

STYLE MARKERS IN MARI PRAYERS

Natalia Glukhova^{1*}, Tatiana Vladykina², Valerii Maksimov³, and Galina Kadykova⁴

¹Prof. Dr., Mari State University, The Russian Federation, gluhnatalia@mail.ru

² Prof. Dr., Udmurt Federal Research Center of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, The Russian Federation, tgvladykina@mail.ru

³Assist. Prof. Dr., Mari State University, The Russian Federation, sernur@rambler.ru

⁴Assist. Prof. Dr., Mari State University, The Russian Federation, kadukova_galina@mail.ru

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The main aim of this article is to define markers of style and their functions in Mari prayers of the traditional religion. This goal dictates the choice of methods. A linguostylistic analysis of the language levels of the text, which hasn't been applied to the Mari folklore texts before, is used here. The outcomes of componential and contextual analyses are also shown in the article. The linguostylistic description and the componential analysis yield some additional results which reveal semantic classifications of the lexis of the analyzed prayers as well. These semantic classifications showed the selectivity of this genre of Mari folklore. A prayer is a solemn ritual request for something for those who pray, for their relatives, people of the community. It is an appeal to Gods for their divine protection from any evil. At the same time a prayer is a certain formula, a fixed, practically unchangeable text which contains these requests, appeals, petitions. Like any other text, it is composed according to certain rules and regularities. It has quite obvious communicative goals. When worshippers address themselves to Gods, praying is a reasonable act for them because they address creatures who are like themselves (in their opinion), but much more powerful. When worshippers appeal to the souls of their deceased relatives, it is nothing else than an attempt to continue the communication with them. In both cases it is relevant to convince "the interlocutors" of the frankness of the feelings and the compelling necessity of the petitions and requests. The goals of the worshippers are: 1) to receive a certain amount of good; 2) to be safely protected from evil. The aims are formulated in the texts by expressive means and stylistic devices forming style markers in Mari ethnic prayers.

Keywords: Mari ethnic prayer, linguostylistic analysis, text, formula, communicative goals

1. INTRODUCTION

This article shows some linguistic features of a sacred part of Mari culture, its ethnic belief tradition, namely the classification and stylistic characteristics of Mari ethnic prayers. Mari prayers are considered an integral part of the national spiritual culture, a leading constituent of its sacred domain (Sebeok, Ingemann, 1956). At the same time at the end of the 90s the tradition of praying to different Gods and spirits had started to revive after a long period of 'militant atheism' in the country. A revived 'neo-heathenism' is based on polytheistic beliefs, traditions of nature worship and ancestors cult and is a living cultural phenomenon which can be observed today (Glukhova, 1995, pp. 60-66).

This research has been carried out with the help of methods and techniques based on the

pragmalinguistic and linguostylistic approaches applied to 110 texts from different sources. The greater part of the analyzed prayers consists of the texts compiled by Finnish and Mari scholars at the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth centuries during their expeditions to the regions of Mari compact settlements. Many of these texts were published only at the end of the XXth century (Evseyev, 1994, pp.110-168; Kugu sorta, 1992; Popov, 1991; Porkka, 1895).

The majority of the Mari population lives in the Republic of Mari El. It is one of the subjects of the Russian Federation. The Republic is situated in the European part of Russia in the basin of the middle flow of the Volga River. The territory of the Republic of Mari El comprises 23.3 thousand square kilometers and stretches for 150 km from north to south and for 275 km from west to east. According to the results of the latest population census carried out in 2010, out of 571 382 Maris in Russia 290 900 live in the Republic of Mari El. Despite the influence of various ethnic groups during centuries of interethnic contacts the Mari people succeeded in preserving their cultural traditions and rich folklore. They have also remained faithful to their religion. Therefore, sacred texts – Mari ethnic prayers – are of considerable interest in the study of the Mari language and spiritual culture today.

This research has been carried out with the help of methods and techniques based on the pragmalinguistic and linguostylistic approaches applied to 110 texts from different sources. The greater part of the analyzed prayers consists of the texts compiled by Finnish and Mari scholars at the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth centuries during their expeditions to the regions of Mari compact settlements. Many of these texts were published only at the end of the XXth century (Evseyev, 1994, pp.110-168; Kugu sorta, 1992; Popov, 1991; Porkka, 1895).

