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THE EXPRESSION OF VOLITION IN MEADOW MARI

Abstract. The study of the Meadow Mari (Cheremis) language has a lengthy tradition: since 1775, many linguists have produced thorough descriptions of both Hill and Meadow Mari (Sebeok, Raun 1956). Those descriptive grammars, however, have been written in a strictly formal framework, with foundations in the Latin-Greek terminological tradition. In this paper, I examine two markers that code desire and intention, particularly the desiderative suffix *-ne* and the periphrastic construction with an allegedly very similar meaning *-mE¹ (+ Px) + šuaš* 'to arrive'. The research investigates the distribution and usage of both. The hypothesis was that the speaker's choice between the two markers in a given situation is motivated, and therefore one marker cannot at all times be substituted with the other. The pragmatic aim of the study is to grasp the semantic differences between the two markers.

Keywords: Meadow Mari language, modality, mood, desiderative, volition, functional linguistics.

1. Introduction

This paper intends to provide an insight into the current functions of different desiderative markers used in contemporary Meadow Mari. Mari, as many other languages, has more than one way to express wants, desires and intentions. However, a thorough side-by-side comparison of the semantic domains they cover has not yet been carried out. The viewpoint of this study is functional, in the sense that the main emphasis is on the functions these markers fulfil, however, the theoretical principles do not follow those of contemporary functional linguistics (for a detailed discussion of the topic, see Section 2). The aim of the research is to discover semantic differences between two markers that are claimed to express the same intention, as well as to find out about the context and variables that define the usage of either.

In the first section, I briefly introduce the theoretical background of the notions *mood* and *modality*, with emphasis on desiderative notions. In Section 2, the Mari desiderative markers in question are introduced, with highlight to their representation and classification in descriptive Mari grammars.

¹ In this contribution, *E* is used to represent the vowel-harmonic alternation *e ~ o ~ ö*.

Discussing the contradictions and deficiencies, it becomes clear why further research in the matter was required. In Section 3, I introduce my own research on the matter: the corpus, the methodology and the results. Finally (Section 4), conclusions are drawn, and suggestions on the scope of further research are given.

2. Intentions and desires in mood and modality

Meadow Mari is a language that features the desiderative mood (Berezcki 1990 : 57; Alhoniemi 1993 : 125). Other constructions with a similar semantic domain, however, are also considered to be of modal nature, but not moods.

It is not easy to separate the terms *mood* and its kin term *modality*. As the latter is much younger it often overlaps with the former in usage. Kugler (2008) makes a plausible distinction between the two terms based on their universality. She states that mood is a category marked on the verb, which plays a fundamental role in the modal system of the language. As a grammatical feature, it cannot be found in all languages. Modality, on the other hand, is a universal category, whose markers are present in all layers of the language and which semantically belongs to the entire statement, not just the verb. Therefore, many modal features are not grammatically but lexically marked (Kugler 2008 : 106). This definition strongly suggests a formal versus functional approach: mood is a term that can be used to describe a grammatical phenomenon in a given language from a structural point of view, while modality, with its lesser emphasis on the grammatical side, would be used in functional-cognitive analysis. This is the distinction that is followed by most of the existing Mari grammars and textbooks. Thus, mood is part of the verbal paradigm that has the values of indicative, imperative desiderative and, in the case of Hill and Northwestern Mari, marginally conditional, as will be seen in Section 3).

In this paper, the semantic qualities of this verbal paradigm are compared with a periphrastic verbal construction that has a similar modal meaning. The desiderative is considered a mood, the periphrastic construction is (mainly) not (see Section 3). On the other hand, if we accept Kugler's definition of modality as a semantic and universal category, both constructions are equally worthy of investigation if one is studying the language from a function-based perspective.

As regards semantic subdivisions of modality, some frequently cited domains are "dynamic modality", "deontic modality" and "epistemic modality" (Nuyts 2006 : 2). Dynamic modality denotes the "ability", as well as "need" and "necessity", based on the definitions of Palmer (1979) and Goossens (1985), thus describes as an ascription of the capacity or ability to the subject for the verb to realize the action stated in the clause. Deontic modality is defined in terms of "permission" and "obligation", especially on the degree of moral desirability of the state of affairs expressed in the utterance (The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood 2016 : 36). The category is frequently subject to debate, though, as the exact borders of "moral obligation" are hard to define. Epistemic modality expresses the likelihood, such as doubt, guess or certainty that the state of affairs expressed in the clause applies to the real world (The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood 2016 : 38).

