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EXPRESSION OF MORAL AND AESTHETIC VALUES IN WRITTEN AND ORAL SPEECH

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Abstract: This article explores how moral and aesthetic values are expressed in written and oral speech. Moral values such as honesty, respect, fairness, empathy, and responsibility are conveyed through lexical choice, speech acts, politeness strategies, and discourse organization. Aesthetic values, including expressiveness, harmony, imagery, rhythm, and stylistic appropriateness, emerge through metaphor, repetition, intonation, and textual structure. Using a qualitative, theory-informed approach, the article draws on pragmatics, speech-act theory, politeness research, and discourse analysis to compare spoken and written communication. Illustrative examples show that linguistic forms acquire ethical and aesthetic meaning through context, audience, genre, and cultural expectations. The article argues that neither oral nor written speech is inherently more ethical or aesthetically superior; each offers distinct resources and risks. The findings provide a conceptual basis for further comparative research into Uzbek and English communication.

Keywords: moral values; aesthetic values; oral speech; written speech; pragmatics; politeness; discourse analysis; intercultural communication.

Introduction

Language is not merely a means of transmitting information; it also expresses attitudes, social relationships, cultural expectations, and judgments about what is right or appropriate. In everyday conversation, greetings, apologies, compliments, and disagreement reveal how speakers treat others. In writing, moral and aesthetic meanings are conveyed through vocabulary, sentence structure, argumentation, imagery, and organization. Therefore, the study of values in speech connects linguistics with ethics, stylistics, philosophy, and intercultural communication.

Moral values in communication include honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy. Aesthetic values concern beauty, expressiveness, rhythm, vividness, harmony, and emotional impact. The two dimensions may support one another, but they are not identical: elegant language can manipulate an audience, while a plain statement can be ethically necessary because it is clear and truthful.

This article aims to identify the main linguistic resources through which moral and aesthetic values are expressed in oral and written speech and to explain how medium and context affect interpretation. It addresses three questions: which linguistic features express these values; how do their functions differ across spoken and written modes; and how do cultural and digital contexts influence interpretation?

Theoretical Framework

Moral values and pragmatic meaning

Moral meaning is conveyed not only by words such as ‘justice’ or ‘kindness’ but also by the way people perform communicative acts. A request may respect another person’s autonomy or sound coercive; criticism may address an action or attack a person’s identity. Grice’s account of conversational cooperation explains why truthfulness, relevance, informativeness, and clarity

matter for interpretation (Grice, 1989). These principles are not a complete moral code, but misleading or deliberately unclear communication can weaken trust.

Speech-act theory shows that language performs actions: people promise, apologize, warn, invite, refuse, and congratulate through utterances (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). The moral force of these acts depends on sincerity and responsibility. An apology, for example, is more meaningful when the speaker acknowledges harm rather than simply saying 'I'm sorry'.

Politeness theory examines how speakers protect or challenge another person's public self-image, often described as 'face' (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Expressions such as 'Could you please…?' or 'I may be mistaken, but…' can soften a request or disagreement. However, politeness conventions vary by culture and situation. Courtesy alone does not guarantee ethical behaviour, and directness is not always impolite.

Aesthetic values and stylistic choice

Aesthetic value is created through linguistic form: metaphor, simile, repetition, parallelism, contrast, rhythm, imagery, and coherent organization. In everyday speech, a proverb or vivid comparison can make an idea memorable; in writing, syntax and paragraph structure guide the reader through an argument. Aesthetic effectiveness is not simply ornament. Clear, concise, and appropriate language can be stylistically effective, while excessive decoration may obscure meaning.

Moral and aesthetic values often intersect. A story can develop empathy, and a balanced argument can make an appeal to fairness persuasive. Yet rhetorical skill can also be used to manipulate emotions or reinforce prejudice. Consequently, style should be examined alongside communicative purpose and social effect.

Methodology

The article uses qualitative conceptual analysis and comparative discourse analysis, drawing on established theories of pragmatics, speech acts, politeness, and stylistics. Short examples are used to illustrate how particular choices may communicate moral or aesthetic meanings. They are illustrative examples, not data collected from human participants; therefore, the article does not claim statistical results or generalize about the frequency of linguistic features.

Each example is considered in terms of its communicative act, linguistic form, likely effect, and context. A future empirical study could apply this framework to a systematically collected corpus of Uzbek and English classroom interactions, formal letters, public speeches, or online messages.

Moral and Aesthetic Values in Oral Speech

Oral communication expresses moral values through word choice, intonation, turn-taking, facial expression, gesture, and opportunities to repair misunderstanding. Expressions such as 'thank you', 'I understand', and 'I disagree' may signal gratitude, empathy, or respectful disagreement, but their meaning depends on delivery and context. 'Please be quiet' can be an appropriate instruction, whereas 'Please be quiet, you never understand anything' adds a personal insult. A polite marker does not remove the harmful effect of humiliating content.

Intonation can change the interpretation of an utterance. A compliment may sound sincere when spoken warmly but sarcastic when delivered with exaggerated stress. Pauses may indicate hesitation, respect, or emotional difficulty, although these cues are not interpreted identically in all

cultures. Turn-taking also matters: allowing another person to finish, acknowledging a contribution, and correcting an error without ridicule can enact respect and fairness.

For example, a teacher may respond to an incorrect answer by saying, 'That is wrong. You did not listen,' or 'Not quite; let us look at the example again.' The second response focuses on the answer and offers a constructive next step, preserving the learner's dignity while still correcting the error. Ethical communication does not require avoiding criticism; it requires distinguishing useful feedback from unnecessary personal attack.

Aesthetic qualities in oral speech are created through rhythm, stress, pacing, repetition, and vivid comparisons. Speakers use parallel structures and pauses to make ideas memorable. The saying 'A kind word can open a door that force cannot' uses metaphor and contrast to suggest that respectful persuasion can be more effective than coercion. Nevertheless, expressive language must be appropriate to its audience and purpose. Humour can build solidarity, but it can also humiliate or reinforce stereotypes.

Moral and Aesthetic Values in Written Speech

Writing allows greater opportunity to plan, revise, verify facts, and consider the audience. Moral values appear through accurate attribution, honest presentation of evidence, acknowledgement of uncertainty, fair representation of opposing views, and respectful wording. Compare 'Your proposal is foolish' with 'The proposal may be difficult to implement because it does not yet address the budget constraints.' The second version identifies a problem and gives a reason without attacking the person.

In academic writing, ethical communication also requires avoiding plagiarism, citing sources accurately, and not presenting invented data as research findings. Written messages may be copied and circulated beyond their original context, so precision and awareness of possible harm are important. Narrative choices matter too: a text can portray people with empathy or use dehumanizing descriptions that encourage prejudice.

Aesthetic values in writing are expressed through metaphor, imagery, repetition, syntax, punctuation, coherence, and paragraph structure. For example, describing dialogue as 'a bridge' emphasizes connection, while calling it 'a battlefield' foregrounds conflict. Metaphors are therefore not neutral decorations: they influence how readers frame a topic. Repetition can create rhythm and collective feeling, but slogans may also replace evidence or reinforce stereotypes.

Directness may be ethically preferable in some genres. A warning such as 'Do not enter; the building is unsafe' is clearer and more responsible than an indirect or ornate statement. The appropriate style depends on the communicative goal, not on a universal preference for indirectness or elaborate language.

Oral and Written Speech: A Comparison

Oral and written speech should not be treated as completely separate systems. Prepared speeches may be carefully planned, while text messages can be spontaneous and conversational. Tannen (1982) shows that strategies associated with spoken discourse can also appear in written narratives. The relevant differences concern the resources and constraints of each communicative situation.

Dimension	Oral speech	Written speech
Moral expression	Intonation, turn-taking, immediate response	Word choice, evidence, attribution, organization

Aesthetic resources	Rhythm, stress, pauses, gesture	Imagery, syntax, punctuation, paragraphing
Main advantage	Feedback and immediate repair	Planning, revision, documentation
Potential risk	Impulsive wording or interruption	Ambiguity or loss of context

Consider the word 'Fine'. In conversation, intonation and facial expression may show whether it means agreement, reluctant acceptance, or irritation. In a text message, those cues are absent, so the recipient may interpret it as cold or dismissive. Adding 'That works for me, thank you' can reduce uncertainty. This example demonstrates that meaning is shaped by both linguistic form and the medium.

Neither mode is inherently more ethical or beautiful. Oral speech enables immediate clarification but may be impulsive; writing enables revision but may circulate without its original context. In both, the best choices balance truthfulness, clarity, respect, and stylistic appropriateness.

Intercultural Communication and Digital Discourse

Cultural communities differ in their conventions for greeting, disagreeing, refusing, showing respect, and using silence. A direct statement may be interpreted as honest in one context and disrespectful in another, while indirectness may be understood as tactful or evasive. Such patterns should not be reduced to national stereotypes because individuals and situations vary. UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity emphasizes cultural diversity, human dignity, and the importance of expressing oneself in a language of choice (UNESCO, 2001). Respect for diversity, however, does not justify humiliation or discrimination.

Digital communication adds further complexity. Emails, messaging applications, and social media combine conversational speed with the permanence of writing. Capital letters, punctuation, emojis, and response timing may affect perceived tone, but their meanings vary among users. Memes, irony, and slogans can be aesthetically creative and memorable, yet brevity may remove context or spread misleading claims. Responsible digital discourse therefore requires factual checking, careful wording, and a distinction between criticism and personal abuse.

Language education can help learners develop more than grammatical accuracy. Learners can compare requests, apologies, compliments, and disagreement across contexts; revise messages for different audiences; and reflect on how tone and style influence meaning. This approach supports communicative competence and intercultural awareness without assuming that one culture's conventions are universally correct.

Discussion

The analysis suggests three central points. First, ethical communication is not identical to politeness: a courteous lie may be less ethical than a direct and necessary truth. Second, aesthetic effectiveness is not automatically positive: memorable language can clarify ideas but can also manipulate emotions. Third, the interpretation of both moral and aesthetic values depends on context, audience, genre, power relations, and cultural expectations.

The article is conceptual and illustrative, so it does not establish how frequently particular forms occur in real communication. Further research could compare Uzbek and English speech acts in classroom interaction, formal letters, public speeches, and digital messages. Such a study should

use a transparent sampling and coding procedure, protect participants' privacy where human data are involved, and distinguish the researcher's interpretation from participants' own explanations.

Conclusion

Moral and aesthetic values are expressed through lexical choice, speech acts, politeness strategies, prosody, figurative language, and discourse organization. Oral speech offers intonation, gesture, immediate feedback, and repair, while written speech allows revision, structured argument, and a lasting record. Each mode has distinctive strengths and risks, and neither is inherently more ethical or aesthetically superior.

Responsible communication requires more than grammatical correctness. It involves truthful and clear expression, respect for human dignity, awareness of audience and context, and thoughtful use of stylistic resources. Further comparative research on Uzbek and English discourse could clarify how these values operate in real communicative practices and contribute to linguistics and intercultural communication.

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