Stone in Cognitive Perspective

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Abstract
This paper is aimed to look into the concept քար/stone, to reveal its meaning capacity, to illustrate its characteristics. The parallel study of the concept in four languages enables a cross-cultural perspective into the phenomenon which is essentially linguocultural. The systematization of the phraseology through cognitive models/frames designed on the basis of the idea realized by the concept and their analysis reveal the common and specific features of this concept across cultures.

Key words: concept “stone”, linguocultural analysis, cognitive frame, conceptualization, lexical realization, phraseology, counterpart.

Introduction
Cross-cultural communication has become an indispensable part of our contemporary reality and the study of languages across cultures is now vital as never before. In this context our studies of languages take more various and complex forms.

But first we should understand what culture is and how it can be approached. Culture is generally defined as a system of values and beliefs, which we share with others and the whole of which gives us a sense of belonging or identity. And naturally these values and beliefs are different within various nations and societies.

We should understand what language is. It, in fact, is words and phrases that do not just have abstract meanings. They are the reflection of certain concepts and meanings that vary from culture to culture. They are symbols for social and material interconnections and can be understood in the context of communication, the latter finding its realization or specification in culture. So,
language being part of culture can be defined as a cultural resource and also a powerful tool of human activity which, in its turn, is culture bound, too.

Hence we would consider it relevant to state, as an important standpoint for our research, the idea that any language should be considered and referred to as culturally biased. It advances the cultural assumptions and values embedded in its words, structures and philosophy.

**Stone in Armenian, Russian, English and Italian: Definitions and Lexical Realizations**

The concept to be analyzed in the framework of the present paper is քար/stone. It is deeply rooted in the Armenian national consciousness and culture. This concept demonstrates a wide range of meanings and a huge potential of context coverage. It is a most frequently referred concept in the Armenian linguoculture. Along with literary expressions there are also many dialectal and colloquial ones, which is another evidence showing that this concept is culture bound.

The study of the mentioned concept will be realized through a comparative analysis with other linguocultures – English, Russian and Italian – as things often become more obvious in comparison. So the linguocultural characteristics of the concept stone will be revealed and interpreted in its corresponding realizations in a number of languages. Such a comparative study of language realizations will help to reveal and understand the mental and cultural characteristics of thinking and behavior valid in different cultures, identify the common features and differences of worldview and world perception. The analysis of linguocultural concepts illustrates their conceptual, evaluative role and function and enhances a better understanding of the cultures. The above-mentioned concept will be presented through mental models/frames aimed at revealing the linguocultural thinking.¹

In the present paper the concept քար/stone will be discussed through a number of cognitive frames which have been designed on the basis of the meanings realized by it. Before presenting the frames proper it is regarded relevant to look into the definition of this noun given in explanatory
dictionaries. The lexical-semantic field of the meaning of this noun has both similarities and differences in the languages being discussed (the presentation of the specifically professional or technical meanings of this noun are omitted here as non-relevant to this research).


Stone – 1. hard solid non-metallic mineral matter of which rock is made, especially as a building material; a small piece of rock found on the ground; a meteorite made of rock, as opposed to metal; 2. a piece of stone shaped for a purpose, especially one of commemoration, ceremony, or demarcation/ a memorial stone/ boundary stones; a gem or jewel; a round piece or counter, originally made of stone, used in various board games, especially the Japanese game of go; 3. a hard seed in a cherry, plum, peach, and some other fruits (Oxford Dictionary 2010).

Pietra – 1. frantume di roccia, usato come materiale da costruzione o per ornamento (Zingarelli 2014:1677).

As is evident from the dictionary definition the first meanings are principally the same which refer to stone as a solid mineral matter. In the second place in the Armenian dictionary comes the presentation of stone as a building material and what is of particular interest also material for sculpture or some other creation. It is remarkable that almost the same is the basic definition...
of *stone* in the Italian dictionary: a building material or a material for ornament. This indicates that the ideas of creation and aesthetics are of utmost importance in the Italian culture. In the Russian explanatory dictionary no further specification of *stone* is given. Then in the Armenian and English definitions references to the precious stone and memorial come similarly. Afterwards another point of similarity is observed in the meaning of different objects used in board games.

Now let us look into the differences. In the Armenian version of *stone* there are also meanings of a stone used in weighing and a mountain/rock. The latter meaning is recorded in the colloquial speech and is of particular interest as here the noun *stone* is actually used in the widest sense referring to any stone mass of big size. In the English dictionary another meaning of stone is recorded – a hard seed in fruit. Obviously it is a narrow specific meaning and does not have such a powerful generalizing coverage as the Armenian *stone* in the sense of any rock or mountain.

