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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF GERMAN AND MACEDONIAN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS WITH AN ANIMAL COMPONENT

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Abstract. There is a lot of information and testimonies about proverbs and sayings (PSs), about their existence, duration and about their significant role in everyday life. Thanks to the global approach to scientific knowledge, we can be convinced of the unusual power of PSs, of their penetration into all spheres of society, of human activity and of their distribution. It is their popularity that has attracted our interest and pulled us into the labyrinths of language; to make the research topic more original and vivid, we inserted the animalisms through which human character traits and wisdoms are transmitted.

This contrastive paper deals with the analysis of German PSs with an animal component and their Macedonian equivalents. We tried to determine the animal component that is most represented in German and Macedonian PSs, i.e., whether it is the same component or a completely different one. During our research, we tried to give an answer to questions as: *Do PSs from the two languages have some similarities despite the different language groups they belong and do they have common elements?* For an adequate and relevant answer, we first tried to define the terms proverb and saying and explain their similarities and differences.

Key words: motivation, anxiety, second language learning, classroom environment, difficulties

Introduction

As any other kind of teaching, teaching English is a challenging task. As educators we need Nowadays, the contrastive research of phraseology is attracting a lot of attention and a growing interest in recent linguistics. Given the abundance of phraseological publications in Germanic linguistics, phraseology should be considered a highly current area of research. The existence of a lot of detailed research reviews is probably related not only to the realization that phraseology stands out as a separate linguistic subdiscipline, but also that it is not a marginal phenomenon of language. In recent decades, German phraseological research in particular has progressed and become an independent linguistic sub-discipline precisely thanks to the multitude of publications.

The situation in monolingual and bilingual phraseography is also deficient. This is related to the fact that phraseological research in Macedonia has so far been largely carried out from a folkloristic point of view in the form of collections, with mainly capturing proverbs or other firmly established constructions from a synchronic or diachronic aspect.

One of the areas that recent phraseological research has focused on is contrastive phraseology. Contrastive studies within phraseology compare the phraseological systems of two or more languages and our paper is also part of the growing interest in contrastive phraseology in modern linguistics. In particular, the contrastive study of the German-

Macedonian language pair has so far occupied a marginal position in comparative linguistics. The subject of this article is a contrastive analysis of phraseology, more specifically of proverbs and sayings with the animalistic lexicon in German and Macedonian.

Proverbs and sayings are an integral part of folk creativity, in our case, in German and Macedonian. They are essential tools for the preservation and development of national integrity because they accompany a people throughout its history. PSs aim, first of all, to spread folk wisdom, acquired life experience and lessons accumulated over centuries.

One may encounter multiple variants for the same proverb or saying, or the origin may not be known due to the presence of the same proverb or saying in two languages. PSs are defined as short folk intellectual creations that express a complete thought and in which there is often a loss of semantic connection, which is why they are considered a specific group of expressions.

In our article, typically German and typically Macedonian PSs are analyzed, because they bear witness to their peoples' traditions. We also make attempts to distinguish between proverbs and sayings which is very difficult or even impossible, according to certain scholars. In everyday speech no distinction is made between these two categories, even in tradition they belong to the same genre. They are only distinguished as two separate categories in folklore and in linguistics, because they are considered to possess their own structural, semantic and functional characteristics. Practice shows that there is a distinction between proverbs and sayings and that it should be based on their function, because their structural and semantic differences arise as a result of their function in the sentence. However, due to the large number of common features, PSs are observed together, which is also the case with PSs from our excerpted material. Lyatsky (1847) says that it is impossible to determine the exact border between a proverb and a saying, and his opinion is supported by many others such as Buslaev, Potebnja and others. The question of their distinction arises later and continues over the years without specifying its solution (Savenkova 1989). So, it has become a tradition to consider PSs as a single genre and to analyze the term proverbs and sayings as a single one without dividing it into separate parts (Permyakov 1985).

Phraseology and paremiology are sciences that deal with questions related to PSs, and they deal with distinguishing of PP from a linguistic point of view, all with the aim of deepening into their essence. In the process of distinguishing between PSs, due to their easier recognition and classification, scientists, phraseologists, paremiologists, and collectors encountered difficulties, but not with all PSs, only with a certain part. For easier distinction, they state the following differences: a saying differs from a proverb by its formal structural feature; sayings have an unfinished structure, while proverbs always have the structure of a complete independent sentence.

In our article, the emphasis is placed on PSs with an animal component in both German and Macedonian, because it is the animalisms that reflect human character traits and allude to a people's past experiences, and from them we can learn many wisdoms, which are of great importance for young generations to come. As an illustration of what has been stated so far, let us take the following PSs:

1. „Од болва прави слон“ – Macedonian; *Aus einer **Mücke** einen Elefanten machen = wenn jmd. etwas übertreibt* - German; (lit. 'to make an elephant out of a flea', the English equivalent being 'make a mountain out of a molehill') – to make something big out of something small to exaggerate a small thing. When observing this expression, we can conclude that it is a saying, and we can confirm this by stating all the above-mentioned peculiarities that characterize a saying; and, if we detect these in this linguistic unit, then we can really confirm that it is a saying.

