

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE IDIOMS REPRESENTING THE CONCEPT *WORK* IN THE CHECHEN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The article considers the use of idioms representing the semantic field “work” in the Chechen language on the material of the psycholinguistic inquiry, the author analyses different aspects of the functioning of this layer of lexical system in speech.

Keywords:

language situation, idioms, semantic field "work", psycholinguistic inquiry

1. Introduction

The language situation in the Chechen republic is characterized by a simultaneous coexistence of two differently structured languages close politically and territorially. As a result of such closeness influence of an official language of the state on a minority language is noticeable, the Chechen language appears in a risk zone, obvious semantic and structural transformations are observed, tendencies to speech mixture, preference to speak the Russian language. Within the limits of a current situation interesting was the research of such part of the lexical system of language as idiomatics, one of its fragments, describing work sphere. Such an approach to the problem in our opinion is justified as it gives the most objective picture about the use of idioms in the modern Chechen language.

We had conducted the inquiry of students at the Chechen State University and Grozny Oil Institute. Research covered various aspects of idioms functioning: social, sociolinguistic, linguistic, psycholinguistic.

The social aspect has been directed first of all on revealing interrelation between a social status of students (a residence, education of parents, age, plans for the future and social requirement for this or that language) and knowledge of Russian and Chechen languages. For full life of any language its functioning in all spheres of social institutes is necessary, otherwise there is its gradual replacement and disappearance. In the present the Chechen language lives only on the colloquial level, in a family and in streets, but has no place in educational, scientific, political, economic and other spheres. In this connection there is no versatile development of language and its dictionaries. The same picture develops with other languages of the North Caucasus. Such situation demands working out an alternative and the correct approach in language politics which would also consider involving the Chechen language into the scientific environment and knowledge of Russian.

The sociolinguistic aspect has reflected a language situation in republic, level of knowledge of the Chechen language. The linguistic part of the inquiry was a key component of research, revealing the use and behavior of idioms in the modern Chechen language. Within the limits of the semantic field "work" idioms were classified in taxa by inductive way, from a language material. Such taxa as «to work much, hard», «to work with enthusiasm», «diligence», «to begin working», «to finish work», «to earn», «to work little, badly» were allocated.

The psycholinguistic aspect has shown that the perception of idioms to some extent depends on the structure of the internal form, the more it is transparent, the clearer it is and there is more probability of various variants of their semantic interpretation.

2. Methodology

In the work such methods, as psycholinguistic inquiry, sociological, statistical, cognitive, semantic analysis, a method of continuous sample from dictionaries were applied. By the method of continuous sample idioms of the semantic field "work" have been selected from phraseological dictionaries of the Chechen language (Bajsultanov D., Bajsultanov D., 1992; Ibragimov, 2005). Questionnaire questions have been formulated so that the received results reflected psycholinguistic aspect, that is have been focused on perception. It allowed to investigate the ways of interpretation of idioms semantics during the analysis. Inquiry data has undergone the statistical analysis in program SPSS for Windows 14, revealing in a percentage ratio the degree of each idiom use. Cognitive and semantic analysis was used for examining properties of idioms in contexts, additional meanings, influence of images on an actual meaning.

3. The Analysis

3.1. Social and sociolinguistic aspects

The attitude to languages in a modern Chechen society, and also the language situation in the republic, connected with the tendency of influence of Russian on Chechen, causes a particular interest to researching the use of idioms by native speakers. The choice of the given layer of lexicon is motivated, firstly, by the fact, that the knowledge of idioms and their direct use in speech is frequently one of the indicators of high level of language knowledge, secondly, aspiration to trace the ways of their functioning in the modern Chechen language.

The object of research is the idioms of semantic field "work" in the Chechen language. The actuality of the subject is proved by necessity to reveal the degree of operating with idioms of an investigated semantic field in speech that also is considered to be more objective, than if idioms have been picked up from different fields.

The author interrogated 300 Chechen students of the Chechen State University and Grozny Oil Institute. The questionnaire developed by us «Idioms about work in the Chechen language» included 49 questions, covered 33 idioms chosen from different taxa of the semantic field "work".