So, in the explanatory dictionary we can already observe two important linguocultural characteristics of *stone* in Armenian: it is of the widest universal meaning as a reference to any piece or aggregation of this mineral and a particular meaning as a source of creation for this nation.

This is only a preliminary observation of the concept *stone*, which will further be elaborated in the study of the phraseological units with it. The reference to phraseology is considered most useful in the framework of this research as phraseological units are virtual condensations of language which reflects national thinking, lifestyle, culture – in a word the national picture of the world.

**Stone in Phraseology and through Cognitive Frames**

According to the phraseological dictionaries used for the collection of the data (Sukiasyan, Galstyan 1975, Voynova, Zhukov, Molotkov, Fyodorov 1986, Oxford Dictionary of Idioms 2004, Zingarelli 2014) there are around 95 phraseological units with the concept *stone* in the Armenian language, around 25 in the Russian language, around 15 in the English language and around 50 in
the Italian language. The lexical realizations of the concept *stone* are քար, լեռ, սար in Armenian, камень, рора in Russian, *stone*, *mountain*, *rock* in English and pietra, roccia, sasso, montagna, monte in Italian. Even at the only sight of these figures it becomes evident that Armenian is particularly rich in the phrases with the concept *stone*. Another marker showing that *stone* is typical of the Armenian linguoculture is that around 10 cognitive frames have been designed on the basis of the Armenian phraseological units. Some of these frames are further made precise through subframes. All this indicates the depth and variety of the use of the concept *stone* in Armenian. Some of these frames are valid in Russian, English and Italian, too, but surely not in such an impressive representation. Also there are some frames which are not typical of Armenian but have been designed on the basis of the data of the Russian, English and/or Italian languages.

Thus below will be presented the frames designed as a result of our research (the order of the frames is solely conditioned by the order of the occurrence of the corresponding Armenian phraseological units in the dictionary and has a simply technical reason).

1. *stone* – coldness; emotionlessness; indifference; immobility
   Քար լացանել, քար հալեցնել = fare piangere le pietre; far piangere i sassi; fare pena/compassione ai sassi; fare ridere le pietre; cuore di pietra = avere un cuore di sasso; essere un sasso; essere duro come un sasso; essere di sasso ≠ non essere di sasso;
   Քար անտարբերություն; fall on stony ground /of words or a suggestion/;
   Քար ստանալ = rimanere di pietra; rimanere di sasso

2. *stone* – failure, prevention, obstacle
   Քար գցել /մի բանի վրա/; գլխին քար գցել /մեկի,
   Քար ընկնել; քար գլտորել /արևմտհ/.
   Քարը դուրս բերել; Քարը մեջքին գալ; քար խառնել; mettersi un sasso al collo; gettare il sasso e nascondere il mano
   2.1 closing - silencing
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2.2 end of good/success

2.3 collapse (also moral)

3. stone – solidity/firmness, strength, powerfulness

3.1 bigness/big measurement
3.2 stubbornness

քարը գոգից թափել, քարը գոգից վեր ածել, քարը փեշից թափել
/վեր ածել/ խսկց.

3.3 burden, difficulty

սարը սարի վրա դնել;
avere una pietra sullo stomaco;
քարը գլխին տալ, գլուխը քարին պատճառ չեն գիտել:
leave no stone unturned

3.4 stinginess/the quality of being tight-fisted

քարը կոկոն /2-րդ նշանակություն/.

4. stone – hardship/difficulty, torturing/suffering

երկու քարի արանքում = between a rock and a hard place /informal/;
երկու քարի արանքում քարը դնել; քարեքար գալ;
քարեքար դիպնել; քարեքար ընկնել;

4.1 wondering from one place/side to another (as a type of suffering, hardship)

քարեքար գալ; քարեքար դիպնել; քարեքար ընկնել; քարեքար դիպ
/ուղղություն/.
5. **stone** – creation (also by the power of mind; with difficulties/overcoming hardships), basis - generation

քարից հաց հանել; քարից հաց քամել; քարից յուղ հանել; քարեն կաթ կթել /

/բրբ./; քարի հողի հետ կռիվ տալ; քարի, քոլի հետ կռիվ տալ;

