



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Nominations of the semantic field “illness” in Russian old settler dialects of Yakutia in comparison with the Yakut language

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Oct 16, 2024 Accepted: Dec 11, 2024	The study comprehensively analyzes nominative units representing the semantic field “illness” in Russian old settler dialects of Yakutia. The research material consists of lexical units extracted from the Dictionary of Russian Old Settler Dialects in the Territory of Yakutia by continuous sampling. The study identifies and systematizes the features of euphemization in the nominations of diseases, showing correlations between linguistic phenomena and the cultural and social norms governing the perception of illnesses by patients and society. Special attention is paid to the comparative analysis of the linguistic material from the Russian old settler dialects and the Yakut language, which helps identify common and different features in the linguistic worldview of these ethnic groups. The analysis of disease nominations in the Yakut language and Russian old settler dialects of Yakutia identifies similarities in attitudes towards illness, especially severe illness. Both cultures avoid direct nominations of diseases and use euphemisms, reflecting a universal fear of the unknown and the serious consequences of illnesses.
Keywords Traditional culture Russian old settler dialects of Yakutia Vocabulary Phraseology Semantics Linguistic worldview	
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INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, much attention is given to nominations that characterize a person as they serve as a valuable source of information about the linguistic worldview. Within this paradigm, nominations that fall within the semantic field “illness” are of particular scientific interest since they reflect both linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of the perception of illness and the sick individual in society.

The relevance of studying disease nominations and terms for individuals with medical limitations is driven by their importance in the context of the humanities and interdisciplinary studies. This topic lies at the intersection of linguistics, medicine, psychology, and sociology, making it comprehensive and scientifically significant. The scientific literature includes several fundamental works addressing various aspects of these nominations. M.U. Abdurakhmanova made a significant contribution to the study of medical terms by conducting a semasiological analysis of Greco-Latin medical terms (e.g., “abasia”). Abdurakhmanova’s research showed the multifaceted nature of medical semantics, including denotative, connotative, and associative meanings. N.L. Ogurechnikova focused on euphemization in the context of naming individuals with health issues. Ogurechnikova’s studies allowed to identify and classify various types of euphemisms used in medical discourse, greatly enriching the understanding of linguistic mechanisms employed to soften negative connotations

when referring to diseases and their carriers. For example, the expression "a person with a visual impairment" is used instead of the word "blind".

Linguistics considers nominations of diseases for several reasons. The names of diseases can reflect cultural characteristics and social views on illnesses and those affected by them. The study of disease nominations helps understand the foundations of these nominations and the prejudices and beliefs associated with illnesses. Analyzing disease nominations in a language shows semantic features that reflect a people's perceptions, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the language.

METHODS

To identify the necessary lexical units (words and phrases that denote diseases or people who are ill) in the Dictionary of Russian Old Settler Dialects in the Territory of Yakutia and the Dictionary of Yakut Euphemisms, we used the method of continuous sampling. To conduct a semantic and etymological analysis of the nominations, we applied the comparative-typological method. Within the lexical approach to nomination creation, units of nomination were examined in a cultural-historical context, providing an opportunity to study the unique linguistic material primarily from the perspective of ethnolinguistics. The ethnolinguistic method of comparing fragments of linguistic worldviews shows the unique magical function of language in traditional cultures. The main components of ethnolinguistic research are the language and traditional culture of the people: folk culture is explored using linguistic tools, with the basic premise being the isomorphism of culture and language (the assumption that there are no significant differences and that the same principles and methods can be applied in both spheres). According to N.I. Tolstoy (1995), "Such an expansion of the 'linguistic approach' to cultural phenomena is by no means a 'translation' of cultural terms into linguistic terms, but rather a different, more structured approach to culture as a systematic whole" (p. 16).

The comprehensive approach to these facts refines the semantics and etymology of words and identifies the functions of verbal components in various forms of traditional culture. According to V.M. Zhirmunsky (1976), this principle is realized through methodological solutions, such as "Wort und Sache" ("word and thing") and "Wort und Brauch" ("word and custom") (pp. 439-440).

