

УДК 81

DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2021-7-1-0-3

Elena V. Bondarenko<sup>1</sup>  | **Cultural differences between the North and South of China –  
Qi Wang<sup>2</sup>  | the basis for explaining the linguistic diversity of the country**

<sup>1</sup>Belgorod State National Research University,  
85 Pobedy St., Belgorod, 308015, Russia  
*E-mail: bond-elena@yandex.ru*  
*ORCID iD: 0000-0001-7909-2910*

<sup>2</sup>Belgorod State National Research University,  
85 Pobedy St., Belgorod, 308015, Russia  
*E-mail: wq666321@yandex.ru*  
*ORCID iD: 0000-0002-4219-7927*

*Received 29 January 2021; accepted 1 March 2021; published 31 March 2021*

**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the study of a language and culture of the people's deep connections. The relevance of the work is determined by the need to study the mutual influence of language and culture on the material of the Chinese language, because the modern process of globalization leads to the fact that the peoples of different countries cooperate with China in many areas. Collaboration implies communication based on mutual respect and understanding. This requires knowledge of the culture of the country and the characteristics of its language.

The purpose of this work is to study the specifics of the semantics of culturally-marked linguistic units of different levels, especially set expressions, as a repository of knowledge about the cultural heritage of the Chinese people. The main problem of the scientific work is to identify the key linguistic and culturological features of linguistic means, in the semantics of which the cultural connotation is contained.

During the research, the method of content analysis is used, which allows to analyze the structure of the linguistic units' semantics and to identify the emergence of new connotative semes. As a result of the study, it was found out that culturally-labeled linguistic units constitute an important part of the native speakers' linguistic picture of the world. It is the analysis of culturally-marked linguistic units of different levels that helps to penetrate the culture of China and comprehend some of the values of the Chinese people.

The study of the theoretical works of Chinese cultural linguists makes it possible to briefly describe the scientific ideas prevalent in the scientific environment of China and establish the fact that Chinese scientists are actively working on the issues of the dependence of language development on cultural factors.

**Keywords:** Interrelation of language and culture; Language is a repository of knowledge about culture; Culturally marked linguistic units of different levels; Structure of semantics; Connotative semes

**How to cite:** Bondarenko, E. V. and Wang, Qi (2021). Cultural differences between the North and South of China - the basis for explaining the linguistic diversity of the country. *Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, V.7 (1), 26-32, DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2021-7-1-0-3

УДК 81

DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2021-7-1-0-3

Бондаренко Е.В.<sup>1</sup>   
Ван Ци<sup>2</sup> 

Культурные различия севера и юга Китая – основа объяснения лингвистического разнообразия страны

<sup>1</sup>Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет  
ул. Победы, 85, г. Белгород, 308015, Россия  
*E-mail: bond-elena@yandex.ru*  
*ORCID iD: 0000-0001-7909-2910*

<sup>2</sup>Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет  
ул. Победы, 85, г. Белгород, 308015, Россия  
*E-mail: wq666321@yandex.ru*  
*ORCID iD: 0000-0002-4219-7927*

*Статья поступила 29 января 2021 г.; принята 1 марта 2021 г.;  
опубликована 31 марта 2021 г.*

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена исследованию глубинных связей языка и культуры народа. Актуальность работы определяется необходимостью изучения взаимовлияния языка и культуры на материале китайского языка, т.к. современный процесс глобализации приводит к тому, что народы различных стран сотрудничают с Китаем во многих сферах. Сотрудничество предполагает коммуникацию, основанную на взаимном уважении и взаимопонимании. Для этого требуются знания культуры страны и особенностей ее языка.

Цель работы – изучение специфики семантики культурно-маркированных языковых единиц разных уровней, особенно устойчивых словосочетаний, как хранилища знаний о культурном наследии китайского народа. Основной проблемой научной работы является выявление ключевых лингвистических и культурологических особенностей языковых средств, в семантике которых выявляется культурная коннотация, заложенная в добавочных семах, содержащих добавочную информацию о культуре Китая.

