

## **TYPES OF SPACE IN MARI VERBAL CHARMS**

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### **Abstract**

The main aim of this paper which constitutes a part of a separate research into images, symbols and values of Mari esoteric texts is to reveal and describe space types lying on the base of the system of spatial images and symbols in Mari verbal charms. 428 texts are the object of the investigation; the subject of study is their lexical level. The research results are based on the material from several field expeditions to the territories of compact Mari settlements in the Republic of Mari El as well as on the collections of texts published by local ethnographers and foreign scholars.

Mari verbal charms being ancient unique texts constitute a significant part of Mari ethnic culture. They also contain multilateral information on people's life, folk medicine, and ideas on supernatural. The first recording of Mari esoteric texts were carried out at the end of the 19th - the beginning of the 20th centuries. In the 20th century native ethnographers wrote down texts of charms accompanying the collection by the description of the ritual. Nevertheless there were no separate works dedicated to the study of different aspects of these texts. Particular interest to the collection, publication and research into text characteristics of Mari verbal formulas appears since the 1990s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, the analysis of scientific literature of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century shows that conducted research of charms is clearly not enough to present a complete picture of the complexity and versatility of this type of folklore genre. Therefore addressing the issue of esoteric texts and practices at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is explained by a number of lacunae in the study of religious and ritual texts, which demonstrate the indisputable need for comprehensive studies of an interdisciplinary nature. One of these gaps in the Mari folklore studies is the lack of investigation of vital data for the ethnic group about the spatial characteristics present in the texts of Mari verbal charms.

The space has geographical and climatic characteristics. Staying in one kind of space for a long period of time forms the character of the individual, and long-term living in the same landscape conditions can form ethnic space perception. The space perceived subjectively differs from the three-dimensional "physical" space, since it is much smaller. The volume of the perceived space, being an integral parameter, can be one of the important psychological factors in its perception. In this paper the stress is laid on the space types used in Mari verbal charms which create ethnic images and symbols of space. They are revealed with the help of the theory of system analysis (text is a systemic, hierarchically structured unit, consisting of a number of elements), which is supplemented by the use of factor (types of space) and statistical types of analysis. The algorithm of the research includes the eight steps the most important of which are four: a definition of space types; a calculation of the probability of space type (factor) usage (the preparation of the table);

ranking of factors in descending order of probability(the preparation of the diagram); summaries and conclusion.

**Keywords:** Mari verbal charms, space types, ethnic space perception, factor and statistical types of analysis.

### **3 INTRODUCTION**

#### **MARI VERBAL CHARMS**

Verbal charms represent one of the genres of Mari folklore. Spatial characteristics contained in them have not been studied in Mari linguo-culture and this fact makes it an important research target for scholars.

Mari verbal charms are unique texts which make up a significant part of ethnic culture as they contain versatile facts on people's life, folk medicine, and ideas on supernatural forces. Topicality of this research is also explained by the impact of globalization processes on the economic, political, cultural spheres of life of the Mari which lead to radical changes in traditional culture and thus – ethnic identity. Determination, description and recording of traditional images, symbols and values represented in folklore texts will contribute to the conservation of the core of Mari ethnic culture.

The main aim of this paper is to reveal, describe and classify types of space constituting a system of spatial images and symbols in Mari culture. The objects of the investigation are 428 texts from different collections; the subject of study is their lexical level.

The research tasks include: 1) determination of leading spatial types and their grouping; 2) their ranking in the widespread groups; 3) discovery of their role in the creation of spatial images and symbols. The obtained results are based on the analysis of the material collected during several field expeditions and borrowed from published folklore editions.

Scientific novelty of the paper is determined by the research object and subject as well as by methods and techniques applied to the verbal charms.

#### **3.3 History of the Research**

As is known the first recording of Mari esoteric texts were carried out by foreign scholars at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> - the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Beke, 1934; Paasonen, 1939; Porkka, 1895; Wichmann, 1931). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century during dialectological and folklore field expeditions native ethnographers wrote down texts of charms together with the description of the ritual procedures. Despite this fact there were no significant works devoted to the investigation of verbal charms in Mari culture. Distinct interest to the collection, publication and study of this folklore genre by scholars of various branches of knowledge has appeared since the 1990s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Petrov, 1991; Evseyev, 1994; Yuzo mutat utara, 1992; Yuzo oi, 1991).