The material for the study consisted of nominations selected by continuous sampling from dictionaries of the Yakut language and Russian old settler dialects of Yakutia. In the course of the study, we used the Dictionary of Yakut Euphemisms based on the following sources:

1. The Yakut-Russian Dictionary of Hunting and Fishing Terms compiled by A.S. Lukovtsev (1975).
2. The Dictionary of the Yakut Language by E.K. Pekarsky (1958-1959).
3. The Dialectological Dictionary of the Yakut Language by P.S. Afanasev, M.S. Voronkin, and M.P. Alekseev (1976).

The material from Russian dialects used in Yakutia was selected from the Dictionary of Russian Old Settler Dialects in the Territory of Yakutia (in four volumes) compiled by M.F. Druzhinina (1997, 2002, 2007a, 2007b) using the continuous sampling method. A significant share of nominations from the Russian old settler dialects was selected from Druzhinina's phraseological dictionary.

An ethnolinguistic study of the semantics of disease-related nominations and their characteristics has not been conducted using the Russian dialect material. The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) contains a unique Arctic area of Russian dialects which was documented and became a subject of detailed scientific study in the 20th century. This includes the Lower Indigirka and Lower Kolyma old settler Russian dialects. They belong to regions of late settlement and have been preserved due to their isolated existence in a foreign-language environment, leading to noticeable differences from the dialects of the main East Slavic settlement area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In modern research, there is increased attention to traditional cultures since tradition serves as a link to historical memory and helps preserve national and cultural identity even in the era of globalization and informatization. "Traditional culture intertwined with the everyday life of the people and representing a part of their worldview retains and reinforces important elements of the traditional human understanding of the surrounding reality" (Diyanova, 2011, p. 221).

According to the linguist E.M. Wolf (1985), "In the world of evaluations, it is not the truth relative to the objective world that matters but the truth relative to the conceptual world of the participants in the act of communication" (p. 200). Lexical units and utterances colored by emotions and attitudes toward an object evaluate everything surrounding language speakers (dialect speakers). The analysis of evaluative nominations identifies moral aspects and the prevailing spiritual and ethical values of the group under study.

The study of the category of evaluation is inseparably linked to axiology (the theory of values). Axiology represents generalized, stable ideas about preferred goods and objects significant to individuals and those that are the focus of their desires, aspirations, and interests (Grishina, 1994, p. 28). In axiological concepts, value is of primary importance. Values are defined as "social and socio-psychological ideas and views shared and inherited by each new generation" (Sterin, 1996, p. 108). Evaluation is a factor forming the value-based worldview as value-based representations are common to every culture. The values-oriented system of society includes a specific set and hierarchy of values expressed through evaluation. "The process of evaluation is a way of realizing the value of an object and one's recognition of the object's value-related significance manifested in a judgment about the value that has become the object of evaluation" (Boguslavsky, 1982, p. 116).

Being regional varieties of a language, dialects are an area where traditional culture manifests. According to many scholars, traditional folk culture preserves the ideals and values of ethnic identity filled with local connotations and meanings. The Russian old settlers of northern Yakutia have preserved their traditions, customs, and rituals, which have withstood the test of time. They continue to pass them down to their descendants as a valuable and revered heritage. This represents a distinctive and recognizable image of the Russian people preserving traits of past centuries. The uniqueness of this phenomenon lies in the preservation of the traditional culture of the old settler population of Yakutia within a non-native linguistic environment.

The unique linguistic situation that has developed in the northeast of Russia, particularly in the Arctic regions, is characterized by the interaction and close connection of different linguistic cultures. Each ethnic group retains its identity. Each traditional culture is based on the dominant values created by previous generations. Thus, it represents a culture and a way of organizing the life of the people.

