



LANGUAGE AS A REFLECTION OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND CULTURE

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Abstract: This article examines language as a key means of reflecting national consciousness and culture. It analyzes how a nation's worldview, values, traditions, and historical experience are embodied in linguistic units such as vocabulary, phraseology, metaphors, and discourse patterns. The study is based on the principles of linguoculturology and ethnolinguistics, emphasizing the interdependence of language, culture, and human cognition. Special attention is given to the role of language in preserving national identity and transmitting cultural heritage from generation to generation.

Key words: language and culture, national consciousness, worldview, linguoculturology, ethnolinguistics.

The linguistic sign constitutes the primary nominative and cognitive unit of language, serving to name and communicate the objects, processes, and properties of the surrounding reality. The word, as a unit of naming and designation possessing a distinct content, is characterized by its multifaceted nature and complex internal connections, with its meaning determined by its function within the sign system. As the repository of the socio-historical experience of its native speakers, the word and its meaning serve as the fundamental systemic elements that cement speech formations. Meaning, as a unit of consciousness and a content-based element of mental representation, functions in the words of L.S. Vygotsky as the crucial "node" that links communication and generalization, connecting the linguistic picture of the world with the conceptual map. The linguistic sign constitutes the primary nominative and cognitive unit of language, serving to name and communicate the objects, processes, and properties of the surrounding reality.

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Since the publication of the classic work "Essai de Sémantique: Science des significations" by M. Bréal (who is also credited with introducing the term "semantics"), intensive research has been conducted on the word as the primary unit of language from the viewpoint of meaning. According to A. Schaff, the distinctiveness of linguistic semantics lies in its focus on the word, word meaning, shifts in meaning, and the underlying causes of these changes. The most critical problems of classical semantics were considered to be:

- Differentiation of meaning based on the nature of the communicative act;
- Classification of meaning types according to word classes;
- Problems of transferring and preserving meaning during translation;
- Issues of identity of meaning, synonymy, homonymy, inaccuracy, and ambiguity of words, among others .

At the beginning of the 20th century, Ferdinand de Saussure proposed arbitrariness as the first of the two fundamental principles defining the nature of the linguistic sign: "The bond linking the signifier with the signified is arbitrary. Responses to this assertion were not unanimous. Ch. Bally, A. Meillet, and J. Vendryes also emphasized the "lack of connection between meaning and sound," as did L. Bloomfield, stating: "Linguistic forms are arbitrary." Conversely, J. Damourette and D. Bolinger published works with the same title: "The sign is not arbitrary". In his 1939 article "The Nature of the Linguistic Sign," E. Benveniste argued that "only for the impartial and outside observer is the connection between the signified and signifier a matter of pure chance; for the native speaker of a given language, this connection becomes a necessity."



The genetic direction of studying the semantic side of language is expressed in the "semantic triangle" constructed by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards (1923). This model, along with its subsequent variations (Stern, Sanden, Rudskoger, etc.), reflects the relationships (relations) of the word with the denotatum (object, referent) and the designatum (notion, concept, significatum, etc.). The very title of the first chapter of Ogden and Richards' monograph, "The Meaning of Meaning", titled "Thoughts, Words and Things", pointed to the general interconnections through which this approach to fundamental semantic relations and their levels developed. It provided 16 basic definitions of meaning known to science at that time. To date, their number has increased significantly. The concept of lexical meaning as a relationship between the sign (signifier) and the concept (signified), tracing back to Saussure, was more consistently developed by L. Weisgerber and S. Ullmann. Unlike Saussure, however, they interpreted the relationship between the signifier (phonetic form, name) and the signified (content, sense) not as an associative (psychological) bond, but as a functional relationship. In addition to concepts and mental images, many linguists included expressive components (Nebensinn) and emotional coloring (Gefühlswert) within the structure of meaning. Some semasiologists viewed meaning as a complex psychological entity capable of expressing human thought, emotion, and will. E. Wellander and G. Stern insisted that lexical meaning consists of only two components: conceptual content and associative elements. According to L.V. Shcherba, the essence referred to as the lexical meaning of a word is not a scientific concept, but a "naive" notion of the corresponding object. This notion is often burdened with semantic or emotional associations (valeur émotive, Gefühlswert, feeling, tone) that do not correspond to any essential characteristics of the object or phenomenon designated by the word (Bally 1921, Shcherba 1935, Firth 1935, 1951). In one of his works, Shcherba provides an example of the word eau (water), which possesses a specific "shade" of meaning or semantic association: "The French eau seems to be entirely equivalent to the Russian voda. However, the figurative use of the word voda in the sense of 'something devoid of content' is completely alien to the French word. On the other hand, the latter has a meaning that can be rendered in Russian as 'decoction' (eau de ris, eau d'orge). From these and other minor facts, it follows that the Russian concept of water emphasizes its nutritional uselessness, whereas this feature is entirely foreign to the French language". Significant attention to semantic problems within the field of logic emerged primarily at the end of the nineteenth century. The logical literature of the first half of the 19th century was represented by the works of J.S. Mill, whose concept of denotation and



connotation refined the traditional doctrine regarding the scope and content of concepts.

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