THE ROLE OF NATIONAL MENTALITY AND CULTURAL-ETHNOGRAPHIC UNITS IN ETHNOLINGUISTIC STUDIES

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Abstract. This paper examines the role of national mentality and cultural-ethnographic units in ethnolinguistic studies, focusing on the relationship between language, culture, and national identity. Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a repository of a nation's historical experience, collective memory, customs, traditions, and worldview. Cultural-ethnographic units, including words related to traditional customs, rituals, household objects, clothing, food, and social relationships, provide valuable information about the cultural identity of a speech community. The study discusses how such linguistic elements reflect national mentality and preserve culturally significant meanings across generations. Particular attention is given to examples from the Uzbek language, including *mahalla*, *hashar*, *dasturxon*, and *beshik*. The paper argues that the ethnolinguistic analysis of these units contributes to a deeper understanding of national identity, intercultural communication, and the relationship between linguistic meaning and cultural knowledge.

Keywords: ethnolinguistics, national mentality, cultural-ethnographic units, language and culture, national identity, cultural values, Uzbek language, linguistic worldview, traditions, intercultural communication.

Language and culture are closely interconnected phenomena that shape the

identity and worldview of a particular speech community. Language reflects not only the structure of human communication but also the historical experience, social relationships, moral principles, and cultural values of a nation. Through linguistic expressions, people preserve and transmit knowledge about their traditions, customs, beliefs, and ways of life. Therefore, the study of language provides an important means of understanding the cultural and intellectual heritage of a community. Ethnolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field that investigates the relationship between language, ethnicity, culture, and collective consciousness. It explores how linguistic units encode culturally significant information and how language reflects the distinctive characteristics of a community. Within this field, national mentality and cultural-ethnographic units occupy a particularly important position because they reveal the ways in which cultural experience is represented in vocabulary, phraseology, proverbs, and everyday communication.National mentality can be understood as a historically formed set of shared cultural orientations, values, perceptions, and patterns of social behaviour associated with a particular community. It should not be regarded as an unchanging characteristic shared identically by every individual. Rather, it represents a dynamic cultural framework shaped by historical circumstances, social interaction, regional diversity, and intergenerational transmission. The relevance of this topic is determined by the growing importance of preserving linguistic and cultural diversity in the context of globalization. The analysis of cultural-ethnographic units makes it possible to identify culturally specific meanings that may not be fully conveyed through direct translation. The study of these units is therefore significant for linguistics, cultural studies, translation, intercultural communication, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. The aim of this paper is to examine the role of national mentality and cultural-ethnographic units in ethnolinguistic studies and to demonstrate how these elements represent the cultural identity and worldview of the Uzbek people.

National mentality is an important concept in ethnolinguistic research because it helps explain the relationship between linguistic expression and culturally shaped ways of interpreting the world. It encompasses shared values, conventional patterns of behaviour, culturally meaningful symbols, and social expectations that develop through historical and collective experience.

The language of a community contains numerous expressions that reflect its attitudes toward family, hospitality, work, respect, cooperation, and social responsibility. These expressions frequently appear in proverbs, idioms, forms of address, and traditional sayings. They communicate not only information but also cultural expectations and moral evaluations. For example, Uzbek proverbs such as *"Mehnatning tagi — rohat"* ("Hard work leads to comfort") and *"Birlik bor joyda tiriklik bor"* ("Where there is unity, there is life") express the cultural importance of diligence and solidarity. These sayings represent accumulated social experience and convey principles that can guide individual and collective behaviour. Another important example is the expression *"Kattaga hurmatda bo'l, kichikka izzatda bo'l,"* which emphasizes respect for older people and considerate treatment of younger members of society. Its cultural significance lies in the expression of interpersonal responsibility and socially valued forms of behaviour. However, the interpretation of national mentality requires a careful approach. Cultural patterns should not be treated as universal characteristics of every member of an ethnic group. Differences in generation, region, social environment, and individual experience may influence how particular values are understood and practised. Ethnolinguistic research therefore examines recurring cultural meanings without reducing a diverse community to a single fixed worldview.

