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# WINNIE-THE-POOH AND THE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH BEHAVIUOR

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Anthropologist K. Fox described approximately 250 implicit rules of typical behavior of the English. Assuming that these rules of English behavioral grammar can be illustrated by examples from fiction, such examples for some of the rules were found in "Winnie-the-Pooh" by A. Milne. The examples justify an idea that reverse engineering procedures of text analysis could be possible in order to reveal behavioral rules from fiction narratives.

**Keywords:** human behavior, behavioral grammar, cultural grammar, text analysis.

The purpose of this article is to show how examples of typical English behavior can be found in the works of fiction, namely in "Winnie-the-Pooh".

Winnie-the-Pooh can be considered almost as equally Russian folklore character as Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev or Stirlitz. We owe this largely to the wonderful translation of Boris Zakhoder and, I think, even more so to the cartoon by Fyodor Khitruk, where Winnie is voiced by a truly popular folk actor Evgeny Leonov. All these creators made Winnie a character close to us. And what English behavioral traits did Alexander Milne, wittingly or unwittingly, include in his famous character? How can this story be used to introduce students to English grammar of behaviour? What is behavioral grammar anyway? This term first appeared in the Tartu semiotic school.

Suren Zolyan and Igor Chernov were the first to introduce the notion of grammar of behavior. They thought that behavior can be studied with linguistic methods because it is a semiotic system. Bearing in mind the linguistic competence notion and Chomsky's generative grammar they surmised it possible to model the human behavioral competence and to create the finite system of basic alphabet and instructions which is able to produce indefinite number of behavioral patterns. They considered behavior an analog of surface language structure whereas deep language structure was analogous to normative descriptions of behavior in natural languages. They viewed behavior as language and descriptions of behavior were thought to be metalinguistic.

*Numerous texts function in the cultural system that extrapolate and explicate the competence of society (the system of prescriptions and proscriptions). Let us call grammar the mechanism that generates such texts.*

In the sciences of culture, society and human behavior - in cultural and social anthropology, sociology, psychology, human ethology - there is a significant lack of empirical data. Theoretical generalizations in these sciences are made, as a rule, on the basis of various options for questioning and observation, either in natural or experimental situations, but the set of these situations and topics chosen for research is quite limited. The ability of most scientists to form representative samples for their research is also limited. In addition, the results of these studies (especially "raw", unprocessed data) are very rarely made publicly available. Therefore, we are interested in developing a systematic method for extracting knowledge about human behavior from rich and publicly available sources, namely, fictional narratives.

The abstract formulation of the situational rules of the grammar of behavior of a particular culture and society is an even more complex task than the description of lexical constructions or the formulation of the grammatical rules of a language. But the minimum requirement for one to even talk about the ex-

istence of situational rules of behavior is the presence of examples.

In every culture there is a very large, but still finite set of typical situations, i.e. typical social statuses, psychophysiological states and forms of behavior that correlate with each other. In each specific text there are both typical and atypical descriptions. But the analysis of a large number of texts, which in the future can be done using artificial electronic networks, will make it possible to create dictionaries (databases) of the main typical statuses, states, circumstances, forms of behavior and situational behavioral structures in general. Next, it will be possible to compare the dictionaries of constructions from different cultures. Some designs are expected to be universal, others will be specific to a particular culture, society, or era. A comparison of such structures will make it possible to understand exactly how they changed during the course of socio-cultural evolution, as well as what the specific mechanisms of this evolution were.

One way to conceptualize culture is to distinguish between deep values, on the one hand, and an outer layer of practices, on the other. For example, according to Geert Hovstede, the core of culture is represented by such values as ideas about evil and good, dirty and clean, dangerous and safe, prohibited and permitted, decent and indecent, moral and immoral, ugly and beautiful, unnatural and natural, abnormal and normal , paradoxical and logical, irrational and rational. Practices are a visible part of culture, which is manifested in the structure of social institutions, in people's actions, and behavior. Deep values change very slowly, while practices can evolve quite quickly [3].

To understand how practices and values are related, empirical material is needed, i.e. empirical description of typical practices. The source of such descriptions can be fiction. But we need a methodology for analyzing literary texts aimed at obtaining such descriptions.

