

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS ON THE MEANING OF SOME GERMAN ADJECTIVES COMPARED TO MACEDONIAN

Biljana Ivanovska

Faculty of Philology, University "Goce Delčev" – Stip, R. Macedonia

biljana.ivanovska@ugd.edu.mk

Abstract: *This study is intended to serve as a guide for teachers of German who are teaching German as a foreign language (DaF-Deutsch als Fremdsprache), by making a contrast of the grammatical structures and the meaning of lexical items of both contemporary German and Macedonian language. This study is limited to the word class of adjectives only. By making the contrast between the two systems point-by-point, teachers can more readily see just those instances where dissimilarities and congruences occur between the two systems and where students of one, say Macedonians who wish to learn German, can more readily be made aware of what to look out for as they practice grammar in the target language. Firstly, the author presents the Macedonian word class of adjectives, then the German one, and in the next section makes a comparison between the meaning of the lexical items in both language systems followed by the summary and conclusion of the similarities and differences in both languages. The findings of this study will be important for teachers teaching German as a foreign language in Macedonia, as well as for the Macedonian students of German who study German as a foreign language (DaF) and for the teacher educators, too.*

Keywords: adjectives; DaF; meaning; contrastive analysis

1. Background: contrastive analysis

Contrastive Analysis (CA) or Contrastive Linguistics is a linguistic approach which aims to describe the differences and similarities between two languages. In defining CA, Krzeszowski (1990) sets off from the learning circumstances and says:

When two or more languages are compared, it is possible to focus either on similarities or on differences. When a learner learns a new language, he usually focuses attention on differences and remains largely unaware of similarities. If he discovers some similarities, he is amused and surprised since he ordinarily does not find them. Grammarians, on the other hand, quite early became interested in discovering what various languages have in common, in the belief that making such similarities explicit for the learner may facilitate the process of foreign language learning. (Krzeszowski, 1990, p. 9)

As Gómez-González and Doval-Suárez (2003) have put it in their article *On Contrastive Linguistics: Trends, Challenges and Problems*, "every aspect of linguistic analysis can be approached from a contrastive perspective, and accordingly research in the field flows from numerous academic disciplines that are very different from one another" (p. 41). As a result contrastive descriptions can be applied in all fields of linguistics: speech sounds (phonology), written symbols

(graphology), word formation (morphology), word meaning (lexicology), collocation (phraseology), sentence structure (syntax) and complete discourse (discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics).

Gast (n.d.) explained that: "Contrastive linguistics can be regarded as a branch of comparative linguistics that is concerned with pairs of languages which are 'socio-culturally linked'. Two languages can be said to be socio-culturally linked when (i) they are used by a considerable number of bi- or multilingual speakers, and/or (ii) a substantial amount of 'linguistic output' (text, discourse) is translated from one language into the other". (in: Zawahrer 2013: 429). The author accepts the theory on contrastive linguistics as a branch of comparative linguistics and tries to compare a pair of languages (German and Macedonian), presenting the different meaning of the lexical elements.

2. Purpose and significance of the study

Since even languages as closely related as German and English differ significantly in the form, meaning, and distribution of their grammatical structures, and since the learners tend to transfer the habits of their native language structure to the foreign language, we have here the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the structure of a foreign language. Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn because they will be transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language. Those structures that are different will be difficult because when transferred they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language and will therefore have to be changed. (Lado, 1957, p.59). The main aim of this study is to present the probably problematic differences between some German adjectives and their possible equivalents in Macedonian (strong version of CA), to clarify and explain the differences in meanings when students translate German adjectives to Macedonian without considering the general context.

The analysis and the findings of this study will be important for teaching German as a foreign language in Macedonia and it presents the significant contributions to the understanding of German language teaching and learning for a group of people. This paper may be of a great importance for the target groups, such as for teachers of German who can use these analysis and results in the teaching/learning process in teaching German as a second and a foreign language, being aware of the role of Macedonian language as a first language. It will be also useful for the teacher educators who may use these analysis and findings in reexamining their foreign language teaching methodology. Moreover, the material writers and syllabus designers may make use of the findings in preparing teaching materials and designing the syllabus, as well as for the teaching methodology researchers who can use the findings in conducting more studies in the area, which could be helpful in developing new German language teaching methods and techniques, and finally for the Macedonian students of German as a foreign language who can use the findings to develop their translation abilities.

