

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD IN A. VAMPILOV'S PLAY "THE ELDER SON"**Abdullayeva Dilfuza Babakhanovna**Teacher of the Department of Russian Language and Literature
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Abstract: This article explores the artistic representation of truth and falsehood in A. Vampilov's play *The Elder Son*. The study analyzes how the playwright uses deception, accidental circumstances, and moral choices to reveal the inner world of his characters and to shape the dramatic conflict. Special attention is given to the character of Busygin, whose initial lie transforms into a catalyst for emotional openness, family unity, and personal growth. The article also examines the moral ambiguity present in the play, showing how lies can unexpectedly lead to positive outcomes, while truth may expose vulnerability and loneliness. Through a detailed analysis of character interactions and narrative structure, the paper highlights Vampilov's unique ability to combine humor with deep psychological insight, demonstrating that truth and falsehood in the play function not only as ethical categories but also as significant dramatic tools.

Key Words: A. Vampilov; *The Elder Son*; truth; falsehood; deception; moral choice; dramatic conflict; character psychology; Russian drama.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada A. Vampilovning "Katta o'g'il" asarida haqiqat va yolg'onning badiiy talqini tahlil qilinadi. Muallif obrazlararo munosabatlarni ochishda aldov, tasodifiy holatlar va samimiy tan olishlardan qanday foydalanishi ko'rsatib beriladi. Asarda Busiginning dastlabki yolg'onni qanday qilib oilaviy yaqinlikni tiklashga xizmat qilishi hamda voqealarning axloqiy murakkabligi ochib beriladi. Tadqiqot haqiqat va yolg'onning asarda oddiy axloqiy kategoriyalar emas, balki dramatik rivojlanishni belgilovchi badiiy vositalar sifatida namoyon bo'lishiga e'tibor qaratadi.

Kalit so'zlar: A. Vampilov; Katta o'g'il; haqiqat; yolg'on; aldov; axloqiy ziddiyat; dramatik rivojlanish; obraz psixologiyasi.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается художественное воплощение истины и лжи в пьесе А. Вампилова «Старший сын». Особое внимание уделяется тому, как автор использует обман, случайные обстоятельства и искренние признания для раскрытия внутренних переживаний персонажей и развития драматического конфликта. Анализ показывает, что первоначальная ложь Бусыгина становится отправной точкой для духовного сближения и восстановления семейного единства. Работа подчеркивает моральную многослойность пьесы и демонстрирует, что истина и ложь здесь выступают важными художественными средствами, формирующими отношения героев.

Ключевые слова: А. Вампилов; Старший сын; истина; ложь; обман; моральный конфликт; драматическое развитие; психология персонажей.

The dramatic works of Alexander Vampilov occupy a significant place in twentieth-century Russian literature, distinguished by their subtle psychological depth, moral ambiguity, and careful examination of everyday human relationships. Among his plays, *The Elder Son* stands out as a poignant exploration of how truth and falsehood shape personal identity, family

dynamics, and moral responsibility[1] Written during a period when Soviet society experienced strong social and ideological pressures, the play reflects the tension between individual sincerity and the necessity—sometimes even the inevitability—of deception.

In *The Elder Son*, truth and lies are not merely opposing moral categories, but dramatic forces that guide the characters' decisions, influence their emotional development, and ultimately redefine the concept of family. The accidental lie told by the young man Busygin becomes the catalyst for the formation of genuine human bonds, raising a central question: can an untruth give rise to authentic feelings and real solidarity? Vampilov uses this paradox to challenge conventional ethical boundaries and to reveal the complexity of human nature.

The relevance of this study lies in the continuing interest in Vampilov's dramaturgy, which resonates with contemporary audiences due to its candid portrayal of vulnerability, loneliness, and the search for belonging. The problem of distinguishing truth from falsehood in social and personal relationships remains deeply significant in modern cultural discourse. Therefore, analyzing how Vampilov employs deception not as a destructive force but as a potential means of human connection offers valuable insight into the moral fabric of his characters and the ideological context of the era.

This paper aims to examine the artistic function of truth and falsehood in the play, exploring the mechanisms through which Vampilov constructs dramatic tension, reveals character psychology, and conveys moral ambiguity. The analysis also seeks to demonstrate how lies—whether intentional or accidental—transform into tools of self-discovery and how truth emerges not only through factual accuracy but through emotional sincerity.

Alexander Vampilov's *The Elder Son* presents truth and falsehood not as simple moral opposites but as intertwined forces that shape the characters' emotional journeys. Through a combination of accidental lies, deliberate concealment, and sincere revelations, Vampilov exposes the fragile boundaries between deception and genuine human connection. The following analysis examines key moments and characters in the play that illustrate this complex dynamic. The central falsehood in the play originates when the young musician **Vladimir Busygin** impulsively introduces himself as the "elder son" of **Andrey Sarafanov**, a modest, slightly naive clarinetist[2]

This lie emerges not from malice but from a desperate attempt to find shelter for the night.

