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On the Verb *теемс* (to do, etc.) in the Erzian Language

In the Erzian-Russian Dictionary of 1993, henceforth ERD, the verb *теемс* is given a number of meanings, which, from a semantic point of view, are in rather haphazard order. In fact the features the author intends to illuminate in this treatise are only to be found in other word articles of the dictionary.

ERD:652a

те | емс, -йсь *гл.*

- 1) делать (*заниматься чем-л.*); **теемс кудоютконь тевть** делать домашние дела; **мезеяк а теемс** ничего не делать
- 2) строить; **теемс сэдъ** строить мост
- 3) делать, изготавливать, производить; **теемс станокт** делать станки; **теемс партъ** изготавливать кадки
- 4) делать, поступать (*каким-л. о´разом*); **теемс видестэ** поступать (делать) правильно
- 5) деть, девать; **ков теик тон книганть?** куда ты дел книгу?
- 6) воспитать; **аволь таркась ломанень тейсы, но ломанесь — тарканть** *посл.* не место человека красит (*букв. создаёт, делает*), а человек — место
- 7) притвориться; сделать вид; **цёрась тейсь удыцякс** парень притворился спящим
- 8) заменить; **кизэнь чись телень недлянтъ тейсы** *посл.* летний день зимнюю заменит
- 9) делать, образовывать; **тесэ кись теименькс** здесь дорога делает поворот
- 10) сделать, совершить; **теемс героической тев** совершить героический поступок
- 11) сделать кем-л., каким-л.; **теемс уцяскавкс** сделать счастливым; **теемс шумбракс** сделать счастливым
- 12) слепить (*напр. скульптуру*); нарисовать

The usages of the verb, as illustrated above, can be divided into four basic senses and then further subdivided.

13) For this the author chooses to utilize the division transitive versus intransitive, i.e. subarticles 4 and 7 can be listed as intransitive usages. Whereas the sense (act, behave) is combined in the former with an adverb indicating MANNER, [hence: to act/perform correctly], and in the latter with the translative also indicating MANNER (hence: the boy/man pretended to be sleeping).

14) The second, and perhaps most widely used sense (creation: making something where it did not exist before), transitive in nature, can be observed in the subarticles 12,

3, 2, and 10, 1. Whereas the first three subsenses are concrete due to their appropriate objects [hence: 12) to **make** a sculpture; to **make** a drawing 3) to **make/construct** stands/looms; to **make/construct** barrels 2) to **make/construct/build** a bridge], and the fourth and fifth ones are in a like manner abstract due to either indefiniteness in the former or verbal noun abstractness of the latter [hence 10) to **do** a heroic deed 1) to **do** household chores].

15) The third sense (an existing object/notion is transferred to a new position or state), also transitive in nature, can best be observed in the subarticles 5 and 11. Whereas the former is concrete [hence: where did you put the book?], and the latter abstract [hence: to **make** someone happy; to **make** well, to cure].

16) The fourth sense (to be the prerequisite of something [obj.] / be presupposed by something [obj.]), also transitive, can be observed in the subarticles 6 and 8. Whereas the two examples are difficult to divide on the Erzian side [i.e. 6) it's not the place that is a prerequisite of the man, but the man who is a prerequisite of the place; lit. it's not the place that makes the man, but the man that makes the place. 8) a summer's day is the prerequisite of a week in winter.] Perhaps, they should not have been divided.

Originally, the author spoke of a four way division for addressing the definitions of the verb **теемс**. It will be found, however, that a fifth division is apparent in subarticle 9. Whereas it might be maintained that 9 is, in fact, a subarticle of 14, one specification must be noted. The result of the action, as it were, in fact, describes the state or condition of the subject [hence: the road makes a bend here]. Thus, contrary to a statement made at the beginning of this treatise, the usage of the verb addressed in this paper can expand from the fifth division now established.

17) Describing the state or condition of a subject latent or apparent is made possible with combinations of the verb **теемс** + particle:

{вайх, дренк, дубот, дю-ю-юв, жуйк, зуйк, зыйк, зыйть, кивчк, клявк, лакшт, либор, лоск, лыйк, мизолк, носк, општ, скирьк, сорк, сырк, сырть, тарск, тарцк-варцк, чикорк, чирьк, чув, явшк}

It should be observed that the verb **теемс** + a deverbal noun [non-determinative] provides a means to create an intransitive counterpart for an otherwise transitive verb, e.g 9 above. In the case of intransitive verbs, this construction can provide a means for expressing singular instances of an action, whereas the single verb construction is ambivalent.

The particles in conjunction with 17 are difficult to define as ordinary deverbal nouns, in fact, they all appear to be quite abbreviated at times sharing only partial stems with other known words. From a semantic point of view it should be noted, however,

that all combinations with the exception of the one with **дю-ю-юв**, which operates as an onomatopoeic verbal device, bear a nuance of brevity.

