

# Ethnic Mentality and World Language Mapping

Gunel Tofik kyzy Mahmudova <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Baku State University*

23 Academic Zahid Khalilov Street, Baku, AZ 1148, Azerbaijan

DOI: [10.22178/pos.94-19](https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.94-19)

LCC Subject Category: PE1001-1693

Received 30.06.2023

Accepted 28.07.2023

Published online 31.07.2023

Corresponding Author:

[Mahmudovagunel.87@gmail.com](mailto:Mahmudovagunel.87@gmail.com)

© 2023 The Author. This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



**Abstract.** In the article, the ethnic mentality and world language mapping problem are analysed. The study attempts to substantiate this process from a theoretical point of view. Descriptive-comparative and empirical methods of scientific analysis were used. It is necessary to know the cultural heritage and traditions of the country for the correct transfer of the meaning of the equivalent vocabulary of a specific language. In this study, an attempt was made to outline the starting points for solving the problem of transferring the cultural background and colour of culture when translating it into other languages. Solving problems related to the translation of artistic vocabulary requires considering the entire complexity of the translated original and the means of the language into which it is translated. With the correct identification and accurate reflection of the cultural features of the text, the national colour can be accurately conveyed. However, the cultural component always remains the main difficulty in translation.

**Keywords:** ethnic; language mapping; mentality; mental; worldview; language.

## INTRODUCTION

Culture is the continuity of traditions; therefore, considering its national character, it is customary in linguistic and cultural studies to study the facts of language based on the triad of "language – culture – nation".

Each language community has its national point of view. Inconsistencies in the perception of the surrounding reality and the national specificity of mental activity lead to a unique, unrepeatable linguistic picture of the world.

The concept of "world description" was first used by L. Wittgenstein in a philosophical aspect and was introduced into linguistics by L. Weisgerber. Linguists often use it to study the so-called human factor in language, and it is a generalised result of the reflection of the world in the collective consciousness of certain people [1, p. 115]. Linguistic and cultural factors influenced the emergence of the "world linguistic mapping" concept. However, there is still no generally accepted scientific definition of this term.

The interest in linguistic and cultural issues gave a new impetus to studying world linguistic mapping, often understood as a "scheme of perception of reality fixed in language" [20, p. 16].

World mapping is marked nationally and culturally because it reflects a particular nation's cultural space.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method is a descriptive and typological analysis of linguistics. Different linguistic facts are selected for research materials.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary linguistic and cultural studies issue includes the study of "national language landscape, language consciousness, mental-linguistic complex features" [8, p. 12]. The relationship between language and culture is complex and multifaceted, which does not simply fit into the framework of the specific meaning of words. Just as culture affects language, language also creates a worldview and preserves and reproduces a set of national culture's primary, most important implications. The perception of the world by the speakers of a language is based on stable national-specific image associations and cultural constructions.

In modern linguistics, there is such a thesis that each language embodies a specific ethnocultural philosophy. It is generally accepted that this philosophy manifests itself in the semantics of language units. Each language and its ethnic core is a network of rare structured elements with meanings and associations.

A shared culture characterises each ethnic group. E. Zhanpeisov, in his work "Ethno-cultural vocabulary of the Kazakh language", writes about this in detail: "The main carriers of ethnic properties, the ethnic layer of culture, in general, are everyday consciousness, everyday language and traditional common culture" [21, p. 3]. Indeed, the language and culture of each nation reflect a whole era, where the history and culture of the people are transmitted to us through its rich and accurate language. About the genealogical side of the language, about its cognitive function, A. Karagulova wrote: "In the language of any ethnic group (people, population or nation), the pattern of the whole passed life is complex. The real existence and knowledge of the people's world, rather an ethnos, remains only in its language. All information about the names and descriptions of any object, about social relations, phenomena, customs, and traditions could reach the next generation only through the language, more precisely through words, phrases, phraseological units, as well as proverbs, sayings, legends, fairy tales" [7, p. 21].

It is known that everyday life, customs, traditions, craft (formed in the national consciousness and needs), and culture of any people living on earth for centuries describe the natural world inherent in it (dishes, clothes, tools and labour). To explore this wild world means to learn the history of the people. "The terms of material culture reflect the most important side of human activity – the production of natural goods (food, clothing and housing)" [13, p. 192]. Cultural and everyday detail is one of the main elements of creating a national colour. In addition, if it is incorrectly interpreted or ignored and neutralised, the translation may result in another work that does not correspond to the original in perception and sometimes in content. When reading literature in translation, speakers of other cultures develop a specific opinion about a particular nation. In this case, the translator is faced with the duty of preserving in translation all the cultural features of the people captured in the original work.

