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## Lexeme “Creativity” Syntagmatics as the Embodiment of Ethical Ideas and Moral Traditions in Modern Media Discourse

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### Abstract

The article deals with the peculiarities of the lexeme “creativity” use in modern media discourse. The authors prove that the use of this word has ethical and linguistic limitations not always realized and taken into consideration in media communication; analyze the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic origins of inconsistency with the principles of ecological linguistics, manifested in the lexeme “creativity” syntagmatics. The article uses the modern media texts, mainly the genre of interview, where violations of ethical and linguistic standards connected with the word “creativity” use have been noted. The analyzed feature of the use of the lexeme tvorchestvo (creativity) plays an evaluative role, reflects the further blurring of the fuzzy boundaries between the concepts of “aesthetical/unaesthetical”, “linguoecological/non-linguoecological”, “ethical/unethical”. To study this material the authors used functional and pragmatic analysis and sociolinguistic methodology based on the correlation of social and linguistic parameters of communication. Non-ecology can be associated not only with the use of a crude substandard, but also with the inadequate use of high-sounding words. In media education, it is necessary to focus not only on the appropriate use of linguistic units in accordance with the purity of style, but also on the use of linguistic means in accordance with ethical and linguistic standards. To do this, it is necessary to study the media portraiture of certain words. When studying the discipline “Creative means and tools of communication” in the master's program “Media Linguistics and new means of communication”, it is important to devote a special topic to portraying one of the frequency words of the modern media world picture which can be illustrated by the example of the “creativity” word. Media literacy, formed, among other things, when studying the pragmatic potential of the frequency words in the modern media world picture, will contribute to the proper use of linguistic means and media rhetorical strategies in accordance with ethical and linguistic standards, strengthening the culture of media communication and taking care of the language as a whole.

**Keywords:** media discourse, media communication, media literacy, media education, linguistic pragmatics, syntagmatics, ethical and linguistic standards, media rhetoric, lexeme “creativity”, interview.

### 1. Introduction

Ethical and linguistic standards have long been firmly included in the general system of normativity with systemic, vertical, contextual and situational standards (the detailed bibliography of the issue is in the monograph and articles (Barabash et al., 2023; Kulikova, 2022a; Kulikova,

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2022b; Kulikova, Barabash, 2022; Kulikova et al., 2023; Kulikova, Barabash, 2024a; Kulikova, Barabash, 2024b). Ethical and linguistic normativity is closely connected with media literacy education background (Fedorov, 2001; Fedorov, 2009; Fedorov, 2010; Fedorov et al., 2014; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2018; Fedorov et al., 2019; Fedorov, Chelysheva, 2002; Gálik et al., 2024; Gálik, Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2022; Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2020; Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2022), generalizing linguistic and cultural parameters. Violations in this area may reflect communicative tendencies related to already established stereotypes of behaviour or their formation. “A special focus on oneself, manifested itself in individualism, the cult of publicity and self-promotion, contrasting one's opinion with the opinion of others, has largely determined freedom as the main behavioural value of a new generation in the real and virtual spaces of its existence” (Mamina, Pochebut, 2021: 21). As will be shown in the article, it is these new behavioural values that predetermined the inconsistencies of ethical and linguistic normativity in the “creativity” word use.

## 2. Materials and methods

The article uses the material of modern media texts, especially the interview genre, where violations of ethical and linguistic standards in use of the “creativity” word are noted. Functional-pragmatic analysis and sociolinguistic methodology based on the correlation of social and linguistic parameters of communication have been used to study this material.

## 3. Discussion

About the absence (undesirability, questionable normativity) of grammatical forms it have been known for a long time: the first person of the future tense of the verb “to win” is not used (and on this occasion it has been repeatedly written that the language itself protects against boastful statements like *\*pobedyu* (in English *I will win*, but it is impossible to use this form in Russian), in fact there is a ban on the first person of the indicative mood of the verb *kushat'* (to eat), for example, *kushajte, gosti dorogie* (eat, dear guests), but *ya kushayu* (I eat).

Nikolai Akimov in the famous book “Not only about the theatre”, among other prohibitions, noted the following one: do not use the verbs *kushat'* (to eat), *tvorit'* (create) in the form of first person in singular. Maxim Gorky also noted in his article “On Plays”: “It is not quite appropriate and too often young writers use a loud and also not quite definite church word – *tvorchestvo* (creativity).

