

ADJECTIVES IN THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AND MARI LANGUAGES

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Abstract

Superstitions always played a very important role in the life of folks determining their behaviour, foreseeing future events, warning about something that can happen or prohibiting some actions which may bring damages and misfortunes. The article considers folk superstitions connected with the rites of passage in the English, Russian, and Mari languages. These rites include pregnancy and birth of a child, wedding, and funerals. All the rites of passage are studied from the point of view of three time periods. Authors analysed the superstitions, found adjectives, and grouped them according to their meaning. The analysis has revealed seven groups of adjectives: 1) adjectives naming colours, 2) adjectives describing appearance of people and things, 3) adjectives naming time, age, and distance, 4) adjectives naming condition, quality or features, 5) adjectives giving assessment, 6) adjectives naming material and origin, 7) adjectives talking about fate. The results of the studies had some conclusions. All adjectives naming colour are used in their traditional meaning. Adjectives naming human appearance talk about sides of the body, height, describe hair and skin. Adjectives naming time, age, and distance give the description of speed, frequency, duration, succession, age of people and things, and distance. Adjectives naming condition, quality or features describe alive or dead state, health, fullness, heaviness, purity, honesty, temper, and wealth. Adjectives giving assessment name something as good or bad, lucky or unlucky, happy or unhappy. Adjectives naming material and origin notice different materials connected with the names of trees, plants, metals or having animal origin. Adjectives talking about fate foresee something what will happen in the future. It should be noticed that a lot of adjectives have synonyms, antonyms, and even homonyms.

Keywords: superstitions, adjectives, English language, Russian language, Mari language, technology.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present study is aimed at making a classification and comparative analysis of adjectives found in the superstitions connected with such rites of passage as pregnancy, birth, wedding, and death in the English, Russian, and Mari languages. Such analysis will reveal universal and unique adjectives and descriptions in the languages under study.

The present work is one of the works of the authors devoted to the superstitions. They consider superstitions as verbalized units in the form of sentences which appeared a lot of years ago. The main function of them is to make predictions unexplained from the logical point of view (Fliginskikh, 2014 (2), p. 157). Superstitions always played a great role in the life of all peoples, especially in the events connected with different rites of passages (Fliginskikh, 2014 (1), p. 110). Superstitions predicted, protected, prevented, and forbade something. It is interesting to note that Mari superstitions are usually presented as a set of taboos called *ũöpö 'ojörö'* in the Mari language (Abukaeva, 2016 p. 85).

In the course of the analysis all the adjectives found were distributed among seven groups described below in detail: 1) adjectives naming colours, 2) adjectives describing appearance of people and things, 3) adjectives naming time, age, and distance, 4) adjectives naming condition, quality or features, 5) adjectives giving assessment, 6) adjectives naming material and origin, 7) adjectives talking about fate.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The linguistic analysis which is presented in this work is based on 230 English, 140 Russian, and 115 Mari superstitions. In the research to select the material for the purpose of study the authors used a continuous sampling method, registration and processing of the data received, observation, analysis of each group of adjectives, a comparative analysis of the superstitions, statistical method.

For the English superstitions: Black Cats and April Fools by H. Oliver, Strange and Fascinating Superstitions by Cl. De Lys, The Encyclopedia of Superstitions by R. Webster, Multilanguage Dictionary of Superstitions and Omens by D. Puccio, The Story of the World's Most Notorious Superstition by N. Lachenmeyer, Superstitions: 1,013 of the World's Wackiest Myths, Fables & Old Wives Tales by D.J. Murrell, Oxford Dictionary of Superstitions by I. Opie, M. Tatem, Omens and Superstitions by S.M. Brisher, Superstitions of Victorian England by E. Kouti, N. Harsa.

For the Russian superstitions: Everyday life of a Noble Class of Pushkin Epoch. Omens and Superstitions by E.V. Lavrentyeva, Superstitions or Prejudices by Yu.V. Shcheglova, Multilanguage Dictionary of Superstitions and Omens by D. Puccio, Black Cat with an Empty Bucket. Folk Omens and Superstitions by E.G. Lebedeva, articles in the collections of historical and ethnographical essays.

