

## MATERIÁLY A DISKUSE

### How Men Court and Women Flirt: Reconstruction of Cultural Scripts on the Material of Russian Verbs

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The article proposes an approach to the description of cultural scripts based on the component analysis of the semantics of verbs, and on the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) method proposed by A. Wierzbicka and C. Goddard. A semantic analysis of Russian verbs denoting courtship and flirting made it possible to identify the cultural and gender features of the courtship and flirting process, the behavior of the subject and object, their motives and goals. As it was found out, the axiological aspect that conveys the attitude of society – the approval or condemnation of the behavior of the subject or object of action, their goals – is very important for the courtship and flirting scripts. Cultural scripts of courtship and flirting act as a complex semiotic system in which, in addition to verbal signs, various non-verbal signs are involved.

**Keywords:** cultural script, courtship, flirting, Russian language, Russian verbs, semiotics, gender

#### 1. Introduction

The idea of the script as a form of mental representation, significant for understanding ethnic identity, psychology and culture, was developed in the scientific concepts of R. A. Shweder (1990), A. Wierzbicka (1997; 2002), C. Goddard (2000), A. Wierzbicka in collaboration with C. Goddard (2004). “The term cultural script refers to a powerful new technique for articulating cultural norms, values, and practices in terms” (Goddard – Wierzbicka 2004, 153). The cultural scripts are one of the most appropriate means of schematizing human knowledge; dynamic frame, which is a schematic representation of a certain typical situation, which is a model of behavior and development of events in the minds of the bearers of a particular culture. According to R. Schank and R. Abelson (1977), the scripts are the building blocks of our daily understanding. These are standardized sequences of events that fit into our understanding of frequently recurring events. They are constructed on daily routine experience.

The concept of “cultural scripts” as a research tool is very effective when applied to cultural phenomena, since culture is a combination of stereotypes and standards of subject-practical and ideal-spiritual behavior and human activity developed in socio-historical

practice. Culturally conditioned scripts are semiotic in nature and are realized using elements of various semiotic systems: language (as the main means of communication), facial expressions, gestures, silence, and decorative elements.

Wierzbicka considered culturally-based scripts “an attempt to capture the unspoken cultural norms of a community” (1997, 393–394). Studying cultural scripts reveals explicit and implicit rules of human behavior in relation to oneself and other people, which reflect the system of values adopted in this society. The rules contain recommendations – how to behave, how not to behave, as well as acceptable examples with a certain restriction – how to behave in strictly defined situations. The rules contained in the scripts are stable and highly viable, supported by the mentality and cultural system of native speakers of language and culture.

The cultural orientation of the scripts makes it possible to compare similar behavioral scenarios in different cultures, to identify similarities and differences in cultural norms, which is of great importance in intercultural communication, in the development of effective methods for learning a second language. Thus, a comparative study of cultural scripts “*sagen, was man will*” in Japanese and Anglo-American cultures was carried out by R. Pörings and U. Schmitz (1999, 154–157). A comparison of the cultural scripts of requests and apologies in English and Arabic was made by B. Dendenne (2017). Scholars paid much attention to the cultural script “A Good Death”, which has developed in the minds of cultural bearers; it was studied by F. Aguiar, J. Cerrillo and R. Serrano-del-Rosal (2013) in Spanish culture, S. O. Long (2004) in Japanese and American cultures. The importance of studying various cultural scripts and the effectiveness of their application in various fields of communication, including intercultural communication, in the teaching of a second language, is also confirmed by the works of other researchers (Lopez-Varela 2008; Curtin et al. 2019; etc.).

The stability and viability of rules and cultural norms in cultural scripts can be attributed to patterns that regulate the behavior of speakers of culture and language. This is especially true for scripts of relationships between men and women. Research in sex roles suggests that heterosexual dating among young adults in the U. S. remains highly gender-typed in terms of cultural scripts (e.g., beliefs, ideals, and expectations), as well as interpersonal scripts (e.g., actual interpersonal emotions, interpersonal behaviors, or behaviors aimed at achieving or signaling a partner) (Eaton – Rose 2011, 843).

Cultural scripts of courtship and gender relations have attracted the interest of social scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, literary critics, educators, and have become the focus of attention in numerous works (Simon – Gagnon 1986; Rose – Frieze 1993; Wyatt Seal – Ehrhardt 2003; Gershon et al. 2004; Eaton – Rose 2011; Uffelman 2019; Siegel – Meunier 2019). The features of communicative behavior in a courtship and flirting situation in Russian culture are described by D. L. K o l o y a n (2003; 2006). Nevertheless, it should be noted that we practically did not find works in which cultural scripts of social relationships (courtship and flirting) of people of different sexes are reconstructed on linguistic material, for example, on the analysis of verbs.

## 2. Material and Methods

According to C. Goddard and A. Wierzbicka (2004), linguistically oriented methods for studying culturally determined scripts include a semantic analysis of the culture-specific lexicon and the culture-specific aspects of grammar. The reconstruction of culturally determined scripts by means of semantic analysis of key vocabulary concepts, common

sayings and proverbs, frequent collocations, conversational routines and varieties of formulaic or semi-formulaic speech, discourse particles and interjections, and terms of address and reference is a linguistically objective way of identifying cultural specifics (Goddard – Wierzbicka 2004, 154).

In the works of Wierzbicka (2002; 2003), Wierzbicka and Goddard (2004), Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) was developed as a single method for studying the semantics of various languages using semantic primitives. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory has been successfully used to analyze cultural categories, verbs of speech, verbs of thinking, terms of kinship, names of artifacts and animals in various languages (Wierzbicka 1997; 2002; 2003).

The concept of a cultural script opens up great opportunities for linguists to use, in addition to NSM, other methods aimed at identifying and describing culturally determined patterns of behavior and the development of events in the minds of speakers of a particular language, fixed in its semantics and grammar. So, R. Schmitt used metaphorical analysis of words to identify a scenario of depression in a social context (2017). Ch. Fillmore successfully applied the method of analyzing frame semantics to the verbs of judging *blame*, *accuse*, and *criticize* (1971); this method made it possible to describe patterns of behavior in the situation of judging. G. Graefen and M. Liedke-Göbel write: “The approach of frame semantics is developed by cognitive linguistics (in addition to terms such as schema and script) to describe everyday complex knowledge” (2008, 97). The semantic analysis of verbs is especially fruitful for the reconstruction of cultural scripts, since the processuality of their semantics corresponds to the dynamic nature of such a cognitive phenomenon as a script, in contrast to the statics of a category, scheme, or concept. L. Tesnière in his theory of the verb knot called the verb “a little drama”, referring to the valence potential of the verb, motivated by the indicated situation, which exists in objective reality (1959). The analysis of the meaning of each verb of the lexical-semantic group (hereinafter LSG), supplemented by contextual analysis in the corpus and cultural commentary, will make it possible to identify culturally determined rules, parameters and restrictions that make up the scenario of courtship and flirting in Russian.

To study the semantics of verbs, we use component analysis of words. Developed in the 50s–60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lounsbury 1956; Goodenough 1956; Katz – Fodor 1963), it was first used in the field of vocabulary, and then the effectiveness of the method allowed expanding the scope of its application up to morphology and syntax, as well as for studying psycholinguistic problems. Different concepts use different terms to denote the minimum element of meaning: “semantic factor”, “semantic component”, “differential attribute”, “seme”, etc. Following the Czech scholar Vladimír Skalička, we call the minimum element of meaning a seme: “The smallest linguistic unit that has meaning is the seme. It cannot be divided into smaller significant parts. For example, in the word *zub-at-ý* there are five semes: *zub-* ‘tooth’, *-at* is the suffix of the adjective and *-ý*, which contains three semes: 1) the nominative case, 2) the singular, 3) the masculine gender” (1967, 123). O. S. Akhmanova defines this also as an operational unit of component analysis, carried out in the study of semantic fields and lexical-semantic variants of words to establish their similarities and differences (1969).

