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Representation of the Concept of Shulyk ‘Health / Vitality / Well-Being / Happiness’ in the Discourse of the Mari Ethnic Religion

Lyubov A. Abukaeva^{ORCID}

Mari State University, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation,

✉ sylne@mail.ru

Abstract. In the religious concept sphere, *shulyk* ‘health / vitality / well-being / happiness’ refers to one of the multi-valued, multi-layered, significant concepts that require deep research. The purpose of the article is to identify the content of the concept of *shulyk*, to describe the features of its functioning in the discourse of the Mari ethnic religion. The conceptual content of the concept, interpretation in the works of religious scholars and clergy of the Mari ethnic religion, ways of representing the concept in the texts of Mari prayers, its figurative component and semantic connections with other key concepts of the Mari ethnic religion are analyzed. In the ethno-religious concept of *shulyk*, such semantic features as rise, fullness, growth, joy, vitality, energy, longevity, and happiness are actualized. It has been established that, along with other basic concepts, *shulyk* embodies the spiritual and moral values of the people, the fundamentals of the doctrine of the Mari ethnic religion and reflects the cultural and historical ties of the ethnoses.

Key words: Mari language, Mari traditional religion, prayer text, discourse, concept

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Репрезентация концепта Шулык 'здоровье / жизненная сила / благополучие / счастье' в дискурсе марийской этнической религии

Л.А. Абукаева 

Марийский государственный университет, г. Йошкар-Ола, Российская Федерация
✉ syln@mail.ru

Аннотация. В концептосфере марийской этнической религии *шулык* 'здоровье / жизненная сила / благополучие / счастье' относится к одному из многозначных, многогранных, значимых, требующих глубокого исследования концептов. Цель исследования — выявить содержание концепта *шулык*, описать особенности его функционирования в дискурсе марийской этнической религии. Анализу подвергнуты понятийное содержание концепта, интерпретации в трудах религиоведов и служителей культа марийской этнической религии, способы репрезентации концепта в текстах марийских молитв, его образная составляющая и смысловые связи с другими ключевыми концептами марийской этнической религии (*серлагыш* 'защита, милость', *перке* 'изобилие, плодородие, плодovitость'). В этнорелигиозном концепте *шулык* актуализируются такие семантические признаки, как подъем, полнота, рост, радость, жизненная сила, энергия, долголетие, счастье. Установлено, что наряду с другими базовыми концептами *шулык* воплощает духовно-нравственные ценности народа, основы вероучения марийской этнической религии и отражает культурно-исторические связи этноса.

Ключевые слова: марийский язык, марийская традиционная религия, текст молитвы, дискурс, концепт

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Introduction

Linguocultural analysis, religious conceptology through the study of language as a means of communication between members of an ethnic group, methods and means of recording, preserving and transmitting the most important aspects of culture allow us to reveal the essential characteristics of such a unique object as the ethnic religion of the Mari. The religious picture of the world, verbalized by means of language, 'becomes the cultural heritage of the people and is reflected in the linguistic picture of the world' [1. P. 40].

The basic Mari religious concepts that form the foundation of the worldview include the following:

юмо ‘god’, *ото* / *күсото* ‘sacred / prayer grove’, *онану* ‘sacred / prayer tree’, *кумалтыи* ‘prayer’, *нерке* ‘abundance, fertility, fecundity, prosperity’, *шулык* ‘health / vitality / well-being / happiness’, *серлагыи* ‘protection / mercy’.

Represented primarily in the texts of prayers, as well as in descriptions of rituals, and in general in Mari folklore, they embody the spiritual and moral values of the people, the foundations of the doctrine of the Mari ethnic religion.

Results and Discussion

In this article, we rely on the definition of I. Postovalova, who defines a religious concept as a multidimensional mystical-semiotic formation in the unity of its three main planes — spiritual-ideological, cultural-historical and linguistic [2. P. 139].

The conceptual content of the concept ‘shulyk’ is revealed by analyzing dictionary entries. V.M. Vasiliev in ‘Марий мутэр’ presented two meanings of the word *shulyk*: ‘здоровье, жизненная сила’ — ‘health, vitality’ and provided the following illustrations:

Шулык, тазалык, сьулык (ӱ. м.) — health. *Шулык тажа илышым йодына* ‘We ask for a healthy life’; *шулыкан лий* — be healthy, be happy [3. P. 274].

In the multi-volume Dictionary of the Mari Language, two meanings are defined for this word. The first is interpreted through a number of words of the Russian language: happiness, good, well-being — and a reference is given to the dictionary entry for the lexeme *пиа* ‘happiness’. For the second meaning of the word, a reference is proposed to the word *tazalyk* ‘health’ [4. P. 333].

