

# Compound Words and Collocations as Linguistic Units Reflecting Ethnographic Reality in the Georgian Language

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**In the Georgian language, from the ethnolinguistic standpoint, certain pairs of associatively connected words and compounds derived from them in dialects are important. The peculiarities of the semantics of these units are conditioned by the reality in which the traditional society lives. The same can be said about collocations, through which stereotyped behaviors or actions (i.e. customs and rituals) reinforced by traditions are directly named in the language. Compound words and collocations contain notable information for ethnolinguistic studies. The importance is given to the data analysis of ethnographic texts, which allows, when characterizing the semantics of a relevant linguistic unit (compound word, collocation), to take into account a certain context of its use. © 2022 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.**

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In modern linguistics, the relationship between language and culture, language and society, language and human being is as a topical problem. As Ch. F. Hockett rightly and impressively said: "Linguistics without anthropology is sterile; anthropology without linguistics is blind" [1: 675].

In the ethnographic reality of any people it is especially evident the stereotype character of ideas, views, relationships, norms of behavior and actions, which are strengthened by traditions. It is characterized by stability and regularity, multiple repetition in the same form which is reflected in the language: this or that stable stereotypical behavior,

action or event (e. g., custom, ritual) is denoted and expressed by a stable linguistic unit in the discourse of traditional society. It is worth noting the fact that this or that compound word or collocation in the discourse of the traditional society can have such a connotation that is unusual for discourse of the modern society.

This time the focus is on one of the aspects of the discourse of traditional society, namely, how the mentioned situation is reflected through some compound words and collocations. The importance is given to the data analysis of ethnographic texts (description of traditional customs and rituals),

which allows, when characterizing the semantics of a stable linguistic unit (compound word, collocation), to take into account a certain context in which this or that unit is used. Ethnographic texts containing descriptions of the traditional life, customs and rituals of the Georgian people and abundant empirical material have been collecting and recording by researchers, writers and public figures since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. These texts have been published as books. Ethnographic texts have preserved many linguistic data containing ethnocultural information that has not yet been the subject of special study in Georgian and Caucasian linguistics. The concept of the *context of situation* used in linguistics by J.R. Firth [2: 7-33; 3: 137-167] is borrowed from the prominent anthropologist B. Malinowski's ethnographic theory of language [4: 3-74; 5: 398-401; 6: 139-155], according to which the characteristic sign of the analysis of words, expressions and texts should be their contextualization, i. e. description in which situations and how they are used [4: 73].

A certain associative relationship can arise between two words in a language, if they regularly occur next to each other. For example, in the Georgian language, the word **ia** "violet" is closely associated with the word **vardi** "rose", which is reflected in the language (especially in poetry, folklore texts...). It is also natural for Georgian to connect the words **ᄡuri** "bread" and **ᄡvino** "wine", from which the compound word **ᄡur-ᄡvino** "food, sustenance (for guest)" is derived. There is also a regular antonymic relation (especially in poetry) between the words **txa** "goat" and **mgeli** "wolf", etc. Over a certain period of time and under certain conditions, it is possible to turn some such pairs of words into compound words, that is, to turn them into stable lexical units.

From the ethnolinguistic viewpoint it is important the analogous pair of words **ᄡvali** "bone" and **gvari** "family", "clan", which is unfamiliar to literary Georgian, but in the Khevsurian dialect the copulative compound **ᄡval-gvari** derived from this

pair of words is attested, which has the collective meaning "family, clan, relatives". A parallel to it is observed in the Svan language in the form of collocations: **ᄡiᄡwiᄡ nāti** "close relative" (literally "bone relative"), **ᄡiᄡwiᄡ liᄡwᄡe** "violation of the rule of exogamy in the clan" (literally "breaking a bone") [7: 888]. In relation to such naming, it is worth noting one old custom confirmed in the ethnographic reality of the Khevsurians: if a young woman and a young man who were relatives to each other had violated the rule of exogamy, the whole clan would have gathered. They would dig up the grave of the dead relative of the sinful young man, take out the shin bone from there, break it in two, throw one piece to one side, the other to the other side, and call out: *dyeis amas ikit čven gaᄡrilni ort gvaritacad' ᄡvalitac* "From today, we are separated by both *clan* and *bone*" [8: 279; emphasis added]. A similar custom was forgotten earlier in Svaneti, but traces of its existence have been preserved in the language in the form of a collocation (**ᄡiᄡwiᄡ liᄡwᄡe** "violation of the rule of exogamy", literally "breaking a bone").

