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CONCEPT “MARRIAGE”: LINGUOSEMIOTIC UNDERSTANDING IN THE KALMYK, RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Sarangaeva Zhanna Nikolaevna (a)*, Daldinova Elza Ochir-Goryaevna (b),
Kekeeva Tatyana Michailovna (c)
*Corresponding author

(a) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Pushkin Street, Elista, Russia,
sarangaeva@yandex.ru

(b) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Pushkin Street, Elista, Russia, daldinova@mail.ru
(c) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Pushkin Street, Elista, Russia, t.kekeeva@yandex.ru

Abstract

In modern linguistics, the study of cultural concepts can be viewed from the perspective of various sciences. In cognitive linguistics, a concept is understood as a unit of operational consciousness, a reflection of the content of knowledge, experience, the result of all human activities in the form of certain units, «quanta» of knowledge. In cultural linguistics, the concept is considered as a polysyllabic mental formation, which includes conceptual, figurative– perceptual, significant dimensions with the emphasis on its national and cultural nature. The semiotic description of a cultural concept involves a description of its three components – emblematic, symbolic and allegorical signs. The emblematic study of the concept is aimed at its recognition expressed in verbal designation. In this article, the emblematic signs of the linguistic and cultural concept of «marriage» are considered on the basis of culturally marked lexical and phraseological units of Kalmyk, Russian, and English. The study showed that this concept has different semantic content. In the Kalmyk language, the emblematic designation is realized paradigmatically, i.e. through related concepts. In Russian and English, this concept is expressed both in direct and metaphorical meanings of lexical combinations. The allegory of the concept is manifested through common proverbs and sayings. The study showed that this concept is appraising and marked and has various axiological reactions. On the one hand, marriage is associated with confidence and responsibility, on the other hand, marriage is compared with disappointment. Symbolic characteristics of the concept are described in literary text fragments.

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Keywords: Concept, semiotics, cultural linguistics, Kalmyk, Russian, English.



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1. Introduction

The emergence of numerous studies in the field of national and cultural components of linguistic consciousness is actualized by the current situation of globalization and the inter – influence of linguistic cultures. The ethnicization of economic, political and cultural processes, as well as close attention to the peculiarities of interlingual contacts and inter– ethnic conflicts, have brought to the fore the phenomenon of national and cultural features of linguistic consciousness phenomena and communicative behavior. The interrelation between the mental peace and the peace of culture can be, including described through the cultural concept.

In the contemporary linguistics there are many approaches to understanding of the term of «concept». The representatives of linguistic direction consider concept “as the algebraic expression of value” (Likhachev, 1997, p. 282), “the initial point of the semantic guarantee of a word and simultaneously the last feature of development” (Kolesov, 1992, p. 157).

The representatives of lingo-cultural school treat concept as “basic cell of culture in the mental peace of man” (Stepanov, 1997, p. 74), “multidimensional mental unit with the prevailing value element” (Karasik & Slyshkin, 2001, p. 57).

2. Problem Statement

This research is based on following hypothesis. The concept of «marriage» in all languages and cultures is one of the most important universal categories but despite its universality, it possesses a pronounced national and cultural specificity. In this study, the cultural linguistic description of the concept of «marriage» is assessed lingo-semiotic approach, namely the description of emblematic, allegorical and symbolic characteristics.

The emblematic content of the concept consists in the description of the marked lexicon– phraseological, slang and dialect units naming this phenomenon. The allegorical content of the concept is represented in a concise and explicit form in proverbs and sayings. The symbolic representation of the concept is revealed in literary text.

3. Research Questions

The study of lingo-semiotic signs of the concept of «marriage» in the compared cultural linguistics allowed making the following conclusions. The concept of «marriage» in the Kalmyk, Russian and English phraseological units has a multiple emblematic expression. Thus in the Kalmyk language, the concept of «marriage» is expressed through the concept of «housing»: *нутг-усн болх* – to marry, to enter into a marriage (literally: nomad – water– to stay; «*гер авлһн*– to marry (literally: purchase of nomad tent)»; «*гер – мал болх (болхихах)* – to get married, to get married; get a family and a household» (literally: yurt– cattle or house– cattle to stay (Purbeev, 1971).