Semes are hierarchical, have a categorical, differential, potential, occasional status, which can vary depending on the meaning of the word and the group that includes this word. For example, the seme “gender”, included in the meaning of nouns with a gender attribute, has a categorical status, and in the verbs we are considering has a differential character. We

base on the component analysis that is close to vertical-horizontal analysis of the lexical meaning, which was described by Yu. N ayda (1983). It allows contrasting the meanings of hierarchically different levels, for instance, gender and category; that is the vertical of the analysis. Moreover, it compares the meanings of the same level, independently of their interrelations, that is the horizontal of the analysis (see Kobozeva 2000, 112).

Component analysis is carried out based on the interpretation of the lexical meaning in dictionaries, but the result of the procedure depends on the completeness of the definition, which does not always coincide in different dictionaries. That is why there is a need to identify the missing semes. This is done by contextual analysis of the functioning of the lexeme, which allows us to reconstruct the components of the meaning. A contextual analysis of the functioning of a lexeme is carried out using examples from the dictionary definition or the *Russian National Corpus* (main subcorpus) (hereinafter *NKRJa*). An important role in the interpretation of the lexical meaning is played by the intuition of the researcher himself / herself, who acts as a native speaker, and, accordingly, his / her interpretation can be trusted.

It is important to clarify the relationship between the terms “connotation”, “evaluation”, “seme”. “... We will call the connotations of the lexeme insignificant, but stable features of the concept expressed by it, which embody the assessment of the corresponding object or fact of reality accepted in a given linguistic community” (Apresyan 1995, 159). Thus, connotation includes evaluation. Then we can talk about evaluative connotations: positive, neutral or negative. In Apresyan’s definition, the connotation is equated with the seme, in other words, the interpretation of the meaning of the lexeme includes, in addition to denotative ones, connotative semes, including evaluative ones (see also: Teliya 1986; Arnold 2011). Connotative evaluative semes most often have the status of potential ones and are not always reflected in the lexical definition. For more details on the methods for determining the value semes, see below in 3.5.

Let us consider as an example the component analysis of the verb *yxaxeyebamb* based on the dictionary definition: “2. To show attention, please a woman, trying to gain her favor. She was rich and was afraid that Makhin *was courting* her because of money. L. Tolstoy, Fake Coupon. Eighth graders fell in love, I knew by the names of all the schoolgirls they *courted*. Kaverin, Lighted windows” (*SRJa* 1999). The following semes are distinguished in the meaning of the verb: grammatical seme ‘action’, lexical and grammatical semes ‘social relation’, ‘gender relation – to pay attention’, lexical semes ‘subject – man’, ‘object – woman’, ‘activity of the subject – high’, ‘the goal is the location of the woman’. From the illustrative material to the dictionary entry, potential semes are deduced ‘focus on marriage’, ‘duration’. The positive evaluative seme of the verb ‘to court’ is determined by the corpus analysis of its functioning in *NKRJa*.<sup>1)</sup>

In the reconstruction of cultural script, in addition to linguistic methods, a cultural commentary is used that contains general cultural encyclopedic information. It clarifies the individual components of meaning, concretizes them, making a complete representation of the cultural script. The procedure for reconstructing a cultural script is shown in Table 1.

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1) The volume of the article does not allow giving examples of the use of the verbs of the specified LSG in the *NKRJa*, used for contextual analysis. In the article we present only the results of this analysis.

Nature of knowledge	Method	Cognitive result
Linguistic knowledge	Component analysis method	
	Contextual analysis Corpus analysis	Cultural script
Extralinguistic knowledge	Cultural comment	

**Table 1.** Cultural scenario reconstruction procedure

The research material in the article is the verbs and verb idioms of the Russian language, united in the lexical-semantic group by integral semes ‘to pay attention to the opposite sex’, ‘to attract the attention of the opposite sex’. Reconstruction of cultural scripts of courtship and flirting as a reflection of gender relations and ideas in the Russian world picture is carried out in the course of component analysis of the semantics of Russian verbs, which is accompanied, if necessary, by contextual analysis and cultural commentary that contains information of a general cultural type. The lexical semantic group of verbs of courtship and flirting in the Russian language includes 49 lexical and phraseological units. They are selected from various dictionaries of the Russian language: explanatory and phraseological (*SRJa* 1999; Kuznetsov 2000; Efremova 2000; Ushakov 2005; Fyodorov 2008). The article presents the final result of the component and contextual analysis of LSG verbs with the meaning of courtship and flirting, identifies the most important differential semes that combine them into various subclasses. Using the cultural commentary and method of transformation of definitions,<sup>2)</sup> conclusions are drawn about the cultural and value significance of various semes in the meaning of verbs.

The effectiveness of the method of component analysis of words, supplemented by cultural commentary, for the reconstruction of behavior scripts was shown on the basis of the verbs of social actions in Russian (Plotnikova 2008), emotions “sadness”, “sorrow”, and “grief” in Russian and English languages (Temirgazina 2013), “study” (Abzulidnova 2013).

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Variation of verbs on the gender of the subject

The verbs denoting social gender relations differ in the gender of the subject and the object. These semes delimit the specific cultural scenarios of the behavior of men and women existing in the minds of Russian speakers. The named verbs are two-act, revealing the obligatory positions of the subject and object of the action. From this point of view, they should be divided into three subgroups: I – verbs denoting male behavior; II – verbs denoting female behavior; III – neutral verbs, i.e. not having a clearly defined gender identity of the agent. Table 2 shows the semes that combine verbs into subgroups, the number of verbs in each subgroup, and the percentage of the total.

2) See 3.5 for more details on this method.

A subgroup in LSG	Sema 'subject of action'	Sema 'object of action'	Number	Percentage
I – verbs denoting male behavior	Man	Woman	15	30,6 %
II – verbs denoting female behavior	Woman	Man	18	36,7 %
III – verbs characterizing the behavior of men and women	Man / woman	Woman / man	16	32,65 %
			49	100 %

**Table 2.** LSG subgroups of courtship and flirting verbs

### 3.2 Verbs characterizing the behavior of men

Subgroup I with the general meaning “to show interest in a woman, to show her signs of attention” characterizes male behavior; it describes the cultural characteristics of the scenario of a man’s courtship of a woman. Within the subgroup, courtship verbs are divided on the basis of differential semes: ‘sex of the object of action’<sup>3)</sup>; ‘setting to marry’; ‘the status of the caregiver and the person being looked after’; ‘duration’; ‘intensity’; ‘subject activity’; ‘by all means / obsession’; ‘spatial approach to the object’, etc.

We have included literal translation and meaning in the presentation of the examples.

- (1) *ухаживать* ‘to court’ to court
- (2) *волочиться* ‘to drag’ to court
- (3) *приударить* ‘to hit’ to court
- (4) *ухлестывать* ‘to whip’ to court

In most dictionaries, the interpretation of the lexical meaning of verbs of subgroup 1 is carried out using the word *ухаживать* (‘to court’), for example: *волочиться* – “to court a woman (usually without serious intentions)” (Kuznetsov 2000); *приударить* – “start to court (a woman)” (Kuznetsov 2000); *ухлестывать* – “to court to take care for love, reciprocity” (Kuznetsov 2000).

The verb (1) *ухаживать* (‘to court’) is the dominant of the 1<sup>st</sup> subgroup; it is stylistically neutral and non-expressive. It characterizes the generally accepted, conventional behavior of a man whose purpose is marriage. Such behavior is approved and accepted by the society, consistent with its ethical and moral principles, this is a courtship scenario “with noble intentions”, which must precede marriage. In each culture, there are specific methods of courtship, including verbal and non-verbal actions, which must be performed by a man who courts, for example, a date of invitation, flowers as a gift, compliments, glances, sighs, gestures, escort to the house, shaking hands, kissing, etc. For example: *Ухаживать за ней, уж за это я берусь! Ни в чем недостатка иметь не будет; коли захочет, каждый вечер серенаду под окном устрою; ямициков одеколоном надушу, цветы по дорогам натыкаю* (‘To court her, so for this I undertake! There will be no shortage in anything; if she wants to, every evening I will arrange a serenade under the window; I will perfume the coachmen with cologne; I’ll stumble flowers on the roads’ [trad. Z. T.]) (Turgenev 1979, 114).

3) Cultural scripts of courtship and flirting are traditional and reflect stereotypical relationships of the sexes in which the representative of the opposite sex becomes the object of courtship or flirting.

