

The Genesis and Development of The Concept of Linguocultural Codes

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Received: 13 February 2026; **Accepted:** 10 March 2026; **Published:** 31 March 2026

Abstract: The genesis and development of the concept of linguocultural codes. today, the issue of linguocultural codes has become one of the most relevant areas in studying the relationship between language and culture. this research comprehensively examines the history of the origin of the concept of linguocultural codes, its scientific and theoretical foundations, and the stages of its current development. furthermore, the national-cultural characteristics of codes are revealed based on the mutual integration of ethnolinguistics, linguoculturology, and cultural studies.

Keywords: Linguocultural codes, genesis, development, language and culture, ethnolinguistics, national-cultural characteristic, cultural studies.

Introduction: Linguocultural codes are an important concept widely used in modern linguistics, ethnolinguistics, semiotics, and cultural studies. This concept serves to systematize the relationship between language and culture. The concept of linguocultural codes developed rapidly within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, which was formed at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries on the basis of placing the human factor in the foreground. Linguocultural codes are a mechanism by which a person perceives and regulates the world. Knowing them helps to understand culture more deeply. Their genesis relies on semiotic and relativistic theories, while their development is closely connected with societal changes. Classifying and analyzing these codes is a primary task of ethnolinguistics and is of great importance in studying the complex relationship between language and culture. They manifest the mutual connection between language and culture, serving as a "key" in the processes of meaning-making, interpretation, and communication. This concept essentially refers to the role of language in the cultural and social context of people. Linguocultural codes are

not static but dynamic; they change continuously under the influence of societal development, globalization, and new technologies. Codes are measured by the frequency of reuse and universality of words in a language. While cultural meaning was initially interpreted in separate lexemes at the initial stage, it was later systematically analyzed within the framework of stable units, texts, and discourses.

The stages of development in researching cultural codes can be defined as follows:

1. Descriptive stage – recording cultural signs at the lexical level.
2. Systematization stage – grouping codes and creating their typology.
3. Interpretative stage – linking codes with discourse, pragmatics, and cognitive models.
4. Interdisciplinary stage – reinterpreting codes in the context of media, digital communication, and globalization.

Regarding the operating mechanism of linguocultural codes, they manifest in language in two ways:

1. In their proper meaning, as names of realities important for culture, for example, Qadr Night (Night of Destiny), Navruz holiday.

2. In a metaphorical meaning, in the capacity of a "cultural sign" within phraseological units, proverbs, sayings, and syntactic constructions. For example, in the poetic line "Har tuning Qadr o'lubon, har kuning o'lsun Navro'z" (Alisher Navoiy), it expresses the meanings of being precious, wise, and full of grandeur (1), and full of joy (2). Harmonizing the literal and figurative meanings of the terms Qadr and Navro'z mentioned in the poem does not pose difficulties for representatives of the culture, as they are familiar codes for them.

Cultural codes are multifaceted tools that govern national thinking, regulate social relations, and ensure succession between generations. Codes belonging to a specific ethnic culture manifest in close connection with the fundamental ontological nature of language and its multifaceted social functions. The semiotic function of language forms the theoretical foundation for the formation of cultural codes as linguistic signs and their activation in speech. According to its structure, this function encompasses three important aspects: semantics – the figurative meaning of the cultural code hidden within the linguistic unit; syntactics – the mutual relationship and connection of these codes with other signs in the language system; and pragmatics – the use of signs by language speakers and thereby introducing them into the sphere of active speech activity. Cultural codes come into motion on the basis of this very semiotic triad, bringing forth the various linguocultural and social functions of language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of the theory of linguocultural codes has been significantly contributed to by representatives of the Russian linguistic school, such as V. V. Krasnykh, V. V. Maslova, D. B. Gudkov, M. L. Kovshova, V. Shakhovsky, and others, with specific research having been conducted within Russian linguistics (Suvorova, 2010; Boldyreva, 2008; Melnikova, 2011; Danilova, 2007; Koroleva; Shuralyov; Khayrullina, 2016).

