Levy-Bruhl’s Concept of Participation and the Indirect Use of Relation Nouns in the Russian Language

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The paper discusses various ways of expressing the linguistic category of participation. The concept of participation was introduced into cultural anthropology by L. Levy-Bruhl. Participation is concerned with people’s feelings towards objects around them, as well as with the evaluation of the object’s relation to the speaker. The category can be expressed by a variety of means in the Russian language. This article argues that the indirect use of Russian relation nouns (drug ‘friend’, brat ‘brother’ etc.) is most comprehensively explained by the theory of participation.

Keywords: linguistic category of participation, Russian relation nouns, Russian language

Introduction

This paper deals with the problem of expressing the category of participation in the Russian language.

The concept is very important for Russian ethnic culture; however, until recently scholars have not been able to find the means of its expression in the Russian language.

The author tries, therefore, to demonstrate the variety of means used to express participation in the Russian language and to indicate why they were so difficult to discover. The concept of participation is often expressed indirectly, by means of transpositions. The most important of these are the transpositions of the grammatical forms of person and the indirect use of relation nouns.

On the history of participation

The concept of participation was introduced into cultural anthropology by L. Levy-Bruhl [11, 12, 13]. He used the concept to explain the ways of thinking in traditional cultures and compared them to modern scientific thinking based, according to L. Levy-Bruhl, on the principle of contradiction.

According to the author, participation suggests invisible, mystic, supernatural connections created between the person and other phenomena of the physical world. This relation can be represented as some internal intimacy between the subject and object of the relation, the importance of the object for the subject. A person is a part of his/her environment and things of the world are parts of the person. These connections are quite stable, but not static. Magic actions change or reproduce participations and taboo violations destroy them. The process is...
similar to that of manipulation with objects, to creative, reproductive processes and destructive processes, respectively. Participation seems to be actualized in magic actions and taboo violations both positively and negatively (positively for the former case and negatively for the latter case).

Participation is a specific category for traditional cultures and for the traditional layers in the cultures of “civilized” people, in particular, Russian people. It can be revealed in people’s day-to-day behaviour and their language.

The concept of participation was introduced into Russian linguistics by V.S. Khrakovsky and A.P. Volodin in their monograph “Imparative Typology. Russian Imperative”. The authors describe specific examples of the inclusive imperative (1st person plural), representing the joint actions of a speaker and an addressee (addressees) to demonstrate the addressee’s action, e.g.:

A teper’, deti, davajte zapišem domašnee zadanie ‘Now, children, let’s write down your homework’

The authors call it a “participation effect”: “The speaker willingly simulates his intention to perform the caused event together with the addressee/addressees” [6].

Participation predicates are closely connected to the predicates causing participation: privleč’ ‘to attract’, približit’ ‘to approach’, vyzvat’ doverije ‘to gain one’s confidence’, očarovat’ ‘to charm’, etc.:

Ona bystro s nim spravilas’, očarovala…

The concept of participation hasn’t been widely used in linguistics.

**Lexis and grammar to express participation**

Russian linguistic categories used to express participation are as follows:


Davajte že rabotat’ I žit’ kak v Evrope, a dumať i dražit’ po-russki ‘Let’s work and live according to European standards but think and make friends according to Russian standards’ (D. Severskij. Introduction. In: Domovoj, 04.03.2002. – The National Russian Corpus www.ruscorpora.ru (NRC).

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She managed to make him love her. She charmed him into loving her’ (I. Grekova. The masters of life. (1960) – NRC).

2. Vocabulary and grammar means to express possession. In fact, alienable possession is both a social and personal relation, as the connection between the possessor and the possessed is biased, arbitrary and maintained by social establishments, on the one hand, and the possessor’s internal (psycho-mental) feeling, on the other hand. The sentence Daj moju ručku ‘Give (me) my pen’ suggests that addressee have some physical contact with the object, but the “invisible” feeling of possession is ascribed to the speaker.

However, it is often the case when possession implies other relations which are mostly described by participation. For instance, my father is not the object of possession despite the use of a possessive pronoun. The relation of kinship is the participation. For instance, a formal refusal to be a mother or a father, annulment is a social break in the kinship relation, while an informal break in kinship between children, parents and relatives, for example, by the following statement means a
break of an informal relation, even if it is only temporary:

Ty mne ne syn (doć’, otec, mat’, brat, sestra) ‘You are not my son (daughter, father, mother, brother, sister)’.

3. Some means to express evaluation, in particular, diminutives [18, see also 20]:

Ne ugostiš’ tabač-k-om? ‘Will you treat me with your nice little tobacco bar?’ (-k- is the suffix of diminutive-hypocoristic).