The issue with this classification is that the subject of the current study, the notion of desires, cannot be adequately classified into any of these domains. Some linguists make use of a fourth category, called "boulomaic modality", which indicates the degree of the speaker's liking or disliking of the state of affairs (The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood 2016 : 39). Its right to stand alone on its own as a category is subject to some debate, though, since it may frequently overlap with other categories, especially deontic modality (e.g. Palmer 1986).² Some scholars strongly argue for this category and question the legitimacy of deontic modality instead (Narrog 2005; Bybee, Perkins, Pagliuca 1994). There is also a terminological confusion: *bouletic*, *boulomaic*, *volitive* and *teleological modality* are all somewhat overlapping categories used by different scholars.³ Palmer distinguishes wants from wishes and desires. He classifies the former as a subgroup of dynamic modality (Palmer 2001 : 10), while he views wishes, fears etc. as partly deontic, partly epistemic (Palmer 2001 : 13). Kugler also views it as a distinct subgroup (2008 : 387).

As can be seen, in the functional framework it is unclear how to classify the notion of desires and intentions, since it is exactly there where most opinions differ, and different viewpoints part ways from one another. Mainstream classification even questions the notion's modal nature, and even the scholars arguing in its favor have trouble categorizing it as a subcategory of deontic modality, or one covered by boulomaic modality, or something else. It is not up to this paper to resolve the ongoing contradictions, or even take a stand, but it is important to highlight the subject's problematic nature.

3. Markers with desiderative meaning in Mari

In this section, two markers with desiderative/volitive meaning will be introduced, both of which are widely common in Meadow Mari, and are well documented.

3.1. *-ne*

The desiderative suffix *-ne* in Meadow Mari is used to express 'to want / intend to (do something)' (Riese, Bradley, Yakimova, Krylova 2017 : 157, based on ЯКИМОВА, КРЫЛОВА 1990). A verb in the desiderative mood is composed of a verbal stem, the desiderative suffix, and an appropriate personal suffix.

- (1) *Tač'e ola-ške kajǰ-ne-m*⁴
 today town-ILL go-DES-1SG
 'Today I want to go to town'

² "Volition [---] is less clearly related to permissions and obligations, but rather relates to the realm of desires. [---] The discussions boil down to the question whether "action plans" and desires still count as modal notions." (The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood 2016 : 37).

³ "[---] deontic subsumes at least deontic (pertaining to rules and obligations), teleological (pertaining to goals) and bouletic (pertaining to what is desired) modalities. [---] Boulomaic modality ("want"-type modality) pertains to intentions." (The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood, Oxford 2016 : 89).

⁴ Example provided by a native speaker.

This part of the paradigm, called desiderative mood, is listed in almost all Mari grammars and textbooks (e.g. Beke 1911; Alhoniemi 1985; Галкин 1964; Bereczki 1990; 2002; Pomozi 2002; Riese, Bradley, Yakimova, Krylova 2017; etc.), along with the other basic moods: indicative, imperative, and (more controversially) conditional. Bereczki 2002 also lists several other constructions which he calls "moods", such as "simulative", "assumptive", "promissory", "determinative" and "necessive", although all of them are compound structures (Bereczki 2002 : 106–110). While Bereczki (2002) is generous with the term, some scholars like Galkin (Галкин 1964) and Sebeok and Ingemann (1961) do not count the conditional as a mood. This is probably because its morphological realization *-yec(e)/-yec'(e)* is only found in Hill and Northwestern Mari, and even in those areas its use is sporadic and primarily restricted to the verb 'to be'. It is usually substituted by the compound past tense I (Alhoniemi 1985 : 123; Bereczki 2002 : 100).