3. Adjectives in Macedonian

For the examination of the word class adjectives in Macedonian the author uses the references of famous Macedonian grammarians, such as Koneski B. (1982), Kepeski K. (1978), as well as of foreign scientists, e.g. Lunt H.G. (1952), and Friedman V. (2001). Adjectives as a word class have no gender of their own, but

change their form to indicate the gender of the substantives which they modify. There are four forms; masculine, feminine and neuter singular, and a single plural form. The masculine form ends in zero (i. e. a consonant followed by zero), the feminine has the suffix -a, the neuter -o, and the plural -и. For example: *голем, голема, голомо, големи*.

Many adjectives which have an -e, -o, or -a before the final consonant lose this vowel before the other suffixes: *добар, добра, добро, добри* (gut); *силен, силна, силно, силни* (stark). Other changes may accompany the loss of this vowel. A relatively small group of adjectives ends in -и in the masculine form; nearly always they have the suffixes: -ски, -шки, -чки. This -и is dropped before the inflectional adjectival suffixes. *македонски, македонска, македонско* (Macedonian). (Lunt 1978: 34-35)

Most adjectives inflect for gender and number. A few inflect only for number and some do not inflect at all; these last two types are all of Turkish or more recent foreign origin. Most masculines end in a consonant, a few end in /-i/, feminines all end in /-a/, neuters normally end in /-o/, a very few — all possessive — end in /-e/, plurals all end in /-и/. Masculines in /-i/ include derived adjectives in /-sk-/, some toponymic, anthroponymic and other lexicalized expressions, e.g. *dolen* 'lower' but *Dolni Saraj* 'Lower Saraj' (a neighbourhood in Ohrid), *premudar* 'extremely wise' *premudri Solomon* 'Solomon the wisest' *toj pusti/kutri...* 'that wretched...', also *nivni* 'their' (but also *niven* according to Koneski 1999), and a few ordinal numerals. A few adjectives also have an optional masculine vocative in /-i/, e.g. *drag* 'dear', *dragi moj* 'my dear!', *počituvan* 'respected' *Počituvani Professore* 'Dear Professor' (opening for a semi-formal letter). (Friedman 2001: 26)

Comparison in Macedonian adjectives is entirely analytic. The comparative marker is /po-/, the superlative /naj-/ written unseparated from the adjective: *ponov* 'newer', *najnov* 'newest'. The only irregular comparative is *mnogu* 'much, many', *poveќе* 'more', *najmnogu* 'most' (*najpoveќе* is no longer literary; note: *poveќeto* 'the majority'). The comparative and superlative markers can also be added to nouns, verbs, and adverbial phrases: *prijatel* 'friend', *poprijatel* 'more of a friend' *na jug* 'to/in the south', *ponajug* 'more southerly' *ne saka* 'dislike', *najnesaka* 'dislike the most'. If there are proclitic object pronouns attached to such a verb, however, each morpheme is spelled as a separate word: *naj ne go saka* 'he dislikes him the most' (Friedman 2001: 27).

4. Adjectives in German (germ. *Adjektiv* engl. *adjective*; von lat. *adiectum* ,das Hinzugefügte')

The adjectives as a word class in a language system have the function to express properties. Prototypical adjectives are words, such as: *groß, breit, kurz, jung / large, wide, short, young*. They refer mostly to nouns in the sentence or to pronouns: *die kurze Geschichte; sie ist kurz / the short story; it is short*, but they can refer also to verbs: *Sie sah kurz auf / She looked up briefly*. In German, the adjectives are inflected and can agree with the gender, case and number of the noun to which they refer. But, they can only be inflected when they are with a noun in attributive use: *ein schwerer Fehler / a serious mistake*. However, adjectives in German can also be predicatively used (they come after the verbs *sein/werden/bleiben*). E.g.: *Der Fehler ist schwer / the error is serious*, and in that

case they are used without inflexion. The same applies to their use as adverbials: *Er seufzte schwer / He sighed heavily.*

