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**CULTUROLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF CHARMS (ON  
EXAMPLE OF FRENCH, ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES)**

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**Abstract**

The charms get the special attention of researchers who studied their morphology, vocabulary, invocations being performative by their nature. Performativity phenomenon is studied on the material of legal vocabulary, biblical texts without paying too much attention to the charms. In this paper, an attempt is made to classify charms basing on cultural aspects in order to study the performativity from the linguistic point of view. The success of the performativity of the plot is analysed through the methodology of speech acts, in particular, the connection of the solar cycle and the meaning of right - left in charms is considered which corresponds to the criteria of performatives felicity, that is, the procedure follows its conventional form. In most charms the ritual of right and left is remained having the meaning of good and evil correspondingly as well as acting incantations in the different parts of the day according to the charm objective.

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## **1. Introduction**

Many scholars as Austin J., Searle J., Wolf K., Proskurin S.G., Apresyan Yu.D., Paducheva E. V. have done research of performatives. The material for research is legal vocabulary, political discourse, biblical texts, but not charms which are naturally performative and represent a common part in different cultures.

### **1.1. Performatives**

Performatives were first mentioned in the lectures of John Langshaw Austin (1962) who called them statements that do not describe any events, but, unlike constative statements, are themselves actions. To utter a performative utterance means thereby to perform the corresponding actions, for example, to order, promise, assign a name. In charms, when examining its performativity from the point of view of semiotics, we can examine the text and its changes over time, since violating any of the four rules, for example, by using a certain etiquette formula incorrectly or not being in the relevant position in the right to carry out this action, the action in question becomes doubtful (Austin, 1962).

### **1.2. The felicity of performatives**

In his work Austin paid special attention to the fact that performatives cannot be true nor false but they can be felicitous or infelicitous in terms of conditions. The first one is the conventional procedure. In a charm the procedure will be represented by a rite. Jan Assman (2004) speaks of the succession of the rite by generations that very essence of the rite suggests reproducing the predetermined order, as much as possible in an unchanged form. So we can assume that the rites remain intact in most charms.

## **2. Problem Statement**

There are a lot of classifications according to the following principles: morphology and the plot, subject matter, there is a dictionary of charms made by Claude Lecouteux (2008) but there were not a try to classify the charms according cultural aspects which looks effective due to investigating the evolution of the charms parts. We identified the following cultural aspects:

- i. charms reflecting aspects of amulets
- ii. voice and silent charms
- iii. charms reflecting solar cycles
- iv. the idea of death

In this paper solar special attention will be paid at cycles in charms at solar cycles.

## **3. Research Questions**

Levy-Bruhl (1994) argued that in primitive consciousness the world is perceived as one, we are talking about a collective representation, where the law of participation works: mystical participation appears and nature acts as a mobile set of mystical interactions.

The worship of the Sun is the most logical and natural, since the life of all life on Earth depends on it. Mircea Eliade (1999) says that in Egypt, Asia and primitive Europe, what we call the worship of the Sun became so widespread that at times it rose (as, for example, in Egypt) to a predominant position. In the work «Slavic language modeling semiotic systems (Ancient period)», written by Ivanov and Toporov (1965), we find the emphasis on the fact that at the beginning of mythological time, the sun, like other luminaries, is absent. So the myths about the disappearance and return of the sun are the archaic, that is, we are dealing with the cyclical nature of time that Tolstoy (1996) speaks of, being the characteristic of Indo-European ethnic groups, since its foundations are extralinguistic, extrapsychological, extrahuman, connected with nature, with activity of the sun and its reflection on the earth How is the Sun reflected in charms? What is the connection between “right-left” and solar cycle?

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study is to determine felicitous or unfelicitous performatives reflecting solar cycles from the linguistic point of view.

#### **5. Research Methods**

To study performatives felicity, we used the methods of philological and semiotic analysis.

##### **5.1. Philological analysis**

Using philological analysis we can clarify the etymologies, justify the choice of the right way in semantic reconstruction and it is an important issue in investigating the tradition of linguistic cultures.

##### **5.2. Semiotic analysis**

Semiotic allows you to find out how the performativity in the plot is organized, with the help of what elements, helping to understand the deep meanings of the text.

#### **6. Findings**

As the Sun is worshipped most of all, the sunset direction was also important as it reflects the sun movement on the sky, from west to east, from right to left, from day to night, from life to death. As a result, the binary oppositions appeared contrasting right to left.