By this time some style characteristics, the categories of informativity and time have been shown (Sebeok, Ingemann, 1956; Sebeok, 1974; Glukhova, 1997); practical advice from folk medicine contained in texts have been described (Petrov, 1991, pp.9-15); and later several provisions of the theory of probability implicitly present in Mari verbal charms have been determined (Glukhova, 2008, pp. 108-118);.

At the same time in the works of researchers of other ethnic cultures essential signs of verbal charms and spells have been determined and described; compositional principles of text construction have been revealed; "inclusion" of verbal formulas in the ritual has been investigated; pragmalinguistic classification of verbal charms have been done (Kõiva, 1990; Kõiva, 1996, pp. 12-35; Napolskikh, 1997, pp 141-144; Roper, 2003a, pp. 7-50; Roper, 2003b, pp.50-62; Misharina, 2011, pp. 155-172; Oral Charms in Structural and Comparative Light, 2011; Vladykina, 2011, pp.153-163; Timotin, 2013, pp.141-143, et al.).

However, the analysis of scholarly literature of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century shows that conducted research of charms is clearly not enough to present a complete description of the complexity and versatility of these folklore texts. Therefore addressing the issue of esoteric texts and practices at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is explained by a number of lacunae in the study of religious and ritual texts, which demonstrate the indisputable need for comprehensive studies of an interdisciplinary nature. One of these gaps in the Mari

folklore studies is the lack of investigation on the spatial characteristics present in verbal charms.

## 1.2. Spatial Characteristics in Verbal Charms

Space is a concept that is considered in various branches of knowledge. The length, the unity of discontinuity and continuity, the dimension are the three leading aspects of the total physical space in a rectangular coordinate system, thus, space is the boundless, three-dimensional extent in which events occur and objects have relative position. However, the space perceived subjectively by a person differs from the three-dimensional "physical" space, since it is much smaller.

The space has geographical and climatic characteristics. In the human mind an individual image of space perceived negatively or positively is formed with their help. And if staying in one kind of space for a long period of time forms the character of the individual, then long-term living in the same landscape conditions can form ethnic features of space perception.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century O. Spengler in "The Decline of the West» indicated the necessity of studying the ethnic perception of space. He pointed out, quite rightly, that every culture is in a deep symbolic connection " ... with the space in which and through which it seeks to be realized» (Spengler, 2000, p. 167).

Man's space perception (especially the volume of the perceived space) has essential limitations: 1) we perceive only that space which we see; 2) land surface cuts off the lower part of space with the spatial angle of 180 degrees; 3) the spatial angle is limited in height, width and depth as well as distance because of our sight organs; 4) space seemingly disappears if there are barriers (hills, forests, fog, clouds, smoke etc).

The volume of the perceived space, being an integral parameter, can be one of the important psychological factors in its perception. We pioneer the use of several parameters combination to show the *volume* of the perceived space. The parameters are: 1) topography (description of surface shape and other features); 2) type of space (an area /location, place) – a forest, a hill, a river, a village; 3) space/place attainability; 4) explored possibilities of space (it's knowledge); 5) space value; 6) organization of space (area organization).

The combination of topography, type of space and man's position in it creates the *openness* of perceivable space. In this paper the stress is laid on the *space types* used in Mari verbal charms which create ethnic images and symbols of space.

## 2. METHODS AND MATERIAL. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

At the initial stage of the research after defining the concept of "type of space", the statistical method was used, based on the registration of mention of the selected factors (types of space) in the texts without going into the study of their semantic content. As a hypothesis, the obvious idea was accepted that the more significant for a Mari nation any type of space is the more often it will be mentioned in these texts. Factor-semantic analysis within the framework of the system approach applied to the Mari verbal charms allowed us to identify the eighteen most common types of space, organized into four groups.

Thus, the methodological basis includes the use of a number of provisions of the theory of system analysis (text is a systemic, hierarchically structured unit, consisting of a number of elements), which is supplemented by the use of factor (types of space) and statistical types of analysis.

