

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE IN RESEARCH METHODS

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Abstract: this article examines the issues of the peculiarities of the level of language as a cultural phenomenon and the methods of research in linguacultural studies. Linguistics has developed in a certain number of sciences, each of which studies the relationship between language and culture in its own way.

Key words: phenomenon, culture, analogies, values, layer, communication.

Introduction. One of the main postulates of linguoculturology is the idea that language is a cultural phenomenon. This means that language is viewed not merely as a system of grammatical rules or a means of communication, but as an integral part of a people's culture, a phenomenon created by and serving that very culture. Language develops within and alongside a specific cultural environment, which is why the values, traditions, and worldview of society are inevitably reflected in it.

Every natural language possesses a layer of meanings, referred to as the national-cultural component of a word, which is comprehensible and significant for members of that particular culture but often opaque to representatives of other cultures. This component can manifest at various linguistic levels.

The linguistic worldview – a crucial concept in linguoculturology – comprises the totality of all nationally distinctive meanings embedded within a language. Through language, individuals comprehend the world in a specific manner, framed within the coordinate system of their own culture. For instance, certain fundamental categories may not be conceptualized identically for speakers of different languages: time might be perceived as cyclical or linear, space can be attributed various metaphors (in one culture, the future is "ahead," while in another it's "behind" or "above"), and the classification of kinship, colors, and weather phenomena – all these differ and reflect the unique experience of a community.

Analysis and Results. At the lexical level, there are words-realia that lack precise equivalents in other languages, as they denote objects or concepts specific only to a particular culture. For example, the Russian words "баня" (banya, a traditional bathhouse), "валенки" (valenki, felt boots), "боярин" (boyarin, an old Russian nobleman) reflect the realities of Russia in past centuries; similarly, English lacks a full equivalent for the Russian "тоска" (toska, a deep melancholic longing), and Russian lacks a full equivalent for the English "privacy," because these concepts are rooted in different cultures.

At the phraseological level, numerous fixed expressions, proverbs, and sayings reflect the experience and culture of a people. For instance, let's compare: the Russian "как снег на голову" (literally "like snow on one's head") and the English "out of the blue." Both expressions convey unexpectedness, but their imagery differs, tied to climatic and cultural specificities. The Russian "вилами на воде писано" (literally "written with a pitchfork on water," meaning "uncertainty") originates from rural life, while in Uzbek, there is the proverb "Tildan tegmas kun yo'q" (literally "There's no day that the tongue doesn't touch"), reflecting a

different type of imagery. In the equivalent translation of phraseological units, the lexical meaning is preserved. Concurrently, the imagery and structure of the unit are also retained: for example, Uzbek «пичоғи мой устида» (literally "his knife is on butter/oil") corresponds to "living in prosperity"; and «бурнини (осмонга) кўтармоқ» (literally "to lift one's nose (to the sky)") means "to walk proudly" (to be arrogant). However, the complete preservation of lexical, semantic, and structural equivalence is not always possible. It is rare for all three types of equivalence to perfectly align (e.g., Uzbek "Avval o'yla, keyin so'yla" – Russian "Сначала думай, потом говори" – English "Think before you speak").

Cultural preferences are also observed at the level of syntax and speech models. For example, accepted forms of politeness in a language are linked to the etiquette norms of a particular culture (in Russian – the "ty/vy" distinction and constructions like "Не будете ли так любезны..." (Would you be so kind as to...), whereas in Japanese, there's a complex system of speech registers depending on the interlocutor's status, and so on). Even word order or typical speech constructions can reflect specific aspects of national thinking (for instance, the prevalence of impersonal constructions in Russian like "мне не спится" (I can't sleep), which some researchers link to Russians' inclination to speak about states as if from an external perspective).

Linguoculturology teaches us to "extract" these cultural components from a text. This means being able to understand what layer of cultural information is hidden behind a particular word or phrase. For example, when reading a literary text, a linguoculturally prepared reader notices that the author calls a character "Oblomov" and understands that this is a precedent name referring to the lazy landlord Oblomov from Goncharov's novel, meaning it immediately characterizes the person with a certain set of traits (lazy, passive, dreamy). Or, encountering the phrase "tempting serpent," such a reader knows the biblical story of temptation and grasps the moral meaning of the allusion. Even in everyday communication, a culturally sensitive speaker notices similar subtleties: for instance, the phrase "мой дом с краю" (my house is on the edge) – this is not merely about a house on the outskirts, but a quotation from a proverb implying avoidance of responsibility (an allusion to a specific behavioral characteristic).

