

Chapter 18

Teleuts' Family and Kinship Ties: Socio–Demographic Background and Linguistic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The chapter is devoted to the description of current state of the Teleut language and culture (the indigenous minority of the North) in terms of contemporary socio-demographic processes, taking place in this ethnos, as well as in the aspect of reflecting of the Teleut language with the help of polysemantic units, understanding about family and kinship ties. Extralinguistic factors affecting the specificity of the bilingual linguistic personality of modern Teleuts are analyzed. The linguocultural conceptions about kinship ties, recorded in the Teleut linguistic worldview, are studied. The specificity of polysemy in the Teleut language is determined, based on the material of linguistic units, which call different types of kinship ties. The chapter consists of three sections, written by the project executors “Language and culture of Teleuts,” who were supported by grant RHSF/RFBR N° 17-04-00252 ONG/18.

INTRODUCTION

At present time, the study of the Teleut language has actual importance: Teleuts are the small indigenous minorities of the North, whose language is on the verge of extinction. The rich cultural potential of the Teleut language is revealed as part of the solution to the problem of language preserving: the significance of its comprehensive study is shown against the background of the danger of early loss.

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Teleuts' Family and Kinship Ties

Teleuts (self-name – Telengetter, Tadar, Bayat-pachat) are the indigenous minorities in the Russian Federation, one of the smallest nations of the South of Western Siberia (only about 2600 people). The preservation of the features of the Teleuts' worldview, their original linguistic worldview are promoted by the Linguistic-Cultural Teleut-Russian dictionary and Electronic propositional frame-based Teleut dictionary that are developed by scientists of Kemerovo Derivational School. The conception of the Propositional frame-based dictionary is to present the material in a frame form, which allows concentrate lexical units on a certain topic within one frame in order to make its integral perception and comparative study with the lexemes of other frames. All of this helps to preserve the bright color of Teleuts' worldview, to preserve their identity. Along with lexemes, contexts in the Linguistic-Cultural dictionary videos are also presented.

The study of the Teleut language is carried out within the framework of the propositional frame-based approach to the signs of verbal and non-verbal semiotic codes, revealing and explaining the propositional determination of the semantics of words and gestures.

The study of the Teleut language in this direction is relevant; it includes the modern paradigm of comparative description of various sign systems. Anthropological study of the language and physical signs is a problem of fundamental importance. In the course of linguistic and semiotic study, it is assumed that a number of thematic fields of everyday vocabulary and Teleuts' gestures will be further fixed and systemically described, as well as the completion of frames, which are important for Teleuts, representing discursively related names of culturally significant objects and phenomena. It determines the scientific novelty of the study.

In the process of studying the Teleuts' language and culture in the field conditions, databases containing video- and audio materials, as well as handwritten texts are formed. The work is carried out within the scope of Kemerovo Derivational School, which has existed for more than 26 years. The conception of propositional frame-based modeling is used by members of School in analysis of derived vocabulary of the Russian folk dialects, the Russian, Chinese, Kyrgyz and Teleut languages (over 1000 publications). Description of the Teleut language is made from cognitive positions, as it reveals the structures of different types of knowledge reflected in this language. Propositional connectedness of words and gestures reveals naive-linguistic and, more broadly, Teleuts' semiotic worldview. In order to identify cultural concepts, psycholinguistic experiments are carried out that is directed to elimination gaps in the long-term memory of Teleuts within the propositionally organized frames, representing Teleuts' pre-existing cultural life, the relics of which have survived to the present time. Description of Teleuts' verbal and sign language in the aspect of propositional frame-based modeling gives a full picture of the worldview, culture, manifested in the language and stored in long – term memory of the indigenous minorities of the North – Teleuts.

The global scientific problem of the research is the preservation of Teleuts' language and culture. Therefore, it becomes important to search for cultural foundations for the preservation of the endangered Teleut language.

Now, not only linguists, but also the global public organizations discuss the question about factors of certain language vitality, as well as about the undoubted importance of the preservation and, at least, the description of endangered languages of minorities (see, for example [UNESCO, 2003]).

In this way, the formulated scientific task includes the research, carried out in the context of significant ecology problems, in particular, linguistic ecology, which, among other things, solves the problem of the preservation of endangered languages – by analogy with endangered species (Vakhtin, Golovko, 2004, p. 112-113).

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