Helbig/Buscha (2011: 281) explained that there are relative and qualitative adjectives: 1) Qualitative (e.g., groß, klug, heilbar / great, clever, curable). 2) Relative adjectives (väterlich, bulgarisch, gestrig / paternal, bulgarian, of yesterday). According to Duden (2009: 340) they are so called relative adjectives. The relative adjectives cannot be compared (gestriger*) and many of them cannot be used predicatively (Die Zeitung ist gestrig*). Eisenberg (2006: 241) defines the relative adjectives as dimensional adjectives (groß-klein / big-small, kurz-lang / short-long). Adjectives which modify the nouns and pronouns may be classified into: 1) Descriptive: they describe a quality of the noun (lange Reise) 2) Limiting: they limit the noun they modify (sein Haus). Descriptive adjectives are of two types: a. Attributive adjectives: they come directly before the noun to attribute a quality to the noun they modify. The same noun can be modified by more than one adjective. For example: Sie wohnen im weißen und schönen Haus. b. Predicative adjective: they form a part of the predicate and appear after the verb to modify the subject of the sentence. For example: Dieser Junge ist klug. Regardless of how long the adjective is, the *comparative* is formed by adding -er to the basic form: billig - *Dieser Laptop ist billiger.* interessant - *London ist viel interessanter als Paris.* The same principle applies to the *superlative*. The *superlative* as the highest form of comparison is formed by using *am* or the *definite article* (*der, die, das*) before the adjective, and by adding *-ste(n)* to the end of the adjective (e.g.: *die schnellste Läuferin/the fastest runner*) in attributive use, or the combination of *am* before the adjective and the ending *-sten*, in predicative use (e.g.: *sie läuft am schnellsten/she runs the fastest*).

5. The meaning of the out-of-context German adjectives compared to Macedonian

In the textbooks for the first and second semester of the first year of studies for the students studying DaF at the University in Štip, the new vocabulary is presented isolated at the beginning of each unit. Adjectives are the main important part of that vocabulary. Unfortunately, students use the dictionaries (mainly bilingual German-Macedonian) or let the others help them translate the new vocabulary out of context. Consequently, the process of finding and choosing the correct equivalents of Macedonian adjectives in German language when they translate out-of-context adjectives, is difficult and misleading in most cases. The student tries to translate Macedonian adjectives into German depending on his/her experience and influence of the mother tongue itself. In other words, the student finds the equivalents of those German adjectives in Macedonian and tries to translate them as they frequently appear in the communication of the Macedonian native speaker. We analyze the meaning of the adjective *frisch* and find its equivalents in Macedonian as they must be translated depending on the context:

According to Wahrig G. (1986: 503-504), the lexeme *frisch* has the following meanings: **frisch** <Adj.> **1** *unverbraucht, nicht abgelagert, nicht abgestanden* (Lebensmittel); *neu, jung* (Gemüse); *erneuert, unermüdet* (Kräfte); *sauber, rein, unbenutzt* (Wäsche); *vor kurzem geschehen; eben erst getan; munter, keck, keine Scheu zeigend* (Person); *lebhaft, gesund blühend* (Aussehen); *kühl* (Wetter); *nicht verwischt, deutlich, gut erhalten* (Farben); <Met.> *nicht totgebrannt* (Erze) **2** ein