The author, determining the semantics of the lexeme *tvorchestvo* (creativity), pays attention to its transparent internal form and the word-formation characteristic of the lexeme *Tvorec* (Creator).

In the semantics of this unit, it is significant for M. Gorky the relationship with the lexeme *God*, and the author taking into consideration the communicative situation, chooses a special characteristic of the lexeme *tvorchestvo* (creativity) is *church word*. This combination of words seems to intentionally actualize the negative evaluation characteristic of the situation, but does not extinguish the correlation of the lexemes *tvorec* (Creator) and *God*, which is significant for linguoculture as a whole. Later, M. Gorky argued that since “there is something aristocratic and ecclesiastical in the word *tvorchestvo* (creativity), it is better to replace it with a simpler and more precise *rabota* (work)”. Such a stable interpretation of the lexeme *tvorchestvo* (creativity) developed back in the XIX century: it is considered to be stylistically marked, related to high, bookish, etc. style, its use is considered to be appropriate when defining something unique, unusual.

Thus, the letter from I.S. Turgenev to V.P. Botkin contains an indication of the peculiarities of the meaning of this lexeme: “This word is impermissibly impertinent – who dares to say not in jest that he is the *tvorec* (Creator)?!” (Turgenev, 1856).

Also: “Since the middle of the XIX century, the words *tvorec* (creator), *tvorcheskij* (adjective creative), *tvorchestvo* (creativity) get a shade of ceremonial solemnity, majestic, high style” (Vinogradov, 1947: 6-9)

It has been repeatedly noted (by writers, linguists) that the word *tvorchestvo* (creativity) is not quite acceptable in combination with the possessive pronouns *my*. “Sensitive to language Bulat Okudzhava reacted ironically in the last years of his life to questions about “*tvorcheskie plany*” (creative plans): “Creativity is for Alena Apina, but I just work” (Novikov, 2016: 127).

I.B. Levontina points out: “There are many words in the Russian language, as one of my colleagues says, “*na koturnakh*” (on the couch). These words are not necessarily high, but perhaps just slightly out of use, not applicable to every situation. Like the words *sovershennyj* (perfect), *sovershenstvo* (perfection). ... The Russian language is very sensitive to such elation. In particular,

this is manifested in the fact that not everything can be said about yourself. When, for example, an actor or singer says in an interview: “in my *tvorchestvo* (creativity)...” – it sounds vulgar and ridiculous” (Levontina, 2021: 93).

V. Tokareva also writes that she does not like the word *tvorchestvo* (creativity), but does not know how to replace it (Tokareva, 2015). It can be replaced, as is sometimes believed, by a foreign-language borrowing (Algavi et al., 2021; Baranova et al., 2022; Brusenskaya et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2022; Kayal, Saha, 2023; Ozbek et al., 2023; Skvortsova et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2023).

Many authors (García-Perdomo, 2021; Lane, 2020; Langer, Gruber, 2021; Macgilchrist et al., 2020; Manca, 2020; Muzykant et al., 2022; Muzykant et al., 2023; Osipovskaya, Savelyeva, 2023; Shin et al., 2022; Stoumpos et al., 2023; Švelch, 2022) attribute the popularity of the anglicisms *kreativnyj* (creative) and *kreativnost'* (creativity) to the fact that they filled a pragmatic lacuna: synonymous with the words *kreativnyj* (creative) and *kreativnost'* (creativity), they, however, lack “elation”, bounding collocation.

“...it seems inappropriate to strive for the actual identification of the concepts of *tvorchestvo* (creativity) and *kreativnost'* (creativity), which can also be traced in scientific, philosophical and educational literature, not to mention the levels of everyday and mass consciousness”; “the mechanistic, technological and algorithmic essence of *kreativnaya* (creative) activity, which, in turn, not only does not exclude, but also it assumes the possibility of replication and mass production of a *kreativnyj produkt* (creative product)” (Kachay, 2016: 33).

