

## LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY: ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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## LINGVISTIK NISBIYLIK: TIL VA MADANIYAT O'RTASIDAGI MUNOSABATLAR HAQIDA

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## ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНОСТЬ: О ВЗАИМОСВЯЗИ ЯЗЫКА И КУЛЬТУРЫ

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**Abstract.** By analyzing English and Uzbek wedding terms, this study explores the intricate interplay between language and culture, looking at how language patterns affect thought, how culture determines language use, and how multilingualism influences cultural identity. Currently, among the most important subjects on which linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers are engaged is human communication. Language is the most crucial tool for human communication; for this reason, language and culture, as well as their mutual interaction, are quite crucial. Culture and language are inextricably linked; they both profoundly impact and shape one another. Language serves as a fundamental medium of communication, transmitting information while embodying the values, beliefs, and traditions of a society. Language facilitates the acquisition of cultural norms, the expression of identity, and the transmission of collective knowledge across generations. The manner of speech, word selection, and linguistic structure of individuals all mirror the cultural context in which they reside.

**Keywords:** culture; language; W. Humboldt's view; reality of the nation; cultural spirit; the hypothesis of Sapir and Whorf; wedding words in English and Uzbek.

**Annotatsiya.** Ingliz va o'zbek to'y atamalarini tahlil qilish orqali ushbu tadqiqot til va madaniyat o'rtasidagi murakkab o'zaro aloqalarni o'rganadi, tildagi iboralarining tafakkurga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishini, madaniyat til qo'llash usullarini qanday belgilab berishini hamda ko'p tillilik madaniy identitetga qanday ta'sir qilishini tahlil qiladi. Hozirgi kunda insoniy muloqot masalasi lingvistlar, antropologlar, psixologlar

va faylasuflar shug'ullanayotgan eng muhim mavzulardan biri hisoblanadi. Til inson muloqoti uchun eng muhim vositadir; shu sababli til va madaniyat, shuningdek, ularning o'zaro ta'siri nihoyatda muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Madaniyat va til bir-biri bilan uzviy bog'liq bo'lib, ular bir-biriga chuqur ta'sir ko'rsatadi va bir-birini shakllantiradi. Til asosiy aloqa vositasi sifatida xizmat qilib, nafaqat ma'lumot uzatadi, balki jamiyatning qadriyatlari, e'tiqodlari va an'analarini ham o'zida mujassam etadi. Til madaniy normalarni o'zlashtirish, identitetni ifodalash va avlodlar o'rtasida jamoaviy bilimlarni uzatish imkonini beradi. Shaxslarning nutq uslubi, so'z tanlovi va lingvistik tuzilmalari ularning yashayotgan madaniy kontekstini aks ettiradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** madaniyat; til; V. Gumboldt qarashi; millat voqeligi; madaniy ruh; Sepir va Vorf gipotezasi; ingliz va o'zbek tillarida to'y so'zlari.

**Аннотация.** В статье анализируются английские и узбекские свадебные термины, а также сложное взаимодействие между языком и культурой. Рассматривается, как языковые модели влияют на мышление, как культура определяет использование языка и как многоязычие влияет на культурную идентичность. В настоящее время среди наиболее важных тем, которыми занимаются лингвисты, антропологи, психологи и философы — человеческое общение. Язык является важнейшим инструментом человеческого общения, поэтому язык и культура, а также их взаимодействие имеют важное значение. Культура и язык неразрывно связаны, они глубоко влияют друг на друга и формируют друг друга. Язык служит основным средством общения, передавая информацию, воплощая ценности, убеждения и традиции общества. Язык способствует приобретению культурных норм, выражению идентичности и передаче коллективных знаний из поколения в поколение. Манера речи, выбор слов и языковая структура отражают культурный контекст, в котором проживают люди.

**Ключевые слова:** культура; язык; В. Гумбольдт; реальность нации; культурный дух; гипотеза Сепира – Уорфа; свадебные слова на английском и узбекском языках.

## Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a rise in the use of diverse languages, driven by the progress of globalization, migration, and technological advancements. In today's globalized society, language serves as a vital tool for connection while also playing a significant role in expressing identity, shaping cultural understanding, facilitating learning, and enabling social interaction. As bilingualism and multilingualism progress within society, individuals are increasingly capable of expressing their thoughts more comprehensively and significantly, resulting in a heightened use of language and culture. Linguaculturology has emerged as an essential strategy for effectively navigating diverse and interconnected societies.

Language and culture are deeply entwined and provide the basis of human communication and growth in society. Linguaculturology, an interdisciplinary science examining how language reflects, shapes, and distorts cultural values, traditions, and worldviews, emerged from the study of their connection. Language carries cultural identity, historical

memory, and social conventions rather than only a means of communication. Likewise, by determining its meanings, phrases, and usage among various societies, culture shapes language. Understanding the connection between language and culture is essential for promoting cross-cultural communication and avoiding misinterpretation in a society going more global and where bilingualism and multilingualism are more common. Linguaculturology studies how language components- such as idioms, metaphors, and speech patterns- are ingrained with cultural relevance, therefore exposing the ways in which individuals view and understand the world via their native languages. By means of analysis of their interactions, influence, and contribution to the development of cultural and linguistic identities, this research seeks to investigate the function of language and culture in linguoculturology.

Language reflects cultural, historical, and personal identity rather than only a means of communication. Language is the road map of a culture, Rita Mae Brown said once; it indicates its people's whereabouts as well as their backgrounds. This comment emphasizes the great link between language and the cultural narratives of civilizations. By use of language, cultural knowledge is passed on from one generation to another, therefore conserving historical narratives, social conventions, and group identity. Simultaneously, culture impacts the evolution of language, therefore affecting vocabulary, phrases, and even the communication's framework.

Language marks cultural identity, supports group membership, and differentiates many groups. It is fundamental in social interaction, narrative, rituals, and customs, all of which support cultural continuity. The dynamic interaction between language and culture keeps changing as globalization, migration, and digital communication cause society to get more multilingual. Particularly, the media has a major influence on language trends and cultural impressions. Hence, it is a great tool in modern society.

Language constitutes a component of culture, while culture embodies an element of language; the two are inextricably intertwined, rendering their separation detrimental to the value of both language and culture. The attainment of a second language, aside from specialized, instrumental learning, also entails the assimilation of a second culture. Culture can be defined as the knowledge acquired from others, either via direct instruction or by observing their behavior. As we acquire our culture from our surroundings, we may presume that we share it with others, especially when utilizing language.

This passage underscores the complex interaction between language and culture, examining how language patterns affect thought, how culture determines language use, and how multilingualism influences cultural identity by analyzing English and Uzbek wedding words.

The significance of the issue of "language and culture" was initially articulated by several prominent linguists. Language, according to W. von Humbolt, is the nation's spiritual emanation. He mentions the objective reality of the nation and cultural spirit in his works. The following fundamental concepts were outlined by W. von Humboldt:

- 1) Material and spiritual cultures are manifested through language.

2) Each culture possesses a national character that is expressed in language.

3) The language of a specific culture serves as an expression of the “national spirit.” In his works, the relationship between language and culture is examined at the level of individuals or communities [Гумбольдт 1984]. S. G. Ter-Minasova asserts that language reflects culture [Тер-Минасова 2000], while N. Chomsky posits that language fundamentally shapes thought [Voegelin 1958]. R. Jakobson highlights that different cultures utilize language variably according to context and necessity [Jakobson 1988]. Edward Sapir asserts that language does not exist independently of culture, which encompasses the socially inherited collection of practices and beliefs that shape the very basis of our existence [Sapir 2012]. D. Hymes emphasizes the importance of the social functions of language and the role of discourse in shaping cultural identity [Hymes, 1974]. P. Bourdieu argues that language is intrinsically linked to power, social class, and culture [Bourdieu 1991]. R. M. Brown asserts that language wields an unseen influence akin to the moon’s effect on ocean tides [Ashurova 2019]. U. V. Bromley asserted that language is equivalent to culture as a cognitive framework and, importantly, as a means of communication [Бромлей 1975]. K. Risager asserts that language functions as a vehicle for acquiring and preserving culturally significant knowledge [Risager 2006]. D. Ashurova observes that culture is an inherently inclusive phenomena that permeates nearly all facets of human existence, including languages [Ashurova 2019]. Uzbek linguists like N. Mahmudov [Mahmudov 2012], A. Nurmonov [Nurmonov 2012], and Sh. Safarov [Safarov 2008] sought to shed light on the ethnocultural aspects of the Uzbek language. Their works embody the national perspective, manifested in the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the Uzbek language, encompassing themes of values and mentality. These researchers have made substantial contributions to the comprehension of the interplay between language and culture.

