

# *Dialect Polysemia as a Source of Interpretation of Language Signs*

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**Abstract**—The article is devoted to the linguistic analysis of the archaic vocabulary of the Ossetian language compared with its dialect forms in order to identify similar semantic characteristics and differential features of morphogenesis. Step-by-step analysis of synonymous pairs of dialect variants identified lexical groups with relatively frozen semantics, established various borrowing paths and forms of metaphoric transformation as main differential features, characterized forms and methods of metaphorization and identified their potential participation in formation of semantic fields. Ways of semantic integration and actualization of dialect forms with preservation of other variants are features of modern dialect synonyms functioning in one language. The importance of synchronous development of both dialect forms and derivational processes was emphasized.

**Keywords**—*vocabulary; semantics; archaism; semantic field; metaphor; the Ossetian language; dialect*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Universal integration and socio-economic relations are always accompanied by interpenetration of languages and cultures. At the same time, unification of linguistic signs, words, and expressions can be observed. It simplifies communicative efforts. Native speakers have behavior and speech patterns, common stereotypes of thinking.

Differences observed at cultural and mental levels do not imply complete dissolution of one culture into another one, regardless of interpenetration. However, the echoes of each culture affect the degree and quality of integration. In this regard, it is quite obvious that interaction and unification of communicative conditions require understanding and deep studies on the cultural background of communicants.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Due to increased attention to national languages, including the Ossetian one, to folklore texts which are natural forms of the language, it is difficult to understand and interpret certain language units and constructions of the modern Ossetian language. With regard to genre and stylistic features of folklore texts, it should be said that lexical units are not a

genre-forming tool. They carry the original semantics of historical realities of their time and represent an archaic layer of vocabulary. The study of this stratum is an extremely important part of lexicology, since archaic vocabulary is in close connection with modern synonyms and other layers of vocabulary. In addition, understanding and interpretation of the semantics of these lexemes is important for a thorough and in-depth study of the national language picture of the world.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Prominent scholars studied the vocabulary of the Ossetian language. A brilliant multi-volume work was written by V.I. Abaeva [1]. It deals with the etymology of the vocabulary of the Ossetian language. There is not enough research on semantics and functions of lexical units in the Ossetian language for progressive and productive study of the language as a whole, as an integral part of ethnoculture. In the light of new scientific trends towards an interdisciplinary approach, the need for a new approach to the vocabulary and its semantic layers becomes urgent. The relevance of this issue is due to the absence of deep comprehensive studies on archaisms and historicisms of the Ossetian language. They were considered as a separate layer of vocabulary by researchers who described them as "rare exhibits" of the language, devoid of chances for a "new life".

## IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the article is to consider the Ossetian archaic vocabulary in comparison with synonymous variants existing in dialect forms of the language. The synchronous analysis will make it possible to identify fundamental differences in vocabulary formation, to determine the degree of their activity in speech, to identify the dynamics of their development under modern conditions, and to establish semantic intersections with lexical blocks of other conceptual families. This will make it possible to reconstruct archaic lexemes and to study metaphorization processes due to which archaisms are actively incorporated into the active vocabulary, and the emergence of additional connotative meanings.

## V. RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve these goals, the method of continuous sampling was used to identify key lexical-semantic groups in the folklore texts. The methods of lexicographical description, comparative analysis and conceptual study of nuclear families were applied. The semantic coverage of language units required using research methods of related scientific fields. Knowledge of ethnolinguistics, folklore, cultural studies, and ethnology was used.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main issue of this article is representation of the archaic vocabulary of the Ossetian language in its dialect paradigm. This aspect was chosen in order to establish common and distinctive features which influenced formation of a special "configuration" of meanings [2, p.27]. The results helped identify the dynamics of selected word forms with regard to time.

The Ossetian language is a name of two closely related northeastern Iranian languages - Iron and Digor [3]. Discrepancies are observed at all levels of the linguistic structure. So, phonetic discrepancies exist both in vocalism and in consonantism. Digor morphology has more archaic forms. Lexical differences are due to the different degree of preservation of original Iranian words and the influence of different Caucasian substrate languages [4]. The lexico-semantic system of both dialect forms of the Ossetian language is characterized by the contextual use and functions of various lexemes.

When sampling lexical and phraseological material, the main emphasis was placed on epic texts [5] where lexemes exist in the most comfortable conditions and convey all the internal semantic aspects and formal grammatical features. Graphic recording prolongs the life of dialect forms which is of particular value [6, p. 12].

The structure of the analyzed material included language units with similar logical and semantic meanings which were subjected to lexicographic and contextual descriptions. They made it possible to establish the radius of semantic uses taking into account associative links and definitions offered by the sources.