For the Mari superstitions: Ethnography of the Mari People by G.A. Sepeev, Mari Mythology: Ethnographic Reference Book by L.S. Toydybekova, Studies in Chermis: the Supernatural by Th.A. Sebeok, Fr.J. Ingemann, articles in the collections of historical and ethnographical essays

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All the adjectives found in the superstitions connected with the rites of passage in three languages were divided into seven groups according to their meaning. Let us consider each group in detail.

3.1 Adjectives Naming Colours

When talking about colours in the superstitions from the rites of passage, first of all we remember choosing the dress for a bride. For this purpose there is an English poem that may help future bride and which was taken as a basis for comparison: *Married in White, you have chosen right. Married in Grey, you will go far away. Married in Black, you will wish yourself back. Married in Red, you will wish yourself dead. Married in Green, ashamed to be seen. Married in Blue, you will always be true. Married in Pearl, you will live in a whirl. Married in Yellow, ashamed of your fellow. Married in Brown, you will live in the town. Married in Pink, you spirit will sink.* So, we can see that the poem suggest dresses of white and blue colours.

In the Russian tradition the white dress brought success, and it was prestigious, but only for the virgin brides: *Белое платье приносит удачу только девицам (White dress brings success only to the virgins).* That is why it is possible to marry in white only for the first time and choose another colour for the second wedding. Mari brides wore white dresses with a lot of embroideries and decorations. It is necessary to mention that a *white dress was a traditional Mari dress* as it was sewed from cloth of natural colours. The blanket that protected a bride from evil eye was made of nettle fibre which was also of light, almost white colour.

A traditional Russian dress was of red colour. Brides used red and similar colours for dresses, scarves and shawls made of wool and silk. This colour was chosen as a colour of blood and fire, it was a symbol of a marriage and a wedding night. At the same time it was an apotropaic colour. If the Russian wedding was urgent because of a delicate condition of a bride, *she tied a red ribbon under the dress.* So she could protect herself and her future baby from evil eye. The embroidery of white Mari dresses was made of *red woollen*

and silk threads and presented Mari ornaments with traditional protective symbols. Among the English superstitions we can mention the following: *Red ribbon, thread, or wool were often used to protect against supernatural beings, witches, or demons. Tying something red around a baby's cradle prevented fairies from stealing the child.*

As for the green colour in English culture it meant shame as green was a symbol of infidelity, the colour of trod green grass. Russian superstitions also prevent from wearing green for wedding. To the contrary in the Mari tradition green colour was associated with nature, with birth so a bride wore a green coat together with a dress.

Blue colour of a dress is mentioned only in English superstitions, but it is necessary to mention that blue colour is one of the most popular wedding colours in the British tradition. There is a saying about bride's clothes: *Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue, And a Sixpence in Your Shoe.*

Pink colour bringing sink spirit in the English poem was popular in the Russian tradition, especially in the XIX century as a symbol of love. Pink satin was put on the floor during the wedding ceremony, brides wore a golden cross on the pink ribbon: *Забывать розовый атлас под ноги – дурное предзнаменование (It was a bad omen to forget pink satin to put under feet.)*

Black colour for the wedding dress is also mentioned in the English language meaning the way back. But there are other superstitions with the word *black* connected with animals. They have positive meaning: *It was lucky if you met a black cat or a white horse when you were walking together. Черные тараканы предвещают счастье и быстрое замужество (Black cockroaches predict happiness and quick wedding).* But mostly black colour has a negative meaning as it was associated with evil spirits and death. In the Mari folklore everything evil and scaring was associated with black colour: *шем керемет (black evil spirit), шем ия (black devil), упи леведын шем ия куд (devil's hands covered with black hair).* In Russian: *Черный ворон на крыше – к смерти в доме (Black raven on the roof meant death in the house).* In English negative meaning of black colour is also popular: *It's best not to bury any female relatives in black; otherwise, they will come back to haunt the family. Dreaming of a black candle is another omen of death or illness.*

As for the last superstition with word *candle* it is necessary to mention other superstitions connected with candle flame. Blue colour of candle flame is always a bad omen: *If a candle flame turns blue, someone is about to die. Синее пламя свечи – к покойнику или к морозам (Blue candle flame means death or frost).*

Grey, yellow, pearl, and brown colours are found only in one English superstition mentioned above.