New scholarly disciplines within an anthropocentric paradigm such as text linguistics, ethnolinguistics and pragmalinguistics provide new methods and techniques for a broader systemic approach to this folklore genre. The application of linguistic techniques to folklore genres within a framework of a systemic approach reveals language, compositional characteristic features, and style markers of Mari sacred texts. The analysis carried out with the complex of methods and techniques revealed leading style markers (Leech, Short, 2007, p.66) depending on the prayers' pragmatic goals

A review of the presently available literature on the chosen subject in Mari folklore shows the absence of a generally accepted understanding and interpretation of an ethnic prayer. Here we offer a working definition of this folklore genre. A Mari prayer is a believers' appeal to a deity or deities, on the one hand, and on the other, it is a canonized text, which contains worshippers' petitions and requests. Texts of prayers present a specific kind of a worshippers' 'report' on every day activities, their admiration for nature which is considered the wealth of the gods as well as the enumeration of people's requests that focus on personal, family and community life addressed to different deities.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Methods and Techniques

First of all, we should define communicative and pragmatic goals of sacred texts. As is known a prayer is a solemn ritual request for something for the worshippers, for the members of their families, neighbours, and villagers. The prayer is the text which contains an appeal to the gods for the worshippers' protection in everyday life from any evil. At the same time a prayer is such a type of text which represents an unchanged formula, with the requests, appeals, and petitions compositionally structured in a certain order according to definite canons (Glukhova, 1994, pp. 259-265). When worshippers address themselves to the gods, praying is a reasonable act for them because they 'communicate' with creatures who are like themselves (in their opinion), but much more powerful. When people appeal to the souls of the deceased relatives, it is nothing else than an attempt to continue the communication. In both cases it is relevant to convince 'the interlocutors' of the frankness of the feelings and the compelling necessity of the petitions.

The worship ceremonies usually take place in sacred groves. The prayer meetings may vary from an individual (personal) and family gatherings to the most important 'world' worship where the Mari from all regions and compact settlements all over Russia gather together. Mari folklore and religion researchers distinguish the following types of ritual actions: 1) a personal praying; 2) a family praying which occurs during a marriage procedure, childbirth, illness, and death of a family member; 3) a village praying before or after joint spring, summer, autumn agricultural work by the worshippers of one village; 4) communal praying which unites worshippers from 10-15 villages; 5) praying of several religious communes on particular occasions once in three years; 6) the so-called 'world' praying, praying of several religious communes from different Mari diasporas held once in four-six years on very special occasions.

Each type of religious ceremonies was and is characterized by a choice of certain prayers and their incorporation into a ritual process. Along with the strict observance of a sequence of stages in ceremonial procedures texts of prayers represent a very important component.

Secondly, the worshippers have to be very eloquent, persuasive, and thus – expressive in the formulation of their invocations for the request 'to be fulfilled'. The prayers were to be expressive for one further reason. In an oral culture it is necessary to retain the sacred texts and to pass them on from one generation to another. This problem is solved by the well-proportioned structure, specially organized language means which make the text easy to memorize. The texts of the prayers are tested by time. They seem to be composed according to an optimum pattern, the only possible variant for this culture. They create an impression of having carefully chosen language devices. They give the idea of being devoid of any individual mistakes. They bear a stamp of the collective mind of the community and certain collective emotional and aesthetic values which are shown by the style markers based on expressivity.

Expressivity (expressiveness) is produced by the mechanism of "foregrounding" (the Prague School). Among the modes described by linguists in the prayers they have analyzed, this is achieved by a relatively unusual selection of usual language means and their comparatively uncommon arrangement in the text. Expressivity is a kind of intensification of the utterance which largely depends on the position of the means that show expressiveness in order to influence the interlocutor's feelings and thoughts thus achieving a certain expected response (Galperin, 1981, pp. 26-27). The style markers, being also the markers of expressivity, are all those language means and stylistic devices which serve to intensify the utterance.

Scholars discern graphical, lexical, syntactic, grammatical, and semantic style markers in a particular text. Stylistics is viewed as a language science. It analyzes the outcomes of the communication acts. Being the study of language stylistics shows how a sound, word, phrase or sentence is used in an unusual way that is a certain marked context.

Therefore, thirdly, during this stage of the research 110 texts of prayers from different collections were read and analyzed phonetically, syntactically, semantically and numerically with the aim of determining expressive means and stylistic devices – folklore tropes – as well as their number. Investigation was carried out according to a common plan in order to make the comparison of style markers in the published texts possible.

