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CULTURALLY MARKED LEXICAL UNITS IN BABUR'S GHAZALS: A LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The article examines culturally marked lexical units in Babur's ghazals from a linguocultural perspective. The study deliberately narrows the material to lexemes that name concrete cultural practices, objects, festive customs, games, musical instruments and feast-related items, because an excessively broad use of the term realia may blur the boundary between realia, symbol, metaphor and religious-precedent vocabulary. The analysis is based on the 1994 Tashkent edition of Babur's Divan and focuses on such units as Navro'z, yog'lig', chavgon, go'y, dutor, chang, nuql, chog'ir and sog'ar. The findings show that these units do not function merely as archaic or decorative words. They preserve culturally relevant information about holiday practices, dress etiquette, equestrian games, musical culture and courtly feast traditions. In Babur's ghazals, culturally marked lexemes connect lyrical emotion with a historically concrete Uzbek-Turkic cultural environment.

Keywords

Babur, ghazal, linguoculturology, cultural realia, culturally marked lexeme, Navro'z, chavgon, dutor, feast culture.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary linguistics, the study of literary texts increasingly requires attention not only to poetic imagery but also to the cultural information encoded in lexical units. A classical ghazal contains many words that cannot be understood adequately if they are treated only as stylistic ornaments or as isolated dictionary items. Some words bring into the text a whole cultural scene: a holiday, an item of clothing, a form of public entertainment, a musical instrument, a feast, or a communicative practice. In this respect, Babur's ghazals are important linguistic material, because they combine refined poetic expression with a historically concrete cultural world.

The present article is based on the section of the dissertation devoted to realia and culturally marked units in Babur's ghazals. However, the methodological position is narrowed intentionally. In literary analysis, there is a risk of calling every historically old word a realia. Such an approach weakens the argument. A

religious name, a metaphorical image, a symbolic figure or a courtly title may carry cultural meaning, but it is not always safe to classify it as realia. Therefore, this article focuses mainly on object-based and practice-based cultural lexemes: names of holidays, clothing, traditional games, musical instruments and feast-related objects. This restriction makes the analysis more defensible and prevents the material from becoming an artificial list.

The central problem of the article is the following: how do culturally marked lexical units in Babur's ghazals preserve information about the Uzbek-Turkic cultural environment, and how do they participate in the creation of lyrical meaning? The aim of the research is to analyze selected cultural lexemes in Babur's ghazals and to show that they function not only as referential names but also as carriers of cultural connotation. The object of the article is the language of Babur's ghazals, while the subject is the linguocultural meaning of selected culturally marked lexical units in the text.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical basis of the study is formed by works on realia, linguoculturology and cultural semantics. S. Vlahov and S. Florin define realia not as the object itself but as the word naming an object, practice or phenomenon specific to a particular culture [2, p. 13]. They also emphasize that realia name objects connected with the life, culture, social and historical development of one people and may be unfamiliar to another people [2, p. 47]. This definition is important because it prevents the term realia from being reduced to any old or rare word. The decisive criterion is cultural specificity.

D. M. Sharifova's approach is also significant for the present study. She notes that the absence of an exact equivalent should not always be understood absolutely; the main difficulty lies in transferring the full local cultural meaning of a culturally specific unit into another linguistic and cultural system [3, p. 118]. This clarification is useful for analyzing Babur's ghazals. Some units can be translated approximately, but their cultural associations often cannot be transferred by a single word. For example, Navro'z may be rendered as a spring festival, but this translation does not fully convey the complex cultural associations of renewal, communal celebration, visiting relatives, table setting and good wishes.

Linguoculturology treats such units as signs carrying cultural information. V. A. Maslova states that language preserves nationally marked cultural information and that linguoculturological analysis should reveal how such information is embodied in linguistic units [4, p. 11]. In this sense, the analysis of Babur's ghazals should not be limited to the external meaning of the word. The task is to identify what cultural experience is activated by the word in a given poetic context.