This brevity might best be illustrated with the minimal pair *мизолкс* and *мизолк*. The former of which can be regarded as a deverbal noun with its parallel in *мизолдомс* (to smile, to grin). Thus *мизолкс + теѐмс* (to give a smile) is a singular instance of smiling. The construction *мизолк+ теѐмс* (break a smile) provides a nuance of brevity helping us to arrive at something short of a toothy grin, perhaps a smirk.

Morphologically there is a blatant similarity in that nearly all of the particles end with either the voiceless stop *к* or the *т/ть* voiceless stops. Hence we are once again encountering particles similar to those used in constructions with the verbs *мерѐмс* (J.M. Rueter: A Treatise of the Erzian Verb *мерѐмс*, Ujvar, 2000) and *молеѐмс* (J.M. Rueter: *Молеѐмс глаголонть сюлмавксонзо*, Saransk, 2000) as well as inessive particles (J.M. Rueter: *Inessive Particles in the Erzian Language*, Tartu, 2000).

What can be observed in the particles of 17 above is that the majority appeal to something sensed by an individual, and because they involve internal feelings of that given individual, what is sensed is not immediately observable to others. The combinatory subjects of these combinations include *седей* (the heart), *потмо* (the insides), *ойме* (the soul) and *рунго* (the body) + {*дренк, жуйк, зуйк, зыйк, лоск, носк, скирьк, сорк, сырк, сырть, тарск, чув, явшк*}.

Beyond the realm of the individual internal experience, there are particles appealing to the senses of sight, hearing and touch, which in turn can be transferred to convey meaning for the internal experience, as well: *кивчк* (flash), *сорк* (~ shudder), *сырк* (~ budge), *сырть* (~ shiver), *тарск* (~ balk, jolt).

18) Particles appealing to the sense of hearing, *вайх* (oh), *дубот* (stomp), *зыйть* (rattle), *клявк* (), *лакшт* (crack), *општ* (~ being in awe, i.e. the silence that fall when all conversation and sound is abruptly broken off = dead silence), *чикорк* (squeak), are demonstrative of the variety of backgrounds particles have, i.e. *дубот* has a parallel in the verb *дубордомс* (tromp, stamp) and other particles *дубордсо* (with a), whereas *општ* appears to only have a parallel in the adjective *опаня* (sweltering), and *лакшт* in the verb *лакштордомс* (crackle).

Visually perceptible are movements of natural beings both conscious and uncontrolled: *либор* (~ flutter, e.g. a bird), *луйк* (~ nod), *мизолк* (breaking of a smile), *тарцк-варцк* (budge), *чирьк* (~ quiver).

When the derived verb *тейнеѐмс* (frequentative or cyclical) is applied to the particle model, it should be observed that a doubled particle is used (hence: *лып-лып* (flutter, bat), *носк-носк, цят-цят*), or a varied particle as seen in (*лып-лап* (flutter, bat, i.e. the eyes)). There are, however, instances where an affinity has carried over from the combinations with the verb *теѐмс*, for example *зуйк* and *тарск*.

19) A second usage found in connection with the frequentative derivation is the onomatopoeic verbal device as observed in rare combinations with the simple verb *теѐмс*. Substitution of the derivative *тейнеѐмс* appears to warranted by more prolonged sounds.

Instances of this combination usually involve doubled or paired onomatopoetic particles but sometimes even drawn out sounds suffice. Hence sounds produced by the following:

гр-ро-ооо-ам! гр-рум-грох! (boarded enclosure); кор-р-р-р (horse);
ку-ка-ре-ку (rooster); лавцк-лавцк, лавцк-лавцк (railing under a train); лат-лат (shoes);
пыкор-лакор (wheel); пфу! ап-фу! (lips); сят-сят (logs); ун-ун-ун-ун-ун! (bullfrogs);
хмылк-хмылк-хмылк (oars); чак-чак (feet); чи-кор-р-р-р (hollow tree); чик, чик-ик!
(spinning wheel); цятор-цятор (outbuildings under a heavy snow pack)

20) A sixth usage of the verb *теемс*, which is beyond the scope of this paper, is its use as a combining element for other verbs. When in a serial verb construction the *теемс* element always come second, although both elements are conjugated. The nuance given to the basic verb is one of prolonged or elaborated activity followed then by another verb providing a continuation to the circumstances of the sentence. Thus the alterations of meaning apparent in the verbs, *арсемс* (to think), *арсемс-теемс* (to think for a while); *оршамс* (to dress), *оршамс-теемс* (to spend one's time dressing); and *ярсамс* (to eat), *ярсамс-теемс* (to take one's time eating), also merit consideration in future dictionary work if not treatment of the verb as well.

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