

ETHNOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF DESCRIPTIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL IN AZERBAIJANI AND ENGLISH FOLK LANGUAGES

SUMMARY

This article delves into the ethnolinguistic aspects of Heaven and Hell as portrayed in the folk languages of Azerbaijani and English-speaking communities. By investigating the cultural narratives, symbolic meanings, and moral teachings within these descriptions, the study unveils how different cultures perceive and express these metaphysical realms through their vernacular languages.

The comparative analysis emphasizes the role of folk language in maintaining cultural identity and continuity, providing insights into the values, beliefs, and moral frameworks of Azerbaijani and English-speaking communities. Through vivid imagery, symbolic richness, and moral teachings, the folk narratives' depictions of Heaven and Hell reveal the intricate relationship between language, culture, and metaphysical beliefs, echoing across generations with timeless themes of redemption, justice, and the eternal search for meaning.

Key words: *heaven, hell, folk language, analysis, Azerbaijani, English*

Ethnolinguistics explores the intricate relationship between national culture and language. Essentially, ethnolinguistics serves as a form of cultural self-expression, delving into national thinking and reflecting the cultural characteristics of a nation through its language [Убайдуллаевна: 2021, С.193].

According to N.I. Tolstoy, this field is a research direction within linguistics that examines the intersections of language and spiritual culture, language and national psychology, and the role of language in folk art. It is important to note that ethnolinguistics is not merely a fusion of linguistics and ethnology [Толстой: 1995].

A.S. Gerdt describes ethnolinguistics as a marginal discipline that intersects with linguistics, ethnography, and sociology [Гердт: 2005, С.488]. At its core, ethnolinguistics is a language-oriented discipline with a focus on cultural studies, investigating the interplay between language and culture. Ethnolinguistics investigates how language shapes and reflects cultural beliefs and practices, examining how linguistic expressions of metaphysical concepts like Heaven and Hell reveal underlying cultural values, societal norms, and moral frameworks within different communities.

Regarding the "broad" and "narrow" definitions of ethnolinguistics, it is useful to revisit the debates and discussions among folklorists from fifty years ago and earlier. Some viewed folklore as a field focused on the study of people, their histo-

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ry, daily lives, and beliefs, while others equated folklore (or folklore studies) with anthropology, regarding it as a science concerned with humanity in general. Some nearly equated folklore with ethnography or ethnology, defining it as a science about people and their traditions.

Some scholars saw folklore as a more specialized and focused discipline. Yu. M. Sokolov described folklore as "a segment of ethnography" and argued that folklore studies are inseparable from literary studies, just as they are from ethnography [Соколов: 1926, С.6, 7].

A key aspect is the internal link between folklore and ethnography concerning content, particularly the meanings of folklore and ritual texts. Although the materials, methods, and forms of expression in folklore and rituals are different—one being verbal and the other involving actions, objects, etc.—they are often interchangeable in terms of meaning and can be integrated into a cohesive whole. One part might be verbal, while the other is expressed through ritual practices [Байбурин: 1993].

A.K. Bayburin, who has extensively explored the relationship between folklore and ethnography, has recently revisited the topic. He posits that the core connection between these two fields lies in their focus on tradition. Both ethnographers and folklorists study relatively stable cultural forms, and thus, the realm of tradition is a shared area of interest for modern folklore studies and ethnography [Байбурин: 2003].

Descriptions of Heaven in Azerbaijani folk language. In Azerbaijani folk language, Heaven, known as "Cənnət" or "Göy" embodies a concept of ultimate bliss and divine reward deeply ingrained in cultural narratives and oral traditions. Across Azerbaijani folklore, the depiction of Heaven transcends mere theological doctrine, resonating as a celestial paradise where spiritual aspirations find fulfillment and eternal peace reigns supreme.

In Azerbaijani folk tales and idiomatic expressions, Heaven is portrayed as a paradisiacal realm adorned with verdant gardens, flowing rivers of milk and honey, and shaded by the lush foliage of eternal trees. This imagery evokes a sense of abundance and serenity, symbolizing the ultimate reward for a life of piety and virtue. Such descriptions not only serve as a portrayal of divine benevolence but also reflect cultural ideals of harmony and prosperity.