Traditionalism determines a culture's value-based and normative content and social mechanisms for its transmission. It preserves the accumulated experience of practical and spiritual activity over centuries and establishes moral principles and norms of social relations. In terms of spiritual culture, mythological and religious representations of the world dominate.

In the lexical system of a language, there are groupings of lexemes united by semantic or formal features. When analyzing the phenomena of taboo and euphemism, the linguistic prohibition applies not to the content of the word or the concept but to word forms. Since concepts cannot be excluded from daily life or linguistic communication, the basis for classifying prohibited forms is their semantic value, i.e., the meaning the speaker intends to convey to the listener.

According to O.S. Akhmanova's definition, a semantic field is "a set of meaningful units (concepts, words) that cover a specific area of human experience" (Akhmanova, 1966, p. 322). However, not all semantic systems within a language are subject to linguistic prohibition. Moreover, not all words are

subject to taboo even within a given system. Some systems are heavily affected by taboos (for example, the semantic fields "hunting and fishing", "illness", or "death"). Others are partially involved in the sphere of prohibition (in specific situations, for example, the semantic field "Object" when traveling). Thus, the classification of taboo words into semantic groups is primarily based on defining their general meaning (based on their semantic commonality).

Illness, especially a grave one, has always been characterized by a particular atmosphere, influencing different word usage. Among the Sakha people, direct nominations of diseases are often taboo. Instead, compound names are used that refer to the disease indirectly, through a key semantic component. For example, the secondary nomination "yraas buolbut" (Yakut: "he became pure") is used instead of the direct term for a bone disease (Pekarsky, 1958-1959, p. 3811). The adjective "yraas" (Yakut: "pure") in combination with "buolbut" (Yakut: "became") is used to denote a grave disease. Here are similar examples: "ohsorgo oğustarbyt" (Yakut: "allowed himself to be hit") as a euphemism for paralysis and "töbötö hamsaabyt" (Yakut: "the head moved") describing a mental disorder (Nelunov, 1981, p. 51). Such words as "oğustarbyt" and "hamsaabyt" relate to illnesses through the key words "ohsorgo" and "töbötö", with their meaning being clarified only in combination with these key semantic components.

Euphemisms vary across Yakut dialects. For example, measles is described through different substitutes: "itiiktehehkh" (Yakut: "with heat") in the Bulunsky and Verkhoyansky districts; "maatyska" (derived from Russian "mother") in the Bulunsky, Vilyuysky, and other districts; "simetii" (Yakut: "decoration") in the Zhigansky, Sakkyrir, and Nyurba districts (Pekarsky, 1958-1959). Kinship terms referring to female figures, foreign borrowings, and nominations with exaggerated connotations are used as euphemisms.

The study shows similarities in attitudes toward illness, particularly grave diseases. We need to emphasize the universal nature of this attitude: illness disrupts everyday life, causing discomfort and provoking fear. The unknown consequences of illness are particularly frightening, and this anxiety increases with age. External factors, including weather conditions, also play a key role. In the harsh environment of the Far North, where climate can cause illness, people's emotional reactions are aggravated, influencing their views on diseases. In traditional cultures, illness is given much prominence. In this context, the role of words becomes paramount.

In traditional cultures, illness is predominantly characterized negatively or with caution, often accompanied by a sense of fear. When describing objects, people tend to use evaluative terms. Evaluation is a fundamental category of language. People analyze the surrounding reality, including objects, phenomena, qualities, and actions. This evaluation extends to thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. Therefore, virtually everything can become an object of evaluation. These evaluations are based on a human value system rooted in dichotomies, such as good and evil, benefit and harm, and other moral oppositions.

In the Yakut spiritual culture, the evaluative term "kuhağan" (Yakut: "bad") is directly associated with illness. When analyzing reactions within the associative field "kuhağan", it is important to consider associations with unique semantics enriched by a broad cultural-historical context. These associations are marked by extensive semantic connections, reflecting the deep-rooted traditions and mentality of the people (especially their attachment to origins and roots) showing the profound meaning of the word. Let us examine associations with a significant semantic environment, creating a specific aura around the reaction and filling it with a sacred meaning.