Main blocks of questions of the questionnaire:

1. Knowledge of Russian
2. Knowledge of the Chechen language

3. Desire to know the Chechen language perfectly
4. Teaching the Chechen language at the university
5. The most demanded language
6. How often are idioms heard or used in speech (idioms of taxa «to work much, hard», «to work with enthusiasm », «diligence», «to begin working», «to finish work», «to earn», «to work little, badly»).
7. Education of parents
8. Age
9. Special subject
10. The course
11. The residence

Inquiry main objective consisted in collecting contexts with the Chechen idioms, to consider their use in speech. The carried out analysis has allowed to define the possession level of the Chechen language, to make a picture about a language situation in republic, to reveal the attitude to language, knowledge of idioms, operating with them, the semantic features shown in speech. The language situation in republic is characterized by penetration of Russian into informal colloquial-everyday sphere of communication, mixture of Russian and Chechen speech.

According to the inquiry, the percent freely knowing the Chechen language (51,6 %) has appeared a little higher, than Russian (49,2 %). 70 % of the interrogated students aspire to know the Chechen language perfectly and explain it in a greater degree (39,8 %) by fear of disappearance of language. In it the realization by young people of a language situation in republic, influences of Russian and its penetration into informal sphere of communication is traced. Nevertheless, 42,5 % not aspiring to know the Chechen language perfectly consider sufficient that are able to speak.

Table 1. «How do you estimate your knowledge of Russian?»

Variants of answers	Respondents
fluent	49,2
good	32,9
speak badly	2,8
understand, but don't speak	14,4
other	0,7
total	100

Despite prompt influence of Russian on the Chechen language, as a whole freely knowing Russian there was half from 100 %. So, the present population of the Chechen republic is basically the former inhabitants of villages. During the conflict and post conflict periods there was a stratification of the population of Grozny, outflow of inhabitants in different cities of Russia and abroad. In villages during the Soviet and Post-Soviet time teaching was conducted in the Chechen language and 100 % of the population made representatives of the Chechen nationality. The knowledge of Russian was insufficient and low, received on Russian and literature lessons, from reading books in Russian. At the moment in Grozny live 80 % of natives from villages. Preferable language of communication is Chechen, 98 % interrogated do not speak Russian in daily language practice. Nevertheless, among young men the tendency of communication in Russian is traced, it gets into the Chechen language that is shown in the mixed speech, in use of Russian words for denotation of those or other subjects and concepts.

For example, everywhere use Russian numbers, the Chechen numbers, since 20, use less frequently, especially among the young. Possibly, it is connected with a choice of the way from difficult to easy, to simplification. The Chechen numbers are more difficult.

Table 2. «Do you aspire to know the Chechen language perfectly?»

Variants of answers	Respondents
Yes	70,0
No	11,1
I find it difficult to answer	18,9
Total	100

Table 3. «If do not aspire, why?»

Variants of answers	Respondents
There is no strength of will	5,2
It is enough that I am able to speak	42,5
It is enough that I understand	14,5
There is no time	13,5
What else?	8,3
I find it difficult to answer	16,0
Total	100

The choice by the majority of the answer - enough that I am able to speak is caused by various factors. One of them is connected with how much language is claimed in a social sphere. As it is known, an official language of communication in republic and in the country is Russian, teaching is conducted in the given language and at work there is also no necessity to know the Chechen language, to write in the Chechen language reports, letters, to carry out actions. All operations, all work passes in Russian, except for separate channels of television and editions of magazines and newspapers. Thus, an important aspect of full existence of language is its place, demand for it in a society.

Table 4. «If aspire to know the Chechen language perfectly, by what is it caused?»

Variants of answers	Respondents
Influence and example of people around	28,5
The demand of relatives and friends	4,7
Fear that the Chechen language will disappear	39,8
What else?	10,5
I find it difficult to answer	16,4
Total	100

Language disappears under the influence of another language, being gradually forced out from the use. This process can proceed naturally, other language is not imposed, but makes a strong impact in view of its status in the country, changing lexical structure of language of minority and bringing changes. Other variant of aspiration to know the Chechen language was

that it is a native language, the language of the nation defining its socio-cultural self-identification.

«Is the Chechen language taught at your university, at your faculty?»

92 % have answered that the Chechen language is taught at the university. The Chechen language is taught at schools and is proceeded at the university on 1st, 2nd courses, accordingly pupils know written language bases.

As a whole by results of inquiry it is possible to estimate the knowledge of the Chechen language as above an average. The problem put at carrying out the inquiry, has been fulfilled, contexts with idioms have been collected in necessary for making an objective analysis volume.