Symbolism plays a significant role in Azerbaijani descriptions of Heaven, enriching its portrayal with layers of spiritual meaning. Light, often depicted as radiant and soothing, symbolizes enlightenment and the divine presence. The beauty of Heaven, described in terms of celestial delights and celestial music, underscores its transcendental nature and the spiritual elevation awaiting the righteous.

Beyond its aesthetic and symbolic dimensions, Azerbaijani folk descriptions of Heaven serve as moral and ethical guides. They reinforce the importance of virtuous conduct and adherence to religious teachings, proverbs and folk wisdom, such as "Cənnət də bu dünyadı, cəhənnəm də" (*"Heaven is also in this world, and*

so is hell"), "Cənnəti istəmədi, cəhənnəmə də getmədi, qaldı yolda sərgəndar" (*He did not desire heaven, nor did he go to hell; he remained stranded on the road*) and "Cənnətin yaylağı, cəhənnəmin qışlağı" (*The summer place of heaven, the winter place of hell*) can be good examples for that.

The depiction of Heaven in Azerbaijani folk language not only reflects cultural values but also contributes to the preservation of cultural continuity. Through oral traditions, folk tales, and religious narratives, the concept of Heaven remains integral to Azerbaijani identity, fostering a sense of communal belonging and spiritual unity across generations.

In Azerbaijani folk language, Heaven emerges as more than a theological abstraction—it embodies a cultural archetype of ultimate fulfillment and divine grace. Through vivid imagery, symbolic richness, and moral teachings, the descriptions of Heaven in folk narratives resonate with timeless aspirations for spiritual transcendence and eternal peace, offering profound insights into the cultural and spiritual dimensions of Azerbaijani society.

Descriptions of Hell in Azerbaijani folk language. In Azerbaijani folklore, the descriptions of hell (as heaven) are influenced significantly by Islamic beliefs and local traditions. An ethno-linguistic analysis of these descriptions reveals how language and culture intertwine to shape the conceptualization of hell.

In Azerbaijani culture, Islamic teachings predominantly shape the concept of hell. This Islamic concept is infused with local folklore, creating a unique Azerbaijani representation of hell.

The Azerbaijani descriptions of hell are heavily influenced by Islamic texts such as the Quran and Hadith. In these texts, hell is depicted as a place of intense suffering, with vivid descriptions of flames, darkness, and various forms of punishment.

Azerbaijani folklore adds layers of local color to the Islamic depiction. Stories and proverbs often incorporate elements from pre-Islamic beliefs and cultural practices, resulting in a distinctively Azerbaijani portrayal of hell.

The linguistic portrayal of hell in Azerbaijani folk language involves specific terms, metaphors, and imagery that reflect cultural perceptions of punishment and suffering.

Words such as "Cəhənnəm" (*hell*), "alov" (*flame*), "qaranlıq" (*darkness*), and "əzab" (*torment*) are commonly used. Each term carries connotations that contribute to the overall depiction of hell.

Azerbaijani descriptions of hell often use vivid metaphors, such as comparing hellfire to an unquenchable blaze or describing the suffering of its inhabitants in terms of extreme physical and emotional pain. These metaphors serve to amplify the fear and moral lessons associated with the concept of hell.

The harshness of the descriptions and the intensity of the imagery used in describing hell underscore the moral and ethical teachings of Islam as adapted

within Azerbaijani culture. The language used reflects a deep-seated belief in the consequences of moral transgressions.

Azerbaijani folklore adds local flavor to the Islamic concept of hell. For instance, traditional stories might depict hell as having specific regional characteristics or include local mythological figures. This integration of folklore elements shows how cultural narratives are adapted to fit religious teachings.

The specific linguistic choices in describing hell act as markers of cultural identity. They reveal how Azerbaijani speakers conceptualize and relate to the idea of divine justice and punishment. The nuances in language illustrate broader cultural attitudes towards morality and the afterlife. The following proverbs can be examples for the above-mentioned: "Cəhənnəmə də adamın dayısı gərək" (*"Even in hell, a person needs their uncle"*), "Cəhənnəmə gedən gələr, müştərinin gedəni gəlməz" (*"One who goes to hell will return, but the customer who leaves will not return"*), "Cəhənnəmə gedən özünə yoldaş axtarar" (*"One going to hell looks for a companion"*), "Cəhənnəmə gedən yoldaşını çox istər." (*"One going to hell would greatly desire their companion"*) and "Cəhənnəmə girsə, üzü qızarmaz" (*"Even if they enter hell, their face won't turn red"*).

