

**VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND EVALUATIVE SEMANTICS IN LANGUAGE  
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**Abstract:** This article delves into the axiological dimensions of language, concentrating on how values and evaluative meanings are conveyed and understood within linguistic units, especially proverbs. It analyzes the foundational theories of value perspectives, their hierarchical organization, and their influence on human conduct and worldview. Drawing upon the works of renowned Russian linguists like Apresyan, Arutyunova, Telia, and others, this paper explores the relationship between evaluation, connotation, and the semantic framework of language. It particularly highlights the evaluative aspect within phraseological units and proverbs, which embody culturally ingrained attitudes and shared experiences. The research underscores that language not only communicates cognitive content but also contains emotional and axiological significance, thereby playing a crucial role in cultural transmission and social interaction.

**Keywords:** axiological linguistics, value orientation, evaluation, connotation, semantic structure, proverbs, phraseological units, language and culture

**Introduction**

In contemporary linguistics, examining values and evaluativity enhances our understanding of how language functions socially and culturally within society. The values constructed in human cognition are articulated through language and passed down through generations using linguistic forms. Axiological linguistics specifically seeks to uncover the human perspective by analyzing concepts such as values, evaluation, and connotation. The evaluative aspect of language, along with its connotative and pragmatic dimensions, has emerged as a key area of research in this domain. This article examines values, evaluative semantics, connotation, and how these elements are represented in linguistic units, particularly proverbs. The primary aim is to ascertain how value orientations and evaluative components are linguistically manifested.

V. Sagatovskiy characterized value as a standard that influences an individual's way of living. He posited that values are overarching notions about preferred items and acceptable methods of acquiring them, encapsulating the individual's previous experiences and informing their future choices. It's crucial to recognize that values apply not just to individuals but also to groups, societies, and humanity as a whole. The philosopher introduced his own classification, which is based on human actions oriented toward values. He distinguished values as extragenic when dictated by external demands to achieve a specific aim, and intragenic when arising from internal needs. These are regarded as fundamental conditions for fulfilling the cognitive functions of language. Throughout its evolution, language mirrors what holds the most significance for a society or its individual constituents. The process of comprehension is shaped by value categories that dictate the trajectory of human societal development. Therefore, language is not only intrinsically linked to intellectual engagement but also encompasses axiological and spiritual elements. Furthermore, language serves as a medium that conveys an individual's emotional state and nuances of feelings, including emotions that affect the sentiments of others.

One prominent scholar who significantly contributed to the field of axiological studies is N. Rozov. In his publication “Values in a Troubled World” (1998), he articulates the concept of value in this manner:

“A value, much like terms such as “truth”, “human being”, and “culture”, may never be completely defined with exact descriptions. Nonetheless, this should not prevent the establishment of functional conceptual frameworks that fulfill the need to tackle contemporary challenges” (Rozov, 1998). By value, he refers to the essential foundations of human consciousness and behavior.

In addition, different religions and cultures have their unique value systems.

The manifestation of values in human awareness and their acknowledgment as fundamental life objectives and overarching worldviews is known as “value orientations” (hereafter – VOs). The term “value orientations” was introduced in the field of social psychology as a counterpart to the philosophical concept of “value.” Numerous researchers view VOs as the connection between motivation and the objectives of an activity. In sociological terminology, VOs include “motives, needs, interests, and various other elements considered within the context of the value paradigm of activity” (Sociological Dictionary, 1991).

According to V. Yadov, “from the standpoint of relational theory, value orientations serve as particular guidelines that reflect an individual's attitude in each specific situation” (Yadov, 1975).

It is reasonable to examine value orientations through the lens of both frameworks, as they function as essential “nodes” linking different forms of human activity. These “nodes” emerge through integration into social relationship systems and form the essence of the individual, maintaining the coherence of one's existence.

In other words, the establishment of values is shaped not only by historical factors but also by personal experiences. An individual's values form their life orientation system, which reflects a collection of their most fundamental internal traits. These value orientations serve as the foundation for human behavior and have a direct impact on personal growth. If we view value orientations as purpose-driven guides for a person, then their significance in determining one's life becomes clear: this process encompasses the entire scope of an individual's existence within the “value-attribution” framework.