Etymological analysis leads to the conclusion that the word *shulyk* is of Turkic origin. Cf.: Tatar *саулык* ‘health, healthy state’ [5. P. 471], Turkish *sağlık* ‘health’, Turkmen *saglyk* ‘health’.

Comparative analysis of lexicographic data and etymological analysis indicate that the primary meaning of the word *shulyk* is ‘health’. As a result of the expansion of the meaning of the word in the Mari language, the semes ‘vital force’, ‘inner strength’, ‘power, energy’, ‘harmony of divine energy’ arose, and in the meadow dialect of the Mari language the took on the meaning of ‘happiness’.

This thesis is confirmed by the combinations *шулык вий* ‘life force’, *шулыкан вий* ‘life force, literally, the force of health’ from prayer texts:

Шулык виетым поро пашаите чаманыде кучылтметлан тылат вуйнам савена [6. P. 33] ‘For the fact that you use your life force in good deeds without sparing, we bow our heads’; *Мланде Ава дене пырля Агавайрем Кугу Юмо шулыкан вийым пуэн шогыза, вольыклан, мўкишыжлан, пушенгылан,*

саскалан, киндылан, шийвундылан шулыкан вийым нуэн шого [6. P. 32] ‘Goddess-mother of the earth, together with the God of the holiday Agavair (Spring holiday of arable land, plow — *L.A.*), give life force, for cattle, for bees, for trees, for fruits, for bread, for silver, give life force’.

Combinations from the texts of the prayers *шулыкан нұрымаи* ‘happy fate, destiny’, *шулыкан кангаи* ‘good instruction’ indicate that the word *shulykan* has a broader meaning than it is noted in the aforementioned ten-volume dictionary of the Mari language.

The word-formation nest of the lexeme-name *shulyk* includes the adjective *шулыкан* ‘1. happy; 2. (Hill Mari) healthy’; verb *шулыкланаи* ‘(Hill Mari, book var.) to say hello, wishing someone to be happy’:

Шулыкан лий, кум тўрлө вольык перке гыч Юмо тыйым ынже кўрыл-тыктө [7. P. 204] ‘Be happy, let Yumo not deprive you of the abundance of three different types of cattle’; (*Яшнай*) *вәтмь доно пурынок шулыкленыи*. V. Petukhov. ‘Yashpay greeted the woman warmly’ [4. P. 333].

When identifying the conceptual content of a religious concept, definitional analysis based solely on linguistic dictionaries seems limited, so **let us turn to the works of religious scholars and ministers of the traditional Mari religion**. The religious scholar N.S. Popov defines *shulyk* in the following context: ‘For a righteous life, deities can endow a person with an additional guardian angel, confirm the existence of a person in God, thereby ensuring the ability to contemplate and experience God, the harmony of divine energy (*shulyk*) and the human soul’ [8. P. 137]. He also deduces the meaning of the word *шулык* from such concepts as *тазальк* (*tazalyk*) ‘health’, *көргө вий* (*körgö viy*) ‘inner strength’, *куат* (*kuat*) ‘power / energy’ [7. P. 249].

When interpreting the meanings embedded in these concepts since ancient times, one cannot help but turn to the works of clergymen. V. M. Mamaev gives the following interpretation:

Шулык — тиде вий-куат, Перке — вай кылдалт шогышо нимучашдыме поянлык, Серлагыи — ылыи ласкалык [9. P. 12] ‘*Шулык*’ is strength and power, *Перке* is the interconnected manifestations of endless wealth, *Серлагыи* is life’s well-being / tranquility.

In lexicographic and religious studies interpretations, there is no complete coincidence of semantic features of the main representative of the analyzed concept, however, native speakers have fairly stable ideas about its components. For clarity and completeness, we will consider the functioning of the word *шулык* and its synonyms for each of the dictionary meanings in prayer texts.

Representatives of the concept *шулык* ‘health / vitality / well-being / happiness’ and their implementation in the texts of prayers

The meaning of ‘correct, normal functioning of the body, its complete physical and mental well-being’ in the Mari language is also expressed by the word *tazalyk* ‘health’, borrowed from the Turkic languages. This word is also productive in the texts of prayers:

Тылеч вара илаш тазалыкым йодына. Ешланат, вольыкланат, суртланат, кугу серлагышым, кугу тазалыкым йодына [7. P. 158–159] ‘After this, in order to live, we ask for health. And for the family, and for the cattle, and to protect the home, we ask for good health.’