During stylistic analysis of the phonological level the authors paid attention to the fact how the word or words sound. Therefore multiple cases of alliteration and assonance were discerned. Incomplete rhyme represents another type of euphonic repetition. Linguists usually analyze one more marker on this level, namely, rhythm. In the investigated prayers rhythm is felt due to the recurrent repetition of similar syntactic patterns reiterated after short intervals following one another.

Before defining syntactic stylistic compositional devices the next stage of investigation included grammar analysis during which different types of word-combinations were determined and described. In addition to it prevalent types of simple and complex sentences were discerned and classified. The main goal of this part of procedure was to present the stylistic potential both of word-combinations and sentences. The quantitative approach to the researched texts revealed the dominant style markers on this level. They are *parallel constructions*, *different types of repetition*, *anadiplosis*, *enumeration*, and *antithesis*.

Expressive means on lexical level, folklore tropes, were determined and described with the help of semantic analysis combining componential and contextual types of research. Leading style markers among folklore tropes are *sustained* and *simple similes*, *tautological epithets*, *periphrasis*. The examples of the dominant markers are shown in the following part of the paper.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

3.1. Style Markers of Different Text Layers

The analysis has shown that the style markers in the investigated prayers are: 1) phonological, 2) syntactic, 3) lexical, and 4) semantic.

Among the phonological markers the most typical is *alliteration*, which is aimed at imparting a certain melodic effect to the utterance. Typical cases of alliteration in the investigated prayers are: 1) the repetition of the sonorous sounds: *tele goch voliykym orlandaren sholgygten ulyna* (Kugu sorta, 1992, p.8); 2) the multiple repetition of the constrictive voiceless consonants (fricative): *tudym kyryshash pagyt shuyesh, yamagatshe dene, ikshyvyzh dene, poshkydysh dene* (Yevsevyev, 1994, p.155). Vocalic alliteration – assonance – is also a frequent device in the analyzed texts: *türedash kaina manyn, kadyr sorlam vachesh pyshten,*

yumylan-püyryshylan kalasen (Yevseyev, 1994, p.157).

Another type of euphonic repetition in the prayers is incomplete rhyme presented in numerous cases, the character of which gives grounds for assuming these to be the elements of blank verse: *kormyzhym temen, kormyzh olmesh kyltam yshten, kylta olmesh kopnam yshten* (Yevseyev, 1994, p.156). Rhythm in the prayer is perceived by the regular reiteration of similar syntactic patterns repeated after short intervals following one another. The most obvious rhythmical units are created by the structural similarity of the certain types of word-combinations and sentences. The prevalent types of word-combinations in the texts are attributive and objective. The examples of the attributive types are: *kugu Yumo* 'Great God', *osal shincha* 'an evil eye', *türlö voliyk* 'different cattle', *mlande tütyra* 'the mist from the Earth', *tudo kaiyk* 'those beasts', etc.

The examples of the objective word-combinations are as follows: (kuzu) *kurymym pu* 'give a (long) life', *pyrchym kudaltena* '(we 've) thrown grains', *vozhshym odarlandare* 'spread (wider) the roots', *perkem pu* 'give abundance', *tazalykym pu* 'give health', etc. The clauses of the asyndetic compound sentences composed on the same model create the structural similarity too: *kyl-votym tüzaten, pasushke lektyn kaimenge, kum iyr savyrnen, tüzhem pyrchym kudaltena, vozhdem odarlandare, kydalzem pengydym yste, parchazhym shii poldysh gane tutym yshte* 'Having mended the handles of the seedlip, having come out onto the field, having turned three times around, we'll throw a thousand grains, spread wider the roots, make the stalks strong, make the seeds in the spike full and round like silver buttons!' (Yevseyev, 1994, p.154). Simple sentences with the participial constructions give another rhythmical pattern: *Kugyzhan pazaryshke mien shogalmenge, kugyzhan kugu kupichshe dene vash kondo!* 'When we come to the czar's market, let us meet the czar's great merchants! One more example: *Shoshym shumenge vüta körgö gychyn voliykym luktyn koltymenge, nur-serynzhyum kumdam yshte!* 'After spring comes and the cattle will be let out of the cattle- shed, make the meadows wide!' (Kugu sorta, 1992, pp. 11-13).

