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EXPRESSIVE RESOURCES OF ETHNOCULTURAL IDENTITY IN LITERARY TEXTS (IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF THE CONCEPT OF MATERIAL CULTURE)

This study is dedicated to the analysis of lexical and phraseological units found in Azerbaijani and English-language literary texts that reflect the authors' national cultural identity and illuminate the symphonic linguistic identity inherent in the characters' linguistic affiliation. Specifically, within the scope of the article, reference is made to the language of works by Azerbaijani poets and writers such as I. Shykhly, Y.V. Chamanzaminli, F. Karimzadeh, A. Ahmad, among others, as well as English-language authors including M. Angelou, N. Diaz, Kahlil Gibran, N. Scott Momaday, and many others. The subject of this study is the analysis of the usage and functional positioning of lexical and phraseological units found in the works of the aforementioned authors, which can be included within the semantic field of the concept of national cultural identity. These units are evaluated from both linguistic-cultural and linguistic-pragmatic perspectives, in terms of their role in conveying authorial intent. It is well-established that the domain of realization for the concept of national cultural identity is remarkably broad, encompassing the entire conceptual sphere of language that is shaped by mental, ethnographic, historical, and cultural elements. In other words, this extensive and multifaceted semantic field may encompass, or at the very least, be closely connected with a variety of other conceptual domains. This stems primarily from the fact that any national-cultural identity reflects stereotypes and speech behavior models existing at an ethnomental level (often non-verbal in nature), while also manifesting through verbal means in the form of lexical and phraseological units that relate to all aspects of a people's way of life. Among the microconcepts that manifest at a non-verbal and mental level, one may note, for instance, the concept of the "stiff upper lip." As for microconcepts that possess verbal expression, these include the semantic domains of "national history", "national material culture", "national art", "national literature", "national cuisine", "national customs and traditions", among others – domains which may be fully or partially ascribed to this field.

Key words: artistic text, ethnocultural identity and language, the concept of national cultural identity, semantic field, Azerbaijani and English languages.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the verbalization mechanisms of the national identity concept based on authentic linguistic data and to evaluate the potential of these expressions to acquire expanded contextual meaning within specific textual frameworks. In line with this aim, the study identifies the following key tasks: 1. to analyze the internal hierarchical structure of the microconcepts, frames, and slots that underpin the realization mechanisms of the national identity concept; 2. to examine the text-structuring functions of these elements in artistic texts from a contextual perspective.

The aim of the article is to investigate the contextual use and structural/text-building functions of such lexical and phraseological units within artistic texts, particularly those that fall within the semantic field of the aforementioned microconcepts and serve as verbal markers (verbal identity cards) of national identity.

In this context, the study seeks to clarify the authorial intention behind the selection of specific lexical or phraseological units and to assess the extent to which the authors succeed in realizing their communicative goals. One of the key factors influencing communicative success lies in the accurate decoding of each party's semantic codes within the act of communication.

Degree of problem elaboration. It is important to note that a dual-aspect approach should be prioritized – one that synthesizes both identity-based and semantic-pragmatic evaluations. Specifically, the semantic expression of lexical and phraseological units related to the concept of national cultural identity in literary texts can be interpreted: 1. within the broader framework of identity studies, including the theory of linguistic identity; and 2. through a conceptually grounded analysis of the lexical-phraseological units tied to specific semantic fields.

Relevant domains include traditional crafts, national customs, material culture, literature, and folklore. Among the first line of studies in this direction, it is necessary to mention the foundational research of the great Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was among the earliest to articulate the idea of individual and collective language/speech identity [25, pp. 50–55]. Within the historical framework of the issue, particular emphasis must be placed on the research of neo-Humboldtian linguist Leo Weisgerber, regarded as the founder of both the theory of linguistic identity and the theory of the linguistic worldview. His theoretical investigations not only laid the groundwork for the ideas surrounding language/speech identity but also made it possible to delineate the boundaries of the semantic field of the national cultural identity concept.

Although Noam Chomsky regarded identity as peripheral to linguistic analysis, many scholars have emphasized its centrality [31, pp. 409–429]. In this context, numerous valuable studies have given significant attention to analyzing the manifestations of various identity forms – cultural identity, national identity, social identity, and others – within language.