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The material of the article is taken from the 1994 edition of Babur's Divan prepared by A. Abdug'afurov and edited by A. P. Qayumov. The selected examples include Navro'z, yog'lig', chavgon, go'y, dutor, chang, nuql, chog'ir and sog'ar. The method is descriptive-analytical. First, the lexical unit is identified in the poetic context. Second, its dictionary or cultural meaning is clarified. Third, its function in the bayt is interpreted in relation to cultural connotation. The article does not use tables and does not divide the material into artificial groups; instead, each example is analyzed in its textual environment.

RESULTS

The first culturally marked unit analyzed in the article is Navro'z. In Babur's ghazals, this word is not only a calendar name. It activates a culturally recognizable festive scene: the beginning of spring, renewal, joy, meeting people, setting a table and beginning a new period with good intention.

Yuzi Navro'ziyu vasli iydini, Bobur, g'animat tut,
Ki, mundin yaxshi bo'lmas, bo'lsa yuz Navro'z-u bayramlar. [1, p. 22]

In this bayt, Navro'z is associated with the beloved's face and the joy of union. The poetic meaning is built on a cultural analogy: the beloved's face is perceived as a festive renewal, and union is valued as a unique holiday. The word does not merely denote a spring festival; it brings into the ghazal the cultural feeling of renewal and collective happiness. Even if the reader translates Navro'z as "spring festival", the cultural density of the word remains wider than the translation.

Another example confirms that Navro'z is opposed to grief and mourning:

Ulki yillar-oylar o'tkargay g'am-u motam bila,
Shod-u xurram bo'lmag'ay Navro'z ila bayram bila. [1, p. 57]

Here Navro'z becomes the lexical marker of joy that stands against sorrow. The opposition between "g'am-u motam" and "Navro'z ila bayram" is not accidental. In Uzbek cultural consciousness, Navro'z is related to cleaning, renewal, reconciliation, visiting relatives, preparing food and entering a new season with hope. Thus, in Babur's ghazal the lexeme Navro'z functions as a linguocultural sign of communal joy and psychological renewal.

The next unit is yog'lig'. In the source material, this word is interpreted as a headscarf or kerchief. F. Is'hoqov's explanatory dictionary for Boburnoma explains yog'liq as "ro'mol" and gives an example connected with the manner of tying a kerchief [5, p. 53]. This detail is important: the word does not simply denote a piece of cloth; it also points to dress etiquette and a culturally marked practice of covering or tying.

Yog'lig'ingkim, jon bila men xastadurmen zor anga,
Xasta jonlar rishtasidindur magar har tor anga. [1, p. 18]

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In this bayt, yog‘lig‘ is connected with the suffering of the lyrical subject. The individual thread of the kerchief is imagined as if it were made from the threads of sick souls. The cultural background of the word strengthens the poetic image. Since yog‘lig‘ belongs to the sphere of clothing, modesty and personal appearance, its use creates an intimate connection between material culture and emotional experience.

The same unit occurs in another context:

Ey ko‘ngul, yuz pora qilsa yor tig‘i, g‘am yema,
Lutf etib gar bog‘lar o‘lsa yog‘lig‘ini yor anga. [1, p. 22]

The expression “to tie the yog‘lig‘” evokes a concrete gesture. It is not an abstract symbol detached from everyday life. It recalls the practice of binding or covering with a scarf. The bayt transforms this ordinary cultural action into a gesture of kindness from the beloved. Therefore, yog‘lig‘ functions as a culturally marked object that connects the bodily, the emotional and the social.

The units chavgon and go‘y introduce another cultural sphere: traditional equestrian games and public entertainment. In the explanatory dictionary of Alisher Navoi’s works, chavgon is described as a stick used in a traditional game [6, p. 195], while go‘y is explained as a ball used in the same game [7, p. 431].

Olida go‘yin ko‘rung, ilgida chavgonin ko‘rung,
Yuzida zulfi bila go‘yi zanaxdonin ko‘rung. [1, p. 35]

The words chavgon and go‘y cannot be reduced to “stick” and “ball”. In the context of the ghazal, they evoke a cultural scene of mounted play, skill, movement and public spectacle. The continuation of the image with “maydon” and “javlon” strengthens this cultural frame:

Ul pari maydon aro javlonda yuz ming noz ila,
Orqasinda yuz meningdek zoru hayronin ko‘rung. [1, p. 35]

The presence of “maydon” and “javlon” confirms that the scene is not merely an isolated metaphor. It has a cultural basis in equestrian movement and game performance. The beloved appears as a figure moving in a public field of beauty and play, while the lyrical subject remains amazed. In this case, cultural realia organize the visual and dynamic structure of the bayt.