If the character's action consists of some oral or written statement, the content of the statement also characterizes the culture and society. In particular, the analysis of statements allows us to describe basic cultural values.

Typical cultural and social practices are not limited to acting or speaking according to scripts. A more complete description of practices should include both typical forms of behavior and typical reasons for their implementation, namely, the typical states of the acting characters and the circumstances in which they find themselves. In general, such complex descriptions of interrelated typical states, circumstances and forms of behavior can be called descriptions of typical situations. And another idea is to extract just such descriptions from texts.

As we know, Anna Wierzbicka proves that linguistic concepts in different cultures are different, but their meaning can be conveyed in a natural semantic metalanguage. Thus, Wierzbicka's methodology affirms the originality (non-universality) of linguistic meanings. Cultures are unique, but not so unique that they cannot be talked about [4]. We believe that not only language concepts are unique, but also behavior. We can convey unique meanings if we help with reliable tools. To understand the uniqueness of culture is to understand the uniqueness of behavior, as Fox does. And you can explain the rules of English behavior using examples from books about Winnie-the-Pooh.

Fox's "Grammar of Behavior" implements not only unique semantics of concepts, but also unique rules of behavior. This approach is close to Wierzbicka's linguoculturology, however, in our opinion, it expands the idea of describing the unique features of culture beyond the boundaries of language. We assume that Fox, like Wierzbicka, can find some universal primitives (this may be the subject of our next study).

Why is Winnie-the-Pooh needed to understand the English? Because his behavior is specific to them! Why can we understand something about them from this book? Because Alexander Milne's descriptions of Winnie's behavior contain some elements that are universal for all people, and we are able to rely on these elementary meanings.

"Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behavior" by Kate Fox was first published in 2004. Her goal was "to identify distinctive patterns or regularities in English behavior…, to detect the unwritten social

rules governing those behavior patterns…, and to figure out what these rules can tell us about Englishness" (p. 31). Thus she formulated about 250 hidden and unspoken rules of behavior that the typical English have. She called them the cultural "grammar of Englishness" or the "grammar of English behavior". Kate Fox uses inverted commas for the word "grammar" showing that it is not quite language grammar, but still the two grammars seem akin:

*Native speakers can rarely explain the grammatical rules of their own language. In the same way, those who are most 'fluent' in the rituals, customs and traditions of a particular culture generally lack the detachment necessary to explain the 'grammar' of these practices in an intelligible manner.*

Thus typical and atypical behavior correlates with implicit rules, that together can be called the grammar of behavior. If, in this set of rules, we distinguish those that are specific to culture (as opposed, for example, to biological predispositions), then they can be called the grammar of culture. So, in order to better understand human behavior and compare different cultures we can look for such grammars. A relatively recent and rather successful implementation of this approach in anthropology is Kate Fox's book "Watching the English" (1st edition was published in 2004, 2nd expanded edition – in 2014). Fox described about 250 rules of English behavior (English culture). But since these are generalized rules with just a few particular examples given by Fox to each of them, a question arises whether it is possible to extract more such examples from fiction.

In particular, Fox herself uses the word "Eeyorishness", derived from the name of the Donkey Eeyore from Alexander Milne's fairy tale "Winnie-the-Pooh", in order to designate one of the defining characteristics of Englishness. By "Eeyorishness" she means "our chronic pessimism, our assumption that it is in the nature of things to go wrong and be disappointing, but also our perverse satisfaction at seeing our gloomy predictions fulfilled – simultaneously peeved, stoically resigned and smugly omniscient" [1, p.554]. The term hints at the possibility of finding an example of this English trait in Milne's book. What did Eeyore say when he found out that he had lost his tail? " 'That Accounts for a Good Deal,' said Eeyore gloomily. 'It Explains Everything. No wonder.' " [2].

Accordingly, we decided to look in "Winnie-the-Pooh" for visual images of other characteristics of the English described by Fox and the rules of English behavior. Below are some of the examples we found.