The algorithm of the research includes the following steps: 1) the process of reading texts with the aim of discerning types of space ('factors'), after applying methods of semantic investigation (componential and contextual types of text and lexeme analysis); 2) a compilation of the list of factors; 3) a distribution of the texts according to the factors; 4) an estimation of factor incidence; 5) a calculation of the probability of factor usage (the preparation of a table); 6) ranking of factors in descending order of probability(the preparation of a diagram); 7) singling out main, complementary, auxiliary and insignificant factors by a dichotomous method applying the principle of simple majority employed in mathematical statistics; 8) conclusions and summarizing.

Reliability and plausibility of the obtained results have been assured by abundant evidence in 428 texts, representing an objective material filtered through the nation's memory during hundreds of years.

This combination of techniques and methods applied to the Mari verbal charms allowed to distinguish the most significant four space types from eighteen ones (with the total of 1410 mention). They constitute 55.7% of all the references. We will discuss them in the following part of the paper.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. The classification of Mari verbal charms

Mari verbal charms are characterized by their explicit pragmatic goals. Functionally, according to their pragmatic aims, Mari charms are classified into the following classes: 1. Verbal charms healing: a) people, b) animals. 2. Verbal charms protecting from witchcraft aimed at: a) people, b) animals, c) plants and objects. 3. Counter verbal charms and verbal charms freeing from already inflicted evil on: a) people, b) animals, c) plants and objects. 4. Verbal charms changing relationship among people, spoiling or improving them. 5. Verbal charms bringing benefit or profit to: a) people, b) animals, c) plants. 6. Verbal charms casting evil spell on: a) people, b) animals, c) plants (Glukhova 1997, pp.15-16; Glukhova, 2017, pp. 36-52; Glukhova, et al. 2016, pp.1808-1812).

The analyzed material showed that among the six classes three groups dominate. They are represented by the texts of protective and therapeutic character, aimed at treatment of the diseases, protection and liberation from "witchcraft" and "spoil" (curse and jinx) as well as charms changing interpersonal relationship.

The content of the considered texts, the imaginary actions necessary to achieve the goals of the verbal formula, are developing in the space-time continuum. The space in the folk texts reflects reality and serves a background of events.

For this study, the most significant characteristics are the elements of the terrain (area relief) and geographical features, which are combined under one conventional term "types of space". They create the basis for images and symbols of mythological thinking and complement the list of the spatial archetypes of the Mari culture.

In order to determine the perception of spatial characteristics in the texts at the first stage of the study, the lexical composition of texts from various collections has been analyzed.

#### 3.2. The classification of space types groups

The most frequently used word denotes *natural water bodies* and its *parts*. It constitutes the most extensive group of space types. The classification follows the consecutive dichotomy technique based on the choice by simple majority. First, we calculated the percentage content of each space type in the total sum of factors. Then we added up all figures together beginning with the bigger one till they exceeded 50%. The biggest group was called "main". It embraces the following space types: *natural water bodies* and *their parts*; *human habitation*; *earth*; *sky*. They constitute 55.7% of all the space types mentioned. For the rest space types (factors) the same procedure described above was carried out. Thus, the auxiliary, additional and insignificant groups – eighteen space types all in all – have been revealed. The second group includes such space types as; 'bridge', 'field', 'cattle-shed', 'hill, mountain', 'church, cathedral' (24.3%). The third group is represented by such factors as 'forest', 'universe', 'ravine', 'fence', gates (12%). The following four space types close the list: 'threshing floor', 'barn', 'door', 'staircase' (8%). The results of the analysis of references to types of space are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Results of the Analysis of Space Type Mention and Frequency of Use in Mari Verbal Charms

№	Type of space	Frequency of use (% %)	№	Type of space	Frequency of use (% %)
1.	Natural water bodies and their parts	26,0	10.	Forest	3,9
2.	Human habitation (house, outbuildings)	14,3	11.	Universe	2,8
3.	Earth, land (soil, ground)	8,9	12.	Ravine	2,7
4.	Firmament, sky	6,5	13.	Fence	2,6
5.	Bridge	5,9	14.	Gates	2,1
6.	Field	4,8	15.	Threshing floor	2
7.	Cattle shed	4,7	16.	Barn	1,7
8.	Hill, mountain.	4,5	17.	Door	1, 2
9.	Church, cathedral	4,4	18.	Staircase	1,0

Representation of the tabulated data provides the basis for a further graphical representation in the form of a summarizing diagram. Each space type is depicted as a separate column, arranged in descending order,

with a height proportional to its frequency use. The research results which are shown in Table 1 are graphically represented in Figure 1. The article provides examples of the first group of space types.