Phonological style markers – alliteration, rhyme, rhythm – convey a consolidating effect to the parts of the utterance, intensifying the emotions, they bring strict regularity and order into the composition of the utterance and heighten the general aesthetic effect.

The analyzed texts show that the most observable rhythmical patterns are based on the use of such syntactic stylistic devices as *repetition, enumeration, antithesis, parallel constructions* and special ways of combining parts of the utterance (*polysyndeton* and *asyndeton*). The stylistic effect of the numerous cases of repetition points at the logical importance and the necessity to fix attention on the keyword(s) of the request. The repeated units of the prayers are mainly at the end of the sentences and clauses. Such are numerous cases of *epiphoric repetition* of the verbs and the verbs with postpositions (Kugu sorta, 1992, pp.13-14): *isyrzhym tüshym yshte, kangazhym koyam yshte* 'make a cow with a calf, make skinny (cow) fat'; ...*tudyn vozshshym lavyra gane nolo yshtenat, kydalzhym pengyde yshtenat, mychashyzyum shii poldysh gane tutym yshtenat* ... '(the gods) made the roots of the corn as wet as mud, made stalks hard, made ear of rye as heavy as silver buttons'. Many participles, which are abundant in the text, are repeated as well: ... *kozhlä mardezh gych saklen, nele tütyra gych saklen, ayar shincha gych saklen, ayar iylyme guch saklen, puzhyzo-loktyzo gych saklen*... (Yevseev, 1994, p. 149) '(the gods), saving us from a forest wind, protecting us from a heavy mist, safeguarding us from an evil tongue, defending us from sorcerers-bewitchers...'. Furthermore there are reiterated identical roots (*müksh-perke gychyn, müi-perke gychyn nemnam jvyvrytkte!* 'make us happy by the plenty of bees, by the profusion of honey!') and possessive suffixes (... *vüd vokten lektyn kaimöngö, vüd kolek ulo, vüd shashket ulo*...)(Porkka, 1995, p.20). Another syntactic style marker is *enumeration*. The enumerated words generate a specific chain which can lead to creation of sporadic semantic fields organizing important concepts into separate classes and groups (Porkka, 1995, p.19): ... *kyltashat perkem pu, kylta tüshkashat perkem pu; kopnashat perkem pu, kopnam orvashke optymo godym orvashat perkem pu!* '... give us the profusion of wheat in the sheaves, give us plenty of sheaves of wheat, give abundance to the grain in the rick, while loading the ricks onto the cart, give us the plenty of carts!' One more vivid example: ...*kinde perkem pu, vaksh-kü koklashat, klat-purashat perkem pu, shokte-tagynashat perkem pu!* '... give abundance to the grain, and give profusion between the millstones in the barn, and between the sieve and the flat trough!'. One more style marker on the syntactic level is *antithesis*, the device which is molded in parallel constructions: *Ülyl tütyram küshkö yshtenat, küshyl tütyram ülykö voltenat!* (Popov, 1991, p.80) 'You raised the lower mist and lowered the upper mist ...'. Different, even antagonistic, features of the described objects are better observed in this stylistic marker: ... *isyrzhym tüzhyum yshte, kangazhym koyam yshte*... (Popov, 1991, p.198) 'make cow with calf, make thin fat!' There is one more extract from the text: ...*nalshashlykym shuldeshtare, uzhalysashlykym shergeshtare!* (Porkka, 1995, p. 20) '...reduce the price of the goods we are going to buy, raise the price of the things we are going to sell!' Parallel constructions in the prayers are generally used in *enumeration, antithesis, gradation* and are supported by *lexical repetition*. They strengthen the general effect of these syntactic style markers, making

the text more compact and more rhythmical. There are many passages in the texts where the array of the clauses and parts of the sentences gives a gradual increase in importance, which is maintained in a logical way but with the touch of some quantitative meaning: ... *kugu yesh perke gychyn puen shogo: indesh ergym pu, shym üdyrym puen shogo!* (Yevseev, 1994, p. 110): 'Make us happy with a big family: give us eight sons and seven daughters!'. One more example: *Ik kormyzhshymat shulynat, kok kormyzhshymat shulynat, kum kormyzhshymat shulynat kylta valan kyltam yshtenat, kopna vokten kopnam yshtenat, idalyk purydymyzhym nur pusak yeda kavanlan shyndenat. Kormyzhtyzhat perkem pu! Kyltashtyzhat perkem pu! Kopnashtyzhat perkem pu! Kavanyshat perkem pu!* (Popov, 1990, p. 77) 'Having reaped a handful, having reaped two handfuls, having reaped three handfuls, I put the sheaf to the sheaf, heaps of sheaves to the heaps of sheaves, and at every field corner placed rye stacks for the whole year. Give profusion to the handfuls! Give profusion to the sheaves! Give abundance to the heaps of sheaves! Give profusion to the stacks!'