According to the Great Explanatory Dictionary of the Yakut Language, the Yakut phrase "kuhağan yaryy" ("bad disease") refers to "systygannaakh yaryy" ("contagious disease") (Sleptsov, 2004-2018). In Pekarsky's Dictionary of the Yakut Language, "kuhağan yaryy" is defined as syphilis (Pekarsky,

1958-1959, p. 1938) and is also described as "nuuchcha yaryyta" (Yakut: "Russian disease") (Pekarsky, 1958-1959, pp. 3746-3747) or leprosy (Pekarsky, 1958-1959, p. 1938).

The dialects of the Russian old settlers of Yakutia use specific words related to illness. The evaluative term "khudoy" ("bad") is frequently used in the context of illness. The phrase "khudaya bolezn" ("bad illness") refers to an incurable disease. In the expression "bolet ot khudoby" ("sick from being thin"), the word "khudoba" is used as a euphemism to denote tuberculosis (an incurable disease) (Druzhinina, 1997, p. 21). Similarly, the phrase "Yakut disease" is used by old settlers to refer to an incurable disease. It is believed that a "bad illness" can fatally consume a person, metaphorically "eating" them (Druzhinina, 2007b, p. 104).

In V.I. Dal's dictionary, the word "khudoy" is defined as "faulty, unfit, bad, poor; something or someone with defects, flaws, or corruption". A proverb is cited: "When it is bad, it is bad, but if it is not bad, it is worse". The phrase "byt v khudykh dushakh" ("to have a bad soul") meaning "near death" is used in Siberia.

The analysis of the term "khudoy" ("bad" or "ill") in Russian shows the attitude towards objects in the surrounding world that evoke extremely negative emotions, aversion, and fear of the unknown. Illness is described as "khudoy". In some cases, it refers to specific diseases (venereal diseases, epilepsy, or tuberculosis). In others, it denotes a condition leading to illness or death (e.g., "khudoby" or "khudosochny" meaning "emaciated" or "frail").

In different regions of Russia, the term "khudoy" is associated with the most negative phenomena: tuberculosis in the Smolensk region; epilepsy and convulsions in the Perm region; deformity or physical disfigurement in the Vologda and Tambov regions; someone thin, sickly, or weak in the Pskov region; someone unwell or suffering from anemia in Siberia.

The phrase "kuhağan tyl" (Yakut: "bad word") holds a special place in the speech behavior of the Sakha people. The concept of dividing words into "good" and "bad" is deeply rooted in the spiritual traditions of their culture and is closely tied to the magical perception of language.

In the Yakut spiritual culture, words are endowed with magical properties reflected in numerous signs and prohibitions concerning verbal communication. The magical function of language in archaic cultures is shaped by the people's mythological beliefs and their animistic understanding of the surrounding world.

The linguistic analysis of the languages of indigenous Siberian peoples shows similarities in their unique approach to verbal communication. The sacralization of words and the attribution of special properties to them condition brevity in speech among northern ethnic groups. In ancient times, it was believed that spoken words could be heard and influenced by natural forces or spirits as reflected in the Yakut proverb: "Algyska onnoğor abaahy tokhtuur" (Yakut: "Even the devil yields to a spell"). The Yakut folklore contains numerous proverbs and sayings that regulate communication, prescribing specific patterns of speech behavior and etiquette through prohibitions and recommendations. As a result, each word was spoken in traditional culture with great caution as illustrated by the proverbs "Eppit tyllaagar eppetekh tyl orduk" (Yakut: "An unsaid word is better than a spoken one") and "Etilibit tyl ihillibet buolbat" (Yakut: "A spoken word is never unheard"), meaning even confidential information does not remain private.

