

HILL MARI HOUSEHOLD OMENS WITH NEUTRAL MEANING

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of household omens in the Hill Mari language. The reasons of appearance and meanings of these omens are presented with the view of historical, cultural and ethnographical premises. The list of resources with the mention of countryside community of informants is enclosed. Published works of collected omens were also used as a resource. The omens were divided into groups according to the meaning of the main clause, expressing the result of a certain condition. The following groups of the Hill Mari household omens were pointed out: 1) omens predicting the arrival of guests; 2) omens about a future husband and marriage; 3) omens protecting from an evil eye; 4) omens predicting the sex of a newborn baby; 5) omens predicting news and letters; 6) omens about a person's character; 7) omens about an upcoming feast; 8) omens about means of treating diseases; 9) other omens. Omens with other household meanings found in single examples are referred to the miscellaneous group. These omens express money attraction, hair growth, colloquy, remembrance of a person by other people. Based on quantitative data, ratio of household omen groups was deduced and presented in a diagram. As it is commonly considered, the most numerous groups express the most essential spheres of people's life. These are omens predicting future married life, coming guests, and defense from an evil eye. The syntactic structure of the Hill Mari household omens is analyzed on the basis of works of the Mari language researchers. Household omens reflect the most ordinary aspects of people's everyday life. They form the basis for historical, linguistic, cultural and ethnographic determination of the Hill Mari national traditions, way of life, folklore, as omens are purely folk heritage.

Keywords: the Hill Mari language, household omen, groups of omens, ratio of omens, historical, ethnographic, cultural meaning of omens.

1 INTRODUCTION

Folk omens are one of the expressions of folklore. The special feature of omens is their short, laconic form and content that have been honed by people for centuries and passed down from generation to generation. In the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian language, an omen is defined as a phenomenon or a case that is popularly considered to be foreknowledge of anything (Ozhegov, Shvedova, 1999, p. 594).

Household folk omens with neutral meaning reflect the ordinary, everyday life of people. The purpose of the most of omens is to warn about the upcoming events.

The method of collecting information was recording of omens inquired of the habitants of the Hill Mari region

of various villages. The informants were V.Z. Vorontsova and L.A. Vorontsova from the village of Tsyganovo, G.P. Petrova from the village of Sarapayevo, S.Kh. Opleva from the village of Pyatilipovka, E.Z. Opleva and I.V. Trubyanova from the village of Pernyangashi. Collections of folk omens compiled by A.E. Kitikov (Kitikov, 1989) and F.T. Gracheva (Gracheva, 2001) also served as a source of information.

The purpose of the research is to collect and systematize the Hill Mari household omens with neutral meaning, to consider the syntactic structure of the omens, to identify the most characteristic phenomena of the life of the Hill Mari people through the omens. There were previous research works devoted to the analysis of different groups of the Hill Mari omens. Classification of the Hill Mari meteorological folk omens was made by I.V. Trubyanova, T.N. Belyaeva, E.L. Yandakova, M. V. Ryabinina, I.G. Fedotova-Gradobaeva (Trubyanova, Belyaeva, Yandakova, Ryabinina, Fedotova-Gradobaeva, 2017, p. 21). Origin and role of the Hill Mari folk signs with negative prediction were investigated by I.V. Trubyanova, A.L. Kolyago, G.L. Sokolova, A.A. Fokina, A.V. Rychkov (Trubyanova, Kolyago, Sokolova, Fokina, Rychkov, 2017, pp. 811-815). Superstitious component in the Mari language in comparison with the Russian and English languages is analyzed by Y.Y. Fliginskikh, S. L. Yakovleva, R. A. Kudryavtseva, K. Yu. Badina and S. S. Akeldina (Fliginskikh, 2017, pp. 50-58; Fliginskikh, Yakovleva, Kudryavtseva, Badina and Akeldina, 2016, pp. 1634-1640).

As a rule, omens are conditional sentences, in the subordinate clause of which there is a condition, and there is a result in the main clause. Most often, in the Hill Mari language conditional sentences use a conjunction "гынь", suffix "-ык(ы)" or substitution of conditional sentences' signs by a dash between the subordinate and main clauses. The peculiarity of the syntactic structure of the Hill Mari omens is that the conditional sentence is used at the beginning of the sentence, followed by the main clause.

