shepherd Karaja in "the Book of Dede Gorgud" are among such heroes. In this excerpt, linguocultural points are manifested in elements such as sea-mountain-forest, ship-horse, spear, armoured clothing-club. If the places inhabited by the Anglo-Saxons are surrounded by oceans and seas, the area where the Oghuz live is surrounded by mountains and forests. It is no coincidence that this issue, which has a linguocultural essence, has been written repeatedly in "The Book of Dede Gorgud". The saying of Kazan Khan "I lived next to qulan and elk" also indicates the closeness to the forest and mountains. The use of the words qulan, elk, deer in a distributive environment indicates mountains and forests. The home of Kazan Khan is in the heart of the mountains, where deer, elk and deer live.

In general, the epics glorify society, its people, leaders and heroes, their everyday life, customs and traditions, created by people who have come a long historical way, united into groups, tribes. This society also has its own rules, customs and traditions. Both "Beowulf" and "The Book of Dede Gorgud" describe the moments that define these societies, revealing their ethno-cultural differences. In the Beowulf epic, a guard leads them to the palace of Hrothgar. Visitors

see the golden dome of the palace illuminated by the rays of the sun. It is magnificent. A guard accompanies the arrivals to the palace. Thereafter, the arrivals are directly escorted by the palace guards. The above-mentioned in the Beowulf epic also points to the differences in the duties of those working in the various spheres of society. The prohibitions of the myth, i.e. society, the particular programme of action it gives to its members are derived from a very deep layer of the epic. Every action, moment or ordinary word gives rise to a judgment, and thereby formulation, of one or other prohibition. This in itself shows that the longevity of these prohibitions is much older than the longevity of the epic" [2, p.67]. It is clear that the society referred to in the epic is a primitive-state form, breaking up into tribes, communities and ethnic groups. It literally celebrates other nations and the territories on which they live, as, for example, the story of Bagil khan mentions that Georgia had a border with Oghuz.

The palace described in "Beowulf" was built by the Anglo-Saxon king. He gives banquets in this palace. In the Oghuz society, the residence of the khan, the place where he receives guests is somewhat different, and there are enough linguistic and cultural markers in the epic that express the difference of this place, its national character and uniqueness. For example: "One day the son of Ulash, rose up from his place and ordered that his large tents be erected on the surface of the black earth and that silk carpets be laid in a thousand places. A red canopy was raised skyward. For the ninety divisions of young Oghuz men who gathered there, wine casks with big mouths were opened. Large kettles were set at nine different places, and golden jugs were hung up. Nine black-eyed infidel girls with polished nails, braided hair, hands hennaed to the wrists, and necks a handspan high served the Oghuz beys red wine in golden goblets."

The residence of Oghuz Khan is made of tents with golden bannisters built on black ground, and silk carpets are laid in a thousand places around them. Here guests sit around the khan on carpets. At the same time, it is the wine that is drunk at the court of Bayandır, Kazan, or Hrothgar. If we draw a parallel with "Beowulf", the similarity of "the golden jugs" and "the golden goblets" attracts our attention. Linguistic units such as "the golden jugs" "altun ayaq" – and "the golden goblets" – "surahi" used in the above example from "The Book of Dede Gorgud" also perform the function of a lingucultural marker. In "The Book of Dede Gorgud," the numbers used in expressions such as "the ninety divisions of young Oghuz men" – "doqsan tümən gənc" and "nine black-eyed infidel girls" – "doquz qara gözli qız", have sacred meanings and should be the object of linguistic and cultural research.

CONCEPT OF TIME IN EPICS

The epics record facts relating to the expression of time in quantitative numbers. For example, "The Book of Dede Gorgud" shows the fact of 16 years passing after a particular event. The heroes of the epic Beyrek, Bayburt have to stay in prison for 16 years. "Sixteen years have passed." In the Beowulf there is a phrase about the passing of twelve winters. The passing of twelve winters means the passing of twelve years after the event. A parallel can be drawn here between the two epics. Beyrek remains in captivity for sixteen years, Hrothgar in his turn is not in captivity, but for twelve years he lives in his palace, tormented by suffering, a prisoner of his own morality. He endures the insults caused by Grendel's actions, while those living in his palace are in constant danger of death.

If we approach this issue from the linguocultural point of view, we are faced with the fact that Germans measure the past time by the number of winters that have passed. Why do they mention 16 and 12 years? At first glance, these seem to be generally accepted facts. But the role played by so much time in human life may be related to certain national beliefs and imagination. Beowulf learns of Hrothgar's misfortune in the thirteenth winter. In our opinion, the use of the number 16 in "The Book of Dede Gorgud" and 12 in "Beowulf" should be based on a certain tradition. 40 young men and 40 beauties gathered around Oghuz heroes and Oghuz ladies. In "Beowulf", their number is fourteen. These facts certainly have a cultural basis.

Aspects of particular interest in each epic include the elements and social structure of the epic world. In the "Beowulf" epic, the system of images such as king, vigilantes, queen, heroes, and their retinue make up the ideal society of the epic world. In "The Book of Dede Gorgud", this society consists of khans, beys, heroes, the ladies they love and choose, and the braves that gather around the heroes. Both epics also contain an epic micro-society. Gazan khan is bey, and so are Baybura and Aruz. Gazan khan occupies a superior position among Baybura khan and Aruz khan. This aspect probably stems from Khan's status after Bayandir.

In "Beowulf," the leading line of events-fighting mythical enemies. Here, the epic society is limited and little space is given to real social relations. The only wing of the social structure is the chieftain and his retinue conforming to the ideal of heroism. This micro-society replaces the rest of the world in the mind of the narrator and the listener. While the Beowulf mentions farmers, merchants, artisans, etc. none take part in the story. In "The Book of Dede Gorgud," traces of division into social groups are evident, albeit weakly, with shepherds, merchants, brother-slaves, and ordinary members of society participating in the narrative. It should be noted that in "Beowulf" only once is the image of a slave portrayed. The slave steals a golden cup from the dragon's treasury. In the epic, this act is considered one of the most despicable and becomes the reason for the dragon's attack on the Gauts.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the comparison of the ancient Anglo-Saxon epic "Beowulf" with "The Book of Dede Gorgud" epic through their linguocultural aspects shows similarities and differences that constitute a certain set. The translation of linguocultural markers, and linguocultures from one language to another is one of the difficult problems. Linguocultural systems in the form of realities are difficult to express in object language and take a long time to explain. Therefore, the analysis of epic texts from a linguocultural perspective is of particular importance. The results of such studies can serve as important material for the translation of epics and myths. At the same time, the results of such studies can be used in teaching both the foreign language and foreign epics.

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