3.2. *Linguistic aspect*

Thus, functioning of the Chechen idioms closely intertwines with social factors. So, many idioms leave the active use, become outdated, others on the contrary become frequent (for example, ахча даккха (lit. money to extract) - to "earn"). In the analyzed contexts the idiom *ахча дакккха* has meanings: 1) it is heavy to earn, 2) to work, to earn (at work), 3) to earn on bread.

Ахча даккха атта дац, хъанал даккха гуттара а. To earn money is not easy, but fair – always.

Ахча даккха болх бан беза, и бан хъекъал хила деза. To earn money it is necessary to work but to work, mind is necessary.

In many contexts the difficulty to earn if there is no education is underlined. One of the most often used idioms according to the inquiry (88,6 % heard and 65,3 % use) that is connected with the demand in modern society.

Inquiry of informants has allowed to reveal both semantic properties of idioms in speech, and a fragment of a current state of the Chechen language (one of its subsystems - phraseological).

Results of research have shown that:

- Idioms with archaic grammatical and semantic structure are less often used and not recognized by native speakers.

- Idioms with the transparent inner form semantically variable, find out polysemy, in contexts get additional meanings that grows out of influence of the inner form on an actual meaning.
- Idioms with the transparent inner form syntactically are not steady, in contexts are exposed to violation of phraseological unity
- Cultural-specific idioms are defined by native speakers depending on the presence of background cultural knowledge.

The analysis shows that some idioms are almost unrecognizable and not used. Idioms with less transparent semantic structure are badly distinguished and less often met in colloquial contexts. For example, 5 % often heard an idiom *са бага кхача (кхаъчна) / бага са а кхаъчна*. The idiom *са бага кхача* as inquiry shows, is seldom used and the main meaning «to be tired of smth., doing smth.». Only in one context it is mentioned in reference to work.

Са де ваша *са бага а кхаъчна* къа хьобгуш ву, ше доьзал кхаба г1ерташ.

My uncle (the daddy's brother) *works, without being tired*, trying to support the family.

10,7 % heard the idiom *оьна яьккха санна*. Meanings of the idiom in contexts: 1) to work in study (to learn), 2) to sit down for something (for any employment), not necessarily for work. As inquiry shows, the idiom is used rather seldom and leaves everyday language, passing into the passive stock of language reflected in the dictionary.

Оьна яьккха санна чувовлла 1амош вара 1ела. Iela have been learning *without raising the head*.

Б1аьстенан дийнахь стоьмийн синтар д1адог1а латта охкуш, *оьна яьккха санна юха ца волуш, чувовлла* иза. In the spring afternoon, he *has steeped in work*, digging up the earth for tree planting.

Thus a ratio, how often native speakers heard and use idioms in speech, does not coincide. The percent of how often heard, half exceeds percent of frequency of the use. It can be caused by unwillingness to think out contexts, implicit language knowledge when the native speaker does not realize or does not notice that he uses this or that expression and how often, imperfect mastery of a language, gradual reduction of use of those or other idioms in colloquial practice, age of interrogated - 72,3 % - from 16-20 years.

Idioms with a more transparent inner form found out variations of meanings, polysemy – *сийна клур эькхийтана*, 70,4% often heard this idiom, 42,3% often use.

The idiom as contexts have shown, is used in following meanings:

- 1) to work with might and main, actively,
- 2) to do affairs about the house (to sweep etc.),
- 3) to kick up dust, smoke (about the car, a horse),
- 4) to set fire, make a fire,
- 5) to quarrel.

Сийна кIур эkkхийтана болх बारे terra, делкъале бевлира мехкарий болх чекх баьккхина.

As the girls have *actively started to work*, so till dinner they have finished the work.

Also such idioms are prone to violation of phraseological unity - *гIуллакх дIакхехъа*, 57,3% often heard, 36% often use.

Бахархойн *гIуллакх* тIе а лавцна, и *дIакхехъа* кийча а, доьналла долуш вара юрт-да. The head of village was the courageous person, ready to incur business of people.

The idiom *куьйгаи ца satsosh/охъа ца доькуи* (41,2% often heard, 26% often use) has meanings: 1) to work without being tired (Physical work in a kitchen garden, about the house, at work), 2) to do something without being tired (to write, count, clap hands).

Сатасле хъала а гIабттина, *куьйгаи охъа ца доькуи* гIуллакхаш деш яра керла нус.

Having risen at daybreak, the new daughter - in-law *nonstop was busy* about the house.