In Yakut, certain words are believed to possess the power to either save or harm a person. For example, "Algys" (Yakut: "blessing") and "Kyryys" (Yakut: "curse"). According to Pekarsky's "Yakut Dictionary", "kuhağan tyl" means "a bad word, curse" (Pekarsky, 1958-1959, p. 1257). The term "kuhağan sanaalaakh" translates as "evil, ill-natured" (Pekarsky, 1958-1959, pp. 1257-1258).

The word "kuhağan" is semantically linked to the color nomination "hara" (Yakut: "black"). The adjective "hara" has multiple meanings in the Yakut linguistic culture. On the one hand, it denotes a

specific color and can be contrasted with other color terms like "kyhyl" (Yakut: "red") and "yryñ" (Yakut: "white"), functioning as antonyms. On the other hand, "hara" has a figurative meaning "evil, unfortunate": "hara sanaa" (Yakut: "dark, gloomy thoughts"), "hara suol" (Yakut: "sin, vice") (Pekarsky, 1958-1959, p. 3332). In this regard, the negative semantic aspect becomes prominent. In addition, "hara" is used to intensify meanings: "hara da hara" (Yakut: "pitch black"), "yas hara" (Yakut: "completely black"), "hara sor" (Yakut: "great misfortune"), "hara työkyn" (Yakut: "a terrible rogue, swindler") (Sleptsov, 2004-2018). This intensifying word has common use. The frequency and rich semantics of "hara", with a predominance of negative qualities, can be considered evidence of the sacredness of the word, indicating a special cultural attitude toward it as something highly significant.

In the associative field, the core is such reactions as "hara" and "haraña" (Yakut: "dark"). At the periphery, there are numerous reaction phrases: "hara bylyt" (Yakut: "black cloud"), "hara d'aj" (Yakut: "evil spirit"), "hara sanaa" (Yakut: "dark, gloomy thoughts"), "hara oñ" (Yakut: "color black") (Sleptsov, 2004-2018).

"Kuhağan sir" (Yakut: "bad place") is a sacred space in a person's environment where, according to beliefs, negative entities may dwell, exerting harmful influence on individuals.

"Kuhağan tyyn" (Yakut: "bad breath") ranks fourth in the frequency of use. In the Yakut culture, the mythological understanding of "tyyn" (Yakut: "breath") conveys the meaning "spirit". When combined with "kuhağan" ("bad"), "tyyn" takes on the meaning "evil spirit". This interpretation is first listed in the "Great Yakut Dictionary". Pekarsky (1958-1959) draws a parallel between "kuhağan" and "abaahy" ("evil, malign forces, all that is harmful and hostile to humans, causing them harm; everything incomprehensible or contrary to customs; evil spirits embodying the destructive forces of nature") (pp. 5-6).

"Kuhağan d'allyk" is another core reaction within the associative field (Grishina, 1994, p. 67), where the word "d'allyk" in its secondary meaning refers to "plague, epidemic".

"Kuhağan tyl" ("bad word") in the Yakut spiritual culture has an analog in the culture of Russian old settlers. In critical situations, a person focuses on words.

In Russian, there are proverbs about bad words, such as "No one speaks ill of themselves", "Without salt and bread, the conversation turns bad", "Without saying a bad word, he tucked it away and left", etc. These reflect a cultural wariness toward negative speech.

Both the dialects of old settlers and the Yakut language demonstrate a negative and serious attitude towards the concept of "bad" ("ill") as a source of supernatural dark forces. The notion of "bad" is often associated with ominous, malevolent powers.

In the vocabulary of old settlers, there is the phrase "khudoy chukcha" ("evil Chukchi"), referring to a "malicious spirit of the tundra; Sendoushny". For example, "the evil Chukchi used to visit our yurts, they say, he stole reindeer, whistled and laughed" (Druzhinina, 2007b, p. 133). Typically, Sendoushny is a distinct character.

In some cases, the images of Sendoushny and Khudoy Chukcha merge into a single entity. This image is negative, associated with supernatural forces hostile to humans, and should be feared.