Certain actions (gestures, glances, winks, sighs), the actions of one who courts (singing a serenade under the girl's window) and one who gets courted, even objects (flowers, a ring) are semiotic in the process of courtship and act as signs that should be interpreted in accordance with the traditions and customs accepted in this culture. In Russian, there are idiomatic expressions indicating the semiotic nature of the courtship procedure.

The one who makes court to, they say: *Он оказывает ей знаки внимания* ('He gives her signs of attention'); the one who is paid court, they say: *Она (не) принимает его знаки внимания* ('She (does not) accept his courtship'). In other words, courtship appears to be a kind of stable semiotic system, having a beginning, a continuation and completion, including a complex of various verbal and nonverbal – taxic, proxemic and kinetic – methods and means used by participants in accordance with cultural conventions. This ritualized system has not only cultural, but also social and historical conditionality: the courtship takes place differently in different historical eras; the courtship scenario in a peasant environment differs from courtship in secular society, among villagers and urban residents, among young people and among older people generations. In Italy, it was customary to perform serenades under the window of a lady, in England – send flowers with a messenger, putting a perfumed card in a bouquet.

The cultural specificity of the courtship script is very clearly demonstrated by verbs in metaphorical use. For example, the metaphor (2) *волочиться* ('to drag') causes an association with something that is behind, long and stretching along the ground, perhaps something that looks like a train. This metaphor characterizes the behavior of a man of a certain social status – high (belonging to secular society) or medium, see, for example: *В молодости она была очень хороша собою. Поэты писали ей стихи, молодые люди в нее влюблялись, важные господа волочились за ней* ('In her youth, she was very good-looking. Poets wrote poems to her, young people fell in love with her, important gentlemen dragged after her'[trad. Z. T.]) (Turgenev 1979, 35). It is hard to imagine that this verb describes the relationship between men and women in a peasant environment. In other words, it characterizes the high social status of a man, who is called the verbal noun *волокута* ('red tape') in the Russian language.

Verb (3) *приударить* is derivationally and semantically connected with the verb *ударить* ('to hit'), denoting an active ('one might say, aggressive') physical effect on an object, but a prefix with a value of incompleteness softens the degree of intensity and activity of the male subject's influence on the female object in the process of courtship. Verb (3) contains the seme of short durations of the courtship, compared to verb (2) *волочиться* in which the duration value is actualized. So, verb (3) *приударить* describes such a courtship scenario in which a man is active, a certain aggressiveness in attracting the attention of a woman and at the same time indicates the short duration of his efforts: *Кто в молодости не писал стихов "к ней", кто не только в молодости, но и в более зрелом возрасте не приударял за хорошенькой горничной?* ('Who in his youth did not write verses "to her", who not only in his youth, but also at a more advanced age did not court for a pretty maid?')[trad. Z. T.]; Griboyedov 2019). The functioning of the verbs *приударить* (3), *ухлестывать* (4) is limited by the specific social status of the man, giving him respect and honor. If a man possesses this status, then they will not say about him that he *gushes*, he *hits*, since these verbs have an evaluative dismissive attitude towards the subject of the action, which is incompatible with categories such as honor and respect.

- (5) *добиваться* ‘to seek’ to court  
 (6) *завоевывать* ‘to conquer’ to court  
 (7) *обхаживать* ‘to court’ to court

(5) *To seek* semantically and derivationally is associated with the verbs *бить* (‘beat’), *добить* (‘to finish’), *добивать* (‘have finished’) etc., meaning the active, aggressive impact of the subject on the object. In (5), such a courtship script was concluded in which a male subject purposefully and aggressively for a long time by all means seeks to win over a woman and attract her attention. The verb has the seme ‘by all means’, which in this case bears a positive assessment of the man’s persistence and determination in the courtship process. In the meaning of verbs (6) *завоевывать*, (4) *ухлестывать*, the emphasis is on the aggressiveness of the male subject and the intensity of his efforts, as well as on the duration of the actions. The seme of duration is also supported by grammatical means: the imperfect form of the named verbs (we note the impossibility of the perfect form (*ухлестнуть*)) in (4), the perfect form of the verb *завоевывать* contains the semantics of the result, eliminating the possibility of designating a procedure, process, and behavior. The nature of the aggressiveness of action in both verbs is different. In the first case, it is associated with the original word-forming verb (*хлестать*), which bears the meaning of an active physical impact on the object, like in the verb (3) *приударить*. In the second case it is associated with the word belonging to a military vocabulary. The verb (6) *завоевывать* represents a courtship script in which a man acts as an aggressor, a warrior, and a woman as a trophy obtained in battle, and the whole courtship situation is associated with military actions: [COURTING is WAR] (see about metaphorical models: Temirgazina et al. 2019).

- (8) *подкатывать* ‘to roll up’ to court  
 (9) *приставать* ‘to molest’ to court  
 (10) *подъезжать с амурами* ‘to drive up with cupid’s’ to court  
 (11) *клеиться* ‘to stick’ to court  
 (12) *подбивать клинья* ‘to knock out wedges’ to court

The metaphor (8) *подкатывать* (‘roll up’) (see also in 3.3, metaphors *бегать, ходить по пятам / следом / как пришитый* (‘to run along, to tag along / after / as sewn’ in the sense of ‘courting’) reflects the characteristic feature of the Russian world picture – to comprehend many behavioral and mental aspects of human activity from a dynamic point of view, using verbs of movement (Temirgazina et al. 2016). (8) *Подкатывать* in the primary sense means approaching an object, which generally characterizes courtship as a spatial approach to an object of courtship (see also the obsolete humorous idiom (10) *подъезжать с амурами*). The dynamic tendency to comprehend a person’s behavior and thinking is manifested in the verbs (1) *ухаживать* and (7) *обхаживать*, which derivationally go back to the verb of movement *ходить* (‘to walk’). In (7), in addition, there was an idea of the courtship procedure as walking around an object, this seme is introduced by the prefix *об-*, compare *обходить* (‘go around’), *облететь* (‘fly around’).

The understanding of the courtship process as a spatial approximation to the object is recorded in relatively new nominations (9) *приставать* and (11) *клеиться*, so we can talk about this as a steady trend in the development of cultural scripts of courtship of native Russian speakers. (9) *Приставать* originally means “to whom – to what. To stick, tight-fitting, to glue” (Efremova 2000). In the meaning of *приставать* (‘to molest’) in



(9), the primary semantics is rethought: if courtship in the Russian world picture is a local approximation to a female object, then in this metaphor it is the closest approach to an object, the desire to become part of it ('attach', 'stick'). It characterizes the behavior of a man who is actively, assertively, and even aggressively trying to impose his attention on an object against her will. The semes 'against will, desire' and 'excessive proximity to the object' gives rise to a negative connotative seme of the verb, reflecting the speaker's attitude to such behavior of a man. In (11) *клеиться* a negative evaluative seme is actualized during metaphorization "limit approximation to an object, the desire to become one with it". The idiom (12) *подбивать клинья* is borrowed from the professional speech of joiners and lumberjacks. The use of verbs (9), (11), (12) is typical of youth; they most often characterize the behavior of a young man. These verbs replace the less common ones in the speech of modern youth (2) *волочиться*, (3) *приударить*, (4) *ухлестывать*.

(13) *заигрывать с пряниками* 'to flirt with gingerbread cookies', to flirt

(14) *жениться* 'to get married', to flirt

(15) *набиваться в женихи* 'to ask for grooms' to want to get married, to flirt

Life and customs of Russia prescribed a man an active role in the courtship process. For example, a young man, in accordance with traditions, could attract the attention of a girl he liked by giving her a spindle – a small elegant thing. It was customary to give it to gatherings, which were arranged in villages on winter evenings. If a girl came to the following gatherings with a return gift, this was a sign that she was ready to accept courtship (Brudnaya et al. 1996, 201).

In merchant and trade bourgeois circles it was customary to "flirt" with girls, treating them with gingerbread cookies and sweets.<sup>4)</sup> This is the way the idiom (13) *to flirt with gingerbread cookies* appears. The differential feature of verbs with the meaning of courtship and flirting is the focused action of the subject on the object in order to arouse interest and self-interest. This feature is peculiarly refracted in the semantics of the verbs of the 1<sup>st</sup> subgroup, as it is complicated by an additional target motive – the setting for marriage.