Сацитас *куьйгаи ца сацои* беш охку. Sacita is digging up a garden, *nonstop*.

The idiom *дечунна мало йир йоцуи* (56,4% often heard, 34,2% often use) in contexts is used in the meaning «the hardworking person (more often in relation to the woman)».

Ахъа деш долу гIуллакх мало ца еш дича, *дечунна тIера* хуьлу. If you carry out the business without feeling sorry for forces, you are hardworking.

Дечунна мало йир йоцуи дика нус ю тхан. We have a good daughter - in-law who is very *hardworking*.

Other synonymous idioms *балхан тIера*, *кхъахъега мало ца еш* in contexts have meanings: 1) hardworking, loving work, 2) to work without feeling sorry for forces.

Дуьненах ваха лаахъ *балхан тIера* хила веза, кхъахъега мало ца еш.

If you want to live well, it is necessary *to be hardworking* and to work without feeling sorry for forces.

The idiom *куьйгаи Iумтарх* (31,2% often heard, 18% often use) in contexts has meanings: 1) «to work not much, do not try, to work easily », 2) «to work little by little to do something (about the house, with car, in a kitchen garden, with positive connotation)».

Куьйгаи Iумтарх г1уллакх хир дац, дика г1еверза веза хьо хьан белхан. If you *rummage in*, business will not go, you need to undertake the work well.

In the contexts received during the inquiry, the meaning of the Chechen idiom *лол бетта* follows from the inner form and is used in its dictionary meaning «to work somehow, negligently» as well as in the meaning «to work hard; to work, to earn», in this case corresponds to Russian *тянуть ляжку*, 43,4% often heard the idiom, 20,7% often use. Probably, interrogated leant against the direct reading connected with sewing business which is considered laborious and difficult.

Х1ора а шен *лол беттаи* шен рицкъ доккхуш ву. Everyone works, earning himself on livelihood.

И йоккха стаг хала *лол беттаи* шен доьзал кхаба г1ерта. An old woman *works hard*, trying to provide for her family.

The actual meaning of the idiom follows from its image component and touches first of all the seme “much work”. In the contexts the variation of form is possible. So in the given context to the form, fixed in the dictionary the component болх “work” is added – *ги боьттина болх*. The combination of the idiom with other lexemes gives different meanings, but the main sense stress remains on the seme – “very much”.

The meaning of culturally specific idioms with oblique inner form was defined with reference to the component structure and such idioms were considered not so familiar, seldom used. Thus not all informants could correctly understand the meaning of the culturally marked idiom *Абубешаран болх* (lit. Abubeshar work – «easy work») and define the source of the cultural component – proper name (expression from the play of A.H. Hamidov «Abubeshar»). Only 10 % interrogated often heard the given expression, 26,3 % - seldom heard, 57,7 % - never heard; 5,4 % - often use, 18,1 % - seldom, 67,4 % - never use. Nevertheless, in contexts the actual meaning has been correctly defined and followed from the internal form though oblique, idioms scornful, negative connotation has been understood. In some contexts into the dictionary meaning of the idiom «easy work» was introduced the seme «negligent, bad work».

Хьайн болх *Абубешаран болх* санна эрна байна ма хилийталахь.

Let your work will not be made in vain, as *work of Abubeshar*.

Thus, inquiry is an actual method of research of a current state of language, analysis of idioms semantics within the limits of one language, consideration of peculiarities of perception and representation of idioms meanings within one linguistic community.

4. Conclusion

In spite of the fact that the obtained data cannot be considered absolutely representative, sample from more than 300 informants gives an idea of the existing tendency, developing laws. Important there is also a supervision over perception of the idioms characterized by figurativeness. Such analysis reveals theoretical characteristics of idioms as a class of phraseological units. The language situation demands attention, working out the projects on popularization and improvement of knowledge of the Chechen language. Inquiry has shown that many idioms are used not so often and are unfamiliar to young representatives of the Chechen people while the group of people of the senior generation knew the meaning of these idioms, that is some idioms leave the active use. Idiomaticity is considered to be one of the indicators of the level of mastery of a language. The actual meaning of unfamiliar idioms was interpreted with support on component structure and the inner form.

Interesting is the fact that in such cases different informants deduced identical meaning of idioms. Students of the first courses have shown a bigger activity, diligence and knowledge at questionnaire filling, as well as students of Faculty of the Chechen philology. Certain group of students did not know written Chechen language as lived in cities of Russia.

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