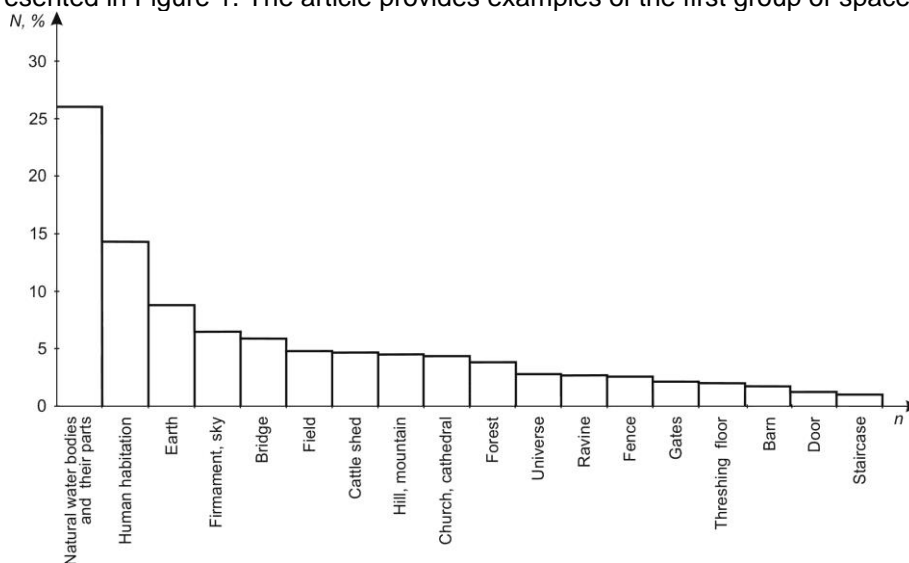


Fig.1. Summarizing Diagram of Space Types and Their Frequency of Use

### 3.3. The most frequently used space types

As is mentioned in the previous section the most frequently used word denotes *natural water bodies* and its parts. Analyzing the contextual use of the listed lexemes, we can offer the following observations. In various linguistic cultures 'water' is considered a concept as it combines lexico-semantic groups of diverse meaning, which include lexemes denoting the *nature of the movement of water*, *water conditions*, *forms of existence of water*, *water bodies* and *their parts*, as well as some other properties. The analyzed material showed that only the names of natural water bodies and their parts are mentioned in Mari verbal charms. They are: *the river*, *the sea*, *the lake*, *water of the river*, *the river bottom*, *the sea bottom*, *the bottom of the lake*.

#### 3.3.1. Water Bodies and Their Parts

Water is a kind of mediation environment where actions of some supernatural forces can occur as it is seen in the charms protecting from illnesses. Diseases in Mari culture as they are presented in the charms are associated with evil spirits. It is believed that rheumatism as a spirit lives in the water:

'77 türölö Büdysh kayen, 77 türölö küiyim kudalten, 77 türölö rožym šhüten küeshyže, tushan 77 türölö mengym keryn, 77 menge Buiyshto 77 türölö imym kerlyn ik shagat, ik minutyshto tache kechyn imyshke shogalyn, shüsken-muren kunam kertesh, tunam iže (tide ajdemym) kochkyn-jüyn kertshe! (Petrov, 1993, p. 83)

'Only then let the rheumatism eat-drink this man's body (inflict an illness on him) when it is able to get into 77 different waters, throw 77 different stones, make 77 holes in stones, to put 77 different poles in them, to put 77 different needles, get on these needles and sing and whistle for an hour and a minute!'

Water in the reviewed texts is the medium of imaginary actions of a person using verbal formulae with different purposes. In the following extract the sorcerer uses a text to evoke love, to charm ("Symystaryme"). The text contains an introductory part describing animals who will play a certain part in the imaginary process:

Kugu teryz vjd pundash gych orysho zhavam luktam, orysho kolyam luktam, orysho pyrysym luktam, orysho piyim luktam, orysho maskam luktam, orysho zverym luktam! (Glukhova, 1992-1997, p.13)

'From the bottom of the big sea I'll let out a rabid toad, I'll let out a rabid mouse, I'll let out a rabid cat, I'll let out a rabid dog, I'll let out a rabid bear, I'll let out a rabid beast.'

