

# **AXIOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CONCEPT «MAN» IN THE RUSSIAN PAREMIOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Background.** In the anthropocentric paradigm of modern linguistics, the study of concepts that form a linguistic worldview is of paramount importance. Paremiological units serve as key cultural signs, encoding a people's system of values and priorities. The concept of "Man" is central to this system.

**Objective.** This study aims to identify and analyze the axiological dimensions of the concept "Man" as represented in the Russian paremiological worldview, determining the core value orientations embedded in folk proverbs.

**Methods.** The material for this study comprises 45 Russian proverbs, selected from authoritative lexicographic sources. The methodology employs a linguocultural and axiological analysis, classifying the proverbs into thematic blocks that reflect various aspects of human existence.

**Results.** The analysis revealed that the concept "Man" is structured around four main thematic clusters: (1) inner qualities (mind, character); (2) labor and activity; (3) social relations (wealth/poverty, one's own/another's); and (4) family ties. Key axiological dominants were identified, including the priority of the inner over the outer, the centrality of labor as a basis for being, the high value of collectivism and family harmony, and a dualistic worldview combining fatalism with personal responsibility.

**Conclusion.** The Russian paremiological worldview presents "Man" as a multidimensional entity where moral and spiritual qualities are paramount. The identified axiological markers reflect deep-seated foundations of Russian mentality, transmitted through language across generations.

**Keywords:** concept "Man", paremiological worldview, axiology, Russian proverbs, linguoculturology.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary anthropocentric paradigm of linguistics, the study of concepts that constitute the linguistic worldview has taken center stage. Language is interpreted as a form of consciousness, a transmitter of culture, and a means for humans to understand themselves and the surrounding reality (Alefrenko, 2006, p. 45). Within this field, the analysis of the paremiological fund holds a special place. Proverbs and sayings are not merely a repository

of folk wisdom but also a "semiotic scale" that allows for the reconstruction of a people's system of values, priorities, and cultural symbols (Teliya, 1996, p. 112).

The paremiological worldview (PWM) is a key fragment of the overall linguistic worldview. Possessing all the features of a "classical text"—completeness, objectivity, and semantic connectivity—the corpus of proverbs is also dynamic, polyphonic, and hypertextual, leading some researchers to define it as a "non-classical text" (Bogachev, 2024, p. 238). At the center of this worldview is always a person, in all their diversity of connections with society, nature, and their own essence. The concept of "Man" manifests as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon, embodying the core meanings of ethnic culture (Maslova, 2001, p. 87).

This study is situated within the broader context of linguocultural research. As Azizova (2021, p. 321) notes, phraseological and paremiological units act as repositories of cultural information, directly or indirectly conveying knowledge about the world, society, and the value orientations of an ethnic group. Furthermore, comparative analyses highlight that modeling the linguistic personality through paremiological discourse fully reveals the nationally specific features of the axiological worldview (Azizova, 2026, p. 35).

The objective of this paper is to identify and analyze the axiological dimensions of the concept "Man" as represented in the Russian paremiological worldview. It seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What thematic blocks structure the concept of "Man" in Russian proverbs? (2) What key value orientations (axiological dominants) are encoded in these proverbs?

## **METHODS**

The material for this study consists of 45 Russian proverbs, selected from the foundational collection by V.I. Dahl (1984) and supplemented with examples from contemporary linguocultural studies. The selection criteria aimed for a representative sample covering various aspects of human existence: inner qualities, labor, social status, family relations, and the spiritual-physical dichotomy.

The research methodology employs a qualitative, interpretive approach grounded in linguocultural and axiological analysis. The analytical procedure followed these steps: Corpus Compilation: Proverbs were extracted from the source material based on their semantic relevance to the concept of "Man."

Thematic Categorization: The selected proverbs were classified into thematic blocks, following the framework proposed by Bitova (2018, p. 33), which includes categories such as inner qualities, physical state, material condition, and social status.

Axiological Analysis: Each proverb was analyzed to determine its evaluative semantics, identifying what is praised, condemned, or accepted as a norm. This involved analyzing lexical components, stylistic devices (e.g., antithesis), and implicit cultural connotations.

Synthesis: The findings were synthesized to formulate the key axiological dominants of the concept "Man."

## **RESULTS**

The analysis of the 45 proverbs revealed a structured axiological model of the concept "Man." The proverbs were organized into four main thematic blocks, each revealing a distinct set of value orientations.

### **Inner Qualities: The Primacy of Mind and Character**

This block emphasizes the priority of internal, intellectual, and moral attributes over external appearances or material wealth.

"Clothes make the man, but it's the mind that proves him" (Vstrechayut po odyozhke, a provozhayut po umu). This proverb establishes a dichotomy between external and internal, valuing intellect as the true measure of a person (Kotova, 2000, p. 124).

"Better a hundred friends than a hundred rubles" (Ne imey sto rubley, a imey sto druzey). This highlights collectivism, valuing human relationships over material wealth (Dzhelalova, 2015, p. 105).

Other proverbs in this block reinforce values of prudence ("Measure twice, cut once"), collective wisdom ("Two heads are better than one"), and the limits of intellect ("No man is so wise but a fool may trip him"). Conversely, proverbs about foolishness emphasize social irresponsibility ("Fools have no laws") or the uselessness of knowledge without practical application ("A mind like a palace, but the key is lost").

#### **Labor and Activity: Work as the Basis of Being**

This block presents labor not merely as a necessity but as a fundamental law of existence and a measure of human maturity.

"You can't pull a fish out of a pond without effort" (Bez truda ne vylovish i rybku iz pruda).