In the collection of prayers compiled by N.S. Popov, it appears as more frequent: 96 uses of the word *tazalyk* and 48 uses of *shulyk* were noted. The word *tazalyk* is commonly used and neutral, while the lexeme *shulyk* is present in the Hill Mari language and mainly in the religious discourse of the Meadow Mari people.

In the texts of prayers pleonastic combinations *шулык таза илыш*, *шулык тазалык* are used to intensify semantics:

а таче укечет дене, ару могыр дене кӧ кумал шога гын, тудлан поро шулык тазалыкым, илышаи кужу ўмырым, шочио-влакшылан тазалыкым, пиа-лым, серлагышым пуэн шогыза [7. P. 63] ‘And today, on a new day, whoever is clean in body and prays, give him good (lit. healthy) health, longevity, give his children health, happiness, protection.’

The meaning of ‘a state of absolute satisfaction with life, a feeling of the highest pleasure, joy’ in the Mari language is expressed by the commonly used literary word *нуал (pial)* ‘happiness’ and the Eastern Mari dialect of Turkic origin *рыскал (ryskal)* ‘happiness’. Both lexemes are found in the texts of prayers, in particular in the collection ‘Марий кумалтыш мут’ the word *pial* — 70 times, *ryskal* — 22 times:

Перке ден перкем ваи ыштенат, пиа ден пиалым ваи ыштенат [7. P. 135] ‘You have united abundance with abundance, you have united happiness with happiness’; ...*кўшыл тўтырам ўлыкӧ волтен, ўыл тўтырам кўш кўзыктен, кок тўтырам ваи конден, нылле ик пачаи чаршаутым почылтарен, кўрылтдымӧ резыкетым пуэн, пытыдыме рыскалым пуэн, кум тўрлӧ еш гычын, тўрлӧ вольык гычын, кум тўрлӧ шурно чот гычын, кум тўрлӧ пакча кӧргӧ мўкиш чот гычын, кум тўрлӧ ший казна дене илаш, Кугу Юмо, ынгайлыкым пу!* [7. P. 107] ‘Lowing the upper fog down, raising the lower fog up, connecting two fogs, opening forty-one curtains, giving continuous sustenance,

giving endless happiness, with three different families, with different cattle, three different types of bread, with bees in three different apiaries, with three reserves of silver, Great Yumo, give the opportunity to live!’

The lexemes *pial*, *tazalyk*, *shulyk* in the texts of prayers are used in the same context in texts of prayers:

Ынде ты тичмаи җумбачын пореи пиялым пу! Тиде тичмаи җумбачын, ой Кугече Юмо, җушнӧ юмын сура почылтын, җлӧ мланде сура почылтын, кок тӹтыра коклаште варсенге гае вычымаден, умла гае оварген, порсын гае җмыр шуен илаш, поро кугу шулык перкем пу, шулык дене ыштыме поро еш перкем пу, ешыже-влакым ушан-акылан ыште... [7. P. 143] ‘Now, by prayer with this whole gift, grant happiness in goodness. By prayer with this whole gift, God of the Kugeche holiday (spring holiday of remembrance of ancestors, lit. Great day — L.A.), the divine castle opened above, the earthly castle opened below; to live between two fogs like swallows, rejoicing like hops, multiplying like silk, prolonging life, give good, great abundance of health, created by health, give well-being to the family, let everyone in the family be smart, reasonable’; *А Вуйҗумбал Кугу Юмо, ике Пиямбарет дене, чыла ешет дене, мемнан сӧрымым колын, чыла осалым поктен колто. Поро шулыкым да тазалыкым пуэн, илаш полиен шого* [7. P. 9] ‘And the Great Yumo above our heads, with his Prophet, with his whole family, having heard our promise, drive away all evil. Giving good happiness and health, help us to live’.

The polysemantic word *эсенлык* of Turkic origin has a similar semantic content to the word *shulyk*: Cf.: *эсӑнлык* 1. health; normal vital activity of the organism; the presence of strength, fortitude of the organism. 2. well-being; calm, successful course of life, affairs; contentment, security; good, kind’ [10. P. 141] and *исӑнлык* health, as well as *исӑнлык-саулык* [5. P. 178].

