

## CONNOTATION CATEGORY IN ENGLISH

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**ABSTRACT:** Analysing the phenomenon of conotema, which is present in phraseological and paremiological units of language, slang, and occasionalisms, is crucial because connotative components lead to the emergence of new lexical-semantic variants in the token's semantic field and provide opportunities for metaphorical, metonymic, and ironic nomination. Within the context of contemporary linguistics, this article offers a thorough examination of the concept of connotation in the English language. The associative, affective, stylistic, and evaluative aspects of lexical meaning that support denotation are known as connotation. The study explores the theoretical foundations of connotation, its classification into major types (positive, negative, neutral), and its extended subcategories, including emotional, expressive, stylistic, cultural, and pragmatic connotations. Special attention is given to the functional role of connotation in discourse, communication, literature, and language teaching. The article also discusses the variability and subjectivity of connotation, emphasizing its dependence on context, speaker intention, and sociocultural background. Through illustrative examples, the paper demonstrates how connotative meanings influence interpretation and communicative effectiveness in English.

**Keywords:** Connotation, denotation, semantics, lexical meaning, pragmatic meaning, emotional coloring, stylistic register, evaluative meaning, associative meaning, discourse, stylistic meaning, emotional meaning, semantic association, expressive coloring, lexical background, emotional and stylistic semantic content.

### INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a system of signs used to denote objects, actions, and concepts; it is also a powerful tool for expressing attitudes, emotions, and cultural values. In linguistic theory, meaning is generally divided into two main components: denotation and connotation. While denotation refers to the primary, literal meaning of a word, connotation encompasses the additional shades of meaning that arise from associations, emotions, and cultural context.

The category of connotation plays a crucial role in English, influencing both spoken and written communication. Words with identical denotative meanings can differ significantly in their connotative value, thereby affecting interpretation, tone, and stylistic nuance. For instance, synonyms such as "slim," "thin," and "skinny" all refer to a similar physical attribute but differ in their connotative implications.

Connotation is derived from the Latin word "connotatio", which means "additional meaning", and refers to not only the denotative (basic) meaning of a word or expression in language, but also the emotional, evaluative, social or cultural connotations attached to this meaning. In linguistics, this phenomenon is often associated with the subjectivity of meaning. That is, the connotative value of a word changes depending on the experience of the person using it, the cultural environment and the communicative purpose.

### METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The domain of associative-image representation of a particular reality based on knowledge of the internal workings of the term is known as connotation. Examining the associative and affective vectors of the mechanism of such linkages is crucial since it clarifies the bidirectional nature of the creation of connotative shades of lexical meanings of words. Due to differing methods for elucidating the connotation's distinctiveness and status, linguistic traditions and different contemporary scientific notions interpret it differently, which raises a number of theoretical issues.

An examination of the retrospective component reveals that connotation is a complex phenomenon that first appeared in linguistics in the 17th century thanks to Por-Royal grammar. However, in the 20th and 21st centuries, when more in-depth research on semiotics, stylistics, pragmatics, communicative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, intertextuality theory, etc. started, scholars paid close attention to connotation (Zaichenko, 2019).

Authors like Babiy (2020), Vynnychenko (2005), Hashibayazova (2019), Hrymalyuk (2020), Kunin (1986), Kudyba (2004), Marchuk (2015), Maslova (2001), Matsko (2003), Mikhailovich (2015), Mozovaya (2010), Phil (2012), Telia (1996), Uzhchenko (2007), Zagnitko (2012), Zaichenko (2019), and Ishchenko (2010) have contributed to the research of the phenomenon of connotation.

The Babiy (2020) explores the features of lexical and stylistic connotations of advertising text. The viability of employing lexical and stylistic connotations to boost the impact and efficacy of advertising texts is thus the main topic of this paper. Additionally, the author examines instances of connotation development using terminological constants, synonymous language elements, and socio-political vocabulary. The author goes into great depth about the results that may be obtained by employing these language units in the structure of advertising material.

The issue of phraseological equivalency and how phraseological units are presented in phraseological dictionaries are still highly pertinent, according to Vynnychenko (2005). The concept of word connotation and the connotation of a phraseological unit's component were emphasised by the author, who also established the dependency of phraseological units' interlingual equivalency and their component connotations.

The article by Hashibayazova provides an analytical review of the methods used in linguistics to define the term "connotation." It also highlights the issues with the current theoretical development of the term, characterises its content, and substantiates its ideal definition (Hashibayazova, 2019). Additionally, the author highlights the integration of both approaches by summarising the methods for differentiating between a broad and restricted interpretation of connotation. As a result, the author makes a distinction between two kinds of connotation: infrequent and typical. Determining the structure of the elements of adjective connotation in the language and speech system and discovering that connotation is additional semantic, emotional, pragmatic, and stylistic shades of usual or occasional character that are part of the semantics of the word, expressing the emotional, is noteworthy in the author's research. and a critical perspective on reality.

The goal of Hrymalyuk's (2020) research is to analyse the employment of integral idioms with colour symbolism in journalistic articles from the German-language press of the 21st century. These idioms have both openly token and implicitly semantic aspects. After examining

the opinions of numerous academics, the author highlights that there is no one definition of "connotation" in use today, the author offers his understanding of the connotation of a phraseological unit. Also, explicit and implicit connotations in the semantic structure of phraseological units are considered, tokens-symbols are analyzed, namely coloronyms that are part of idioms taking into account their emotional, evaluative, cultural-symbolic, connotative load. In order to identify the dominating group, the author separated them into favourably and negatively marked idioms. The article also emphasizes how the idiom's internal shape and the associative and metaphorical information it contains contribute to the development of explicit token connotations.

Modern linguistic terminology is described in Zagnitko's (2012) dictionary, which covers terms' ambiguity and functional load in various linguistics areas, discloses their etymology, and connects them to other terms. The dictionary's unique feature is its extensive coverage of conventional linguistic terminology combined with the most recent terms and concepts, their authorship, potential use variations, and the tracking of synonymous and antonymous relationships.

In his research, Zaichenko (2019) analyzed the general trends of interpretations and descriptions of the concept of connotation by domestic and foreign scholars, taking into account the specifics of approaches to the definition, boundaries of functioning, separation of components of connotative shade of language unit. As a result, the scientist provided his approach to the definition, typology, and description of the properties of connotation based on its systemic duality.

Maslova (2001) studied linguoculturology.

A course on the stylistics of the Ukrainian language was created by author Matsko in 2003. It takes into account the theoretical concerns of stylistics, the origins and development of linguistic stylistics, its fundamental ideas, and its classifications. This course's presentation of the definition and categorisation of styles, analysis of the particulars of their formation and evolution, backdrops of the contemporary Ukrainian language, genre, and stylistic distinction of language writings are all significant.

Mikhailovich (2015) examined the development of foreign language connotations in advertising texts as a successful manipulative strategy.

Mozovaya (2010), like several other scholars, studied the connotation in the context of advertising to the consumer.

Telia's (1996) study focused on individual phraseologies and how various academics saw them.

A collection of Ukrainian phraseological units with distinct national and cultural semantics are described in Phil's (2012) essay. According to the author, there exist toponyms in the Ukrainian phraseological fund that denote the cultural affiliation of a linguistic sign.

The phraseology of the contemporary Ukrainian language is the focus of Uzhchenko's (2007) book, which served as the foundation for the investigation of the connotation phenomena. The Ukrainets (2013) scholar's research focuses on understanding the function of

connotation as a linguistic category that shapes poetic language's emotional and meaningful dominance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lexical, lexico-grammatical, word-forming, stylistic, and communicative language levels are all studied by linguists who investigate the linguistic theory of connotation. The elements of these levels are components of connotative meaning. As a result, linguists place the meaning in several ways:

- "stylistic meaning";
- "emotional meaning";
- "pragmatic meaning";
- "semantic association";
- "expressive coloring";
- "lexical background";
- "emotional and stylistic semantic content", etc. (Hashibayazova, 2019)

These interpretations of the term "connotation" attest to its ambiguity and complexity.

Differentiating between a broad and a restricted understanding of connotation is a well-established practice. In a wide sense, connotation refers to any element that enhances the language unit's grammatical and subject-conceptual (or denotative) content and lends it expressiveness based on information pertinent to empirical, cultural, historical, and global knowledge. In a limited sense, a token's connotation is viewed as part of its meaning, enabling it to be utilised for secondary nomination. It appears on associative representations and appears to take the place of the direct objective meaning.

There are also four components of connotation:

- 1) expressive and evaluative,
- 2) contextual,
- 3) historical and linguistic, and
- 4) historical and cultural.

The concept of connotation goes beyond semantics and is closely related to the field of pragmatics. Pragmatics studies the context of meaning in language, that is, it analyzes what the speaker wants to say, with what intention he speaks, and how the listener perceives this expression. From this point of view, connotation is one of the central elements of pragmatics.

Indeed, the connotative coloring is often determined by the speaker's purpose, social status, and cultural value. For example, in political speeches, expressions such as "reform", "restoration of order". "Renewal", despite their neutral appearance, actually serve as a means of socio-psychological influence.

The cultural differentiation of connotative meanings is also noteworthy. A word that is positive in one language may take on a negative connotation in another. For example, while the English word fox is usually associated with cunning and cunning, in Uzbek the image of "fox"

has a more neutral evaluative meaning, such as wisdom and resourcefulness. Or the word black has a negative connotation in English in some contexts ("black mood", "black market"), but the expression black tie denotes luxury and formality.

From a pragmatic point of view, connotation is important in determining the speech strategy. The speaker affects the listener not directly, but through emotional or evaluative signals. For example, in advertising texts, phrases such as "new approach", "change your life", "the most reliable choice" are used to evoke positive associations in the consumer's mind.

The problems between connotation and pragmatics are mainly related to the interpretation of meaning and the boundary of context. Sometimes the connotative meaning of a word is interpreted differently by different audiences, which leads to communicative ambiguity. Therefore, in modern linguistics, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and linguocultural factors are also taken into account when analyzing connotation.

In modern linguistic research, connotation is studied based on approaches such as corpus analysis, discourse analysis, and cognitive semantics. For example, through the connotative use of words in online texts or social networks, cultural changes and social trends in society can be identified.

Linguists such as Geoffrey Leech and John Lyons have emphasized that lexical meaning is not homogeneous; rather, it consists of multiple layers, including conceptual (denotative) and associative (connotative) components. Connotation is inherently subjective and can vary depending on individual experience, cultural background, and communicative context.

For example:

"Home" denotes a place where one lives, but it connotes warmth, security, and belonging.

"Politician" may denote a person involved in politics, but it can carry negative connotations such as dishonesty or manipulation in certain contexts.

Connotation is also closely linked to pragmatics, as it depends on how language is used in real-life situations.

Classification of Connotation. Positive, Negative, and Neutral Connotation

One of the most common ways to classify connotation is based on evaluative polarity:

1) Positive Connotation. Words with positive connotations evoke favorable emotions or associations.

- youthful (positive) vs. young (neutral)

- fragrance vs. smell

- generous vs. giving

Such words are often used in advertising, literature, and persuasive discourse to create a desirable impression.

2) Negative Connotation. Negative connotation involves unfavorable or critical associations.

- nosy vs. curious
- stingy vs. economical
- obsolete vs. old

Negative connotations are frequently used to express disapproval, criticism, or irony.

3) Neutral Connotation. Neutral words lack strong emotional or evaluative associations.

table, person, city

These words are typical of scientific, technical, and formal language, where objectivity is required.

Connotation is not a single, unified feature but a complex structure consisting of multiple overlapping elements. A single word may simultaneously carry emotional, stylistic, and evaluative connotations.

For example:

“slim” → positive (evaluative), neutral stylistically

“skinny” → negative (evaluative), informal (stylistic)

Thus, connotation should be viewed as a multidimensional semantic phenomenon.

Functions of Connotation in English

a) Expressive Function. Connotation allows speakers to express emotions, attitudes, and personal opinions.

b) Persuasive Function. In advertising and political discourse, connotative language is used to influence opinions. Example: “affordable” vs. “cheap”

c) Stylistic Function. Connotation contributes to tone, style, and aesthetic effect, especially in literature. Writers carefully select words for their connotative impact to create imagery and mood.

d) Pragmatic Function. Connotation helps interpret meaning in context and understand implied messages.

e) Social Function. Connotation reflects social identity, group membership, and cultural norms.

In literary texts, connotation plays a central role in creating symbolism, metaphor, and emotional depth. Poets and authors rely heavily on connotative meanings to enrich their works.

For example, in poetry, words like “night,” “light,” “shadow,” and “spring” often carry symbolic and emotional connotations beyond their literal meanings.



In discourse analysis, connotation helps reveal hidden meanings, ideological positions, and speaker intentions.

For learners of English, understanding connotation is essential for achieving fluency and communicative competence. Many learners struggle with connotation because it is not explicitly taught in basic vocabulary instruction.

### CONCLUSION

In summary, connotation is more sentimental and semantic, pragmatic, or stylistic subtleties of regular or sporadic character, which are part of the word's semantics and convey the sentimental and critical perspective on reality.

Both a broad and a restricted view of connotation, as well as a synthesis of both approaches, are presented in the scientific literature, demonstrating the concept's richness and adaptability. The division between two forms of connotation—usual and occasional—is the most prevalent. The meaning of the linguistic unit of phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic level is enhanced by connotation, which subtly conveys the subject's emotional, expressive, and evaluative attitude toward the described object of real or unreal reality as well as its stylistic colour.

The category of connotation is a fundamental component of lexical meaning in English. It extends beyond the literal meaning of words and encompasses emotional, evaluative, stylistic, and cultural dimensions. Connotation is dynamic, context-dependent, and often subjective, making it a complex yet essential aspect of linguistic analysis.

Understanding connotation enhances communicative effectiveness, enriches language use, and deepens interpretation in both everyday communication and literary discourse. For linguists, it provides insight into the interaction between language, culture, and cognition. For language learners, mastering connotation is a key step toward achieving advanced proficiency in English.

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