From the perspective of examining the mechanisms through which linguistic identity and the concept of national cultural identity are realized in the format of literary texts, particular interest lies in the dissertation-level research conducted by Azerbaijani linguists B.G. Mammadova [24] and G.F. Baghirova [5], both of whom systematically explored the issue of language/speech identity. These scholars paid special attention to aspects of textual structuring in literary works, investigating the impact of collective linguistic identity and bilingual identity factors realized through intertextuality [23, pp. 110–118].

Other research directions have focused on micro-concepts within the broader concept of national cultural identity. In this regard, notable attention has been paid to studies analyzing the realization mechanisms of the concept of "Englishness" within the conceptual sphere of the English language, including the works of scholars such as B. Engler [12, pp. 335–348], B. Norton [31, pp. 409–429], K. Kumar [21], and M. Sofiyeva [36, pp. 221–225]. Additionally, studies exploring the concept of "Britishness" within the English conceptual sphere are also worthy of consideration [32].

Among the scholars in Azerbaijani linguistics who have examined the reflection of national and cultural identity in language, the research of I. Mammadov [26], H. Asgarov [13], I. M. Gurbanova [22], and many others deserves particular attention. At

the same time, it should be especially emphasized that within Azerbaijani linguistics, no comparative research has yet been conducted on the realization of microconcepts related to material culture in artistic texts in English and Azerbaijani. The present article can therefore be regarded as the first scholarly attempt in this direction.

As for the research methodology, the analyses carried out within the framework of the article employ the methods of semantic field analysis, conceptual analysis, text analysis, and comparative analysis.

Introduction. It is well known that the concept of culture encompasses a broad semantic field, and this fact has a natural and objective basis: by its very essence, the notion of identity represents a complex, multifaceted mode of existence that incorporates social, ethnic, gender, and psycho-emotional characteristics and dimensions. Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity emphasizes self-representation within the framework of social identities. The scholar emphasizes that the markers of identity manifested through different narratives may express the diversity of an individual's existence in multiple forms (or hypostases), and that this diversity can be regarded as the natural and logically consistent manifestation of social realization.

It is not accidental that S. Hall characterizes racial, ethnic, and national (citizenship-based) identities as forming a vital and indispensable triad in the determination of identity (for further discussion, see [15, pp. 130–141]). Admittedly, while Hall's approach is broadly accepted here, it should not be absolutized. Given his Afro-American background, Hall's emphasis on the essential importance of this triadic structure is understandable. However, for bearers of Azerbaijani, Turkish, Ukrainian, Georgian, and other national identities, this factor does not occupy a central place. Accordingly, within the conceptual spheres of the languages spoken by these ethnic communities (Azerbaijani, Turkish, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.), the micro-concept associated with racial identity does not cover a wide semantic field.

This, in turn, reveals the necessity – when determining the general landscape of the semantic field of the concept of identity and forecasting the internal semantic hierarchy structures – not only to consider universality (that is, the reality of semantic universals), but also to take into account identity-specific differences (their frequency or uniqueness).

Although S. Hall's doctrine of cultural mix and inclusivity of difference has indeed become a feature of contemporary global reality [6], the diversity of national and cultural identities remains indis-

putable. While the adoption and acceptance of diverse identities within a framework of tolerance – without marginalization, exclusion, or alienation, but rather through appreciation and understanding – is rightly seen as a key factor in sustainable development, the preservation, maintenance, and further cultivation of national identity distinctions must also be regarded as an integral and legitimate component of that developmental strategy. From this perspective, the study of linguistic means that express national and cultural identity acquires particular scholarly relevance.

Main section. A comparative analysis of the language of works written by Azerbaijani and English-speaking authors and poets allows for the identification of moments in which national and cultural identity finds expression through different aspects. At the same time, despite the fact that the texts produced by Azerbaijani and English-speaking writers are written in languages of distinct genealogical and structural-typological organization, one can still observe numerous shared or analogous mechanisms of expression. The latter, as previously noted, derive directly from the factor of semantic universality and are based on the commonalities in the mechanisms through which background knowledge exerts its influence on artistic discourse.

Background Knowledge as an Element of National Cultural Identity and Semiosis. It is known that background knowledge may possess universal, frequent, or unique characteristics. Universal background knowledge encompasses metaphors, intertextual insertions, and other verbalization mechanisms whose semantic decoding occurs almost effortlessly on a global scale. For instance, the use of the alternative names New World for the United States or Foggy Albion for Britain represents examples of universality.