In parallel to the lexicological and word-formation analysis, as aforesaid, it is important to consider pairs of words from the standpoint of their use in a certain context.

For example, N. Baliauri has described an old ritual in the traditional society of Khevsureti, related to the ostracism of sister's children, severing kinship ties and all relations with them, due to their certain guilt. Attention is drawn to the words uttered in public during the performance of this ritual: *gaigonet ᄡacma' diacm, berma' axalm, soplel' ᄡᄡmart, mᄡerma' moᄡetem, cama' dedamičam, kvama' xem, sulma, ᄡvarma, rom čven otx ᄡman tavis col-ᄡvilit, orn dani ukmarᄡvilod, viᄡvett di-čulebs...* "Let hear *man* [and] *woman*, *old* [and] *young*, *villager* [and] *guest*, *enemy* [and] *well-wisher*, *sky* [and] *earth*, *stone* [and] *tree*, *soul*, *shrine* that we, four brothers with their wives and children and two unmarried sisters ostracize sister's children..." [9: 93; emphasis added].

In the fragment of the text, as it is seen, the following pairs of words stand out: **ḡaci** "man" and **diaci** "woman (married)", **beri** "old" and **axali** "young", **sopleli** "villager" and **ṡṡumari** "guest", **mṡeri** "enemy" and **moḡete** "well-wisher", **ca** "sky" and **dedamiḡa** "earth", **kva** "stone" and **xe** "tree". In general, various specific words, phrasemes, sentences, texts, performatives and also glossolalia which accompany a ritual related to this or that traditional custom, are visible in the discourse of traditional society. Along with this, ritual texts are noteworthy as they are characterized by stereotype feature, regular use, repetitiveness of certain words, phrases and sentences.

To characterize the peculiarity of the way of life and worldview of the traditional society, from the point of view of linguistic reflection, the pair of words **sopleli** "villager" and **ṡṡumari** "guest" given in the quoted fragment of the ethnographic text is noteworthy.

The peculiarity is that in the Khevsurian dialect these words are antonyms to each other, while the associative connection of the words **sopleli** "villager" and **ṡṡumari** "guest" as well as the opposition of these words is unfamiliar to literary Georgian.

This peculiarity is conditioned by the fact that the word **sopleli** in the Khevsurian dialect has narrower and specific semantics and means "fellow villager, neighbor" and not "inhabitant of a village" in general, as it is in literary Georgian, and the word **ṡṡumari** "guest" in A. Shanidze's "Dictionary of mountain dialects" it is given according to Khevsur Besarion Gabuuri's unambiguous and clear definition: *ṡṡumar ḡven ḡvikvian sxva sopleṡiit masuls. tavis sopleis ḡacs ṡṡumar ar xkvian* "We call a guest a man from another village. A man from own village is not called a guest" [10: 403; emphasis added].

For its part, this opposition of the mentioned words reflects the collectivist mentality characteristic of the traditional society of the village of Khevsureti, based on the traditionally

formed firm unity of the members of this society (for the ethnological analysis of this phenomenon, see 11: 135-139): as a rule, the inhabitants of one village or community were considered servants of a common shrine (Khevs. dial. **ṡṡvaris ḡmebi** "serfs of shrine"); They had their own public self-government; There was common land use; Mutual assistance was characteristic of fellow villagers; There was a strict rule of exogamy, that is, marriages between fellow villagers were not allowed; cf. in the ethnographic text: *soplelebi ort. tavis dasavit unda ṡcamdas soplelt kali* "We are villagers (i.e. fellow villagers. – L.A.). The villagers should consider a young unmarried [fellow villager] woman as their sister" [9: 36; emphasis added]; therefore married women (daughters-in-law) were usually brought from other villages; ostracism (banishing from a village, clan, community; Geo. **moḡveta** "ostracize", literally "cut") was the most severe punishment for an individual. Thus, the village of Khevsureti represented a kind of microcosm, and the echo of the firm unity of its inhabitants is just the specific meaning of the word **sopleli** in the Khevsurian dialect – "fellow villager", "neighbor".

