

## “CAUCASIAN MOUNTAIN MAN / SCOTTISH HIGHLANDER”: CORRELATION BETWEEN SEMANTICS AND CULTURE

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**Abstract:** The research focuses on Russian and English concepts ‘Caucasian mountain man’ and ‘Scottish Highlander’; The comparative-contrastive analysis of the vocabulary definitions of the concepts under consideration is conducted, which makes it possible to build the lexical-semantic fields of both lexical items in Russian and English. This stage of research helps to turn to the linguistic-cultural fields of these concepts construction. All collected data are systematized in schemes reflecting the linguocultural differences and common areas.

**Keywords:** concept, lexeme, lexical item, lexical-semantic field, linguistic-cultural field

### 1. Introduction

Language is a system each level of which is characterized by an integrity and a specific organization of its homogeneous and interdependent elements. Basing on the works by N.N. Amosova, M.L. Apazheva, I.V. Arnold, Sh. Bally, L. Weisgerber, L.M. Vasilieva, V.V. Vinogradov, L.V. Shcherba, in this article, the lexical system is understood as *an ordered set of lexical units, correlated and / or opposed in their meaning and structure*. Particular attention is paid to such a characteristic feature of the lexical system as its correlation to particular extralinguistic factors (Apresyan, Yu.D., 1995).

## 2. Objectives/Purpos of the study

The research aims at revealing differences and similarities between the Russian concept ‘Caucasian mountain man’ and the English concept ‘Scottish Highlander’ by creating lexical-semantic fields of the lexical items *mountain man* and *highlander* in Russian and English.

## 3. Methodology and sub headings

### 3.1. Definition Analysis

To build a semantic field, the analysis of lexicographical and encyclopedic sources, as well as the Internet resources associated with lexical items ‘*гopeц*’ *mountain man* (in the Russian language) and *highlander* (in English) was made. The definition of the word *mountain man* (in the appropriate context for the present research) was found only in 18 sources.

Consider the definitions of a lexical unit *mountain man* relevant to this research:

1) resident of the mountains (Efremova, T.F., 2000), (Lermontov, M.Yu. URL: <http://e-libra.ru/read/194489-izmail-bej.html>), (Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English. 2000).

2) mountain dweller (Scott, W. URL: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7025/7025-h/7025-h.htm>).

3) national name of ethnic groups living in mountainous areas (Ozhegov, S.I., Shvedova, N. Yu., 1997).

4) a person who lives in the mountains or born in such mountainous regions (Great Dictionary of Russian nouns, 2005).

Various dictionaries of foreign words of the Russian language provide us with a synonymic lexical item to the word *mountain man* – “abrek”. “Caucasian mountain men give such a name to a person who gave a vow to give up all the pleasures of life and be utterly brave; also a fugitive, adhering to some gang for robbery” (Chudinova, A.N., 1910), “the mountain man, who vowed implacable hatred for enemies,” “a thief, a desperate” (Popov, M., 1904), “during the period of joining the Caucasus to

Russia: a mountain man waging a struggle against the tsarist troops” (Krysin, L.P., 2008).

Note that there are no references to the Highlanders in Scotland in the dictionaries of the Russian language. However, turning to translation dictionaries (16 sources), several options of how the lexeme *mountain man* is translated into English can be found. In the core of the analysis of the materials taken from the Russian-English translation dictionaries, several translations of the word *mountain man*, were allocated, they are as follows: *mountain dweller*, *mountain man*, *highlander*, *hill-man*.

Let’s turn to the analysis of the lexical item *highlander* basing on the materials found in the English-English dictionaries. First, it can be noted that in the available dictionaries, this lexeme is not represented by a word-combination «mountain dweller», we can presume that it is not a typical construction for the representatives of the English-speaking cultures. Of all the analyzed dictionaries (201 sources) a particular interest falls onto Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 2000), MacMillan dictionary for Advanced learners (MacMillan Educ, 2006), and Webster's Online Dictionary (Webster’s Dictionary Online, 2012), because they give quite a complete definition to the item *highlander* and other lexical items correlated with this one.

MacMillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners defines *a mountain man* as “someone who climbs high of dangerous mountains / the one who climbs the mountains dangerous”, without noting other distinguishing characteristics. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary interprets *mountain man* as “a person who climbs mountains as a sport” – not mentioning the fact that the person is a resident of the mountains. Webster's Online Dictionary gives three possible definitions of the analyzed item: “1. Someone who climbs mountains. 2. An inhabitant of a mountain; one who lives among mountains. 3. A rude, fierce person”. This definition gives a range of contents which are interesting for our research. Namely, this definition added the lexical item *mountain*

*man* as a resident of the mountains, as well as the idiomatic meaning of the concept, treating it as a rude and fierce man.

