Hunting vocabulary in the work by Timofey Smetanin "Tales of the hunter Meheelecheen" (lexical and semantic classification)

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Abstract. The article discusses the hunting vocabulary used in the work by the Yakut front-line writer Timofey Smetanin “Tales of the hunter Meheelecheen”. The relevance of the study is due to the fact that there is no comprehensive description of the hunting vocabulary in the Yakut language; part of the vocabulary, including the special vocabulary as a hunting language has been lost. The purpose of this study is to identify lexico-semantic groups of hunting vocabulary used in the work. The hunting vocabulary was divided into thirteen lexico-semantic groups: 1) nominations of hunting activities and their results; 2) nominations of habits of animals and birds observed during hunting; 3) nominations of birds, groups of birds and animals; 4) designations of hunting methods; 5) names of hunters’ clothes, footwear and equipment; 6) names of hunting accessories, their parts and equipment; 7) names of hunters and their assistants; 8) names of body parts and internal organs of animals and birds; 9) names of types of meat of animals or birds and specific food of hunters and fishermen; 10) names of hunting buildings; 11) geographical features of the area; 12) sounds of the surrounding world; 13) figurative representations of the movements of animals and birds.

1 Introduction

Since ancient times, the Yakuts have been engaged in hunting, whose products were fish, meat of animals and birds. Hunting provided people with clothing. The Yakut hunting language is a rich and expressive professional language, but due to various reasons, the hunting vocabulary has been forgotten, and some elements are endangered.

A series of stories by the front-line writer Timofey Smetanin “Tales of the hunter Meheelecheen” were written in the genre of humorous hunting stories. A large amount of hunting vocabulary in the stories is present due to their theme.

The material of the study is a series of stories "Tales of the hunter Meheelecheen", included in the book of selected works by Timofey Smetanin, which was published in 1969 [1]. The texts translated into Russian were used as the second source, included in the collection of stories "Timofey Smetanin: poems, stories, novels, fairy tales and plays for children", published in 2017. [2] The publication of the book was timed to the 100-year anniversary of the writer. The stories were translated into Russian by librarians from the writer's homeland, the Kobyai ulus library. Vladimir Karpov, an honored worker of culture of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), a member of the Union of Writers of the USSR, a member of the Union of Writers of Russia, and Boris Lukin, a poet, essayist, translator and critic, translated the stories.

2 Materials and Methods

The study used the continuous sampling methods to select hunting vocabulary from original and translated texts; the methods of lexico-semantic analysis were used to specify the semantics of hunting vocabulary.

3 Results and discussion

Timofey Smetanin was born on November 25, 1919 in Chomchusy, Kobyaisky (Chachy) near Sredne-Vilyuy ulus. In 2020, the researcher from the Yakutsk State Literary Museum E.S. Nogovitsyna wrote the book “The Heart of a Soldier: The Life and Work of T.E. Smetanin by letters and memoirs” [3]. Based on published and unpublished letters of the writer himself and memories, his life path was described. According to the recollections of friends and classmates included in this book, Timofey Smetanin was a breadwinner of the family, he loved hunting and fishing.

There is no mention of the fact that the manuscript of the book “Meheelecheen Bulchut” was written in collaboration with Yakov Struchkov in 1940-1941. The war prevented its publication, the book was published only in the autumn of 1943 and recognized as the best children's work of the year. E.S. Nogovitsina included...
the memoirs by Yakov Struchkov from his article “Happiness to be his co-author”: after the war Timofey Smetanin wrote to Yakov Viktorovich, consulted, sent manuscripts of his books, persuaded him to become a co-author: “Timofey kept calling me, wanted us to become coauthors, but the Ministry of Education refused my requests. It was my greatest experience” [3, 38 p.]. The co-authorship of Ya.V. Struchkov was not reported due to the fact that on November 18, 1948 he was arrested. Only on March 5, 1955, he was released due to insufficient evidence. He was fully rehabilitated on April 30, 2002.” [3, 40 p.]. In memory of his friend, Struchkov wrote a continuation of the stories about the adventures of the hunter Meheelecheen inn the tundra “Meheelecheen bulchut tuundaraşı syryylara”, which was published in 1990 [3, 40 p.].

