

FUNCTIONS AND SEMANTIC CATEGORIES OF LEXICAL UNITS EXPRESSING HOSPITALITY

Zokirjonova Mohinabonu

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Узбекский государственный университет мировых языков

E-mail: umumiytilshunoslik@mail.ru

Abstract. With an emphasis on its linguistic representation and cultural ramifications, this study examines how hospitality is expressed as a social phenomena in both Russian and English. The study finds and classifies lexical methods associated with hospitality, including as idiomatic expressions, verbs of invitation and offering, greeting formulations, and epithets. Additionally, it looks at the cultural and emotional subtleties of hospitality in both languages, emphasizing variations in formality, intensity, and cultural values. The study's comparative research shows that although hospitality is valued in both Russian and English cultures, the ways in which it is expressed vary greatly—Russian hospitality tends to emphasize warmth and plenty, whereas English hospitality tends to be more courteous and considerate of others' personal space.

Key words: hospitality, linguistic expressions, intercultural communication, Russian language, English language, cultural values, greeting formulas, idiomatic expressions, translation, cultural differences.

Introduction. A universal human characteristic, hospitality has its roots in social conduct and cultural standards. Hospitality is expressed through language, where vocabulary choices convey cultural attitudes toward hosts and visitors as well as communication goals. This is because language is a mirror of tradition and interpersonal values. The idea of hospitality is influenced by social, emotional, and historical elements in various linguistic communities, leading to a wide range of stylistic subtleties and verbal expressions.

The roles and semantic categories of the linguistic ways of conveying hospitality in Russian and English are examined in this article. Formulas for greetings, verbs that indicate invitation and offering, epithets, and colloquial idioms are all given particular consideration.

Literature review. Hospitality as a social phenomenon has a multifaceted expression in language, reflecting traditions, values, and cultural norms.

The lexical means used to express hospitality can be classified according to their functions and semantic categories¹. They consist of greeting formulas, verbs denoting invitation and offering, epithets reflecting attitudes toward guests, as well as set expressions and idioms that shape the concept of hospitality in language.

The functions of lexical means of hospitality are diverse. First and foremost, they perform a communicative function, facilitating the establishment and

¹ Humboldt, W. von. (2019). *Selected works on linguistics*. Moscow: Infinity.

maintenance of contact between host and guest. Greeting formulas such as “Добро пожаловать” (Welcome), “Рады видеть!” (Glad to see you!), “Чувствуйте себя как дома!” (Make yourself at home!) express friendliness and readiness to welcome a guest. In English, similar expressions include “Welcome!”, “Make yourself at home!”, “You are always welcome!” These phrases carry an emotive function, conveying positive emotions and creating a cozy atmosphere.

Another function is the regulative one, where lexical means are used to guide the guest's behavior or express norms of conduct. In Russian, expressions like “Проходите, располагайтесь!” (Come in, make yourself comfortable!), “Присаживайтесь, будьте как дома!” (Take a seat, feel at home!) are commonly used to help the guest feel at ease. In English, similar phrases would be “Please, take a seat!”, “Feel free to sit anywhere!”, which help establish norms of hospitable interaction and highlight cultural differences in guest perception.

Semantic categories related to hospitality include terms associated with receiving guests, offering food and drink, and creating an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness. In Russian, verbs that express actions related to treating and caring for guests are widely used (угощать, украшать стол, накрывать на стол, угощаться, приветствовать). In English, corresponding verbs include to serve, to offer, to treat, to welcome. For example:

“Let me offer you some tea” – Разрешите предложить вам чая

“We are happy to treat you with homemade pie” – Мы рады угостить вас домашним пирогом

“Help yourself to some cookies” – Угощайтесь печеньем

The emotional coloring of hospitality expressions also plays an important role. In Russian, epithets such as дорогой гость (dear guest), желанный гость (welcome guest), почётный гость (honored guest), любезный хозяин (gracious host) emphasize warmth and cordiality². In English, expressions like honored guest, dear guest, gracious host are used to show respect and create a welcoming atmosphere. For example:

“Our honored guest deserves the best” – Наш почетный гость заслуживает лучшего

“Dear guests, we are happy to have you here” – Дорогие гости, мы рады видеть вас здесь

A special layer of vocabulary consists of set expressions and idioms related to hospitality. In Russian, these include:

“Хлеб-соль” – a symbol of hospitality

“Радушный приём” – a warm and sincere welcome

“Гостеприимный дом” – a home where guests are always welcome

“Накрыть богатый стол” – to organize a generous feast

In the English language, there are analogous expressions such as “*to roll out the red carpet*” – to give someone a grand welcome, “*be as good as a home*” – to feel at home, and “*wine and dine*” – to treat someone lavishly.