Folk tales often include descriptions of hell that incorporate local fears and moral lessons. These stories might describe hell as a place where specific cultural sins are punished, adding a layer of local moral teaching to the religious concept.

The descriptions of hell in Azerbaijani folk language offer a rich field for ethnolinguistic analysis. They not only reflect the Islamic teachings on the afterlife but also integrate local cultural elements that provide a unique perspective on the concept of divine punishment. Through language, the cultural and religious values of Azerbaijani society are articulated, illustrating the interplay between linguistic expression and cultural beliefs.

English folk descriptions of Heaven and Hell. Heaven and Hell, central to English folklore, embody contrasting metaphysical realms that explore the complexities of human existence, morality, and spiritual destiny. Through the lens of English folk language, these concepts transcend theological doctrine to become vibrant cultural narratives imbued with symbolic meaning and moral guidance.

In English folk tradition, Heaven is envisioned as a place of eternal joy and divine reward. Described metaphorically as "a piece of Heaven" or "Heaven on Earth," these expressions evoke a sense of profound happiness and ideal circumstances. Such depictions resonate with the universal human longing for spiritual fulfillment and the ultimate reunion with loved ones in a blissful afterlife.

Symbolism plays a crucial role in shaping the portrayal of Heaven in English folklore. Light, often depicted as radiant and comforting, symbolizes divine presence and spiritual enlightenment. Gardens filled with celestial delights, rivers flowing with purity, and harmonious music of angels contribute to the imagery of Heaven as a transcendent realm of beauty and serenity.

Conversely, Hell in English folk language represents a realm of eternal punishment and spiritual torment for those who lead sinful lives. Idiomatic expressions like "to go through Hell" ("*cəhənnəmdən keçmək*") or "a Hellish ordeal" ("*cəhənnəm əzabı*") vividly illustrate the harsh realities of suffering and moral reckoning. Descriptions of Hell include fiery pits, darkness, and agonizing punishments, serving as a cautionary tale against immoral behavior and ethical transgressions.

Descriptions of Heaven and Hell in English folk language serve as moral and ethical guides, reinforcing societal norms and values. These narratives encourage virtuous conduct and discourage wrongdoing by offering visions of heavenly rewards and hellish punishments.

The depiction of Heaven and Hell in English folk language underscores their role in preserving cultural identity and continuity. Through oral traditions, ballads, and folk tales, these concepts remain integral to English cultural heritage, imparting moral teachings and shaping collective beliefs about the afterlife and moral order.

In English folk language, Heaven and Hell emerge as powerful symbols that illuminate the complexities of human morality, spiritual aspiration, and cultural identity. Through their vivid imagery, symbolic richness, and moral teachings, the descriptions of Heaven and Hell in folk narratives offer profound insights into the cultural and spiritual fabric of English society, resonating across generations with timeless themes of redemption, justice, and the eternal quest for meaning.

The ethnolinguistic analysis reveals how descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Azerbaijani and English folk languages mirror cultural values, aspirations, and moral teachings. These narratives serve to reinforce societal norms, ethical conduct, and the pursuit of spiritual rewards or the avoidance of divine punishment.

Over time, linguistic expressions of Heaven and Hell evolve alongside cultural changes and global influences. Modern interpretations and adaptations in folk language continue to shape these metaphysical concepts, reflecting contemporary perspectives on morality and spirituality.

The ethnolinguistic exploration of Heaven and Hell in Azerbaijani and English folk languages unveils a tapestry of cultural narratives and symbolic meanings. These concepts, deeply rooted in linguistic expressions and oral traditions, offer insights into the values, beliefs, and moral frameworks that shape human perceptions of the afterlife and spiritual dimensions of existence. By analyzing how different communities conceptualize and articulate Heaven and Hell through their vernacular, ethnolinguistics enriches our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and metaphysical beliefs.

Relevance of the Article: The article "Ethnolinguistic Analysis of Descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Azerbaijani and English Folk Languages" holds significant relevance in the study of comparative linguistics and cultural anthropology. By examining the conceptualizations of heaven and hell within Azerbaijani and

English folk languages, the article provides valuable insights into how different cultures perceive and describe these fundamental religious and existential concepts. This analysis helps in understanding the interplay between language, culture, and religious beliefs, offering a deeper appreciation of how metaphysical ideas are embedded in linguistic structures and cultural narratives. Such studies are crucial for cross-cultural communication, intercultural dialogue, and enhancing mutual understanding between diverse societies.