Քարը քարին չդնել; portare la prima pietra all’edificio; posare/porre la prima pietra; краеугольный камень = pietra angolare; pietra dello scandalo

6. **stone** – silence

Քարերը աղաղակել = камни вопиют / камни возопили / книжн./

7. **stone** – hint; meaning

Քար գցել մեկի բանջարանոցը = бросать/кидать/пускать камешки/камень в огород; քարը կտուրը գցել;

Քարը տեղը դնել /ձգել

8. **stone** – means

Քարն էլ իր ձեռին լինել, պոպոկի / ընկույզն էլ / խսկց . /

9. **stone** – wilderness - withdrawal from people/solitude; withdrawal from people/from civilization

Սարը քաշվել; սարի արջ

10. **stone** – memorial

Քար գցել

11. **stone** – criticism

забросать/закидать камнями/грязью, бросить камнем / в кого/;

cast/throw the first stone = scagliare la prima pietra

12. **stone** – danger - suffering

derжать/иметь камень за пазухой; lanciare un sasso nello stagno;

tirare/gettare sassi in piccionaia/colombaia
13. *stone* – challenge - difficulty

пробный камень = pietra di paragone

The above presented system of frames has mainly been designed on the basis of the Armenian phraseology: ten frames out of thirteen. The last three frames and also subframe 3.5 have been designed on the basis of the English, Russian and/or Italian phraseological units though, for example, frames 12 and 13 have some shades of meaning common with frame 4.

The Armenian lexical realization *լեռ* and its Russian counterpart *ropa*, English counterpart *mountain*, Italian counterparts *montagna* and *monte* are expressed in the general frame 3 and the subframe 3.1. Another fact we would like to comment on is that the two other lexical realizations of the concept *stone* in Armenian – *լեռ* and *սար* – are less representative than the word *քար* which is actually the basic linguistic embodiment of the concept. In the case of *լեռ* and its counterparts the idea of firmness becomes even stronger as in *լեռան պես կանգնել, стоять город за кого/что, стать/встать город за кого/что, как на каменную гору надеяться/полагаться на кого/что* and the idea of bigness associated with physical size becomes more remarkable, also particularly as a result of the use of *լեռ* in plural as in *լեռներ շարժել, воротить горы/гору, двигать горами, move mountains, muovere mari e monti, золотые горы, promettere mari e monti* and the juxtaposition of the ideas of bigness and smallness as in *լեռը/երկնեց/մուկ ծնեց, la montagna ha partorito il topolino, promettere mari e monti, make a mountain out of a molehill, muovere mari e monti.*

The Armenian lexical realization *ուար* and its counterparts in the other languages (which are practically the same as those of *լեռ*) are mainly expressed in the subframes 3.1, 3.3 and 4.1. In the case of subframe 3.3, too, *ուար* is conceptually stronger than *քար* and makes the idea of burden/difficulty stronger: compare *սրտից քար ընկնել* and *սար ընկնել ուսերից*. Another technique of pluralization of idea – repetition of the word-concept – is used in *ուարը ուարի վրա դնել* expressed through the same frame. Anyway, the conceptualization through *ուար* is obviously frequent through its idea of big
measurement, physical bigness in particular: սարի, essere grande come una montagna, sembrare una montagna, սար, una montagna di, սար զգուշ տվել. Here, too, the ideas of plurality and contrast are exploited to make the bigness of measurement more expressive, e.g. սարերի ետևում, յոթ/սարի ետև (յոթ is a numeral meaning seven which transmits a much stronger idea of plurality than the plural of the corresponding noun would express in this phrase), նե զա գորակ, սարի առումունք, սար ի դուր, սարի կիրառում, սար ի տես, սար ու ձորի տարբերություն լինել, սարից ձորից խոսել, սար ու ձոր գցել/ընկնել, սար/եր/ու ձորեր բաժանել, սար/քոլ ընկնել. The plurality of սար suggests the idea of a bigger coverage in particular. With reference to the subframe 4.1 it should be stated that apart from the idea of wondering from one place/side to another as a type of suffering or hardship as in քարեքար գալ, սարեսար ման գալ/ընկնել, սար ու քոլին տալ/իրեն/, սարերը ընկնել the phraseological units with սար/եր and սարեսար also express the idea of a difficult search.

Frame 9 is actually designed on the basis of the phraseological units with սար. Wilderness expresses the idea of being distanced from people either in the meaning of seclusion, solitude or in the meaning of lacking civilization and being ignorant/harsh: compare սարի քաշել and սարի արջ.

