

Guest as Special Status of "Other"

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Abstract—The research discusses a special status of the "Guest" as a variety of the Other, based on the cultural-specific features of the personal representations of the "I am the Other" interaction. More than 100 proverbs are used about the guest and hospitality of various culture peoples, and qualitative methodology (content analysis and context analysis) is applied to determine the content and meaning of the Host-Guest representation. The results of content analysis allow decoding the content of social practice of hospitality, and context analysis provides the identification of its semantic vectors (emotional, reference, supportive, symmetry, subjectivity, sacrifice, etc.). The highlighted contexts reflect and broadcast culturally significant connotations of hospitality due to the social notions of hospitality that exist in culture and provide various ways to categories a guest. A socio-psychological analysis of social practice of hospitality is proposed, discussing the different perspectives of the vision: the host, guest, host in-group and guest in-group. The applied aspect of the study lies in the fact that its results can be used as a kind of semantic matrix in the development of programs of education and training in interpersonal interaction and intercultural communication of representatives of various ethnic groups.

Keywords—representation of the "I-Other" interaction; the guest as a variant of the Other; semantic contexts; social practice of hospitality; content analysis; context analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of interpersonal relations for constructing the image of "I", "non-I" and "Other" is recognised by all researchers, regardless of their views and interpretation of the term "attitude" [2, 6-10, 12, 15]. The main aspect of the relationship of the personality is its interactions with Others, which represent a psychological connection based on the experience of real or virtual interactions with Others, with internalised cultural patterns, expressed in actions, reactions and experiences. A person cannot exist and does not exist out of contact with other people, whose diversity and depth determine the representation of the "I-Other" interaction [5, 11, 13, 14]. Understanding of oneself and the Other is possible only in the context of interpersonal relations, since a person is revealed only when a person somehow behaves in relation to one or several Others. Because of relationships with Others, their real or potential evaluations are formed, on the basis of a subjectively interpreted feedback, ideas about their own "I" and "not-I", the image of the Other. For the effective entry into the sociocultural world, the mastery of its resources and capital, the personality requires not only the presence of

Others, but also a reflection of their own presence as the Other in their living space.

"Other" in the mental life of a person can be represented by various categories: "Friend", "Enemy", "Alien", "Extraneous", "Native", etc. The focus of our research is the personal representation of the "Guest", the identification of its universal functions and semantic contexts.

The purpose of this work is to analyse the social practice of hospitality through decoding the universal mission of the "Guest" and "Host" in proverbs and sayings about the guest and hospitality in the cultures of various peoples.

II. MATERIAL AND RESEARCH METHODS

To determine the content and meaning of the Host-Guest representation, we used 110 proverbs about the guest and the hospitality of peoples of different culture. It is known that proverbs and sayings reflect the process of cultural development, fix the peculiarities of national identity and mentality, store knowledge about the system of customs, traditions, rules and conventions developed in the framework of a particular culture. Proverbs and sayings as cultural ethical standards, possessing communicative self-sufficiency, encode culturally significant meanings of hospitality and attitude to a guest in a variety of configurations, transmit them, and also form stable attitudes, moral and ethical standards of hospitality practices and stereotypical behaviour algorithms. Representing aphoristically concise expressions, they manifest figuratively emotional content and reflect the cultural-specific context of the concept "Guest", which is determined by socio-psychological factors that provide different ways of categorisation. Also such qualitative research methods were used as content analysis and context analysis.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The content analysis and context analysis of 110 proverbs and sayings¹ about the guest and hospitality allow us to distinguish the following blocks describing different contexts of social practice of hospitality:

A. *Emotional context* is the context of friendliness and goodwill, reflecting the special emotional atmosphere associated with the presence in the house of the guest:

¹ Sayings are translated literally in order to preserve meaning

“The host is glad to meet the good guest”; “A good guest at home is joy”; “The good guest brings seven successes”.