2 RESULTS

Household omens with neutral meaning are very diverse in content. There were formed more than 8 groups of the Hill Mari omens with the view of the content of the main clause: 1) omens predicting the arrival of guests (5 examples); 2) omens about future husband and marriage (5 examples); 3) omens protecting from an evil eye (5 examples); 4) omens predicting the sex of a newborn child (3 examples); 5) omens promising news and letters (3 examples); 6) omens about a person's character (2 examples); 7) omens about an upcoming celebration (2 examples); 8) omens about means of treating diseases (2 examples); 9) other omens (5 examples).

The largest groups consist of omens about the arrival of guests, marriage, protection from an evil eye, judging by the number of which it may be concluded that they have the greatest significance in the life of the Hill Mari people.

The arrival of guests was predicted by the behavior of domestic animals, cats and dogs, which were kept in every Hill Mari family: «Шагыртем шагыртемда - хынавлам канда». 'Magpie chatters - brings in guests' (informant: S.Kh. Opleva). «Шагыртем чонгештен толеш гынь – хына толеш». 'If a magpie flies by, wait for guests' (informant: V.Z. Vorontsova). «Коти порогышты шынза гынь, хынавла толыт». 'If a cat sits on the doorstep, the guests will come' (informant: V.Z. Vorontsova). «Коти пылыш гач лицам мышкеш - мындыр хына лиэш». 'If a cat washes its muzzle, guests will come' (informant: V.Z. Vorontsova).

The omens predicting the arrival of guests of a certain sex by the type of cutlery falling from the table to the floor is common both among the Russian and Mari population. «Кызы кенвазеш - пуэргы хына толеш, савала - ыдырамаш хына». 'A knife falls – a male guest will come, a spoon falls – a female guest will come' (informant: V.Z. Vorontsova). This omen has a continuation among the Russian-speaking population: 'If to knocks on the table with the handle of the fallen cutlery, the guest will not come' (informant: I.V. Trubyanova). The predominance of omens about guests on the doorstep indicate that the Hill Mari are hospitable people, they like guests, often receive them and they are party goes too.

The group of omens about a future husband and marriage is also presented by 5 examples. Most of them are superstitions for young women who are going to get married. The distance of the place of living and the age of the groom, the way of the whole married life are determined by to the manner of dressing, physical traits, appearance, labor producing character, and the first wedding night. «Савыцым изи лыкан ялштет гынь, изи лыкан солаш марлан кет». 'If you tie a headscarf in a small angle, you will marry a man from a village with a short street' (informant: L.A. Vorontsova). «Цыгылтышан ыдыр шонгы марылан кеа». 'A girl sensitive to tickling will marry an elderly man' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 223). «Ыдыр шыртым шыдырымыжы годым кужы шуйышым ышта гынь, марлан мындыркы кеа». 'If a girl spins yarn with long squeals (from the spinning wheel to the floor), she will marry far away' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 224). «Ыдырын уп (вуй) корныжы кужы ылеш гынь, марлан мындыркы кеа». 'If a girl's parting on her head is long, she will marry far away' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 224). «Арваты дон армары кыце пытариш йыдым эртарат, тенге курымыштым ылаш

тынгалыт». "As the first wedding night, so the whole married life" (Gracheva, 2001, p. 214).