Syntactic style markers have different functions. First of all, they emphasize the structural similarity of the different parts of the prayer (parallel constructions); they have rhythm-forming function (antithesis, polysyndeton, repetition); they express the sequence and the connection of the ideas in the text (polysyndeton, asyndeton). Besides, they create semantic homogeneity of the text, uniting sporadic semantic fields and thus creating the whole unity (enumeration). In addition to that they help to dissever and compare different notions (antithesis); they fulfill the function of logical emphasis of the key-words in the passage and the background function when the words and word-combinations which precede the repeated units are made more conspicuous (repetition).

Usually expressivity of the text on the lexical level is created by 1) the repetition of the words and word-combinations, 2) the use of the paired words, 3) the use of the intensifiers. In the analyzed prayers the first two modes of creating expressivity is used.

The lexical repetition is the most typical case of the used style markers in the analyzed prayers. The dominant type is an *anaphoric repetition* of a separate word: **Tudo** *satum uzhalen, tudo kazna dene nyl pusakan surtysjko pörtylyn tolmeke, tudo kazna dene kalyk vuilatyshylan puyshash-nalshashchyla törlaten, vara tudo gychyn kodshyzho dene rodo-shamych dene, shymly-shym tang dene kochkyn-iüyn tüganydyme shiivundo kazna perkem pu* (Yevseev, 1994, p.125). 'Having sold those goods, having returned to our house with four corners, having paid taxes to the authorities, let us rejoice with the relatives, with seventy-seven friends during a festive meal with the money left'. We can also show some of the numerous cases of an *epiphoric repetition* of a separate word: ... *kozhlä mardezh gych saklen, nele tuman gych saklen, küchan-püan gych saklen, ayar iylme gych saklen, puzhyzo-loktyzo gych saklen...* (Yevseev, 1994, p. 149). 'you have saved us from a forest wind, you have saved us from the heavy mist, you have saved us from the wild animals, you have saved us from a bitter tongue and sorcerers-witches'. Characteristic details of the texts are the use of *paired words*, denoting two complementary concepts. The semantics of this lexical complex is not derived from the meanings of each component, but acquires the character of generality: *kudo-yesh* 'all relatives, household'; lit.: 'family-house'; *küdyrchö-volgenche* 'power of nature'; lit.: 'thunder-lightning'; *shokte-tagyna* 'all the dishes'; lit.: 'sieve-trough' and others. Numerous cases of repetition are due to the selectivity of the genre, which is revealed with the help of a componential analysis. Thus, all the verbs in the prayers (the finite forms only) are divided into three classes. The most numerous class includes the verbs of different kinds of activities: *yshtash* 'to do, to make', *aralash* 'to guard, to save', *ruash* 'to cut', *polshash* 'to help', *türedash* 'to reap', *kondash* 'to bring'. The second largest class unites the verbs of motion: *kayash* 'to go', *koshtash* 'to walk', *lektash* 'to go out', *purash* 'to enter', *savyrash* 'to turn' etc. The third class is composed of verbs of existence: *ilash* 'to live', *liyash* 'to be', *ulash* 'to be, to exist', etc. The concrete nouns of the prayer are divided into six classes. The most representative is the class containing the names of different objects, nature phenomena, geographic realities: *klat* 'a barn', *shokte* 'a sieve', *sorta* 'a candle', *orva* 'a cart', *küdyrchö* 'thunder', *volgenche* 'lightning', *mardezh* 'wind', *korno* 'road', etc. The second in number is the class of the names of the wild animals and birds: *pire* 'a wolf', *maska* 'a bear', *merang* 'a hare', *muzo* 'a hazel-grouse', *vüd-koma* 'an otter', etc. The nouns constituting the other four classes denote the social status of men, names of food, some agricultural products. These nouns are not numerous. The adjectives denoting the quality of the objects perceived by the senses prevail in the text. They show the quality of the objects perceived: 1) by sight – *kugu* 'big, great', *kumda* 'wide', *kuzhu* 'long', *shem* 'black', *kelge* 'deep', *koya* 'fat'; 2) by touch – *pengyde* 'hard, tough', *shoksho* 'hot', *leve* 'warm'; 3) by taste – *tamle* 'tasty', *shere* 'sweet', etc. The adverbs in the prayer denote the time (*adak* 'again', *yüdsjö-kechyzhe* 'day and night') and the place of the action (*onchyko* 'in front', *shengeke* 'behind', *tushechyn* 'from there', etc.).