Musical culture is represented by dutor and chang. In the following bayt, dutor appears in the form “dutora”:

Dutora uni aysh-u farog‘atni berur yod,
Mutribg‘a quloq tutki, ne der nag‘mada sozi. [1, p. 63]

Dutor is a two-stringed musical instrument deeply associated with Turkic and Uzbek musical culture. The neighboring words “nag‘ma”, “soz” and “mutrib” show that the unit belongs to the musical environment. The word is not a random object-name. It evokes song, performance, listening and the emotional atmosphere

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of leisure. In translation, "two-stringed instrument" gives only the technical meaning; it does not convey the cultural memory of performance, gatherings and lyrical musical tradition.

Chang is another musical instrument that appears repeatedly in the same cultural environment:

Ishrat ichra har qachonkim chang olsang ilgingga,
Furqatingda qolg'on egri qomatim yod aylagil. [1, p. 37]

The expression "chang olmoq" connects the instrument with the action of performance. The bayt is built on a contrast between musical pleasure and the memory of separation. The cultural function of chang is important: it belongs to the world of majlis, music, sound and collective enjoyment. The lyrical subject asks the beloved to remember his bent figure whenever the instrument is taken in hand. Thus, the object of musical culture becomes a mediator between entertainment and suffering.

Other examples show the same musical frame:

Soz aylab bir nishotangiz chang, ey dilrabo,
Benavo ko'nglumni g'am changidin ozod aylagil. [1, p. 37]

Majlis ichra chang birla tortib ovoz, ey pari,
Sabru hushim juzv-u avroqini barbod aylagil. [1, p. 37]

In these bayts, chang appears together with "soz", "ovoz" and "majlis". The repeated environment proves that the unit is not an accidental archaic word. It names a musical object that participates in the cultural organization of the lyrical situation. The ghazal uses this cultural object to connect sound, gathering and emotional disturbance.

Feast and courtly gathering are represented by nuql, chog'ir and sog'ar. Nuql denotes light food or snacks served in a feast or drinking gathering. The explanatory dictionary of Alisher Navoi's works gives the meaning of nuql as a feast-related item [6, p. 493].

Bori ahbob edi hozir, bori asbob edi jam',
Soz-u xonanda bila nuql-u may beg'ash edi. [1, p. 65]

The bayt presents a complete scene of courtly or social gathering: friends are present, necessary things are gathered, music and singer are present, and nuql and wine complete the festive environment. Nuql is a small lexical item, but it has a strong cultural function. It helps reconstruct the material side of the majlis: table, food, music, companionship and conversation. Without this word, the scene would lose part of its concrete cultural texture.

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Chog‘ir is another feast-related unit. It names an alcoholic drink and is repeatedly connected with spring, pleasure, conversation and the figure of the cupbearer:

G‘ofil o‘lma, ey soqiy, gul chog‘in g‘animat tut! Vaqti aysh erur boqiy, ol chog‘ir, ketur, bot tut! [1, p. 20]

In this context, chog‘ir is connected with “gul chog‘i”, “vaqti aysh” and “soqiy”. The unit does not function as a neutral beverage name. It belongs to a cultural scenario of springtime pleasure, a cupbearer, a gathering and the call to value the passing moment. The lexical environment makes the culturally marked meaning visible.

The same cultural association is repeated elsewhere:

Soqiy erur ishtrat chog‘i, afsurda bo‘lma day bila, O‘tteg chog‘ir keltur, dag‘i, suhbat tutoshur may bila. [1, p. 57]

Here chog‘ir is directly tied to “ishrat”, “soqiy”, “suhbat” and “may”. The bayt does not simply mention a drink; it constructs a social situation. The drink becomes part of the etiquette of gathering and emotional release. That is why chog‘ir should be treated as a culturally marked lexeme, not only as an old lexical item.

Sog‘ar is also related to the feast culture. The explanatory dictionary of Alisher Navoi’s works explains sog‘ar as a cup or vessel used for drinking [8, p. 110].