Turning to the definition of the item *Scottish highlander*, it should be noted that in the reviewed English-language sources, it is interpreted quite concisely. Here are some examples. The online source Dictionary.com suggests the following definition: “a native of the Highlands of Scotland” (Scottish highlander, 2011). The Free Dictionary by Farex at the same time offers a completely identical definition (Scottish highlander, URL: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Scottish+Highlander>).

Most of lexicographical sources in English define the lexical item *highlander* as 1) “someone who comes from the Highlands / the Scottish Highlands” (14 sources – with the reference to the Highlands of Scotland); 2) “a person born or living in a highland” (four sources – respectively, any person living in the highlands); 3) “a soldier of a Highlands regiment” (four sources – with reference to military activity and the Scottish mountains).

The review of the definitions helps to highlight the following set of features that reveal the lexical meaning of the item *highlander*:

- 1) a resident of mountainous regions of Scotland – Scottish Highlands – Gaelic origin;
- 2) a person with warlike and rigorous character;
- 3) a representative of the Scottish army.

Thus, the lexical item *highlander* is mainly seen as going back to the traditional culture of Scotland.

Unfortunately, the item *mountain man* in the lexicographical sources in Russian is not so widely depicted, it can only be summarized that a *Caucasian mountain man* – is:

- 1) a mountain man who lives in the Caucasus mountains;
- 2) a resident of the mountains and mountainous regions (without any specific place name);
- 3) an abrek.

