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Superstitions in Uzbek and German Languages: Linguocultural Analysis

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Abstract: This article emphases on the study of the cultural and linguistic characteristics of lexical units related to superstitions in German and Uzbek languages. Superstitions have been an integral part of the culture and lives of people over centuries. The study analyzes the history, classification, and educational significance of this genre. Superstitions, as a genre of oral folklore, are found among all peoples of the world, but scientific research in this area is still insufficient. The linguistic and cultural features of superstitions in German and Uzbek languages are studied using a comparative method. Folklore works, religious myths, and dictionaries were used as sources. The conclusion highlights the educational significance of the superstition genre and its critical role in the lives of people.

Key words: Superstitions, religious beliefs, German language, Uzbek language, folklore, cultural traits.

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Introduction

Superstitions have held a significant place in the lives of people across various cultures over the centuries. They represent a fusion of moral teachings, religious beliefs, and cultural experiences that vary across societies. Studying the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of superstitions in German and Uzbek languages is a novel and intriguing scientific topic. This article aims to analyze the history, classification, and educational significance of superstitions as reflected in these two languages.

Superstitions are recognized as a genre of oral folklore, prevalent in some form or another across the globe. Despite their established status as a cultural phenomenon, scientific studies exploring their linguistic and cultural dimensions remain limited. This research employs a comparative methodology to uncover the similarities and differences between German and Uzbek superstitions.

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Superstitions are a genre of oral folklore and are present in some form or another among all peoples of the world.

Despite having been established as a genre, scientific research in this area remains insufficient. The study employs a comparative method to analyze the linguistic and cultural features of superstitions in German and Uzbek languages.

Folklore works, dictionaries, and religious myths were analyzed as sources of data. Superstitions were classified into thematic groups.

Literature review and Methodology

The study uses a comparative analytical approach to explore the linguistic and cultural dimensions of superstitions in German and Uzbek. Data sources include:

1. Folklore works
2. Dictionaries (e.g., “Das Bedeutungwörterbuch” and Uzbek explanatory dictionaries)
3. Religious myths

The collected superstitions were categorized into thematic groups for better understanding and analysis. Additional references such as the methodological guide “Irim-sirimlar” by F.Isomiddinov and I.Yusufov, and Mahmud Sattor’s “O‘zbek Udumlari” were utilized.

In the methodological guide “Irim-sirimlar” authored by Associate Professor F.Isomiddinov and I.Yusufov, prominent superstitions from different nations were highlighted, classified into thematic groups, and categorized based on their essence.

In Mahmud Sattor’s book “O‘zbek Udumlari”, superstitions are scientifically substantiated as a separate topic within the realm of human belief.

Results and Discussion

Definition and Representation of Superstitions

The term “irim” in Uzbek is defined as an action performed with intention, e.g., to ensure good fortune or ward off harm. Examples include:

throwing items into the sea for good luck (A. Oripov).

using variations like “irim-sirim” and “irim-chirim” in everyday expressions.

In German, “Aberglaube” (superstition) is associated with beliefs about supernatural forces and specific fears, such as the unlucky number 13.

Comparative Features

Superstitions in both languages reflect their respective cultural and religious contexts. For example:

Germans avoid auspicious activities on Friday the 13th, rooted in Christian beliefs.

Similar beliefs exist in Islamic cultures, tied to legends about Cain and Abel.

Discussion

Superstitions provide insights into the collective psyche and moral frameworks of societies. This research highlights their cultural significance and how they serve as an educational tool in shaping beliefs and behaviors. The findings reveal thematic commonalities (e.g., fear of numbers) and distinct differences influenced by religious and cultural narratives.

The term “irim” is defined in relevant sources as follows:

"IRIM" (ethnographic term): An action performed with a specific intention or purpose (e.g., taking something from a wedding for good fortune; throwing away an item to ward off harm, misfortune, or the evil eye) [2; 539]

For example:

Shukurlar deyman-u, ko'zim yoshlayman,

Jajji nabiralar mehriga qona.

Irim, deb ummonga tanga tashlayman,

Zora, qaytib kelsam sen tomon yana.

"I give thanks, though my eyes fill with tears,

Content with the love of tiny grandchildren.