First, defining what culture is can help one to understand how language and culture are entwined. Culture is among the most important ideas in social-humanitarian thinking. E. Taylor describes culture as a complex of information, beliefs, art, laws, ethics, conventions, and other abilities and habits acquired by a human being as a member of society, therefore providing the first definition of culture in scientific literature [Tylor 1871]. Thus, we might consider culture as a set of “game rules” for collective life, a collection of social experience modes kept in the social memory of a community, and which are created by individuals for socially meaningful practical and intellectual tasks. Learning rather than inheriting genetically, culture norms call for significant intellectual and volitional work to grasp a country's culture.

K. Harutyanyan defines “culture” as the collective ideas and assumptions regarding the essence of objects and individuals that we acquire upon joining social organizations [Harutyunyan 2011]. Culture is described as “socially acquired knowledge”. We cultivate consciousness of our knowledge, and consequently our culture, only after acquiring language. The specific language acquired through cultural transmission

equips us, at least initially, with a pre-existing framework for categorizing our surroundings and experiences.

It is thought by scholars that a man can only be considered a human being if he is exposed to his nation's language and culture from an early age. The nuances of a nation's culture are reflected in its language, which is distinctive and unique in its perspective on the world and its inhabitants; hence, language constitutes a form of human activity. It constitutes a significant facet of general culture, defined as the aggregate of human activity across several domains: industrial, social, and spiritual. However, the study of "language and culture" possesses a rich historical background, stemming from linguistics' early focus on their interplay and correlation. Despite considerable scholarly endeavors, numerous questions persist unresolved, such as "culture shapes language" or "language shapes culture".

Language, according to American academics Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, shapes the mind. This idea is sometimes referred to as "linguistic relativity" or the "Sapir — Whorf Hypothesis" [Whorf 2013]. This theory implies that the language patterns people employ shape their view and interpretation of their surroundings. For instance, depending on their language, different civilizations classify time, space, and colors in different ways, therefore illustrating how linguistic variety results in distinct cognitive frameworks. For example, in most countries of the world, people differentiate the colors blue and green. However, the Himba people of Namibia have numerous terms for different shades of green, but they do not distinguish between blue and green. This makes it difficult for them to tell some shades apart that English speakers can tell readily. In addition to this, Cultural factors significantly influence language, as demonstrated by the observations of Humboldt's adherents, E. Sapir and B. L. Whorf, who noted that the Eskimo language contains approximately less than 30 terms for snow, suggesting a heightened sensitivity to the nuances of this phenomenon. Both anthropologists and linguists have demonstrated that snow is a significant element in the Eskimo language [Ashurova 2019]. Furthermore, classical Arabic purportedly contains more than 5500 terms for camels. Natives of the Sahara possess more than 200 terms for dates and 20 distinct expressions for dunes, while the Zulu language contains 39 words for the color green. As it mentioned above, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, or linguistic relativity, posits that language shapes thought and perception. Although it has significantly impacted linguistics and cognitive science, it also faces various criticisms: the strong version (linguistic determinism) asserts that language entirely dictates thought; however, research indicates that individuals can conceptualize ideas even in the absence of specific linguistic terms [Iwamoto 2005]. Cognitive science research indicates that language affects thought processes, yet it does not entirely limit them. The hypothesis posits a direct correlation between linguistic differences and cognitive differences, potentially oversimplifying the intricate interplay between language, thought, and culture. Various factors, including environment, education, and personal experience, significantly influence thought beyond language. Certain concepts, such as basic emotions and spatial reasoning, seem to be universal across languages, thereby challenging the notion that language