~es **Aussehen** haben *eine gesunde Gesichtsfarbe*; ~es **Brot**; ~e **Brötchen**, Eier; noch unter dem ~en **Eindruck** des Geschehenen stehen; eine ~e **Fährte**, Spur; die **Farben** sind noch ganz ~; ~es **Gemüse**, Obst; der Anblick des ~en **Grüns** tut den Augen gut; ein ~es **Hemd** anziehen; mit ~en **Kräften**; ~e **Luft** schöpfen; ~en **Mut** fassen; ihr **Schmerz** ist noch ganz ~; jmdn. auf ~er **Tat** ertappen; ~e **Truppen** an die Front werfen; einen ~en **Verband** anlagen; ~e **Wäsche**; ~es **Wetter** <Bgb.> *Frischluff im Grubenbau*; ein ~er **Wind** kommt auf; die **Wunde** ist ganz ~**3** ~ (und gesund) **aussehen**; die Betten~ **beziehen**; **sein**: es ist ~ draußen; das Haus ~ **verputzen** lassen **4** ~ , **fromm**, fröhlich (froh), frei (*alter Turnerspruch*); ~ **gebackener** Kuchen; ~ **gefallener** Schnee; ~ **gewaschene** Wäsche; ~ und **munter** sein **5** ~ **auf!** (*ermunternder Zuruf*); es steht mir noch ~ **in** der Erinnerung; etwas ~ im Gedächtnis haben; **von** ~ em beginnen von *neuem, erneut*; Milch, ~ von der Kuh; ~ von der Leber weg (reden) *rückhaltlos, offen*; Bier, ~ vom Faß.

According to the *Englisch-Deutsch & Deutsch-Englisches Wörterbuch* (1987: 408), the lexeme 'frisch' has the following meaning: fresh; cool, chilly; refreshing; brisk, lively; new, recent; clean; ~ frisch gestrichen (wet paint); frisch auf! (look alive, come on); es ist recht frisch draußen (there is quite a nip in the air; auf frischer Tat (in the very act of); frische Eier (new-laid eggs); frisches Grab (newly-dug grave); frische Wunde (green or raw wound; Frische, freshness (coolness; liveliness); frischer Stahl (natural steel).

In the Online Synonymie-Wörterbuch there are about forty different meanings of the lexeme (adjective) *frish*. The author presents them in the following table.

Table 1. Synonyms of the adjective *frisch* and their meaning.

German adjective	Synonyms	Meaning
<i>frisch</i>	neu	gegenwärtig, glatt, grün, gut, leistungsfähig, neubacken, neugebacken, neugeboren, ofenfrisch, ofenwarm, präsent, rein, taufrisch, unbenutzt, frisch
	angenehm	aufnahmefähig, ausgeruht, blühend, durchblutet, erholt, faltenfrei, fit, frischbacken, frisch gebacken, gesund, jugendlich, jung, knackig, kräftig, frisch
	kühl	eisig, erfrischend, feucht, kalt, frostig, luftig, rau, frisch
	wohlauf	wohl, Frisch
	aufgeschlossen	aufgeweckt, empfänglich, flexibel, weltoffen, zugänglich, aufnahmefähig, frisch
	gesund	frisch, durchblutet
	belaubt	frisch, grün
	fit	gesund, kräftig, stark, strapazierbar, tüchtig, erholt, frisch , leistungsfähig
	frisch gebacken	frisch, neubacken
	anwesend	da, gegenwärtig, greifbar, hier, parat, verfügbar, vorhanden, zugegen, zur Verfügung, aufmerksam, dabei, dort, frisch , präsent
	frisch	frisch, warm