As a superstition, I throw coins into the sea,

Hoping to return to you again someday." (A.Oripov, Ummon bo'yidagi o'ylar / Thoughts by the Ocean)

Among people, variations of this term such as "irim-sirim" and "irim-chirim" are commonly used.

"IRIM-SIRIM": Various superstitions. [2; 540]

Bechora onamning qistovi bilan eskicha irim-sirim qilib, nomi chiqqanki mulla-baxshi-parixonlarga ixlos qilib, eshiklarida haftalab yotib yurdik.

(Under my poor mother's persuasion, practicing old superstitions, believing in renowned shamans and healers, we stayed at their doors for weeks on end.

(I.Mirzo, Bonu, Letter Thirty-Eight)

"IRIM-CHIRIM": Same as "irim-sirim." [2; 540]

Shu qorda domlaga borish nimasi?! Har balo oyimdan chiqadi. Irim-chirim bo'lsa bas. (What is this about going to the teacher in this snow?! Every issue comes from my mother. It's all about superstitions. (Oybek, Selected Works))

In the German dictionary "Das Bedeutungwörterbuch" (Dictionary of Meanings), the term superstition (Aberglaube) is defined as follows:

Aberglaube, der: -ns: als irrig angesehener Glaube, daß überirdische Kräfte in bestimmten Menschen und Dingen wirksam sind: es ist ein A., dreizehn eine Unglückszahl ist. sinnv.: Glaube. (Superstition, noun: -ns: A belief regarded as erroneous, that supernatural forces are active in certain people and things: it is a superstition that thirteen is an unlucky number. Synonym: belief.)

It appears that the lexical unit "irim-sirim" is extensively explained in the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language.

F.Isomiddinov and I.Yusupov explain the superstition related to the number 13 in German culture, as described in the German dictionary "Das Bedeutungwörterbuch", as follows:

"Another superstition that Germans always fear is the number 13, especially if it falls on a Friday. Therefore, when Friday coincides with the 13th of the month, Germans avoid doing any auspicious tasks".

The question arises as to why people dislike Friday the 13th so much.

According to Christian legends, Adam and Eve sowed the seeds of sin on the day they committed their first act of disobedience, eating from the forbidden tree (apple tree in the Bible and wheat in the Qur'an), and were subsequently expelled from paradise.

This day was Friday the 13th, and they also died on a Friday.

Among some peoples, including those of the Islamic faith, there is a superstition that Friday the 13th brings misfortune.

There are several legends regarding the origin of this superstition. One of them comes from the ancient Testament. It states that Cain and Abel were among the first children of Adam (peace be upon him). In those early days of simple life, children (by divine wisdom) were born in pairs – one boy and one girl. Subsequent children were also born in this manner – one boy and one girl.

As there were no other people on Earth when they grew up, God established a divine rule that the boy from the first pair would marry the girl from the second pair, and vice versa. This was a special allowance for that early era. God willed humanity's proliferation in this manner during the time when no other humans existed. Thus, family life was established as the fundamental principle of existence.

Historians note that Cain, being the eldest, desired to marry his twin sister, contrary to the divine rule, and Abel opposed him, leading to conflict between them. Subsequently, Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). Abel sacrificed a ram, which was accepted by Allah. Cain's sacrifice, however, was not accepted. Out of jealousy, Cain killed Abel. This is considered the first crime committed on Earth by humanity. Since then, Friday the 13th has become a symbol of misfortune. Although superstitions are considered a distinct genre, they are closely related to the genre of advice and wisdom, differing only in certain aspects.

Superstitions, like proverbs and sayings, are concise in form, characterized by specific signs, events, phenomena, natural conditions, or behaviors, and are summarized as the result of centuries of folk experience. Their commonality lies in the fact that both superstitions and proverbs or sayings have an educational aspect, but the difference is that advice and wisdom are based on logical conclusions, whereas superstitions present intentions through unproven predictions. Another difference is related to form: superstitions are typically prose-based, whereas proverbs and sayings are predominantly poetic.

Conclusion

The study concludes that superstitions, as an oral folklore genre, are invaluable cultural artifacts reflecting the history and beliefs of societies. Comparative analysis underscores the universality of certain themes and the uniqueness of cultural expressions. Future research can further explore their role in contemporary society and their transformation over time.

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