strictly dictates thought. Research indicates that language influences color categorization; however, humans generally perceive color distinctions in a similar manner across different cultures [Aliyeva 2024]. Designing experiments that effectively isolate the impact of language from other cognitive and cultural factors presents significant challenges. Numerous individuals are multilingual and can transition between various linguistic structures, indicating that cognition is not strictly confined to a single language [Wang 2017]. Cognitive flexibility enables individuals to adjust their thought processes independent of linguistic limitations.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis underscores a significant relationship between language and thought; however, its strong version, known as linguistic determinism, is largely dismissed. The weaker version of linguistic relativity remains a topic of debate; however, contemporary research indicates that language influences thought without fully determining it. Consequently, several researchers assert that the conceptualization of these words' linguistic framework differs significantly from that in the other languages' linguistic framework. These examples indicate that language influences individuals' perceptions and interactions with the world.

### Method

In order to uncover the universal and distinctive characteristics of Uzbek cultural words associated with weddings and engagements and their English translations, we used a multifaceted strategy that integrated a range of linguistic and cultural research methodologies, procedures, and analysis approaches.

*The cross-linguistic comparison analysis* analyses linguistic properties between two languages to discern similarities and variations in word comprehension. The objective was to identify essential characteristics of cultural terminology that disclose cognitive patterns and cultural influences.

*Linguacultural analysis* examines the interplay between language and culture, highlighting the intangible cultural heritage of Uzbekistan that embodies the cultural worldview and social conventions of Uzbek society. It examines how cultural terminology, namely wedding ceremony, is influenced by the cultural context in which it is employed. The cultural and historical contexts of each language were examined to ascertain how certain events, ideas, and practices shaped the evolution of idiomatic expressions.

*The socio-cultural analysis* facilitated the identification of cultural words that embody community-centered values contingent upon the culture.

The corpus of contemporary American English (COCA) and the Uzbek national corpus has been utilized to examine the frequency and context of specific wedding-related words and phrases in Uzbek and English, serving as an excellent resource for locating wedding-related vocabulary. We utilized additional resources, including online and physical dictionaries, novels, and literary works, to elucidate the authentic meanings of wedding-related words and expressions in each language. *The*

*corpus-based methodology* guaranteed a comprehensive and representative sample of phrases employed by native speakers.

### Results

Language and culture are interwoven; words and phrases have great social and cultural connotations. The domain of weddings, where rituals, events, and relationships are expressed in terminology reflecting traditions, values, and society standards, is one of the most culturally rich domains of language. For learning both language and culture, wedding-related terms and phrases offer insight into a society's ideas about marriage, family structures, and social roles, thereby helping one. The essence of this concept is that language shapes individuals' perception of reality; consequently, speakers of different languages perceive the world distinctively. This implies that words influence thought, and it is posited that language and its structure are wholly contingent upon the cultural context in which they are situated.

Learning wedding-related terminology helps language learners to surpass simple linguistic ability and acquire a better awareness of cultural norms. Words like “bride price”, “dowry” or “wedding vows” could have diverse meanings depending on the culture reflecting historical and social influences.

The function of wedding-related words and phrases in language education and cultural understanding is investigated in this research. This study emphasizes how such vocabulary bridges language acquisition and cultural literacy, enhancing learners' understanding of both linguistic structures and societal traditions by analyzing linguistic expressions linked with weddings in many languages.

Weddings (to'y) are significant social and cultural occasions that represent community involvement, tradition, and family connection in Uzbek society. Wedding-related expressions are essential for conveying blessings, demonstrating respect, and promoting social norms. Of course, there are ways in which culture really does determine language, in the Uzbek language, there are about less than 100 words to describe before, during and after wedding ceremony, that is indicating that they are more sensitive in perceiving the reality of wedding; and this statement aroused our interest and we have found and made a **Table 1** by using Uzbek national corpora Uzbek-English dictionaries [Мадвалиев 2006-2008; Irisqulov 2013]. Moreover, the research showed that in English and Uzbek languages the perception of “wedding” can be different for each nation and culture. That is, in Uzbek and English languages, the notion of “wedding” can be used in free-word combinations, however in English wedding-related concepts are expressed by separate lexemes.

