

Linguoculturology: Linguistic Means of National Mentality Expression in Cultural Studies

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Abstract:

This article examines the linguistic means of expressing national mentality within linguocultural studies. It analyzes how language elements reflect cultural identity, mental frameworks, and worldviews specific to different nations. Through a comprehensive literature review, the paper identifies key linguistic markers of national mentality, their classification, and methodological approaches to their study. The findings demonstrate that national mentality manifests through various linguistic levels, including lexical, phraseological, and grammatical structures, with significant implications for cross-cultural communication and translation studies.

Keywords: linguoculturology, national mentality, linguistic worldview, cultural linguistics, cultural concepts, language and culture, ethnolinguistics, cross-cultural communication.

INTRODUCTION

The interconnection between language and culture represents one of the most significant areas of modern linguistics. Linguoculturology, as a discipline studying the manifestation of culture in language, has emerged as a crucial field for understanding how national mentality is encoded and expressed through linguistic means [1]. National mentality, defined as the collective psychological predispositions, cognitive patterns, and value systems characteristic of a particular ethnic or cultural group, finds its reflection in various language structures.

The relevance of this research lies in the growing importance of cross-cultural communication in a globalized world, where understanding cultural differences expressed through language becomes essential for successful interaction. As Alefirenko notes, "language serves as a mirror of national mentality, reflecting centuries of cultural development and collective experience" [2, p. 45]. This perspective aligns with Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis about language not merely representing reality but actively shaping the perception of reality for its speakers.

The purpose of this article is to systematize and analyze the linguistic means through which national mentality manifests itself across different language levels, focusing particularly on lexical, phraseological, and grammatical structures. The research questions guiding this investigation include: (1) What are the primary linguistic means that express national mentality? (2) How do these linguistic means function within the framework of linguoculturology? (3) What methodological approaches are most effective for studying these expressions?

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology based on comprehensive literature review. The methodological framework combines principles from cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, and comparative analysis. Linguoculturology as a discipline has been significantly shaped by the works of researchers from various traditions. In the Russian school, Vorobyev defines linguoculturology as "a complex scientific discipline studying the interconnection and interaction of culture and language in its functioning and reflecting this process as an integral structure in unity with its linguistic and extralinguistic content" [3, p. 37]. This definition positions linguoculturology at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies, providing a framework for analyzing national mentality expressions.

The Uzbek tradition of linguocultural studies has developed its distinctive approach. Mamatov argues that "the national specificity of language is most vividly manifested in culturally marked vocabulary and phraseology that reflect the historical experience, traditions, and value system of the people" [4, p. 128]. This perspective emphasizes the historical dimension of linguocultural research, connecting linguistic expressions to the cultural memory of a nation.

Western scholarship has contributed significantly to this field as well. Wierzbicka's work on semantic universals and cultural scripts has provided valuable methodological tools for identifying cultural specificities in linguistic expressions [5]. Her Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach offers a framework for cross-cultural comparison without ethnocentric bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that linguistic means of national mentality expression operate at multiple levels of language structure, each providing unique insights into cultural patterns and cognitive frameworks.

At the lexical level, culturally specific concepts with no direct equivalents in other languages (often termed "lacunae" or "culture-specific items") serve as powerful indicators of national mentality. Examples include the Uzbek concept of "mahalla" (neighborhood community), Russian "toska" (melancholic longing), or Japanese "wabi-sabi" (appreciation of imperfection). These lexical items encode cultural values and experiential patterns specific to particular cultural communities [6].

Cultural connotations attached to seemingly universal concepts also reveal national mentality patterns. Safarov demonstrates that even basic concepts like "home," "family," or "bread" carry distinct cultural associations in different languages, reflecting specific cultural values and historical experiences [7]. In Uzbek culture, for instance, the concept of "non" (bread) extends beyond nutritional value to represent hospitality, respect, and life itself, manifested in numerous rituals and phraseological units.

Phraseological units represent particularly rich repositories of national mentality. Maslova argues that "phraseology preserves cultural archetypes and stereotypes that constitute the foundation of national self-identification" [8, p. 82]. Proverbs, sayings, and idioms often encode cultural wisdom, historical experience, and value systems in condensed linguistic form.

Comparative analysis reveals significant differences in metaphorical systems underlying phraseology. For example, animal metaphors display cultural specificity: while the fox symbolizes

cunning across many cultures, its specific characterization and associated qualities vary significantly. In Uzbek culture, the donkey ("eshak") appears in numerous phraseological units representing stubbornness but also endurance and hard work, reflecting agricultural traditions and historical experiences.

Perhaps less obvious but equally significant are grammatical categories reflecting cultural patterns. Grammatical gender systems, honorific forms, and tense structures can reveal cultural attitudes toward social hierarchy, time perception, and categorization. Wierzbicka notes that "grammar, no less than vocabulary, embodies a certain interpretation of reality and established ways of conceptualizing various aspects of the world" [5, p. 167].

The extensive honorific system in languages like Japanese and Korean reflects cultural emphasis on social hierarchy and relationships. Similarly, the complex system of familial address terms in Uzbek demonstrates the importance of kinship structures and age-based respect in the culture. These grammatical patterns provide insights into social organization and value systems that constitute national mentality.

The research reveals certain methodological challenges in studying linguistic manifestations of national mentality. One significant issue is avoiding cultural essentialism while recognizing genuine cultural patterns. Safarov cautions against "overinterpreting cultural specificity" and recommends "distinguishing between universal human experiences expressed through culturally specific means and genuinely culture-specific concepts" [7, p. 95].

Another methodological consideration involves the dynamic nature of cultural and linguistic systems. As Shaklein emphasizes, "national mentality is not static but evolves through historical processes, intercultural contact, and socio-political changes" [9, p. 113]. This dynamic quality necessitates diachronic approaches that track changes in linguistic expressions of mentality over time.

CONCLUSION

The analysis confirms that national mentality finds systematic expression through various linguistic means across lexical, phraseological, and grammatical levels. These linguistic manifestations provide valuable insights into cultural patterns, cognitive frameworks, and value systems characteristic of particular cultural communities.

The findings suggest several important implications for linguocultural studies. First, they underscore the necessity of integrating linguistic analysis with cultural and historical context when studying national mentality expressions. Second, they highlight the potential of comparative approaches in revealing both cultural specificity and universal patterns in linguistic structures. Finally, they demonstrate the practical applications of linguocultural research for areas such as intercultural communication, translation studies, and language teaching.

Future research directions might include developing more refined methodologies for distinguishing between universal and culture-specific elements in linguistic expressions, exploring the impact of globalization on traditional linguistic markers of national mentality, and investigating how digital communication impacts the expression of cultural identity through language. As Alpatov suggests, "the evolution of linguistic means expressing national mentality in the digital age represents one of the most promising areas for contemporary linguocultural research".

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