The analysis shows that black and white colours are dominant for the English, Russian, and Mari languages, which is also proven by other studies of idiomatic phrases (Fliginskikh, 2016, p. 113; Glukhov, Glukhova, 2012, p. 61; Yakovleva, 2015, p. 40).

3.2 Adjectives Describing Appearance of People and Things

The adjectives of this group give a description of the appearance of people and different things, including size.

Lexical opposition 'right-left' is wide-spread in the English and Russian languages. The examples belong to the group of superstitions defining baby's gender. The right side usually means a boy, the left one – a girl: *If an unborn child kicks on the right side of the womb this is a sign it is a boy; while on the left it is a girl. Если ребенок трепещет в правом боку - будет мальчик, если в левом – девочка (If a baby is moving in the right side, it's a boy; the left side means a girl).* The same meaning is attributed to the lexical opposition 'acute-flat' in the Russian language: *Если живот острый, то ожидают мальчика, если же плоский, то – девочку (If a woman has an acute abdomen, she is expecting a boy, if the abdomen is flat, she is expecting a girl).*

Lexical opposition 'small-big' is found in the English and Mari languages. English has two synonyms used depending on the noun: *little one's body, small coin.* Mari word *узи* (*small*) is present in the apotropaic, or protective, superstitions: *Кусеньшке аралтышлан чеснок пуйым але узи шоганым пыштеным (They put a clove of garlic or a small onion into the pocket).* Mari word *кузу* (*big*) is found in one Mari fortunetelling: *Кӧ колӧн онгыр йӱк, кузу ала сӱан вучена (Who hears the sound of bells, she shall expect a big wedding).*

Lexical opposition 'tall-short' is also found in the English and Mari languages. These words describe the height of a future spouse: *Young men could pull up plants, such as cabbage stalks, and tell by size whether their future wife would be tall or short. Пошто йудым пу артана гыч пу комылям налыным. Кудо удыр*

кучык пу комылям налеш, узи капан качылан лектеш. Кужу пу комылям налше – кузу капанлан (At the Christmas night girls take a log from a woodpile. That who takes a long log will marry a tall man. That who takes a short log will marry a short man). As we can see, Mari words coincide with the word forms from the previous group.

The last Mari example also includes one more lexical opposition: 'long-short' (кучык-кужу). Word *long* is also found in the English superstition describing hair: *Until the latter half of the nineteenth century people let little boys grow beautiful long curls so as to confuse Devil and avert the evil eye* and Russian superstitions with positive meaning: *Чем длиннее свадебное платье, тем длиннее супружеская жизнь* (The longer the wedding dress is, the longer the married life is).

Mari word *күкшүрак* (*higher*) is used in the combination with word *кунде* (*bread*): *Кудо йыргешке кунде моло деч күкшүрак да сайрак кўалтын, тудын лўмжым пуэным* (A child was given a name of a bread that was higher and better than others)

Lexical opposition 'bold-opulent' describes people hair and is present in the Russian and Mari languages: *Нельзя стряхивать хлебные крошки со стола – не будет денег или выйдешь замуж за лысого* (You shall not shake bread crumbs off the table – you will have no money or marry a bold man). *Если постричь годовалого ребенка наголо, то волосы у него вырастут густыми* (If to cut one-year-old-child's hair, the hair will grow opulent). *Вута гыч кондымо чыве, гын чыве чунгалеш ошмам - пелаше чара вуян, упдымо* (Girls took a hen in the house, put on the floor, and looked. If it picked sand, a husband will be bold).

