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## **Semiotic approach to studying omens in the Russian culture (Based on the omens related to birds)**

### **Abstract**

The article studies omens in the Russian culture by investigating their key words that denote species of birds (*chicken, crow, swallow, cuckoo, rooster*), as well as *bird* as a category name. It is argued that if we consider the symbolic nature of omens then we can prove that their cultural codes are realized in certain binary semantic oppositions. Thus, for weather omens, these oppositions are “locus – weather”, “space – weather”, “time – weather”, “action – weather”, “image actions – weather”, “quantity – weather”, and for superstitious omens, they are “locus – fate”, “space – fate”, “time – fate”, “action – fate”, “mode of action – fate” and “quantity – fate”. This study aims to analyze Russian omens related to birds from the semiotic viewpoint. Applying the semiotic approach that contributes into cultural code deciphering gives a new angle to Russian omens analysis. During the study, the following methods were used: the method of binary oppositions, the method of classification, the quantitative method and ethnocultural analysis. It has been found that for the omens related to bird species, there is a clear prevalence of the oppositions “locus – weather” and “time – weather”. For the superstitious omens related to bird species, the place of action (locus), the action itself, the method of its implementation, the quantitative factor, representing the pre-Christian, mythological consciousness – all of them are considered symbolic. For the omens related to *bird* as a category name, the opposition “locus – weather / fate” prevails. It is shown that the oppositional analysis of the ornithological code features enables to put forward certain assumptions about the people's views on different aspects of their economic activities and lifestyle.

**Keywords:** omens, ornithological culture code, method of binary oppositions

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**For citation:** Liang, M. (2022). Semioticheskiy podkhod k issledovaniyu russkikh primet (na materiale primet o ptitsakh) [Semiotic approach to studying omens in the Russian culture (Based on the omens related to birds)]. *Teoreticheskaya i prikladnaya lingvistika* [Theoretical and Applied Linguistics], 8 (1), 95–112. [https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190\\_2022\\_8\\_1\\_95](https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190_2022_8_1_95)