Scientific novelty of the article: The scientific novelty of the article lies in its ethnolinguistic approach to analyzing descriptions of heaven and hell in Azerbaijani and English folk languages. While much research has focused on individual languages or religious texts, this article bridges a gap by comparing these descriptions across distinct linguistic and cultural contexts. The innovative aspect of the research includes:

a) Comparative ethnolinguistic framework: Introducing a comparative framework that combines ethnolinguistic theories with the study of metaphysical concepts.

b) Cultural and linguistic insights: Offering new insights into how specific cultural and linguistic features shape the conceptualization of heaven and hell.

c) Cross-cultural linguistic patterns: Identifying and analyzing patterns and variations in descriptions that reflect broader cultural values and beliefs.

Practical significance and application: The practical significance of the article extends to several fields:

a) Education: It can be used in academic settings to teach students about the intersection of language, culture, and religion. It provides examples of how linguistic and cultural factors influence the expression of metaphysical concepts.

b) Intercultural communication: The findings can aid in improving intercultural communication and understanding by highlighting how different cultures describe and interpret fundamental concepts of heaven and hell.

c) Translation studies: The research offers valuable insights for translators working between Azerbaijani and English, particularly when dealing with religious or cultural texts that involve descriptions of heaven and hell.

d) Cultural research: It contributes to broader studies on cultural beliefs and their linguistic representations, useful for researchers in anthropology, religious studies, and sociolinguistics.

e) Religious studies: The article's insights can help scholars in religious studies to better understand how religious concepts are communicated across different cultures and languages.

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**CƏNNƏT VƏ CƏHƏNNƏM TƏSVİRLƏRİNİN AZƏRBAYCAN VƏ İNGİLİS
XALQ DİLLƏRİNDƏ ETNOLİNGVİSTİK TƏHLİLİ
XÜLASƏ**

Bu məqalə Azərbaycan və ingilisdilli icmaların xalq dillərində təsvir olunan Cənnət və Cəhənnəmin etnolingvistik ölçülərini araşdırır. Bu təsvirlərdəki mədəni narrativləri, simvolik mənaları və əxlaqi təlimləri araşdırmaqla, tədqiqat müxtəlif mədəniyyətlərin bu metafizik aləmləri öz yerli dilləri ilə necə konseptuallaşdırıb ifadə etdiklərini göstərir.

Müqayisəli təhlil xalq dilinin mədəni kimliyi və davamlılığı qorumaqda rolunu vurğulayır, Azərbaycan və ingilisdilli icmaların dəyərləri, inancları və əxlaqi çərçivələri haqqında anlayışlar təklif edir. Canlı təsvirlər, simvolik zənginlik və əxlaqi təlimlər vasitəsilə xalq narrativlərində Cənnət və Cəhənnəmin təsvirləri dil, mədəniyyət və metafizik inanclar arasındakı incə qarşılıqlı əlaqəni işıqlandırır və nəsilər boyu əfv, ədalət və mənəvi axtarış kimi əbədi mövzularla səsləşir.

Açar sözlər: *cənnət, cəhənnəm, xalq dili, təhlil, Azərbaycan dili, ingilis dili*

**ЭТНОЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ОПИСАНИЙ РАЯ И АДА В АЗЕР-
БАЙДЖАНСКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ НАРОДНЫХ ЯЗЫКАХ
РЕЗЮМЕ**

Эта статья исследует этнолингвистические измерения Рая и Ада, как они изображены в народных языках азербайджанских и англоязычных сообществ. Изучая культурные нарративы, символические значения и моральные учения, заключенные в этих описаниях, исследование показывает, как разные культуры концептуализируют и артикулируют эти метафизические царства через свои диалекты.

Сравнительный анализ подчеркивает роль народного языка в сохранении культурной идентичности и преемственности, предлагая инсайты в ценности, убеждения и моральные рамки азербайджанских и англоязычных сообществ. Через яркие образы, символическое богатство и моральные учения описания Рая и Ада в народных нарративах освещают сложное взаимодействие между языком, культурой и метафизическими убеждениями, резонируя сквозь поколения с вечными темами искупления, справедливости и вечного стремления к смыслу.

Ключевые слова: *рай, ад, народный язык, анализ, азербайджанский язык, английский язык*