

## THE IMMODEST BEHAVIOR OF A PERSON AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN THE VERB LEXICON OF THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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### ABSTRACT

The article under consideration describes the Russian and English verbal lexical units which represent immodest behavior of a person. Such verbs fall into four semantic groups: 1) verbs of immodest behavior with accentuation of speech activity; 2) verbs of immodest behavior with accentuated seme “demonstrating one’s merits”; 3) verbs of immodest behavior with accentuated seme “high self-esteem of individual merits of the subject”; 4) verbs of immodest behavior with accentuated seme “high self-esteem of the subject as a whole”. The study reveals the following obligatory elements of the situation of immodest behavior: the subject of the action, the object of praise, the spectator and the evaluative component. In the course of the research the method of component analysis, the method of context analysis, the descriptive method and the comparative-contrastive method were used. The author concludes that the situation of immodest behavior is evaluated negatively in both Russian and English cultures.

**Keywords:** verbs of behavior, immodest behavior, seme, semantics, verbal units, evaluative component.

### INTRODUCTION

Ethics define modesty as a moral quality that characterizes an individual in terms of his attitude to others and himself and is manifested in the fact that a person does not recognize for himself any exceptional advantages or special rights. An immodest person, on the contrary, overestimates his / her significance, advertises his / her own merits and positive qualities, does not know how to restrain himself / herself. The situation of immodest behavior can be described as follows: “X thinks that he / she has a very good object or property Y, because of which other people will think better of him / her, X behaves so that other people will pay attention to Y and start thinking better of him / her” [Apresyan 2003, p. 230]. Moreover, if the individual evaluates his / her behavior as positive, then the observer makes a negative evaluation. (Cf .: If someone boasts about something that they have, they are done or are they, they are irritating or offensive [Collins 2009]).

### METHODS

In the course of the research we used the following methods: 1) the method of component analysis in the formulation of verbal classifications of the behavior of unrelated languages; 2) the method of context analysis to identify the different values and tints of the values of the verbs being studied; 3) a descriptive method for explaining and systematizing the research material; 4) comparative-contrastive method in revealing the differences and similarities of the semantic features of the verbs of the behavior of the analyzed languages, as well as their interlanguage correspondences.

### Results

The verbs of the analyzed semantic group according to L.M. Vasiliev are included into verbs of unnatural behavior. Such verbs contain lexemes representing ostentatious, showy, bizarre behavior of a person. According to L.M. Vasiliev verbs of unnatural behavior denote immodest behavior, as well as unnatural, pretentious behavior [Vasiliev 1981, p. 63]. The latter, in A.M. Plotnikova’s opinion, denote “behavior-mask” [Plotnikova 2008, p. 345].

The attention should be paid to the close connection of verbs of immodest behavior with verbs of speech, movement, feeling. Thus, immodest behavior is represented in the English and Russian languages by the lexical units which fall into the following subgroups:

1. Verbs of immodest behavior with accentuation of speech activity: Rus. *hvalit'sja, pohvaljat'sja, vyhvaljat'sja, bahvalit'sja, hvastat', hvastat'sja, fanfaronstvovat', fanfaronit'sja, fanfaronit'*; Eng. *boast, brag, vaunt, crow, gasconade, swagger*;
2. Verbs of immodest behavior with accentuated seme "demonstrating one's merits": Rus. *horohorit'sja, bravirovat', shhegoljat', forsit', figurjat', koketnichat', risovat'sja, kozyrjat', krasovat'sja*; Eng. *show off, gloat, flaunt, parade, exult, strut, pose, posture*;
3. Verbs of immodest behavior with accentuated seme "high self-esteem of individual merits of the subject": Rus. *gordit'sja, chvanit'sja (obsolete, colloquial), spesivit'sja; vazhnichat', kichit'sja, tshheslavit'sja*; Eng. *pride oneself, preen oneself, plume oneself, pique oneself, praise oneself, fancy oneself*;
4. Verbs of immodest behavior with accentuated seme "high self-esteem of the subject as a whole" (verbs of behavior do not have the object position, but the addressee's position is potentially preserved): Rus. *zadavat'sja, zaznavat'sja, zanosit'sja, voobrazhat', vysokomernichat', vazhnichat', dut'sja (obsolete); prevoznošit'sja (obsolete); fufyrit'sja (common language)*. In English such verbs were not revealed.

Cf. : Rus. [Stepan] *stal kak budto zaznavatsja, slishkom javno kichitsja prjamotoj svoih suzhenij* / '[Stepan] began to seem to be conceited, too obviously boasted by the directness of his judgments' [NCRL: M. Gorkij. Tri dnja]

Rus. *Snachala oni oba vazhnichali i dulis' drug pered drugom nesterpimo* / 'At first they both prided themselves and sulked at each other unbearably' [NCRL: N.V. Gogol. Mertvye dushi].