German adjective	Synonyms	Meaning
	dynamisch	blutvoll, farbig, feurig, heißblütig, lebhaft, mobil, temperamentvoll, unruhig, vif, vital, wild, aktiv, frisch , fröhlich, dynamisch, lebendig
	anschaulich	auffällig, bildlich, blutvoll, blühend, bunt, deutlich, eingängig, farbenfreudig, farbenfroh, farbenprächtigt, farbig, feurig, frisch , greifbar, lebhaft
	erregend	spannend, spritzig, atemlos, frisch , packend, prickelnd
	lebhaft	munter, frisch , flink, rösch
	kräftig	hoch, zu teuer, überhöht, frisch, satt, saftig
	jung	blühend, halbwüchsig, heranwachsend, jugenhaft, knabenhaft, lausbübisch, mädchenhaft, unentwickelt, unerfahren, unmündig, unreif, frisch , sportlich, jugendlich
	belebend	anregend, erquicklich, labend, wohl tuend, angenehm, aufmunternd, aufputschend, erfreulich, frisch , kurzweilig, stimulierend, wohlig, erfrischend
	bitterkalt	eisig, kalt, kühl, unterkühlt, winterlich, hundekalt, frisch , frostklirrend, lausekalt, saukalt, frostig
	knusprig	erholt, frisch, straff, krass, appetitlich, knackig
	munter	aufgeheitert, aufgekratzt, aufgelegt, aufgeschlossen, aufnahmebereit, ausgelassen, feuchtfrohlich, freudestrahlend, freudig, frisch , fröhlich, froh, frohgemut, froh gestimmt, fidel
	aufgeheitert	aufgekratzt, aufgelegt, aufgeschlossen, aufgeweckt, ausgelassen, feuchtfrohlich, freudestrahlend, freudig, frisch, fröhlich, froh, frohgemut, froh gestimmt, frohsinnig, lebenslustig
	auffrischend	frisch , kühl, böig, windig, bewegt, stürmisch, zugig, luftig
	kroß	knackig, lecker, anziehend, frisch, jung, appetitlich, delikat, blühend, resch, schmackhaft, knusprig
	kalt	abgekühlt, ausgekühlt, bitterkalt, eisig, eisig kalt, eiskalt, frisch, frostig, frostklirrend, unterkühlt, winterlich, schattig, unbehaglich, ungeheizt, kühl
	ausgeruht	blühend, fit, frisch , gesund, knackig, kraftvoll, lebendig, leistungsfähig, munter, rüstig, unverbraucht, erholt
	abgekühlt	ausgekühlt, bitterkalt, eisig, eisig kalt, eiskalt, frisch , frostig, frostklirrend, hundekalt, klamm, kühl, lausekalt, saukalt, schattig, kalt
	stark	kräftig, fit, mächtig, robust, frisch , dynamisch, erholt, handfest, heftig, scharf, stürmisch,

German adjective	Synonyms	Meaning
		stämmig, kernig, kraftvoll
	delikat	schmackhaft, wohlschmeckend, appetitlich, lecker, aromatisch, frisch , gewürzt, herb, herzhaft, kräftig, scharf, wohlriechend, blumig, gehaltvoll, pikant, würzig
	rein	adrett, aufgeräumt, fleckenlos, frisch , genau, gereinigt, gewissenhaft, hygienisch, makellos, ordentlich, reinlich, sorgfältig, tadellos, unbenutzt, sauber
	blühend	frisch , gesund, gut, munter, strotzend, angenehm, geborgen, heil, kerngesund, wohlbehalten, gut beieinander, wohl
	jugendlich	frisch, gesund, jung, kerngesund, taufrisch, unverbraucht, erholt, wohl, munter, rüstig, strotzend, anmutig, blühend

Depending on the online DUDEN-Wörterbuch "Richtiges und Gutes Deutsch" (2013), we present in the following section the different meanings of the adjective "frisch" in German and Macedonian language with some examples:

1. a. Fresh (especially food), not old. For example: frische Eier (MK: sveži jajca), Butter (MK: puter), frische Fische (MK: sveža riba), frische Blumen (MK: sveži cvekinja), das Obst war frisch (MK: ovošjeto bese svežo).

b. clean and pure, not old or spoiled, newly produced. E.g.: frische Luft (MK: svež vazduh), noch frische Kräfte haben (MK: se` ušte ima sveži sili). With metaphorical meaning: die Erinnerung daran war noch zu frisch (MK: sekavanjeto za toa beše se` ušte svežo).

c. Just arisen, made, executed. For example: eine frische Wunde (MK: sveža rana); ein noch frischer Blutfleck (MK: se` ušte sveža fleka od krv); der Fleck ist noch frisch (MK: flekata e se` ušte sveža); frisch gebackenes Brot (MK: svežo ispečen leib); Vorsicht, frisch gestrichen! (vnimanie, svežo bojadisano!).

d. Just formed, established: frisch von der Uni. kommen (MK: tukušto izlezen od univerzitet); ein frisch verliebtes Pärchen (MK: svežo vljuben par).