Lexical opposition 'beautiful-pitted' is found in the Russian language, where word *рябой* (*pitted*) means 'ugly': *Если кто-то заметил матери, что младенец красив, то мать должна три раза облизать языком лицо младенца, сплевывая каждый раз* (If somebody mentioned to a mother that a baby is beautiful, the mother shall lick baby's face with her tongue three times spitting every time). *Девушка нечисто моет пол – жених будет рябой* (If a girl washes the floor unclean, her groom will have a pitted face). In the English language there are synonyms to word *beautiful*: *handsome, pretty*: *If the water was poured over a tree at the time of flowering, it was considered particularly good for the child who would grow to be exceptionally beautiful.*

3.3 Adjectives Naming Time, Age, and Distance

The first lexical opposition 'fast-long' has a lot of synonyms for the first element in the Russian language used in different word combinations: *быстрые роды* (*quick childbirth*), *скорая смерть / вашке колен / fast death*, *срочная свадьба* (*urgent wedding*), *близкая смерть* (*impending death*), *недолгое замужество / марлан лекмешкыже кўчык* (*brief marriage*). At the same time word *близкий* (*impending*) is used in the word combination *близкий человек* (*close relative*). Word *long* is used in the word combination *long life*: *When whippoorwills sing together at night making the sound "hohin, hohin", one should reply "No!", if the birds continue their singing, it means a long life. Чтобы семейная жизнь молодоженов была долгой и счастливой, жених должен перенести невесту через мост* (To have a long and happy marriage life a groom shall carry a bride over the bridge).

Lexical opposition 'frequent-rare' is present in one Mari superstition predicting child's life: *Шочшо азан чўкыдын кычкырыме йўкшō писе колымашым сулен, а шועн кычкырыме йўкшō – кужу ўмырым* (Frequent crying of a newborn predicted fast death, rear shouting meant long life).

Words *long-living* and *sudden* are presented as an opposition as their contextual meaning is opposite: *Кмо родился в новолуние – живуч и долговечен* (That born in the dark of the moon is die-hard and long-living). *Чимарий-влак лўмым пуымо йўлам кок гана эртареныт, уке гын, аза кенета кола гын, лўм деч посна кодын кертеш* (Mari pagans gave a name to a newborn two times in order it was not left without a name in case of a sudden death).

Words *successive* and *future* are considered synonymic as they have the meaning of what is going to happen in the near or not very near future: *If the sound is repeated three times in the night, or on three successive nights, it is even more ominous. If you are a single woman, sleeping with a piece of wedding cake under your pillow will bring a dream of your future husband.*

Lexical opposition 'new-old' is spread in all three languages. Word *new* is used with different objects: *new clothes / новая одежда / у вургем, new moon, new road, новый дом* (*new house*), *новая семья* (*new family*), *новая метла* (*new broom*). It is interesting to compare English and Russian word matches when Russian equivalents do not have word *new* in the word combination: *new baby / новорожденный, new arrival – появление новорожденного*. Russian word *молодой* (*young*) is used as a homonym in the word combinations meaning newly married: *Если после свадьбы муж занесет молодую жену в дом на руках,*

то будет «носить ее на руках» всю жизнь (If after wedding a groom bring a bride into the house in his arms, he will carry her in his arms for the whole life). If to talk about the age, there are also examples in the Russian and Mari languages. Russian word младший (younger) is found in the word combination младший брат невесты (younger brother): Изъятие девичьей красы достигалось путем «продажи косы» младшим братом невесты (Taking out of a bride was achieved by 'selling a braid' by a younger brother of a bride). Mari words рвезе, самырык (young) also mean age: Шонго чыве логалеш гын, лийшаш пелашет илалше лиеш, самырык – пелашет рвезе (If a girl catches an old hen, a husband will be old; if a young hen, he will be young).

Words old / старый / шонго, илалше are used for the old maid in the English language, clothes in the Russian language, and age in the Mari language: If she was to die an old maid, she would see a coffin or hear a bell. Старые лапти привязывали к саням, в которых ехала венчаться невеста (They tied old straw shoes to the sled where a bride was sitting going to the wedding ceremony). Шонго чыве логалеш гын, лийшаш пелашет илалше лиеш, самырык – пелашет рвезе (If a girl catches an old hen, a husband will be old; if a young hen, he will be young)

In the English language there is one adjective meaning distance: Married when March winds shrill and roar, your home will lie on a distant shore.