The first of the stories about Winnie-the-Pooh begins with the fact that he "lived in a forest all by himself under the name of Sanders" and this meant that "he had the name over the door in gold letters, and he lived under it" [1]. But then no one ever calls the bear by that name. It is also interesting to note that "Sanders" phonetically rhymes with "sundry" which probably is meant to give reference to the introduction of the book where Milne tells about different names that the bear had. What is hidden here besides humor based on wordplay? Fox writes about *the moat-and-drawbridge rule*, according to which the British do not like to make it easier for outsiders to find their houses and therefore "house numbers and names are usually at least as well camouflaged as the street names <...> Our house numbers are at best highly discreet, and at worst completely obscured by creepers or porches, or even left off altogether, presumably on the assumption that our number may be deduced from those of our immediate neighbours" [1]. In accordance with this rule, a broken board with the inscription "Trespassers W" is nailed on a pole next to Piglet's house, about which Piglet says that this is his grandfather's name.

In the first story about Winnie the Pooh, we also see an excellent example of his application of *the understatement rule*, according to which the English never say what they mean directly. They always leave something unsaid, it's such a fusion of English politeness and English humor. Christopher Robin shoots a balloon with a gun, but hits Winnie-the-Pooh. " 'Ow!' Said Pooh. 'Did I miss?' Christopher Robin asked. 'You didn't exactly miss,' said Pooh, 'but you missed the balloon!' " [2].

*The understatement rule*, according to Fox, is one of the two rules of English irony. Another rule of irony is *the self-deprecation rule*. According to this rule, Winnie-the-Pooh

knows about himself that he is a poet and a pioneer, but he emphasizes his stupidity out loud in every possible way. So, in the third story, he tells Christopher Robin: "I have been Foolish and Deluded <...> I'm a Bear of No Brain at All" [2], in the following story he declares to the Owl: "I am a Bear of Very Little Brain , and long words Bother me" [2].

Another obvious example is related to *the long goodbye rule*. When Winnie-the-Pooh came to visit the Rabbit, ate all the treats and began to get ready to go home, the story develops in accordance with this rule. But while Rabbit follows the rule strictly, the bear violates it (because he is always hungry): " 'As a matter of fact,' said Rabbit, 'I was going out myself directly.' – 'Oh, well, then I'll be going on. Good-bye.' – 'Well, good-bye, if you're sure you won't have any more.' – 'Is there any more?' asked Pooh quickly" [2].

It would be possible to give other examples of how generalized rules of behavior grammar are implemented in the behavior of characters in works of fiction. The presence of such examples proves that the analysis of fictional narratives can be used to better understand behavior. If there is a correspondence between anthropological descriptions of rules, on the one hand, and episodes of literary texts, on the other, then, in principle, methods of reverse-engineering reconstruction of rules based on fiction should be possible.

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## ВИННИ-ПУХ И ГРАММАТИКА АНГЛИЙСКОГО ПОВЕДЕНИЯ

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В статье показывается, как можно обнаружить примеры грамматики поведения англичан в художественной литературе, а именно в сказке Александра Милна про медвежонка Винни-Пуха. Понятие «грамматика поведения» впервые было предложено Суреном Золяном и Игорем Черновым, принадлежащим к тартуско-московской семиотической школе. Они считали поведение семиотической системой, которую можно исследовать лингвистическими методами. В науках о культуре, обществе и поведении часто не хватает эмпирических данных. Наблюдается значительный интерес в развитии систематического метода извлечения знания о поведении человека из богатых и общедоступных источников, а именно – из художественных нарративов. В каждой культуре существует широкий и все же конечный набор типичных ситуаций, социальных статусов, психофизиологических состояний и форм поведения, которые соотносятся друг с другом. Анна Вержбицка утверждает, что культуры уникальны, но не настолько уникальны, чтобы об этом нельзя было говорить. Мы считаем, что уникальны не только языковые понятия, но и поведение. Чтобы понять уникальность культуры,

нужно понять уникальность поведения. Можно объяснить поведение англичан на примерах книг про Винни-Пуха. В своей книге «Наблюдая за англичанами» Кейт Фокс описывает не только уникальные понятия, но и уникальные правила поведения. В частности, Фокс использует слово «иашность», образованное от имени ослика Иа, чтобы определить одну из ключевых черт английскости – хронический пессимизм. В книге про Винни-Пуха можно также увидеть примеры таких правил поведения, как «правило рва и подъемного моста», «правило самоуничижения» и других.

**Ключевые слова:** поведение человека, грамматика поведения, грамматика культуры, анализ текста.