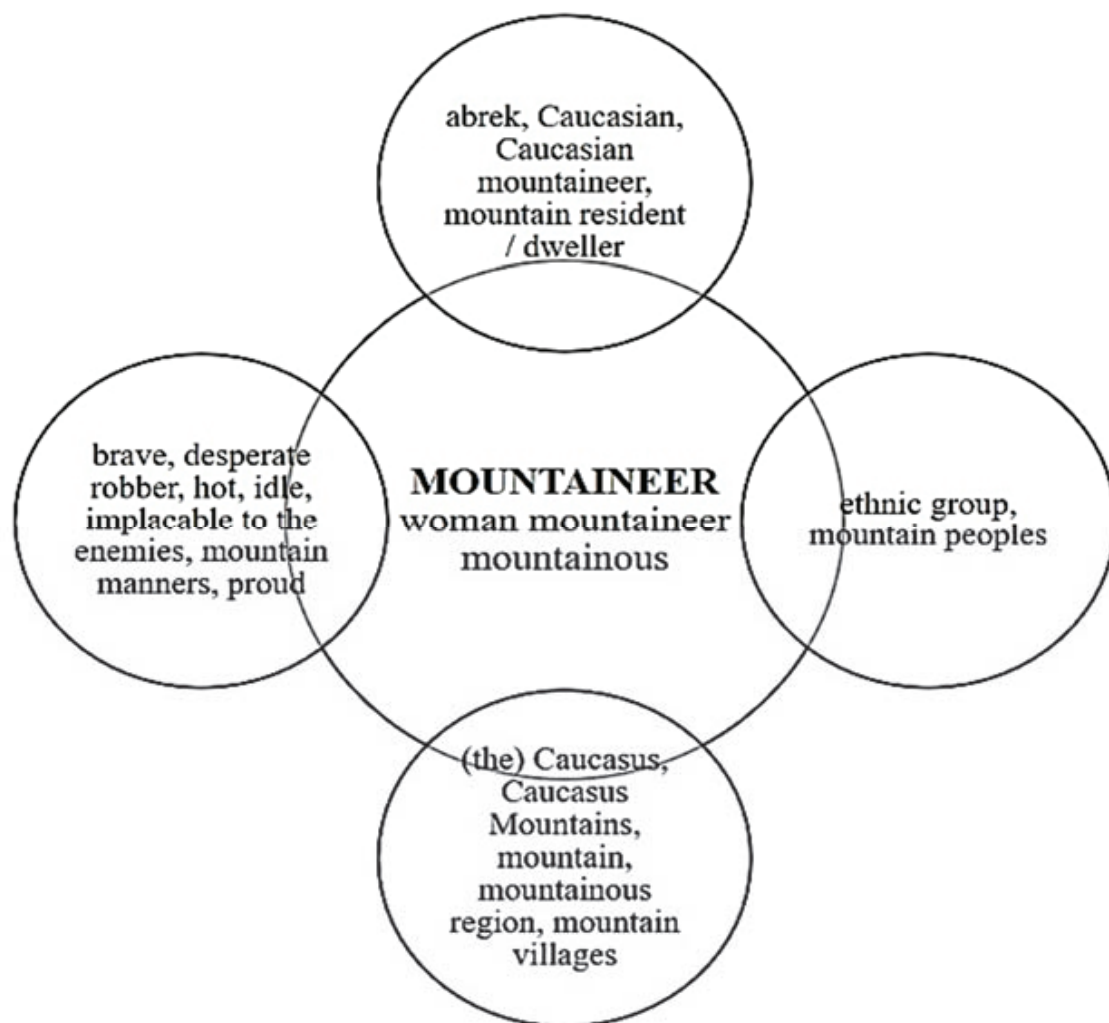
### 3.2. *Lexical-Semantic Fields*

Conceptual characteristics analysis of the lexemes *mountain man / highlander* in both Russian and English respectively allows us not only to identify their key definitional features, but also gives an opportunity for further study development, namely, the construction of lexical-semantic fields of these two lexical items.

According to the dictionary definitions, a lexical-semantic field of the lexeme *mountain man* includes the following number of items (we present them in the alphabetical order): *abrek, brave, Caucasian mountain man, Caucasian, (the) Caucasus, Caucasus Mountains, desperate robber, ethnic group, highland, hot, idle, implacable to the enemies, mountain peoples, mountain resident / dweller, mountain villages, mountain, mountainous, mountainous region, proud, woman mountaineer* – a total of 21 items. Five items from this list are synonymous, or specify the lexical item *mountain man* (*abrek, Caucasian, Caucasian mountain man, mountain resident / dweller*); One lexical item (*woman mountaineer*) – feminine of the central item; one item – an adjective derived from the item *mountain man* (*mountainous*); two lexical items characterize the social belonging of the *mountain man* (*ethnic group, mountain peoples*); five lexical items characterize the habitat of the *mountain man* (*(the) Caucasus, Caucasus Mountains, mountain, mountainous region, mountain villages*); seven items describe the behavioral features of the *mountain man* and his character (*brave, desperate robber, hot, idle, implacable to the enemies, mountain manners, proud*). Summarizing the results of this stage of the research, the *mountain man* lexical-semantic field scheme was constructed:

After considering the definitions found in the English-English dictionaries, it is possible to identify the items belonging to the lexical-semantic field of the lexeme *highlander* (we present them in the alphabetical order): *brave, fierce, Gael, Gaelic people, Highland dress, highlandman, hill-man, hospitable, kilt, “ladies from Hell”, mountain dweller, mountain man, mountains,*

*patient, rude, Scotland, Scottish Highlander, Scottish Highlands (the Highlands), shocking the enemy, soldier of Scottish regiments, tartan* – 21 lexemes in total. Seven of the given items specify the central lexeme *highlander* (*highlandman, hill-man, “ladies from Hell”, mountain dweller, mountain man, Scottish Highlander, soldier of Scottish regiments*), two lexical items determine the *highlander* heritage (*Gael, Gaelic people*), three lexemes determine the place of his living (*mountains, Scotland, the Highlands*), six items describe the character of the *highlander* (*brave, fierce, hospitable, patient, rude, shocking the enemy*), two tokens represent the traditional attire (*Highland dress, kilt, tartan*). After such an analysis, it turned out to be possible to build the *highlander* lexical-semantic field scheme:



**Fig. 1. Caucasian mountain man lexical-semantic field**



**Fig. 2. Scottish highlander lexical-semantic field**

Comparing the lexical-semantic fields of the lexemes *mountain man* and *highlander*, several similarities can be distinguished. They are as follows:

- 1) central lexical items in both languages are ethnonyms;
- 2) central lexemes in both Russian and English are clarified by the items with the same root or by the items-ethnonyms;
- 3) the definitions of both lexical items characterize the place of residence and the character features of the concepts indicated in the central lexeme; in addition, the place of living in both Russian and English is “mountains”, the character of a *mountain man/highlander* is, mainly – “warlike and ferocious” (compare:

*implacable to the enemies, desperate, brave – brave, fierce, shocking the enemy*).

Besides the obvious language differences, when comparing these two lexemes semantic fields, it should be noted that in the *highlander* lexical-semantic field, there is a definition of his heritage and the description of his national dress. However, the semantic field in Russian indicates the *mountain man* social belonging.