S. V. Ivanova outlines the following conditions as the basis for studying language units from a linguocultural perspective:

1. language serves as the object of linguocultural research and functions as the expression of the

linguocultural code;

2. language and culture are two inseparable parts of the linguocultural code, operating as an interrelated complex;

3. the execution of the linguocultural code role by language is ensured by the influence of the cultural component;

4. the linguocultural component serves as an indicator of the cultural sign of language units, meaning it indicates the existence of language as a linguocultural code;

5. the linguistic personality is the bearer of the linguocultural code;

6. data within the consciousness of the linguistic personality is arranged based on a specific system, and due to this systematic structure, identifying signs inherent to national culture becomes easier;

7. various methods of linguistic analysis make it possible to determine the impact of the cultural component across the entire linguistic space (Ivanova, 2003).

S. V. Ivanova's conception clearly defines the intersection point of linguistics and cultural studies. According to her, studying language is the process of uncovering the meaning of the national cultural code systematized within the individual's consciousness. Ivanova's approach demonstrates that cultural influence exists across the entire linguistic space, while linguistic analysis methods serve to reveal how deeply culture has permeated the language system.

The term "code" was introduced into linguoculturology by the Russian linguist V. N. Teliya, who defines the term as follows: "A cultural code is a taxonomic substrate of texts. This substrate is a collection of culturalized ideas about the worldview of a given society—natural objects, artifacts, and phenomena included in it, actions and phenomena identified within it, mental facts, and spatio-temporal or quantitative-qualitative measures characteristic of these entities" (Teliya, 1999). According to her, cultural codes are typically realized in sacred texts, paremias, metaphors, and phraseological units because they possess a high degree of symbolism.

V. N. Teliya connects the concept of code with the archetypal layer of culture. In her view, language units serve as the vehicle that preserves cultural codes and

transmits them from generation to generation. The scholar draws particular attention to phraseological units as a crucial link in this process. Today, linguocultural codes are also studied within the framework of psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics.

A linguocultural code is a method of culturally interpreting the world. It represents the values, traditions, and concepts of a particular people embedded into language units (phraseological units, proverbs, metaphors). Codes possess a specific hierarchical structure, where each object or concept is actualized as the unique code of a given people, though some codes possess a universal character. Linguocultural codes serve as "cultural foundations" that demonstrate how speakers within a specific culture perceive and evaluate the world. Studying them helps to understand the mentality of the people speaking that language. They encompass semiotic systems, rules, stereotypes, and strict social norms reflected in language, inherent to a particular culture, and used in social communication. Through linguocultural codes, we can comprehend the worldview, values, customs, and thinking style of a nation.

The roots of the theory of linguocultural codes trace back to the semiotic teachings of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce, who studied signs and systems in their mutual relationship. Ferdinand de Saussure's study of language as a system, followed by Charles Peirce's semiotic theory, demonstrated that language is a system of signs. If culture is a system of social agreements and the interaction of conscious and unconscious activities and norms, the social status of semiotics manifests in signs—habits shaped into specific molds and norms that appear within these agreements and activities (Allayarova, 2012).

The idea put forward by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf that "language determines a person's way of perceiving the world" confirmed the active role of language in forming cultural codes.

One of the first scholars to introduce the concept of code into the context of culture was Roland Barthes. He drew attention to signs, codes, and myths—hidden meanings lurking behind familiar words, images, and objects. Analyzing texts, he viewed them as a system of "cultural codes", proposing the revolutionary idea that everything is a text, and any text can be read as a

structure of signs. This implied that books, advertising products, movies, clothing, food, football, and television—everything surrounding a person—could be analyzed (<https://femuse.education/rolan-bart-semiotika-moda>).

In his work "Mythologies", R. Barthes uses the term "myth" in a broad sense as a form carrying figurative, symbolic meaning, interpreting the concept not in the sense of ancient Greek legends, but as hidden ideological signs in modern society: "Mythological speech is a message. It does not have to be oral; it can be a letter or an image—written speech, photography, cinema, news reports, sporting events, spectacles, and advertising can all serve as material vehicles for a mythological message. The essence of a myth is determined neither by its theme nor by its material vehicle, because any object can be filled with arbitrary meaning" (Barthes, 1989).