Во время исследования используется метод контент-анализа, позволяющий анализировать структуру семантики языковых единиц и выявлять появление новых коннотативных сем. В результате исследования было обнаружено, что культурно-маркированные языковые единицы составляют важную часть языковой картины мира носителей языка. Именно анализ культурно-маркированных языковых единиц разных уровней помогает проникнуть в культуру Китая и осмыслить некоторые ценности китайского народа.

Изучение теоретических трудов китайских лингвокультурологов позволяет кратко описать научные идеи, распространенные в научной среде Китая и установить факт того, что китайские ученые активно разрабатывают вопросы зависимости развития языка от культурологических факторов.

**Ключевые слова:** Взаимосвязь языка и культуры; Язык – хранилище знаний о культуре; Культурно-маркированные языковые единицы разных уровней; Структура семантики; Коннотативные семы

**Информация для цитирования:** Бондаренко Е.В., Ван Ци. Культурные различия севера и юга Китая – основа объяснения лингвистического разнообразия страны // Научный результат. Вопросы теоретической и

ПРИКЛАДНОЙ ЛИНГВИСТИКИ. 2021. Т.7, № 1. С. 26-32. DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2021-7-1-0-3

### Introduction

There are many different definitions of language, but in accordance with the specifics of this study, the most optimal is the definition of language proposed by S.I. Ozhegov and N. Yu. Shvedova as a system of signs (sounds, signals) transmitting information (Ozhegov, 2013). Language is defined as a historically developed system of sound, vocabulary and grammatical means that allows people to express their thoughts and communicate. This system, that is, the native language, people begin to master from birth. L.A. Vvedenskaya wrote: «Word, speech are indicators of the general culture of a person, his development, his speech culture» (Vvedenskaya, 2011: 4).

In the Dictionary of S.I. Ozhegov, there is a definition of the concept of «culture»: «culture is the totality of industrial, social and spiritual achievements of people» (Ozhegov, 2013: 291). Covering all spheres of human life, language is an integral part of culture, one of its most important categories. Sun Jijian, a renowned Chinese researcher, points out that: «研究人员声称, 除了从整体上考虑文化 (在语言中, 语言只是一般系统的组成部分) 之外, 语言还可以影响文化并塑造人们所说的世界观» (In addition to considering culture as a whole, in which language is only an element of a general system, researchers claim that language can influence culture and shape the worldview of people speaking it) (Sun Jijian 孙继建, 2018). Language acts not only as a mean, but also is the environment in which a person is formed and lives, which determines the life experience of a nation. E.L. Golovleva notes: «a person lives as if inside the language, constantly experiencing its influence on himself» (Golovleva, 2008: 117).

### Main part

The study of the relationship between a language and culture has a long history: the

most discussed is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The essence of the theory of the American linguists is that: «language determines cognition, that is, it not only allows one to describe the phenomena surrounding a person, but also radically changes people's perception of these very phenomena, is one of the main factors in the formation of a worldview and a means of its verbal expression (Sapir, 1993: 237). Researchers draw attention to the fact that certain cognitive systems correspond to different languages. In the course of many discussions, this hypothesis is often disputed and questioned by many linguists and culturologists, however, the indication that there is a close connection between a language, culture and thinking, determines its significance, therefore the linguocultural approach to language learning is now one of the priority linguistic paradigms of the modern linguistics throughout of the world.

Analyzing this hypothesis, the Chinese linguist Wang Rui (王瑞) clarifies, that: «在该假设中, 语言的社会属性, 社会文化环境具有特殊的地位» (a special place in this hypothesis is given to the social attributes of the language, the socio-cultural context) (Wang Rui 王瑞, 2020). Language is a part of culture; it shapes the perception of the surrounding world. Cultural differences become a prerequisite for the fact that in different languages, lexemes correspond to unequal emotional and evaluative shades, which constitute a connotative meaning in the structure of semantics.