Rus. *Odin iz fabrichnyh – na udivlenie svoim derevenskim bratishkam sil'no nachal velichat'sja i fufyrit'sja, pol'zuja' svoim stolichnym avtoritetom* / 'One of the factory owners, making his village brothers surprised, began to show off and fancied himself using his metropolitan authority' [NCRL: G. Uspenskij. Voskresen'e v derevne].

## DISCUSSION

We can hardly agree with A.M. Plotnikova's viewpoint that the situation of bragging is a private situation of deception, when a bragging person usually tries to create a false impression of his significance among those around him, or a false idea of what he owns [Plotnikova 2008, p. 117]. On the contrary, boasting is a type of insincere and deceitful behavior when a person exaggerates and overstates his dignity and achievements (which often exist in reality) in order to attract the interest of others. In addition, deception involves concealing one's intentions, and immodest behavior (for example, boasting) clearly reveals the desires and goals of the subject of behavior.

The goal of this behavior is the tendency of the subject to stand out, to attract the others' attention:

Rus. <...> *i jeta barynja, chasto otzhivshaja svoju molodost' i radost', eshhe hochet obratit' na sebja obshhie vzgljady, eshhe zhevanitsja, eshhe spesivitsja, eshhe voobrazhaet byt' cel'ju vnimanija i krasneet na starosti let ot skromnosti* / 'and this lady, who outdated her youth and joy, still wants to draw the public's attention, still behaves with false modesty, still giggles, still imagines to be the goal of attention and blushes in her old age from modesty' [NCRL: A. F. Veltman. Koshhej bessmertnyj. Bylina starogo vremeni].

Eng. *Models, like photographers, specialize in certain types of work and they usually have portfolios to **show off** how they look in a variety of poses* [BNC: Ridgway, Judith. Successful Media Relations: A Practitioner's Guide].

The subject of indiscreet behavior is usually a person or a group of people. A.M. Plotnikova compares the bragging man to an object that is about to burst ("like a balloon or a soap bubble" [Plotnikova 2008, p. 118]:

Rus. *O nej možno bylo pozhalet', kogda ona lopnula, no poka ona **hvastalas'** i naduvalas', tak, verojatno, vse, gljadja na nee, smejalis', a ne plakali* / 'One could feel sorry for her when she burst, but while she was boasting and puffing, everyone looking at her laughed, but did not cry' [NCRL: M. N. Zagoskin. Moskva i moskvichi].

In Russian we find examples in which the subject of immodest behavior can become an animal or an object of physical reality:

Rus. *Na ulice peli pticy, razgovarivali kury, **hvastalsja** petuh, kachalis' derev'ja, hlopal derevjannoj dver'ju tualeta Korin i chto-to veselo sprashival u otca* / 'The birds were singing in the street, the chickens were talking, the cock was bragging, treeswere swaying, Korin was clapping the wooden door of the toile, and asking his father something cheerfully' [NCRL: Z. Prilepin. Les].

Rus. *«Mercedes» im v otvet metal blik i biser solnechnyh zajchikov, **horohorilsja**, sijal bordovymi bokami* / 'Mercedes responded with metal glints and beads of solar beams, bragged, shone with claret flanks' [NCRL: Ul'ja Nova. Inka].

These personifications based on metaphorical transfer make statements more imaginative and sound more convincing. In such statements we can reveal the Russians' ability to rethink in the behavioral aspect not only the actions of a man, but also the processes of the surrounding world [Sandomirskaya 1991, p. 116].

The object of immodest behavior can be one's abilities, qualities, achievements or objects of property:

Eng. *Hank used to **boast** that he had been killed over a dozen men* [Longman Language Activator, p. 139].

Eng. *Two young men in suits were standing at the bar, **boasting** of how much money they had made that week* [Longman Language Activator, p. 139].

Eng. *Aggie was a spotlessly clean woman who **prided** herself on her housekeeping* [BNC: Bowling, Harry. The girl from Cotton Lane].

Rus. *On postojanno **bahvalilsja** svoej siloj, kotoraja byla dejstvitel'no velika* / 'He was constantly bragging about his strength, which was really great' [NCRL: N. Pomjalovskij. Oчерki bursy].

Rus. [Grigorij Fedorovich] **shhegoljal** gastronomicheskimi obedami, na kotorye priglasjal tonkih znatokov iz gastronomov-prijatelej / '[Gregory Fedorovich] sported gastronomic lunches, to which he invited delicate connoisseurs among gastronomic friends' [NCRL: I. Goncharov. Literaturnyj vecher].