The diversity and richness of language, based on strict adherence to norms, allows for expanding the possibilities of conveying a linguistic worldview. However, strict adherence to norms is not always acceptable.[6]

Thus, language as a cultural phenomenon is the idea that every element of language embodies a part of the cultural code. For native speakers, this connection is often intuitively transparent, but for a foreigner, it may not be obvious. The task of the linguoculturologist is to explicitly demonstrate, describe, and explain it. Thanks to this, a deep understanding of texts and utterances within their original cultural context becomes possible, as does a conscious comparative analysis of different languages and cultures. It should be noted that such an interrelationship between language and culture works bidirectionally.

On the one hand, culture influences language: the emergence of new realities or ideas leads to the appearance of new words, and with changes in values, the meanings of words also change (for example, while the word "g'oya" (idea) had an exalted-positive connotation in Soviet culture, it acquired a more neutral meaning in the post-Soviet era).

On the other hand, language also influences culture, particularly through literature, media, and education, by reinforcing certain images and stereotypes. For example, classical literature

created a whole gallery of national types (Oblomov, Pechorin, Chichikov's entrepreneurial "type," etc.), which have entered the culture and are still perceived as part of it today.

Overall, analyzing language as a cultural phenomenon allows for a deeper understanding of a nation's mentality, society's value orientations, and the specific characteristics of communication. For the Russian linguistic consciousness, for example, a multitude of words and nuances for expressing psychological states is characteristic, reflecting an intensified attention to the human inner world in Russian culture. For comparison, in English cultural discourse, themes of individualism and practicality are more deeply rooted – this is also reflected in the language (e.g., fixed expressions like "time is money," popular business metaphors, etc.). Linguoculturology notes these differences and commonalities, helping to build bridges of mutual understanding between representatives of different linguocultures.

The methods of linguocultural research constitute a set of approaches that help identify and describe cultural meanings in language. Let's list the main methods used in this field:

1. The Descriptive Method – a fundamental method of linguistics, also applied in linguoculturology. This involves collecting linguistic material (words, texts, expressions), classifying it, and providing a systematic description. In linguoculturology, the descriptive method is used, for example, in compiling thematic groups of words related to a particular cultural domain (e.g., groups of word-symbols: colors as symbols, animals in phraseology, etc.), or in describing customs through linguistic expressions.
2. Semantic Analysis – encompasses various methods for studying the meaning of a word or phrase. Component analysis of meaning (identifying semes – minimal semantic components) holds a special place. For a linguoculturologist, it is important to identify not only linguistic semes but also cultural semes – i.e., meaning components that refer to a cultural context. For example, when analyzing the word "karavay" (a type of bread), in addition to its denotative meaning of "large round bread," a cultural seme is also identified: a ceremonial bread used in East Slavic traditions at weddings and when welcoming guests. Additionally, the definitional analysis method is applied, which involves studying lexical definitions of a word in various explanatory and encyclopedic dictionaries to identify what cultural information is embedded within them.
3. Etymological and Historical-Cultural Analysis – allows for tracing the origin of a linguistic unit and the history of its use. Through etymology, the cultural layer is often revealed. For example, by knowing that the Russian word "кум" (kum, godparent or close friend) was originally associated with kinship through baptism (via Old Church Slavonic кѡмъ – godparent), we understand why in proverbs, a 'kum' is considered a close, 'one's own' person. Or, analyzing a proverb might require knowledge of historical ways of life (e.g., why «без году неделя» (bez godu nedelya, literally 'no year, no week') means "a very short time" – based on information about apprentices' training in workshops lasting less than a year and a week).
4. The Comparative Method – is actively used when it is necessary to identify national distinctiveness by comparing it with another language/culture. By comparing parallel phenomena, the researcher observes unique aspects. For example, comparing proverbs about labor in Russian and English: in Russian, «Терпение и труд всё перетрут» (Terpeniye i trud vsyo peretrut, literally "Patience and labor will grind everything away," meaning "Patience and hard work overcome all difficulties"), while in English, a similar idea is expressed differently: «Practice makes perfect». Both speak about the importance of labor, but the nuances are different – in Russian, the emphasis is on patience, while in English, it is on skill and perfection. Such comparisons help to precisely distinguish culturally specific aspects.

The overall tonality of the entire text is defined as the sum of the lexical tonalities of the sentences and their combinations that constitute it.

Conclusion. The methods of linguoculturology are diverse, but they are united by a common aspiration: to identify systematic reflections of culture in linguistic material. Adherence to the principle of comprehensiveness is the key to success: only by combining multiple approaches (linguistic analysis + cultural commentary + comparison, etc.) can linguocultural phenomena be accurately interpreted.

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