The semantics of the word **hobol** denoting "guest" in one of the Dagestani languages – Avar – is somewhat noteworthy. In the Avar language, the word **hobol**, in addition to its common meaning ("guest"), also has the connotation of "inhabitant of another village" and can be used not only in relation to a person, if the attributive suffix **-ab** (non-human class suffix) is added to it, e.g., **hobol-ab hoj** "dog of another village". It should be noted that the Dagestan village also represented a kind of microcosm with its traditional way of life and collectivist mentality, but it was sharply different from the Georgian mountain village in that the rule of endogamy operated in Dagestan, i.e. marriages took place between fellow villagers, while marriage relations with residents of other villages were considered unacceptable.

The opposite of this is the rule of exogamy among the Georgian mountaineers, which was also reflected in the language. From this standpoint, in the mountain dialects of the Georgian language (Khevsurian, Pshavian, Tushian) the copulative compound **kal-zali** is noteworthy, which represents a collective word and its meaning is "female representatives of the village population". As aforesaid, in the highland region of Eastern Georgia, according to the rule of exogamy, marriage of a man and a woman of the same village was forbidden, and the expression of this rule is presented by the opposition of the words **kali** "young unmarried woman" and **zali** "daughter-in-law" in the mentioned compound word: **zali** was called a married woman who, according to the rule must have been brought from another village, and **kali** in mountain dialects is not identical in meaning to the same word in literary Georgian ("female person" in general). In a mountain village, **kali** was the name of a young unmarried woman, who was born and raised in the same village. In case of marriage, she would also become a **zali**, but in another village. From the linguistic viewpoint it is interesting that in modern literary Georgian **kali** ("female person" in general) and **rzali** ("daughter-in-law") do not form a pair of words with opposite meanings, while in mountain dialects the same words appear as antonyms. As it is seen, the opposition of these words in the mountain dialects is directly determined by the everyday reality of traditional society.

Along with compound word formation, obvious examples of linguistic reflection of ethnographic reality can also be found in phraseology, which manifests itself in the form of peculiar collocations. With this type of collocations, stereotyped behaviors or actions reinforced by traditions, which are called customs and rituals, are directly named in the language.

For example, **topis ayeba** "taking a rifle" is completely free and ordinary syntagma in literary Georgian and does not have any other special

content in it. But the situation is different in the discourse of traditional society. This collocation has a specific connotation in the ethnographic context. In particular, in the Khevsurian dialect **topis ayeba** was also called one of the customs associated with blood feud, according to which an avenger was no longer allowed to shoot a rifle at the murderer or his relatives if a murderer managed to sneak secretly into the main shrine of the avenger's village, to leave there silver bowl and the sacrificial cattle and to turn back secretly. This murderer's act was called **žvarši šaždoma**, literally "sit down in the shrine" (**žvarši** "in the shrine" + **šaždoma** "sit down inside"). If this ritual could have been performed, from now on it was already believed that the shrine took a murderer under its protection and an avenger, according to the rule, had "to take away" the rifle, i.e. did not shoot it to a murderer [12: 186-188; 13: 86]. The connotation of the verb **ayeba** ("taking") will be understandable in this context, if for an analogy it is brought the phraseme common in Georgian **xelis ayeba**, which means "to stop something", "to leave something", literally "taking hand" (**xel-i** "hand", Gen. case **xel-is** + **ayeba** "taking"), for example, in literary Georgian: man am sakmeze xeli aiyo "He stopped this case, he left this case" (Erg. case **man** "he" + **am sakmeze** "from this case" + **xeli** "hand" + **aiyo** "took").