One of the main characteristics of sayings is the predicative form with an unfinished structure, which means that our expression meets the first criterion for classification in the group of sayings because it has a predicative form and the message conveyed is not

completed. The figurative sense is absent in this expression, which means that it also satisfies this criterion for confirming the saying category. It also represents a short folk expression, and grammatically it consists of an independent sentence. This expression is used in the speech not to confirm the thought, but to decorate it, to enrich the speech and to bring liveliness into it, which means satisfying this criterion as well. The statement does not ask for anything, it does not offer an explanation, but only describes a given image, i.e., a representation of how it is possible because of one small flea to set a whole quilt on fire, so there is expressed imagery. All these characteristics are necessary to confirm that an utterance is a saying.

2. „Кога мачката ја нема, глувците оро играат“ – Macedonian; *Ist die Katze aus dem Haus, tanzen die Mäuse auf dem Tisch* = wer gewohnt ist, ständig beaufsichtigt zu werden, nutzt es aus, wenn er einmal ohne Aufsicht ist – German; (lit. ‘When the cat is gone, the mice dance’, the English equivalent being ‘When the cat's away, the mice will play.’) - when the boss is not there, all the employees slack off with their work or take longer breaks. This expression is a proverb, but it is necessary, just in case, to confirm the features that characterize a proverb.

The statement really has the structure of a completed independent sentence with the meaning that when the person in charge is not at the workplace, the employees take longer breaks; this meets the second criterion, which is the presence of figurative meaning. With this statement, the experience of many generations is emphasized and the attitude of the entire nation is expressed in relation to that problem. If a statement is a proverb, then it should not be judged, or debated; it should only be accepted as an experience from past generations or as wisdom that we should be happy to trust, because it comes to us as a given already experienced thing, an experience from which we should derive only the positive benefits. The thought conveyed by this expression is confirmed by the expression itself. With it, a socially significant value is conveyed and the didactic character is present from the position of the centuries-old experience of society. So, this statement contains all the essential characteristics of a proverb and therefore we confirm that this expression is actually a proverb.

Our main concern is the analysis of PSs with animal components in the two target languages, using the lexical classification and, of course, determining the equivalence between the same two target languages. But, in order to arrive at such an analysis, several steps are needed that will help us in defining such statements in both languages.

The contrastive study of PSs in German and Macedonian is of great importance for both languages, because few researchers have done such research so far. During our research, we started from the possibility of actually detecting the equivalents, if such exist, in both languages, and we came across very interesting variations of PSs thus coming to the conclusion that despite the different language groups, PSs from both languages have many common elements.

In professional literature, the most accepted classification approaches are those of Permyakov (1970), according to which PSs can be arranged according to alphabetical, lexical, monographic, genetic, and thematic classification. Each of these classifications has its own positive and negative aspects that, depending on the researcher, are emphasized or neglected. As researchers, linguists, we thought a lot about this topic, all in order to choose the most suitable classification for our excerpted material of PSs from the two investigated languages; in the end, we decided to take as the subject of our analysis the lexical classification which, in our opinion, has the least anomalies and which can greatly help the learners of both languages, German and Macedonian, as well as future generations of researchers in this field. The alphabetical classification is the classification that we immediately eliminated due to the fact that it is quite used, that is, already used in some way and where restructuring of PSs was observed during translation from one language to another. The monographic and genetic classifications are carried out according to the origin,

the place of collection and the language in which they were created and they are mostly used in historical research. Our research is not like that, we neither neglect the origin of the PSs nor do we emphasize the place of collection; this is not important to us, but the PSs themselves are important to us and the language in which they originated is not the subject of our research, but we are more interested in the most frequently used PSs with an animal component in German and those in Macedonian language. On the other hand, the thematic classification arranges PSs according to the content, that is, the topic they deal with, such as social topics, family ties, love topics, etc. We concluded that this classification cannot highlight the animal components that are the subject of our research, and therefore we decided that the most adequate to satisfy our interests is the lexical classification that sorts PSs according to some dominant lexeme.

So, the lexical classification is the right one that will allow us to highlight animalisms as dominant lexemes in German and Macedonian PSs. After we decided which classification would satisfy our approach to research, we moved on to the classification itself, waiting for its results, which are of great importance for our research. We first analyzed German PSs with an animal component, considering that their corpus is far more extensive due to the fact that German researchers showed interest in them much earlier than the Macedonian ones, for which we will later determine that we were not right because the Macedonian corpus of PSs with animal component is not to be underestimated.