##### **6.1. Solar cycle**

The Slavs believed that the sun goes into the sea or underground every day, and after cooling down, reappears. Also, the sun mates with the earth at certain periods, and the agricultural year is connected with the solar annual cycle. The ancient Slavs divided the year into summer and winter, in turn, separated by the border, which accounted for the days when these periods were in full swing. Based on this, the agrarian period of the ancient Slavs was divided into four parts, while, as Tolstoy (1996) notes,

these periods do not coincide with the European division into seasons. According to Tolstoy, the ancient division corresponded to or obeyed the periods of the solar cycle allocated by the days of the equinox and the solstice. With the advent of Christianity, pagan beliefs were partially replaced and partially supplanted, for example, the feast of the Annunciation falls on the day of the spring equinox, and the Exaltation - on the autumn equinox, being the boundaries at which the earth "wakes up" or "goes to sleep" (Tolstoy, 2003). The other two milestones are the days of the winter and summer solstices which practically coincide with Christmas and the holiday of Ivan Kupala. Isomorphism of the division of the year and calendar days: summer corresponds to the day, winter to the night, dawn to the spring equinox, evening to autumn, noon to the summer solstice (Ivan Kupala), time from midnight to the first roosters - Christmas time, unbaptized days, at this time it is believed that the evil spirits "unbelt" and subside with the cry of the first roosters (Tolstoy, 2003). Such line we can observe in a charm plot against the child's insomnia in a collection of Russian charms made by Maikov (1869): the baby must be taken late in the evening to the barn where the chickens spend the night, saying: "Куры рабаи, куры с'браи, куры чорнаи, вазмита сваи криксы ... аддайтя наш сонъ" (p. 34), the translation is: speckled hens, grey hens, black hens take back your noise ... give our sleep (translated by Krivenko E.).

The boundary is the time of sunset and sunrise, when the evil spirit is present, it is open and vulnerable. It is this time that considered the most suitable for various magical actions, charms, witchcraft, appeal to higher powers, most often, evil ones. In the charm against the insomnia of a baby, the baby is put in the hem, then they have to go under the chicken perch and pray, in the evening to the west, and in the morning to the east, that is, facing the sun. In the same collection by Maikov (1869) there is a charm against a toothache where the sorceress goes out into the yard at night and, looking at the moon, says three times: "The golden month, your teeth don't hurt, God's servant doesn't hurt" (p. 37). In French charming tradition we can observe the same tradition of solar cycle. In the charm against stomach ache taken from the work by Camus (2013) before sunrise, the following charm has to be said, after having read Lord's prayer 5 times and Ave Maria 5 times: Sainte Madeleine, tiens bien l'osset, faites qu'il se relève pour (nommer la personne) † (p. 86) – it can be translated as: "Saint Madeleine, hold the bone and make it stand up (say the person's name)". As the charm is made at the boundary time of the day, when in magic thinking the evil is powerful, a special protection with prayers is needed with invocation to the most powerful saints.

## 6.2. Sunset direction

In ancient Indian mythology, there is a concept of "dakshina", meaning a gift presented to a brahman. Its etymology goes back to the ancient Indo-European designation of the word «right», Toporov (1987) speaks about etymology of this word: "avest. dasina-, lit. dasinas, slav. desn and further up to Greek.δεξιτερος, Latin dexter, irl. dess, etc.", assuming that originally the word "dakshina" meant the sacral favorable side (direction), part of the space — the right, in contrast to the unfavorable — the left (often tabooed). Also, in Hinduism and Buddhism there is a rite of "pradakshina", which consists in making a tour of the temple in the sunset direction, the right hand should be closer to the object of worship. So we can observe the parallel between "pradakshina" and Russian rite "posolon", which originally in Russian comes from the expression "from the sun". The main meaning according to the

dictionary edited by Dal (1866, p. 349): “according to the sun, along the course of the sun, from east to west, from the right hand (up) to the left”. Further, in the encyclopedic dictionary we find the following mention of solar cycle direction as a church rite: “the first mention of it as a church ritual, refers to the last quarter of the 15th century. In 1478, during the consecration of the Moscow Assumption Cathedral, Metropolitan Gerontius walked with crosses around the church "not at sunrise" (Brockhaus & Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1898, p. 688). That is, the sun moves from east to west, from right to left, then the binary opposition right-left is as important to the plot as the solar cycle.