The Yakut phrase "kuhağan tyl" is associated with the air a person breathes. "Salgyn" ("air") is included in the Yakut disease terminology. For example, to describe a paralyzed person, the Yakuts use the euphemism "salgyn okhsbut" ("struck by air") (Sleptsov, 2004-2018). This suggests the influence of the Yakut culture on the Russian old settler population. The semantics of this phrase effectively conveyed through a metonymy imply that illness is transmitted through the air.

Air is also mentioned in the semantic field "disease" in Russian dialects, further linking the objects under study. The dialect speakers referred to the possibility of contracting viral diseases as "falling ill from the air" or "getting sick from the air" meaning "to catch the flu" (Druzhinina, 1997, p. 28). In the speech of old settlers, the expression "puskat po vetru" ("to cast to the wind") means to cast a spell to inflict illness on someone (Druzhinina, 2007a, p. 47).

According to folk beliefs, illness can move through the air. Air can be an integral part of the semantics of disease nominations, such as in the term "vetryanoy pereloy" (Russian: "wind-borne disfigurement"), referring to superstitious incantations against deformity (Druzhinina, 1997, p. 47). The word "pereloy" refers not only to the disease but also to plants of the sundew and orchid families believed to be effective remedies for gonorrhea and syphilis; these plants were called "pereloy grass" (Dal, 1863-1866). The lexeme "pereloy" has been known in the Russian language for a long time, with a similar interpretation presented in V.I. Dal's dictionary. In the Eastern Siberian dialects of Russian, this term has preserved its archaic semantics and is listed in dictionaries as obsolete.

The study shows a gender differentiation in the naming of diseases. We determined that Yakut uses kinship terms referring to female figures, foreign borrowings, and nominations with exaggerated connotations are used as euphemisms. In the Vilyuysky, Olekminsky, Bulunsky, and Tattinsky districts, measles is called "maatyska" derived from the Russian word "mother". Scabies and rashes are referred to as "hotun" (Yakut: "lady") in the Ust-Aldan and Vilyuysky districts, "ed'ii" (Yakut: "elder sister") in the Toko district, and "ebe" (Yakut: "grandmother") in the Bulunsky district (Sleptsov, 2004-2018). The old settlers of Yakutia have a similar gender differentiation in disease nominations (in particular, female kinship terms). For example, fever as an illness was described as "kuma triplet" (Russian: "auntie shaking") (Druzhinina, 2007a, p. 243). It is important to emphasize that a grave illness was referred to as "kuma" (Russian: "auntie"), employing a kinship term like in the Yakut examples.

The vanished town of Zashiversk, once an outpost in Arctic Russia, existed from the mid-17th century (1639) and was located on the Indigirka River. In 1776, smallpox wiped out its population. Both Russians and Yukaghirs were afflicted. The disease spared no one. "Zashivorskaya pogan" (Russian: "Zashiversk plague") meaning "an acute, highly contagious viral disease; black smallpox" was an incurable and deadly illness that took the lives of many people, according to local accounts (Druzhinina, 1997, p. 120). The disease that ravaged Zashiversk was severe, and many died. The Zashiversk plague was also referred to as black smallpox (Druzhinina, 1997). The town's extinction is tied to a curse supposedly cast by a shaman who lost his only daughter. According to the legend, he cursed the town and its inhabitants forever. It is believed that black smallpox was unintentionally brought by an infected merchant, but the shaman had foreseen the disaster, claiming to have seen "sister grandmothers" (a term used by shamans in Yakutia for smallpox spirits) sitting on the branches. In the Sakha culture, euphemisms often replace direct nominations for grave illnesses. As a rule, these are kinship terms for women and borrowed words (especially Russian, such as "sestra" ("sister"), "matushka" ("mother"), "babushka" ("grandmother"), etc.).