Results and discussion

When classifying the German PSs with an animal component, we respected the alphabetical order, that is, we started with the lexemes animalisms first with the letter A for a more comprehensive approach. From the analyzed German corpus, we can state the following data that we have come to and conclude that a total number of 119 examples are subject to the lexical classification of German PSs, of which the lexeme **Hund** = dog stands out as the most represented lexeme in 11 PSs, followed by the lexeme **Katze** = cat with 9 PSs, **Hahn** = rooster with 7 PSs, **Gaul** = horse, **Fisch** = fish and **Pferd** = horse with 6 PSs, **Esel** = donkey with 5 PSs, **Affe** = monkey, **Bär** = bear, **Hase** = rabbit and **Wolf** = wolf with 4 PSs each, and lexemes such as **Frosch** = frog, **Fliege** = fly and **Fuchs** = fox are represented with 3 PSs each. The lexemes **Vogel** = bird, **Taube** = pigeon, **Spatz** = sparrow, **Schaf** = sheep, **Ochs** = ox, **Maus** = mouse, and **Kuckuck** = cuckoo are represented with 2 PSs each, while these are represented with 1 PS each: **Ziege** = goat, **Wurm** = worm, **Tier** = animal, **Stier** = bull, **Schwalbe** = swallow, **Scwein** = pig, **Löwe** = lion, **Raube** = bird of prey, **Ratte** = rat, **Mücke** = fly, **Sau** = pig, **Schwalbe** = swallow, **Schweine** = pigs, **Stier** = bull, **Kuh** = cow, **Krähe** = raven, **Eule** = owl and **Gans** = goose. As can be seen from the analysis, the most represented in the German PSs are domestic animals, dog and cat that emphasize different human character traits.

We also sorted the Macedonian PSs with an animal component according to the lexical classification, starting with the lexemes first beginning in the letter A for a more comprehensive approach. From the analyzed Macedonian corpus, we have come to the following data:

From the Macedonian corpus of PSs with an animal component, which is a total of 126 PSs, we can draw the following conclusion: the most represented animalism in Macedonian PSs is the **dog** with 14 PSs, **horse** with a total of 9 PSs, followed by **fish** with 8 PSs, **wolf** with 7 PSs, **sparrow** with 6 PSs, **rabbit**, **chicken**, **sheep** and **pig** with 5 PSs each, **mouse**, **donkey** and **chicken** with 4 PSs each, then the **crow**, **goat**, **rooster**, **cat**, **worm** and **jackdaw** with 3 PSs each, **horse** (in the archaic form of **am**), **ox**, **snake**, **fox**, **frog**, **lamb**, **bear** and **bee** with 2 PSs each, and **flea**, **bumblebee**, **louse**, **raven**, **dove**, **animal**, **mare**, **crocodile**, **swallow**, **fly**, **mule**, **spider**, **pig**, **maggpie**, **owl** and **mole** with 1PS each.

Conclusion

As a conclusion of our research dedicated to PSs as bearers of folk wisdom of a nation, we can freely state that they are truly the treasure of a nation, because through them the

traditional wealth or the wisdom of the nation is passed down from generation to generation. They are not just lexical units that enrich the linguistic corpus of a language, but are really a great cultural-historical treasure of a people, because they contain the customs and traditions of that people.

We have tried to define and make a distinction between them, although many linguists think that it is impossible to do. According to our research, we can freely state that the proverb in Macedonian „Прво отепай ја мечката, после продавај ја кожата“ (Величковски 2009:171)- in German ‘*Man soll das Fell des Bären verteilen, bevor man ihn erlegt hat*’ (MDI 1976: 120) (the English equivalent being ‘*Don’t sell the fur before shooting the bear.*’) is a model of behavior that always expresses experiences from history and life and it always teaches, while the saying in Macedonian „спиe како мечка“ – in German ‘*schlafen wie ein Bär = wie ein Murmeltier schlafen*’ (MDI 1976: 42) (the English equivalent is ‘*sleep like a log*’) does not ask for anything, it does not explain anything, but only gives a description of a picture or a performance. In a word, proverbs differ from sayings not only by structural-semantic, but also by functional characteristics.

On the other hand, through lexical classifications of PSs in both diasystems, we came to interesting insights from both the linguistic and a cultural aspect, which we tried to present in the best possible way. It is interesting to note that PSs with the animal lexeme **dog** appear as most numerous in the excerpted material in the two contrasting languages, which emphasizes the human trait of loyalty, sincerity, and protection.

In the given PSs, the lexeme dog is mentioned in both positive and negative contexts. In a positive context, the qualities of loyalty, honesty, protection, adaptability, etc. stand out, and in a negative context the human qualities of hostile attitude, unworthy life, impossible situations, bad temper, ingratitude, unprotected person, etc. are represented.

So, despite the differences in the analyzed linguistic corpus of the two diametrically different languages, German and Macedonian, when it comes to the transmission of folk wisdom and the identification of human character traits with those of animals, we can freely state that there are great similarities and support it with the figures obtained from our comparative research.

We rightly believe that such a comparative research opens up many dilemmas and questions for thought that could attract new linguist researchers and language lovers to delve into this topic and deepen the knowledge of it for our future generations.

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