Culture is developed in the conditions of the spiritual unity of the ethnos, its national unity. Language embodies the uniqueness of the people, ethnic culture, and outlook. There are no two identical national cultures in the world. Even W.von Humboldt said that "by its essence, in terms of its effect on consciousness and feelings, different languages are different worldviews... In language, we always find a combination of the nature of the native language and the character of the people, which the language accepts" [6, p. 370-373]. The influence of the nature of language on the subjective world is undeniable.

Each language is, first of all, a national means of communication, and it reflects the national-specific facts of the culture of the society it serves. Language can influence the world's perception of one or another linguistic community [14, p. 31].

A historically formed group of people can be called a single nation only if it speaks the same language and is distinguished by its cultural uniqueness. The main components of national identity are ethnic, linguistic and cultural.

"Ethnic community in the broad sense of the word can be called any conscious cultural language community formed in a certain area" [2, p.10]. The boundaries of ethnic identity are culturally conditioned [15, p. 149].

When talking about the "language of culture", we should note that it embodies the totality of all possible methods of communication that reveal ethnic specificity and materialise the nation's culture in the language [12, p. 7]. Mentality reflects the deep level of culture, which combines what is in consciousness with what is not in consciousness. It is the basis of a stable system of ideas and meanings rooted in the consciousness and behaviour of many generations.

According to W.von Humboldt, the worldview is rooted in every language. Each language describes what belongs to the people, and it is possible to get out of it by passing from one to another; the language of the people is its soul, and its soul is its language.

Language is, above all, a tool for the transmission of ideas. It is not the reality itself but only the speaker's idea of this reality, which is imbibed in his mind. The reflection of language and reality is direct. It is through thinking. It is a language that fulfils the role of a mediator between the world of things and the world of language. That is why it is

impossible not to touch on the triad "language – culture – mentality" when conducting research within the framework of linguocultural studies, as linguocultural studies "live communication processes, the relationship between linguistic expressions that move synchronously in the mentality of the people" [17, p. 218]. Language is the primary custodian of ethnocultural information and its carrier and a means of expressing specific aspects of ethnic mentality.

With all this in mind, we should note that there are many debates about the concepts of "mentality" and "mental capacity", and we will try to explain how we understand these concepts. Scholars have divergent opinions about these concepts. Some state that mentality and mental capacity are synonymous concepts, while another part separates these concepts. However, they do not specify a clear definition between them. In our opinion, separating these concepts is difficult because of their abstractness and vagueness.

The researchers noted that the mentality, as a relatively holistic set of thoughts, beliefs, and skills of the spirit, creates a picture of the world and strengthens the unity of cultural tradition and society [3, p. 284; 4, p. 30, 35, 38-39]. These ideas are determined by the geographical environment, space-time ideas, way of life, gender stereotypes, attitude to nature, work, property, power, notions of good and evil, beauty and truth, fate, life and death, and constitute the structure of the mentality [5].

It is difficult to give a precise definition of the concept of mentality. The French historian J. Le Goff proposed accepting the spread of this term not to lose all the richness associated with its ambiguity. In the concept of mentality lies the nation's character, its specific outlook expressed in the cultural concepts of the language. In our opinion, mentality is a partial embodiment of mentality. That is, if mental capacity is a set of all perceptions of the world that surrounds us, the mentality is a practical embodiment of these perceptions (in this or that situation, the collective association, prejudices, typical models of behaviour).

According to W. von Humboldt, the nation's character leaves its mark on the surface of its language, which "embodies the unity of the moral spirit of the people" and retains the uniqueness of the entire nation. The language is an expression of a particular view of the world. It is not just a reflection of the people's ideas [6, p. 348-349].

Many scientists think it is impossible to understand mentality as a carrier of language "from the inside". Its evaluation can only be done "from the outside". However, it is impossible to learn or copy a foreign mentality. This is explained by the fact that mentality is the moral orientations and structures created and acquired by a person in the socialisation process, considering the characteristics of the cultural-historical period. In works devoted to mentality, it is also emphasised that it has a systematising character: a system of features and characteristics naturally interconnected based on a single essence. This system is formed under the influence of objective factors of historical development. In this regard, the mentality is defined as a system of stereotypes of thinking, sensory-emotional reactions, behaviour and activity, which is an expression of a particular method of hierarchically associated priorities and values, determined, in turn, by relatively constant geographical, geological and social conditions of life. Researchers distinguish various forms of manifestation of mentality: the mentality of the individual, the mentality of the social group, the mentality of specific historical eras, and the mentality of the ethnic group (people, nation). In contact with a foreign language, we try to perceive it through the prism of native mentality, which inevitably leads to the distortion of cultural attitudes inherent in this language in a certain sense. In other words, it is necessary to be born and finished in that culture where the mentality was created and preserved for centuries. We can only approach understanding this or that worldview through studying the language that is the transmitter of this culture.