Background knowledge of a frequent nature, on the other hand, refers to common markers of national cultural identity found in the languages of peoples who share certain cultural affinities. As S. Musavi notes, such knowledge may include references to a shared history, folklore, or literary heritage among genealogically related nations. Similarly, background knowledge based on shared religious traditions, for example, Islam or Christianity, can encompass manifestations of common religious values, quotations from sacred scriptures, and other elements of this kind [28, pp. 306–312].

Semantic unicalia, by contrast, embrace those concepts, background references, and manifestations of national and cultural identity that are distinctive to a single language or to a particular linguistic-cultural

environment. In this sense, one may assert that the reflections of national and cultural identity embodied in the background knowledge of Azerbaijani and English literary texts display both frequent and unique characteristics. In the first case, these are manifestations of shared cultural frequency such as pan-Islamic, pan-Christian, or pan-Turkic references, while in the second, they represent semantically encoded elements that bear unique significance for Azerbaijani, British, or American culture.

An adequate decoding of a literary text depends to a great extent on familiarity with its background knowledge and on awareness of the facts of national and cultural identity. Otherwise, the essential semiosis of the text – that is, the alignment between the author's and reader's interpretative frameworks – fails to occur (for further discussion, see [2, pp. 42–66]).

In Umberto Eco's interpretation of semiosis, each new linguistic sign evokes associations with another sign, thereby generating the potential for infinite recursion. According to Eco, this arises from the boundless potential of the "semantic encyclopedia" and ensures the infinite nature of semiotic processes [11]. However, while the inexhaustibility of this semantic recursion may expand creative possibilities (including the reader's interpretive or hermeneutic creativity), it may also impede the comprehension of the author's intended meaning. For precisely this reason, literary translations are at times accompanied by translator's commentaries, which most often pertain to background knowledge, verbal manifestations of national cultural identity, and related phenomena (see [1]).

In this regard, one cannot but agree with H. Chen, who emphasized that literary translation should not be understood merely as the transfer of a text from one linguistic code system into another. The linguist rightly considers deep familiarity with background knowledge – particularly that which conveys national and cultural identity – to be an essential, even decisive, factor in this process [9, pp. 645–651].

In other words, if one considers that the principal goal of reading a literary text lies in deriving meaning from it [36, pp. 214–240], then the infinite openness of the decoding process may, inevitably, distance us from this ultimate aim. Such interpretative boundlessness risks the loss of meaning and may lead to a failure to grasp the author's original intent.

According to Roland Barthes's concept of "The Death of the Author," which argues that reading a literary text is not merely an act of perception but a form of creative engagement on the part of the reader, the decoding of a literary text enables the

reader to penetrate even those profound meanings that the author may have unconsciously expressed without being aware of them [17, pp. 13–14]. However, this interpretive freedom cannot be extended to the manifestations of national and cultural identity. The reason is that these manifestations constitute a system of concepts existing independently of any individual reader's imagination; therefore, their adequate interpretation and translation are essential for the successful comprehension of the literary text – that is, for the effective realization of semiosis.

Mechanisms of the Verbal Realization of National and Cultural Identity in Literary Texts. The verbal realization mechanisms of national and cultural identity in literary texts may include the use of lexical and phraseological units that express historical realities, elements of daily life, the specificity of customs and traditions, ethnomental systems, and, among them, priorities in speech behavior.

Among the indicators of mental identity represented in literary texts, one may discuss the realization of the concepts of “Azerbaijani-ness,” “Englishness,” “Britishness,” and “Americanness.” For instance, as is well known, the concept of Englishness in literary texts is often actualized in opposition to the American variant of the English language [16]. As K. Kumar also observes, Englishness itself can, in many cases, be presented in opposition to Britishness. This phenomenon is manifested in a number of literary works – for example, in the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* and in the background, knowledge associated with it [21].

As for the direct linguistic phenomena found in the works of Azerbaijani and English-speaking writers and poets that can be characterized as manifestations of national and cultural identity, they may be distinguished primarily along the following lines:

1. Elements of national and cultural identity that characterize lifestyle, ways of living, and customs and traditions;
2. Manifestations of ethnomental characteristics, including those reflected in speech behavior;
3. Elements referring to spheres of activity, particularly professions and crafts that possess national specificity;
4. Elements representing national art, artistic heritage, and folklore.