Some names are given to the concepts of «son's marriage» and «daughter's marriage». The marriage/wedding of the son is denoted by the idiom of «*күн болх*» (literally: to become a man), «*неерэн дуудулх*» (literally: to praise the name). These phraseological expressions show that marriage has an

estimated status value. Kalmyks say: «*гер мал уга күн гөндн нохад орхнь дор* – a man who has no yurt, no cattle, worse than a stray dog» (Todaeva, 2007).

The marriage and the wedding of the daughter is denoted by the idiom of «*хэрд һарх*» (to get married), where the word «*хэрд*» means «outsider», «unfamiliar», «alien» (Munieva, 1977). Literally, the idiom «*хэрд һарх / хэрд һазрт мордох*» translates as «to go out in an unfamiliar, foreign side». Thus, the home (father's home), family is associated with the native land («*эврә һазр* – literally «own land»), and the husband's house and family are associated with foreign land («*күүнә һазр*) or «land full of misery» («*зовлцгта һазр*)» (Bordzhanova, 2007).

In the Kalmyk language, the concept of marriage is expressed through the names household items, such as bedding. The phrase «*marry young, marry*» is translated by the phraseology «*деринь негдүлх*», which literally means «to unite the pillow» or «*көл- дер негдх* – to enter into marriage» (literally «to unite legs and pillows»). The idea of marriage is also transmitted through the name of the dowry of the bride. So, the idiom of «*көнжл хувалцжс*» is used in the meaning «to get married» (literally – «to share the blanket»). In this context, the «blanket» symbolizes the large number of children (Sarangaeva, 2019).

Unlike the Kalmyk language in Russian and English, this concept has a direct name. So, in the explanatory dictionary of the Russian language the word «marriage» is defined as follows:

Marriage – a family union of a man and a woman; matrimony. *to be married. to get married. to marry. registration of the marriage, divorce. marriage of love, marriage of convenience. Church marriage* (a marriage concluded in a church according to religious rites). *Legal marriage* (concluded according to the rules adopted by law). *Civil marriage* (not formalized). *Mixed marriage* (marriage between persons of different ethnicity). *Fictitious marriage* (which is fiction; putative marriage). *Marriage to catch-up* (jokes about a marriage related to the unintended pregnancy) (Kuznetsov, 2000).

According to Fasmer's (1986) etymological dictionary, the word «marriage» comes from the Old Slavic «бракъ» in the meaning of «marriage» from the verb «брати», i.e. «to take». The verb «брати» was originally used in the meaning of «to bear», in the context of marriage meant «grab», «abduct». Marriage among the ancient Slavs often implied the abduction of a girl from another clan or tribe. In Old Russian, the word «marriage» is used in the meaning of «wedding», «feast», «matrimony». In modern Russian there has been a narrowing of the meaning of this word: the lexical units of «marriage» means only «matrimony».

In English, the concept of «marriage» is defined as follows:

1. the relationship that exists between a husband and a wife: It was his second marriage. They have a very happy marriage. Her first two marriages ended in divorce;
2. A ceremony in which two people are married to each other: Many friends and relatives were present at their marriage; a priest who has performed many marriages;
3. A close union of or between two things: a marriage of sweet and spicy flavors; a marriage of science and art; a marriage between form and function.

Thus, the main designation of the concept «marriage» is the same in the Russian and English languages since both words characterize «legal union», «reunion through the church», «solemn ceremony», etc.

In the emblematic sense, in the Russian and English linguistic cultures, the concept of «marriage» is realized through the concept of «bonds» in the meaning of «close ties, relations that unite someone»: Rus. *«tie the knot»* (Kuznetsov, 2000), English. *«to tie the knot – to tie together, to complete the marriage ceremony»* (Apresyan & Mednikova, 1993).

The concept of «marriage» in Russian and English is also realized through the names of items of clothing: Rus. *«before/after the crown (about the rite of marriage, marriage)»*, *«go under the crown – to get married, get married»*, *«take the bride out of the crown – to prevent the marriage with someone»*; English *«cast cloths together – to discard clothes»*, *«clog together – to remarry (from clog – «shoe on a wooden sole»*.

