



## ANTHROPOCENTRISM IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE


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**Abstract.** *Language has been studied from different angles such as system-structural, comparative-typological and anthropocentric paradigms during the period of historical development of general linguistics as a science. The problem of the place of human-being in language attracted linguists' interest approximately last hundred years where the role and importance of the language user is highlighted to great extent. This article discusses important issues of the connection of language, culture and human.*

**Key words:** *anthropocentrism, culture, language, world picture, linguistic personality, scientific paradigm, anthropological constant, concept*

The problem of interrelation and interconnection of language and culture has become one of the most important and disputable issues of the present-day linguistic investigations, since both of them cannot exist without one another. Determining the importance of language in the culture of any people is a rather difficult issue. Each discipline approaches this issue differently. In particular, in the literature on cultural studies, the importance of language is often assessed as follows: a) language is a mirror of culture, in which not only the real world surrounding a person is reflected, but also such phenomena as the mentality of the people, their national character, traditions, customs, system of moral norms and perception of the world; b) language is a unique repository of culture, the sum of all knowledge, including material and spiritual wealth, intellectual potential accumulated by a particular people, is stored in its language system - folklore, books, oral and written sources; c) language is a tool for transmitting culture from one generation to another, and by learning the native language, the younger generation assimilates the material and spiritual wealth and experience left by the ancestors of that nation; d) language acts as a tool for identifying objects in the surrounding world, classifying it and organizing information about it; e) language makes it easier for a person to adapt to the surrounding environment; f) language helps to correctly evaluate objects, reality and their interaction; g) language has the ability to coordinate human activities; h) language is a cultural tool (instrument) that shapes human personality, and it is through language that a person understands the mentality, traditions and customs of his people, as well as the unique cultural image of the world<sup>i</sup>.

The borrowing of the term "anthropocentrism" from philosophy in the 19th century by linguistics was fruitful, since anthropocentrism is still one of the priority scientific paradigms in the linguistic sphere, recognizing human-being as the center of linguistic reality and describing language in action taking into account its main speaker<sup>ii</sup>. A well-known Russian linguist V.A. Maslova considers the idea of the anthropocentrism of language to be a key in modern linguistics, pointing out that the goal of linguistic analysis




can no longer be considered simply to identify various characteristics of the language system, and the study of language is not possible without the center of its existence, that is, human themselves.<sup>iii</sup> Back in the 19th century, W. von Humboldt believed that the study of language is subordinated to the goal of man's knowledge of himself and his attitude to everything visible and hidden around him<sup>iv</sup>. In 1804, the outstanding German humanist thinker first suggested that language is an integral natural characteristic of man, necessary for the development and formation of his thinking, spiritual powers, worldview <...> since man thinks, feels and lives only in language and, therefore, is first formed through language. This position found a response in the research of the French linguist E. Benveniste, who, considering linguistic phenomena from the perspective of anthropocentrism, that is, studying language in the process of its implementation, in his article "On Subjectivity" calls the anthropocentrism of language "subjectivity", "man in language", and considers it not just a distinctive feature of language, but a necessary condition for its existence.<sup>v</sup> This paradigm reached its peak of popularity in Russian linguistics in the mid-70s of the twentieth century, thanks to the work of Yu.S. Stepanov, who, analyzing the concept of E. Benveniste, writes in the preface to his book: "Language is created according to the measure of man, and this scale is imprinted in the very organization of language; language should be studied in accordance with it. Therefore, in its main core, linguistics will always be a science about language in man and about man in language, a humanitarian science"<sup>vi</sup>. Anthropocentrism as a principle of modern linguistics in the late 80s - early 90s of the 20th century acquired not only special relevance in the field of human and language sciences, but also became fundamental in the linguo-philosophical theory of language. As a result, every theory, idea, fact, unit is passed through the prism of the human factor. A human-being is taken as the starting point in the analysis of certain phenomena and is involved in this analysis, determining its prospects and ultimate goals. The American researcher E. Sapir also studied the principles of anthropocentrism, believing that understanding language is the key to understanding man, since language "is so deeply rooted in all human behavior that there is very little left in the functional side of our conscious activity where language does not participate"<sup>vii</sup>.