The ethnic mentality is the primary form of the mindset of any socio-cultural formation since all other forms of mentality are specific modifications of the ethnic mentality. Therefore, all of the above characteristics of the mentality are characteristics of the ethnic mentality. There is a relatively common point of view in the cultural and philosophical literature, according to which the ethnic mentality has a dual nature. On the one hand, these are psychological, sometimes subconscious, natural, biological, and on the other hand, social and cultural, instilled by upbringing principles that are in unity and integrity.

S. Ter-Minasova rightly noted in her work "Language and Intercultural Communication" that all components of the "language – culture – thinking" triad reflect the natural world and, in a certain sense, influence its formation. From his

standpoint, the objective world can be presented in three forms:

- a map of the natural world that exists outside of human consciousness and does not depend on objective reality;
- a cultural (conceptual, conceptual) map of the world that is objectified at the level of consciousness, formed based on human imagination, and is the reflection of the actual picture in the prism of concepts;
- the world language mapping – the reflection of reality through the world's cultural landscape in linguistic facts [18, p. 40].

Mentality and the linguistic mapping of the world are interconnected and conditional. Therefore, the linguistic landscape of the world forms a unique sphere of cultural existence.

In addition to the concept of "language mapping of the world", there are concepts of "conceptual mapping of the world" and "ethnic (national) mapping of the world" in linguistics. Scientists believe that the conceptual view of the world is a broader concept than the concept of the language view, so "the view of the world is a way of drawing the world in one's imagination. It is a more complex phenomenon than the language view of the world. That is, the conceptual world of a person is related to language, and the language patterns are part of it. Everything that a person understands and knows that passes through different sensory organs and enters the human brain through different channels from the outside may not take a verbal form" [9, p. 41]. That is, the conceptual landscape of the world is the system of knowledge and ideas of a person about the surrounding world, the mental reflection of the nation's cultural experience, and the world language mapping is its verbal embodiment. However, the conceptual mapping of the world does not fully reflect the originality of the ethnic mentality, which fully manifests itself only at the level of the linguistic mapping of the world. The definition of the conceptual and language view of the world as a part and the whole does not seem right to us. In our opinion, we can talk about interaction and action here so that one is the output of the other and complements the other.

Because of the development of linguistic thought, the scientific world has come to understand that the linguistic picture of the world is formed from verbal units that reflect cultural, ethnic, and cognitive phenomena in people's lives. However, the

dual nature of the language mapping of the world lies in the fact that the material world surrounding people affects their behaviour, forms consciousness and especially language. On the other hand, people's knowledge of the world occurs through their native language and native speech. In addition, language begins to influence and determine a person's consciousness [10, p. 209].

Each language reflects and organises objective reality in its way, which is common to all its carriers in the system of collective views. The worldview reflects the carriers' naive ideas about the objective reality from the experience of self-perception accumulated for several centuries, which allows it to play the role of a connecting chain between the natural and language worldviews. A human looks at the world through the prism of his individual experience and the prism of collective experience. Each nation bears traces of a particular matrix related to a specific refraction of reality through consciousness. In the elements of civilisation, the matrix traces are brighter than others, manifested in the specificity of culture. In other words, the picture of the world, especially the picture of language, is ethnically specific. However, it is necessary to distinguish the linguistic and ethnic mapping of his world. Unlike the first, the second is purely national and is the object of ethnolinguistics rather than lingua-cultural studies. The linguistic mapping of the world is not limited to one language framework.

The linguistic mapping of the world is simply a conditional reflection of reality and an incomplete reproduction of mental relations in the lexical units of the language. For a complete and adequate understanding of the world image, it is essential to have empirical knowledge about reality, familiar to all speakers of one or another natural language [19, p. 64-72]. In mentality, certain national stereotypes are preserved from generation to generation and are the basis of the changing worldview in general practice.

The view of the world is abstract. Language is essential for its "physical realisation". With the help of speech, it transforms into a world language mapping. And therefore, world language mapping embodies the reflection of the world in language.

