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AXIOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *The paper examines the axiological aspects of the evaluative component coded in each national language and represented by different means of language at a derivative and lexical level - by means of self-explanatory lexemes with implicitly put in intrinsic evaluative semantics, by means of lexemes, pertaining to one and the same synonymic row, by means of word-combinations - free and phraseological ones. The mechanism of expressing assessment in language "good - bad - neutral" is presented; it is based on the axiological triad "good - evil - nature" and represents the approach of juxtaposing in the human consciousness of the properties and qualities of objects and phenomena with the generally accepted norm. The deviations from the norm are axiologically marked and identify the national-specific features presented at the linguistic level.*

Keywords: *axiology, axiological assessment, cultural code, mechanism for expressing assessment in language*

INTRODUCTION

As a theory of values axiology is a science of the nature of values, of their place in reality and of the structure of the world of values, in other words of the relationship between the different values, between them and the socio-cultural factors, as well as of the spiritual structure of personality. The assessment component through the nation's value system is "encoded" in the national language system by the existing in each society assessment criteria based on its specific cultural model. The study of "language as a verbal cultural code and as a creator of culture" (Tolstoy 1995: 24) is essential for the study of the cultural semantics of the linguistic signs formed by the interaction of the two different codes – the linguistic and cultural ones. This is applicable, since language signs can also function as a "language of culture", which materializes through the intrinsic to language ability to reflect the national-cultural mentality of the respective linguistic personalities.

EXPOSITION

As a native speaker man is the bearer of both national culture and national mentality. Linguistics aims to study ways to fix, encode and represent mental processes through the means of language. Thanks to the reversible interrelation between language and culture, the latter can be interpreted as a definite structure, as a certain *unity of peculiar signs – codes*.

Code and cultural code

In the field of mathematics, cybernetics, computing and communication equipment, and code-based genetics, the term *code* means a set of characters and a set of rules that can be used to compile information as a set of these signs for its transmission, processing, and storage. This solves the problems related not to understanding but to the optimisation of the codes.

However, the content and interpretation/ understanding of cultural texts is precisely the most appreciated in culturology and linguoculturology. That is why the concept of *cultural code* (code of

culture) is gaining ever greater significance. The need to apply a cultural code arises only when a transition from the world of signals to the world of meaning takes place.

The different interpretations of the cultural code (Ilieva 2016: 115-116, 174-175) give us reason to summarize its essential characteristics in a working definition: *a peculiar set of language and cultural signs expressing the notions of the value of objects through the prism of the national-cultural specificity associated with the processes of evaluation and conceptualisation and providing through its specific "cipher" access to the values of the culture of an ethnos.*

Like any code, the cultural code must be a means of decoding –in this case of the hidden and obvious meanings (together or separately) of cultural phenomena expressed through rituals, signs, symbols, gestures, communicative stereotypes, texts, etc.

The relation of sign systems with the reflected reality is not immediate. For this reason, we believe that sign systems can only be understood thanks to the cultural code representing a *system of meaningful distinctive features*.

The code "acts as principle of the choice of meanings in the relevant communicative-pragmatic system" (Parakhonskii 1988: 46). Krasnykh's understanding of the code of culture is widespread: he regards the code of culture as a "net" that culture casts on our surrounding reality and thus segments, categorises, structures, and evaluates it. We perceive this view as an extremely appropriate figurative image comparison of the representation of the cultural code and its role /relation to the world around us. "The cultural codes relate to the most ancient archetypal ideas of man. In other words, these ideas are encoded by the codes of culture" (Krasnykh 2002: 232). They are universal, *but their "way of manifestation, "the relative weight" of each of them in a given culture, as well as the metaphors through which they are realised, are always nationally determined and conditioned by the specific culture* (ibid: 233).

Culture code – axiological aspect

Values that arose as spiritual pillars of man at the dawn of human history, "hierarchise" reality, bring valuational touches into its meaning, relate to the idea of the ideal, desirable, normative or unacceptable, and recommend certain behavior.

The significance of the value orientations for one or another ethnicity has determined their "coding" in the system in every national language – mainly in vocabulary, especially in the phraseological and proverbial fund. Such "coding" is done primarily by including the evaluation component in the denotational or connotative meaning of the word, and the stylistic and metaphorical means of the phraseological units, proverbs and sayings conveying messages to the next generations. Therefore, we support V. Telia's view that "the emotionally valued attitude is determined by the worldview of the people – the native speaker of a particular language, by its cultural and historical experience, by the system of assessment criteria existing in the given society" (Telia 1986: 39).

Based on the definition of the cultural code, we should refer in parallel with it to the notion of a *norm* considered in two aspects, representing two facets of a whole – the cultural and linguistic norm. "Cultural norm embraces rules, standards, prescriptions, templates, institutions and boundaries the breaking of which is unacceptable, as that would be a violation of the rules of a given culture and would trigger the negative reaction of a given cultural community. Linguistic norm is usually understood as the set of the most persistent, language-enhancing linguistic means and their usage rules that have been adopted by the given society at a given time" (Wierzbicka, cit., Trazanova 2010: 69).