From the point of view of the subject's target setting in the courtship script, the verbs are divided into unambiguously having in their semantics an indication of getting married (*ухаживать, обхаживать, жениться, набиваться в женихи*) and not having it (*волочиться, приударить, ухлестывать, завоевывать, добиваться, подкатывать, приставать, клеиться, подбивать клинья*). (14) *Жениться* means "showing interest in a person of the opposite sex; courting (usually about a man)" (Efremova 2000), from the word formation point of view the lexeme goes back to the noun *жених*, denoting the target status of the subject.

In the idiom (15) *набиваться в женихи*, semes of obsession are revealed, the intensity of the application of efforts by the subject (*набиваться*), which gives rise to a negative connotative seme in the idiom, conveying the disapproving attitude of society towards the violation of generally accepted norms of behavior, which seems to be an overly obsessive courtship.

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4) The *Энциклопедия обрядов и обычаев* [Encyclopedia of Rites and Customs] says: "In the philistine urban environment on Sunday (on weekdays girls from "decent families" were not allowed) parties were held. They sang romances with a guitar or accordion, played fascinating games – flirting flowers, paints, telephone, forfeits ..." (Brudnaya et al. 1996, 204).

In many words that do not have the semantics of a focus on marriage, a negative evaluative seme is found because a society condemns the behavior of a man who shows signs of attention to a woman, and does not have “serious” intentions in the long run, i.e. intentions to get married. We are talking about the verbs (2) *волочиться*, (3) *приударить*, (4) *ухлестывать*, (8) *подкатывать*, (11) *клеиться*, (13) *заигрывать с пряниками*, which are connected by the seme “slightly, not seriously”, i.e. courtship matters “not seriously”, see, for example: *Да, и еще прибавила, что вы сами нисколько не желаете жениться на мне, что вы только так, от скуки, приволокнулись за мной...* (‘Yes, and she added that you yourself do not want to marry me at all, that you are the only way out of boredom to drag around me...’ [trad. Z. T.]; Turgenev 1979, 107). This seme ‘lightness’, ‘frivolity’ brings a negative evaluation to the meaning of words conveying the speaker’s disapproval by such courtship.

So, the features of the semantics of the verbs of I subgroup are presented in Table 3 on the next page. It indicates the presence of the semes ‘the focus on marriage’, ‘an indication of the social status of the subject’ and the degree of manifestation of the semes ‘duration of courtship’, ‘intensity of courtship’, ‘aggressiveness of the subject’, ‘against the will, desire of the object’, ‘approaching the object’.

### 3.3 Verbs describing the behavior of women

The second semantic subgroup characterizing the behavior of women is represented by 18 verbs and idioms. They are united by a common meaning “attract the attention of a man, arouse his interest”. Within the subgroup, verbs are divided on the basis of differential semes: ‘sex of the object of action’; ‘use of enchantments’; ‘by all means / obsession’; ‘artificial behavior’; ‘the status of the one who is courting and the one who is being courted’ etc. The dominant feature in this subgroup is the verb (16) *флиртовать*. Many verbs in this subgroup are defined using the verb *флиртовать*.

(16) *флиртовать* ‘to flirt’, to flirt

(17) *заводить флирт* ‘to start flirting’, to start flirting

(18) *заниматься флиртом* ‘engage in flirting’, to be busy with flirt

(19) *кокетничать* ‘to coquet’, to flirt

In the dictionary, flirting is defined as “love game, coquetry” (Kuznetsov 2000). Researchers also pay attention to the game nature of flirting.<sup>5)</sup> The concept of flirting came to the Russian culture from the Western European culture. The word flirt is borrowed in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from the German language, where “Flirt < Eng. (to) flirt dating back to Old French fleureter ‘flutter from flower to flower’, derived from fleur ‘flower’” (Shanskiy – Bobrova 2004). The initial semantics of the borrowed word (fluttering, flower) vividly demonstrates the essence and character of this behavioral phenomenon – optionality, ease, aesthetics, which in Russian were expressed in the idiom of *легкий флирт* (‘light flirtation’).

Flirting can be an integral part of the courtship script or an independent phenomenon of a person’s communicative behavior. Flirting as an independent strategy of behavior differs

5) Koloyan writes about flirting as a phenomenon of communicative culture: “... flirting has the following characteristic features of game behavior: the presence of rules; theatricality of action; by surprise; creating tense moments; fraudulent behavior (pretense); the ambiguity of what is happening; competitiveness; the presence of a gain” (2006, 43).

	Verb	The focus on marriage	Indication of the social status of the subject	Courtship duration	Courtship intensity	Subject Aggressiveness	Against the will, desire of the object	Approaching the object
1	ухаживать	+	-	+++	-	-	-	-
2	волочиться	-	+	++	-	-	-	-
3	приударить	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
4	ухлестывать	-	-	++	+++	+++	-	-
5	добиваться	-	+	+	+++	+	+++	-
6	завоевывать	-	-	++	+++	+++	++	-
7	обхаживать	-	-	+++	+	+	-	-
8	подкатывать	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
9	приставать	-	-	+	++	+++	-	++
10	подъезжать с амурами	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
11	клеиться	-	-	+	++	++	-	+++
12	подбивать клинья	-	-	+	++	++	-	-
13	заигрывать с пряниками	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
14	жениться	+	-	+++	+	-	-	-
15	набиваться в женихи	+	-	+	+++	+++	+++	-

**Table 3.** Differential semes of verbs of I subgroup

The sign (-) means the absence of a feature, the sign (+) means the presence of a feature to a minimum degree, (++) – to an average degree, (+++) – to a high degree.

from courtship with the initial goals: courtship is aimed at getting married, or at least for a serious long-term relationship, flirting does not pursue such far-reaching goals, it is rather a way of socializing and playing games to attract attention to someone.

The closest concept to flirting is coquetry. The words *coquetry*, (19) to *coquet* derivationally go back to the word *coquette*, which means “a woman striving for her behavior, manners, outfit to please men, arouse interest in her” (Kuznetsov 2000). This word is borrowed in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century from the French language, where “*coquette* (received in Russian: suf. *-k-a*) is a substantive derivative of (femme) *coquette* ‘flirty’ (woman), a suffix derivative of *coqueter* ‘< behave like a rooster’ (from *coq*). Compare: *cocotte* < French ‘*cocotte*’ < ‘chicken’ (also from *coq*)” (Shanskiy – Bobrova 2004). The internal form of the original French word – a comparison with the appearance (bright plumage, scallop, spurs) and the habits of a rooster – is preserved in the semantics of the acquired Russian words *кокетка*, *кокетство*, *кокетничать*, characterizing the behavior of women trying to attract the attention of men primarily in costumes and manners. The original gender orientation of the concept has been preserved in the Russian language – in Russian culture it is believed that coquetry is primarily a characteristic of women. Often, in the process of mastering in the borrowing language, the idiom is modified to most closely match the world picture of the corresponding linguistic culture (Rakhimzhanov et al. 2020). In this connection, it should be emphasized that the behavior of a woman, a girl, characterized as flirting, coquetry, is typical for traditional Russian folk culture, which was characterized by the stereotype of a home-staying woman, corresponding to the traditions of the “*teremnaya*” culture. This is confirmed by the lack of proper Russian nominations for such a phenomenon as flirting and coquetry. All names for such behavior are borrowed in nature (*флирт*, *флиртовать*, *кокетка*, *кокетство*). Later, the borrowing of words – from the second half of the XVIII century and later – meant the emergence and strengthening of such concepts first in a secular society familiar with the foreign languages and with the Western European culture. This is the case when you can talk about borrowing not just words, but fragments of someone else’s world picture. Just as borrowed words were fully acquired by the lexical and grammatical system of the Russian language, so “foreign” concepts took root in the consciousness of native speakers over several centuries and became a fact of a Russian culture.

Corpus analysis shows that over time the meaning of the verb *флиртовать* in Russian has expanded and is applied to the description of a man’s behavior, which is reflected in the *Russian National Corpus* (main subcorpus): *And thank God that Vadim did not start to compliment her and flirt.* [Masha Traub. Keyhole (2012)] (*NKRJa*).