In essence, the formation of values is influenced not just by historical circumstances but also by individual experiences. A person's values constitute their life orientation framework, which embodies a compilation of their core internal characteristics. These value orientations are foundational to human actions and significantly affect personal development. If we consider value orientations as purpose-driven navigators for individuals, their importance in shaping one's life becomes evident: this process encapsulates the totality of a person's existence within the “value-attribution” context.

According to M.A. Makhkamova (2024), values embedded within linguistic frameworks are not simply abstract cognitive ideas but are essential carriers of emotional, moral, and cultural significance. By examining Uzbek and English linguistic traditions, she demonstrates how proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and culturally specific terms act as mediums for conveying deeply ingrained social norms and shared experiences. This perspective supports the notion that language does more than express thought—it also actively shapes and mirrors the value-based worldview of its speakers.

Y.D. Apresyan notes that evaluation is “a very subtle and sometimes elusive aspect of meaning” (Apresyan, 1995). The idea of evaluation was first introduced into linguistic

discussions as a concept in the early 20th century by Charles Bally. He encompassed a broad spectrum of attitudes toward an event or object expressed through language choices—whether something leads to happiness or distress, is beneficial or detrimental, fundamentally good or bad, and whether it adheres to moral standards or not (Sklyarevskaya, 1997, p. 167).

It is important to note that Sh. Ball's theory of language evaluation went largely unnoticed during the first half of the 20th century, with significant interest in this field only beginning to appear since the 1950s. In contemporary research, related concepts associated with the idea of language evaluation include modality and subjective modality. The realm of issues pertaining to the evaluation category is known as subjective modality, which is examined within semantics, partially in stylistics, as well as in linguistic pragmatics.

The theory of language assessment forms the basis for the comprehensive advancement of the theory of connotation and connotative semantics. Connotation is defined as a set of different and typical semantic components: expressive, emotional, evaluative, stylistic, and pragmatic elements, which arise from associations created within the culture of a specific society and are linked to the qualifying functions of linguistic signs (Sklyarevskaya 1997, 170). The connection between connotation and evaluation was characterized by Y.D. Apresyan: connotation is described as “the evaluation attributed to the referent of a particular word as a name in this language” (Apresyan 1995).

According to G.N. Sklyarevskaya, evaluation as a component encompasses moral qualities (good - bad, altruism - egoism, helping - harming, etc.), aesthetic aspects (beautiful - ugly), and emotional expressions (indifference, disregard, humiliation on one hand, approval and admiration on the other). The evaluative part of a word's meaning is the approving or disapproving assessment inherent in its semantics (Sternin 1987, p. 99). She distinguishes between evaluative semantic components and evaluative words. In language, words that express an evaluative (positive or negative) meaning are grouped thematically. These primarily include general evaluative adjectives: excellent, good, disgusting, bad, beautiful, as well as relevant adverbs. For example, in the proverb “An old friend and old wine are the best” the adjective “best” — a superlative form of “good” — expresses a positive evaluation. Here, the evaluation is manifested as part of the word's denotative meaning. Such words are evaluative descriptors and carry an evaluative meaning.

The debate over whether evaluation is part of the connotative meaning has resulted in varying perspectives among scholars. Certain linguists consider evaluation to be a facet of the denotative meaning (denotation) (Filippov 1978, pp. 57–63; Shippan 1978, p. 87). For instance, A.V. Filippov states that “...the evaluative feature is a specific aspect of denotation, not of connotation” (Filippov 1978, p. 61). Consequently, some researchers suggest that the evaluative component should be regarded as an integral part of the conceptual core of a linguistic unit's semantics, instead of being viewed as an additional element relative to the conceptual core.

Other researchers, however, recognize that evaluation is an integral part of the lexical meaning of linguistic units and consider it a separate, autonomous aspect that enhances the conceptual core (Vol'f 1979, p. 276; Shmelev 1964, p. 106; Shmelev 1973, p. 140).