Work is presented as a universal condition for achieving any result (Maslova, 2001, p. 94).

"Business before pleasure" (Delu vremya, potehe chas). This establishes a strict hierarchy where work takes precedence over leisure, reflecting an ascetic aspect of the work ethic.

The principle of direct proportionality between effort and reward is expressed in "As you trample, so shall you eat" (Kak potopaesh, tak i polopaesh). The results also show a pragmatic acceptance of human nature, with proverbs like "Work isn't a wolf; it won't run off into the woods" (Rabota ne volk — v les ne ubezhit) providing an ironic commentary on procrastination (Bogachev, 2024, p. 240).

#### **Social Relations: The Dynamics of One's Own and Another's, Wealth and Poverty**

This block reveals the axiology of social interaction, emphasizing solidarity with one's own group while maintaining clear boundaries.

Collectivism is evident in "From the world by a thread — a naked man gets a shirt" (S miru po nitke — golomu rubashka), which praises mutual aid.

However, boundaries are sharply defined. "Charity begins at home" (Svoya rubashka blizhe k telu) acknowledges self-interest as a natural given (Dahl, 1984, v. 2, p. 156), while

"Friendship is friendship, but keep your tobacco separate" (Druzhba druzhboy, a tabachok vroz) warns against mixing friendship with material sharing.

Regarding wealth, the analysis reveals a consistent devaluation of material riches. "Poverty is not a vice" (Bednost ne porok) and "Happiness does not lie in money" (Ne v dengakh schastye) separate material conditions from moral worth (Mirzayeva, 2011, p. 49). The wealthy are often portrayed negatively, as in "A rich man is like a horned bull: he won't fit through a narrow gate" (Bogaty — chto byk rogay: v tesnye vorota ne vlezet), associating wealth with pride and alienation (Seliverstova & Zhao, 2019, p. 92).

#### **Family and Kinship: The Sacred Space of the Home**

This block constructs the family and the home as the highest, most sacralized sphere of human existence.

The transmission of traits across generations is a key theme ("The apple doesn't fall far from the tree", "Like father, like son").

The home is exalted as the ultimate space of safety and peace: "There's no place like home" (V gostyakh khorosho, a doma luchshe).

Family harmony is presented as an absolute value, superior to all material wealth: "What good is treasure when there is harmony in the family?" (Na chto i klad, koli v semye lad) (Oganeva, 2015, p. 203).

The role of the mother is sacralized ("A mother's prayer can save you from the depths of the sea"), while the collective responsibility in child-rearing is critiqued ("Too many cooks spoil the broth").

### **Synthesized Axiological Dominants**

Across these thematic blocks, several overarching axiological dominants were identified: Priority of the Inner over the Outer: Mind, soul, honor, and moral virtues consistently outweigh wealth, beauty, or physical strength.

Collectivism and Community: A person is rarely conceived outside of society. Friendship, mutual aid, and family accord are highly valued, but a clear distinction is made between "one's own" and "another's."

Labor as the Basis of Being: Labor is both a means of survival and the measure of a person's maturity and social worth.

Fatalism Combined with Personal Responsibility: There is a dualistic recognition of fate and circumstance alongside a strong call for personal effort and accountability.

Axiological Polarization: The worldview is structured by clear binary oppositions (good/evil, wise/foolish, rich/poor), providing a moral coordinate system for evaluating individuals.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study confirm that the Russian paremiological worldview presents the concept "Man" as a complex, value-laden construct. The findings align with previous research that identifies the "inner self" as a primary focus of Russian cultural mentality. As noted by Mirzayeva (2011, p. 52), this forms a "heart-oriented" model of the person, prioritizing spiritual and moral qualities.

The pronounced emphasis on collectivism and family, as seen in the thematic blocks, supports the view of the "family as the entirety of one's life" (Dzhelalova, 2015, p. 108) and the "mir" (community) as a guarantor of truth (Alefirenko, 2006, p. 156). However, the study's results also nuance this by revealing a simultaneous, pragmatic insistence on personal boundaries (Druzhba druzhboy...), suggesting a complex balance between communal identity and individual self-preservation.

The centrality of labor found here reinforces the view that work is not just a practical necessity but a universal law of life within the PWM (Maslova, 2001, p. 94). Yet, the existence of proverbs with ironic undertones about overwork shows that the system is not monolithic but allows for a degree of realism and humor (Bogachev, 2024, p. 240).

The dualism of fatalism and personal responsibility, identified as a key dominant, is a hallmark of Russian mentality. It positions a person simultaneously as a subject of their own destiny and an object of external, sometimes inscrutable, forces (Lakoff, 2007, p. 156). This study has shown how this duality is not an abstract philosophical point but is concretely embedded in the proverbs that guide everyday behavior.

Finally, these findings have implications beyond linguocultural description. As Azizova (2026, p. 36) argues, such conceptual analysis has direct applications in lexicographic

practice, helping to create culturally sensitive dictionaries that reveal the national specifics of a language's axiological landscape.

## CONCLUSION

This structured study has demonstrated that the Russian paremiological worldview is a unique source for reconstructing the value system of the ethnic group. The concept of "Man" is revealed as a multidimensional construct, integrating moral, social, labor, and familial characteristics. The identified axiological dominants—the primacy of the inner over the outer, the value of collectivism and family, labor as the basis of life, and the dualism of fate and responsibility—reflect the deep foundations of Russian mentality. These values, encoded in proverbs and transmitted across generations, provide crucial insight into the national consciousness as expressed through language.

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