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**CONNOTATION OF WORDS WITH A SPECIFIC SUBJECT  
MEANING**

Maria Suntsova (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Kaluga State University named after K.E. Tsiolkovski, 26, Stepana Razina str., Kaluga, Russia,  
suntsova.mari@inbox.ru

**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the characteristic of the phenomenon of connotative meaning of a word in the Russian language. The definition of the term «connotation» as far as the structural elements of the connotative meaning of the word are presented, since despite a large number of works on this topic, these issues still remain open. The relevance of the research topic is determined by current trends in the development of the language. It is shown that connotative meanings are inherent in common words with a specific subject meaning, which makes it necessary to expand the boundaries of dictionary entries in explanatory dictionaries by supplementing them with figurative meanings of words. Special attention is paid to the type diversity of connotations in words with a specific subject meaning. In this regard, it is advisable to study the connotative meanings of words with a specific subject meaning in the context of lexical and semantic groups. In the modern era of the information society there is an active development of the live Russian speech. Common words get meanings that are not fixed in explanatory dictionaries, but that are significant for the perception of the speaker's speech by both a concrete person and groups of people (societies). In this regard, we can state with certainty that the phenomenon of connotation is more and more actively penetrating into the live colloquial speech, which has been previously peculiar mainly to fiction and publicism.

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## **1. Introduction**

In the Russian language the phenomenon of connotative meaning of a word plays a huge role. This happens because, along with the development of fiction and publicism, in the modern era of the information society there is an active development of the live Russian speech. As a result, even the most “popular” meanings of vocabulary are not limited by the definitions defined in dictionaries. Apart from dictionary meanings, words have the supplementary, not fixed meanings, which are significant for the perception by both a concrete person and groups of people (societies).

## **2. Problem Statement**

It should be mentioned that the Russian language curriculums (both school and university ones) don't focus on connotative meaning of words for organising the practical work with the vocabulary, if only they are not the curriculums aimed at the professional training of philologists. At the same time, it is obvious that knowledge of the theoretical and minimal practical side of the phenomenon of connotation significantly increases the level of perception of fiction, contributes to the development of speech, and develops skills of usage of emotionally-coloured vocabulary.

Moreover, many linguists recognize connotation as a compulsory structural element of the lexical meaning of a word, where the priority is given to the subjective nature of the meaning opposed to the objective – denotative component of the meaning (Apresyan, 1974; Dummett, 1996; Goverdovskiy, 1979; Revzina, 2001).

Thus, there is a distinct contradiction between the objective need to consider the issue of the peculiarities of the phenomenon of connotation in the modern Russian language and its insufficient level of development in the applied aspect. The existence of such a contradiction makes the topic of this publication relevant.

## **3. Research Questions**

The author tries to answer several questions:

- Is it possible to categorize connotations into the distinct types?
- Are the connotations always emotional or evaluative in nature?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to show that the connotation is intended to express emotional or evaluative shades of the utterance and to reflect the cultural traditions of society. Also, connotations represent a kind of pragmatic information that reflects not the objects and phenomena themselves, but a certain attitude towards them.

## 5. Research Methods

The author used content observation and analysis of theses, monographs, scientific and educational publications, research work to prove that connotative meanings are inherent in common words with a specific subject meaning, and connotations can be of different types.

## 6. Findings

Connotation has a rather clear structure: it consists of elements, and its components are closely related. Most often, the components of connotation are intertwined as if they are overlapped (Goverdovskiy, 1979).

Connotation is an emotional, evaluative or stylistic colouring of a linguistic unit of a usual (fixed in the system of a language) or occasional character. In a broad sense, it is any component that complements the main (or denotative) meaning as well as grammatical content of a linguistic unit. And that gives it an expressive function based on the information related to empirical, cultural-historical knowledge, the worldview of those who speak a particular language. It is also related to the emotional or value attitude of the speaker to the indicated or to the stylistic registers that characterize the conditions of speech, the sphere of linguistic activity, the social relations of the participants of the speech, its form, etc. In a narrow sense, it is a component of a meaning, a meaning of a language unit that plays the role of the secondary function of a particular name. And when it is used in speech, it complements its objective meaning with the associative and imaginative idea about the defined reality based on the understanding of the inner form of a name, i.e. the attributes associated with the literal meaning of a figure of speech, which motivated the redefinition of the expression. The subjective speech nature of connotation is contrasted with the objective content of linguistic units aimed at the cognitive (gnoseological) function of a language.

The subjectivity of the connotation is manifested in the possibility of an opposing interpretation of reality, named by one and the same word, for example, “volosyonki” - an affectionate or dismissive connotation connected with all the emotive-pragmatic aspects of the text that create its expressive colouring. All linguistic entities containing connotations are a kind of pragmatic "semi-finished products" that, when used in a statement, compliment it with a subjective modality. Connotation can also perform a text-forming function by living up an image (internal form) and using it as a means of surface-syntactic coordination of text elements or by playing with a stylistic register (Carnap, 1947).