The author of the sentence expresses his participation with the addressee with the diminutive tabačok. The connection between participation and estimation has been discussed in detail in [8].

4. Personal deixis. Various transpositions of the linguistic person allow us either to claim the participation of the grammatical subject with the speaker or to disclaim it.

It can be said that a communicative (pragmatic) situation does not only create the conditions to express participation for the speaker and the addressee, or the speaker and the object of his speech, but can also be considered a kind of a world model. The model suggests that the speaker, the author of a statement is in the centre of the universe, the addressee (his communicative partner) is in his communicative environment, being the closest object of his communicative reality. The communicative reality involves also other actors who are beyond the communication (characters). These positions are marked by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons. The speaker, addressee and other actors can be plural, in that case they are expressed by the corresponding person plural. This is the standard, primary use of personal pronouns. The 1st person plural also means two combinations of communicative roles: the author + the addressee(s) (so called, inclusive), the author + character(s) (so called, exclusive). Both options are considered a standard use.

It is important to distinguish between the grammatical category and the communicative role of a person, as they can be used indirectly, in a transposition. V.G. Gak defines transposition as “the use of a grammatical form in the function of another grammatical form as another member of the paradigm” [5]. The concept of the transposition is widely used in the morphology of the verb, where transpositions are often the case, e.g. [4]. Transpositions of the grammatical category of the person suggest the use of personal grammatical forms to denote such participants of a pragmatic situation which are usually revealed by other grammatical forms. The transpositions of personal grammatical forms considered in the paper suggest the shift of communicative roles (their characteristics and hierarchy) from the communicative situation to the image of the world in the speaker’s consciousness. Thus, the speaker and, consequently, the grammatical form of the 1st person represent the speaker’s self-consciousness (H.-N. Castaneda), his ego-sphere; the addressee and the grammatical form of the 2nd person are exceedingly close to the speaker; the characters expressed by the grammatical forms of the 3rd person do not have any personal relations with the speaker.

In terms of the category of participation, two types of transpositions can be distinguished.

The first shift is that of the personal grammatical form described by I.I. Kovtunova [9]. The grammatical form of the 1st person can be shifted to the grammatical form of the 2nd or 3rd person, the 2nd person can be shifted to the 3rd person, the 3rd person can be shifted to the 2nd person.

The 1st person represents the author’s ego-sphere, which is not subject to transpositions. The transpositions of the 2nd person (when the speaker or the character is represented by the 2nd
person) express the participation of the denoted object in the speaker. The transpositions of the 3rd person (when the speaker or the addressee is represented by the 3rd person) demonstrate the loss of the actor’s participation in the corresponding communicative role in the speaker.

The second shift is that from the singular to the plural grammatical form. Such transpositions express the shift of informal/formal relations between the speaker and the figure behind the grammatical form. This transposition is connected to the category of participation (to the personal sphere). It is described by Yu.D. Apresyan [1].

The shift of the person can be considered the strongest one of the two shifts, as it is related to the shift in communicative roles.

Transpositions can generally be represented as follows: grammatical forms of the 1st person singular (self-consciousness, ego-sphere) → grammatical forms of the 1st person plural → 2nd person singular (participation) → 2nd person plural → 3rd person (no personal relation). However, taking into account the two types of shift, the distribution of the grammatical forms can be more detailed (see the table).

The most important transpositions are as follows:

1) 2nd person singular → 1st person plural. The transposition is often related to the author’s social role.

   conductor’s “my” (‟my‟ „we‟ used by Russian conductors):
   
   – Dveročki ne zagoraživa-em (We-inclusive)! „Let’s don’t stand in the doorway!’
   
   – Potorop-im (We-inclusive)-sja! „Let’s hurry up’
   
   – Knopočki nažima-em (We-inclusive) pered ostanovkoj! „Let’s use buttons before stops!’.

   – policeman’s or the military “my”:
   
   – Naruša-em (We-inclusive)? „– Are we violating the rules?’
   
   – Čto tut dela-em (We-inclusive) “What are we doing here?” (A. Kim. Sobirateli trav ‘Herb collectors’).

   – doctor’s «my»:
   
   – Nu kak my sebja čuvstvu-em (We-inclusive)? „Well, how are we feeling?’

   – cameraman’s “my”:
   

2) 3rd person → 2nd person and a poetic form of address:

   O Volga!.. kolybel’ moja! Ljubil li kto tebja, kak ja? „Oh, Volga, my cradle! Did anybody love you as strongly as I do?’ (N. Nekrasov. Na Volge ‘At the Volga’).