- (2) *Ti əðâr aɣâl əl-yecə, Andrej sola-škə-ž-at*
 this girl NEG to.be-COND Andrej village-ILL-3SG-too
a-k ke əlʔ⁵ (Alhoniemi 1985 : 123)
 NEG-3SG walk.CNG was.PST1.3SG
 'If it wasn't for this girl, Andrej wouldn't be walking in the village'
- Joškar užya-m urɣ-en pu-et əl'e ɣəŋ, məj təj-əm*
 red fur.coat-ACC sew-CVB give-2SG was.PST1.3SG if I you-ACC
kol-mešk-em o-m mondo əl'e (Alhoniemi 1985 : 123–124)
 die-PTCP.PRI-1SG neg-1SG forget.CNG was.PST1.3SG
 'If you sew me a red fur coat, I' will not forget you until I die'

The desiderative mood discussed above was called "conjunctive" or "potential" by Budenz (1864; see Beke 1911 : 353), as in Hungarian the (etymologically related) suffix *-ne* denotes both the desiderative and conditional.

- (3) *Szeret-né-k almá-t en-ni* (Kugler 2000 : 107)
 like-COND-1SG apple-ACC eat-INF
 'I would like to eat an apple'
- (4) *Ha a kutyá-m ló le-nne, nek-em nagyon jó*
 If det dog-PX.1SG horse be-COND DAT-PX.1SG very good
len-ne (MNSZ2 doc#1722)
 be-COND.3SG
 'If my dog was a horse, it would be very good for me'

2.2. *-mE (+ Px) + šuaš*

There is another construction that denotes desiderative intention in Mari. It consists of the passive participle *-mE*, optionally marked with a possessive suffix, and the third person singular form of *šuaš* 'to arrive, to get somewhere', acting somewhat like an auxiliary (Alhoniemi 1985 : 138). The person can be indicated by the possessive suffix and/or a nominal in the genitive case.

⁵ This example is in Hill Mari, all other examples are in Meadow Mari.

- (5) *Ola-ške mäj-än kajđ-m-em šu-eš* (Alhoniemi 1985 : 138)
 town-ILL I-GEN go-PTCP.PASS-PX.1SG arrive-3SG
 'Today I want to go to town'

Given their traditional form-based approach, not all Mari grammars take this construction into account. It is missing from the earlier works, (e.g. Castrén 1845; Wiedemann 1847; Beke 1911; Sebeok, Ingemann 1961), and is discussed in completely different sections than the *-ne* desiderative marker in Alhoniemi 1985 and Riese, Bradley, Schötschel, Yefremova 2018 (though coreferenced and compared with the desiderative in the latter).

A similar situation can be met in Mari necessitive clauses, since there are a wide range of ways to express necessity, for example:

- (6) *Ola-š kajđ-šaš-em ulo* (Wichmann 1978 : 202)
 town-LAT go-PTCP.FUT-PX.1SG there.is
 'I need to go to town'

- (7) *Таце кече гыч арам ылыман огыл* (Галкин 1964 : 161)
Таце кеце гџџ [niγö-lan] aram ilđ-man oγđl
 this day from [nobody-DAT] in.vain live-INF.NEC NEG
 'From this day on, one must not live aimlessly'

- (8) *Joča-blak-lan urok-đm đšt-aš*
 child-PL-DAT homework-ACC do-INF
kül-eš (Riese, Bradley, Yakimova, Krylova 2017 : 102)
 need-3SG
 'The children need to do homework'

In Example (6), the clause is composed with the future participle *-šaš* followed by *ulo* 'there is'. A possessive suffix on the participle can indicate person and number. In (7), the so-called necessitive infinitive formed with the suffix *-man* is used (without possessive suffixes) with the person needing to do something indicated by a dative-marked nominal. The dative is also used in (8); necessity is indicated through a periphrastic construction with the infinitive and *külaš* 'to be necessary' in the third person singular, acting as an auxiliary.