The concepts of flirting and coquetry, with all their closeness in the linguistic world picture, differ from each other. As we mentioned above, in the semantics of coquetry, the dominance of the external side of the image of a woman was originally laid down. Coquetry is manifested in women’s outfits, in separate clothing accessories; see typical phrases: *кокетливое платье* (‘flirty dress’), *кокетливая шляпка* (‘flirty hat’), *кокетливые рюшки* (‘flirty frills’), *кокетливый бантик* (‘flirty bow’), etc.; in facial expressions: *кокетливая улыбка* (‘flirtatious smile’), *кокетливый взгляд* (‘flirtatious look’), *посмотрела кокетливо* (‘looked flirty’), *кокетливо надула губки* (‘coquettishly pouted lips’); in gestures: *кокетливо подала руку* (‘coquettishly offered a hand’), *кокетливо помахала* (‘flirtatiously waved’), etc., in gait and body movements: *кокетливо прошла к двери* (‘coquettishly walked to the door’), *кокетливо дернула плечиком* (‘coquettishly

jerked her shoulder’), etc. It is no coincidence that the word *кокетка* acquired a figurative meaning in Russian: “the upper detachable part of the clothes to which the rest is sewn” (Kuznetsov 2000).

F. Casta-Rozas (2010) writes that the main techniques of coquetry were developed in the XIV century in Italy and France. Both courtesans and ladies, trying to emphasize their feminine attractiveness, did intricate hairstyles, tightened the corset, put on low-cut dresses, exposing the shoulders and chest, and used exquisite perfumes and cosmetics for eyes and lips. Gold jewelry – earrings, necklaces, bracelets – were designed to attract the attention of men to the bare neck and wrists. A fan, an umbrella or a bouquet of fresh flowers in their hands completed the outfit of a lady who was ready to leave and flirt. In the Russian language, expressions characterizing flirtatious female behavior very often use diminutive forms with various suffixes (see examples above: *шляп-к-а*, *рюш-к-и*, *бант-ик*, *губ-к-и*, *пальч-ик-ом*, *плеч-ик-ом*), transmitting a condescending, dismissive and somewhat approving attitude of native speakers to female coquetry.

In flirting as a form of behavior, there is no orientation to the external sides of the image of a woman. Flirt – this is primarily to behave in a certain way to attract the attention of a man – is a focused communicative line of behavior, a significant part of which is speech activity; flirting means not only sighing, exchanging glances, touches, gestures, smiles, but also, above all, being able to playfully react to partner’s remarks, sometimes ambiguous, speak frivolity, maintain the atmosphere of the game and the temptation. Flirting is a playful, aestheticized behavioral form of communication in which participants play predefined roles with the intention of attracting the attention of a partner and then maintaining interest in themselves. In a certain set of rules of conduct, flirting took shape in the XVII–XVIII centuries. The birth of the new meaning of the word “flirting” was described by English Lord Chesterfield. According to him, at one of the high-profile receptions, first opened, and then closed her fan, sometimes hiding her whole face behind it, then leaving only her eyes. And when the man talking to her jokingly made a remark to her for such tantalizing behavior, she replied that this was only “flirting”, she was just waving a fan. With the help of Lady Francis, this word became widespread first in Britain, and then around the world (Casta-Rozas 2010).

The ability to flirt requires a person extraordinary artistic skill, wit, a sense of humor. It is no coincidence that they talk about the *art of flirting*. Coquetry, unlike flirting, may be unintentional and not have a conscious focus on attracting attention. It can be present in a person as her innate and constant character trait; hence the typical expressions such as *безыскусное кокетство* (‘artless coquetry’), *врожденное / природное кокетство* (‘innate / natural coquetry’), *врожденная кокетка* (‘innate coquette’), *детское кокетство* (‘childish coquetry’), etc. appear.

So, one thing is certain: coquetry is an obligatory component of flirting, while at the same time it differs from it by its emphasis on the external image of a woman, and not on her communicative and behavioral aspects. In contrast to the verbs of subgroup I, describing the behavior of a man, such as *волочиться*, *ухлестывать*, *приударить*, *подкатывать*, *клеиться*, *заигрывать*, in which the same ‘lightness, frivolity of courtship’ causes a negative connotative seme, conveying condemnation by society of such male behavior, the meaning of playfulness, lightness in verbs (16) *флиртовать*, (17) *заводить флирт*, (18) *заниматься флиртом*, (19) *кокетничать*, (20) *стрелять глазками*, (21) *играть*

*глазками*, (22) *строить глазки*, (23) *делать глазки* does not cause so obvious negative assessment, since in the eyes of society, such behavior is typical of a woman and corresponds to the ideas of native speakers.

(20) *стрелять глазками* ‘to shoot by eyes’, to flirt

(21) *играть глазками* ‘to play with eyes’, to flirt

(22) *строить глазки* ‘make eyes at someone’, to flirt

(23) *делать глазки* ‘to make eyes’, to flirt

In the idioms (20), (21), (22), (23) quasi-symptoms of coquetry are described: typical non-verbal signs – looks, play with the eyes of flirty women: “*строить глазки кому. Смотреть на кого-л. кокетливо, игриво*”; *играть (стрелять) глазами (глазками)*. Бросать кокетливые взгляды, заигрывать с кем-л.; бросать короткие, быстрые взгляды” (Fyodorov 2008). In the dictionary, all of the listed idioms are given as synonyms for the verb (19) *кокетничать*. A large number of idioms with the *глаза / глазки* component to characterize female behavior during flirting is caused by the fact that, according to the traditional canons of behavior, a woman could not be active in relations with a man, and therefore, most often, she could only let him understand how she evaluates his signs of attention and shows her interest. Despite the active nature of the actions described in the verbs *строить*, *делать*, *играть*, *стрелять* their combination with *глаза / глазки* puts the analyzed idioms in the zone of acceptable “activity” of women’s behavior in the flirting scenario, as evidenced by the lack of an explicit, pronounced negative value connotation. A small degree of disapproval is associated with the seed of ‘artificiality’ in the meaning of idioms, which is associated with the primary semantics of the verbs *строить*, *делать*, preserved in the general meaning of phraseological units (22), (23), and with the seme of ‘insincerity’, due to the original semantics of the verb *играть* (to play) in the expression (21) *играть глазками*. The age-related correlation of the use of the above idioms can be noted as they are mainly used to characterize the coquetry of young women and girls.

(24) *очаровать* ‘to charm’, to charm

(25) *обворожить* ‘to enchant’, to charm

(26) *околдовать* ‘to cast a spell’, to bewitch

(27) *завлекать* ‘to lure’, to lure

The verbs (24), (25), (26), (27) form a special group. They are united by a differential seme ‘enchantment’. “Sorcerers performed magical actions with water with a special vessel – the spell” (Gordienko-Mitrofanova – Aksenov 2003, 54). According to native speakers of Russian, this is typical for female behavior. The seme ‘the use of enchantment’ is based on the ancient Slavic pagan archetype “woman – witch/ hag /mermaid”, who knows the secret magical ways and means (conspiracies, love spells, etc.) to attract men. The famous Slavist V. N. Toporov (1995) speaks of a woman’s belonging to the transcendental-mystical spheres, to the “alien world” in the pagan consciousness of the ancient Slavs<sup>6)</sup> (see about

6) Perhaps Jane Caputi is right when she says that ancient myths and prejudices against women are very much alive in our society, despite our attempts to dissociate ourselves from them (2004).

it also Kuvač-Levačić 2019). It should be noted that among the ancient Slavs, women engaged in magic and sorcery also belonged to the priestly class of the Magi (Gordienko-Mitrofanova – Aksenov 2003, 55–56).