This choice of notional words is not accidental. It reflects the main communicative goals of the texts – to get everything that is required. The worshippers do not only give the descriptions of the desired things – a good harvest, rich results of the hunt, but they ought to give an account of the actions and their character, the

places where these actions have been performed, etc. That is why lexis "mirrors" the surrounding nature, usual household duties, characteristics of the things they need. In addition to their rhythmical function, logical and emotional intensification, lexical style markers show semantic homogeneity within the parts of the text and relative independence and heterogeneity of these parts within the text. They depict the world where the worshippers lived with all its problems, and at the same time they portray the poeticized reality surrounding the believers. Lexis shows the material and moral values of the community, worshippers' different emotions.

The semantic style markers (metaphor, metonymy, simile, epithet, periphrasis etc.) creating text expressivity in the analyzed material are: *similes*, *epithets*, *periphrasis*. Prayers are especially rich in *similes*, such figures of speech which are based on similarity of objects belonging to different semantic groups. It is also known that simile is an imaginative comparison of two unlike objects. Simile consists of three components of which the ground of comparison, denoting a certain characteristics is explicit due to the presence of formal indicators. In our material these markers are: *gai*, *gaie*, *gane*, *semyñ*, translated as 'like', 'as'. For example: *sukyr gaie karash-shamychem* 'honeycomb like a round loaf of bread', *pyrchezhyñ sii poltysh gaie* 'seeds in the spike like silver buttons' *oto gaie koiyshlanen* 'showing off like a coppice', *tylze gaie temash* 'to become as round as the moon', etc. They are found nearly in every text and can be viewed as *folklore similes*. The structure of similes used in the prayers is characterized by a great variety. The most frequent models are: 1) a noun + *gai* (*gaie*, *gane*) + a verb: *melna gane sharlash* 'to expand like pancakes'; *pyrdyzh gai kushkkash* 'to grow like a wall'; *umyla gai ovartash* 'to grow like hops' ('to get rich'), etc.; 2) a noun + a noun + *gai* (*gaie*, *gane*): *pamash shinchai gai* - lit.: 'like a spring eye' (very clean); *porsyn yarym gai* 'like a silk thread'; *kutko muni semynak* 'like ant eggs' (very numerous), etc.; 3) an adjective + a noun + *gai* (*gaie*, *gane*): *osh keche gai* 'like a bright sun'; *shem pyl gai* 'like a dark cloud'; *shem shoptyr gai* 'like black currants', etc. In the attributive word-combinations of the prayers there are numerous *epithets* and logical attributes which directly characterize the things described. In the analyzed prayers there are mainly *fixed epithets* which are characterized by the repetitive use of a word for the same object, thing or phenomena throughout the text: *osal mardezh* 'an evil wind', *osal shinchai* 'an evil eye', *lyvyryge ilyme* 'a flexible tongue', *volgydo ushakyl* 'bright mind', *sharvak tumo* 'a spreading oak', etc. The most frequent group of epithets is composed of attributes: *umyr chever keche* 'a warm clear day'; *kugu nele pokshym* 'abundant heavy hoarfrost'; *lashtyra pochani ur* 'a squirrel with a fluffy tail', etc. Another frequent style marker in the prayers is *periphrasis*, that is the use of a longer phrasing in place of a shorter and simpler form of expression. The examples of periphrasis in Mari prayers are: *lapka-yolan* – lit. 'with short legs', 'a hare'; *küchan-püian* – lit. 'with claws and sharp teeth', 'wild animals'; *kadyr kürtñö* – lit. 'a piece of crooked iron', 'a sickle', etc.

Semantic style markers indicate the direct evaluating attitude of the collective author, the community, towards the things described, the actions, the quality of the objects (*epithets*); they show a new apprehension of the objects compared, juxtaposing heterogeneous classes of them (*similes*); they intensify the properties of the objects, simultaneously showing different sizes of them (*periphrasis*).