The complex interplay between semantic facets and dialectal, diachronic, and stylistic variation that determine the exact division between these different necessitive forms is beyond this paper. Returning to the two desiderative constructions, information on differences in usage can hardly be found, as none but one descriptive grammar compares the two. The one that does, Vasiljev (Васильев 1958) (and later Bereczki 2002 citing him) states that the *šuaš* construction expresses more a wish, and *-ne* more an intention – so the *šuaš* construction is called 'desiderative', and the *-ne* construction 'intentional'. Vasiljev (Васильев 1958 : 55) uses the following sentence to accentuate the difference:

- (9) *Кочмем шуэш, садлан кочнем*
коџ-т-ем šu-eš, sadlan коџ-не-т
 eat-PTCP.PASS-PX.1SG arrive-3SG so eat-DES-1SG
 'I feel like eating, so I intend to eat'

Similar conclusions are drawn in Pomozi 1997. Bereczki 2002 and Васильев 1958 are the only works that regard the *šuaš* construction as a verbal mood, instead of a "compound periphrastic verbal construction with a modal meaning", as most scholars define similar constructions existing in Tatar, Chuvash and Ottoman Turkish (Bereczki 2002 : 105; Landmann 2014 : 81, 90; 2015 : 58, 83). However, this distinction and example appears rather vague, as it is not supported by any other academic fieldwork, nor is it quoted in more recent publications, so further research was necessary.

4. Desiderative markers in contemporary written Mari

The research was based on a sample of texts aiming to be representative of contemporary literary Mari with approximately 300 000 words published no earlier than 2007. The texts were selected by the following parameters: 1) contemporaneity, 2) authors whose first language is Mari, 3) a relatively high chance to find modal clauses. The final corpus of the research consisted of contemporary Mari literature and written online press,⁶ especially blogs, written and maintained by native Mari speakers. In the corpus I manually examined, a total of 321 occurrences with desiderative meaning were found: 265 uses of *-ne* and 56 uses *-mE (+ Px) + šuaš*. Affirmative and negative, as well as present and past tense examples were taken into account. The number of the findings appears small given the size of the corpus, but the subject of the research itself (sentences expressing desire or intention) determines the low representation in any given text, especially in online sources such as news sites and blogs. The examined corpus consists of many different genres (interviews, biographies, user comments, novel dialogues), thus representing both formal and informal registers. With a corpus of this size and nature, this paper may not be able to pinpoint the exact distinction between the two markers. However, some promising patterns have been revealed.

5. The distribution of the markers in various genres

	<i>-ne</i>	<i>-mE (+ Px) + šuaš</i>	Total
Online media	39	17	56
Contemporary literature	226	39	265
Total	265	56	321

The results show that *-ne* was twice as common in online sources, but six times more common in contemporary literature than the periphrastic construction with *šuaš*. The possible explanation can be found in the typical usage of these structures.

- (10) *Тидын нерген мутым йӧршеи лукмем*
Тидӧ-н нерҥен мут-ӧм жӧршеӧ лук-м-ем
 this-GEN about word-ACC at.all release-PTCP.PASS-PX.1SG
ок шу (MariUver 02.11.2016)
ок шу
 NEG.3SG arrive.CNG
 'I would not like to talk about this at all'

⁸ The sites examined were the following: <http://mariuver.com>; <http://vijar.wordpress.com>; <http://kidsher.ru>; <http://gazetamariel.ru>.

- (11) *Йӱдлан корнеш кӧн кодмыжо шуэш?* (МК 12)
Jüδ-lan korn-eš kӧ-n kod-mδ-žo šu-eš?
 night-DAT road-LAT who-GEN stay-PTCP.PASS-PX.3SG arrive-3SG
 'Who would want to stay by the road for the night?'
- (12) *Тыгай тамле, шокшо юж нӧлтеи, ӱпшынат да*
Tǎγaj tamle, šokšo juž nӧlt-eš, ӱpšǎnč-at da
 such sweet warm scent rise-3SG smell-2SG and
ильмет веле шуэш (МК 114)
ilδ-m-et βele šu-eš
 live-PTCP.PASS-PX.3SG just arrive-3SG
 'Such sweet, warm air rises, you smell it and instantly feel like living'
- (13) *Сыльнымут поянлыкна нерген угыч да угыч*
Sǎlnǎmut rojanlǎk-na nerǧen uǧč da uǧč
 literature wealth-PX.1PL about again and again
кутырымо шуэш (MariUver 02.12.2015)
kutǧrǧ-mo šu-eš
 speak-PTCP.PASS arrive-3SG
 'Again and again (we) want to talk about the richness of our literature'
- (14) *Кугу таум каласыме шуэш посна*
Kuǧu tau-m kalasǧ-me šu-eš posna
 big thanks-ACC tell-PTCP.PASS arrive-3SG individual
ен-влаклан (MariUver 14.07.2015)
jeŋ-βlak-lan
 person-PL-DAT
 '(We) would like to say thank you very much to individual people'
- (15) *Тыге каласыме шуэш мариӱ*
Tǎγe kalasǧ-me šu-eš marij
 this.way tell-PTCP.PASS arrive-3SG Mari
лудшылан (MariUver 02.02.2015)
luδ-šǧ-lan
 read-PTCP.ACT-DAT
 'This is how (we) would like to talk to Mari readers'