It is necessary to clearly distinguish the semantics and pragmatics of the concepts *tvorchestvo* (creativity) and *kreativ* (creativity). “During this period, there is a tendency to merge and interchangeability of *tvorchestvo* (creativity) and *kreativ* (creativity), but their reflection shows that the opposition of *tvorchestvo* (creativity) and *kreativ* (creativity) still exist. *Tvorchestvo* (creativity) and *kreativ* (creativity) can be contrasted by the parameters of verticality – horizontality” (Azarova, 2015: 36), but at the same time, there is also an understanding of *kreativ* (creativity) as “well-paid *tvorchestvo* (creativity)” (Azarova, 2015: 44).

V.I. Dahl in the “Explanatory Dictionary of the living Great Russian language” explains the word *tvorchestvo* (creativity) through the synonym “*sozidanie* (creation) as an active property” and fixes the saying “A *tvorcheskij* (adjective *creative*) gift is given just few persons” (Dahl, 1955).

As I.B. Levontina writes, “the Russian language is characterized by a peculiar duality such as doubling of important concepts, dividing them into “gornij (higher)” and “dol'nij (lower)” variants such as *istina* and *pravda* (truth), *dolg* and *obyazannost'* (duty)... And now a new pair: *tvorchestvo* (creativity) and *kreativ* (creativity)” (Levontina, 2021:95).

In the fact that a reduced conceptual and stylistic synonym *kreativnost'* (creativity) to the word *tvorchestvo* (creativity) has appeared, I. B. Levontina sees a manifestation of the primordial pattern.

#### 4. Results

The analysis of the lexeme *tvorchestvo* (creativity) functioning in the communicative practice of mass culture figures makes it possible to assert that speakers relating to mass culture and considering this attribute significant for themselves tend to intentionally use the lexeme *tvorchestvo* (creativity) to themselves and their activity.

For example the content of the interview with Elizaveta Afanasyeva “Creativity must be loved like a child” (Interview, 2023):

– Do you have a favourite poet: a classic and a contemporary one? Are you guided by someone in your work?

– Oh, I always forget to name someone on this question. Perhaps, it's time to make a list of favourites. Of the classics, of course, Mayakovsky. Of contemporaries is Andrei Orlovsky. There is no reference point in my work, but I try to notice for what reasons I like other authors' poems, what catches on in them, how to integrate it into my *tvorchestvo* (creativity). <...>

This poem was a powerful start to my work on the word. That's what I wrote after analyzing my texts with Andrei Orlovsky. It is this poem that essentially reflects my *tvorchestvo* (creativity) and gives an answer to the questions “why verlibra? and why without punctuation marks?” <...> The theme of mirrors has taken root in my *tvorchestvo* (creativity) unnoticeably for me. My solo album last September was called “The Hall with Mirrors”. And with this text, I summarize, I give myself the answer to where does this topic grow legs from, and what to be done to get out of the looking glass.

– Have you ever dedicated poetry to someone?

– *To say, this is dedicated to the boy who broke my heart, of course, is impossible. But, a lot in my tvorchestvo (creativity) is written about someone, although rather about my emotions related to people. There were direct dedications to my mother and grandmother in childhood.*

– *You promote your tvorchestvo (creativity) by performing in other cities. What is the usual purpose of such events and the audience?*

– *The audience is very often unfamiliar with poetry, and therefore very valuable. It is an indescribable feeling to see how people's eyes are burning, because they used to not know poetry at all beyond the conventional Pushkin, and now they can read a whole crowd of modern authors. The goal is to present modern poetry to people, to present modern poetry in an unusual format to people.*

– *How do you understand that you are talented and your poems are not a set of words devoid of meaning?*

– *It is important to show the poems to more skilled authors, to be ready for criticism and years of work on the texts. To connect common sense yourself and develop the ability to look at your tvorchestvo (creativity) from the outside. And the concept talent is overrated, in my opinion. The most important thing is work.*

– *What advice would you give to aspiring poets or those who has been writing for a long time, but who is afraid to present his/her tvorchestvo (creativity) to the people?*

– *I always say that you need to love any of your tvorchestvo (creativity) like a child. Love for children is unconditional, but this does not prevent them from being educated, because a loving parent wants the child to develop, learn new things, be a good person.*

– *Where can the readers of “Open Belgorod” get acquainted with the Muse's tvorchestvo (creativity)?*

– *I am actively run my telegram channel now. There are poems, poetic notes and my other tvorchestvo (creativity)”.*

As we can see, the poetess does not feel any discomfort using the combination “*moyo tvorchestvo (my creativity)*”. It should be admitted that this feature correlates with the idea that it opens the horizons of poetry for people, “who did not know poetry at all beyond the *conventional Pushkin*”. The poetess thinks it's time for her to make “a list of favourites. Of the classics, of course, Mayakovsky...”.