An evil eye is an unexplained phenomenon and getting rid of it is just as inexplicable. However, it is a widespread superstition. They have a protective nature. The elements of protection are bright, mostly red, clothes, bright details on the clothes or old clothes, rags, as well as an ash mark on the forehead. All of them grab attention to themselves from the person or the pet. «Якшар выргемым чимыкы али выргемеш булавым пышкылмыкы, сынза ак вац». 'If you put on red clothes or pin on yourself, you will not be touched by an evil eye' (informant: E.Z. Opleva). «Изи тетялан лепкаэш сыцым шыралмыкы, сынза ак вац». 'If a child's forehead is marked with soot, he or she will not be touched by an evil eye' (informant: E.Z. Opleva). «Упеш, калявач мычашеш яргата цыреан лентам, коэмым, резинкым пижыктымыкы, упым сынза вацмаш гыц перегат. Сынза упеш агыл, лентаэш, коэмэш, резинкеш вазеш». 'If you attach a bright ribbon, a comb or a band to the hair, they will protect the hair from an evil eye. The evil eye will not touch the hair, but the ribbon, comb, band' (Gracheva, 2001, pp. 222-223). «Токо лакшы цывыгым (лыдыгым, комигым) армараж вашт лыкмыкы, сынза ак вац». 'If a hatched chicken (duckling, gosling) is passed through the front incision of pants, the evil eye will not touch it' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 220). «Ышкалым пытариш гана кытош лыкмы годым, сынза ынжы вац манын, шукшы ялаш дон поктен лыктыт». 'When the cow goes to the herd for the first time, it is kicked out with old trousers, so that an evil eye did not touch it' (informant: E.Z. Opleva).

There are 3 omens related to the birth of children. The birth of children is undoubtedly one of the most important moments in the family. Before the birth, people try to guess the sex of a child. The omens predicting the sex of a child are based on various signs: the direction of father's hair growth, the mother's habit to eat a crust of bread, cooking features. «Пуэргын шаягаремышты ўп калявачан гань гынь, тыдын ыдыр тетя шачеш». 'If man's hair grows like a plait on his nape, he will have a daughter' (informant: L.A. Vorontsova). «Эргы азам ыштынет гынь, сыкыр нерым качкаш келеш». 'If you want to have a son, eat the bread crust' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 225). «Шартял годым пай паткагылым тышкымы паштек роаш кодеш, семняшты ыдыр шачеш, пай кодеш - эргы шачеш». 'If dough is left after making meat dumplings on Christmas, the family will have a daughter, if the meat is left, the family will have a son' (informant: I.V. Trubyanova). The character of a newborn baby can be determined by the person, while meeting whom the child moves in the womb of the mother. «Тетян йанг пырымы годым ава махань эдемым ужеш, тетя ты статян лиэш». 'When a child moves in the womb, while the mother sees a certain person, the child will be like that person' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 221).

Until the beginning of the 21st century, the age of digital technology, the most common ways of communication were letters and oral messages. The arrival of a letter or the news that had been heard was an event that was eagerly awaited, so all the preceding phenomena that were associated with the arrival of a letter or the news were noted. «Кек окняш чонгештен толеш гынь, увер лиэш». 'If a bird flies by the window, there will be news' (informant: V.Z. Vorontsova). «Лем торолкашты лавровый лист варештеш гынь, сирмаш толеш». 'If you find a bay leaf in a bowl of soup, you will receive a letter' (informant: I.V. Trubyanova). «Пылыш тьонга – увер лиэш». 'If you hear a ringing in the ear, there will be news' (informant: S.Kh. Opleva).

