E. S. Stepanov
St. Petersburg State University

HOW LEXICAL MEANS OF GRADUATION CONTRIBUTE TO EVALUATION IN RUSSIAN AN GERMAN SCIENTIFIC TEACHING PRACTICE

The present article examines evaluation strategies in scientific teaching practice and focuses on graduation as an evaluative tool. Graduation is thought of as an additional qualificative meaning which is superimposed on the main evaluation component and aims at intensifying or down-toning the degree of author's intent. The textual analysis is carried out within the framework of the theory of communication practices. It allows to distinguish the text type of university textbook which is a basis for the empirical material of the study. The linguistic methodology of the theory of evaluation is chosen to examine the manifestation of evaluative strategies in university textbooks. The analysis of German- and Russian-language textbooks on sociology shows that the use of graduation in the evaluative function is a common evaluation strategy (20 % of all evaluative acts in German-language textbooks and 19 % in Russian-language textbooks). Three groups of graduators are emphasizers, intensifiers, and hedgers. Intensifiers have similar use frequency both in German and Russian scientific teaching practice whereas emphasizers are spread more widely in Russian textbooks. Russian and German authors in scientific teaching practice tend to graduate knowledge according to its relevance emphasizing most important information and intensifying their evaluative judgements. The use of mitigation markers is rather uncommon here since the goal of scientific teaching practice is to provide students with most relevant information.

Keywords: scientific discourse, scientific teaching practice, language of evaluation, lexical graduation, university textbook as text type.

Е. С. Степанов

ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИЕ СРЕДСТВА ГРАДУАЛЬНОСТИ В НАУЧНО-ОБУЧАЮЩЕЙ ПРАКТИКЕ РОССИИ И ГЕРМАНИИ И ИХ РОЛЬ В ВЫРАЖЕНИИ ОЦЕНКИ

В настоящей статье исследуются стратегии оценивания в научно-обучающей практике, в центре внимания находится градуальность как оценочное средство. Градуальность рассматривается как дополнительное квалификативное значение, накладывающееся на основной оценочный компонент и направленное на усиление или смягчение авторской интенции. Методика анализа строится на теории коммуникативных практик. Она позволяет обособить тип текста «вузовский учебник», который является основой эмпирического материала исследования. Для изучения оценочных стратегий в университетских учебниках выбрана лингвисти-

ческая методология анализа оценки. Анализ немецко- и русскоязычных учебников по социологии показал, что использование градуальности в оценочной функции является распространенной оценочной стратегией (20 % всех оценочных актов в немецкоязычных учебниках и 19 % в русскоязычных учебниках). Три основных группы средств градуальности включают в себя лексику с семантикой выделения, интенсификаторы и хедж-маркеры. Интенсификаторы приблизительно с одинаковой частотой употребляются в научно-обучающей практике как России, так и Германии, в то время как лексика с семантикой выделения более широко распространена в русскоязычных учебниках. Российские и немецкие авторы в научно-обучающей практике активно используют градуальность знания по шкале его актуальности, выделяя наиболее важную информацию и усиливая категоричность своих оценочных актов. Использование хедж-маркеров довольно ограничено, поскольку конечной целью научно-обучающей практики является межпоколенческий трансфер верифицированной научным сообществом и наиболее релевантной информации.

Ключевые слова: научный дискурс, научно-обучающая практика, язык оценок, лексическая градуальность, вузовский учебник как тип текста.

Introduction

The study of the process of acquiring, verifying, and transmitting new knowledge is the focus of several scientific disciplines — pedagogy, linguistics, sociology, epistemology, and gnoseology. From the sociolinguistic point of view, this process is considered within the framework of the so-called scientific communicative practice. To characterise it, let us first refer to the general notion of communicative practice.