Many scientists, such as Yu. K. Voloshin, S. G. Vorkachev, V. A. Maslova, I. P. Susov and others note in their research the stable formation of three main scientific paradigms, within which many linguistic concepts, schools and trends appear:

- 1) comparative-historical paradigm (based on the principle of historicism and brings to the forefront the evolutionary side of language);
- 2) systemic-structural paradigm (based on the principle of systematicity and deals primarily with the organizational side of linguistic reality);
- 3) anthropocentric paradigm (the determining factors here are the principle of activity and the functional side of the linguistic phenomenon)<sup>viii</sup>.


Thus, the anthropocentric scientific paradigm, having occupied a worthy place among other scientific paradigms, set new tasks in the study of language, and required new



methods of description and analysis of linguistic units and categories, research into the transmission of a person's world picture through linguistic units. This naturally led to the active study of man, language and culture as a whole through the subtleties of language, which are difficult to detect without comparison with other languages. For example, A. Vezhbitskaya attributes emotionality, irrationality, and a tendency toward moralizing to important semantic characteristics of the Russian language, and comparing Russian with English, she notes the frequent use of impersonal constructions in Russian speech as an indicator of a tendency toward passivity and fatalism, which is absolutely natural. M.D. Djusupov defines the anthropological constant in his research as a permanent category for humanity as a whole, and for a separate nation in particular<sup>ix</sup>.

Anthropocentrism is a universal property of language, but it can manifest itself to varying degrees and in different forms in the context of a particular culture, which, in turn, is specifically reflected in the corresponding language categories. In fact, the content plane of vocabulary is the basic material for studying the specific features of national perception, studying how thought and logical processes are involved in a particular language. In particular, comparing English and Russian, Russian and Uzbek, English and Uzbek, or any other languages, when considering lexical and structural-grammatical layers, it is possible to identify the nuances of how languages differently manifest their anthropocentric character through the prism of national and cultural specificity. For example, it is widely believed that the Russian language is more anthropocentric than English, since it is traditionally believed that Russians are more emotional and open in communication, while representatives of the English-speaking culture are more closed and reserved in expressing emotions. However, the frequency of use by the same representatives of the English-speaking culture, for example, of personal and possessive pronouns *ya-moy* (я – мой), *ty-tvoy* (ты- твой) in a free form, as well as in parenthetical constructions and with modal verbs, indicates a shift in communication towards the activity of interlocutors, and their belonging to cultures with a high level of individualism, where the expression of a person's unique personality, that is, the human factor, comes first. There is an intensive use of impersonal sentences or pronouns *we-nam* instead of pronouns *ya-mine*. The anthropocentric paradigm provides language researchers with the opportunity to study the real world picture, comprehended by them through the prism of the perception of reality by a linguistic personality; A person from the position of anthropocentrism is interpreted not only as a native speaker of a language, but also as a custodian of linguistic traditions, linguistic culture, material and spiritual values of his people and his ancestors. The linguistic personality reflects the ideological priorities of an ethnocultural group, which are transmitted genetically and in the process of socialization.

Anthropocentrism in language and culture also includes the idea that certain elements of the external world form a kind of unity with a person, are connected with him by a common destiny and mutual dependence, such as, for example, the internal connection between a person and a tree, starting from the metaphor of "a tree branch is a girl's hand or



braid” (in Russian ветки дерева – руки или косы девушки) or calling a woman incapable of giving birth a barren tree, and ending with ideas about the parallelism of the life of a person and a tree and the community of their vital forces (a tree planted in honor of the birth of a child cannot be cut down in Uzbek culture; a tree planted at the birth of a person should not “outgrow” him, etc.), as well as about the continuation of the life of a deceased person in a tree. Thus, the world picture surrounding native speakers is not simply reflected in the language, it also shapes the language and its speaker, and determines the features of linguistic embodiments.

The combination of cognitive and cultural research focus of the late 20th century and to this day has brought to the forefront the personal, individual characteristics of the linguistic personality as an important component of studying the problem of human in language. The latest concepts, formed and described using the tools of biology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, cultural studies, and other sciences, have changed the point of view on the traditional approach, enhancing the importance of the individual characteristics of the linguistic personality.

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