In the Old Believer tradition, the expression "khudoi um u kogo" (Russian: "someone has a bad mind") denotes dark thoughts or madness (Druzhinina, 2007b, pp. 152-153). It is believed that gloomy or dark thoughts can lead to illness. The term "bolnoi mozgami" (Russian: "sick in the brain") is used to describe someone suffering from dementia (Druzhinina, 1997, pp. 28-29). Similarly, the phrase "nedovolnyi umom" (Russian: "displeased with their mind") refers to someone with a cognitive impairment (Druzhinina, 2007a, p. 223). The expression "byt ne v poryadke" (Russian: "to be not alright") is used to describe someone in a mentally deficient state (Druzhinina, 1997, p. 127). The phrase "pripadok берет" (Russian: "a seizure takes") was used by the Old Believers to describe epilepsy. For example: "He suffers from epilepsy – grandson was ill when the seizure took him this morning" (Druzhinina, 1997, p. 81).

The analysis shows many expressions related to mental disorders. These examples are drawn from the Nizhnekolymsky, Allaikhovsky, and Ust-Maysky districts. The loss of sanity is described as both a result of everyday trauma and an illness triggered by stress or fright. The mind is considered the baseline or the normal state. However, the mind can be lost, one can "fall off it, roll out, get shaken, or be shaken off" (Druzhinina, 2007b, p. 152). The phrase "um teryat" (Russian: "to lose one's mind") also means "to become insane": "There were three of them, fishing there. The wind, a storm came, they were seen struggling in the middle of the river. One young man got very scared and began to lose his mind" (Druzhinina, 2007a, p. 229).

The expressions "sdvinutsya s uma" (Russian: "to go mad") or "sdelatsya bez uma" (Russian: "to become mindless") describe a state of losing one's reason or engaging in reckless actions. An example could be a sick child who, after a severe fright, "became mindless" and turned extremely nervous (Druzhinina, 2007a, p. 222). Traditional beliefs suggest that the mind can become "evil" and "attack" a person, which is associated with dark thoughts. The phrase "khudoi um napal" (Russian: "an evil mind attacked") describes a state where loneliness makes someone think about death: "From loneliness, an evil mind attacked him: he decided to lie in the ground" (Druzhinina, 2007b, p. 149).

Mental illnesses can be seen as conditions that arise without obvious causes. The phrase "past k vetru" (Russian: "to fall to the wind") refers to a sudden mental disorder without an apparent reason (Druzhinina, 2007a, p. 183). Special attention was given to animals, particularly those that transmitted rabies, whose bites could lead to incurable diseases, instilling fear among people. A person bitten by a rabid dog was described as "umom nedovolnyi" (Russian: "displeased with one's mind"): "The rabid dog bit his arm, and now he is displeased with his mind" (Druzhinina, 2007b, p. 153).

In modern science, traditional Yakut medicine is studied by scholars who view Yakut healing as a cultural phenomenon. According to S.S. Protopopov (2022), the medicine of each people possesses unique and distinctive characteristics conditioned by the cultural and historical features of that group and its connection to the environment within its cultural habitat.

In Yakut beliefs, the causes of many illnesses, particularly severe ones, were attributed to evil spirits known as "abaahy". Similar concepts existed among the old settlers: "likh likhomatit kogo" (Russian: "an evil spirit is disturbing someone"). For example, "they say an evil spirit possessed the sorcerers and shamans. The evil torments them" (Druzhinina, 2013, p. 151). In the North, folk medicine was closely intertwined with magical rituals and shamanism. Shamans acted as adversaries of supernatural forces capable of harming a person's health.

In traditional Yakut medicine, rituals and magical actions were used in home treatment. In the everyday life of the Yakuts, ordinary people displayed certain magical and ritualistic skills. This knowledge was used to maintain the health of family members. Minor ailments were treated in this way, such as cough (using frogs), diarrhea among children (by warming the affected area in front of an open stove), small wounds (by applying fresh manure), etc.