The situation of immodest behavior presupposes one more obligatory participant – the spectator (the observer, the addressee) for whom the "representation" is played:

Rus. **Hvastalis'** drug pered drugom svoej lovkost'ju, umeniem smuhlevat', peretorgovat', mahnut'sja ne gljadja / 'They boasted to one another with their agility, the ability to cheat, to negotiate, to give up without looking' [NCRL: D. Granin, Zubr].

Rus. *On mnogo stal o sebe dumat', vazhnichal pered drugimi mal'chikami i voobrazil, chto on gorazdo luchshe i umnee vseh ih* / 'He began to think a lot about himself, boasted I front of other boys and imagined that he was much better and smarter than all of them' [NCRL: A. Pogorel'skij. Chernaja kurica].

Rus. *V ofise, v restorane, v kafe vse kak by nemnogo igrajut na publiku, nachinajut fufyrit'sja, nabivat' sebe cenu, stroit' iz sebja to, chem oni ne javljajutsja* / 'In the office, in a restaurant, in a cafe everyone seems to play a little for the public, start fooling around, show off, pretend being what they are not' [NCRL: A. Slapovskij. Bol'shaja Kniga Peremen].

Eng. *The children start in the house. She did not know why she had come. Not sure to reassure her mother, but ... to **boast** of her new self! To **show off**?* (Maitland, Sara, Three times table). Without such a spectator, the situation of immodest behavior does not make sense.

It is quite natural that the evaluation of such behavior is usually negative, even to a contemptuous attitude:

Rus. *V koljaske sidel razvaljas' kakoj-to frant, on posmatrival gordo na prohodjashhih, inym klanjalsja, po rimskomu obyknoveniju, rukoju, drugim otvechal na nizkie poklony edva zametnoj ulybkoju i tak javno chvanilsja i vazhnichal* svoim narjadnym jekipazhem, s takim prenebrezheniem smotrel na vseh bednyh peshehodov, chto vot tak i hotelos' pljunut' emu v lico / 'In the wheelchair a certain dandy was sitting, he gazed proudly at those passing by, bowed according to the Roman wont with his hand, answered to low bows with a barely perceptible smile and so clearly wagged and prided himself on his elegant carriage, looked with such disdain at all poor pedestrians, that one felt like spitting in his face' [NCRL: (M. N. Zagoskin. Iskusitel').

**Eng.** *I wish you to stop **bragging** about how rich his parents are* [Longman Language Activator, c. 139].

In English we find the utterance of coll. *if you've got it, flaunt it* (informal)

'something that you say which means if you have something you are proud of, such as beauty or wealth, you should make it obvious' [The Free Dictionary]. English-speaking cultures appeal not to hide one's virtues but, on the contrary, be proud of them, be able to properly present them to others ("used for saying that you should be proud of your success, beauty, money, and not hide it" [Macmillan]). We have identified the transformations of this phrase in the texts of a different genre:

Eng. *My view is, if you've got it, **flaunt it!*** [BNC: Ely, Cambs, Guitarist].

Eng. *They've got it, and they **flaunt it*** [BNC: New Musical Express].

Eng. *Those who have it, **flaunt it*** [BNC: World affairs material].

Eng. *Frivolous frou-frou feathers, spikey mules and a high hairstyle are flapping, **flaunt it*** [BNC: Today. London].

Let us consider the following viewpoint of the anthropologist Kate Fox: "*The English, as I've said before, are no more naturally modest than any other nation, and although they obey the letter of the unwritten modesty laws, the spirit is another matter. Many of their derogatory comments about their children are in fact boasts in disguise, or at least highly disingenuous. Moaning about one's child's laziness and unwillingness to do homework indirectly conveys that he or she is bright enough to do well without trying*" [Fox 2004]. Thus, for British culture the boast in disguise is characteristic. Real gentlemen and

ladies brought up in the spirit of restraint and modesty would rather lower their merits than boast about them. The Russians are more likely to display their abilities and other merits.

## CONCLUSION

The verbal series representing immodest behavior includes sixty lexical units in the Russian language and twenty lexical units in the English language. It is assumed that in English there are other (analytical) ways of expressing self-admiration, arrogance (for example, nouns, adjectives and adverbs expressing the manner of some action – *to crow in triumph, gleefully, with delight, to flaunt as noisily as possible*, etc.).

Immodest behavior finds a negative evaluation in both Russian and English cultures. Bragging, coquetry and complacency are noticeable to others. It is better to let your abilities and achievements be expressed by others, so as not to look ridiculous and pitiful in the eyes of others.

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