In the structure of connotation, the associative component is regarded as the basis for the estimative qualification and stylistic marking, combining the denotative and connotative content of a linguistic unit. The latter is responsible for the “summarized” expressive colouring of the whole expression, where the following can dominate: a figurative or sound symbolic idea (“guboshlep”, “krovavaya zarya”); an estimative qualification – emotional (“solnyshko”), qualitative (“burda”), quantitative (“nosishche”); any stylistic register (formal and solemn “vozdvigat”, colloquial “valandatsya”). The usual connotation is formed by subjective evaluation suffixes, perceived inner form, onomatopoeia, alliteration, expressively coloured words and idioms. However, connotation is characterized by non-localization, development throughout the text that creates the effect of the implied

sense. Connotations are a linguistic universal, which forms depend on the peculiarities of meaningful units of a particular language as well as the rules of their combinatorics and text organization.

There are numerous definitions of connotation, both based on semantic properties (e.g. "additional meaning") and on the systemic properties of linguistic expression, resulted in synonymy, antonymy, in belonging to certain forms of language (literary, dialectal, etc.), or based on considering the sound envelope of expression (Apresyan, 1974).

In most cases, the meaning of a word is related to a certain notion. But it is not always limited to this notion. Apart from the main (denotative) component of the meaning, a word sometimes has an additional connotative meaning – expressive, evaluative, imaginative, which expresses the attitude of the speaker to the subject of the speech. For example, the words “ukrast i stashchit”, “razgovarivat i boltat”, “potratit i rastranzhirit” have one and the same meaning. But the first words are neutral, while the second ones contain the expressive shade: in the word “stashchit” the speaker gives the negative evaluation to this action, in the word “boltat” this evaluation is intensive, in the word “rastranzhirit” we find both of them (negative and evaluative) (Revzina, 2001).

Connotation compliments the objective meaning of the word with the associative and imaginative idea about the defined reality based on the understanding of the inner form of a name, i.e. the attributes associated with the literal meaning of a figure of speech, which motivated the redefinition of the expression. In this case, we speak about the imaginative connotation, for example, “medved” (about an awkward person).

The words, which meanings contain the emotionally-evaluative element, bear the same name (emotionally-evaluative), for example: zadachka, skhalturit, razgildyay, dozhdichek, belenkiy, neimoverno and so on. The words with emotional colouring can include various shades: ironic, disapproving, scornful, affectionate, etc. As a rule, this colouring is steady, resulting from a word meaning with the evaluation element: the name of the object, phenomenon, action, attribute is complicated by the evaluation and the attitude of the speaker to the named phenomenon.

This evaluative, connotative component in the meaning of the word prevails over rational, denotative. Such words in which connotation is expressed no less than denotation or even more are called connotation lexicon. For example, the words “bespodobnyy. otvratitelnyy” express precisely the evaluation of the phenomenon (in the first word the evaluation is positive, in the second one it is negative). Words in the figurative sense can be evaluative. Zoonyms are often used for humans, that is, the names of animals: lisa, baran, osel, kozel, medved, vorona, orel (Frege, 1997).

Evaluation is often expressed by adding the suffixes: babulya, solnyshko, tsvetochnik, etc.

Emotionally-evaluative vocabulary is divided into two big categories: positive characteristic words and negative characteristic words (Frege, 1892).

Emotionally-evaluative vocabulary is used in artistic and colloquial speech for the emotional expressiveness, in the publicist style to express passion. In stylistics, the emotionally-evaluative words reflect the emotionally expressed pragmatism of language, that is, the attitude of the speaker to the reality, content or the receiver. There are three groups of emotionally-evaluative words: the evaluation is contained in the meaning of the word (voslaviv, derzaniye); when the element of evaluation is contained

in the figurative meaning of the word (about a person: orel, kipyatitsya); the subjective evaluation is expressed by suffixes (babulechka, chelovechek).

In the explanatory dictionary, the definitions of emotionally-evaluative words are given with stylistic labels: polite, vulgar, rude, ironic, affectionate, disapproving, humorous, etc.

Connotation became the subject of systematic analysis in Elmslev's "connotative semiology". Barth, developing research on connotation, points out the following characteristics: connotative meanings are found in both linguistic denotative meanings and non-verbal signs; connotative meanings are latent, relative and changeable. According to Barth the most important characteristic of the connotative meaning is its ideological factor. This form of ideological influence can result in changing the "main" meaning of the word (Apresyan, 1995).

Thus, the sources of connotation are folklore, historical and cultural events, literature, and mass media. As an example of the historical background of an additional value judgment, we take the word "Suvorov", which, in addition to its own name, bears the meaning of "excellent strategist". You can also remember the word "Swede". For Russian culture it is strongly associated with the battle of Poltava during the Seven Years' War.

In most cases, connotation is formed from the characteristic features peculiar to the main meaning of the word, denotation. For example, the features for the word "zayats" are big-eared, grey, fast, coward. The last two characteristics resulted in an additional evaluative meaning. Connotation may even extend to non-verbal means of communication, for example, gestures: a fist with a raised thumb means "otlichno, molodets" (Dummett, 1996).

Some scientists consider, that connotation highlights a language cultural identity, makes it closer to people. It is clearly manifested in different types of art. For example, in painting, images-symbols are distinguished in order to express the deep meaning of the picture and reveal the author's message.

## 7. Conclusion

With the development of mankind and the Internet, cultural connotations acquire universal significance in contemporary art. They are getting the same understandable for the representatives of different nations.

The use of connotation undoubtedly makes speech more expressive. The ability to guess additional meanings in works of literature, other types of art, in the speech of politicians and mass media representatives will help us to produce a more complete picture of the world.

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