As a linguistic category, evaluation is a phenomenon related to the realization of various assessment meanings. Estimation can be expressed at each of the linguistic levels⁸ – at **derivative** one: by using different affixes – **suffixes** (жена – женка, женска, женище, женоря, женичка)⁹, **prefixes** (for

⁸Because of the volume limitations, only examples reflecting different language axiological phenomena in the Bulgarian language will be considered in the publication.

⁹Axiologically neutral is жена (woman), all the other words originated from it have a different axiological tinge given by the implicated meaning in the suffix itself: женка, женска (both derogatory for woman; to underestimate, undervalue her; the latter sometimes is translated as pussy), женище (disrespectful, lit. "virago"), женоря (disrespectful; the only lexeme in the row in plural tantum), женичка (the only lexeme in the row with a positive axiological tinge; meaning: 1. wife /expressing a very affectionate attitude/, 2. A very delicate, a very cute woman/girl).

example, the verb *изиграя*/play/– prefixes of negative axiological significance attached to the verb: *изиграя* някого (En.: cheat somebody), *разиграя*/разигравам някого (En.: fool somebody/dupe), *подиграя* някого (En.: mock someone), *преиграя*/преигравам– (En.: 1. to override the necessary measure in the acting game; theatrical play, 2. figur. overexaggerate/carry an action to excess); *проиграя* (*шанс, пари, състояние*)¹⁰ (En.: play/gamble away a chance, money, fortune), etc.; prefixes with a positive axiological meaning, attached to the verb: *преиграя*/преигравам (En.: play again, replay), *изиграя*/изигравам (En.: play a game from its start through to the finish), etc.

Here, the axiological assessment in language is not only emphasized but in some cases it is the one also influenced by the assessment in speech: for example, the neutral, positive or negative axiological characteristic of certain verbs with the same affixes is situationally and morphologically predetermined (influenced). For example, if the verb *изиграя* (play) is situationally used with an inanimate noun, it is axiologically neutral – "play a game from the beginning through to the end": *изигравам партия шах, изигравам всички физически упражнения от посочения комплекс* (En.: play a game of chess, play all the physical exercises of a given complex). If the same verb is used in a speech situation with an animate noun, it attains an axiologically negative meaning, which is semantically synonymous to "deceive" – a lexeme itself having a negative axiological meaning.

The same applies to the aforementioned prefixed verb *разигравам* – if it is being used with an inanimate noun, it is of axiologically neutral meaning: *разигравам лотария, разигравам пари, разигравам варианти* (En.: run a lottery; lit. – include money in circulation; lit. – work out different options). However, if it is situationally used with an animated noun, it has the negative axiological meaning "I deliberately make some troubles for s.b.; delay".

The examples are numerous. We can add to them some expressions, having been converted into **phraseological units** for example, with the verb *разигравам* – *разигравам си коня* (En.: be self-willed, typically irresponsibly and recklessly – play fast and loose), *разигравам комедия* (En.: play-act: behave insincerely, falsely; pretend), *разигравам театър* (En.: to try to trick or slow down the realisation of something through various tricks), *разигравам като маймуна* (En.: to easily and deftly manipulate someone to suit one's own needs or benefits – play s.o. like a fiddle).

Similar to these examples are the phraseological units with the verbs *изиграя*/изигравам: *изиграя/изигравам номер на някого* (En.: to discredit, compromise someone, taking advantage of their gullibility – play s.o. for a fool); *изигравам комедия*– (lit. play comedy – "do something insincere, fake"). All these examples are phraseological units that have retained their negative axiological mark on the above-mentioned prefixed verb (*изигравам*), inherent in the speech use with animated nouns.

In addition to the derivative level, an assessment can also be expressed at other linguistic levels, for example, at the **lexical** one – by **separate words** charged with evaluative semantics (with a negative axiological value: *бричка, кранта, катафалка, смрад, грозен, отвратителен, лицемерен*¹¹; with a positive axiological value: *грандиозен, прекрасен, великолепен, изящен, чудесен, безценен*¹²). An axiological evaluation can be done at the lexical level by lexemes of a **synonymous row**– the neutrality of the lexeme *куче* (dog) is outlined against the axiologically negatively labeled lexemes: *нес, псе, помияр, копой* (En.: cur, mutt, mongrel, hound). Nowadays, the obsolete in Bulgarian meaning of the last lexeme the original content of which is "hunting dog" (axiologically neutral), begins to give way to the figurative meaning "trusted person, informer" with a distinctively negative axiological value.