To treat more serious and complex illnesses, the Yakuts turned to traditional healers. Massage therapists were called "ilbihitter". They were expected to have a "soft hand" and "know their craft" (Protopopov, 2022, p. 7). It was believed that massage improved blood circulation and muscle development. Healers also treated headaches. Among the "ilbihit", there were specialists known as "head adjusters" ("töbö tutaachchylar") who focused solely on treating headaches, particularly migraines. Diagnosis included measuring the head from the middle of the forehead, through the point above the ears, to the middle of the back of the head. Head massages were performed over 10-15 days, and the treatment course was repeated if necessary. Patients generally recovered after this treatment (Makarov, 1983, p. 54).

The study recorded an almost complete overlap in headache treatment between the Yakut people and the Russian old settlers, among whom magical practices have been preserved. During the 2018 dialectological expedition, such treatment was recorded in the village of Chokurdakh in the Allaikhovsky district. The process was described by Ya.Ya. Gorbunova who participated in the expedition and gathered the field materials.

The coincidence in euphemisms to describe illnesses among Russian Old Believers and the Sakha people may indicate the borrowing of healing methods. This confirms the hypothesis of mutual exchange of socially significant traditions between peoples living in the harsh conditions of the Far North.

The dialects of Russian Old Believers contain modern disease nominations but in an unusual context. For instance, the term "throat disease" is used to describe tonsillitis: "I often had a throat disease, it even bothered me in the summer. He suffers from throat problems every year; he has a throat disease too. I have even had a purulent throat disease" (Druzhinina, 2002, p. 80).

For referring to cold-related diseases, the expression "fever struck" (Druzhinina, 2002, p. 103) is used. The word "fever" is not a direct nomination for a cold but rather an initial metonymy: a cold causes a fever. The phrase "unhappy with the eyes" is used when someone has eye problems (Druzhinina, 2013, p. 171). The reasons for using "unhappy" in this context require further analysis.

Bleeding traditionally instilled fear in people: "to bleed out" (Russian: izoiti krovyu) meant to die from blood loss (Druzhinina, 2002, p. 112). This expression is equivalent to "bleed paint" (Russian: kraskoi izoiti) which refers to suffering from uterine bleeding or losing a significant amount of blood (Druzhinina, 2002, p. 114). Blood is metaphorically associated with paint, emphasizing the color intensity of the staining substance. In the euphemistic expression "bleed paint", the metaphor uses a substitute to replace the direct and taboo term for the frightening phenomenon of bleeding.

It is important to highlight the belief in the evil eye as a cause of illness, often referred to as "an evil eye" (Russian: khudoi glaz). The expression "lay eyes on someone" (Russian: glaz upal na kogo) has the superstitious meaning "casting the evil eye". In folk medicine, one of the archaic magical practices was spitting. Old settlers of Russkoye Ustye use the phrase "one should spit to ward off the evil eye" (Russian: sleduet poplevat ot sglaza). Spitting as a magical, protective, and defensive act (especially against the evil eye, curses, illness, and malevolent forces) was widely used by Slavs as a traditional method to repel evil and danger.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that in the traditional cultures of the Yakuts and the Russian old settlers of Yakutia, the word plays a paramount role in situations involving illness. This is evident in the special attitude towards "bad" or "ill-omened" words with magical properties. This fact confirms the preservation of archaic beliefs about the magical function of language in both cultures. We also determined a gender differentiation in the nominations of diseases typical of both cultures. Kinship terms referring to female relatives are used as euphemisms for serious illnesses.

The main limitation in interpreting the study results lies in the fact that the analysis was based on a limited linguistic dataset sourced from dictionaries and collected during expeditions. To provide a more comprehensive picture, it is necessary to expand the source base and conduct additional field research. This study ensures a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic features of illness perception in the traditional cultures of Yakutia and opens prospects for the exploration of the mutual influence between Yakut and Russian old settler cultures in the sphere of folk medicine and linguistic worldview.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in its substantial contribution to the theory of nomination, ethnolinguistics, and linguistic cultural studies. The practical value of the article is

determined by the potential use of its conclusions in lexicographic practice and courses on dialectology, ethnolinguistics, and intercultural communication.

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