Communicative practice implies a stable configuration of regularly reproduced socio-communicative actions carried out by their actors in order to implement certain tasks [Chernyavskaya, 2021, p. 12]. Communicative practices are the subject of modern sociolinguistic research, as the introduction of this concept allows establishing clear boundaries of the studied field of communication with orientation on its subject matter and functions [Hausendorf, Kesselheim, Kato, Breitholz, 2017, p. 137]. It analyses both written and oral communication channels as well as a range of extra-linguistic parameters: the characteristics of the sender and the recipient, the purpose, and conditions of the communicative act.

Scientific communicative practices can be conventionally divided into research, scientific-expert and scientific teaching practices; the last one is the main object of the present study. The main purpose of scientific teaching practice is the intergenerational transfer of normative knowledge and competencies accumulated by the scientific community at a particu-

lar stage of its development. Communicative practices are manifested in real speech activities in the form of certain types of texts and speech genres serving their purposes [Stein, 2011, pp. 14–15]. The types of texts implemented in scientific learning practices — lectures, seminars, or tutorials — are used to transfer normative, reliable knowledge set out in an adapted form. Knowledge in the process of transfer is subjected to a certain systematization, reduction, and simplification in order to adapt it to the specific level of the student [Nefedov, 2021, p. 17]. In order to successfully implement scientific learning practice, it is necessary to establish contact between the teacher and the learner, as well as to encourage the learner to take the teacher's point of view, to form a certain position on the issues at hand. One of the main means to achieve these goals is linguistic assessment, which is

Methods and materials: Evaluation as an assessment tool in high school textbooks

This article uses the linguistic methodology of the theory of evaluation by J. Martin and p. White [Martin, White, 2005] as a tool for analysis. According to this approach, evaluation is understood as a system located at the level of discourse semantics and implemented by a wide range of lexical-grammatical means. The subject of evaluation is seen as a socially constructed model: evaluation as a phenomenon and its manifestation in language depend on the type of practice in which it is used.

In the case of scientific teaching practices, it can be argued that evaluation is implemented as a persuasive strategy, as it aims at persuading students to learn or to study the information presented in the textbook. Persuasive communication refers to "any conscious attempt to influence the behaviour of the interlocutor by means of semiotic systems". [Schönbach, 2019, p. 18]. This definition emphasises three main aspects of persuasiveness. Thus, the influence must be consciously exerted by the sender and expressed in the form of attempts, i.e., it is not the result but the fact of exerting influence on the recipient that is important here, the ultimate goal being to persuade him to adopt the sender's position. Through persuasive evaluation, the teacher thus structures and systematizes the taught knowledge, identifies the most significant fragments, and sets the accents in the book text, managing the learner's attention.

The study of persuasive evaluation was carried out using university textbooks on sociology in German and Russian. The university textbook as text type serves the purpose of teaching students the knowledge they need for successful professional activity. Textbooks are typologized accord-

ing to their form of presentation (traditional and electronic) [Nikitina, Gavrilova, 2021, p. 64], by the level of education (for bachelor and master studies) [Batkolina, 2010, p. 6], and further classification allows us to distinguish manuals, workbooks, tutorials, etc., apart from the very textbook. The process of composing a university textbook implies the principle of consistency and introducing a common narrative motif [Davydova, 2013, p. 171], and the result of this process is a multimedia "book text" consisting of textual, visual, and graphic elements in their unity and integrity [Wildfeuer, Bateman, Hiippala, 2020, p. 7].

The predication was chosen as the unit of analysis of the expression of evaluation in scientific teaching practice. Evaluative predication is a two-component structure containing evaluation with an assertive intent, the distinguishing feature of which is the attribution of a specific predicate to the subject [Weinrich, 2007, p. 183].

Let us now turn to the discussion of the results obtained in the analysis of persuasive evaluation in high school textbooks.