4. CONCLUSION

Mari prayers are classified according to the type of praying. All prayers are a solemn request for something for the worshippers, their relatives, and their neighbors. The texts of prayers are compiled of different compositional parts. In general a prayer can be considered a certain fixed formula. All prayers contain certain pragmatic goals: the worshippers ask supreme deities for their favors. The worshippers' goals are centered around two main ideas: people want protection from evil in different forms (evil eye, evil tongue, etc) and are eager to receive a certain amount of good.

As the worshippers should be very persuasive and convincing in their requests the prayers are to be very expressive and compositionally harmonious. Expressivity, or expressiveness, of the analyzed prayers is created on different levels of the text structure. The investigated material (110 texts from different published sources) showed that there are such style markers as phonological, syntactic, lexical and semantic means of expressivity.

The style markers on the phonological level are: different types of alliteration, partial rhyme, rhythm, based on the usage of the syntactical expressive means, the identical types of word-combinations, the same types of sentences repeated throughout the text. The analysis showed the repeated vowels and consonants which created the euphony, sound harmony of the prayers. Phonological style markers fulfill several functions in the texts. They help to consolidate the parts of the utterance into a single whole, thus organizing a text composition; intensify the worshippers' feelings and emotions and by doing it they impart a general aesthetic and melodic effect.

Expressive means on the syntactic level are created with the help of certain rhythmical patterns. The

investigated material showed different types of repetition, enumeration, antithesis, and parallel constructions ('balance' and partial parallelism). These style markers are combined with the means of expressivity on lexical level, too. In addition to the enumerated markers on the syntactic level the authors discerned particular ways of combining utterance parts into a single whole. They are polysyndeton and asyndeton. The first is such a device in which a number of coordinating conjunctions are used in close succession in the utterance in order to achieve a required effect. The latter, asyndeton, is a stylistic device, the essence of which is connection between parts of a sentences or an utterance without any connectives. Syntactic style markers are characterized by different functions. They can stress the structural similarity of parts of the prayers; logically emphasize the prayer key-words; help to form a rhythm of the text; express the logical sequence and the ties among the ideas expressed in the texts. They can also create a specific conceptual homogeneity of the text by uniting concepts of the texts into a single whole.

The investigated material showed lexical style markers as well. They are formed with the help of the repeated lexemes and their combinations, by using word pairs and intensifiers. Their function is to mirror the world in which the worshippers lived and acted. Componential analyses revealed material, ethic and aesthetic values of the community.

Semantic style markers contain the transferred meaning of the words. In the researched prayers they are similes, epithets, periphrasis. They can indicate a new understanding of the compared or juxtaposed objects (simile); show a subjective evaluation of the community (epithets); accentuate the properties of the described things (periphrasis). Evaluating lexemes describe the quality of the material objects, and worshippers' actions.

The functions of the style markers shown in the article constitute in their totality several pragmatic functions of the prayer. They are: conservation of ethic and aesthetic values of the ethnic group, intermediary contacts between generations, an evaluation of everyday life and behavior as a frame of social orientation, a therapeutic effect (self-soothing) which helps to overcome personal and cosmic loneliness.

REFERENCE LIST

- Evseyev, T. E. (1994). Kalyk oipogo. Yoshkar-Ola: Marii kniga savyktysh.
- Galperin, I.R. (1981). Stylistics. Moscow: Vysshaya shkola.
- Glukhova, N. (1994) Linguistic Interpretation of a Cheremis Prayer. *Linguistica Uralica*, 4. Tallinn.
- Glukhova, N. (1995). Reflections of the Cheremis Religious Beliefs in the Texts of Pagan Prayers. *Folk Belief Today*. Tartu.
- Kugu sorta (1992). Kugu sorta vera mariiyn kumaltsyh mutsho. Yoshka-Ola: U Vii.
- Leech, G., Short, M. (2007). Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose. London, New York. Pearson, Longman. Pearson Education Limited.
- Popov, N. S. (1991). Marii kumaltsyh mut. Yoshkar-Ola: Marii kniga izdatel'stvo.
- Porkka, V. (1895). Volmari Porkka's Tscheremissische Texte mit Ubersetzung. *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne (Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Aikakauskirja)*, XIII1. Helsingfors: Druckerei der Finnischen Literaturgesellschaft.
- Sebeok, Th. Ingemann, Fr. (1956). The Studies in Cheremis: The Supernatural. *Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology*, 22. New York.