### Methods

This article is based on systematic approach to the cultural linguistics analysis. Due to the cross-disciplinary approach, we take into account the anthropocentric factor, linguistic and extra-linguistic data. To reach all the aforementioned goals of the research the following scientific methods have been used: continuous sampling method on the first

stage. Then, after detecting all the contexts of linguistic units used in English and Spanish news articles to create V. Putin's image contextual analysis, lingo-stylistic analysis and content analysis methods were applied. At the final stage of the research all the obtained results have been analyzed with the help of contrastive-comparative method and have undergone linguistic and cultural linguistic interpretation.

### Results and discussion

There are many differences in the linguistic expression of the same concepts that are found in speech among speakers of different cultures within the same state. The orthoepy of the Chinese language is not the same for the inhabitants of the southern and northern parts of the country. Due to the peculiarities of the traditions and life of the inhabitants of the southern regions, cultural phenomena fixed in the language are reflected in the inconsistency of speech norms for the inhabitants of the northern regions of the country. This state of the various variants of the Chinese language leads to the fact that residents of different regions located only in the south of China may experience serious problems in understanding each other.

It is interesting to point out that within the borders of one Ming region, there is a territorial branching of the Chinese language into dialects: Fuzhou, Xiamen, Putian and Minsky. At the same time, the geographic location and distance between regions is not always a predetermining factor in the formation of dialects: it is known that the path from the Pearl River Delta to the Hanjiang Delta takes no more than 300 km, however, residents who speak Cantonese cannot freely communicate with those who speak the Khaoshan dialect.

Under the influence of cultural differences, linguistic differences are manifested especially clearly in the process of comparing the speech of the inhabitants of the southern and northern parts of China. This linguistic phenomenon can be traced by studying the personal names of the Chinese language. Their semantic basis is made up of

Chinese characters, which are one of the means of expressing the country's ancient and rich cultural heritage. The cultural connotation embedded in the hieroglyphs reflects the difference in etymology, includes the value orientations of the Chinese people. When naming people, they try to take into account the form, sound and meaning of each element, without neglecting the beauty of the full name and its euphony. The last word that makes up the names of residents of the southern regions often ends in a high vowel «i». There are 268 such names in the south of China and only 55 – in the north of the country.

Chinese linguoculturologists clarify that: «中国南方适当居民的名字的另一个特征是它们充满鼻音。

在中国南部，比起北部，音译的专有名称要多得多，例如Zheng Jordan, Jean Kelly等»( Another feature of the proper names of the inhabitants of southern China is their saturation with nasal sounds. In the south of China there are significantly more transliterated proper names, such as: Zheng Jordan, Jin Kelly, etc., than in the north) (Ji Linzhi 吉林芝, Du Xingzhou 杜兴洲, 2014).

Linguistic differences are predetermined by the cultural factors, so there are many behavioral and worldview characteristics of the expression of thoughts by the inhabitants of the southern and northern parts of China. The northerners are more open about their point of view, while the southerners are prone to understatement, hints and paraphrasing. Another cultural difference between north and south is that: the north of the country is the birthplace of Confucius philosophy, while the south is influenced by the worldview ideas of Lao Tzu. Confucius will be quoted in the north: «不怕慢，就怕站» (I'm not afraid that I'm walking slowly, I'm afraid it will stop). It is as a result of these cultural differences that the inhabitants of the south of China will say: «所有困难的事物都起源于简单的事物，伟大的事物起源于小的事物» (All difficult



things start from easy ones, great things start from small ones). This is one of the most famous sayings of Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher, the founder of the philosophical movement of Taoism, the author of the important Taoist treatise «Tao Te Ching». These statements contain one of the most famous and revered values of Chinese culture: movement is life, development is important, if you stop, you stop developing as a person.

In addition, there are differences in all social spheres, including in the field of cooking. Ye Daifu (鄂代夫) covers the culinary traditions of the North and South. «北方人饮食的基础是大米, 而南方人的饮食是面粉» (The basis of the diet of the northerners is rice, and the southerners – is the flour) (Ye Daifu 鄂代夫, 2002). In this regard, in the speech of northerners, there are many linguistic units of different levels, which describe dishes made from rice, and among southerners – from flour.