Frame 11 expresses the idea of criticism exemplified through забрасывать/забросать камнями кого, бросать/бросить камнем в кого in Russian and cast/throw the first stone in English and scagliare la prima pietra in Italian. It should be mentioned that in English and Italian it is the same phrase which comes from St John’s Gospel and is universal.

Frames 12 and 13 are exemplified through the Russian and/or Italian phrases держать/иметь камень за пазухой and пробный камень / pietra di paragone, correspondingly. The ideas of danger - suffering and challenge - difficulty as can be seen have something in common with frame 4 but still the main conceptual contents is expressed in the ideas of danger and challenge.

It is remarkable that there are many synonyms and even antonyms among the phraseological units with the concept stone. Below are only presented some
of them to avoid an extensive repetition (the sequence of these examples is according to the conceptual classification above):

քար լացացնել = քար հալեցնել; քար գցել /մի բանի վրա/ = գլխին քար գցել /մեկի, մի բանի/ = քար գլտորել /արևմտհ./; քար դնել մի բանի վրա = քարը բարձրացնել, տակով /ն/ անել = քարը վերցնել, քարի տակը դնել;

սար ընկնել ուսերից = սրտի վրայից ծանր քար ընկնել /սարից քար ընկնել/;

լեռներ շարժել /շրջել /շուռ տալ = սար շուռ տալ;

քարեքար գալ = քարեքար ընկնել = սարերը ընկնել = սարեսար ընկնել = սար ու քոլի տալ /իրեն/;

քարից հաց հանել = քարից հաց քամել = քարից յուղ հանել = քարեն կաթ կթել /բրբ./ = քարի հողի հետ կռիվ տալ = քարի, քոլի հետ կռիվ տալ;

fare piangere le pietre = far piangere i sassi;

essere duro come un sasso = essere di sasso ≠ non essere di sasso;

rimanere di pietra = rimanere di sasso;

dormire come un sasso = dormire come una monatgna;

вортить горы/гору = ворочать/двигать горами;

идти/пойти в гору /вверх/ ≠ идти/пойти под гору/под уклон;

забросать/закидать камнями/грязью = бросить камнем /в кого/.

**Conclusion**

The active use of the concept *stone* in phraseology of different languages and even the existence of synonymous and antonymous phraseological units among them account for the fact that the stone is one of the most basic living environments common for all human beings. At the same time the particular abundance of the phraseological units with the concept *stone* and the variety of the conceptualization of the underlying notion, as well as the noticeable synonymic series in Armenian are strong indicators that this concept has a special meaning for this nation. The stone has for centuries been the typical living environment of the Armenian nation, it has become an essential scope of
worldview, a vital means of struggle for life, a basic source of creation – both material and spiritual – for this people. Stone is specific to the Armenian nation, it is deeply rooted and active in its language. The natural environment is “fixed” in the culture and language – the big repositories and sources of thinking and behaviour.

Note:

1. A frame can be defined as a structure of knowledge or a mechanism of knowledge building: in the broad sense, a frame is a cognitive model. A frame is a unified structure of knowledge, a coherent schematization of experience. It is a structure of data which exists in a person’s consciousness and which a person uses to recognize and process typical situations and phenomena. It represents the essential, typical and possible features of the concept, which can be conditioned to this or that extent, that is they have a situational basis. Frames shape a person’s perception of the world and direct his behaviour (See Kubryakova, Demyankov, Pankrats, Luzina 1997, Minskiy 1979, Fillmore 1988).

References:


**Քար հասկացույթի ճանաչողական մոտեցում**

Հասկացույթի նպատակն է հանել դրա գաղափարային հնարավորություններն ու ցույց տալ առանձնահատկությունները: Հասկացույթի շատուրքի նպատակներինը, շատշարժ տվյալների տեղեկատու համար, կարող են լինել հասկացույթի իրաtopl🔹, որն էլ կարող է տեղափոխել տեսակի խաղաղության հասկացույթների հետինս կարգահանել, բայց այն նման են հասկացույթի դիտակարգերի խաղաղության հետինս կանխազատել, առանձնահատկությունները: Հասկացույթի շատուրքի նպատակներինը, շատշարժ տվյալների տեղեկատու համար, կարող են լինել հասկացույթի իրաtopl🔹, որն էլ կարող է տեղափոխել տեսակի խաղաղության հասկացույթների հետինս կանխազատել, առանձնահատկությունները: