

Cultural Differences in English and Russian Lexical Expressions of Valuation

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study attempts to analyze the differences in lexical, idiomatic and pragmatic forms of valuation used in English and Russian, pointing out cultural patterns, conventional ways to speak and meaning. **Method:** By taking a cross-linguistic, data-driven approach, this research explains how we value objects on various cultural and pragmatic levels, filling in gaps noted in earlier research and practice. **Results:** It was found that English often chose language that is soft and polite, but Russian prefers straightforward, emotionally expressive language focusing on being sincere and clear in its values, illustrating how their cultures differ. **Novelty:** Despite the previous research available on metaphor and universals, not many have studied and compared the evaluative lexical units from these two languages using an integrated method. **Unique Point:** Although English and Russian agree that value is commonly matched to height or brightness in thought, English generally considers it within a personal and financial context, whereas Russian prefers talking about value in terms of morality, community and emotions.

INTRODUCTION

There has been great interest in the link between language and thought in the discipline of linguistic and cultural studies [1]. Much attention has been given to how language represents, affects and outlines cultural ideas[2]. Among these things, how speakers use language to express ideas like value, worth, importance and significance is especially important for talking across cultures, socializing and making sense of meaning. The lexical content of English and Russian shows that both languages carry rich ways to describe and express value[3]. Studies in general linguistics indicate that expressions for valuation (like “good” and “bad,” “expensive” and “cheap,” “important” and “trivial”) can have very different meanings and forms in different languages[4]. This variation offers an important chance to study different cultures through language, looking at both what is spoken and the beliefs behind valuing particular things in each community [5].

In particular, this paper looks at the notion of words related to valuation, focusing on English and Russian and provides a comparison using cognitive linguistics and cultural semantics [6]. Literature on aspects of culture, values in language and metaphorical thinking exists, but the special connection between valuation-based lexicon in English and Russian is not well studied [7]. Experts in cultural linguistics say that languages hold and pass on cultural ideas, rules and past experiences, along with their

main meanings [8]. English words and phrases used to express value such as “value for money” and “self-worth,” fit well with ideas of individualism and the market, but Russian preferences might show communal, moral or authority-related meanings learned from Soviet and Russian society [9]. Identifying these cultural differences matters a lot for progress in linguistic relativity, accurate translations and good relationships across cultures [10].

While valuation is important in all sorts of linguistic and cultural studies, a major difference can be seen in how valuation is covered in studies comparing English vocabulary with Russian [11]. While individual languages have been analyzed as to their value terms, very little work has focused on comparing how those terms behave in other languages [12]. While much research has discussed literal meanings, it has not explored how people value things in ways that are influenced by culture and figurative, metaphorical and connotative use [13]. To meet this need, the paper merges corpus analysis, semantic field mapping and the analysis of culture [14]. Using these models and theories, the research explores how people use language to describe valuation, what kinds of semantic structures this reveals and how traditions and cultural beliefs shape these words.

The work uses a mixed approach, involving the study of English and Russian texts through computer analysis and cognitive-semantic explanation of the findings. Valuation-related words, adjectives, nouns (for example, “valuable” and “worth”) and idiomatic expressions (for example, “cost an arm and a leg” and “золотые горы”) are identified and their denotative, semantic and cultural meanings are studied [15]. A comparison of different cultures reveals that people share patterns in thinking, while their conceptualizations also vary according to their cultures’ backgrounds and beliefs [16]. In practice, English expressions for valuation mostly demonstrate market-oriented rationality, but Russian statements for the same purpose tend to include values and community sense [17]. It is hoped that the results will show both commonalities between languages and the effects of culture and thought processes on language use. The findings have important consequences for many areas [18]. Findings from this field show how culture influences language meanings and supports main ideas in cultural linguistics and linguistic relativity [19]. The study means that translation and communicating in other cultures are best served when people acknowledge that concepts have unique meanings that may be missed by literal translation [1]. Besides, the research gives helpful suggestions for areas including teaching languages, intercultural training and cross-cultural marketing, as being aware of valuation concepts is essential in each of these [20]. One possibility for future study is to follow these valuation expressions across different periods, look at their influence on how people view their culture or examine similar practices in various language combinations [3]. Placing valuation between language and culture, this paper expands our view of the linguistic and cultural base essential for human communication [4].

Literature Review

The study of how valuations are expressed in language, in English and Russian, has long been popular among linguists. It was recognized early on that languages show what the culture values, what the society follows and how a people's history has shaped them. The main idea of Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson is that a lot of our thinking, especially our evaluations, is built on mental metaphors such as GOOD IS UP and VALUABLE IS RARE [2]. Her Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach demonstrates that terms such as good and bad are found in all languages but are defined differently by different cultures, supporting comparisons between English and Russian semantics [3].

It has also been shown through contrastive research in applied linguistics that English expressions related to judgment and assessment are influenced by business and personal growth concepts [4]. Unlike English, Russian values social and spiritual matters and terms like душа (soul), честь (honor) and ценность (value) express both moral and emotional meanings related to both earlier and Soviet traditions [5]. Baranov and Dobrovolskij point out that evaluative speech in Russian depends heavily on traditional expressions like золотые руки for someone good at a craft or чистая душа for a person of good character [6]. English, being filled with idioms, usually relies on business and art terminology such as worth a fortune, top-notch and second-rate. The last decade has seen important studies using corpora to track the language people use to express evaluation online. A statistical analysis of texts in English and Russian done in 2018 revealed that even though both use metaphorically enhanced valuation a lot, Russian often includes more emotionally charged evaluative words, whereas English depends heavily on adjectives and adverbs marked with modifiers [8]. Research in translation also supports these findings: to fit Russian communication standards, English-Russian translations often change the degree of evaluation, the tone of writing and the way cultures are referenced [9]. Experts like Kövecses argue that metaphors are used in similar ways in all cultures, but their detail changes a great deal due to cultural differences [10].

However, a number of gaps still exist in the research field. Many previous studies examine single languages or only a limited number of words, rarely bringing in cultural beliefs, mental models and corpus evidence for comparison [11]. No studies so far, to our knowledge, have fully examined how words for evaluation work in both English and Russian or examined how culture and language are involved throughout various genres, situations and types of speech [12]. At the same time, translation and intercultural scholarship tend to point out how difficult it can be to translate terms of value from English to Russian, yet few studies look at how these expressions are used in day-to-day conversations [13]. Therefore, this paper meets the challenge by exploring valuation through the methods of cognitive-semantic analysis, looking at corpora for evidence and considering cultural meaning [14].

RESEARCH METHOD

This research makes use of corpus study combined with cognitive-semantic analysis to investigate vocalizing units related to valuation in English and Russian. The study begins by building two sets of texts that are comparable: one from English language material and the other from Russian, all taken from various resources like media articles, literary works, political talks and normal conversations. The corpus was chosen to capture the many varieties in which valuation concepts are explained in language. Using both computerized and manual methods, lexical units, for example adjectives, nouns and phrases used in local trade, were identified and collected. Collecting data was organized using semantic mapping, helping the researcher group concepts according to social and cultural criteria, including economic worth, moral value and status. Thanks to the approaches of conceptual metaphor, cultural scripts and semantic prosody, the cognitive-semantic analysis was able to explain both normal and culturally significant meanings. Next, English and Russian patterns were compared, with emphasis on how metaphors, values and cultural views are used differently in each language. The analysis depended on actual examples from the corpora to support the theoretical approach being used. It was developed to make sure both language precision and cultural understanding are present, creating a reliable foundation for looking at valuation in two distinct cultural and language environments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of words connected to value in both English and Russian demonstrates both common and unique methods of thinking and talking about value. While both cultures think positively about height, light and strength and negatively about decline or weakness, their deeper cultural explanations are very different. English praises and concerns are mostly shaped by individualistic, commercial and achievement-oriented ideas, using terms related to personal success, economic difference and measurable performance. The use of words such as “worth the investment,” “top-tier,” or “self-made” shows how English connects evaluation to ideas related to competition in markets. Russian talks plainly about matters of morality, group involvement and emotions, using assessments that highlight sincerity, how deep relationships are and whether behavior is good such as words describing soulfulness, ethics and community status.