Timofei Smetanin died aged 27. Despite his short life, he left behind bright works: poems, dramas, stories, novels, journalism. According to the translator Boris Lukin, most of Smetatin’s works are saturated with popular Yakut folklore motifs, which makes them especially close to compatriots, and saturation with local color causes great difficulties for the translator. The war encouraged him to achieve success [4].

The work “Tales of the hunter Meheelacheen” consists of 15 stories. The stories were written on behalf of the hero-narrator, the hunter Meheelacheen, through whose attitude the hunting events are described, but in the hero’s image, the authors represent themselves. Adventures of young hunters, making their first hunting trip and more mature experienced hunters are described. If in the first 11 stories hunting is depicted with humor and fiction, in the last three stories “Chubuku” (“Mountain Sheep”), “Kuttas dogor” (Cowardly friend) and “Bulchut buolbut bele” (“How I became a hunter”), the storytelling style was changed.


Hunting vocabulary in the Yakut language has not been subjected to special research, but there are works on this topic. In the scientific library of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) there is a manuscript by A.S. Lukovtsev “Yakut-Russian Dictionary of Hunting and Fishing Terms”. Taboos and euphemisms about totemic animals have been analyzed by A.S. Lukovtsev [7, 8], A.A. Scriabina [9]. Taboo hunting vocabulary has been described by L.S. Efimova, N.S. Shkurko, N.V. Afanasiev and others [10].

The analysis of the stories by Timofey Smetanin found that they use terms, semi-terms, words and expressions belonging to the professional jargon of hunters, colloquial hunting speech and dialect speech of hunters, expressed by nouns, verbs, onomatopoeic and figurative words, and phraseological units. The following lexi-co-semantic groups of hunting vocabulary were identified: 1) nominations of hunting activities and their results; 2) nominations of habits of animals and birds observed during hunting; 3) nominations of birds, groups of birds and animals; 4) designations of hunting methods; 5) names of hunters’ clothes, footwear and equipment; 6) names of hunting accessories, their parts and equipment; 7) names of hunters and their assistants; 8) names of body parts and internal organs of animals and birds; 9) names of types of meat of animals or birds and specific food of hunters and fishermen; 10) names of...
hunting buildings; 11) geographical features of the area; 12) sounds of the surrounding world; 13) figurative representations of the movements of animals and birds.

The first group consists of words and phrases denoting hunting actions and results of their activities: kyrka - to take aim, saan yit - to reload the gun, tap - to injure, ulahannyt taptarda - to seriously injure, ikki orlin atasytan harbaa (kuobagy) - to grab hold of the hind legs (hare), tyymaa kuobagy tuhikhtan berke serenen aaraa - to take a live hare out of the loop carefully, elbhe kuhu bultaa - it is easy to get ducks, khaihary ieh - to cover the runners with deer skin, tugu da körüm - to go around in vain, tayakhyy tagys - to go hunting elk, tayagy bultaa - to kill an elk, tayagy yt / bultaa / olor - to shoot / kill, bu kemire tayagy bultuur serehteeh - it is dangerous to hunt a male during the rut, tayagy bultaa da körüme - to go around in vain, tayakh - elk, atyyr tayakh - elk / male elk, e - bear / boar / male / bear - wolf, kyyn - knife, byyyn - to lay an egg, a - a valley of mountains, hotool kumakh - a sandy cape, etc.

2) Descriptions of habits of animals and birds observed during hunting are expressed by verbs and gerunds: ahaan bier - to have time to dodge (ducks), ystanan taqys (boro) - to jump out towards (wolf), (haraasyn) yyrpyryyn kor (boro) - to roll out white eyes (wolf), tuuhakha yyan (kuobah) - to get caught in a noose (hare), dykky (boro) - to try to break out (wolf), moltuu byhyyttedytor (boro) - to resist weaker (his strength is running out) (wolf), harakkhyn uhul kor (boro) - the bulging eyes of the predator froze motionless, as if glazed, hamsaabat buolbut b - to jump out towards (wolf), tayakh - elk, atyyr tayakh - elk / male elk, e - bear / boar / male / bear - wolf, kyyn - knife, byyyn - to lay an egg, a - a valley of mountains, hotool kumakh - a sandy cape, etc.