3) 2nd person singular ↔ 2nd person plural:

   [Samanta, 2005.02.19. 00:51.] Marija Nikolaevna, no ona menja vela, a kto spasal ne pomnju. A ty (Vy) tože tam? Davno? „She was

Table. Distribution of personal grammatical forms and pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Singular/Plural</th>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Ja idu</td>
<td>Ty iděš</td>
<td>On iděť</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>„I am going’</td>
<td>„You are going’</td>
<td>„He is going’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selfconscious-ness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>My iděm</td>
<td>Vy iděte</td>
<td>Oni idut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>„We are going’</td>
<td>„You are going’</td>
<td>„They are going’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>No relation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
my doctor, I don’t remember who saved me. And you (singular/plural) are also there, aren’t you?’ ([Krasota, zdorov’e, otdyhx: Medicina i zdorov’e // Forum on eva.ru, 2005] – NRC).

4) 2nd person → 3rd person:


The system of transpositions for grammatical forms of the person is discussed in detail in [7].

5. Some nouns denoting people: drug ‘friend’, soded ‘neighbour’ and kinship terms. They are called relation nouns [2: 233-248; 3: 61-62]. They have some meaning or potency of participation. Such words can only be used with possessive adjectives or, sometimes, relative pronouns or nouns in the genitive case: moj drug ‘my friend’, soded Ivanova ‘Ivanov’s neighbour’, eë brat ‘her brother’.

Relation nouns have obligatory semantic or syntactic valency of a possessor, which indicates the object of participation. It means that even if the position of the possessor is vacant, the possessor is still present. In this case, the phenomenon of the syntactic zero [15] can be observed. Depending on the pragmatic situation and the semantics of the sentence, there are various zero possessors, e.g.

1) participant of a pragmatic situation, for example, the speaker or the addressee:

Kak Ø otec? ‘How’s (your) Father’ (Colloquial speech in Krasnoyarsk, 1998, author’s materials).

b) proposition subject:

Kak pomoč Ø tovarišču? ‘How Ø (you) to help (your) comrade’ (Soldat udači ‘Soldier of fortune’. 2004. – NRC)

Relation nouns also include words which express stable connections between people:

1) kinship (babuška ‘grandmother’, muž ‘husband’, vnuk ‘grandson’, etc);
2) spatial intimacy (zemljak ‘fellow-countryman’, soded ‘neighbour’),
3) professional unity (kollega ‘colleague’, odnokašnik ‘fellow-student’),
4) emotional bonds (drug ‘friend’, sweet heart etc.).

These words express an objective relation with somebody else but they can also express and often do express participation, especially as a form of address.

Indirect use of relation nouns to address

Relation nouns express participation explicitly when used in a transposition, indirectly, as a form of address:

Tam, brat... poxuže dela byli ‘There were worse things there, brother’ (V. Šukšin. Gore (Grief)).

When an addressee is called the speaker’s friend, brother or father without being in such a relation, this form of address shows a shift from an objective relation to participation:

– Daj ešče vypit’, otec. ‘I’d like to have one more drink, father’ (V. Šukšin. Oxota žit’ (I Want to Live)).

Participation is also actualized when a kinship term is a form of address:

JA očen’ tebja ljublju, otec, ne serdis’ na menja, no ja uježaju odna ‘I love you so much, father, but don’t be angry with me, I am leaving alone’ ([Evgenij Švarc. Obyknovennoe čudo ‘A Simple Miracle’ (1956)]. – NRC).

The speaker uses address to establish communicative contact with the addressee. And use of the relation noun as address allows us to
establish some additional personal contact, as if the addressee were the speaker’s actual friend, brother or fellow-countryman.

Indirect forms of address are represented by the words of the following semantic classes:

1) kinship terms are widely used:
   – *Nu, brat* Vanja, xorošo, xorošo! ‘Well, brother Vanya, it’s good!’ (F. Dostoevskij. Unižennye i oskorblennye (The Insulted and Humiliated)).
   – Ty mne ponravilsja, synok ‘I like you, sonny’ (Marijskaja pravda (Joškar-Ola), 2003.01.10. – NRC);
   – Ty podoždi, mat’! ‘Will you wait, mother?’ (V. Šukšin. Materinskoe serdсe ‘A Mother’s Heart’).

Indirect forms of address involve terms of close relation only. A. Wierzbicka describes the difference between “kinsfolk” and “relatives” [19]. According to A. Wierzbicka, some components of the words’ meaning can be interpreted as follows: “these people are like part of me”, “I am like part of these people”, “when I think of these people I feel something very good». These components reflect the participation of the speaker in the people whom he considers his kinsfolk.