This representative of the analyzed concept is found in the prayers of the Eastern Mari:

Мер калык йодын кумалеш сурт кӧргӧ ямагатшылан эсенлыкым, кум тӹрлӧ волькышлан эсенлыкым йодын, кум тӹрлӧ җдымӧ шурныжлан эсенлыкым йодын, пакча кӧргӧ мӹкшыжлан эсенлыкым йодын, сӧйиш кайыше салтакше-влаклан эсенлыкым йодын, сондык кӧргӧ ший окса дене илаш ынгайлыкым йодын, кавыл ыште манын [7. P. 92] ‘The people pray, asking for well-being for the family, well-being for three different types of livestock, well-being for three different types of sown grain, well-being for the bees in the apiary, well-being for the soldiers who have gone into battle to live with silver in their chests, saying: accept’; ...*илаш-касаи эсенлыкым, шулыкым,*

күрылтдымө поро порылыкым ну, Поро Күдыратле Күзу Юмо [7. P. 112] ‘To live and prosper, well-being, health, endless goodness, grant me, Kind Mighty Great Yumo.’

Attributive combinations with the word шулык allow us to determine the properties and features of the analyzed concept. In the texts of prayers, the word *shulyk* is combined with the epithets-adjectives *күзу* (*kugu*) ‘big’, *күжгө* (*kүzhgө*) ‘thick, dense’, *поро* (*poro*) ‘kind’:

...ош порсын гане ўмыр сулен илаш **күзу шулыкым** тый дечет, Күзу Юмо, йодын кумалына [7. P. 81] ‘To live like white silk, prolonging life, we ask for great happiness from you, Great Yumo, and pray’; Ий гыч ийыш, талук гыч талукыш, тылзе гыч тылзыш, кече гыч кечыш, эр кече гай нөлталтын, варсенге гай вычымаген, порсын гай ярымалтын, умла гай оварен, шыште гай печкалтын, илаш **күжгө шулыкым** пуэн шого [7. P. 14] ‘From year to year, from summer to summer, from month to month, from day to day, like the morning sun, rising; like swallows, rejoicing; like silk, blossoming; like wax, illuminating, live, give us great happiness’; Эр ўжара гай волгалтын, чевер кече гай нөлталтын, тылзе гай нөлталтын, шўдыр гай тўлен ылышаи **поро шулыкым** ну! [7. P. 216] ‘To live, like the morning dawn, shining; like the red sun, rising; like the moon, rising; like the stars, multiplying, give good health.’

One of the above epithets is a permanent epithet of the characters of the Mari pantheon. Among them are *Ош Поро Күзу Юмо* ‘Bright, Kind, Great Yumo’. According to the beliefs of the Mari believers, such deities as *Күзу Шулык* (*Kugu Shulyk*) ‘Great Happiness/Health’, *Күзу Серлагыш* (*Kugu Serlagysh*) ‘Great Savior/Guardian/Defender’, *Күзу Перке* (*Kugu Perke*) ‘Great Abundance’ exist in unity, harmony, and constant creation. In prayerful addresses this unity is emphasized in a special way:

Шулык дене ыштыме еш перкем, еш дене ыштыме вольык перкем, вольык дене ыштыме кинде перкем, кинде дене ыштыме мўкиш перкем, шийвундо перкем ну [7. P. 26] ‘The well-being of the family created by health, the abundance of livestock created by the family, the abundance of bread produced by livestock, the abundance of bees created by bread, give us silver’; *Серлагыш вач кугу шулыкым йодына* [7. P. 129] ‘We kindly ask for good health’. Their unity receives a symbolic material embodiment in the pinches that are made with three fingers of the right hand (thumb, index and middle) on the gift of bread before it is baked. The priest sends this part into the fire for the god in whose honor the prayer is being performed. Each of the pinches symbolizes the prayer requests of believers for health (happiness) — *shulyk*, for abundance — *perke*, for protection, mercy — *serlagysh*.

According to the beliefs of the Mari believers, *Түнә юмо* ‘God of the bright world’, *Азавайрем юмо* ‘God of the *Азавайрем* holiday’, *Илян Кузу юмо* ‘Great life-giving god’ manifest themselves in maintaining health and happiness, endowing all living things with health, well-being, and vitality.

In the Mari religious discourse, шулык is harmoniously and inextricably linked with such categories as *тичмаш* (*tichmash*) ‘fullness’, *перке* (*perke*) ‘abundance’, *уш-акыл* (*ush-akyl*) ‘lit. mind-mind’:

А тиде тичмаш вач илаш, Поро Кузу Юмо, шулыкым пу. Шулык дене кучымо еш перке гыч йывыртыкте [7. P. 191] ‘And in order to live with this whole goodness, Great Good Yumo, give me health. Bring joy to a large family created by health.’