It is important to highlight that there are different interpretations of the term “connotation.” For example, some scholars regard connotation as a fundamental aspect of the meaning of linguistic units: “...In both words and phraseological units, denotative, significative, and connotative components are essential. The existence of connotation is a vital part of the meaning of any secondary linguistic sign” (Chernyshova 1973, p. 7). A.B. Kunin shares a similar perspective: “...In meaning, including the meaning of phraseological units, two levels should be recognized:

the content plane (designate), in which the significative, denotative, and connotative aspects are identified, and the expression plane, which refers to the material form of the phraseological unit” (Kunin 1970, p. 310).

According to V.N. Teliya, connotation refers to the “implicit” information that is not explicitly communicated, which reflects the speaker's pragmatic intention to influence the listener in a specific way, including their emotional response. Connotation encompasses any element of the content plane of a linguistic unit (such as morphemes, words, phraseological units, and text segments) that adds to the denotative and grammatical meaning... (Teliya, 1996, p. 107). Teliya asserts that all connotative meanings carry a pragmatic charge. Thus, evaluation is seen as a component of connotative and pragmatic semantics, which, in our opinion, aligns with reality. V.N. Teliya’s concept of connotation corresponds with the modal evaluation theory introduced by P.D. Arutyunova and E.M. Volf. They suggest that evaluation is defined as a judgment regarding the worth of an object or certain attributes of that object (the subject of evaluation) (Arutyunova, 1988; Volf, 1985).

R.F. Andreyeva points out that the evaluative aspect is inherent in the phraseological units found within proverbs, which is a characteristic of all proverbs and sayings. Additionally, it is highlighted that figurative and expressive qualities are part of the connotative significance (Andreyeva, 1984, p. 62). The evaluative meaning plays a crucial role in shaping the semantic traits of phraseological units across all proverbs, influencing their character in various ways. Proverbs and sayings provide assessments of occurrences and real-life situations, encapsulating life wisdom or moral lessons in a condensed, aphoristic manner.

Some scholars in linguistics view evaluation as an element of both the denotative and connotative dimensions of linguistic entities (Kunin A.B. 1980; Petrishcheva 1965; Sternin 1980, and others). For example, E.F. Petrishcheva categorizes the evaluative component into two categories: the first category comprises intellectual-logical evaluation, which is a part of the referential content, while the second category encompasses evaluation that exists outside the referential content (Petrishcheva 1965, pp. 55–57). A.V. Kunin identifies intellectual evaluation as belonging to the denotative (referential-logical) dimension, whereas emotional evaluation is classified as part of connotation (Kunin 1980, p. 168).

Evaluations are commonly split into intellectual and emotional types. Intellectual evaluation serves as a component of the referential-logical aspect of phraseological meaning and is characterized by a rational assessment of the object, highlighting its traits. Conversely, emotional evaluation is associated with the connotative aspect and conveys the speaker’s sentiments. Emotional evaluation is typically recognized through emotionally charged words or descriptive terms that carry stylistic indicators. This pertains to evaluations that are ingrained in the conventional usage of the language. According to A.V. Kunin, when context or occasional alterations affect phraseological units, different designations can arise. He describes evaluation as an attitude that is both objective-subjective and subjectively-objective towards an object, which is articulated overtly or subtly through linguistic expressions (Kunin 1980, p. 169). In numerous phraseological units, evaluation is communicated not just through definitions but also through their elements, which might possess evaluative significance even when considered outside the phraseological unit. In these instances, evaluation is distinctly articulated. Conversely, in certain phraseological units, the components convey evaluative meaning solely within the context of the unit itself. This methodology is employed in our research as the principal means of analyzing evaluation.

In summary, each person functions within a distinct set of values influenced by their needs, experiences, and social surroundings. These values not only signify an individual's lifestyle but also dictate the priorities they establish, often resulting in a hierarchy where some values are pursued at the cost of others. Language is vital in maintaining and passing down these values through generations, emphasizing its role in cultural and social continuity. The hierarchical structure of values, along with their historical and personal variability, underscores the dynamic interaction between personal experiences and societal standards. An individual's biological and psychological traits contribute to the context of value development, yet it is through social interactions that values gain objectivity and significance.

Ultimately, values underpin a person's perspective and actions, influencing their objectives and reactions to the world. When viewed as internalized frameworks guiding intentional behavior, value orientations highlight their significant impact on human growth and interaction with the environment. Therefore, examining values provides profound insights into the linguistic, cultural, and existential aspects of human existence.

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