

Cultural Semantics and Linguistic Worldviews: A Comparative Study of English Individualism and Russian Collectivism

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Abstract. *Language is a complex, unique sign system, a universal means of communication. Language reflects the features of history, geography, everyday life, culture and literature of the people who speak it. Thus, a cumulative function—known in linguistics as the “cultural component of the meaning of a word”—is distinguished alongside the communicative function. This function consists of storing and transmitting the extra linguistic experience of a particular linguistic community, which determines the content of extralinguistic information in a linguistic sign. In this way, language serves as a sort of intergenerational bridge, preserving and passing along people's extra linguistic experiences.*

Key words: *cultural semantics, English-speaking societies, English and Russian expressions, pragmatism and cultural diversity.*

Introduction:

The study of how cultural environment shapes meaning is known as cultural semantics. It focuses on the ways that other cultures utilize language to express their values, beliefs, customs, and worldviews. Words have relationships and cultural meanings beyond simply referring to things. In terms of the linguistic picture of the world is a potent theoretical idea that enables us to comprehend how language serves as both a tool for communication and an angle through which we see, understand, and engage with the outside world is the linguistic picture of the world. Each language contains a distinct perspective on the world that is shaped by the speakers' culture, background, and mentality. Metaphors, idioms, concepts, ideals, cognitive categories, and worldviews are all included into the language, which extends beyond vocabulary and grammar.

Within this framework, the concept of the linguistic picture of the world becomes central. It refers to the way speakers of a particular language conceptualize reality, shaped by their collective experiences, social norms, and cognitive categories. This picture is embedded in idioms, metaphors, expressions, and even grammatical choices, offering insights into the cultural psychology of a people.

The various cultural semantics of the English and Russian languages—two linguistic systems with radically different historical, social, and ideological origins—are examined and contrasted in this article. Individualism and pragmatism have a strong influence on the Anglo-Saxon viewpoint, which is particularly evident in the US and the UK. It places a strong emphasis on individual liberty, open communication, and useful results. The Russian (Slavic) worldview, on the other hand, is influenced by collectivism, emotional resonance, and communal values; language is used to strengthen bonds of understanding, solidarity, and shared identity.

Main part:

There are a number of key features and differences between the English and Russian verbal representations of the world that distinguish their separate cultural semantics.

Anglo-Saxon perspective in English

The ideals of individualism and pragmatism have a great influence on English-speaking societies, especially those in the US and the UK. These two pillars impact the structure and usage of the English language in addition to social behavior and attitudes.

➤ Individualism: Focusing on Oneself

The idea of individual liberty, self-reliance, and autonomy is central to the Anglo-Saxon worldview. Individuals are frequently urged to voice their own opinions, make decisions on their own, and accept accountability for their deeds.

This way of thinking is ingrained in the language. Think about how frequently people who speak English use expressions like:

- "I think..."
- "I believe..."
- "In my opinion..."

These phrases emphasize the speaker's unique viewpoint and support subjective assessment. The sense that one's opinions and experiences are acceptable and worthy of being expressed is reinforced by the frequent usage of the first-person singular ("I").

➤ Pragmatism: Focus on Practicality and Results

Efficiency, outcomes, and common sense are also valued in the Anglo-Saxon way of living. Direct, goal-oriented, and clear communication that prioritizes function over form is the norm.

In the active voice, "She solved the problem" is used rather than "The problem was solved by her."

Verbs that are simple and straightforward: ("Fix it," "Get it done," "Make it work")

This pragmatic tendency is also demonstrated by common English expressions:

- "Cut to the chase" refers to skipping the introduction and getting right to the point.
- "Get the job done" refers to concentrating on finishing the task, regardless of the method.
- "It is what it is" refers to accepting reality without persisting on it or overanalyzing it.

The English language reflects a worldview that emphasizes the individual as an active agency and a practical doer, particularly in its Anglo-American setting. English's common idioms and linguistic structures reflect a society that prioritizes practical action, individuality, and clarity over collectivism or abstract theory.

Collectivism and Communal Values in the Russian (Slavic) Worldview

Russian culture, and Slavic cultures more broadly, are deeply rooted in collectivist ideals — the belief that the group, the community, or the nation is more important than the individual. Centuries of history characterized by common hardships, group survival, and close familial and communal bonds have molded this worldview. Interdependence, solidarity, and collective identity are therefore essential principles.

➤ Emphasis on the Collective Over the Individual

Russian communication and cultural behavior frequently convey a sense of oneness and shared responsibility, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon emphasis on individuality and self-expression. Success for an individual is frequently evaluated by how it affects or contributes to the greater group, whether it be the family, the business, or the country.

This can be clearly observed in language. For instance:

- Even when discussing a personal experience, the pronoun "мы" (we) is commonly employed. "мы выздоравливаем" (literally, "we are recovering") is a polite method for a doctor to show empathy and support when speaking to a patient.

- Similarly, even if the speaker was not directly involved, they may use the phrase "мы победили в войне" (we won the war) to evoke collective memory and identity in political or historical discourse.

A cultural norm is reflected in this linguistic pattern: actions by individuals are frequently presented as a component of a group endeavor or identity.

- Shared Emotional Experience

The significance of forming emotional bonds via common experiences, especially adversity, is another characteristic of the Russian worldview. Instead of emphasizing individual success, Russian society frequently rewards people who persevere, make sacrifices, and help one another.

This is shown in emotional expressions that focus more on understanding between people than on personal enjoyment, like:

- "Тяжело всем, но мы справимся" ("It's hard for everyone, but we'll manage").
- "Поделим горе пополам" ("Let's share the grief equally").

The idea is not to stand out or celebrate oneself, but to belong — to feel deeply, collectively, and sincerely.

Russian language and cultural expressions reflect the Russian (Slavic) worldview, which is rooted in collectivism, emotional depth, and communal ideals. Russian communication affirms that people are a part of a larger whole and that loyalty, belonging, and shared experience are the pillars of life, whether through the use of collective pronouns or emotionally charged speech.

Conclusion:

How closely language and culture connect is demonstrated by comparing the linguistic worldviews of English and Russian. Language is a framework that people use to comprehend, classify, and emotionally connect with their reality rather than just a means of describing it. The cultural semantics that are ingrained in Russian and English draw attention to the basic distinctions between their different civilizations' interests and values.

The English-speaking Anglo-Saxon worldview is based on pragmatism and individuality. These principles encourage self-expression, directness, and clarity, forming a language that honors individual viewpoints, independence, and effective communication. English portrays a culture that encourages independent thought and workable solutions through the frequent use of personal pronouns, aggressive language patterns, and idioms focused on action and outcomes.

The Russian (Slavic) worldview, on the other hand, is based on collective identity, emotional depth, and collectivism. Russian language usage patterns that emphasize solidarity, shared experience, and social cohesion include the inclusive use of "мы" (we) and emotionally charged words. Instead of emphasizing the individual, Russian frequently aims to reinforce the resilience and fortitude of the group, particularly during difficult times.

These language and cultural differences are more than just stylistic; they influence how speakers understand the world, connect to others, and view their place in society. We can better appreciate cultural diversity and human worldviews in addition to gaining linguistic insight by comprehending the cultural semantics of other languages.

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