Although the *-ne* suffix is universally common, the *-mE* + (Px) + *šuaš* is preferred when the subject is general or unknown, and thus unnecessary to specify. In these cases, the possessive suffix is usually absent, see Examples (13)–(15). (Note that person marking cannot be omitted in the case of the structure with *-ne*.) This could explain why this structure is much more common in online media: it is easy and natural to admit that journalistic genres require way more general and impersonal acts of speech than fiction. Of the 17 clauses with *šuaš* found in online media, only three contained a Px. Neither Alhoniemi (1985) nor Bereczki (2002) specify that Px can be omitted from this construction. It follows from conceivable real-life speech situations that Px is often absent in a similar context (when the subject is general or unimportant or already clear from context), and thus the phenomenon comes as no surprise. But it might as well have gained more popularity in the twentieth century due to Russian influence, since there are fewer examples of the elimination of Px in traditional folklore texts (e.g.

Beke 1957; 1961; 1995). The usage and meaning of these constructions concurs with the Russian *хотелось бы*, which denotes a general or impersonal intention — the slight necessitive tone seen in the English translations comes from the difficulty of proper rendering of the original meaning.

Based on consultations with native speakers, in most cases *-ne* can universally substitute *šuaš*. However, the results show a further pattern of situations where *šuaš* is preferred. These are:

(I) Informal, even intimate situations, such as conversations with family and close friends, even self-talk, see Examples (11) and (8)

(II) Sudden, emotion-driven wishes or intentions, as well as urges and needs caused by outside impulses, with lesser control from the subject, see (10)–(12)

(III) Suggestions and pieces of advice, especially regarding others, as seen in Examples (13)–(15). It is noteworthy that in all cases the grammatical subject of the clause is either general, or an unspecified person or group of people.

A closer look at the *-ne* desiderative reveals that it has opposing qualities in terms of preference. The main difference is its closer link to the speaker, as the verb inflection always agrees with them, and the agent is obligatorily specified. It typically occurs in interviews and dialogues, as well as narratives describing a certain person or institution's behaviour. It generally has a more formal tone, and can express more of an intention than a wish, as stated by Vasil'jev (Васильев 1958).

(16) *ынде ондален-ондален нунын кӱшеш адакат властеш*
ɨnde ondal-en-ondal-en nunɨ-n kũšeš adak-at blast-eš
 now trick-CVB-trick-CVB 3PL-GEN at.expense again-too power-LAT
коднешт (MariUver 08.28.2015)

код-не-шт
 stay-DES-3PL

'Now by cheating and cheating, they again want to stay in power at their expense'

(17) *Мый врач лийнем, ег-влаклан*
Mɨj vrač lij-ne-m, jeŋ-βlak-lan
 1SG doctor become-DES-1SG person-PL-DAT
полшынем (Kidsher 03.29.2016)

полšɨ-ne-m
 help-DES-1SG

'I want to become a doctor and help people'

(18) *Татар-влак тоже латин алфавитыш куснынешт*
Tatar-βlak tože latin alfaβit-ɨš kusnɨ-ne-št
 Tatar-PL also latin alphabet-ILL transfer-DES-3PL
ыле (MariUver 02.11.2016)

ɨle
 was.PST1.3SG

'The Tatars also wanted to transfer to the Latin alphabet'

(19) *Кажныжлан наша шерге, кажныже у семын*
Kažnɨ-ž-lan paša šerɣe, kažnɨ-že u semɨn
 everyone-PX.3SG-DAT work dear everyone-PX.3SG new like