Below is a categorized selection of basic wedding words and phrases in Uzbek culture with English translation.

Table 1

#### Basic wedding words and phrases in Uzbek culture with translation into English

No	English	Uzbek	Notes
Pre-wedding ceremony			

1	—	Sovchilik	matchmaking
2	Proposal	Qo‘lini so‘rash	making an offer of marriage
3	—	Qiz ko‘rdi	getting to know her parents and the bride’s situation at home
4	—	Non-sindirar	bridesmaids state their purpose for coming and
5	—	Oq berish	giving white material in order to wish couple’s life will be better
6	Engagement ring	Uzuk taqish	giving a ring to bride
7	—	Tog‘ora yuborish	sending some gifts to bride due to show appreciation
8	—	Jonliq olib kelish	giving sacrificial animals to an engaged girl’s parents
9	—	Qalin puli	bride-price, that is, a payment given by or in behalf of a prospective husband to the bride’s family in many cultures
10	—	Mol yoyar	bringing a perspective bride’s things to the groom’s family
11	Engagement	Fotiha to‘yi	the interval between the proposal and the wedding, representing the commitment and intention to wed [Namozova, 2021]. This is a period of enthusiasm and expectation, characterized by preparations and arrangements for the forthcoming celebration of affection
12	Bridal shower	—	a pre-wedding celebrating event in honor of the bride-to-be. The event is characterized by affection, joy, and well wishes, as friends and family convene to bestow presents upon the bride and partake in the anticipation of her forthcoming marriage
13	Bachelor party	Qiz bazmi	a celebration for the groom and his male companions to commemorate his final days of bachelorhood in English. This vibrant assembly is characterized by enjoyment, mirth, and fellowship, as the groom and his companions forge connections and establish enduring memories prior to his nuptial voyage. A pre-wedding event for the engaged girl, attended by her



			relatives and friends in Uzbek culture.
14	—	Hina qo‘yar	applying henna before a nikah to bride’s hand
<b>During wedding ceremony</b>			
15	—	Nahor oshi	traditional pilaf served during wedding ceremony
16	Wedding	Nikoh to‘yi	the apex of affection and dedication, wherein two persons exchange vows and are united in matrimony. This is a celebratory event uniting family and friends to witness the merging of lives.
17	—	To‘qqiz tovoq	giving 9 different plates to a groom, his friends and relatives
18	Wedding vows	—	The sincere vows exchanged by the pair at the wedding ceremony. These customized wedding vows embody their affection, dedication, and ambitions for their future together.
19	Throwing rice, confetti, or coins	—	a celebratory custom in which attendees bestow rice, confetti, or cash onto the newlyweds as they depart the ceremony location. These joyful actions aim to confer good fortune and blessings upon the couple as they commence their married life
20	Bridal Waltz	—	a customary dance executed by the newlyweds as their inaugural dance as a married pair. While waltzing is less prevalent today, couples frequently devise their own dance sequences to a selected tune
21	Registry office		a governmental establishment designated for the administration of civil marriage ceremonies. Couples can legally wed at a registry office, rendering it a significant venue for exchanging matrimonial vows and formally registering their union
<b>Post wedding ceremony</b>			
22	—	Nikoh o‘qish	recitation of the marriage contract by a religious officiant
23	Breaking glass	—	a ceremonial gesture commonly

			linked to Jewish nuptials, in which the groom shatters a glass with his foot. This action is accompanied by exuberant exclamations and denotes the conclusion of the ceremony and the commencement of the festivities.
24	Tossing the bouquet	—	a longstanding custom in which the bride tosses her bouquet to a gathering of unmarried ladies. The woman who catches the bouquet is said to be the next to marry, infusing the ceremony with excitement and expectation
25	Honeymoon		a romantic retreat undertaken by the newlywed couple following their nuptials. This period is designated for relaxation, adventure, and intimacy, enabling the couple to revel in the afterglow of their wedding
26	—	Kelin ko'rdi/ yuz ochdi	show bride's face to her new family
27	—	Yor-yor	Singing a special song after finishing a wedding
28	—	Mazar	bringing different plates to a new groom's family till 40 days after wedding
29	—	Kelin salom	bride's greeting ceremony to her new family
30	—	Kuyov salom	groom's greeting ceremony to bride's parents
31	—	Chaqirdi (kelinni)	calling a new bride to her parent's house
32	—	Ota ko'rdi	visiting a parent's home of a new bride
33	—	Chillaqochdi/ chillaguzaron	visiting after 40 days of marriage