According to R. Barthes, a myth is a method of presenting a certain idea as natural. He calls myth a "secondary semiotic system", relying on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of signs:

1. First degree — language: a word and its literal meaning (e.g., "rose" as the name of a plant).
2. Second degree — myth: the social meaning loaded onto this word (e.g., "rose" as a symbol of love). Thus, the original meaning recedes into the background, and it transforms into a weapon carrying a new social content.

R. Barthes's choice of the term "myth" was not accidental. Through this word, he accurately expressed the working mechanism of contemporary culture, pointing out that the essence of ancient myths was wrapped in the mask of "naturalness" Ancient myths (such as legends about Zeus or Aphrodite) seemed to people to be "absolute truth" explaining the creation and order of the universe, and no one questioned Zeus's existence—it was accepted as natural. R. Barthes argues that modern myths work in the exact same way, turning history into nature while people believe in it. At the same time, through the idealization inherent in myths, advertised items begin to be viewed as symbols possessing some kind of attractive power. In conclusion, by using the term "myth" R. Barthes intended to explain that modern culture is actually built on illusions and hidden symbols, much like the era of ancient legends. In

our view, the term “myth” used by R. Barthes expresses a meaning close to the concept of the “cultural code”.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The main characteristics of linguocultural codes can be outlined as follows:

1. Unity of language and culture. Linguocultural codes demonstrate the inseparable connection between language and culture. While language serves as the primary means of expressing culture, culture in turn influences the formation and development of language.
2. Contextual understanding. To correctly understand linguocultural codes, knowing the context in which they are used is crucial. The same word or phrase can acquire entirely different meanings in different cultures or even in different situations within

the same culture.

3. Stereotypes and cultural traditions. Linguocultural codes are often formed on the basis of stereotypes (generalized perceptions of social and cultural norms) and traditions. These pass from generation to generation through language and become self-evident in communication.
4. Semiotic feature. Linguocultural codes manifest within the system of semiotic signs (words, phrases, symbols, actions). These signs possess special meanings for a specific culture.
5. Variability. Linguocultural codes are not absolute and immutable; they can change and update as a result of cultural development and contacts with other cultures.

Main Characteristics of Linguocultural Codes

No.	Feature Name	Scientific-Substantive Essence	Manifestation Characteristics
1.	Unity of language and culture	The mutual, inseparable, and dialectical connection between language and culture.	Language is the primary tool expressing culture; culture determines the development and formation of language.
2.	Contextual understanding	The dependence of cultural code meanings on the communication environment and situation.	A single word or phrase acquires entirely different meanings across different cultures and situations.
3.	Stereotypes and cultural traditions	A database of generalized perceptions regarding social and cultural norms.	Passed down through generations via language, becoming a natural self-evident norm in communication.
4.	Semiotic feature	Reflection within the system of semiotic signs and symbols.	Words, phrases, symbols, and actions carry specific semantic meaning for a given ethnos and culture.
5.	Variability (dynamism)	The non-absolute and unfixed nature of codes.	Updated and altered due to cultural progress and contact (integration) with other cultures.

The linguistic and extralinguistic signs of linguocultural codes manifest in the following aspects:

Lexical codes. In the cultural meanings of words and phrases in a particular language. For example, words

like “mehmon” (guest), “odob” (manners), “halol” (lawful/honest), and “adabli” (polite) in the Uzbek language are deeply tied to cultural values, while words like “ota” (father), “ona” (mother), “buvi” (grandmother), “bobo” (grandfather), and “bola” (child) acquire socio-cultural content alongside their dictionary meanings.