In the Russian linguistic culture, the idea of marriage can be expressed through somatic phraseological units: *«ask for hands and hearts»* in the meaning of «make a proposal for marriage», *«give a hand»* – in the meaning of «agree to marriage of the daughter during the matchmaking», *«tie a head, tie – «get married»*, etc.

Unlike Kalmyk in Russian and English, the semantic attributes «positive and negative sides of marriage» are detailed: *«how to skate in oil, how to be in paradise»*, *«how to sit in salt»* (Fedorov, 2007); *«a bread- and- cheese marriage – marriage with the poor»*, *«marriage makes or mars a man – marriage is a turning point in life, a person marries happiness or sorrow»*, etc. (Magrulis & Kholodnaya, 2000).

Allegorical characteristics of the concept of «marriage» are described on the basis of paremias. Kalmyk, Russian and English marriage paremies include a significant number of images that reflect the national- cultural vision of the world.

In the parishes of the considered linguistic cultures, the idea of public recognition and approval of marriage (marriage and marriage) is noted: *«көвү өскөл гер авдг, күүк өскөл хэрд хардг – the son will be raised – married, the daughter will be raised – they will marry»*; Russian *«neither the clan nor the tribe»*, *«and in paradise to live sick alone»*, *«a married man stands on his feet»*; English *«he who does not marry will be lonely – the one who does not marry will be single»*, *«marriages are made in heaven – marriages are made in heaven»* (Sarangaeva, 2018).

A single lifestyle is associated with frivolity and nonchalance: Kalm. *«герги уга күн йовач нохачас дор – a bachelor worse than a stray dog»*, *«замин дундас мөрнэс салх, насни дундас аваласи салх – in the middle of the way to stay without a horse, in the middle of life – without a legal wife»*, Russian *«idle will – evil share»*, *«idle – half a man»*, *«idle lay down – curled up, stood up – shook himself»*, etc. (Dal, 2005).

In the Kalmyk and Russian linguistic cultures, the status of an unmarried girl is sharply condemned (Rus. *«a wife without a husband is a widow's worse»*, *«a girl who remains unmarried for a long time has neither hay nor trash»*). Kalmyk proverbs emphasize that an unmarried girl is burdensome, because can deliver additional chores to his family: Kalmyk: *«күүкн көгирхлэ герин зутаһул, үмси икдхлэ һульмтин зутал – if a girl grows old – a burden for the family, if a lot of ash accumulates – an obstacle to the hearth»*.

In Russian paremia, marriage is considered a decisive act: *«is such a thing that you have to go boldly»* (about war and marriage), *«to get married – don't put on bast shoes»*, *«get married – keep an eye*

out». Difficulties and quarrels cannot destroy the marriage: «*it is cramped together, but it's nauseous separately*», «*the family is at war, and the lonely is grieving*» (Dal, 2005).

The English linguistic culture emphasizes that marriage is for life, therefore it should be treated responsibly: «*death and marriage make the term – day*», «*when we're married or dead, it's for a long time*». Marriage causes changes in life: «*death and marriage make changes*». Marriage simultaneously brings both joy and sorrow: «*in marriage tears and smiles make the music of life*» (Simpson & Speake, 1994).

English proverbs discourage young people from marrying: «*better one house spoiled than two*», «*the better the day the better the deed – everything has its time*», «*why buy a cow when milk is so cheap – why buy a cow if you can get milk for free*», «*if you want praise, die; if you want complaints, marry – if you want praise, die, if you want complaints, marry*» (Irl.). Marriage is allegorically compared with rare luck and luck: «*marriage is a lottery in which men stake their liberty, and women their happiness*».

The symbolic characteristics of the concept are manifested in the texts of fiction.

In many text fragments, marriage is considered as the most important social institution, without which the existence and functioning of society is impossible. Marriage is a symbol of class and social status. One of the main goals in life is finding and choosing the right partner: «*Shaking important head / Neighbors whisper among themselves: / It's time, it's time for her to get married!*» (Pushkin, 1977).