(28) *жеманиться* ‘to behave coquettishly’, flirting

(29) *манерничать* ‘to demeanor’, to flirt

The verb (28) in the context is most often also used in the meaning “flirt”. The main meaning of (28) is “to behave minutely, without simplicity and naturalness” (Kuznetsov 2000), but with contextual support, the meaning of coquetry is actualized in it. The lexems *жеманный*, *жеманиться* are originally Russian, *жеманный* is “suf. derivative of *жет* ‘cutesy man’, formed with suffix *-an-* from *жет* ‘pretend, behave affectedly’ (*жаться*, *жется*). Ср. *ужимки*” (Shanskiy – Bobrova 2004). The verb (28) *жеманиться* is close to *манерничать* (29), which also means “behaving in a mannered way, without simplicity and naturalness” (Kuznetsov 2000). If the seme ‘is updated in the context in order to attract, win over someone’, then (29) is used with the meaning “flirt”. Nevertheless, the seme ‘lack of simplicity and naturalness / artificiality in behavior’ in words (28), (29) remains. It causes a negative connotative semes in these verbs, since the society approves of the simplicity and sincerity in the subject’s behavior.<sup>7)</sup>

The use of verbs denoting gender relations can be influenced not only by the gender of the subject, but also by his or her social status, age, and sometimes the status and age of the object. So, verbs (28), (29) characterize the behavior of a lady from secular society, and they cannot be used in relation to a peasant woman worker, since the actions called by these verbs imply the presence of certain manners in women that are alien to a peasant woman.

(30) *вешаться на шею* ‘to hang on the neck’, to impose oneself

(31) *виснуть на шее* ‘to hang around the neck’, to intensely seek mutuality

(32) *вертеть (крутить) хвостом* ‘to twist the tail’, to flirt

(33) *крутить подолом* ‘to twist the skirt hem’, to flirt

The expression (30) is based on the interpretation of a typical real situation when a woman hugs a man by the neck with both hands. Outwardly similar to it, the idiom (31) looks to hang on someone’s neck / on someone else. However, a closer examination reveals that (30) has the meaning “to impose oneself, to intensely push for favor, to seek for mutuality, love” (Fyodorov 2008), in which the seme ‘by all means to achieve the favor and attention of a man’ is actualized. This idiom describes the overly active, persistent actions of a woman directed at a man, and the second – the meaning “to show a strong disposition, cling to smb.” In the meaning of idiom (31) there is no seme ‘by all means’, or seme ‘obsession’. This is due to the influence of the direct meaning of the verb *hang* – “to be in a hanging position, to hang, to hang down”, which describes the passive position of the subject, on the general semantics of the idiom. In it, as a result of a metaphorical association, a seme

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7) This is indicated by Koloyan: “The conditions for successful communication in the field of courtship are cooperativeness; ability to correctly read verbal and non-verbal signals; openness and sincerity of communicants; the presence of a communicative intention to express one’s feelings to a partner as fully as possible; coincidence of target settings; proper use of communication strategies; coincidence of etiquette norms and social identities of individuals” (2003, 66).

of a heavy burden that appears to be a woman hanging on a man. It is this seme that is the source of the negatively evaluated connotation in the meaning of the idiom (31) to hang on someone's neck / to hang on someone.

The expression (30) *вешаться на шею* according to semantics more closely with phraseological units (32) *вертеть (крутить) хвостом*, (33) *крутить подолом*. (32), (33) are based on a comparison of a woman's skirt with the tail of an animal, most likely a fox with a long magnificent tail, and on the association of a flirting woman's behavior with the habits of this animal. Idioms (30), (32), (33) have the meaning "by all means to get the attention of a man" (Kuznetsov 2000) and have a sharply negative connotation in Russian that is not comparable in degree of negativity with the connotation of the idiom of (31) *виснуть на шее*. This is due to the peculiarities of the Russian mentality, in particular the fact that the stereotype of a home-staying woman, which is part of the "teremnaya" culture introduced from Byzantium, was established in the Christianized Russian culture, as mentioned above. In accordance with this culture, a woman was estranged from public life; she belonged only to the domestic world and obeyed her husband. All these canons were legalized in *Домострой* [Domostroy].<sup>8)</sup>

The mentioned stereotype is firmly rooted in Russian traditional culture, its violation or deviations from it in the behavior of women is perceived negatively and condemned by society. V. N. Teliya writes the following about it: "An exclusively female idiom *вешаться на шею* characterizes a woman as an initiator of a relationship, which does not correspond to the ordinary consciousness that modesty in these relationships is "a woman's decoration", and her violation causes condemnation. There are such shameless women that they themselves will be hung around the neck ... (I. Goncharov); Bear in mind that men do not respect those who hang themselves on their neck (D. Granin)" ([trad. Z. T.] Teliya 1996, 267). It's seme 'by all means', in the lexical meaning of idioms (32), (33), (30), which means excessive activity, obsession of a woman, gives rise to a strong negative evaluative connotation.

The "free" behavior of a woman, the manifestation of her activity, obsession in the desire to attract the attention of a man, act in the eyes of Russian speakers as a violation of the moral canon, according to which she should be humble, bashful. Respectively idioms and verbs describing such behavior contain a high degree of negative evaluation. See also the negative connotation in a noun referring to a woman with similar behavior: *вертихвостка* 'a windy, frivolous, flirtatious woman' (Kuznetsov 2000). The cultural script assumes that a woman can either simply accept signs of attention from a man, i.e. to be a passive party, or to attract his attention in implicit, unobtrusive ways, such as flirting, coquetry, enchantment, i.e. refrain from actions.

At the same time, male perseverance, assertiveness is not only condemned, but is often even encouraged, as evidenced by the presence of an intensity seme in 80%, and aggressive seme in a value of 50% of the verbs of courtship of subgroup I (see Table 3), and these semes do not cause a negative appraisal connotation, but rather have a positive or at least neutral character. Moreover, it is believed that the assertiveness of a man in the

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8) The full title of the book is *Книга, называемая «Домострой», содержащая в себе полезные сведения, поучения и наставления всякому христианину — мужу, и жене, и детям, и слугам, и служанкам* [A book called "Domostroy", which contains useful information, teachings and instructions to every Christian – husband, wife, children, servants, and maidservants] – a work of Russian literature of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which is a collection of rules, tips and instructions in all areas of human life. The authorship is attributed to the confessor of Ivan IV Sylvester.



courtship process ensures his success. Thus, courtship verbs denote active actions on the part of males, therefore they are often semantically related to verbs of movement or verbs of active physical actions (for example, dragging, courting, lashing, rolling, molesting, conquer, stick). For verbs whose subject of action is a woman, the main seme – ‘to attract attention’ or ‘to take signs of attention’ – does not involve active actions. The classification of verbs and idioms denoting a woman’s behavior based on the semantic attribute ‘activity’ is presented in Table 4.

	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Passivity</b>	<b>Limited activity</b>	<b>Activity</b>
16	<i>флиртовать</i>	–	+	–
17	<i>заводить флирт</i>	–	+	–
18	<i>заниматься флиртом</i>	–	+	–
19	<i>кокетничать</i>	–	+	–
20	<i>стрелять глазками</i>	–	+	–
21	<i>играть глазками</i>	–	+	–
22	<i>строить глазки</i>	–	+	–
23	<i>делать глазки</i>	–	+	–
24	<i>очаровать</i>	–	+	–
25	<i>обворожить</i>	–	+	–
26	<i>околдовать</i>	–	+	–
27	<i>завлекать</i>	–	+	–
28	<i>жеманиться</i>	+	–	–
29	<i>манерничать</i>	+	–	–
30	<i>вешаться на шею</i>	–	–	+
31	<i>виснуть на шее</i>	–	+	–
32	<i>вертеть (крутить) хвостом</i>	–	–	+
33	<i>крутить подолом</i>	–	–	+

**Table 4.** Classification of verbs and idioms on the basis of “activity” feature

The sign (–) means the absence of a feature, the sign (+) means the presence of a feature.

The main part of the verbs of the II subgroup (90%) has the seme of inactivity (passivity or limited activity) and describes a typical cultural scenario of a woman’s flirting, in which she is prescribed an inactive position approved by society. Almost all verbs of this subgroup have either positively evaluative or weakly negative connotative semes. Idioms with the seme of female activity in gender relations have, accordingly, a stable, sharply expressed negative evaluative seme, which conveys condemnation by society of such woman behavior.