The richness of linguistic expressions is the basis of culture enrichment and change, therefore, the language can rightfully be considered as a source of knowledge about the historical and cultural development of the civilization of the people using it. The people live on a certain territory, the culture of this people is spread and their language functions on the same territory. Studying culture and language one can come to the conclusion about their ethnic and regional characteristic features. «Language», «culture» and «territory of their distribution» are three interrelated concepts that make up a single system, therefore, the study of language and culture should include familiarization with regional characteristics and the specifics of geographic location.

Zhang Wang (张望), within the framework of colloquial speech research, insists on the need to take into account data on ethnic and territorial specifics. This is important for understanding modern Chinese expressions.

In Lujiang dialect, the classic sentence

«小乔 - 周瑜 的 妻子» (Xiao Qiao - Zhou Yu's wife) means «love, wife». Zhou Yu and Xiao Qiao are the names of the characters in the famous book «The History of the Three Kingdoms». They are from Lujiang. «周瑜是一位英勇的英雄, 一位因他的功绩而闻名的统治者, 而他温柔细心的妻子小乔成为了房屋老板的集体形象-他的妻子» (Zhou Yu was a brave hero, a ruler who became famous for his exploits, while his gentle and attentive wife Xiao Qiao became the collective image of the homemaker - his wife) (Zhang Wang 张望, 2020). Thanks to such set expressions, the language of the people becomes a source of information about their history, perpetuating their heroes and spiritually uniting them. Anchored in myths, legends, folk customs, literature, the language becomes the treasury of the national culture.

The proverbs and sayings of the Chinese people are always instructive. Many of them have survived for centuries, but they are all characterized by one specific feature: they contain the wisdom of the people, and in a condensed form teach a life lesson.

Over the five thousand years of the existence of China, its language and writing, the Chinese nation has managed to preserve national unity and multiply its rich cultural heritage. Zhu Hui (朱辉) writes: “尽管 口语在几个世纪以来发生了很大的变化, 但文学规范保留了古代的传统。这使的本理解各种重要的文本, 例如秦汉的教义, 它们吸收了民族文化的价值”(Despite the fact that the spoken language has changed greatly over the centuries, the literary norm preserves the traditions of antiquity. This allows descendants to understand various significant texts, for example, the teachings of Qin and Han, which have absorbed the values of the national culture) (Zhu Hui 朱辉, 2020).

In the process of historical development, the language and culture of the inhabitants of each district have undergone significant changes. The emergence of writing played an important role in the recording of

cultural and historical information about the state of the state, both in a specific period and in the process of its development. Writing allows you to accumulate and pass on valuable experience to future generations.

The language of a people changes with the society in which it functions. The Chinese language has undergone changes, both in its classical literary writing and in various varieties of spoken dialects. A large stream of vocabulary, philosophical terms, is included in the system of the Chinese language under the influence of the Buddhist worldview. Modern conditions for the existence of nations and the processes of globalization create conditions for the large-scale influence of the international English language on the Chinese language. At the modern level of diachrony, the Chinese language is replenished with many new lexemes, since the lifestyle of the Chinese is changing. For the same reason, some lexemes are outdated and out of use. Scientific and technological progress contributes to the growth of the number of borrowings from other languages.

«Internet上流行的是对现有单词进行修饰的示例。  
这个词素用来表达对某人的好感或敬佩，来自给力奥» (An example of a modification of an already existing word is the popular on the Internet «奥利给». This lexeme is used to convey a strong admiration for someone's appearance or work and comes from 给力奥) (Zhu Hui 朱辉, 2020). By rearranging the components, a kind of linguistic inversion, the lexeme acquires an expressive character, which makes it possible to more accurately convey the speaker's intention, filling the statement with a special emotional meaning. S.A. Prokhotskaya notes that at the same time, one should not abuse the dynamism and flexibility of the language system, since such changes are not always appropriate. For example, the language of science suffers from unnecessary complexity, an abundance of not always justified foreign language borrowings in the field of terminology (Prokhotskaya, 2005).