3.4 Adjectives Naming Condition, Quality or Features

Lexical opposition 'alive-dead' is found in the Russian superstitions about child birth which forbid some actions in order not to harm to him/her: Если хотите, чтобы малыш родился живым и здоровым, не покупайте ему приданое заранее (If you want a baby is born alive and healthy, do not buy clothes for it beforehand). Сама беременная не должна ребенку приданое готовить, не то он мертвым родится (A pregnant woman shall not prepare clothes for a baby herself, or it will be born dead). English and Mari superstitions have only one element from this lexical opposition: The direction of the dog's tail points out where the dead person lies. Олыкмарий-влакын колышо лумеш агытаным але чывым руалме йулашт уло, колышо илыше-влакым вес туняшке ынже нангай манын эртареным (Meadow Mari have a custom of sticking a cock or a hen in honour of a deceased as a ransom in order he will not come to take those who are alive to kingdom come).

Lexical opposition 'sick-healthy' is also more popular for the Russian superstitions. Word больной (sick) has such synonyms as хилый (feeble), вялый (weakly), болезненный (sickly): Если ребенок родился головой на юг – хилый, вялый, болезненный. Если ребенок родился головой на север – всегда будет здоров (If a baby was born with its head to the South, it is feeble, weakly, and sickly. If a baby was born with its head to the North, it will always be healthy). Mari superstitions talking about rituals to bring a baby health, happiness, and wealth include word таза (healthy): Вара йочам пиалан да таза кушшо манын тулыпш пыштеным (Then a baby was put into the sheepskin with wishes to grow happy and healthy). English superstitions include word sick talking about dying people who could be healed: If a child already been sick, putting a red ribbon on it would stop sickness from returning.

Lexical opposition 'difficult-easy' in the Russian and Mari languages predict baby delivery or the life of a definite person or people in the whole: Чтобы роды были легкими и быстрыми, в доме роженицы нужно открыть все форточки (To make delivery easy and fast it is necessary to open all windows in the house of a woman in labour). Эрдене шочын гын – неле илыш вуча, кастене шочын гын – куштылго (Birth in the morning meant difficult life, birth in the evening meant easy life.)

Lexical opposition 'full-empty' is indicative for the English superstitions, but the second element is present in the Russian language as well. Words empty / пустой are found only in the superstitions about an empty cradle, and Russian superstitions have a negative meaning while the English ones are mostly positive: If you rock an empty cradle, you will rock a new baby into it soon. Пустую колыбель нельзя качать (It is forbidden to rock an empty cradle). Word full is used for children's character, while its synonym plentiful is used for the life of newly married: Tuesday's child is full of grace; Wednesday's child is full of woe. Happiness and success in the marriage should be as plentiful as the shards of a broken glass.

Lexical opposition 'true-unfaithful' is talking about relations between a man and a woman: If you drop scissors, it means your lover is being unfaithful to you. Перевязывание рушником – знак мира и верной дружбы (Binding with a towel is a symbol of peace and true friendship).

Lexical opposition 'sweet-bitter' talks about relations of a husband and a wife: Married in July with flowers ablaze, bitter-sweet memories in after days. Если перед свадебной церемонией жених и невеста съедят украдкой шоколадку, их жизнь будет сладкой (If a groom and a bride eat chocolate before the

wedding ceremony on the quiet, their life will be sweet).

Another lexical opposition 'facile-impetuous' is talking about the character of a future spouse. The elements of the opposition have different synonyms in the three languages: in English *quick-tempered*, *jealous*, in Russian *послушный* (*obedient*), in Mari *кредалшан* (*quarrelsome*), *сўмсыр* (*stubborn*), *вурседылшан* (*grumpy*): *A July bride will be handsome, but a trifle quick-tempered. Если до конца брачной церемонии невеста успеет наступить на ногу жениху, то муж выйдет послушный и покладистый* (If a bride manages to step on groom's foot before the end of a wedding ceremony, a husband will be obedient and facile). *Агытан порт мучко оным кадыртен коштеш, чывым чунга гын, мриет кугешныше, койышан лиеш* (If a cock is walking around proud and pinching a hen, a husband will be impetuous).

Lexical opposition 'rich-poor' is often found in the superstitions about birth of children and in predictions of life in marriage: *Marry in September's shrine, your living will be rich and fine. Нельзя стричь ребёнка до года — вырастет бедным* (Do not cut baby's hair before one year old or it will grow poor). *Удыр пушкыдо кидым шижын – поян качылан, чара йушто кид – нужналан* (If a girl felt a hairy hand, it meant a rich groom; a cold bold hand and a poor groom).