The axiological neutrality of the lexeme *жена* (woman) stands out against the positively axiologically dyed *дама, госпожа* (lady, madame) as well as the phrase *нежният пол* (An.: fair sex). Against the background of the neutral lexeme *жена* the lexemes of the same synonymous row, but with other axiological tinge such as *прокля, фуста, (стара) чанта, кифла* (disparagingly, lit. dress, female; petticoat; (old) bag; the last one – lit. "muffin" but its very close modern slang correspondence is *girly-girl, hoity-toity, bimbo*), have a strongly expressed negative axiological value because of the implicitly

¹⁰ The semantic definitions of the given examples (and the ones below) are according to OIOD.

¹¹ En.: wreck (for a very old ill-kept car); 1. scrawny horse, 2. disparagingly – for a tall, skinny and slow woman; mourning-coach; stink; ugly; disgusting; hypocritical

¹² En.: imposing, wonderful, magnificent, exquisite, wonderful, priceless.

embeddisregarding in the semantics of their connotative meaning. Even more negative axiological color is emanating from the phraseological unit *стара пѣстѣрма* bearing the semantic meaning of “a well-groomed woman of old age” (BPE), an expression which has nothing to do with gourmet and eating at all (although the literal translation of „пѣстѣрма“ is *pastarami*, and “стара пѣстѣрма” has the literal meaning of “not fresh pastarami”. Only the implicit semantics of “not fresh” unifies the meaning of the two expressions).

An axiological evaluation can also be expressed by **free word combinations** (for example against the background of the neutral lexeme *куче* (dog), the word combinations *пѣрииво куче*, *мѣсно куче*, *зло куче*, *бѣсно куче*¹³ have developed negative axiological meanings). Word combinations like *добро куче*, *породисто куче*, *вярно куче*, *умно куче*, *обучено куче*, *куче-водач*, *куче-следотѣрсач*, *куче-спасител*, *полицейско куче* (En.: good dog, breed dog, devoted dog, smart dog, trained dog, guide dog, dog-tracer, dog-savior, police dog) have adopted positive axiological values.

An axiological evaluation can also be expressed by sentences and statements¹⁴ that in the context of the communicative situation can realise their assessment content through various means of extra linguistics¹⁵ or in the process of interaction with the linguistic context.¹⁶

The term *evaluation* in modern linguistics

In the broadest sense, it is understood as a linguistic expression of a given value relationship between the object of speech and the subject of speech. As it became clear, value is understood like the object of desires, needs, interests, aspirations of man. His value attitude towards the world in which he lives is expressed in the assessment of the phenomena of the surrounding reality. The juxtaposition in the human consciousness of the properties and qualities of the objects with the norm is expressed in language in the form of positive (approval), negative (condemnation) or neutral attitude (indifference): *good – evil – nature*. *Good* and *evil* include in their semantics an assessment element, *nature* is neutral in terms of evaluation. This axiological triad represents the **mechanism for expression of assessment in language**: *good – bad – neutral*.

Valuability is determined by the mentality of the people – the native speaker of the given language, its historical development, the system of evaluation criteria existing in the given language groups. Through socialisation, or rather through culturisation¹⁷, one adapts himself to the respective culture, assimilating socially significant life experiences, customs, and values. The value to the image of the object from the reality and to the object itself is reflected in evaluations. The extraction of the national value code of a given linguistic culture allows an interrelation with thought to be done - with the formation of concepts in the process of meaning formation.

CONCLUSION

The value system of a nation is encoded in the system of the national language at each of the linguistic levels – derivative (through various affixes) and lexical – by separate independent lexemes charged with negative or positive axiological value, as well as by the national identical phraseological units. An axiological evaluation can be carried out on the lexical level as well by means of a synonymous row. The main marker for the value reference in this case is the lexemes-centre for the given synonymous row: they are axiologically neutral, they are the starting point on the basis of which the deviations from the norm – center-left or center-right is defined. It is these deviations from the norm

¹³En.: fake dog, dirty dog, evil dog, mad dog

¹⁴The latter two, together with the proverbs, which are mostly one-sentence texts, are treated separately as axiological systems in speech.

¹⁵*Extralinguistic*– A division of linguistics that studies the combination of ethnic, socio-historical, social, geographic and other factors as inextricably linked to the development and functioning of language// OIOD

¹⁶ More about language tools in expressing assessment in Bulgarian in: Blagoeva, D. (2009) and Shushlina (2014).

¹⁷*Culturisation*– the process of assimilation by the individual of the values and experiences of other societies and ethnicities. // CEDRL

which are axiologically dyed and identify the national-specific features, presented at the linguistic level. Objects or situations of reality which hinder the achievement of objectives by the subject or pose a threat to it are loaded up by a negative assessment.

Most of the words with additional connotation are difficult, often impossible to be adequately translated. That is why they have to be used very carefully especially by foreigners, who don't know the given language and culture well enough so as not to get in a confusing situation. In cases like these linguoculturology and axiology act in sync finding mutual paths for a better expression and understanding.

Axiological dimensions can be highlighted at an extended level too— in speech, for example. For this purpose, sentences, proverbs and entire statements should be explored—at semantic, syntactic, communicative and prosodial level; that will be the aim of future linguocultural and axiological research.

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