Linguocultural codes are important for enhancing communication effectiveness. In intercultural communication, knowing linguocultural codes facilitates communication among representatives of different cultures and prevents misunderstandings. Cultural awareness helps an individual understand their own culture and other cultures more deeply. It is an important factor in establishing mutual respect and effective cooperation in international relations, business, and diplomacy. Especially during the process of learning a new language, understanding its linguocultural codes helps to grasp the essence of the language more profoundly. The relevance of this issue is determined by the transition to a new ontology in speech communication research, the shift in approach to the concept of communication, and the difficulty of achieving positive outcomes in interactions among representatives of different linguistic cultures.

As T. N. Yefimenko notes, linguocultural codes serve as a means of verbally expressing national-cultural information. According to a number of scholars such as V. N. Teliya, N. D. Arutyunova, V. V. Vorobyov, V. A. Maslova, Yu. S. Stepanov, and V. M. Shaklein, culture is manifested in the form of linguocultural codes via verbal tools as a polycode phenomenon “saturated” with cultural codes capable of changing. Thus, the linguocultural code collects and transmits culturally significant information (Yefimenko). This observation clearly and logically reveals the essence of the linguocultural code, showing that linguocultural codes are closely connected with culture. The “saturation” of cultural meanings through verbal tools confirms that language is a mechanism that preserves cultural memory and values and transmits them from generation to generation. Indeed, linguocultural codes appear as an important tool in collecting and transmitting culturally significant information.

When examining the issue of the classification of cultural codes, the principle of universality, opposed to

particularity, drew our attention. The question arises: while cultural codes express the worldview specific to a certain culture or nation, what about universal cultural stereotypes?

While each nation has its own national codes (e.g., beshik [cradle], sumalak, chopon [robe] in Uzbeks), it is important not to forget that there are also codes that acquire the same logical and emotional content for any person anywhere in the world. Linguistics possesses the concept of “linguistic universals”. It is only natural that cultural universals exist in a similar fashion.

CONCLUSION

We attempt to identify universal cultural codes based on the universality of human thought. In all languages of the world, certain human body parts serve as the same level of measure for evaluating the environment and inner psyche; for example, the heart (сердце) in all cultures is a symbol of emotion, love, kindness, and compassion: Uzbek: yuragi toza (pure-hearted), Russian: доброе сердце. The head (голова) is a symbol of intellect, leadership, and high status: Uzbek: boshliq (boss), Russian: глава государства (head of state).

Humanity evaluates its character by comparing it with nature. In this regard as well, there are commonalities across world languages regarding the symbolic meaning of certain animals, plants, or natural phenomena. For example, the flower (цветы) is a symbol of beauty, youth, and the beginning of life.

Since food is a primary need for human survival, codes associated with it evaluate the quality of life. For example, bread is the symbol of life, livelihood, sustenance, and survival in almost all peoples (Uzbek: nonini yarimta qilmoq [to deprive of livelihood], Russian: оставить без куска хлеба [leave without a piece of bread], “хлеб насущный” [daily bread]). In the sacred books of Russians, it is stated that “Bread is the most essential food for life, a means of existence”. Bread is the most necessary sustenance and means of livelihood for life. Uzbek: kunlik rizq or rizq-nasiba [daily provision]).

In the high/low (верх/вниз) antinomy related to the space code, “high” is always a sign of goodness, elevation, success, and divinity; “low” is a sign of depression, evil, and defeat. Thus, universal cultural codes indicate the common cognitive experience of humanity and the uniformity of perceiving the world

through sensory organs. However, this universal content passes through the prism of each language's inner world, the living conditions, history, and mentality of the ethnos, taking the form of unique national metaphors and expressions. Based on the aforementioned thoughts, we deemed it appropriate to introduce the term “universal cultural code” in relation to the system of linguistic and mental signs common to all or the majority of peoples, nations, and ethnicities in the world, reflecting the identical foundation of human thought. Culture, while preserving a fund of historical memory in its codes, manifests as an information supersystem ensuring feedback between the individual and the environment. This reveals the essence of linguocultural codes, which are prone to deep transformation from the perspective of socio-philosophical and cultural anthropology.

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