² Humboldt, W. von. (2019). Selected works on linguistics. Moscow: Infinity.

An interesting direction of research is the difference in how hospitality is perceived and expressed across cultures. In Russian, hospitality is often associated with abundance and generosity, while in English it tends to emphasize respect for personal space and the guest's comfort. For instance, in Russian, diminutive and affectionate forms are commonly used in expressions such as “чайку попьёшь?” (“Would you like some tea?” in a warm, caring tone) or “пирожочков покушаешь?” (“Would you like some little pies?”), highlighting a caring, familial type of interaction. In English, such affectionate forms are less common, but polite offers like “Would you like some tea?” or “Help yourself!” convey a sense of respectful hospitality.

Different cultures also display varying degrees of intensity in expressing hospitality. In Russian speech, hyperbolic expressions such as “у нас для гостей всё самое лучшее!” (“Only the best for our guests!”) or “как же ты уйдёшь без угощения?” (“How could you leave without a treat?”) are frequent. In contrast, English expressions of hospitality tend to be more reserved, for example: “We’d love to have you over!” or “It was a pleasure having you!” These differences in lexical means reflect the particularities of national mentalities and the perception of guests in different cultures.

Throughout various historical periods, hospitality has taken on different forms of expression, which is reflected in the changing lexical composition of language. In Old Russian, there were words and phrases that emphasized not only warmth but also the host's obligations toward guests, such as “странноприимство” (the reception of travelers) and “посадить за стол” (to seat someone at the table, i.e., to offer a meal). In English, the concept of hospitality evolved from expressions rooted in feudal traditions, such as “to grant lodging” – to provide accommodation, to more modern polite constructions that focus on comfort and informal interaction.

Lexical means of expressing hospitality reflect cultural characteristics and communicative traditions, shaping a unique linguistic worldview. In Russian, hospitality is associated with warmth, generosity, and plentiful offerings, whereas in English, it is manifested through politeness and respect for personal boundaries. The evolution of vocabulary shows that the expression of hospitality changes depending on social norms and historical contexts. A comparative analysis enables a deeper understanding of the differences and similarities in expressing hospitality across cultures, which is crucial for intercultural communication and translation.

Data and Discussion:

Materials for this research project were obtained from Russian and English dictionaries, online corpora, and authentic texts which include works of fiction along with media and conversations. The words pertaining to the scope of hospitality were arranged according to the functions of greeting, invitation, offering, and emotional connotation.

Greeting Formulas: Both languages utilized expressions such as “Добро пожаловать” and “Make yourself at home!” where guests are received with warmth.

Verbs of Invitation and Offering: Common active verbs include Russian угощать and English to serve, to offer, to welcome as it occurs in "Let me offer you some tea."

Epithets: Russians use respectful epithets such as дорогой гость while the English use honored guest.

Set Expressions and Idioms: Russian hospitality includes phrases like "Хлеб-соль" (bread and salt) while the English hospitality encompasses "to roll out the red carpet".

Emotional Expression: The former usually resorts to exaggeration as in "У нас для гостей всё самое лучшее!" meaning "We have all the best for the guests," whereas the latter is more reserved with expressions like "It was a pleasure having you."

The results of this investigation highlight how intricately language, culture, and hospitality are related. The way hospitality is represented linguistically in both Russian and English reflects their respective cultural values, but they do it in different ways that reflect different social norms and expectations around relationships between guests and hosts.

Cultural Variations in the Expressions of Hospitality

The emotional depth with which hospitality is conveyed in the two languages is where the biggest distinction can be found. The emphasis on abundance and generosity in Russian hospitality is frequently expressed through exaggerated and hyperbolic phrases like "У нас для гостей всё самое лучшее!" ("Only the best for our guests!"). A cultural value that puts the comfort and welfare of the visitor first, even at the expense of the host's resources, is reflected in this mode of expression.

Conclusion.

Language is a mirror of social norms and cultural values, as evidenced by the comparison of the vocabulary expressions of hospitality in Russian and English. Both languages stress the value of greeting and tending to visitors, but they do it in different ways. Russian expressions, which usually use exaggeration and small forms, commonly convey feelings of warmth, abundance, and familial tone. English expressions, on the other hand, emphasize civility, consideration for others' personal space, and emotional nuance.

These linguistic variations represent underlying cultural norms around guest-host interactions and go beyond simple style distinctions. Effective cross-cultural communication requires an understanding of these differences, especially in translation and multicultural contexts. The study emphasizes the importance of examining language from a cultural perspective and highlights the significance of hospitality as a rich and culturally significant area of linguistic expression.

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