### 3.4 Verbs neutral by the gender attribute

The third subgroup, as already mentioned, includes verbs that are neutral in relation to the gender of the subject: they can mean both courtship of a man for a woman, and vice versa – flirtation and coquetry of a woman in relation to a man. These are the verbs:

(34) *покорять* ‘to conquer’, to charm

(35) *пленять* ‘to capture’, to charm

(36) *обольщать* ‘to flatter’, to charm

(37) *соблазнять* ‘to tempt’, to tempt

The verbs (34) *покорять*, (35) *пленять* depending on the gender characteristics of the subject acquired the meaning “to show interest, attention to a woman” or “to attract a man’s attention” by metaphorizing words that originally meant military operations. In section 3.2, we talked about a similar metaphorization of the verbs of the subgroup I *завоевывать* (‘to conquer’), *добиваться* (‘to attain’), characterizing male actions. Regardless of the affiliation of verbs to one or another subgroup, they are formed according to one metaphorical model in which the sphere of love is conceptualized by native speakers through a source – a field of knowledge about war: [LOVE is WAR]. Verbs (34), (35) describe such a courtship and flirting script in which the subject appears to be the winner, and the object is the humble, humiliated captive. Apparently, the metaphorical model [LOVE is WAR] is characteristic of many cultures (see Lakoff – Johnson 1980, 49).

The verb (36) *обольщать* (*обольстить кого-то*) ‘to deceive with flattery; to attract, lure, incline to something; to seduce’ (Kuznetsov 2000) has a sense of ‘deceive’, which also indicates the intentions and activity of the subject. Hence the expression of *жертва обольщения, невинная жертва обольщения* appears (‘victim of seduction, an innocent victim of seduction’). In a cultural script, the subject – the seducer – appears to be a clearly negative hero. A similar scenario is in the semantics of the verb (37) *соблазнять*. The presence of the semantics of deception in (36) *обольщать* (*обольстить*) is due to its etymology, which goes back to the word *лесть*, which, in turn, is associated with the Old Church Slavonic *лъсть*, Bulg. *лест* ‘lest’, as well as *лъст* ‘deception’, Czech. *lest* ‘deceit, cunning’, other Polish *leść* ‘cunning, deceit’, Old German. Goth. *lists* ‘cunning, intrigues’ (Vasmer 1986).

(38) *заигрывать* ‘to play with’, to flirt

(39) *любезничать* ‘to give and receive signs of attention’, to flirt

(40) *вскружить голову* ‘to turn the head (circling)’, to fall in love with oneself

(41) *крутить (заводить) шуры-муры* ‘to flirt’, to flirt

(42) *крутить роман* ‘to twist romance’, to flirt

(43) *крутить любовь* ‘to twist love’, to flirt

(44) *заводить (разводить) шаини* ‘to start up tricks’, to flirt

(38) *Заигрывать* in the sense of “groom” or “flirt”, as stated in 3.3, carries this “seriousness”, which contributes to the emergence of a negative valued connotation. Verb (39) *любезничать* in the meaning of “to give and receive signs of attention” characterizes the verbal and non-verbal (behavioral) sides of courtship and flirting, cf. *говорить любезности, любезно улыбнуться, любезно пожать руку, любезно поклониться* and so on. This word is of common Slavic origin and is connected by a common root with the

verb *любить*. The word originates from the Old Russian *любезный*. Etymologically, it is connected with the Old Church Slavonic verb *лѡвѣзати* – ‘kiss’, with the ancient German *laffan* – ‘lick’, Latin *lambo* – ‘lick, touch’. Meaning of the word *любезный*: “courteous, polite”. At the beginning of the XVII century the word also meant “dear, nice”. It has been found in dictionaries since 1847 (Shanskiy – Bobrova 2004).

The meaning of the idiom (40) *вскружить голову* is defined in the dictionary as follows: “fall in love with oneself, to enthrall” (Fyodorov 2008). The idiom describes the internal psychological state of the courtship object or flirting, to which the subject consciously and intentionally brought it, as a loss of orientation in space (cf. *кружить* circling in the meaning “get lost”). (41) *Крутить (закрутить) шурры-мурры* means “to flirt, flirting with someone” (Fyodorov 2008). The component of *шурры-мурры* in the idiom arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a change of the French combination *cher amour* – ‘dear love’ by means of adapting to transmit the word *shury-mury* learned from the Turkic languages (cf. Turkish. *şurmur* – ‘confusion’) (Shanskiy – Bobrova 2004).

The idioms (40), (41), (42), (43) use the semantics of the circle, introduced by the verbs *кружить*, *крутить* into the metaphorical idea of courtship and flirting as active “circular” actions of the subject (see also idioms *крутить хвостом*, *крутить подолом* in subsection 3.3). The subject in this script looks like a manipulator that performs some “circular” manipulations with the object. At the same time, the semantics of the circle metaphorically conveys the psychological state of disorientation of the object. The symbolism of the circle is important in the sphere of love relationships between man and woman, it means the unity of souls, eternity and indestructibility, see, for example, the custom to exchange rings when engaged, existing in many European cultures; in the Orthodox wedding ceremony, the bride and groom are circled around the lectern. Hence the Russian expression *окрутить* is used in the meaning of “to marry” (Kuznetsov 2000). The use of circle semantics in cultural script of courtship and flirting is associated with a high degree of semioticity in various cultures.

In a set expression (44) *заводить (разводить) шашни* the noun *шашни* means: “hidden machinations, intrigues; love affairs” (Kuznetsov 2000). This word is originally Russian, its origin is not completely clear. N. M. Shanskiy and T. A. Bobrova believe that most likely it is a suffix derivative (suff. -N- < -n-, cf. gossip suff. -н- < -ьн-, ср. *сплетни* from *shahi* – ‘game of chess’, *shashki* ‘game, intrigue, tricks’) (Shanskiy – Bobrova 2004).

(45) *бегать* ‘to run’, to court

(46) *ходить по пятам* ‘to dog sb.’s footsteps’, to court

(47) *ходить следом* ‘to follow’, to court

(48) *ходить как пришитый* ‘to walk like a sewn one’, to court

(49) *преследовать* ‘to pursue’, to court

Above we mentioned a dynamic tendency in the conceptualization of human behavior and thinking, characteristic of the Russian language world picture, according to which courtship is understood as a spatial approach to the courtship object, following and designating verbs are used that are metaphorically rethought, such as (45) *бегать*, (46) *ходить по пятам*, (47) *ходить следом*, (48) *ходить как пришитый*, (49) *преследовать*.

Like the verb of movement in its primary meaning, the metaphor (45) *бегать* retains the ability to control the substantive case form *за кем-либо* (‘for someone’) whose meaning is reinterpreted as ‘a courtship object’ (*бегать за Катей / за одноклассницей / за*

*соседкой*). In semantics (45), the neglect of the speaker and the object itself to the subject of the action is conveyed – usually these are young people or teenagers. In the meaning of (46), (47), (48), (49) there is a sense of obsession that arises due to the violation by the subject of the personal space of the object, or rather excessive approach to it (*следом, по пятам, как пришитый*). This causes the discontent of the object of persecution, which is reflected in the negative evaluative sense, which conveys the dismissiveness of the speaker and the object in relation to the subject of courtship.

### 3.5 Axiological characteristics of verbs

Evaluative senses manifest themselves in vocabulary definitions and in vocabulary labels: disapproving, contempt, disdainful, pejorative, rude, caressing, approving, etc. If it is absent in the dictionary definition and in the dictionary labels, the evaluation is revealed by the transformation of the definition (Sternin 1985, 71) or by contextual analysis of the functioning of the lexeme, including in the *NKRJa*. The essence of the definition transformation method is to transform the definition of the meaning of a word into a conditional phrase ending with the component ‘and this is good / bad’. For example, *волочиться* has the meaning “2. for whom, conversational, outdated. Courting (a woman) without serious intentions. He did not fall in love with beauties, But he dragged himself after somebody somehow. Pushkin, Eugene Onegin. I have known for a long time that Michelle is dragging after your daughter. Chernyshevsky, What to do?” (*SRJa*). Transformation method: “to drag after someone is to groom (a woman) without *serious intentions*, and *that’s bad*.” Contextual analysis of examples of usage from the dictionary definition also confirms the presence of a strong negative connotation for the verb *волочиться*.

Axiological characteristics of verbs allowed us to obtain data on what are gender-oriented sociocultural norms that exist in Russian culture, which scenarios of behavior of men and women are approved by society, and which are not. From a linguo-axiological point of view, all verbs denoting courtship and flirting are divided into three groups: 1 – verbs with a positive evaluative connotation, 2 – verbs with a negative evaluative connotation, 3 – verbs neutral from an evaluative point of view.