The figurative component of the concept is formed by comparisons and is revealed in comparative constructions that function as part of chains of 3, 5, 7 or 9 members, which expresses the full manifestation of *shulyk* ‘health, happiness’:

Сурт көргө еш денат иган варсенге гай вычымаден, порсын гай шарлалтын, ош шыште гай кувылтын, саска пеледыш гай илашат поро шулык перкем пуэн шого тиште көргө калыклан, родо пошкудо-шамычлан [7. P. 64] ‘So that we and our families in our houses live rejoicing like swallows, spreading like silk, separating like white wax, like flowers, bestow an abundance of health on the people of the area, relatives and neighbors.’

The chains of comparative constructions are expanded by the following variable figurative-symbolic comparisons:

эр үжара гай волгалтын ‘like the morning dawn, shining’, *Юмын волгыдо гае волгалтын* ‘like God’s light, shining’; *чевер кече гай нөлталтын* ‘like the red sun, rising’, *эр кече гае нөлтын* ‘like the morning sun, rising’; *тылзе гай нөлталтын* ‘like the moon, rising’, *тылзе гае темын* ‘like the moon, filling’; *шүдыр гай түлен* ‘like stars, multiplying’, *шүдыр гай чолгыжын* ‘like stars, shining’.

The construction can be supplemented with the following comparisons:

шыште гай печкалтын ‘like wax, illuminating’, *пыл гай оварен* ‘like a cloud, filling up’, *эр чолтан гай нөлтын* ‘like the morning dawn, rising’, *шуршо гай төрштыл* ‘like a flea, jumping’, *умдыр гане погым поген* ‘like a beaver, collecting the good’, *нурса гай төрштыл* ‘like peas, bouncing’, *саска гай пеледын* ‘like flowers, blooming’.

Of the folk ideas about happiness and health, each of the images highlights the most significant component: a prosperous life is seen as bright, long, fulfilling, cheerful:

Эр ўжара гай волгалтын, чевер кече гай нёлталтын, тылзе гай нёлталтын, шўдыр гай тўлен ылышаи поро шулыкым пу! [7. P. 216] ‘Like the morning dawn, shining, like the red sun, rising, like the moon, rising, like the stars, multiplying, give me good health / happiness to live!’.

A prosperous and happy life as desired in traditional religious views of the Mari is presented in detail. The idea of procreation, of children, is given special significance:

Кузу Юмо, шочшо икшывылан йонлыдымо уш-акылым пуэн, каван гане капан ыштен, умла гане овартен, эр тўтыра гане нёлтыктен, шушо кинде гане пенгыде ыштен, пенгыдылыкым пуэн, кече гане иян-кечан ыштен, тылзе гане тичмашылыкым пуэн, шўдыр гане волгыдылыкым пуэн, шыште печкен гане тўр ылышым пуэн, вараксим гане вычыматен, ош порсын гане ўмыр сулен илаш кузу шулыкым тый дечет, Кузу Юмо, йодын кумалына [7. P. 81] ‘Great Yumo, giving unclouded reason to the children who are born; making them as tall as a haystack; like hops, raising; like the morning mist, raising; like ripe grains, making them firm; like the sun, making them long-lived; like the moon, giving fullness; like the stars, giving light; like wax, giving an even life; like swallows, rejoicing; to live like white silk, prolonging life, we pray to you, Great Yumo, asking for great happiness.’

Conclusion

The concept of *shulyk*, actively presented in the Mari religious discourse, is manifested as polysemantic, reflecting the evolution of religious ideas of the ethnic group. In the ethno-religious concept of шулык such semantic features as light, rise, fullness, growth, joy, vitality, energy, longevity, happiness are actualized.

Synonyms of the word шулык, their differentiation by dialects is an indicator of the significance of the concept both for the people as a whole and for all ethnic groups. Systemic connections of the analyzed concept with the concepts of *perke* ‘abundance’, *serlagysh* ‘protection, mercy’, *tichmash* ‘fullness, integrity’ clearly demonstrate the antiquity of the concept, the peculiarities of not only religious views, but also the mentality of the Mari.

Further analysis of Mari religious concepts, the religious picture of the world as a whole, must be carried out taking into account that in the context of believers turning to the lost traditions of the Mari ethnic religion, new elements arise in it [11]. The key concepts of the Mari ethnic religion reveal the peculiarities of the Mari views on the nature of the divine, and allow us to comprehend and come closer to understanding the spiritual values of the people.

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Bio note:

Lyubov A. Abukaeva is a Doctor of Philology, Head of the Center of Uralic Languages Studies, Mari State University, 1 Lenin Sq, 424000, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation, ORCID: 0000-0002-9622-6770. E-mail: sylne@mail.ru