3) Nominations of birds, groups of birds and animals observed during hunting are expressed by verbs and gerunds: kus - duck, ko - geese, kuobakh - hare, boro - wolf, kyrnaas - ermine, tayakh - elk, atyyr tayakh - el / male elk, e - bear / brown, chubuku - mountain sheep, siegen - wolverine, tyyylee - furs, etc.

4) In the stories, the methods of Yakut hunting are widely represented: oloorno, talakh tordyger ororon kotoy tohuyuu - to be buried under a bush, kuhu urasannah bultaa (kuhu) - to hunt without guns (for ducks) / instead of a gun, an ancient tool was used - a long flexible rod, kustagen - to hunt ducks, sara haastaa - to hunt geese, tirimi sul - to skin the beast, tuhtary keri - to check the loops for hares, tuhtkan aaraa - to pick up prey, kuurka somuogn turuur - to pull the trigger from the gun, khoolutat - to crowd (duck flock), yomen kir - to sneak, etc.

5) Names of clothes, shoes and equipment of hunters: son - zipun, eterbes - torbasa, boro suorgan - wolf blanket, soluurachakh - bowler hat, etc.

6) Names of hunting accessories, their parts and equipment: saa - a gun, bintiepe - a rifle, buckshot - sunnyokh, sunnyosynen itiliibit tuuruka - a gun loaded with buckshot, byyakh - knife, byhylicheka - knife, kyyn - scabbard, yyy - peak, kuurka (saa) somuoga - trigger at the gun, chaarka - chaarka- trap, tuhakh - loop, habdyga tuhakh - snares for partridges, somuok (saa) - trigger (gun), tuut - light wide skis, maamny bya - folded in a circle a strong rope fifteen to twenty meters long with a loop at the end is a lasso for catching deer, chokhoroon is a hatchet, onchokh (syge) is a butt, kymnyys is a whip, urasaa is a pole, etc.

7) Designations of hunters and their assistants: saaghyt - shooter, argys (bulka) - partner, sier at - piebald horse, kuttas doonor - fortunate partner, tayakhchyt yt - hunting dog, etc.

8) Designations of parts of the body and internal organs of animals and birds: ooyoos - side, honnkoh anna - armpits, butun-holun toryte - inguinal folds and bends of the knees, muus kuyakh tygy (ehe) - wool with an ice shell (bear) / ice sheet and etc.

9) Names of types of meat of animals or birds and specific food of hunters and fishermen: ulukte - dried meat, tyos ete - brisket meat, emis tayakh ete - fatty elk carcass, sier - heart, balyk mine - ear, etc.

10) Names of hunting buildings: kystyk baldanah - winter hut, otuu - hut, ararras - storehouse, etc.

11) Geographical features of the Yakutian terrain: alyy - a narrow long valley / swampy valley, tya - dense forest, tube - a valley overgrown with shrubs, sis - a forest with solid soil, akhkar - a crevice, haya khalaah - a lowland tongue of land, yrekh baha - upper reaches rivers, yrekh tojyddor - copes along the bends of the river, khaspakh - a cave, haya tellage - a valley of mountains, hotool kumakh - a sandy cape, etc.

12) Onomatopoeic words used to convey sounds of the surrounding world, including sounds made by animals, birds, hunting dogs, hunters and their equipment: chabygyras ayah tyaha (handicraft) - champing (ducks), sagalara maattarsa-meetings - savory vocal quacking (ducks), kustuu "maat-maat", "meet-meet" die - to call like a duck "maat-maat", "meet-meet", "maat-maat" dien tohtobokkoo saaror - loud quacking; "Sart" gyna tus (kus) - to flop into the water (duck) with noise, "oor-or-or-or-or-rryrryrry" - "oo-oo-hee-hee-hee-nee-nuu", "ay-ayy -ayy-or-or-or" - "ay-ayy-ayy-an-an", "hardygynaa (boro) - to make a hoarse sound (wolf), hardygynaa - to wheeze more and more hoarsely and terribly (wolf), etc.

13) Movements of hunters, animals and birds are described using figurative words widely used in the Yakut language: bokchoy - kneel down, subururnaa (boro) - walk around (wolf), oro yomethee (boro) - jump (wolf), tyyrulle tust (kuobakh) - curl up into a ball (hare), tyyrar oyo tour (kyrynaas) - run away (ermine), syp gynan hael (kyrynaas) - whirl (ermine), tohoosho kurdak batary saalla tus - stand on all fours, dyokhoorydoo - move like a small clumsy bear cub, talbaaryrnna - fluttering wings smoothly (swans), etc.