The first stage involved the thematic classification of lexical variants of the dialects of the Ossetian language. The most vivid variants are presented below taking into account the principles of polysemy and synonymy [7, p.17]:

1. military equipment and weapons: Dig. *рæвдзитæ* / ir. *хотыхтæ* "armor"; Dig. *хъæмуци* / ir. *цæвæрдæр хотых* "weapon, mace", etc. ;

2. housing: dig. *медæггонæ* / ir. *къæбиц* "pantry"; Dig. *кесена* / IR. *галуан, гæнах, хорз цæрæнуат* "palace, mansion", etc. ;

3. household items: Dig. *арсгинæ (арсгийнæ)* / ir. *куырдадзы æртыскæн* "tongs (for grabbing embers in the stove, in the forge, etc.)"; Dig. *бæтман* / ir. *тæскъ, чыргъæд* "basket"; Dig. *цире* / ir. *хъæдын тæрхæг* sofa "etc";

4. food and dishes: dig. *уæрас* / ir. *нозты мыггаг, къуымæл* "kvass, braga"; Dig. *æхцин* / ir. *уæлибæх, хæбизджын* "traditional cheese cake"; Dig. *æхсæрфæмбæлттæ* / ir. *хуылфы дзæмæттæй (игæртæ æмæ рæуджытæй) конд физонæг* "barbecue" etc. ;

5. body parts: dig. *хъæлхъос* / ir. *сæргæхц (цуанонты æвзагыл — сырды сæр)* "head, skull", etc. ;

6. appearance: Dig. *мæрзæздухт* / ir. *бæзæрхыг, мызыхъарæзт* "chunky"; Dig. *нихагæ* / ir. *бецыкк* "Chubchik"; Dig. *рехдзар* / ir. *сæрдзарм* "skin cut off from the face with a beard and mustache"; Dig. *сæндтадæ арæзт* / ir. *дидилман, къуыдитт* "dandy", etc. ;

7. composite nominations and stable combinations: dig. *хуцауи халæбæл* / ir. *хуыцауы фæндонмæ гæсгæ* "by the will of God"; Dig. *фæндарасты синон* / ir. *фæндарасты нуазæн* "a glass of the blessed path"; Dig. *ахæри хъиамæт* / ir. *бæсты сæфт, дунейы кæрон* "end of the world"; Dig. *гулахъи фæрдуг, золагъ фæрдуг* / ir. *мæрдæгасгæнæг фæрдыг* "magic bead"; Dig. *къæсибадæг уосæ* / ir. *къулбадæг ус* (gentleman), etc.

8. social and interpersonal categories: dig. *æнгурдуатон кизгуттæ* / ir. *æмкар, æмбай чызджытæ, цу афоны гуыр* "peers"; Dig. *хæстбойнон* / ir. *сывæрджын* «pregnant, near delivery»; Dig. *æстæггадæ* / ir. *къайаг, бинойнаг* (euphemism) "spouse", etc. ;

9. moral and ethical concepts: dig. *лиагъæ* / ir. *худинаг, æфхæрд* "shame, disgrace,"; Dig. *фес* / ir. *амал, гæнæн* "happiness"; Dig. *уасхæ* / ir. *ард, сомы* "oath", etc.

The study revealed that the most obvious signs of deep archaization were lexical units denoting historical realities and objects which are out of use (military equipment and weapons, household items, etc.). Due to this fact, words preserved their forms unchanged. The remaining groups of words underwent phonetic and other changes.

At the second stage, differential features of the lexemes and the ways of their occurrence were identified. The main way is penetration of existing nominations into dialect variants of the Ossetian language and differences in the metaphorical understanding of objective realities when determining their names.

Thus, borrowings often retain its original semantics and formal features and practically do not undergo significant changes. A typical example is Digor *кесена* which corresponds to Iron *гæнах* and means "a well-fortified construction" used for living and defense [8, p. 87; 9, p. 140]. In both variants of the Ossetian language, the lexemes nominate the historical reality that characterizes the life style of the Ossetians. The lexical differences are related to the fact that *кесена* is associated with the Persian *kāsāna* home, decorated with glaze, a "small house", and *гæнах* is a fortified house [1].

Metaphorical processes as an important factor of development of differential features of lexical semantic groups in dialects of the Ossetian language have different methods and forms. The study on peculiarities of metaphorical

structures required cognitive analysis of these lexemes [7, p.175; 10].

At the third stage, it was revealed that metaphorical methods were used for word formation. Meanings were transferred based on external or internal similarities of objects [11], and through ethical and emotional-figurative rethinking of objects.

The analysis also revealed recognizable and hidden metaphors.

The recognizable metaphor is based on the similarity of external and internal features: dig. *æstæggada* / ir. *къайаг* - "spouse, spouse", where the first variant in its internal semantics is associated with *crær* "bone" + affix -*az* [12, p. 113; 13] with the literal meaning of "bone-close"; The Iron variant is formed from *къай* "pair" + affix -*ag* with a literal meaning of "paired". Recognizability is due to the knowledge of the language.