The last Mari predicting superstition also includes lexical opposition 'hairy-bold' (*пушкыдо- чара*) which coincides with lexical opposition 'rich-poor' according to the sympathetic magic: no hair, no money. The same superstition has word *йушто* (*cold*) which is also present in the English superstition describing future bride's character: *A November bride will be liberal and kind, but sometimes cold*. Word *poor* in the English language also has a meaning 'weak' in the word combination *poor health*: *If a newborn is named after a close relative who has died, the baby will have poor health all his life*.

The rest adjective of the group do not have antonyms found in the superstitions under study.

Word *infertile* / *бездетный* / *шувырчык* is present in superstitions of all three languages giving advice for men how not to become infertile and to women how to stop being infertile: *An infertile woman can become pregnant if she wraps her husband's belt seven times around a tree. Мужчина, пристрастившийся к конопле, может остаться бездетным* (A man addicted to hemp may become infertile).

Word *strong* / *сильный* is present in the superstitions about children: *Babies born when the moon is new were thought to be destined to a life of failure or to grow to be particularly strong. Если во время рождения ребенка погода бурная, сильный ветер, гремит гром, жизнь ребенка будет полна бурь и тревог* (If the weather is stormy, there is strong wind, and it thunders during baby delivery, its life will be full of storms and worries).

Word *single* is often found in the English superstitions about future marriage, pregnancy, and death: *If you are a single woman, sleeping with a piece of wedding cake under your pillow will bring a dream of your future husband. A single swan seen on a lake or elsewhere was believed a precursor of death. Words strange, blow-out, gay* are found in the superstitions about wedding and child's character: *A man marrying a widow shall arrange a blow-out wedding to remove the phantom of the first husband. Words damp, open, natural, accidental* were found in the superstitions about death forbidding some actions or predicting death: *Never cry over a child's corpse for it will have no one to change its damp shroud*. The rest adjectives describe the character of a child or a future spouse: *brave; tidy; lazy; prudent; good tempered; affectionate; tender; loving; inconsistent; forceful; well-meaning; agreeable; practical; discreet; affable; extravagant*, for example: *A January bride will be a prudent housekeeper, and very good tempered*.

Words *ложный* (*false*) and *немой* (*dump*) are present in the Russian superstitions forbidding actions in relation to a baby: *Зеркало убирала подальше от младенцев, чтобы не испугались и немыми не остались* (The mirror was taken away from babies in order they would not become afraid and dump). Word *дружный* (*friendly*) is found in the superstitions about a future family: *Чтобы семья была дружной, молодожены должны сидеть за свадебным столом на одной скамье, а не на стульях* (To have a friendly family the newlyweds shall sit at the wedding table on one bench but not on the chairs). Word *готовый* (*ready*) is met in the superstition about funerals: *Внесли готовый гроб в комнату с крышей, не оставив ее в сенях – готовится близкий кандидат* (To bring a ready coffin into the room not leaving its lid in the hall, there is a new candidate).

Word *йылгыжше* (*shining*) is present in the Mari superstitions about a newborn when the guests said the following words: *Тек тыйын ончыкпык илышет ший гай волгыдо да йылгыжше лиеш* (Let your future life be bright and shining as silver).

3.5 Adjectives Giving Assessment

The adjectives of this group give an assessment to different things, such as people's character, future life, attitude, and others.