### 6.3. Right – left

Proskurin (1990) in his work "On the meanings of "right—left" in the light of the ancient Germanic linguocultural tradition" traces the change in the meanings of right and left in the ancient Germanic languages. Initially, the right hand was perceived as more favorable, being active, in contrast to the left, more passive. In addition, the right hand symbolizes the masculine, while the left hand symbolizes the feminine. In the Old English period, there is a transition of the meaning "correct", "righteous". “Already in the Anglo-Saxon version of the Apocrypha of Nicodemus, the ryht-hand composite is found, meaning a righteous, charitable hand: Se Haelend be daere ryththanda me genam (N. 21) “The Savior took me by the right (righteous) hand” (Proskurin, 1990). The left hand holding the shield was considered “protective” (ibid.) Its name “winestra” “... approaches two Latin forms: on the one hand, *venus* “grace; love”, and on the other - *sinister* "left", therefore the semantic connection is natural - left - female - beautiful – protecting. In his work, Proskurin identifies the following binary oppositions which can be taken into account in charms research:

Right - left: honorary - dishonorable. Under the influence of Christian ideas, the right hand began to be perceived as more honorable than the left.

Right - left: heavenly - earthly. The opposition of the eternal divine to the perishable earthly life. «On his swidran handa waere lang lif, and on his winestran waere wela and wyrdmyht» (Past. 389) – «On the right hand was eternal life, on the left was wealth and honor» (printed according to (Proskurin, 1990).

Right – left: positive - negative. The left is associated with failure, the motive for choosing the road in legends is connected with this - cf. ... they come to a crossroads, and there are two pillars. On one pillar it is written: "Whoever goes to the right will be the king"; on another pillar it is written: “Whoever goes to the left will be killed” (Ivanov & Toporov, 1965, p. 92). This opposition is also traced in charms. Plot against theft in Old English: «you should "turn" to the left and say: «Ponne pe man hwaet forstele awrit pis swigende and do on pinne winstran sco under pinnen ho ponne geacfaxt pu hit sona» (Ch. 396) "When someone steals something, write it in silence and put it in your left heel shoe, then you will soon hear about it" (Proskurin, 1990, p. 38).

Right-left: healthy - sick. In the charm against a a swarm of bees, we find the following: «Take earth, with your right hand throw it under your right foot, and say, - "I take under foot; I have located it. Lo, earth is a protest against every sort of creature, And against hatred and against forgetfulness, And against the mighty spell of man». (Take the earth with your right hand, throw it under your right foot and say - I take it under my foot and put it there, Oh, the earth is strong against all living entities, against hatred and unconsciousness, and against strong human spells) (Grendon, 1909, p. 169). We can see the

same tradition in a Russian charm against toothache, where it is needed to spit over your left shoulder saying: «John confessed the truth in dry wood and water: I was in the field, I saw the dead. The teeth of the dead don't hurt. So that I, the servant of God, do not get sick» (Maikov, 1869, p. 37). Against epilepsy in French charms there is the following charm: the word † Ananizapta † must be said to the patient in the right ear, shaking his knee (Lecouteux, 2008, p. 92). In the collection of charms by Camus there is a charm where the cross should be contoured on the burn with the right index finger saying: «Brulûre, brulûre, je te conjure de faire partir ta violence aussi vite que Judas a trahi Notre seigneur Jésus-Christ au mont des Olives» (Camus, 2013, p. 56) (Burn, burn, I conjure you to let go of your power as quickly as Judas betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives). As we see, the right ear, the right index symbolise good side, the side of health.

The descriptive statistics is presented in Table 1. The French charms were taken from Gimoires (Lecouteux, 2008), “Charms. Research into healing secrets” (Camus, 2013), English charms come from “Anglo-Saxon charms” (Grendon, 1909), Russian charms are from “Charms in the Russian handwritten tradition, XV-XIX centuries” (Toporkov, 2005) and “Great Russian charms” (Maikov, 1869).

**Table 1.** Solar cycles used in charms

Sun mention	French charms (number)	English charms (number)	Russian charms (number)
	(Grimoire (130) /popular (152))		
In the morning	3/12	2	2/9
In the evening	0/4	4	3/10
right	11/24	3	0/4
left	0/0	2	1/1
Sunset direction	0	1	1/0