Marriage contributes to the preservation of centuries – old family traditions, therefore, the basic components of marriage are such concepts as «the sanctity of marriage bonds», «respect and preservation of the family hearth».

“It would not matter if they went their own ways a little so long as the decencies were observed – the sanctity of the marriage tie, of the common home, respected” (Galsworthy, 1984, p. 62) – That they «each one will live their own life, it will not hurt the cause, if only decency is respected, if only the sacred bonds of marriage and the family hearth are respected».

At the same time, fiction often cites examples of the undesirability of marriage. In this context, marriage is seen as punishment and inevitability: «It makes no difference,» the girl said muffledly. – Davdan or who else?

«Even if you don't love him, you will have kids and they will make you happy!» – and, resting her head on Harla's skinny shoulder, which appeared under the covers, Duyutsya suddenly realized how great the grief of her friend was (Narmaev, 1984).

“... he suddenly seemed disgusting and hateful to her... the marriage frightened her like a chopping block, like a grave” (Pushkin, 1977, p. 38).

In a patriarchal family, marriage is associated with the loss of freedom and independence. The role of a woman in marriage is the role of a virtuous mother, a faithful and hardworking wife, unquestioningly fulfilling the will of her husband. “Upon getting married in a new family, Kalmyk lives extremely hard. The whole burden of homework is put on her. In the literal sense of the word, she is «a reaper, and a tailor, and a dude player». She does everything: she cooks, does the laundry, sews clothes for her family, milks and water the cows” (Amur–Sanan, 1987, p. 74).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to study the linguistic and semiotic characteristics of the concept of «marriage» in the Kalmyk, Russian and English language consciousness, to identify its emblematic, allegorical and symbolic manifestations in the linguistic consciousness, to establish its general and specific features recorded in vocabulary definitions, phraseology, paremiology, literary texts.

5. Research Methods

In this work, the following research methods are used. The definitional research method involves a procedure for analyzing vocabulary definitions of nominee words calling this concept. Definitional analysis plays an important role in lingo-cultural studies, since, according to Krasavsky (2001), "... a dictionary article presents in a concise, concentrated form the results of the development by carriers of a particular ethnic group of the objective and subjective world" (p. 73). The purpose of the definitional analysis is to highlight the elementary units of the substantive plan in the semantic structure of the word, which is reflected in its definition.

The interpretative method (interpretation method) is used to establish certain facts of understanding this linguistic phenomenon in the collective consciousness on the basis of a sample of lexical and phraseological units, precedent texts from dictionaries, collections of proverbs and aphorisms, texts of fiction. The method of contrastive analysis is used to identify the most common characteristics and significant differences in the language phenomenon of a particular linguistic culture. Such methods make it possible to determine the semiotic nature of the concept of «marriage», expressed in specific images and motives.

6. Findings

In the lingo-cultures under consideration, the emblematic expression of this mental formation is revealed in various expressions of the estimated connotation with the allocation of ethno-culturally significant moments of the reflection of the world. In the Kalmyk linguistic culture there is no direct designation of the concept of «marriage», but the meaning of the concepts of «marriage/marriage of a son and daughter» is specified in detail. The Russian and English linguistic cultures describe in detail both the positive and negative aspects of marriage. On the one hand, marriage is regarded as a necessary and enjoyable event; on the other hand, it is associated with a dangerous and risky enterprise.

A study of paremias with the designation of this concept shows that in the Kalmyk and Russian linguistic cultures marriage is considered as an immutable value and allegorically compared with the predestination from above. English paremias emphasize a more rational attitude towards marriage. The symbolic characteristics of this concept confirm that in these linguistic cultures marriage is regarded as a blessing, a vital event, on the one hand, is associated with restrictions and loss of independence, on the other hand.

7. Conclusion

The linguistic and cultural concept of marriage allows for multi– aspect lighting. The emblematic understanding of marriage boils down to highlighting a status indicator of personality. In allegorical and symbolic terms, marriage metaphorically expresses life's observations about the values of the people, their emotionally– evaluative ideas about marriage as an important social institution.

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