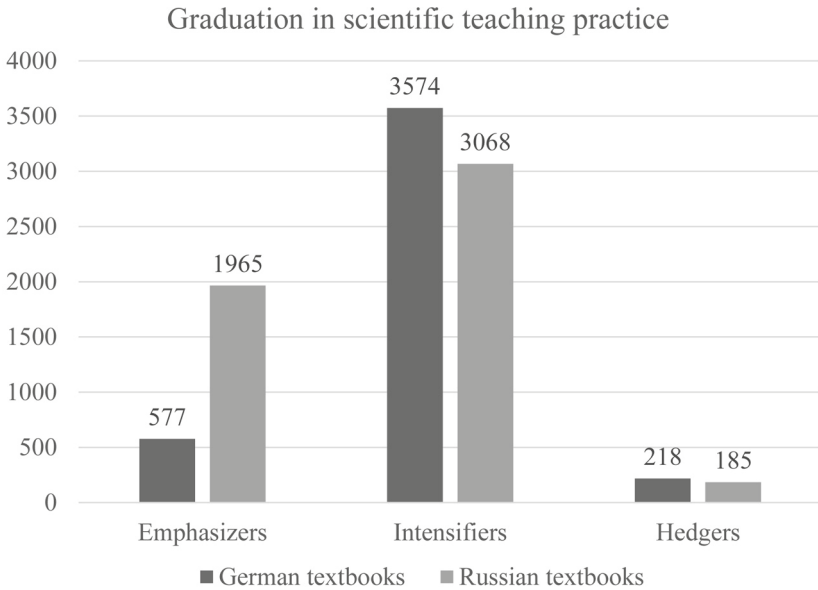## Graduation in scientific teaching practice: results and discussion

In order to analyze evaluative strategies in scientific teaching practices, we compiled a corpus of ten university textbooks on sociology in Russian and ten textbooks in German, from which approximately 107 and 81 thousand evaluative predications, respectively, were further selected. Using Martin and White's classification of three levels of evaluation in language, the following groups of evaluative strategies in German and Russian sociology textbooks were identified:

Attitude, appreciation: Evaluation is based on criteria of importance and centrality of information.

Engagement: Assessment implies the author's involvement of the reader in the conversation between the teacher and the learner, in the process of learning the subject.

Graduation: Assessment is accomplished by structuring the information in the textbook based on highlighting the most relevant aspects of the subject.

This article focuses on graduation as a tool of evaluation in scientific teaching practice. As Martin and White elaborate further in "The Language of Evaluation, Appraisal in English", "graduation is concerned with gradability. For attitude, since the resources are inherently gradable, graduation has to do with adjusting the degree of an evaluation — how strong or weak the feeling is. This kind of graduation is called 'force'; realisations

Graduation in scientific teaching practice

Fig. 1. Graduation in scientific teaching practice

include intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition, and various graphological and phonological features (alongside the use of intensified lexis — loathe for really dislike, and so on) [Martin, White, 2005, p. 37]."

Based on the text corpus we have compiled we distinguish three groups of graduation resources. They all are used to adjust the degree of evaluation: emphasizers, intensifiers, and hedgers. By emphasizers we refer to lexemes with the semantics of emphasizing specific information from the general book text. The groups of intensifiers and hedgers are represented by lexical markers that overlap the main evaluative meaning and strengthen or soften the degree of categoricalness of the statement. Figure 1 shows the statistics of the prevalence of the different graduation groups in academic practice.

According to these statistics the most frequent group of graduation evaluation tools in both German and Russian textbooks are intensifiers (3,574 predications in German and 3,068 predications in Russian textbooks). We suggest that this is related to the specificity of general persuasive evaluation in scientific teaching practice: with intensifiers, the teacher draws students' attention to the high degree of relevance of the information presented in the textbook.

Depending on the degree of expression of the evaluative meaning, intensifiers can be further divided into intensifiers expressing an excessive, high, and sufficient degree of feature intensity. Excessive intensifiers are expressed lexically with the markers *zu* and *слишком, очень* in German and Russian respectively:

> ***Zu*** *verschieden sind die Milieus und Teilkulturen, die sozialen Lagen und Lebensläufe, die Tendenzen in Politik und Wirtschaft, um heute noch über Norm und Sanktion regieren zu können* [The milieus and subcultures, the social situations and life courses, the tendencies in politics and economics are **too** different to be able to govern today by norm and sanction] [Willems, 2008, p. 21].

> *Итогом развития философии истории в эпоху Просвещения стало вызревание целого комплекса идей, которые воспринимались как ведущие в верном направлении интеллектуального и социального прогресса, но* ***слишком*** *умозрительные и потому способные входить в противоречие с объективной реальностью общественного устройства и развития* [The result of the development of philosophy of history during the Enlightenment was the maturation of a whole set of ideas that were perceived as leading in the right direction of intellectual and social progress, but **too** speculative and therefore capable of contradicting the objective reality of social structure and development] [Ivanov, 2018, p. 238].

In the above examples, markers of over-intensity are superimposed on the textbook authors' rational assessments of the sociological theories under discussion and usually carry a negatively charged evaluation.

High-intensity evaluative meaning is lexically expressed by means such as *sehr*, *durchaus, durchweg* in German and *очень* in Russian. Such intensifiers stress the importance and significance of certain aspects of sociological research and tend to be strongly positive:

> *Einige dieser Teildisziplinen verfügen bereits über einen* ***sehr*** *großen Fundus an empirischen Untersuchungen und theoretischen Konstrukten* [Some of these sub-disciplines already have a **very** large body of empirical research and theoretical constructs] [Henecka, 2000, p. 32].

> *Таким образом, прикладная социология составляет относительно самостоятельную и* ***очень*** *важную часть социологического знания, тесно связанную с общей социологической теорией* [Thus, applied sociology constitutes a relatively independent and a **very** important part of sociological knowledge, closely related to general sociological theory] [Baturin, 2012, p. 105].

A sufficient degree of intensity of a feature allows knowledge to be placed on the scale of its relevance at the middle mark; the information

thereby satisfies, in the view of the learner, the selection criteria for inclusion in the textbook. The markers *gewiss, genug, genügend* in German and *достаточно, довольно* in Russian are used to express this meaning, superimposed on the main evaluative meaning:

> *Obwohl persönliche Stile weitgehend durch kulturelles Lernen erworben werden, gibt es deutliche Hinweise darauf, dass die zugrundeliegenden Vorlieben bis zu einem **gewissen** Grad auch biologisch vorgeprägt sind* [Although personal styles are largely acquired through cultural learning, there is strong evidence that the underlying preferences are also biologically pre-formed **to some extent**] [Willems, 2008, p. 300].

> *В меньшей степени это коснулось прикладных социологических исследований, которые в это время развивались **достаточно** активно* [To a lesser extent this was true of applied sociological research, which at this time was developing **quite** vigorously] [Baturin, 2012, p. 194].

Emphasizers form a relatively independent group of evaluation, since they themselves carry the meaning of the importance and relevance of knowledge to be emphasised. This group of graduation means is the second most common among the analysed means, but it is much more widely represented in Russian-language textbooks (577 in German textbooks vs. 1965 in Russian textbooks). Thus, in the Russian corpus emphasizers are found almost 4 times more often than in German, which clearly shows the linguocultural specificity of scientific teaching practice. It is assumed that this is due to the general peculiarities of the linguistic style of textbooks: while the German tradition adopts a compact presentation of material with an expression of evaluative meaning integrated into the main text, the Russian-speaking authors often prefer a more abundant and colourful presentation of facts with the use of introductory sentences.

These include the verbs *betonen, hervorheben, auf etwas hinweisen, unterstreichen* in German and *подчеркивать, указывать, выделять* in Russian:

> *Lockwood **betont**, dass sowohl die Sozialintegration wie die Systemintegration geordnet oder konfliktgeladen sein können* [Lockwood **emphasises** that both social integration and system integration can be ordered or conflictual] [Treibel, 2006, p. 54].

> *Aus den obigen Aussagen Cooleys lassen sich folgende Definitionsmerkmale der Primärgruppe **hervorheben**…* [From Cooley's statements above, the following defining characteristics of the primary group can be **highlighted**…] [Schöneck, Wenzelburger, Wolf, 2012, p. 471]

> *Полемизируя с Н. И. Лапиным, он **указывает** на то, что организация не может рассматриваться только как коллектив*

(совокупность индивидов и групп), поскольку включает также и формальную структуру, состоящую из обезличенных связей и норм [In a polemic with N. I. Lapin, he **points out** that an organisation cannot be seen only as a collective (a set of individuals and groups), since it also includes a formal structure consisting of impersonal ties and norms] [Yadov , 1998, p. 251].

*Именно в этой связи он **подчеркивает** необходимость выделения этой области в специальную ветвь науки, поскольку ни одна из существующих изучением массовых движений как таковых не занимается* [It is in this connection that he **stresses** the need for the separation of this field into a special branch of science, since none of the existing ones studies mass movements as such] [Osipov, Moskvichev, 2003, p. 379].

Finally, the group of hedgers performs the opposite function to the previous two groups: hedgers are meant to soften the degree of categoricity of an utterance, to reduce the intensity of the relevance of information. At the lexical level, hedging is expressed by the lexemes *einigermaßen, relativ, mehr oder minder* in German and *относительно, более или менее, в некоторой степени* in Russian:

*Trägt man die wenigen (**einigermaßen**) zuverlässigen Zahlen über das deutsche Promotionssystem zusammen, dann steht die Bundesrepublik im Vergleich mit anderen westlichen Industriestaaten bei vielen Kriterien relativ gut da* [If one compiles the few (to some extent) reliable figures on the German doctoral system, the Federal Republic compares **relatively** well with other western industrialised countries on many criteria] [Schöneck, Wenzelburger, Wolf, 2012, p. 29].

*Die 7. Auflage des Standardlehrbuchs bietet einen **relativ** ausführlichen, verständlich geschriebenen und aktuellen Überblick über soziale Schichtung und Ungleichheit in Deutschland* [The 7th edition of the standard textbook offers a **relatively** detailed, comprehensibly written and up-to-date overview of social stratification and inequality in Germany] [Korte, Schäfers, 2000, p. 210].

*Описательное исследование — более сложный вид социологического анализа, который позволяет составить **относительно** целостное представление об изучаемом явлении, его структурных элементах* [Descriptive research is a more complex type of sociological analysis, which allows for a **relatively** holistic view of the phenomenon under study, its structural elements] [Gorshkov, Sheregi, 2003, p. 17].

Все перечисленные научные представления, понятия, взгляды и теории о различных социальных явлениях и процессах связаны между собой и образуют единую и достаточно сложную структуру

*социологического знания, которая **более или менее** адекватно отра-*
жает все стороны общественной жизни в их связи и взаимодействии
[All these scientific ideas, concepts, views and theories about various so-
cial phenomena and processes are interconnected and form a single and
quite complex structure of sociological knowledge, which **more or less**
adequately reflects all aspects of social life in their connection and interac-
tion] [Lavrinenko, Nartov, Shabanova, Lukashova, 2002, p. 16].

It can be stated that the use of hedgers is rather unusual in German
and Russian academic practice (218 vs. 185 predications in German and
Russian respectively), since the main emphasis in the textbooks is on in-
cluding the most important and useful information for the student.

Limitations and outlook

This study has shown that, as part of a persuasive evaluation strategy,
authors of sociology textbooks in both Germany and Russia actively use
the category of graduation to enhance the intensity of evaluative meaning
and to highlight the most relevant information in the textbook. The use
of information mitigation markers is rather atypical for scientific teaching
practice.

However, it should be noted that the methodology of persuasive ap-
praisal analysis used in this article allows us to identify specificities that
are only peculiar to scientific teaching practice. Other types of scientific
practice — research and scientific expertise — may engage to a greater
extent with other types of evaluative meanings. The study of evaluation
strategies within such practices is a promising area of sociolinguistic re-
search that we plan to undertake in order to compare with the specificities
of evaluation in scientific teaching practice and to identify commonalities
and differences between the types of texts realised within them.

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