Water plays a crucial role against witchcraft:

Osh (shem, sur) vdydshötö osh (shem, sur) shargym shincha punzho dene kunam nalyn kertesh, tunam izhe shincha vochsho!(Yuzo mutat utara, 1992, p. 17)

'When a sorcerer can take a white (black, grey) pebble with his eyelashes in white (black, grey) water, only then let him be able to bewitch me!'

In the examined material the most typical overstated circumstances are connected with the *time* of specific actions and the *amount of conditions* to be carried out. Texts of such charms are composed on analogy, represented in linguistic terms by situational simile. In the following example a situational simile shows analogy in the character of going processes. Similes in such verbal charms show a sort of balance between processes and events and the desired goals.

<i>Shoshym v'yd kuze talyn shualen tolesh, tugak tudyn yochazhe pisyn lekshe!</i> (Yuzo oi, 1991, p. 23)	'How quickly the water flows in the spring, just as quickly let the baby be born!'
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People using charms think that the diseases or inflicted evil may be dissolved as the water foam disappears. This finishing part occurs in the majority of charms against diseases and witchcraft:

<i>Tenyz v'ud shon' kuze shula, tuge shulyzho!</i> <i>Nemda v'ud shon' kuze shula, tuge shulyzho!</i> <i>Yul v'ud shon' kuze shula, tuge shulyzho!</i> <i>Kugu Musko v'ud shon' kuze shula, tuge shulyzho!</i> (Glukhova, 2008, p. 6).	'As the foam of the sea water disappears, let it disappear! As the foam of Nemda water disappears, let it disappear! As the foam of the water of the River Volga disappears, let it disappear! As the foam of the water of the River Kugo Mushko disappears, let it disappear!'
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In addition, the most common use of the texts with the lexeme 'water' refers to a specific 'scene' where supernatural forces live and can act when being asked for their help. In the following verbal charm aimed at evoking love ("Pyzhyktyme") supernatural forces live in the middle of the sea. The introduction into the imaginary situation is as follows:

<i>Kastene vozam yumym om kumal, erdene vozam yumym om kumal, lektam omsash, lektam kapkash, kayen koltem shem tenyzesh. Shem tenyz v'yd pokshelne kum uzak-sholyak iya ulo: iktyzhe – kechyval iya, vesyzhe – kas iya, kumyshyzo pel i'yd iya.</i>	'In the evening I'll go to bed without praying to God, in the morning I'll get up without praying to God. I'll go out of doors, I'll go out of the gates, I'll go to a black sea. In the middle of the black sea there are three devil-brothers: the first is an afternoon devil, the second is an evening devil, the third is a midnight devil.'
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Then the charm user addresses these supernatural being one by one starting with a request to *afternoon devil*:

<i>Kechyval iya, myi tylech iodam, lyvanyn chonzhym, shymzhym-mokshyzhym shii kogonet dene, shii sravochet dene myiyn pelen symystaren pizhykte da tenyz v'yd pundash kugu stoiko ky iymake chyke. Kunam ik tychaltyshe v'yd kodde koshken komyshtalt lektesh, tunam izhe myi dechem oiyrten kayen kertshe. Tylech onchych ynzhe kert!</i>	'Afternoon devil, I ask you to turn Ivan's soul-heart and liver to me, lock them with a silver key, silver lock and put them into the sea-bed under the stone of the big pole. Only then let him be able to get rid of me when he can drain the sea to the last drop. Till then let him not be able to do that!'
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In the text there are two more appeals - to an 'evening devil' and to a 'midnight devil' - with the same contents. But to the sorcerer it is not enough: to make the assurance double sure there is another passage describing the final stage of the imaginary situation:

<i>Latkok iya, latkok satan, latkok shoo sravoch da latkok shorn'o sravochda ulo. Latkokyt da latkokyt kolo nylt liyesh, kolo nylshii sravochda dene kolo nyl shorn'o sravochda dene lyvanyn shymzhym-mokshyzhym myiyn veke symystaren pyzhykten nalza da kugu v'yd pundash kugu stoiko ky iymake namiyen chykyza. Kunam ik tychaltyshe kodde tenyz v'ydym koshten noltal kertesh, tunam izhe myi dechem oiyrten kertshe! Тылеч ончыч ынже керт! (Yuzo oi, 1991, pp.1-4)</i>	'There are twelve devils and twelve Satans, twelve silver keys and twelve golden keys. Twelve plus twelve is twenty four. With the help of twenty four silver keys and twenty four golden keys turn Ivan's heart and liver to me, take them and hide them in the big water, under the big stone of the large pole. Only then let him be able to get rid of me, when he can drain all the water to the last drop!'
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### 3.3.2. Human Habitation

Water is a kind of mediation environment Type of space which refers to 'human habitation' occupies the second place in the analyzed material. The study of the means of its representation in the verbal charms allows establishing the lexemes constituting this concept. They are: *pört* 'a house', *surt* 'a house with outbuildings, a household', *surt-peche* 'a house with outbuildings'. Representing an independent closed space type, limited from the external environment and controlled by man, the house is opposed to the outside world which might be alien to its inhabitants. It is a kind of means of protection. In the texts devoted to the prevention of diseases it is stressed that nothing can happen to a person in his own house.

<i>Myiyn surtysh-to-pörtyshtö shogen-shogash, shinchen-shinchash tylat ver uke!</i> (Petrov 1993, p. 76)	'In my house and yard there is no place for you either to sit or to stand!'
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In this group of verbal charms sorcerers should perform and complete a series of actions after which a person can fall ill or be bewitched.

In people's opinion, the enumeration of extremely difficult or unreal circumstances independent of each other prevents a person from all evil doings of sorcerers. One of the texts against witchcraft "*Surtyshko osal purymo dech*", for example, is based on such a hyperbolic situation which provides a chain of unlikely circumstances, impossible to realize, and which is aimed at preventing an undesired effect. Sorcerers should go to *silver (golden, copper, glittering)* mountains, or go deep into *black (white, grey, yellow)* sea, find different evil spirits, make them help to inflict diseases on people in *one minute*:

<i>Shem (osh, sur, narynche) tenyz pokshelan ik minutyshto kunam aidemym yshten kertseh gyn, tunam izhe osal tushman surtyshkyzho osalym purten kertshe, tylech onchych osalym purten ynzhe kert! Pah!</i> <i>Ulo tynya ümbalne mlandym chumyral kormyzhtalyn ik minutyshto kertesh gyn tunam izhe surtyshkyzho osalym purten kertshe!</i> (Yuzo mutat utara, 1992, p. 8-10).	'When a malicious sorcerer can create/make a person in the middle of the black (white, grey, yellow) sea out of the black (white, grey, yellow) sand in one minute, only then can evil enter the house! Till then let him not be able to do that! When the evil sorcerer in one minute can gather and keep in hand all the lands of the world, only then can evil enter the house!'
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### 3.3.3. Earth, Land

The third place on the diagram is occupied by the factor 'Earth, land'. In the verbal charm "*Kurymym nalme-shörymö*" 'Against taking a person's life' unrealistic conditions are set, the implementation of which is associated with such types of space as *land* and *sea*:

<i>Kunam loktyzo mlande kurymym nalyn kertesh, tunam izhe aideme kurymym nalyn kertshe! T'fu! T'fu! T'fu!</i> <i>Kunam loktyzo tenyz kurymym nalyn kertesh, tunam izhe aideme kurymym nalyn kertshe! T'fu! T'fu! T'fu!</i> (Evseyev, 1994, p.168]	'Only then a sorcerer can take this man's life when he is able to take the life of the earth. Pah! Pah! Pah! Only then a sorcerer can take this man's life when he is able to take the life of the sea. Pah! Pah! Pah!'
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The verbal charms preventing a beloved person from returning to a rival in love enumerate several conditions. But according to the circumstances expressed in the texts these incidents can only happen provided there is a chain of impossible to fulfill circumstances. Thus, texts of charms are based on the opposition between possible and hardly probable events.