Contexts of Lexical and Phraseological Elements Expressing National and Cultural Identity. This category includes words and expressions that characterize the everyday life and domestic routines of both nations, reflecting the distinctive features of

their lifestyles. These expressions not only embody national identity but also function as important narrative devices for depicting the authentic behavior of characters within their respective cultural settings. Such manifestations of national and cultural identity may encompass a people's gastronomic preferences, ceremonial traditions, culturally specific daily routines, household practices, and similar features.

“...Unlike the Eastern custom, he did not shave his head.” [8, p. 55];

“A bey must dance at his wedding—only then will there be prosperity.” [14, p. 283].

In the first example, we observe the verbal expression of a Muslim hair-cutting custom; in the second, that of a wedding tradition. Likewise, in Azerbaijani poetry, authors achieve a vivid representation of national and cultural identity by employing semantically charged words and expressions in the construction of their artistic texts:

“After the wedding, this drum – What is it for? ...” [38; p. 10];

“I took it, looked, what did I see? An overmixed stale soup” [18, p. 102].

In the first instance, there is a referential allusion to the wedding custom, and a paremiological unit is used in the form of a quasi-citation (a distorted or abbreviated quotation). In the next example, we encounter the use of a culinary item as a metaphorical element of national cuisine:

“...the servant took out the hide that looked like salted curd cheese.” [19, p. 14].

In the works of N. Scott Momaday – considered one of the most prominent representatives of English-language literature by Native American authors – the writer's ethnic identity is represented primarily through depictions of lifestyle. For instance, in the verbalization of the Religion concept (“She had slept soundly, she had made a prayer to the sun...” [35, p. 164]), the Ethnography concept (“He wears a robe – buffalo, probably – and a bandolier.” [35, p. 223]), and other related notions, the author draws upon the resources of the Identity concept, thereby achieving authenticity in the portrayal of his characters and imagery. Another example points not to Native American identity, but rather to pan-American cultural identity, as reflected in culinary and gastronomic habits:

“They had biscuits and gravy for breakfast, and weak coffee with sugar.” [35, p. 104].

Another major figure in American literature characterized by hybrid identity is Kahlil Gibran, whose creative legacy bears the imprint of his unique cultural belonging. As an Arab-origin poet and writer living in the United States, Gibran produced literary

texts that contain verbal traces of both Arab national identity and American identity.

“The Nazarene Jesus listened, and crucifixion was his lot... Jerusalem could not kill the Nazarene.” [20, p. 22].

This quotation points to Gibran’s identity as a Christian Arab, revealing aspects of his worldview, ethical orientation, and spiritual priorities. Such manifestations of identity can be observed at both the lexical and phraseological levels and are often realized contextually.

For example, in the excerpt from I. Shykhly’s novel *Dəli Kür* (Crazy River), we find words and expressions reflecting ethnomental specificity:

“...to live under someone’s arm is no man’s way. Even if he is my uncle, I won’t eat bread out of obligation.” [37, p. 29].

Expressions such as “to live under someone’s arm,” “obligatory bread,” and “no man’s way,” along with the prominence of the uncle figure – imbued with additional semantic connotations – unquestionably bear ethnomental characteristics.

The expression “no man’s way” (*kişilikdən deyil*) in fact reflects gender asymmetry and, to some extent, can be regarded as a universal anthropocentric metaphor. However, the acceptance of manliness as a behavioral standard – and even the characterization of brave, resolute, and steadfast women as having manly traits (in a positive sense) – may be viewed as a direct manifestation of Azerbaijani ethnomental values and priorities. (For a more detailed discussion of gender asymmetry markers in the Azerbaijani language, see [27, pp. 21–23]).

Similar ethnomental representations may also be found in the works of J. Jabbarli (“...this is no man’s way” [7, p. 85]); Anar (“...to hide in a quiet place was no man’s way.” [3, p. 251]); A. Jafarzadeh (“...to publicly humiliate a woman is no man’s way.” [8, p. 174]); and many other Azerbaijani writers and poets.

The work of the renowned American poet Natalie Diaz, whose heritage is rooted in the Native American Mojave tribe, is of considerable interest with respect to the diverse manifestations of national and cultural identity. A Pulitzer Prize laureate, Diaz incorporates both explicit and implicit references in her works to the life, territorial range, and other defining characteristics of the Mojave people [29].

For example, in her *Postcolonial Love Poem*, she writes:

“Arise the wild heliotrope, scorpion weed, blue phacelia which hold purple the way a throat can hold...” [10].