Another type of recognizable metaphor is formed by adding two or more stems that reflect the descriptive associative nomination: dig. *мæрзæздухт* (*мæрз* "shortly" + *æздухт* "crooked") / ir. *мызыкъарæзт* (*мызыкъ* "stocky" + *арæзт* "structure") "stocky, roughly folded." A lot of names of body parts, external and internal qualities of a person and a number of other semantic groups are based on the same principle.

The hidden metaphor is a metaphor which can be identified in the source language (in one dialectal variant) and is formed by language means (in another dialectal variant). Dig. *фæс* goes back to the Iran *paisa-* ("written on the forehead"). The common synonym is *амонд* "happiness".

We observe the most complex form of metaphors in compound names, when a figurative combination expresses a semantically indivisible and culturally labeled complex concept that is part of ethical, spiritual or mythological systems [14]. This category may include a combination of dig. *фæндарастти синон* / ir. *фæндарасты нуазæн* "a glass of the blessed path"; Dig. *ахæри хъуамæт* / ir. *бæсты сæфт, хъаймæт* "end of the world"; Dig. *золагъ фæрдуг* / ir. *цыкурайы фæрдыг* "bead that fulfills desires." These combinations denote concepts which cannot be described and translated into another language preserving the internal meaning which is closely related to the traditional Ossetian culture [15]. To understand these combinations, it is necessary to understand the cultural and spiritual worldview of the Ossetians. At the same time, we can observe partial formal similarity, which is manifested in the similarity of one of the lexical components of the combination, while the other component in both dialect forms is different. In this case, common semantic properties are recognized due to a certain set of compatibility characterized as "linguistic behavior" [16, p. 4, 17].

This "partial similarity" is a characteristic feature of common cultural representations of the speakers of both dialect forms of the Ossetian language. It focuses key values of the traditional culture and Ossetian spirituality, being an important factor for development of semantic fields [18].

At the final stage, we identified basic principles of the development of semantics of the lexical groups and found that the most archaic forms of words denoting historical realities (names of household utensils, weapons, beverages and dishes), came out of active use.

Most lexemes adopted one lexical option and preserved the other ones as synonyms (for example, *амонд* "happiness") or deep archaization of the lexeme in favor of one of common variant occurred (archaic *уасхæ* and widely used *ард, сомы* "oath" [1]).

It can be argued that development of dialect forms of the Ossetian language occurs synchronously and is enriched through semantic reconstruction of outdated vocabulary through the emergence of additional connotative meanings with peculiar contextual uses which become a prerequisite for the lexeme to transfer from one semantic zone to another [16, p. 19]. Dynamic development contributes to the active use of basic principles of word formation, the main of which are composition affixation.

Since the vocabulary is the most productive form of word formation, it has its own characteristics that are of extreme importance in the system of Ossetian word formation. This method determines and explains spiritual, moral, cultural and ideological orientations of the people. Thus, the basis of the majority of lexical formations is metaphorical formation of two and three words. Grammatical features of the language do not imply the presence of a connecting vowel sound, so almost all word formations can easily fall into phrases without prejudice to their denotative meaning. Lexical and syntactic variants cause functional, grammatical, stylistic, and conceptual changes. For example, dig. *фæндарастти синон* / ir. *фæндарасты нуазæн* "glass of the blessed path" is a complex construction that translates the concept of "hospitality" which is the most important in the Ossetian culture. *Синон* and *нуазæн* are dialectal representatives of a part of this concept. The lexeme *фæндараст* is an inverted form from *раст фæндар* "straight road", which has features of a cognitive metaphor resulting from cultural understanding of objective realities. In the latter case, we can observe complete preservation of the denotative meaning with all forms of the change.

Affixation influences formal grammatical changes and the partial status of the lexeme and is actively used for archaisms. For example, the affixes -*гомай*, -*гонд* give a meaning of assimilation or a small presence of a trait (*мæтæзегонд* "like a matase", *æфхæрдгомай* "a bit shameful").

## VII. CONCLUSION

The synchronous analysis of the archaic vocabulary of the Ossetian language showed that dialect synonyms have different connotative meanings related to each other, including individual ways of penetration into the language. The analysis identified exceptional ways of metaphorization and forms of contextual uses, demonstrated actual synchronous development, similar functions of both dialect forms. Given the great interest of native speakers in traditions and culture of their people and extreme demand for folklore and

ethnographic knowledge, the results are particularly valuable, relevant and promising.

#### **Abbreviations**

Ir. - Iron dialect of the Ossetian language

Dig. - Digor dialect of the Ossetian language

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