2. a. Rested, recovered (MK: osvežen, odmoren): frische Truppen, Pferde (MK: sveži/odmoreni trupi, konji); nach der Rast mit frischen Kräften weiterklettern (MK: po odmorot so sveži sili prodolžuva da se iskačuva).

b. Clean, pure: frische Handtücher bereitlegen (MK: novi šamivčinja položuva), das Bett frisch (*mit sauberer Wäsche*) beziehen (MK: postela krevet so čist veš), sich frisch machen (*sich waschen, frisieren, zurechtmachen*)(MK: se osvežuva, se mie, se frizira, se sreduva).

3. Healthy outlook, flourishing [good looking]: eine frische Gesichtsfarbe (MK: nova, sveža boja na liceto); sie ist wieder frisch und munter (umgangssprachlich; *wohllauf*) (MK: taa e zdrava i živa/prava).

4. Fresh color, bright: frische Farben (MK: sveži/novi boji).

5. Cold: ein frischer Wind (MK: studen veter); es weht ein frisches Lüftchen (MK: duva svežo vetrence); es ist ziemlich frisch heute (MK: prilično e ladno deneska).

Typical substantives that usually occur with this adjective are: *Wind, Tat, Geld, Obst, Kapital, Gemüse, Fisch*, then verbs, such as: *schmecken, riechen, wirken, duften, wehen, leuchten, sehen, fühlen*, and adjectives: *blühend, kühl, unverbraucht, knackig, geistig, getrocknet*.

In predicative use, the adjective in German is not inflected (e.g.: das Brot ist frisch/lebot e taze/e svež); Die Farbe ist frisch/Bojata e sveža. In German, predicative adjectives never take endings. Only the attributive adjectives take endings. In more technical terms, predicative adjectives are not declined, whereas attributive adjectives are declined (*klares Wasser, rote Tinte, grüner Tee*).

In Macedonian, the adjective is inflected depending on the gender of the noun: *bojata e sveža, lebot e svež, letoto e svežo*. Used attributively, i.e. preceding a noun, it is inflected e.g.: das frische Obst / svežoto ovošje; frisches Obst / svežo ovošje. The definite article in German is prepositive, unlike in Macedonian where the definiteness is expressed with an ending -ot, -ta, -to, -te (pl.) and the adjective is inflected (*svežata boja, svežiot leb, svežoto leto, svežite leta* (pl.)).

Most adjectives may be used in the uninflected form as adverbs, e.g.: sie hat das Zimmer frisch gefärbt / taa ja bojadisa svežo sobata. In German we can say "frische Blumen", MK: sveži cvekinja but not "taze cvekinja". Frische Luft ("svez veter" with the meaning "cold wind" but not "taze veter". *Frische Gesichtsfarbe* has the meaning of "sveza, nova boja na liceto" but not "taze boja na liceto". Frische Truppen/Pferde has the meaning "svezi, odmoreni trupi/konji", but not "taze trupi/konji" in Macedonian. Thus when choosing the right equivalent, we should pay attention to the collocations, part of speech and the context, too.

6. Conclusion

The function of the adjectives in German and Macedonian language is very important in the process of describing nouns and giving meanings in sentences. The process of finding and choosing the correct and right equivalent of the German adjective in Macedonian language is sometimes difficult and misleading in many cases because of the probably problematic differences between some German adjectives and their possible counterparts in Macedonian.

When it comes to the point of understanding while teaching German as a foreign language to students who translate from Macedonian to German and vice versa, it is highly important to find the correct equivalents of Macedonian adjectives in German language. The students should also pay attention to the context, parts of speech and collocations.

7. Perspectives

In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends conducting studies on using bilingual and monolingual dictionaries in the process of translation from Macedonian to German and visa versa. The effect of the cultural knowledge on choosing the right equivalents in translations should also be a topic for investigation. And, the differences between finding equivalents of adjectives in

Macedonian and German and the other parts of speech such as nouns, verbs and adverbs seem to be useful for further analysis, too.

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