2) The noun *zemljak* ‘fellow-countryman’, which is a widely used word of spatial intimacy and derived hypocoristic words *zёma, zemelja*:

The relations expressed by the term *zemljak* can cover a wide area of space. It may be somebody living in the same town with the possessor or in the same country or somebody representing the same nationality. All this allows the speaker to use the word *zemljak* without causing a negative reaction. This is the reason why these words are often used to express participation in the addressee and are used as a form of address.

3) the words used to express emotional bonds, such as the common *drug* ‘friend’, *prijatel’* ‘mate’, *tovarišč* ‘comrade’:
   – *Ja umeju pristat’ k slučajnomu proxožemu – pomogi, mol, drug* ‘I am quite able to start a talk with a complete stranger – will you help me, friend’ (V. Makanin. Andegraund, ili geroj našego vremeni ‘Underground or the Hero of Our Time’ (1996–1997). – NRC);
   – *Vy sami-to voevali, tovarišč? – sprosil pod koneс Mixajlo ‘Have you been to the war, comrade? – asked Mikhailo in the end’ (V. Shukshin. Moj zjat’ ukral mašinu drov ‘My Son-in-law Stole a Truck of Timber’).

According to A. Wierzbicka, the model of “friendship” in the Russian culture differs significantly from a similar model in Western culture. First, Russians consider friendship to be a more intensive and close relationship. Second, friendship is much more important for Russians than for British people or Americans. The English
word *friend* corresponds to the Russian words *drug*, *podruga*, *tovarišč*, *prijatel’* and *znakomyj*. The order of the words shows the degree of feelings’ intensity [19]. Correspondingly, the address *friend* demonstrates participation, *comrade* is neutral, while *fellow*, on the contrary, establishes some distance between the speaker and the addressee.

As can be seen from the examples, the words from the three groups are normally used as a form of address with zero possessor.

The relation noun *tovarišč comrade* as a form of address is of special interest. This form of address was considered standard and neutral in Soviet society. This noun was the opposite of the noun *citizen* which, as a form of address, was stylistically marked, formal and opposite of relation nouns marked as colloquial.

*Tovarišč*, as a form of address, has its origin in the speech of Bolshevik party members. In this context, *tovarišč*, as a form of address, adequately expressed the implied attitude. The idea of party solidarity, friendship and equality was widely spread among party members. Later, the concept of solidarity shifted from the party level to the level of the state. Cf. the dictionary explanation of the word *comrade*: “1. A person who shares the same opinions, activity, life conditions, etc …

2. A person who is a member of Soviet society or a citizen of a socialist country (generally used as a form of address, when speaking about one’s profession, title” [14] “2. A person connected to somebody because he shares his activities, professional occupations 3. A person connected to somebody by the emotional bonds of friendship; 4. A revolutionary workers’ party member; 5. A citizen, person in Soviet society ” [16].

M. Krongauz describes the word *tovarišč*, stressing the difficulties which arise when translating the word into other languages [10]. However, he does not discuss the important aspect of participation implied by this form of address as the opposite of more formal address, such as *mister* or *citizen*. These forms of address actualize the addressee’s social background. For instance, employees working in courts and prisons were instructed not to use *comrade* when speaking to prisoners. The word *citizen* was considered more appropriate in this context.

Participation can be expressed by a combination of a relation noun and a proper name. For instance, I.V. Utekhin writes about a specific feature peculiar to communication between neighbours sharing the same apartment (*kommunalka*). Younger neighbours may call older neighbours their “home” names, e.g. *djadja Petja* ‘Uncle Petya’, *tetja Katja* ‘Aunt Katya’. Such names can be remnants of the time when the speaker was a child and called his neighbours according to the etiquette of popular speech [18: 125].

The nouns *djadja* ‘uncle’ and *tetja* ‘aunt’ can mean 1) kinship (a relative’s name); 2) the names of adults in children’s speech. Semantic intersection is caused by a semantic component meaning “not a child, adult in relation to the speaker” which is present in both nouns. However, there is no such a component when the speaker himself is an adult. In this case, the semantic component meaning a relative is actualized, with this component embracing the concept of participation. Thus, a semantic transposition can be observed, that is, a kinship name is indirectly used, and this implies participation. There is semantic agreement with the second part of this name – proper hypocoristic noun.

**Conclusion**

Thus, participation seems to be mostly expressed by anomalous linguistic means, that is, transpositions and semantic shifts. The Russian language has few specific means to directly express this relationship.

Participation is a hidden, “invisible” relationship. It is revealed by actions, behaviour,
verbal and non-verbal signs with some primary meaning. Nevertheless, regular use of transpositions and semantic shifts proves that spiritual intimacy, participation is as important for Russians as biological kinship. The former means that the participation is inherent to the Russian social structure.

References