<i>Shymlu shymlü turlö mlande ümbalne nylle ik prezan ushkal shke prezyzhym ik minutyshto lomyzh-lomyzh shke pomyskyzho kuze pogen nalesh, tugak tudynat shüm-mokshyzo ik minut zhapyshte tudyn mogyrsh saßyrnyzhe!</i> <i>Shymlu shymlü turlö mlande ümbalne nylle ik igan kombo shke igyzhym ik minutyshto chiyaklen-chiyaklen kuze pogen nalesh, tugak tudynat shüm-mokshyzo ik minut zhapyshte tudyn mogyrsh saßyrnyzhe!</i> (Glukhova, 1992-1997, pp. 6-7)	'Let him come back to her with all his heart-liver in a minute, as in a minute on 77 different lands 41 cows with an appealing moo gather their calves! Let him come back to her with all his heart-liver in a minute, as in a minute on 77 different lands 41 geese with an appealing cackle gather their goslings!'
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### 3.3.4 Sky

The concept 'Sky' closes the list of main space types. It occupies the fourth place on the diagram. In the text "Poshartysh shörymō" 'From bewitching' there is a description of improbability of several unlikely events which lead to a complete reduction of the possibility of any undesirable effect. Here is an example:

<i>Mlande gych kynelyn, kavashke shumeshke shii (shörtnö, chinche) shopsharym shogalten, ik chas-minut koklashte kavam pochyn puren ... tunam izhe pytaren kertshe!</i>	'Only then let him take my life, when rising from the ground, putting a silver (golden, glittering) ladder of solid wood and reaching the sky, in an hour-a minute is able to ascend to heaven!'
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One more example of the concept used in the text against toothache "P'yi korshtymo dech" is as follows:

<i>Loktyzo eng koremyse oshmam luktyyn, uesh veryshkyzhe pyshten kertesh gyn, kavashke k'yzhen, tylzym (kechym, shudyrym) niyalten kertesh gyn, tunam izhe .... p'yzhym lokten-puzhen kertshe! Tylech onchych ynzhe kert! (Yuzo mutat utara, 1992, p.50-51)</i>	'When the sorcerer can get the sand out of the ravine, put it back there again, having climbed to the sky, stroke /pat the moon (sun, star), only then let him make this person have a toothache! Till then let him not be able to do that!'
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## 4. CONCLUSION

The analyzed material in this paper shows that among the six classes of the pragmatic-semantic classification three groups are dominant. They are represented by protective, healing, liberating from 'witchcraft' charms together with the text influencing interpersonal relationship.

The componential analysis and interpretation of definitions help to distinguish separate lexemes denoting the area relief and geographical objects of natural and anthropogenic origin. Componential analysis complemented by statistical method based on the consecutive dichotomy technique produced a taxonomy of the four groups. Thus, the combination of chosen methods has made it possible to obtain the classification of the space types divided into main, auxiliary, additional and insignificant groups following the technique of choice by simple majority.

The main group embraces the following four types: 1) natural water bodies and their parts; 2) human habitation; 3) earth, land; 4) sky. Text analysis has shown that a symbolic meaning of the space types can be interpreted in the following way.

*Water* is the source of magical purification, it washes away and destroys all evil intentions, countering malicious magical practice. It also can heal wounds and diseases. At the same time water can 'harbor' magical creatures possessing supernatural power which can harm people.

According to the popular beliefs of the Mari people *the house* is a kind of the beginning of everything. In sacred beliefs homes have the same qualities as family sacred trees. On the one hand, the dwelling is considered an analogue of the axis connecting the earth with the cosmic world (through different Gods) and on the other, – the house is a sacred center protecting all members of the family living under one roof.

According to the mythological views *the earth* is one of the components of the universe. The Maris are an agricultural ethnic group therefore the earth has always been an object of worship as it is considered holy and pure. In the analyzed texts this concept has an additional meaning of the distant lands, territories which can be situated far away from the described events thus providing protection from all destructive consequences of the sorcerer's intentions and actions.

In the analyzed texts the interaction of man with *the sky*, the heavenly bodies is strongly emphasized. *The sky* is the place where gods live therefore it appears as an assistant to counteract evil purposes of the sorcerers.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The article has been written in the framework of the project financially supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (Grant № 18-412-120005p\_a).



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