World language mapping consists of values encoded in the associative-image complexes of language units. Decoding cultural codes are only related to interpreting the given complexes by ap-

pealing to cultural signs and concepts that define them [14, p. 32].

A language community's representatives have a common background knowledge that contains certain cultural information. Considering this fact, we can say that the language mapping of the world is culturally and ethnically marked. The worldview of a particular ethnic community is determined by the socio-historical conditions of its life, which is directly reflected in the choice of language actualisation. However, how the language chooses to reflect the surrounding reality, in turn, has a particular influence on ethnic self-awareness and the way of life of the language community.

The essential function of language is the cumulative function. It allows for storing and collecting all the language community's experience in the language. It manifests itself more brightly at the linguistic level, as the language's vocabulary reflects fragments of the people's social experience in daily life activities. Therefore, A.A.Leontyev rightly noted that: "It cannot be denied that spoken in two different languages, signifying the same object in the culture of two peoples, and having a translation equivalent two words are inevitably associated with different contents, and this allows us to talk about the 'national meanings of linguistic signs'" [11, p. 143].

Undoubtedly, the mentality is reflected in language at both the lexical and grammatical levels. In each nation, each word has a specific semantic filling – there are unique associations of figurative thinking conditioned by cultural meanings. They are consolidated in the language system and constitute its national specificity. Ethnic self-consciousness, first of all, is based on the native language. Learning another language includes mastering the collective consciousness of the speakers of this language and understanding the linguistic mapping of the world.

As we know, every language is a self-contained system. Language is a natural convention and potency. It can say anything if someone wants to and can understand it.

However, it should be said that not all languages can realise this potential to the same extent. It can be assumed that the language behaviour of a nation or an ethnic group is closely related to the characteristics of its national mentality, psychopathic, social and cultural aspects.

Ethnocultural philosophy finds its expression in language. The national view of the world is re-

flected in the semantics of language units through the system of meanings and associations. Words with unique cultural, specific meanings reflect the language collective's way of life and thinking characteristics [16, p. 88]. The nominative units manifest the importance of specific cultural institutions for this or that linguistic and cultural society [14, p. 30]. Thus, the national specificity in the semantics of the language results from the cultural and historical characteristics of the people – extralinguistic factors.

## CONCLUSIONS

The problem of the relationship between ethnic and national culture is the problem of the relationship between the "roots" and the modern culture of people. Ethnic culture is not only the historical foundation of national culture but also the source of creativity, creating a national culture in the narrow sense of the word. Writers borrow plots and images from it; composers borrow melodies and rhythms; architects borrow style and ornament, design of buildings. The originality of the "world" of any national culture largely depends on its many centuries of emerging traditions.

The ethnic mentality is the historically established and stable organic integrity of the socio-psychological characteristics and traits of this ethnic community (people, nation), its constituent groups and citizens, existing at a recognised and unconscious level, which determines the uniform, specific for each community type of world perception, axiological assessment, behaviour and self-identification.

Like any ethnicity, nationality is determined by the self-consciousness of the individual. Suppose the original ethnic affiliation depended on the origin of a person, his historical roots. In that case, national association is primarily associated with including an individual in a given national culture's semiotic and value field and a sense of belonging to it.

The national culture is not limited to ethnicity. In the narrow sense of the word, national culture is urban culture. Its wealth develops based on writing and education. It is embodied in literature and art, science and philosophy, socio-political and technological development of society. The best achievements of national culture are the product of the creativity of the most talented representatives of science, enlightened erudite people.