Lexical opposition 'evil-kind' is not even in the composition and quantity of examples. English word *kind* describes future wife: *A November bride will be liberal and kind, but sometimes cold.* Russian word *добрый* (meaning *kind/good*) characterises people who can protect: *Землица с семи могил добрых людей спасает от всех бед* (*Soil from seven graves of good people saves from all misfortunes*). English word *evil*, its Russian equivalents *злой* (*evil*), *дурной* (*bad*), and Mari equivalent *аяр* (*evil*) are present in such word combinations as *evil eye / злой глаз, дурной глаз, evil spirits / злые духи / аяр албаста, дурное предзнаменование / аяр знак (bad omen), evil forces / аяр силы, дурное воздействие (bad influence), аяр ял (evil people).*

Lexical opposition 'happy-unhappy' is found in the superstitions about birth and wedding: *An engaged couple refuses to be photographed together, which means that the marriage will be unhappy.* *Дети, родившиеся под Новый год или под Рождество, будут счастливы* (*Children born on the New Year or Christmas Eve will be happy*). *Суан кечын лум вочмаш ончыкылык ылышын пиалан да улан лийшашым ончыктен* (*Snowfall on the wedding day was a happy symbol for the engaged*).

Lexical opposition 'good-bad' is found in the combination with word *luck* (*good luck – bad luck*), which is synonymic to the lexical opposition 'lucky-unlucky'. All examples are found in the English superstitions about birth and wedding where they warn, prevent or direct: *Baptisms held after weddings were considered very lucky. The most unlucky day of the year to be born was 28 December.*

Words *successful / успешный* are present in the superstitions about advantageous marriage: *If you dream of pearls, you will have a very successful marriage.* *Под порог кладут незапертые замки, а когда жених с невестой их перешагнут, защелкивают их, ключ бросают в воду, чтобы свадьба была успешнее* (*Unlocked locks are put under the doorstep; when a groom and a bride step over it, the locks are locked and the key is thrown into the water to make marriage more successful*).

Words *dangerous / лудыкшылан* are indicative for the preventing superstitions talking about dangers for children, a mother or close relatives of a deceased: *It was dangerous to talk about a future baby before its birth as the conversation could attract fairies which can steal it.* *Колышо енын капшым мушмо вудым лудыкшылан шотленым, садлан сурт деч умбакырак, ен коштыммо верыш ястареным* (*Water used for washing the deceased was considered to be dangerous, that is why it was poured far from the house where people would not step*).

Word *plaintive* is found in one superstition about child's death: *Should a robin be seen perching on the top of a house while singing its plaintive song, it is a sure sign that a baby in the house will die.*

3.6 Adjectives Naming Material and Origin

Adjectives of this group name different materials or origin of a thing. The thing may have plant- or animal-based origin, may be made of metal or other material.

English words *ash* and *sage* are found in the fortunetelling superstitions: *An ash leaf with nine leaflets had to be searched for, and, when found, placed in the seekers bosom* (this method helps to find a betrothed). Russian and Mari words showing plant-based origin *березовый / куэ (birch), рябиновый / пызле (rowan), шопке (asp), льняной (flax), нуж (nettle)* are used in the protecting superstitions: protection of a newborn with a rowan besom, protection of a bride from an evil eye with the help of a cover made of nettle fibre, birch besom and flax tow in the coffin: *Жители Поволжья использовали стружки, льняную кудель и листья от березового венника, сверху все это покрывали холстом* (*Volga region inhabitants used chips, flax tow and birch leaves, then covered with linen*). *Олыкмарий-влак шочшо азам чер дечын аралаш манын пуйто пызле выньык дене мончаште кыреным* (*Meadow Mari sweated out a newborn with a rowan besom to protect it from illnesses*). Asp was thought to be a powerful amulet helping to avoid everything evil or undesirable, including undesirable pregnancy: *Темла азам ышташ огыл манын, шопке тоя дене азақпчыкым купышто тоеным* (*Asp stake was used to sink placenta in the bog not to become pregnant any more*).

Words *woollen / шерстяной / меж, silk / шелковый / порсын* are usually found in the Russian and Mari superstitions describing groom and bride's clothes as woollen and silk material was considered to be protective: *Для этих целей применялись как шерстяные, так и шелковые платки и шали* (*For these purposes both woollen and silk scarves and shawls were used*). *Тур рурлаш шукыж годым шемалге*

йощкар шуртым кучылтыным, нунуыжо меж гыч але порсын гыч ыштыме лийным (Embroidery was made with mostly red woollen or silk threads). Besides silk and wool threads were used in the funeral rituals of the English and the Mari: *It is essential to tie the feet of the corpse with string or woollen thread as soon as laying-out is completed.*