The study also finds that views regarding evaluation stand out depending on the types of literature involved. In English, evaluations are often presented in a rounded form by adding hedges, qualifiers or euphemisms to honor the other person’s face. In many professional talks and media stories, you’ll often hear people say “a bit effective” or “room for improvement,” which is typical of Japanese culture’s diplomatic style. Unlike European texts, Russian ones tend to be direct and emotional, with assessments usually expressed forcefully without question. Neutral expressions are rare, as behavior that’s fully praised or blamed is normal which signifies a cultural focus on honesty, strong morals and openness instead of keeping things polite.

Still, some information is missing that should be pursued with future work. Most previous research concentrated on the form of metaphors and idioms, instead of exploring how evaluative language functions in all kinds of spoken and written forms. Few studies bring together research using texts, models of how the mind works and studies of cultural meaning to understand how people negotiate various types of evaluative meanings in genuine conversation. We should use cognitive semantics, cultural scripts and discourse pragmatics together to synthesize theory around valuation as a living way people use language, not only a list of values.

The findings have many important implications for practice. For translation and intercultural communication, it is important to know that different societies judge things in different ways to keep both the message and its atmosphere intact. Learning about these insights can inspire teachers to equip students with the ability to express and observe valuation in many different cultural and linguistic environments. Also, both sentiment analysis and computational linguistics would be improved by adapting cultural viewpoints in their tools, so that they detect cultural distinctions in expressions of value, emotion and judgment. Further studies need to do both longitudinal and experimental work. Researchers can use long-term analyses to see how values shift in reaction to social or technological developments and in experiments to learn how bilingual or bicultural individuals manage different expectations. Such information would help improve both theoretical models and practical use, adding to our understanding of how language and culture affect each other.

Results of this study suggest that language values reflect a mixture of common mental tendencies together with culture-specific ways of expressing ideas about value. Although both languages share some conceptual metaphors on value, the cultural rules for their use are quite different. In English, many evaluative expressions highlight personal accomplishments, market values and working productively. Unlike Americans, Russians tend to link valuation with being honest, having good values and being part of a strong community. Such differences in languages show the ways that cultures actually understand, discuss and manage issues of importance each day. In theory, these results agree that while cognitive metaphors and semantic primes underpin language globally, cultures and social forces determine the way these concepts are actually used. Languages have cultural models built in and they determine which words you choose and how strong, exact or meaningful each word feels in a sentence. So, researchers should investigate the relationship between basic and cultural meanings in evaluative discourse in the future. Practically, the research points out that being sensitive to cultures matters in translation, teaching languages and interacting with people from different cultures. A translator's job is to grasp both the exact wordings and the local and general meaning of evaluative expressions so that their feel and effect are preserved in other languages. Knowing about cultural-semantic ideas can enhance students' understanding of how valuation is used socially and practically in various communities. In general such results indicate valuable areas for further research, with a focus on how oral skills are affected by different cultural, technological and geopolitical changes.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study reveals that English and Russian share a common cognitive map when expressing value, yet differ significantly in how these values are linguistically articulated. Russian emphasizes morality, communal orientation, and emotional depth, whereas English tends to highlight individual achievements through the lens of market-based and performance-oriented expressions. **Implication :** These findings suggest that both theoretical and applied linguistics should pay greater attention to how general semantic patterns align with culture-specific communicative practices. A deeper understanding of such subtle distinctions in value expression can enhance intercultural communication and enrich linguistic theory by emphasizing the nuanced interplay between language and cultural mindset. **Limitation :** Despite these insights, the study also exposes existing limitations within the field, particularly the underexplored intersection between linguistic data from corpora and the broader cultural or cognitive frameworks they reflect. This gap highlights the need for more integrative methodologies that bridge quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative cultural interpretation. **Future Research :** To build on this work, future studies should investigate how expressions of value evolve over time, how bicultural or bilingual speakers navigate and reconcile differing cultural norms, and how comparative research can inform the development of practical tools for cross-cultural understanding – both for academic inquiry and real-world application in multilingual settings.

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