	Verbs with positive connotation	Verbs with negative connotation	Verbs with neutral evaluation
1	<i>ухаживать</i>	<i>жениться</i>	
	<i>завоевывать</i>	<i>волочиться</i>	
	<i>добиваться</i>	<i>обхаживать</i>	
		<i>набиваться в женихи</i>	
		<i>ухлестывать</i>	
		<i>приударить</i>	
		<i>подкатывать</i>	
		<i>подъезжать с амурами</i>	
		<i>приставать</i>	
		<i>клеиться</i>	
		<i>подбивать клинья</i>	

	Verbs with positive connotation	Verbs with negative connotation	Verbs with neutral evaluation
		<i>заигрывать с пряниками</i>	
II	<i>обвораживать</i>	<i>жеманиться</i>	<i>флиртовать</i>
	<i>очаровывать</i>	<i>манерничать</i>	<i>кокетничать</i>
	<i>околдовывать</i>	<i>строить глазки</i>	
	<i>завлекать</i>	<i>делать глазки</i>	
		<i>стрелять глазками</i>	
		<i>играть глазками</i>	
		<i>виснуть на шее</i>	
		<i>вешаться на шею</i>	
		<i>вертеть (крутить) хвостом</i>	
		<i>крутить подолом</i>	
III	<i>покорять</i>	<i>вскружить голову</i>	<i>любезничать</i>
	<i>пленять</i>	<i>обольщать</i>	
		<i>заигрывать</i>	
		<i>преследовать</i>	
		<i>бегать</i>	
		<i>ходить по пятам</i>	
		<i>ходить следом</i>	
		<i>ходить как пришитый</i>	
		<i>крутить роман</i>	
		<i>крутить любовь</i>	
		<i>заводить (крутить) шуры-муры</i>	
		<i>заводить (разводить) шашни</i>	

**Table 5.** Subgroups of verbs according to axiological characteristics

The largest group is a group of words with negative evaluation – 34 verbs, which is consistent with the axiological postulate of a greater variety of negative vocabulary compared to positive, since it reflects deviations from the norm “good”, and deviations from the norm and its violation are diverse and more numerous than the norm (Soldatkina 2016, 242). Positive vocabulary corresponds to the norm, which is uniform and, as a result, is not numerous – 9 words. The neutral evaluation group is represented by 3 verbs.

The contextual analysis in the *NKRJa* identified the semes ‘responsible’ for the positive and negative evaluation. Semes providing words with a positive value connotation include: 1) seme ‘excessive activity of a man as the subject’; 2) seme ‘the mindset for

marriage’; 3) seme ‘the use of charms’. The first seme, the seme of excessive activity of the subject, is included in both lists, since it affects the sign of verb evaluation in a peculiar way, depending on the gender parameter of the subject: if it is a man, then the value of excessive activity characterizes it positively, and if the subject is a woman, it is negative. In the second seme ‘the mindset for marriage’, the society approves the courtship scenario, which leads to such a good goal as marriage. This attribute is relevant only for the first subgroup of words describing the behavior of a man. The third seme – ‘the use of charms’ – has a localized positive scope – only within the framework of verbs characterizing the behavior of women. The conventions allow women to use this method of attracting male attention and interest, as a magical effect, due to the ancient Slavic archetypal ideas about women as part of a supernatural, mystical world. The distribution of verbs with a positive sign in accordance with the semes that are ‘responsible’ for this is presented in Table 6.

<b>Excessive activity</b>	<b>Mindset for marriage</b>	<b>Use of charms</b>
<i>завоевывать</i> (I)	<i>ухаживать</i> (I)	<i>обвороживать</i> (II)
<i>добиваться</i> (I)		<i>очаровывать</i> (II)
<i>покорять</i> (III)		<i>околдовывать</i> (II)
<i>пленять</i> (III)		<i>завлекать</i> (II)

**Table 6.** The distribution of verbs with positive semantics according to the semes  
The numbers in brackets indicate the reference of verbs to one of the three subgroups.

The seme responsible for the negative component in the semantics of words include the following: 1) seme of excessive subject activity; 2) seme of excessive obsession; 3) seme of neglect of the subject from the side of the object and from the speaker; 4) seme of frivolity, ease of courtship; 5) seme ‘against the will and desire of the object’; 6) seme of excessive approximation to the object; 7) seme of unnatural / artificial behavior.

All of the mentioned semes, except the last one, act within the framework of all three subgroups of verbs and determine the negative evaluation. The last seme – ‘unnatural / artificial behavior’ – applies only to verbs of the second subgroup describing the behavior of a woman and is irrelevant for the remaining subgroups. We present the verbs with a negative evaluation and the semes that are ‘responsible’ for this, in Table 7 on the next page.

#### 4. Conclusion

Thus, we can reconstruct the optimal courtship script in the representations of the native speakers of the Russian language: a man must demonstrate the seriousness of his intentions, i.e. courtship should lead to marriage, he should be active and persistent, but without obsession and in no case act contrary to the will and desire of the woman, and he should not violate her “personal space”, i.e. overly ‘get close’ to her. Failure to comply with at least one of the rules of courtship may affect the success of the entire process as a whole.

The woman’s behavior in the process of flirting as a subject and in the process of courtship as an object is also governed by a set of unwritten rules defining the following cultural scenario: a woman should not be active, her job is to almost passively accept or not accept attention signs, as the only exception among actions by society allows women to use charms, magic to attract the attention of men; a woman also should not be overly obsessive and act against the will and desire of an object – a man. Unlike a male subject,

Excessive activity	Imposition	Neglect	Frivolity	Against the will of the subject	Excessive approach	Unnatural behavior
вешаться на шею (I)	обхаживать (I)	подкапывать (I)	волючиться (I)	приставать (I)	клеиться (I)	жеманичься (II)
вертеть / крутить хвостом (II)	набиваться в женихи (I)	подъезжать с амурами (I)	ухлестывать (I)	преследовать (III)	ходить по пятам (II)	манерничать (II)
крутить подолом (II)	виснуть на шее (II)	женихаться (I)	приударить (I)		ходить следом (II)	строить / делать глазки (II)
		подбивать клинья (I)	вскружить голову (III)		ходить как пришитый (III)	стрелять / играть глазками (II)
		бегать (III)	обольщать (III)			
		заводить (крутить) шуры-муры (III)	заигрывать (III)			
		заводить (разводить) шашни (III)	заигрывать с пряниками (I)			

**Table 7.** The distribution of verbs with negative semantics according to the semes  
The numbers in brackets indicate the reference of verbs to one of the three groups.

strict requirements are not imposed on a woman ‘seriousness of intent’, since in Russian culture it is accepted that matrimonial plans openly come only from a man, and women hide such intentions. Another rule, typical only for women, is the naturalness of behavior; accordingly artificiality, unnaturalness is condemned. This criterion does not apply to men at all.

Nouns naming the subject of courtship and flirting also show a negative (*волокита, ловелас, ухажер, дамский, угодник, любезник, обольститель(-ница), бабник, вертихвостка, кокетка*, see also modern: *ходок*) and a positive ethical evaluation (*рыцарь, воздыхатель, поклонник, дама сердца*). Of course, the context, which actualizes a particular potential in ambivalent verbs and often influences the fact that the word’s evaluative sign can be reversed, is crucial in determining the evaluative word mark.

Reconstructing cultural script of courtship and flirting during the semantic analysis of Russian verbs, we revealed their specificity, due to the system of values of native speakers, their archetypal ideas, sociocultural norms and gender stereotypes. The national specificity of courtship and flirting script is captured not only in the axiological component of the semantics of verbs, but also in denotative signs: the gender of the subject and the object of the action, the duration and intensity of the process, the aggressiveness of the subject, his or her activity / passivity, the use of external methods of influencing the object (orders, jewelry; magic). In addition to the basic differential semantic features mentioned above, among the verbs there was probably not so striking contrast in terms of social status (*волочиться, ухлестывать, заигрывать с пряниками, манерничать*) and the age of the subject (*бегать за кем-либо, подкатывать, клеиться, строить глазки*).

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