## Conclusion

Thus, we can assume that language is a social phenomenon, a mean of communication, it unites people on the basis of their culture. Language and culture are inseparable. Lu Xiyu states: «语言是文化的重要组成部分是大的历史经验的载文和交流的手段» (Language is an important part of culture, it is a bearer of valuable historical experience and a means of communication) (Lu Xiyu 陆思玉, 2019: 60). As S. G. Ter-Minasova notes: «The most important function of language is that it stores the knowledge about the world accumulated over centuries and transfers it from generation to generation. On the one hand, language encodes culture, but at the same time, there is no language without culture. Due to the different historical origins of each national culture, the coding of a particular language has its own unique characteristics. That is why language plays a significant role in the formation of personality, national character, people, nation» (Ter-Minasova, 2000: 79).

## References

- Golovleva, E.L. (2008). *Basics of intercultural communication*, Phoenix, Rostov on Don, Russia. (In Russian)
- Ji Linzhi (2014). 纪林芝从语言学角度看南北女性名字的文化差异 [Cultural differences between female names in the North and South from the point of view of linguistics], *Modern Chinese (Language Research Edition)*, 5, 129-131. (In Chinese)
- Kokareva, E.A. (2017). Mutual influence of language and culture, *Bulletin of the Perm State University*, 1, 39-41. (In Russian)
- Lu, Siyu (2019). 陆思宇。跨文化翻译中文化与语言的关系分析 [Analysis of the relationship between culture and language in intercultural translation], *Youth Years*, 3, 60-61. (In Chinese)

Ozhegov, S. I., Shvedova, N. Yu. (2013). *Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo jazyka: 8000 slov i frazeologicheskij vyrazhenij* [Explanatory dictionary of the Russian language: 8000 words and phraseological expressions], A TEMP, Moscow, Russia. (In Russian)

Prokhotskaya, S.A. (2005). Interrelation of language and culture, *Notes of the Mining Institute*, 160 (2), 8. (In Russian)

Sapir, E. (1993). *Selected works on linguistics and cultural studies*, Progress, Moscow, Russia. (In Russian)

Sun, Jijian (2018). 孙继建文化, 语言和外语教育的影响力之间的关系 [The relationship between the influence of cultural, linguistic and foreign language education], *Curriculum Education Research*, 41, 19. (In Chinese)

Ter-Minasova, S.G. (2000). Language and intercultural communication, Slovo, Moscow, Russia. (In Russian)

Vvedenskaya, L.A. (2011). *Russian language and culture of speech*, Phoenix, Rostov on Don, Russia. (In Russian)

Wang, Rui (2020). 王锐。语言与文化的关系 [On the relationship of language and culture], *Fashion of tomorrow*, 6, 184-186. (In Chinese)

Wei, Huijuan (2020). 魏慧娟。探索。与文化之间的多维关系 [Study of the multidimensional relationship between language and culture], *Language and Culture*, 5, 109-110. (In Chinese)

Ye, Daifu (2002). 鄂代夫。中国北方和南方 15 种文化差异 [15 Cultural Differences Between North and South China], *Collection of Party and Government Personnel*, 7, 38. (In Chinese)

Zhang, Wang (2020). 张旺口语中的谐音之美 [The beauty of homophony in colloquial speech], *News of language and literature*, 9, 23. (In Chinese)

Zhu, Hui (2020). 朱辉 语言传承化文化变迁的多维关系 [On the multidimensional relationship between language inheritance and cultural change], *Cultural Innovation Comparative Research*, 4, 82-84. (In Chinese)

**Конфликты интересов: у автора нет конфликта интересов для декларации.**

**Conflicts of Interest: the author has no conflict of interest to declare.**

**Бондаренко Елена Валентиновна**, доктор филологических наук, профессор кафедры второго иностранного языка, Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет.

**Ван Ци**, аспирант кафедры романно-германской филологии и межкультурной коммуникации, Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет.

**Bondarenko Elena Valentinovna**, PhD, Professor of the Second Foreign Language Department, Belgorod State National Research University.

**Wang Qi**, Postgraduate Student of the Romano-Germanic Philology and Cross-cultural Communication Department, Belgorod State National Research University.