The annoying repetition of the combination “*v moyom tvorchestve (in my creativity)*” betrays a complete lack of self-irony and an obviously exaggerated idea of her own importance (very comical against the background of such pearls as *where this topic grows legsfrom* or *conditional Pushkin*). It was N.A. Nekrasov or I. Brodsky who called their poems *stishki* (small poems), E. Afanasyeva uses only *tvorchestvo (creativity)*. “In the media discourse, like in any other, ethical standard is one of the most important, universal, socially sanctioned regulators of speech behaviour, which perform an orienting, regulating, predictive and evaluative role” (Surikova, 2009: 70), and non-compliance with these standards necessarily needs public reflection.

Even more striking example is the use of the word *tvorchestvo (creativity)* by singer Ya. Dronov – SHAMAN; for interview materials “There were periods of complete despair”. SHAMAN told how he went to success for 15 years” (Sysoev, 2023):

– *“It was only when I was already 30 years old that the first song “Let's get up” shot out, which served as the locomotive for the rest of my tvorchestvo (creativity). As I have been doing this for eleven years, first seven years at music school and then for four years in college, I set myself the task to have folklore notes in my tvorchestvo (creativity). There is another theme that, of course, excites me and that is present, as a kind of leitmotif, not only in my tvorchestvo (creativity), but also in life – this is the theme of death.*

– *As a tvorcheskij chelovek(creative person), I try to get as much emotion as possible on these trips. They also leave their mark on my tvorchestvo (creativity), they inspire, of course. These people let into their hearts only those they believe. I am very pleased that I have earned the trust of my lifestyle and my tvorchestvo (creativity). It seems to me that moyo tvorchestvo (my creativity) does not leave indifferent people all over the world. I would like anyone who searches the Internet for moyo tvorchestvo (my creativity) to see something fresh, relevant material and an up-to-date image first of all.*

The word *kreativnost'* (creativity) is the best word for the activity of a Shaman, since “an indicative feature of a *kreativnyj* (adjective creative) person is the desire to draw attention to

his/herself by any means, which often leads to ethical nihilism” (Kachay, 2016). But it is the word *tvorchestvo* (creativity) that the Shaman likes:

*“For the years of my tvorcheskij (adjective creative) career, I have tried a large number of musical directions, tried on many different images. When your tvorchestvo (creativity) touches a large number of people, gives rise to some emotions in them, of course, interest in yourself. I try not to distract the fans' attention from my songs with some antics. Everything I want to express and say is in my tvorchestvo (creativity). Now I form a team for my own producing centre.*

*It will be called SHAMAN. At first, these professionals, not even employees, but rather like minded people whom I want to unite, will be engaged in the development and promotion of my tvorchestvo (creativity), such as organizing tours, shooting music videos, interacting with the press and so on. I'm not afraid of anything at all. In 15 years of conscious tvorcheskij (adjective creative) activity, I have written about two hundred songs”.*

The answers to the question “Do negative comments touch a nerve?” are amazing!

*“On the contrary! I am grateful to all the haters. It means that my tvorchestvo (creativity) does not leave anyone indifferent, and this is the most important thing.*

*Ksenia wrote three publications about me at the same time in her million-dollar Telegram channel. I didn't say anything at first, but after the third post I “broke down”. (Laughs.) I thought I should thank her for such a powerful promotion and promotion of my tvorchestvo (creativity).*

*I think Alexander is a fan of mine who genuinely liked this song. Thank him very much for the additional PR and drawing attention to me and my tvorchestvo (creativity)!”*