## REFERENCES

1. Alefirenko, N., & Zolotykh, L. (2002). *Problemy frazeologicheskogo znachenija i smysla (v aspekte mezhurovnevnogo vzaimodejstvija)* [Problems of phraseological meaning and sense (in the aspect of interlevel interaction)]. Astrakhan: Publishing house of the Astrakhan state ped. university (in Russian).
2. Arutyunov, O., & Cheboksarov, N. (1972). Peredacha informacii kak mehanizm sushhestvovaniya jetnosocial'nyh i biologicheskikh grupp chelovechestva [Transmission of information as a mechanism for the existence of ethnosocial and biological groups of mankind]. *Rasy i narody*, 2, 8–30 (in Russian).
3. Belik, A. (1999). *Kul'turologija. Antropologicheskie teorii kul'tur* [Culturology. Anthropological theories of cultures]. Saint Petersburg: RGGU (in Russian).
4. Gurevich, A. (1984). *Kategorii srednevekovej kul'tury* [Categories of medieval culture]. Moscow: Iskusstvo (in Russian).
5. Gurevich, A. (1988). Izuchenie mental'nosti: social'naja istorija i poiski istoricheskogo sinteza [The study of mentalities: social history and the search for historical synthesis]. *Sovetskaja jetnografija*, 6, 16–25 (in Russian).
6. Humboldt, V. (1985). *Jazyk i filosofija kul'tury* [Language and Philosophy of Culture]. Moscow: Progress (in Russian).
7. Karagulova, B.S. (2017). *Jevoljucionnye processy v leksiko-semanticheskoj sisteme kazahskogo jazyka (na materiale proizvedenij istoricheskikh zhanrov)* [Evolutionary processes in the lexical-semantic system of the Kazakh language (based on the works of historical zhanrs)]. Makhachkala: Aprobasiya (in Russian).
8. Krasnykh, V. (2002). *Jetnopsiholingvistika i lingvokul'turologija: kurs lekcij* [Ethnopsycholinguistics and linguoculturology: a course of lectures]. Moscow: ITDGK Gnosis (in Russian).
9. Kubryakova, E. (1981). *Tipy jazykovyh znachenij: Semantika proizvodnogo slova* [Types of linguistic meanings: Semantics of a derived word]. Moscow: Nauka (in Russian).
10. Kushakova, I.I. (2015). Lingvokul'turologicheskij aspekt formirovaniya jazykovej kartiny mira (na materiale frazeologicheskikh edinic lingvokul'turologicheskogo polja "Aliments faits de farine" v sovremennom francuzskom jazyke) [Linguistic and cultural aspect of the formation of the language picture of the world (based on phraseological units of the linguocultural field "Aliments faits de farine" in modern French)]. *Vestnik filologija*, 2, 208–215 (in Russian).
11. Leontyev, A. (1977). *Nacional'no-kul'turnaja specifika rechevogo povedenija* [National-cultural specificity of speech behavior]. Moscow: Nauka (in Russian).
12. Myl'nikov, A. (1989). Jazyk kul'tury i voprosy izuchenija jetnicheskoj specifiki sredstv znakovoj kommunikacii language of culture and issues of studying ethnic specifics of means of sign communication]. In *Jetnograficheskoe izuchenie znakovyh sredstv kul'tury* (pp. 7–37). N. d. (in Russian).
13. Nasipov, I. (2009). Finno-ugorskie zaimstvovaniya v bytovoj leksike tatarskogo jazyka [Finno-Ugric borrowings in everyday vocabulary of the Tatar language]. *Uchennye zapisi Kazanskogo universiteta. Serija Gumanitarnye nauki*, 151, 190–198 (in Russian).
14. Oparina, E. (1999). *Jazyk i kul'tura* [language and culture]. Moscow: INION (in Russian).
15. Orlova, E. (1994). *Vvedenie v social'nuju i kul'turnuju antropologiju* [Introduction to social and cultural anthropology]. Moscow: MGIK (in Russian).
16. Oshchepkova, V. (2004). *Jazyk i kul'tura Velikobritanii, SShA, Kanady, Avstralii, Novoj Zelandii* [Language and culture of Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand]. Moscow-Saint-Petersburg: GLOSS / KA-RO (in Russian).

17. Telija, V. (1999). Pervoocherednye zadachi i metodologicheskie problemy issledovanija frazeologičeskogo sostava jazyka v kontekste kul'tury [Primary tasks and methodological problems of studying the phraseological composition of the language in the context of culture]. In *Frazeologija v kontekste kul'tury* (pp. 13–24). N. d. (in Russian).
18. Ter-Minasova, S. (2000). *Jazyk i mezhkul'turnaja komunikacija* [Language and intercultural communication]. Moscow: Slovo (in Russian).
19. Vorkachev, S. (2001). Lingvokul'turologija, jazykovaja ličnost', koncept: stanovlenie antropocentričeskoj paradigmy v jazykoznanii [Linguoculturology, linguistic personality, concept: the formation of an anthropocentric paradigm in linguistics]. *Filologičeskie nauki*, 1, 64–72 (in Russian).
20. Yakovleva, E. (1994). *Fragmenty rusškoj jazykovoj kartiny mira* (Modeli prostranstva, vremeni i vosprijatija) [Fragments of the Russian language picture of the world (Models of space, time and perception)]. Moscow: Gnosis (in Russian).
21. Zhanpejsov, E. (1989). *Jetnokul'turnaja leksika kazahskogo jazyka* [Ethnocultural vocabulary of the Kazakh language]. Alma-Ata: Nauka (in Russian).