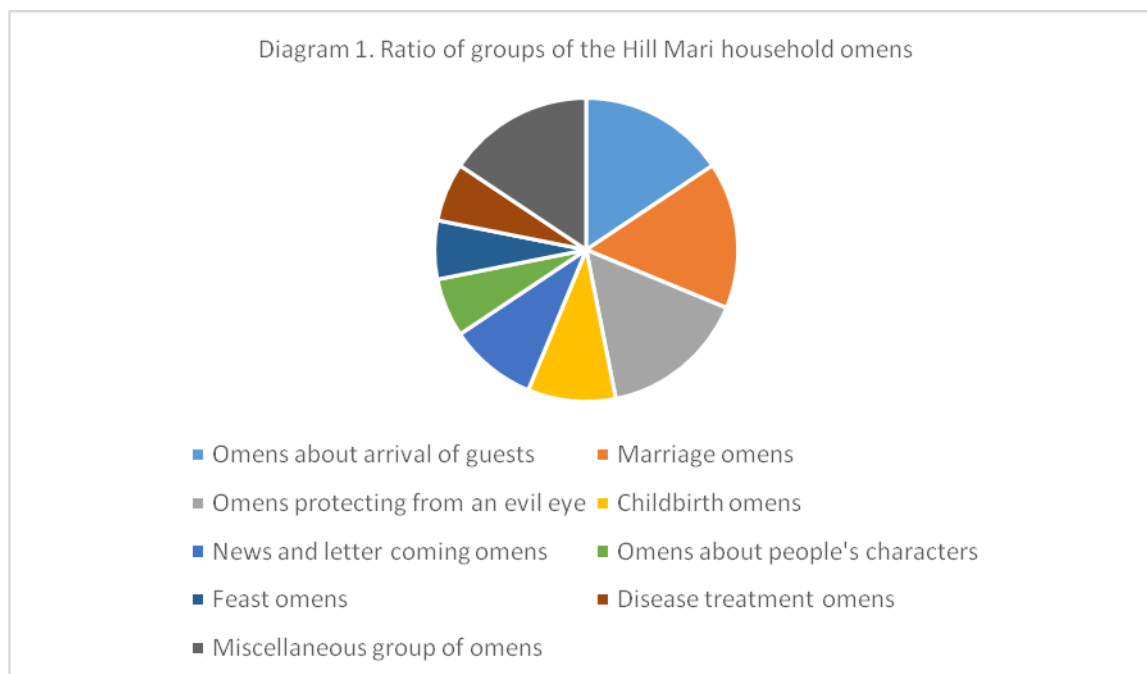
The omens predicting a feast are represented by 2 examples, but they both have the same sign - rumbling in the throat. «Логер мыра - йўмаш лиэш». 'A throat howls – a booze comes' (informant: S.Kh. Opleva). «Логер лавыжеш - аракам йуат, костенецым качкат». 'If a throat moans, you will have a feast' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 219).

The omens that help to treat diseases have a clear superstitious character, though they are represented by only 2 examples. «Колаш вацшы эдем йыле колен ак керд гынь, шукы ясылана гынь, йанжы ирыкын лактын кежы манын, ылыш лавашым тарвалыт». 'If a person who is at the point of death suffers for a long time, cannot die, the roof of the dwelling should be picked off, so that his or her soul can easily leave' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 217). «Тырвеш лакшы суарлыкым пытараш манын, имни суарлыкым пырылаш келеш». 'In order to get rid of sores on the lips, it is necessary to bite the horse's bit (iron rod)' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 222).

Other household omens with different content presented in single examples were combined into a miscellaneous group, from which separate groups can be derived after continuous research and adding examples. The miscellaneous group of omens consist of predictions about an upcoming conversation, hair growth, trip, remembrance of someone, money, protection from an evil spirit. «Йыгынцыш пыра гынь, кугынат тыным ашындара». 'If you hiccup, somebody remembers about you' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 216). «Йылмы мычаш цыгыде чучеш - иктжы доно попаш варештеш». 'If a tip of a tongue tingles, you will have a talk with somebody' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 216). «Уным у тылзын пычмыкы, йыле кушкеш». 'If to cut hair on the new moon, it will grow faster' (informant: E.Z. Opleva). «У кошелекым налмыкы пытари кыртнин

оксам пишташ келеш, тынам соок тышты окса лиэш». 'After buying a purse, put an iron money there, so that there will be always money' (informant: V.Z. Vorontsova). «Портеш тыгырым шагалташ келеш: портышкы келтымаш пыра гынь, ышкымжым тыгыр вашт ужын колтаат, лудын лактын кеа». 'Mirror should be set up in the house: if an evil spirit comes in, it will see itself in the mirror, be frightened of itself and run out of the house' (Gracheva, 2001, p. 220). «Ял лапа легешта гынь – мындыр корны выча». 'If your foot itches, you will have a long trip' (informant: I.V. Trubyanova).

The ratio of groups of the Hill Mari household omens is presented in the diagram 1.



3 CONCLUSIONS

On the whole 32 omens from the collected basis of the Hill Mari omens were considered to have household meaning. They were divided into 9 groups according to the content of the main clause. The ninth group is compiled of omens with different meanings. The reasons of appearance and usage of the Hill Mari household folk omens are given with examples. The quantity data of the omens allowed to represent the ratio of different groups of them. Household omens have an important meaning for the determination of the way of living, habits, social, cultural sphere of the Hill Mari people.

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