In this passage, the poet references the plant species that form the natural landscape of the Gila Valley, the traditional homeland of her tribe, thereby situating her Native identity within a geographically and culturally specific context.

Similarly, in H. Tertlav’s alternative-history novel focused on one of the leaders of a Native tribe, elements of both pan-American and Indigenous ethnography are skillfully integrated to achieve a nuanced verbal representation of his characters’ identities. Examples include:

“At a little past twelve, the soldiers paused to eat salt pork and corn bread...” [30, p. 126]; “Lincoln paused to eat a couple of bites of tasty ham.” [30, p. 130].

In Mario Ancelon’s work, the inclusion of dishes from the modest Afro-American culinary tradition – gastro-onyms – serves as a marker both of the author’s own cultural identity and of the verbalized identity of his characters:

“I had to be forced to eat pigs’ tails and snouts.” [4, p. 6].

Such instances demonstrate that gastro-onyms frequently function as cultural codes, serving as indirect representations of the author’s or characters’ identity within the literary text.

Findings and Discussion. The analyses presented in this article provide fertile ground for further discussion. The use of vocabulary functioning as cultural codes in the expression of identity is continually enriched by new literary works, creating opportunities to identify novel mechanisms of verbal realization.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the examination of works by Azerbaijani and English-language authors and poets shows that these texts offer rich insights into the lifestyle, living conditions, customs and traditions, gastronomic preferences, clothing styles, and specific (national, regional, or social) patterns of speech behavior of the societies to which the authors belong. In some cases, this information is conveyed implicitly, while in others it functions as a contextual representant, contributing directly to the verbal realization of national and cultural identity within the literary text.

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**Гусейнова А. ЕКСПРЕСИВНІ РЕСУРСИ ЕТНОКУЛЬТУРНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ
В ЛІТЕРАТУРНИХ ТЕКСТАХ (В КОНТЕКСТІ СЕМАНТИЧНОГО ПОЛЯ КОНЦЕПТУ
МАТЕРІАЛЬНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ)**

Це дослідження присвячено аналізу лексичних та фразеологічних одиниць, що зустрічаються в азербайджанських та англійських літературних текстах, що відображають національну культурну ідентичність авторів та висвітлюють симфонічну лінгвістичну ідентичність, властиву мовній приналежності персонажів. Зокрема, в рамках статті згадується мова творів азербайджанських поетів та письменників, таких як І. Шихли, Й.В. Чаманзамінлі, Ф. Карімзаде, А. Ахмад та інших, а також англійських авторів, включаючи М. Анжелу, Н. Діаса, Халію Джебрану, Н. Скотта Момадая та багатьох інших. Предметом цього дослідження є аналіз вживання та функціонального позиціонування лексичних та фразеологічних одиниць, що зустрічаються у роботах вищезгаданих авторів, які можна включити до семантичного поля концепції національної культурної ідентичності. Ці одиниці оцінюються як з лінгвокультурної, так і з лінгвопрагматичної точок зору, з точки зору їхньої ролі у передачі авторського наміру. Загальновідомо, що сфера реалізації концепції національної культурної ідентичності є надзвичайно широкою, охоплюючи всю концептуальну сферу мови, що формується ментальними, етнографічними, історичними та культурними елементами. Іншими словами, це обширне та багатогранне семантичне поле може охоплювати або, принаймні, бути тісно пов'язаним з різноманітними іншими концептуальними областями. Це пов'язано, перш за все, з тим, що будь-яка національно-культурна ідентичність відображає стереотипи та моделі мовленнєвої поведінки, що існують на етноментальному рівні (часто невербальної природи), а також проявляється вербальними засобами у вигляді лексичних та фразеологічних одиниць, що стосуються всіх аспектів способу життя народу. Серед мікроконцептів, що проявляються на невербальному та ментальному рівнях, можна відзначити, наприклад, концепт «напруженої верхньої губи». Що стосується мікроконцептів, що мають вербальне вираження, то до них належать семантичні сфери «національна історія», «національна матеріальна культура», «національне мистецтво», «національна література», «національна кухня», «національні звичаї та традиції» та інші – сфери, які можна повністю або частково віднести до цієї сфери.

Ключові слова: художній текст, етнокультурна ідентичність та мова, концепт національної культурної ідентичності, семантичне поле, азербайджанська та англійська мови.

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