- B. *Reference context* is the context of respect relating to the presumption of the guest’s authority as the basis for interaction with him and recognition of his exclusive position: “The host is honoured if the guest is welcomed”.
- C. *Adverbial context* is related to certain conditions of hospitality, norms, conventions, rituals and behavioural strategies: «If you call for guests, make the best food for them», «the food is the same as the guest»
- D. *Temporary context* reflects the temporary permeability of the boundaries of hospitality: «The host is happy twice for the guests: when they come in and when they come out», ‘If the guest is good, host is always happy to see him’
- E. *Spatial context* emphasises the special territorial boundaries of the social practice of hospitality: ‘Being at a guest house is good, but being home is better’
- F. *Subjectivity context* emphasises the activity and responsibility of the host:
- G. *Sacrifice context* is conditioned by the willingness of the host to act to the detriment of his own interests for the sake of the laws of hospitality: “You can starve yourself but you must feed the guest anyway”.
- H. *Supporting context* is the context of care and help, providing support and attentive attitude to the guest, at least in the receiving area: “If a guest is sad, it’s the owner’s fault”;
- I. *Symmetry context* is due to the complementarity of the communicative positions and social roles of “Guest” and “Host”, not implying their equal rights and identities, rather reflecting mutual respect for each other and tolerance to existing differences: "The guest is pleased - the host is happy"; “Those who do not like a guest are not honoured at a party”.
- J. *Functional context* makes it possible to see hospitality as a social practice focused on specific goals and objectives: “The guest sits a little, but notes a lot”; “If you want to be a good guest, praise the hostess”; “The invited guest is unprofitable. You should please the invited guest”; "A good guest host in honour".
- K. *Informational context* sets and defines the semantic coordinates of the communication with the guest: “If you have a lot of guests, you have a lot of news!», «Feed your guest, give him drinks, only afterwards you can ask for the news»
- L. *Game context* is related to the assignment, prescription and possible insincerity of the guest relationship, their formalisation, implying mutual evaluation, but without condemnation and depreciation: “Even if you are not

happy to see the guest, say: you are welcome”; “I have to listen to the person I eat with.”

The selected contexts reflect and transmit culturally significant connotations of hospitality, due to social perceptions of hospitality that exist in different cultures and provide different ways to categorise a guest. A qualitative analysis allows us to determine the frequency of occurrence of a particular context in the studied proverbs about the guest and hospitality, as well as the categorical content of each of them. Generalised data are given in Table 1.

The results indicate different frequency of occurrence of certain contexts of interactions with the guest, as well as the fact that the content of some contexts intersects and complements each other. Let us note that the frequency indicators (their quantitative severity) are not absolute and are decisive for characterising interactions with the guest; they are due to specific proverbs about the guest that were available for research analysis. At the same time, qualitative selection and categorical comprehension of various contexts contribute to a more accurate and detailed description and understanding of the social practice of hospitality

TABLE I. OCCURENCE FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN PROVERBS ABOUT THE GUEST AND HOSPITALITY

Context	Frequency	Content
Adverbial	0.164	treat, necessity, owner, luck, apprehension, gratitude, expectation, luck
Emotional	0.155	joy, friendliness, desire, expectation, treat, caress, acceptance
Subjective	0.127	master, treat, conversation, will, prohibition
Temporal	0.127	on time, bread and salt, prohibition, advice, pragmatism
Sacrifice	0.082	treatment
Symmetry	0.072	smile, gift, fun
Functional	0.064	joy, observation, flattery, honour, pleasing
Spacial	0.064	home, lunch, sleep, cramped, fun
Referencial	0.055	honour, respect
Informational	0.045	news, observation, meeting, subjectivity, conversation, dissemination of information
Supportive	0.027	hello, sadness, wine
Game	0.018	game, ritual, insincerity

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The social practice of hospitality is associated with certain spatial-temporal characteristics of the host-guest interaction and specific ritualised behavioural algorithms due to short-term (not long) finding a stranger on a personified territory of the Other. We propose to conduct a scientific reflection on the practice of hospitality, based on the selected semantic contexts and taking into account four possible interrelated perspectives of the vision of this interaction: the perspective of the host’s vision, the perspective of the guest’s vision, the perspective of the in-group’s vision, which includes the integrated guest. Let us note that the last two perspectives of the vision may coincide - this happens in the case when both the guest and the host are members of the same in-group.

TABLE. II. SEMANTIC CONTEXTS, CHARACTERISTIC FOR A CERTAIN OPTICS OF VISION.

Perspectives of vision	Semantic contexts
Host vision visitor perspective	Adverbial, emotional, subjectivity, sacrifice, spatial, reference, informational, supportive, gaming
Visitor perspective	Adverbial, emotional, temporal, symmetry, spatial, gaming
Perspective of the host in-group	Adverbial, symmetry, functional, referent
Perspective of the visitor in-group	Informational

Each of these perspectives generates personal representations of the interaction “I-Other” and determines tactics and strategy of behaviour with the Other, understanding and predicting the results of joint interaction and its possible outcomes. The host opens the door to his private territory (own house, city, country), symbolically reduces the spiritual distance between himself and the guest, directly and indirectly exposing himself to him: with joy and satisfaction demonstrating achievements and success, values and affection, creating a guest has a certain favourable image (itself, group, country), as a surprise, admiration and interest.