Its use in certain context can also cause a structural change in the form of the word included in the collocation. An example of this is the Georgian dialect collocation **supris amaṭeba** "taking food and drink from the table" (Geo. **supra** "table with food and drink", "banquet table", "tablecloth", Gen. case **supr-is**). Here attention is drawn to the verbal form with verb prefix **a-**: **a-maṭeba**, which is unusual for literary Georgian and it is only a feature of the mentioned collocation. In literary Georgian, in such a case, the verb **a-lageba** "cleaning" is usually used, which also contains the verb prefix **a-**: **supris a-lageba** "clear the table". As for the form **a-maṭeba**, its emergence is conditioned by a certain belief: it was believed that if they did not

say so, the family would run out of victuals. The form **a-maṭ-eb-a** contains the same root as in the verbs **da-maṭ-eb-a** “adding”, **mi-maṭ-eba** “adding to”, but at the same time it still maintains verb prefix **a-**, which occurs in the verbs such as **a-lageba** “cleaning, tidying up”, **a-ḡeba** “taking”, etc.

At present, a large amount of appropriate material is scattered in ethnographic texts, texts recorded for dialectological purposes, dictionaries (bilingual, dialectal, explanatory, phraseological), ethnological works, etc. Ethnolinguistic analysis of the relevant material involves the study of the designations of certain ethnographic realities (traditional culture, social life, custom, ritual, worldview, beliefs and ideas ...), on the one hand, the study of how an ethnographic reality is designated through a compound or a collocation, and on the other hand, what connotation this or that linguistic unit can be represented by in the context of ethnographic reality, how its semantics is determined by specific ethnographic reality. Therefore, it is supposed to describe and analyze both the denotative and connotative meanings of

the corresponding linguistic unit, connotation being often due to extralinguistic factors. When it comes to dialectological vocabulary and phraseology, the need to take into account the relevant extralinguistic realities is especially felt.

The collection, classification and systematic study of this material on Georgian (as well as on other Kartvelian languages) and its dialects will allow scientists to undertake such an ethnolinguistic study in order to compare the relevant data of various peoples and languages of the Caucasus, which should reveal significant facts in terms of areal linguistics and typology, since the neighborhood, contacts and coexistence over the long history of peoples, speaking different languages of the Caucasus, led to the emergence of more than one similarity in the traditional life and culture of these peoples, and this, in turn, was reflected in their languages.

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*ენათმეცნიერება*

## კომპოზიტები და მყარი შესიტყვებები, როგორც ეთნოგრაფიული სინამდვილის ამსახველი ენობრივი ერთეულები ქართულ ენაში

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(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ა. არაბულის მიერ)

ქართულ ენაში, ეთნოლინგვისტური თვალსაზრისით, საყურადღებოა ასოციაციურად შეკავშირებულ სიტყვათა გარკვეული წყვილები და მათგან ნაწარმოები კომპოზიტები დიალექტებში. აღნიშნულ ენობრივ ერთეულთა სემანტიკის თავისებურებები განსაზღვრულია იმ სინამდვილით, რომელშიც ტრადიციული საზოგადოება ცხოვრობს. იგივე შეიძლება ითქვას მყარ შესიტყვებათა შესახებაც, რომელთა მეშვეობითაც ენაში უშუალოდ არის სახელდებული ტრადიციებით გამყარებული სტერეოტიპული ქცევები თუ ქმედებები (წეს-ჩვეულებები, რიტუალები). კომპოზიტები და მყარი შესიტყვებები შეიცავს საყურადღებო ინფორმაციას ეთნოლინგვისტური კვლევებისათვის. მნიშვნელოვანია ეთნოგრაფიული ტექსტების მონაცემთა ანალიზი, რაც საშუალებას იძლევა, სათანადო ენობრივი ერთეულის (კომპოზიტის, მყარი შესიტყვების) სემანტიკის დახასიათებისას გათვალისწინებულ იქნეს მისი გამოყენების გარკვეული კონტექსტი.

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