Hajr shomidin mening qon yutmog‘imni yod eting, Cheksangiz ul nozanin birla sabuhiy sog‘are. [1, p. 65]

The phrase “sabuhiy sog‘ar” points to a particular drinking practice and time. The cup is not merely a physical vessel; it belongs to the order of a gathering and carries connotations of companionship, memory and contrast. The lyrical subject asks to be remembered while the cup is being taken with the beloved. The cultural object therefore becomes a sign through which separation enters the world of pleasure.

DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that culturally marked lexical units in Babur’s ghazals perform several functions simultaneously. First, they name concrete elements of cultural life. Navro‘z names a holiday; yog‘lig‘ names a garment-related object; chavgon and go‘y name elements of a traditional game; dutor and chang name musical instruments; nuql, chog‘ir and sog‘ar name items related to feast culture. In this respect, these units preserve fragments of material and social culture.

Second, these units organize the poetic situation. They are not inserted into the ghazal as ethnographic decoration. Navro‘z structures the contrast between sorrow and joy; yog‘lig‘ turns a material object into a sign of intimate care; chavgon and go‘y create a dynamic scene of movement and spectacle; chang and dutor connect

music with memory; nuql, chog‘ir and sog‘ar construct the atmosphere of majlis and feast. Each word performs textual work.

Third, culturally marked units help connect lyrical emotion with a concrete cultural environment. Classical ghazal often expresses universal experiences: love, separation, longing, joy, grief and hope. However, in Babur’s text these experiences do not remain abstract. They acquire cultural form through objects and practices familiar to the historical linguistic community. The grief of separation may be remembered through a musical instrument; the joy of union may be compared with Navro‘z; the experience of attention and mercy may be expressed through the tying of a kerchief. Thus, the cultural object becomes a carrier of emotional meaning.

Fourth, the analyzed units reveal why the boundary between realia and other linguocultural categories must be controlled carefully. A word may be culturally meaningful, but not every culturally meaningful word should automatically be called realia. Some words work primarily as symbols, metaphors, religious-precedent units or social titles. For this reason, the article limited the material to units that clearly name objects, practices or festive-cultural phenomena. This methodological restriction makes the conclusions more reliable.

The analysis also shows that translation cannot fully reproduce the cultural content of these units. Navro‘z can be translated as a spring festival, but the translation does not contain the full Uzbek cultural frame. Chavgon can be translated as a polo-like game stick, but the historical and poetic associations remain incomplete. Yog‘lig‘ may be rendered as kerchief or scarf, yet the cultural connection with modesty, appearance and social gesture requires explanation. Therefore, such words need commentary in academic translation and literary interpretation.

From a linguocultural point of view, the main value of the material lies in the fact that it preserves cultural memory at the lexical level. Babur’s ghazals do not only present subjective lyrical emotion; they also preserve traces of everyday and courtly life, festive practices, musical instruments, games and table culture. This confirms that a ghazal text can be a source for studying the cultural semantics of historical Uzbek literary language.

CONCLUSION

The study of culturally marked lexical units in Babur’s ghazals shows that selected words such as Navro‘z, yog‘lig‘, chavgon, go‘y, dutor, chang, nuql, chog‘ir and sog‘ar carry more than denotative meaning. They preserve cultural information about holiday customs, clothing etiquette, equestrian games, musical performance and feast culture. Their meaning becomes fully visible only when the poetic context is read together with the cultural background.

The article has deliberately avoided an overly broad interpretation of realia. The selected units were treated as culturally marked lexemes only when they named a concrete practice, object or cultural phenomenon. This approach makes it possible to distinguish cultural realia from symbol, metaphor and religious-precedent vocabulary. The analysis demonstrates that such units in Babur's ghazals are not decorative archaisms; they are linguistic signs that connect lyrical emotion with the historical Uzbek-Turkic cultural world.

Therefore, Babur's ghazals should be studied not only as literary monuments but also as valuable linguistic material reflecting the cultural semantics of the period. Linguocultural analysis reveals how a poetic word can preserve material culture, social practices and collective memory. This perspective contributes to the broader study of Uzbek historical literary language and its culturally marked vocabulary.

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