### **3.3. Linguistic-Cultural Fields**

Since the beginning of the 2000's a new trend in Russian linguistics has been observed. It is following from the lexical-semantic field of the concept to its linguistic-cultural field which tends to identify any concept with the perception of reality by an individual and by the society as a whole. That is why the interest in the semantic fields study in a number of works on comparative linguistics is so obvious, the thing is that the scientist cannot only describe the conceptual side of any lexeme in the language, but also determine the position of the concept associated with this lexeme in the linguistic culture and in the language consciousness of the country analyzed.

V.V. Vorobjev in his book “Cultural linguistics (theory and methods)” was first to introduce the concept of linguistic-cultural fields. The scientist brought out a new category – a linguistic-cultural field – *the field in which the choice and the correlation of its structural components are determined not only by the language but also by the culture*. In this case, the correlation among the elements of such a field is more complex and even multidimensional (Vorobjev, V.V., 1997).

To move from the lexical-semantic field to the linguistic-cultural one, in the present paper, the contextual analysis of fiction texts was carried out.

In fiction, the theme of the Caucasus and the Caucasian mountain men, just as the topic of the Scottish Highlands and their dwellers, is rather common. Folklore, especially Nart epic,



lies at the heart of the North Caucasian literature; but the literary tradition, which played an important role in its development, should not be forgotten. In the origin of the North Caucasus literature there are two basic traditions, the first one is Arabic and Turkic, the other one is the Russian language tradition, which is based on the creative works of such poets of the Caucasus as A.S. Pushkin, M.Yu. Lermontov, and L.N. Tolstoy (Zaraichenko, V.E., URL: <http://refdb.ru/look/2211610-p1.html>).

In the works of M.Yu. Lermontov, *mountain men* are the brave, courageous people who are, at the same time, good, honest, decent and able “to sacrifice their happiness”: “*To hit the enemy is not a crime. // The friendship’s faithful there, but revenge’s truer; // There’s good for good is given and blood – for blood. // And hatred is immeasurable as love*” (Krysin, L.P. 2008). Note the manners of *mountain men*, in which the writer expressed his surprise and satisfaction: “*Close to the alien grounds border// The peaceful auls were blooming. // Were proud of their mutual friendship // There's every traveler found / Lodge and welcoming feast ...*” (Lermontov, M.Yu., URL: <http://e-libra.ru/read/194489-izmail-bej.html>).

The heritage of Scottish literature is rich; it includes a lot of works written in different languages: English, Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Briton, French, Latin and many others. But, of course, Sir Walter Scott among all the world-famous authors of the literature of Scotland, was the most complete, colorful and quite objectively describing the life and traditions of *highlanders*. Historically, he was a descendant of the Highlanders, probably that is why the imagery of his characters is so complete and colorful: “*The imagination of the half-civilised Highlanders was less shocked at the idea of this particular species of violence, than might be expected from their general kindness to the weaker sex when they make part of their own families*” (Scott, W., URL: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7025/7025-h/7025-h.htm>).

Basing on these ideas, the decision to stop at the images of the *Caucasian mountain man* and *Scottish highlander*, presented

in the works by M.Yu. Lermontov and W. Scott was made. This choice is based not only on the identity of the century, which is represented in the works of both authors (the 19<sup>th</sup> century), but also on the fact that both M.Yu. Lermontov and W. Scott are famous for their special attitude to the *Caucasian mountain men / Highlanders* that will allow us to make the most comprehensive analysis of the considered concepts depicting their similarities and differences as the items belonging to different linguocultures.

In an attempt to structure the results of their linguocultural research, Russian linguists often turn to the method of ‘passportization’. ‘Passportization’ itself is *a collection of data related to some particular object or phenomenon, denoted by a word*. This method is widely used in Russian linguistics. For example, I.V. Vujovich in her PhD thesis “The Dynamics of Russian Lexical Keywords Background and Country Studies Teaching in the Hungarian High School” (1979) refers to the method of passportization in the Russian as a second language teacher training (Webster’s Dictionary Online, 2012). L.B. Voskresenskaya can be considered a follower of this approach. In her book “Linguistic Country Studies and the Passportization of the Vocabulary” (1985), this method is also referred to in the Russian as the second language teacher training (Vujovich, I.V., 1979).