Lexical opposition 'bare-fur' is found in the Russian superstitions predicting poor or rich life of a newly married couple: *Голые предметы, используемы во время свадьбы, продуцировали такую же «голую жизнь» новобрачным (Bare things used during wedding produced the same 'bare' life to the newlyweds). Особое значение имела меховая одежда (Fur clothes had a special meaning).*

Adjectives naming metals are mostly found in protective superstitions: *silver / серебряный / ший, iron / железный / куртньо, металлический (metal), золотой (golden).* In all three languages silver coins protected their owners or predicted rich life, iron objects protected from evil spirits. This meaning was for any metal things: *Silver or iron amulets and communion wafers were once placed in a baby's crib and sometimes a knife was tied to the crib as well as red string, a traditional protection against witches. Моло кундемлаште шинчавочмо деч йоча-влаклан еургемышкышт ший оксам ургеным (In other districts they sewn silver coins on children's clothes to protect from evil eye).* Russian word железный (iron) also has negative meaning 'difficult': *Ни жениху, ни невесте не стоит надевать на свадьбу железные украшения или украшения из камня, а то жизнь будет тяжелой и полной слез (Neither groom nor bride shall wear iron or stone jewelry or their life will be difficult and full of tears).* Word золотой (golden) is found in the Russian language in the meaning 'bringing wealth': *Невеста должна положить в башмаки золотые монеты (A bride shall put golden coins in her shoes).*

Words naming animals are found in the English and Mari protective superstitions: *wolf, маска (bear), ур (squirrel): A necklace made of wolf teeth was a good protection for a child. Ожно аралтыш семын коштыммо маска чапам кучылтыным (The Mari used a bear paw as an amulet).*

In the English language there is a word *paper* naming material: *Today paper confetti, birdseed, or even flower petals or dried lavender are thrown.*

In the Russian language we have found words *жемчужный (pearl)* and *земляной (earth)* having negative meaning: *Чтобы не проливать слезы в семейной жизни, невеста не должна надевать на свадьбу жемчужные бусы (In order not to shed tears in her marriage life a bride shall not wear pearl beads for her wedding). Беременная не должна переступить через земляные плоды (свеклу, картофель): может случиться выкидыш (A pregnant woman shall not step over the earth yield (beetroot, potato): there could be a miscarriage).*

3.7 Adjectives Talking about Fate

This group characterise the superstitions of the English language.

There are a number of adjectives with the meaning of fate as something that does not depend on people's will but depend on the concurrence of circumstances: *imminent, mortal, apparent, obvious, ominous, immune.* That is why all such superstitions are connected with death: *If a magpie were to sit on a roof or fly repeatedly around a house making its chattering sound, it meant the imminent death of a family member. Picture falling off the wall for no apparent reason might foretell a coming death.*

4 CONCLUSION

1) All adjectives naming colour are used in their traditional meaning. Among colour adjectives the most popular colour is black which underlines gloomy nature of superstitions.

2) Adjectives naming human appearance talk about sides of the body, height, describe hair and skin. The most wide-spread adjective pair is 'right-left' as it is present in all three languages and is related to baby's gender. Most of the adjectives describing appearance are connected with size.

3) Adjectives naming time, age, and distance give the description of speed, frequency, duration, succession, age of people and things, and distance. Among them the most wide-spread oppositions are 'fast-ling' and 'new-old'. They are spread in three languages including a number of synonyms and even homonyms, especially in the Russian language.

4) Adjectives naming condition, quality or features describe alive or dead state, health, fullness, heaviness, purity, honesty, temper, and wealth. This group is much diversified in three languages as of the composition of its content.

- 5) Adjectives giving assessment are spread in all three languages, but most of them are presented in the English language, which gives a detailed assessment to different events. Such adjectives name something as good or bad, lucky or unlucky, happy or unhappy.
- 6) Adjectives naming material and origin notice different materials connected with the names of trees, plants, metals or having animal origin. Among them there are a lot of apotropaic ones which describe things protecting people from evil spirits. The biggest number of examples belongs to the Mari language which shows attitude of the Mari people to evil spirits and evil eye.
- 7) Adjectives talking about fate foresee something what will happen in the future and are indicative for the English language.

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