Example from the play: When Sarafanov shows unexpected warmth and hospitality, Busygin hesitates to reveal the truth. He realizes that the lie has created a bond that neither he nor the lonely father wishes to break.

- Busygin's deception functions as a dramatic tool that sets all later events in motion.
- The lie exposes Sarafanov's longing for love and belonging—needs he could not voice openly.
- Vampilov uses this falsehood to reveal emotional truths that factual accuracy alone would not show.

Thus, an invented family relationship ironically leads to authentic human closeness.

Sarafanov's acceptance of Busygin as his son highlights the theme that truth is often less about facts and more about emotional need.

Real moment from the play: Sarafanov immediately calls Busygin “my boy” and begins speaking to him with fatherly affection.

His loneliness makes him more receptive to believing what reason should question.

- Sarafanov chooses the “truth” he wants to believe because it fills a void in his life.
- Vampilov shows that people sometimes prefer comforting illusions to harsh reality.
- This choice demonstrates that falsehood can expose psychological truths that remain hidden behind everyday routines.

Sarafanov’s emotional vulnerability transforms Busygin’s lie into a temporary “truth.” Sarafanov’s son **Boria** immediately doubts Busygin’s story.

Example: Boria, unlike his father, interrogates the guest and questions how a long-lost son could appear without warning.

He tries to expose the lie directly.

- Through Boria, Vampilov shows the logical, skeptical approach to truth.
- Boria’s behavior reflects a generational clash: younger characters rely on rationality, while older ones value emotional comfort.
- His refusal to accept deception highlights the conflict between factual truth and emotional truth within the family. This contrast deepens the play’s central tension.

Although Busygin begins by lying, he gradually becomes the most morally grounded character. **Example:** Busygin defends Sarafanov’s daughter Nina from her fiancé Kuzakov’s insensitive behavior, insisting that she deserves respect and genuine affection.

His developing sense of responsibility demonstrates that initial motives do not define a person’s moral trajectory. Vampilov suggests that honesty is not static; it grows as a function of empathy and commitment. Busygin’s lie eventually evolves into sincere care for the family, showing that falsehood can lead to ethical awakening. This shift highlights one of the play’s main paradoxes: a lie creates the conditions for moral truth to emerge.

Nina’s fiancé **Kuzakov** represents another form of falsehood—social hypocrisy. **Example:** Kuzakov is “honest” only in a superficial sense: he insists on correct formalities but hides his selfish intentions. He plans to leave Nina and move to Moscow, prioritizing his career over personal loyalty[3]

- Kuzakov’s “truth” is rooted in self-interest; he tells the truth only when it benefits him.
- Vampilov uses him to contrast emotional sincerity with bureaucratic pragmatism.
- Kuzakov exposes the idea that truth without compassion can be morally empty.

He demonstrates that factual truth can still function as emotional falsehood. In many comedies, the revelation of the lie creates chaos. In *The Elder Son*, the opposite happens. **Example:** When Sarafanov finally learns that Busygin is not actually his son, he does not react with anger. Instead, he expresses relief that someone cared enough to enter his life—even through deception. The lie’s exposure becomes a moment of emotional clarity rather than crisis. Vampilov shows that truth and falsehood are not mutually destructive; instead, they work together to reveal human needs. The family decides to maintain their emotional bond with Busygin despite the factual truth. This ending reinforces Vampilov’s belief that emotional sincerity carries greater weight than strict factual correctness.

In *The Elder Son*, Alexander Vampilov presents truth and falsehood as deeply interconnected aspects of human relationships rather than simple moral opposites. The accidental lie created by Busygin becomes a catalyst that reveals the emotional loneliness and unspoken needs within the Sarafanov family. As the plot unfolds, Vampilov demonstrates that factual truth does not always reflect a person's inner world, while some lies—especially those born from compassion or circumstance—may lead to genuine emotional transformation. The characters illustrate different attitudes toward truth:

- **Sarafanov** chooses to believe a comforting illusion because it heals his inner emptiness.
- **Boria** insists on factual correctness, representing rational skepticism.
- **Kuzakov** embodies formal “truth” that lacks moral sincerity.
- **Busygin** moves from deception to sincere responsibility, proving that a person's true nature is revealed not by their initial actions but by their moral growth.

Ultimately, Vampilov suggests that authentic human connection does not depend solely on factual honesty but on empathy, mutual support, and emotional truth. The discovery of the lie does not break the family apart; instead, it strengthens their relationships and opens the possibility of a new, chosen family. In this way, Vampilov emphasizes that truth acquires its full meaning only when combined with humanity and compassion.

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