тыршынеже (Kidsher 01.31.2016)

tāršā-ne-že

try-DES-3SG

'Work is important for everybody, everybody wants to try a new way'

However, all these findings do not point to sharp boundaries between the domains of usage of the two constructions. The *-ne* desiderative can be found in general speech as well. The usage depends largely on the context, especially in terms of the speaker's conscious involvement in the action. Similar conclusions are drawn in Riese, Bradley, Schötschel, Yefremova 2018.⁷

With this study, I came to similar conclusions as those drawn by Vasil'jev (Васильев 1958) and Bereczki (2002), but a few more viewpoints were added as well. My corpus-based research shows the preference of *-mE* (+ Px) + *šuaš* when having an unknown or general subject, and also the possibility of the elimination of the Px. Naturally, the next step would be to back up these statements with qualitative research. Initial studies with Yoshkar-Ola based and Eastern Mari speakers (Timár 2016), though by far not representative yet, have backed up this study's results, and also suggest areal differences in the usage. However, inclusion of further informants, as well as the addition of a spoken data corpus is required.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I examined different markers with a desiderative/volitive meaning. The usage of the verbal *-ne* and the periphrastic construction *-mE* + Px + *šuaš* were compared in contemporary Mari online media and literature. The findings showed a general preference for the usage of *-ne*, the usage of which overlapped, but was not completely equivalent with those of *-mE* (+ Px) + *šuaš*. Various patterns could be observed in the choice of either marker, which supports the findings in the existing literature on the matter, but opens up new perspectives as well, both for functional and formal analysis. However, those markers are only the core grammatical realizations of the expression of volition. There are numerous other ways, both grammatical and lexical, that express wants and desires, many of them merging into other notions such as obligation or attitude. In order to fully understand the expression of volition in Meadow Mari, more markers, as well as spoken data have to be taken into account in further research.

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⁷ "The wish expressed like this is often of an emotional, inner, involuntary nature. It to some degree contrasts with the desiderative — see 7.1.3 — page 242 — which is as a tendency more used to express concrete, controlled intentions. Usage situations of these two constructs do, however, overlap." (Riese, Bradley, Schötschel, Yefremova 2018).

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative; **CVB** – converb; **DAT** – dative; **DES** – desiderative; **GEN** – genitive; **ILL** – illative; **INF** – infinitive; **INF.NEC** – necessitive infinitive; **LAT** – lative; **NEG** – negative; **PL** – plural; **PTCP.FUT** – future participle; **PTCP.PASS** – past participle; **PX** – possessive suffix; **SG** – singular.

Kidsher – <http://kidsher.ru>; **MariUver** – <http://mariuver.com>; **MNSZ2** – Magyar Nemzeti Szövegtár 2. http://clara.nytud.hu/mnsz2-dev/bonito/run.cgi/first_form; **МК** – Ю. И. Г а л ю т и н (Я л з а к), Марий колумбиада. Эрыкан роман. Илет гын, ужат. Икымше книга, Йошкар-Ола 2007. <http://kolumbiada.narod.ru/>.

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БОГАТА ТИМАР (Будапешт)

ВЫРАЖЕНИЕ ЖЕЛАНИЯ И НАМЕРЕНИЯ В ЛУГОВОМ НАРЕЧИИ МАРИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Исследование языка луговых марийцев имеет давние традиции. Первое описание относится к 1775 году, с тех пор появилось немало описательных грамматик как горного, так и лугового языков. Однако эти грамматики следовали формальному подходу, основанному на латинско-греческой терминологической традиции, который затрудняет выделить особенности форм, близких функционально, но различающихся грамматическим кодом. В основе данной работы лежит наблюдение, согласно которому в марийском языке для выражения условного (кондиционалис) и желательного (десидеративус) наклонений существуют по две разные стратегии кодирования (одна синтетическая: *-ne* дезидеративный суффикс, и одна аналитическая: *-mE (+ Px) + šuaš*). Автор пытается выяснить, какие еще различия в употреблении и в семантике можно обнаружить между обсуждаемыми формами. Исследуются распространение и семантическое окружение каждой из них, а также возможности их взаимозаменяемости. Результаты показывают, что выбор между двумя формами в большинстве случаев мотивирован, хотя в отдельных случаях они могут использоваться и как синонимы.