Among the hunting vocabulary found in the work of Timofey Smetanin, words with the affix of belonging are actively implemented: borom - my wolf", ئ‌،‌mom - 'my bear', siegenem - 'my wolverine', tayahym - 'my moose', chubukum - 'mountain sheep' etc. And when translated into Russian, this feature of the Yakut colloquial speech is not transmitted in any way, for
example: 1. *Ehem urdubunen son hotu ureh dieki ystanna ebat.* - The bear immediately jumped on top of the coat. 2. *Siegenim ulakhan tikke oro suuren tacmyatay.* - Wolverine immediately climbed a tall larch tree. 3. *Borom miehe ergillen da korbokko, oyuur dieki buuta bystarynan sootho suburus gynan haalla.* - The wolf did not even look back at me, rushed off like an arrow and soon disappeared into the forest. 4. *Tayhym khamsaabat, ontonoronon turduum - Soon the elk was lying motionless. I got out of the crevice.* Words in the possessive form, denoting possession, irrevocable belonging, are widely used in the Yakut language in colloquial speech. Nouns in the possessive form of the 1st person express a warm, friendly, approving attitude of the speaker to the object of speech. It should be noted that such nouns do not indicate belonging, but express a feeling of pity for the living beings being killed. Also, such words have an educational function aimed at respecting nature.


In the Yakut language the national and regional picture of the world is reflected in the Yakut hunting vocabulary. The writer managed to assess in the work under consideration were created using epithets, comparisons, particles, affixes: *siegen tuukun* – a rogue wolverine; *siegen boos* – a strong wolverine, *Suoruk barakhsan* – *Suoruk* – a dog’s nickname, *barakhsan* – a modal particle expressing love, affection, duoalan *tayah* – a huge moose, *uluu kotor* – a sacred bird, *hapsaay kyyl* is a dexterous beast, *eh kutur* – a devil bear, *kyyl adyrata* – a ferocious beast, *ataaskaan* – a rogue wolverine, *sieg* *barakhsan* – *Suoruk* – *barakhsan* – a strong wolf.

Specific, artistically processed tokens with an aesthetic function help to recreate the artistic world associated with the regional picture of the world. When analyzing the work, lexemes associated with the animal world of the northern region were identified: *kalin koyuna* – a raven, *kalsay baar* – a black raven, *kalag*, *kalagzhit* – a black owl, *kalak*, *kalakzhit* – a black mole, *kady* – a fox, *kudy* – a fox, *kady* – a fox, *kudy* – a fox.

Among other words used to replace other words that are considered indecent or inappropriate: for example, *tyataagy* ‘forest’ instead of *bear*, *kyrdasag* ‘old’ instead of *bear*, *kihi ‘man’ instead of *bear*, *kuturuktaa ‘tailed* ‘instead of *wolf*, *kytarar ‘red’ instead of *fire*, *kirkil ‘woodecker’ instead of *ax*, etc. Euphemisms are formed due to a respectful attitude towards nature and can be assessed as a manifestation of superstition. It is known that hunters often avoid direct words and expressions that indicate the success of the hunt, due to the fact that luck may not always accompany, sometimes dangerous situations may arise.

In the stories by T. Smetanin, dialectisms are also used: *haya toboto satalanna* (tyal taste) - it became windy on the top of the mountain, *nai khara etir bylyta* (olus khara etir bylyta) - a dark cloud of a thunderstorm, *yol-dyol buolla* (kharararda) - to get dark, *dalai (oysu)* - to beat, *kytalyktaa, turuyalaal (bydyryyy)* - to stumble, *sir-doidu eigete* (sir-doydu) - locality, *tohyyilee, botyonee* (byloolee) - to plug, *tayah muohun ayty aalymmyyl* - to rub against the trees with their horns (moose), etc.

Thus, in his work “Tales of the hunter Meheecheen” Timofey Smetanin described traditional features of the Yakut hunting with using rich and expressive hunting vocabulary. In the Yakut language this special national vocabulary has been lost. The study of the lexicographic description of the Yakut hunting language is relevant.

### References