As a rule, the guest is shown the best, represented by the semantic dominants and including what, according to the owner, is associated with a high status, a well-deserved authority and a bright identity, thereby constructing a certain configuration of the guest’s look, controlling the impression made on him and positioning him difference. Such actions reflect, to a greater extent, “staged authenticity” [17], giving the social practice of hospitality a given and playful character. The owner absolutely has the right to choose the rules of the “game” expressed in the forms of self-presentation, hospitality scenarios, emotional intelligence components[4] and ways of structuring time, it is he who decides what, when and where the guest can be available, determining the spatial, temporal and semantic boundaries. At the same time, the host, accepting a guest and showing signs of attention and care, is willing to sacrifice his time, material and personal resources in order to deliver positive emotions to the guest and to express his respect for him. Moreover, inviting a person to visit, the owner shares with him and his symbolic capital – his own reputation. Reputation is understood to be a socio-psychological phenomenon, which is a coordinated set of cognitive constructs and reflexive assessments of Others (real, symbolic, personalised) about a particular person, forming a specific, dynamic, cognitive-evaluative system of opinions about it, which is formed during a certain segment time [11].

The social practice of hospitality involves a kind of “transfer of reputation” [16] – a deliberate process of transferring any aspect of a person’s reputation from host to guest. Interaction with the guest is based on a substantial information exchange, since the guest can personify a different order, a different system of relevance, a different way of life, information about which he voluntarily or unwittingly shares with the owner. At the same time, the short duration of the guest’s stay on the host’s territory does not threaten the host’s value-semantic picture. Communication with the guest rather contributes to its strengthening and

confirmation, sometimes amplifying the development of the host’s personality and broadening his life prospects and semantic horizons. A person, accepting an invitation to visit, admits the possibility of a return visit and at the same time imposes obligations on himself to receive a guest, i.e. expresses willingness to open your home and show your private territory. The context of symmetry is also related to the reputational exchange: the guest, choosing one or another “house” to visit, also shares his reputation with the owner, showing him honour and respect and recognising his authority. The guest provides the host with a festive atmosphere, breaking the routine of his daily life. Breaking the boundaries of everyday life is associated with the preparation for the arrival of the guest and the expectation of interesting communication with him. It also deals with the direct interaction with the guest who constructs an unusual (festive) event as a co-being, suggesting a joint emotional life and a positive experience of some existential moment of life, and distinguishing it from a series of everyday work. As is known, the holiday consolidates its participants, levels existing borders (language, cultural, status), reduces the communicative distance, facilitating the mutual disclosure of its participants, the emotional interchange between them and the formation of a sense of ownership and responsibility [1, 2].

The holiday always creates a special playing space, the “scenario” of which, as already noted, is written by the host, but the guest is certainly the central figure of this event. From the point of view of the host in-group representatives, the guest rituals act as an indicator of the social reputation of the owner of the house – his local reputation. That is, there is a set of assessments of the personality by the In-group Others, made by them on the basis of a certain criterion and resulting from a real interaction with the personality [5]. Guest rituals (their frequency, scale, reputation of the guests, possible consequences for the group, etc.) add respect and significance to the host, or, on the contrary, devalue his authority in the eyes of the members of the in-group and harm his reputation. The optics of the members of the guest in-group are focused mainly on informational intergroup exchange: a representative of his group is positioned as a mediator (mediator) between two communities – to put it more specifically, among their group norms, the rules developed, value orientations and existential socio meanings. The result of this interaction can be an awareness of their own distinctive cultural affiliation, which is the basis for self-identification of the members of the group, and the construction of their unique identity through a mechanism of social comparison. The representative of the in-group, acting as a guest, is directly or indirectly delegated to represent the in-group in the intergroup contact. Certain duties are assigned to perform the role of the representative of the group and specific sanctions are envisaged.

V. CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of proverbs and sayings about the guest and hospitality allows highlighting the semantic contexts of the social practice of hospitality. The first one is emotional context, reflecting the atmosphere caused by the presence in the house of the guest. The second one is reference context implying the imperative of the special status and authority of

the guest. Then adverbial context is associated with given conditions and behavioural hospitality algorithms. The other one is the time context related to the duration of the guest's presence in the host's private territory. Also we can see spatial context emphasising particular territorial boundaries. Context of subjectivity focuses on the activity and responsibility of the host. Sometimes we can see the context of sacrifice, conditioned by the owner's willingness to act to the detriment of his own interests for the sake of the interests of the guest. It is interesting to find the supporting context, providing support and attention to the guest. Also a context of symmetry implies the complementarity of communicative attitudes and social roles. Functional context allows considering hospitality as a social practice, focused on specific goals; informational context that sets and defines the semantic coordinates of communication with the guest. Even game context is related to the prescription of guest relations, their formalisation and ritualisation. The selected contexts reflect and broadcast the culturally significant connotations of hospitality due to the social notions of hospitality that exist in culture and provide various ways to categorise a guest. Proposed social and psychological analytics of social practice hospitality, taking into account the different perspectives of the vision (host, guest, host in-group and guest in-group), let us decode universal hospitality and define guest status as the special position of the Other.

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