Cultural-ethnographic units are linguistic elements associated with the material and spiritual culture of a particular community. They may refer to traditional objects, food, clothing, rituals, family relationships, forms of social organization, and

customary practices. Such units are important because their meanings frequently extend beyond their direct lexical definitions.In ethnolinguistic analysis, these units can be classified into several broad groups. These include words for household objects, traditional clothing, food, and objects associated with family life. In Uzbek, *dasturxon* refers to a tablecloth or cloth used for serving food, but in appropriate cultural contexts it can also evoke hospitality, sharing food, and family gatherings. Similarly, *beshik*, a traditional cradle, is associated with infant care and may symbolize early childhood and family continuity. The Uzbek word *hashar* refers to a form of collective, usually voluntary work undertaken to assist individuals or benefit a community. Its cultural significance extends to mutual assistance, cooperation, and shared responsibility. This concept illustrates how a single lexical unit can encode a recognizable social practice. The word *mahalla* refers to a neighbourhood or local community and, in the Uzbek context, may also evoke networks of social interaction, mutual support, community participation, and shared responsibilities. Its meaning cannot always be fully explained by translating it simply as “neighbourhood,” because its institutional and cultural associations depend on the social context. Expressions such as *kelin salom*, referring to a traditional greeting ceremony associated with a bride in certain Uzbek communities, reflect culturally established forms of greeting, respect, and the formation of relationships between family members. The performance and interpretation of such customs may vary across regions and generations. These examples demonstrate that cultural-ethnographic units provide access to both the linguistic and sociocultural dimensions of meaning. Their interpretation requires attention to context, cultural practices, historical development, and regional variation. Cultural-ethnographic units contribute to the formation and transmission of national identity by preserving references to shared historical experiences and culturally meaningful practices. Through everyday language, individuals acquire knowledge of traditional customs, social expectations, and symbols that connect them to their communities. In the Uzbek

cultural context, hospitality, respect for elders, family solidarity, and community cooperation are frequently represented in linguistic expressions. The word *dasturxon*, for instance, can evoke more than the physical arrangement of food. In a suitable context, it may suggest welcoming guests, sharing resources, and maintaining social relationships. These associations are developed through repeated participation in cultural practices and through their representation in language. Likewise, *hashar* provides a linguistic expression for a practice in which cooperation becomes a form of social solidarity. The word therefore connects an identifiable activity with broader cultural ideas about collective responsibility and assistance.

Proverbs and idiomatic expressions also play an important role in transmitting cultural values. Their concise and memorable structures facilitate the preservation of traditional knowledge and moral principles. Nevertheless, the meanings of proverbs may change over time, and contemporary speakers may interpret them differently depending on their social and personal experiences. From an ethnolinguistic perspective, these phenomena demonstrate that national identity is maintained not only through historical narratives and formal institutions but also through everyday linguistic practices. Words, expressions, and culturally marked meanings serve as resources through which communities interpret their past and negotiate their identities in the present. Cultural-ethnographic units are particularly significant in translation and intercultural communication because culturally specific meanings do not always have exact equivalents in other languages. A literal translation may convey the basic reference of a word while failing to communicate its social, historical, or symbolic associations. For example, translating *mahalla* as “neighbourhood” may communicate its geographical meaning but may not fully represent its community functions and cultural associations in Uzbekistan. Similarly, translating *hashar* simply as “voluntary work” may omit the traditional and communal dimensions of the practice. For this reason, translators and researchers should consider several factors when interpreting

culturally marked expressions: their literal meaning, their context of use, their cultural associations, and the knowledge required for an international audience to understand them. Possible translation strategies include retaining the original term and providing an explanation, using a descriptive translation, or selecting a contextual equivalent when one is available. The appropriate strategy depends on the purpose of the text and the intended audience. The ethnolinguistic analysis of cultural-ethnographic units can also contribute to intercultural understanding. By identifying both shared human values and culturally specific forms of their expression, researchers can explain similarities and differences between communities without presenting cultural distinctions as absolute or unchangeable. Thus, ethnolinguistic research has practical applications in translation studies, language teaching, intercultural education, lexicography, and the documentation of intangible cultural heritage. The analysis demonstrates that national mentality and cultural-ethnographic units are important components of ethnolinguistic research. National mentality provides a framework for investigating shared cultural orientations and historically shaped patterns of interpretation, while cultural-ethnographic units reveal how particular aspects of collective life are encoded in language.Uzbek examples such as *mahalla*, *hashar*, *dasturxon*, and *beshik* illustrate the close relationship between lexical meaning and cultural knowledge. These units refer to identifiable objects, practices, or social arrangements while also evoking broader associations with community life, hospitality, family continuity, and mutual assistance.The study of proverbs and idiomatic expressions further demonstrates that language serves as a medium for preserving and transmitting culturally significant knowledge. At the same time, cultural meanings are dynamic and may vary across regions, generations, and social contexts. In conclusion, the systematic study of national mentality and cultural-ethnographic units contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and identity. It also provides valuable insights for intercultural

communication, translation, and the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Further research may focus on comparative analyses of cultural-ethnographic units in Uzbek and other languages, supported by corpus data, fieldwork, and contextual analysis.

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