As it can be seen from the table the most French and Anglo-Saxon charms mention the right side. In Grimoires the charms helping the woman in labour or in love charms it is prescribed to wear the written incantations on the right hand or say in the right ear. In French popular charms which are more recent and have undergone changes during Christianity where the right acquired the meaning of good while the left of the evil and, taking into account that illnesses were understood as demons' possession, most of rites include actions with the right hand and in the morning when there is already the sun. Anglo-Saxon charms have more mentions about rites in the evening, usually the charms are said after the sunset, for example, in the charm for toothache: For toothache, sing the following very often after sunset: “Caio laio quaque, uoaque ofer saeloficia sleah manna wymm.” Then name the man and his father, next say: “Lilumenney it aches beyond telling when he lies down; it cools when on earth it bums most fiercely; finity amen” (Grendon, 1909, p. 171). The charm makes allusion of ache going away like the sun goes away, the sunset representing the sun dying. The left was mentioned only in English and Russian charms, English charms were against a dwarf and theft, in the former, the rite of crossing was described: “you must sing the charm, which is stated below, first into the left ear, then into the right ear, then over the man's head” (Grendon, 1909, p. 167). In Russian tradition the left was used in the love charm which had to be put written under left heel, as this charm was directed to the woman's love and it was the man who acted, so the left side is quite justified because the left can also signify the female part.

The charms from the collection made by Maikov (1869) are dated a bit later than the charms from the collection by Toporkov (2005). Like the difference between popular charms and charms from Grimoires, Russian charms collected by Maikov have more sun references. The charms are prescribed to be pronounced in the evening (against different illnesses, like fever, “Заговаривают по вечерним зорямъ; заговоръ читаютъ трижды, отплеывая послѣ каждого раза въ лѣвую сторону со словами: Покуда я плюю, потудабъ рабу (имя рекъ) хворать.с.г.( pronounce charms three times in the evening at the sunset spitting each time to the left and saying : while I am spitting, the God’s slave is being ill” m-translated by Krivenko E.). Here the charm is enforced with the action of spitting to the left, the side of evil; or in the morning, especially, in love charms.

Чѣтается по утреннимъ зорямъ. Встану, раба Божія (имя рекъ), благословясь и пойду перекрестясь изъ дверей въ двери, изъ воротъ въ ворота, въ чистое поле. въ восточную сторону, подъ утреннюю зорю, подъ красное солнце, подъ младъ мѣсяць, подъ частыя ярья звѣзды... (Maikov, 1869, p. 16).

(It is read in the morning dawns. I will rise, the servant of God (the name of ...), blessed and go crossing from door to door, from gate to gate, into an open field, to the east, under the morning dawn, under the red sun, under the young moon, under the frequent bright stars - translated by Krivenko E.). In this love charm the sun is mentioned 3 times – I go to the east, morning dawn, red sun – to make it more performative in mythological consciousness as the sun worship is the most archaic.

The Russian charm against furuncle says: «Очертить среднѣмъ пальцемъ правой руки сукъ у двери или оконнаго косяка, приговаривая: Какъ сохнетъ и высыхаеъ сукъ, такъ сохни и высыхай, болеть; отъ перста нѣтъ огня, отъ чирья ни ядра.» (Maikov, 1869, p. 59) The charm means the following: outline with the middle finger of the right hand on the bough at the door or window jamb, saying: “As the bough dries and dries, so dry and dry, sick; there is no fire from the finger, not a kernel from the boil. The action seems to be analogy – the bough is drying, so the furuncle is dying.” The law of participation functions here, that is, the furuncle must dry as the bough, from the other side, in popular French charms collected by Camus (2013) there is a rite to make a cross of the right-hand finger. It can be assumed that before in charms the finger of the right hand was outlining the burning or furuncles, this rite we meet in the charms against burning (7 charms) like N21: avec l’index droit, faire le sign de croix sur la brûlure en disant... (Camus, 2013, p. 56) (make the sign of the cross over the burn with the help of the finger of your right hand and say...), and to confirm our assumption we meet the charm N22: cerner la brûlure avec le grand doigt de la main droite puis reciter... (Camus, 2013, p. 56) - outline the burn with the big finger of the right hand then recite. The performative of those charms is questioned in this case.

## 7. Conclusion

The rite is unchanged over time. The solar cycle is important for charming practice, the time depends on the solar cycle when one should turn to otherworldly forces. The solar cycle is reflected in the sunset direction ritual, moving from right to left, and it can also be traced through the binary opposition - right - left, which also affects the performativity of the plot.

## 7.1. Performative felicity

The charms were investigated to understand the first criteria of performative felicity, that is, conventional procedure, the tradition in the charms rites could not be followed, they differ in every level of culture. If to take them individually, understanding the connection between sun, solar cycles and right/left, we can assume that they are performative from the semiotic point of view.

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