From the given examples we may see that both nation's wedding related words are very different according to their customs and traditions, that is, the wide and varied vocabulary of wedding-related terms (nikoh to'yi) in the Uzbek language reflects the cultural importance of marriage in Uzbek society. Although it is difficult to determine a precise figure, there exists a multitude of phrases related to different facets of wedding traditions, rituals, and celebrations. Analysis of the cultural significance of wedding terminology in different cultures reveals that English weddings prioritize individual autonomy and romantic affection, whereas Uzbek

weddings underscore familial participation and tradition. Nonetheless, the ceremonial structures of English and Uzbek weddings are seen as significantly distinct. English marriages encompass vows, ring exchanges, and a reception, but Uzbek weddings comprise several stages, including matchmaking, religious blessings, and celebratory festivities. Moreover, language usage is also distinct. English wedding terms tend to be poetic and personal, but Uzbek phrases are more official and closely linked to societal traditions. We have utilised the corpus of contemporary American English (COCA) and the Uzbek national corpus to examine the frequency and context of specific wedding-related words and phrases in both Uzbek and English. Our findings indicate that there are approximately 10 wedding-related words and phrases in the Uzbek national corpora [<https://uzbekcorpus.uz/searchLemmaWord?search=Nikoh&csrfmiddlewaretoken=xBXGDzi3TAZMhgRj4fDBLziLEL3xP97LH8pFfm73ARucIUNcjWW2CA8rbbqjISLS>], whereas the Corpus of Contemporary American English contains around 400 to 500 words and phrases that are commonly used in daily conversation [<https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>]. This collection of words serves as a valuable resource for identifying wedding-related vocabulary.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, a crucial component of linguocultural studies, wedding-related words and expressions are a potent reflection of cultural values, customs, and social conventions. The examination of wedding terminology provides learners with insights into cultural conceptualizations of marriage, family, and social relationships. Idioms, proverbs, and ceremonial terms enhance linguistic knowledge and deepen cultural understanding, illustrating the interconnection between language and culture.

Additionally, vocabulary associated with weddings is essential in language acquisition, as it provides a context-specific understanding of societal customs and beliefs. This understanding promotes cross-cultural communication and improves linguistic competence beyond mere grammatical and lexical skills. Wedding-related terminology transcends mere linguistic units, serving as vessels of cultural heritage and identity. Their research in linguoculturology enhances the understanding of the interrelation between language and culture, emphasizing that language acquisition entails comprehension of the associated worldview and traditions. As globalization advances, acknowledging the importance of culturally embedded language elements is essential for promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

Therefore, in Uzbek tradition, wedding phrases include cultural, religious, and moral importance beyond mere words. They strengthen social connections, familial principles, and conventional knowledge, rendering them a vital component of Uzbek matrimonial traditions. These expressions function to confer blessings, offer counsel, and unify individuals during one of life's most esteemed occasions. And as researchers say, language acquisition broadens one's worldview.

Metaphors often illustrate the connection between language and culture, highlighting the essential role of language in shaping culture.

Culture can occasionally constrain our capacity to contemplate certain concepts in our own language. Consequently, language serves not just as a conduit for culture for numerous persons but also constitutes an integral component of culture itself. Despite the comfort of attendees in their new language, it is customary for immigrants in a foreign nation to preserve their traditional rituals and converse in their native language with fellow immigrants. This occurs because immigrants are fervent about maintaining their history, encompassing not only rituals and traditions but also language. Linguistic variances are often regarded as indicative of a distinct culture, usually leading to conflict among neighboring groups or even within the same nation.

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