Speaking of the text linguistics, the method of passportization was mentioned by M.M. Bakhtin (1986) in his article “The Problem of Text in Linguistics, Philology and Other Humanitarian Sciences. The Experience of the Philosophical Analysis”. According to M.M. Bakhtin, the passport of the text allows scholars to set its authenticity and to describe the special characteristics of the author (Bakhtin, M.M., 1986). The creation of “the corpus of the language” (and corpus linguistics respectively) can be probably considered a most modern case of text passportization (The Corpus of Russian Literary Language, URL: <http://www.narusco.ru/project.htm>).

The Russian anthropological linguistics perceptual features of the linguistic-cultural personality are analyzed with the

help of “the linguocultural personality passport”, suggested by O.A. Dmitrieva (Dmitrieva, O.A., 2007). This passport includes *an external image, clothes, age, gender, origin, location and characteristics of the dwelling, the scope of activities, leisure, marital status, environment, language features* of a separately considered linguocultural personality.

Basing on various approaches to passportization considered, it can be concluded that this method is widely used in different fields of the linguistic science. However, there is no common principle of building the passport. Scientists in their research tend to create a passport according to the characteristics peculiar to the particular phenomenon they study.

For a more detailed description of the concepts *Caucasian mountain man / Scottish highlander*, the passportization method was used in this research. As a basis, “the linguistic-cultural personality passport” by O.A. Dmitrieva was taken, since its structure corresponds with the subject and the purpose of the present study. The analysis of the quotations from the fiction texts by M.Yu. Lermontov and W. Scott was made to produce the list of passport characteristics to describe the concept under consideration.

#### **4. Result/Findings**

In the works of M.Yu. Lermontov, 13 pieces mentioning the concept *mountain man* were found, where it appears in a variety of combinations 13 times (the item “mountainous” is used once), and as 173 pieces with corresponding lexical items and their derivatives, where they are used 204 times. While distributing the lexemes in groups in accordance with their common characteristics it became possible to identify the following parameters:

- 1) The place of living – with such lexical items as: *aul, (peaceful) village, mountain, shelter, etc.*
- 2) Pastime – *battle, night fight, pathway, etc.*

3) Appearance (neighbourhood) – *Asian, insolent eyesight, small, aloof, broad-shouldered, etc.*

4) Environment – *friend (kunik), guest, wife, etc.*

5) Stuff – *horse, diamonds, swords, etc.*

6) Behaviour – *fighter, hospitality, wild, etc.*

7) Moral principles and values – *loyal to glory, bloody vengeance, motherland, etc.*

8) Religious views – *loyal to prophet, mosque, the Great Mohammed, etc.*

9) The attitude to mountain men – *robber, boredom does not live under the Chechen bullets, murderer, etc.*

After considering all the items in the specified groups, the most frequent ones were identified, for example, the lexical item *aul* is met for 5 times, *mountain(s)* is used for 8 times, *hut* – 6 times, *battle* – 5 times, *smile* – 3 times, *dagger* – 6 times, *horse (masculine and feminine in the Russian language)* – 15 times, *wedding* – 3 times, *robber* – 3 times, etc. The next stage of the analysis was to examine the items in each group and to construct the initial *mountain man* linguistic-cultural fields for their further comparison with the fields of the *highlander* concept.

The analysis of the concept *highlander* was carried out according to the same scheme. The practical material was taken from the fiction works by Sir Walter Scott, all the works are dedicated to Scotland and its inhabitants – Scottish highlanders.

In the works of Sir Walter Scott, 379 pieces in which the concept *highlander* was mentioned 429 times have been selected. Moreover, the following lexemes corresponding to the initial concept have been found: *Gael (Gaelic); mountain dweller; mountain man; hill-man; Scottish highlander; “ladies from Hell”* (these items and their derivatives were used 235 times).

In addition to the parameters that were used to analyze the concept *mountain man* in Russian, it was possible to find a number of quotes describing *highlander's* national language (*Gaelic*) and the attitude to the language.

## 5. Discussion

After analyzing the images of the *Caucasian mountain man* in the works of M.Yu. Lermontov and the *Scottish highlander* in the works of W. Scott, an effort to present their basic cultural, national and linguistic characteristics was made. Passportization of the concepts *Caucasian mountain man* and *Scottish highlander* has not only allowed us to describe their figurative and conceptual characteristics, but also to identify the most common concepts associated with their culture and existence, which was further followed by linguistic-cultural field building. This stage of the research moved the study to a direct comparison of two linguistic cultures in order to identify their similarities and differences.

The results of this research and the conclusions made may become the basis to believe that the concepts under consideration are not only the unique, specific and nationally marked representatives of their country's culture in the past, but they also possess some similarities that may become a key to successful intercultural communication at present.

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