*He is not confused by remarks of this kind: Songs “Let's get up” and “I'm Russian”, released in collaboration with producer Victor Drobysh, do not even have a hint of intellectual value <...>. The theme of patriotism from the point of view of Russian morality does not tolerate blatant pride (Konovalov, 2022) ... this is just “meaningless pop music”. Singer Olga Kormukhina, in an interview in the program “Tak skazat' (Say so)” on the YouTube channel “Abzats-media”, said that the Shaman could have become the second Kipelov, but did not have enough intelligence that sooner or later he would remain at the broken trough”.*

To the writer Evgeny Martin, the Shaman's songs remind the answers of negligent students: “When I was teaching, I noticed that some of the most lagging and negligent students used one technique, which could be conditionally called “buttons”. Answering my question, they looked into my eyes and strained their brains with an effort to squeeze out of themselves... individual words. When he gives out the word and looks at you hopefully: well, you know what I mean? The idea is the teacher knows perfectly well what is behind this word and that the “general view” itself will be drawn in teacher's head. And that she was drawn in his head, but not in the student's head, he (teacher) probably won't notice. And the student will be saved the trouble” (Martin, 2023).

Indeed, it is quite expected that the author of such lyrics is not confused talking about *svoyom tvorchestve* (his creativity). “The inner moral law expressed in language” (Dmitrieva, 2005: 9) is most likely to be unknown to the Shaman. Normative restrictions on the use of the combination “*v moem tvorchestve* (in my creativity)” in relation to oneself and one's activity are based on the concepts of linguistic ethics, a certain set of ethical concepts fixed in linguistic culture, including at the level of cognition, which should ensure the unity and continuity of spiritual and moral parameters that ensure a systematic worldview, including linguistic and, as a result, the formation of cognitive, including social and communicative principles of interaction. “Linguistic ethics is an inner feeling, to some extent akin to linguistic instinct or taste, but more psychologically deep, primary one in relation to the latter” (Dmitrieva, 2005: 10). Of course, all this is incompatible with the principles of show business such as to shout loudest, to overtake competitors, to succeed at any cost. Of course, the problem is not only in Shaman, but in the general linguocultural situation. When the writer Yuri Polyakov was asked a question about the singer Shaman, he also spoke about poor lyrics, but at the same time he remembered that there was a state song committee in the USSR, hence there were the lyrics that we remember and love to this day. And songs with “dumb” lyrics can only destroy us, empty our souls. And it is not necessary to contrast the current “freedom of *tvorchestvo* (creativity)” and “censorship” of the Soviet era.

The analyzed feature of the use of the lexeme *tvorchestvo* (creativity) plays an evaluative role, expresses the further blurring of the fuzzy boundaries between the concepts of “aesthetical/unaesthetical”, “linguoecological/non-linguoecological”, “ethical/unethical”.

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, non-ecology can be connected not only with the crude substandard use, but also with the inadequate use of high-sounding words. Socially, linguoculturally and communicatively conditioned restrictions on the use of the combination “in my creativity” (*v moem tvorchestve*) are associated with the processes of reflection and author’s reflection, based on ethical, ethical and linguistic standards, are not always significant for the current situation in the society focused on consumption and achieving personal success.

This determines the necessity for a detailed and systematic research of the linguoecological and ethical-linguistic aspects in the culture of using linguistic units in modern Russian speech in general and modern media discourse in particular. Since language is the main tool for the professional activity of journalists, advertising and public relations specialists and all those who will work in media communication, media education should focus not only on the appropriate use of language units in accordance with the purity of style, but also on the use of language tools in accordance with ethical and linguistic standards. To do this, it is necessary to study the media portraiture of certain words. When studying the discipline “Creative means and tools of communication” in the master’s program “Media Linguistics and new means of communication”, it is important to devote a separate topic to portraying the frequency words of the modern media world picture, which can be illustrated on the example of the “creativity” word. Careful attention should be paid to the investigation of this lexeme and the context of its use in accordance with ethical and linguistic standards. Media literacy, formed, among other things, by studying the pragmatic potential of the frequency word in the modern media world picture, will certainly yield excellent results: students will competently, clearly and appropriately use linguistic means, achieving the necessary effect and creating media-rhetorical strategies in accordance with ethical and linguistic norms, strengthening the culture of media communication and taking care of the language as a whole.

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