

**CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND NATIONAL–CULTURAL SEMANTICS IN
TEACHING SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN UZBEKISTAN**

Anastasiya Aleksandrovna Tkacheva

Associate Professor of the Department of Spanish and Italian Philology,

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages,

Candidate of Philological Sciences

E-mail: anastasi72@yandex.ru

Tel.+ 998933489185

Abstract: This article examines the role of cultural linguistics and national–cultural semantics in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in Uzbekistan. As globalization intensifies cross-cultural contact, foreign language education must move beyond grammar and vocabulary to include cultural cognition, conceptual metaphors, values, and cultural scripts embedded in linguistic expressions. The Spanish language carries a rich cultural heritage shaped by Iberian, Latin American, and indigenous traditions, making it a fertile domain for cultural-semantic analysis. For Uzbek students, understanding these cultural meanings is essential for developing intercultural competence and avoiding communicative misunderstandings. This article explores theoretical foundations of cultural linguistics, discusses culturally marked lexical and phraseological units in Spanish, and provides methodological strategies for incorporating national–cultural semantics into the curriculum. Pedagogical implications, challenges, and recommendations for Uzbek higher education institutions are presented.

Keywords: cultural linguistics; national–cultural semantics; Spanish language; Uzbekistan; intercultural competence; phraseology; cognitive linguistics

The teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in Uzbekistan is undergoing significant transformation as educational priorities shift toward the integration of cultural, cognitive, and interdisciplinary approaches. Traditional language pedagogy often focuses on grammatical accuracy and lexical acquisition; however, such approaches fail to prepare learners for real communication in culturally specific contexts. Language is not merely a system of rules but a manifestation of a community’s worldview, cognitive patterns, and cultural psychology. Cultural linguistics, which studies the relationship between language, culture, and conceptual systems, provides a valuable framework for addressing this gap in foreign language instruction.

Spanish is a highly diverse and culturally layered language, spoken across continents and shaped by different civilizations. Its semantics reflect historical processes, colonial legacies, indigenous influences, and regional variations. For Uzbek learners, the acquisition of Spanish requires not only linguistic knowledge but also awareness of cultural metaphors, communicative norms, emotional patterns, and symbolic meanings that structure everyday interaction.

A key concept in cultural linguistics is **national–cultural semantics**, which refers to culturally specific meanings encoded in linguistic units. In Spanish, words and expressions frequently convey cultural connotations that cannot be translated literally. For example, expressions involving color (“ponerse rojo,” “verlo todo negro”), family metaphors, religious references, or idioms related to honor, social hierarchy, and emotions reflect cultural models deeply rooted in

Spanish-speaking societies. Uzbek students encountering such expressions must learn to interpret them through the lens of cultural cognition, rather than relying solely on literal translation.

The phraseological richness of Spanish offers unique opportunities for cultural instruction. Idioms such as “estar en la luna,” “tirar la casa por la ventana,” or “no tener pelos en la lengua” encapsulate culturally patterned behaviors, values, and communication styles. In comparison, Uzbek phraseology reflects different conceptual structures—hospitality, spirituality, collectivism, honor codes—which creates fertile ground for contrastive cultural analysis. Highlighting similarities and differences between these systems deepens students’ understanding of both cultures and enhances metacognitive awareness.

From a methodological perspective, the integration of national–cultural semantics into teaching requires the use of authentic materials, corpus analysis, and culturally oriented tasks. Authentic texts—films, dialogues, literature, advertisements, and social media—provide culturally contextualized examples of language in use. Corpus tools allow students to observe frequency patterns, collocations, and semantic shifts. Culturally immersive activities, such as interpreting metaphors, analyzing linguistic politeness, and comparing speech acts across cultures, help students internalize cultural meanings and adapt their communication strategies.

Cultural linguistics also emphasizes conceptual metaphors as key components of cultural cognition. Spanish expresses emotions, time, social relations, and morality through culturally specific metaphors that differ from Uzbek conceptualizations. For instance, metaphors of time as a physical path, emotional intensity as bodily heat, or social respect as vertical distance shape the ways Spanish speakers conceptualize experience. Teaching these metaphors enables Uzbek learners to decode implicit meanings, avoid misinterpretation, and engage more authentically with Spanish-speaking interlocutors.

Teacher training plays an essential role in this process. Instructors must possess not only linguistic expertise but also cultural literacy and the ability to explain cultural nuances. Professional development programs should incorporate cultural linguistics, contrastive semantics, and intercultural communication. Furthermore, curricula must allocate sufficient time for cultural analysis and include learning outcomes related to cultural understanding, critical thinking, and reflective practice.

Challenges remain, including limited access to authentic materials, insufficient teacher preparation, and traditional assessment models that prioritize grammatical correctness. To address these challenges, universities should invest in digital platforms, partner with international institutions, and develop culturally informed assessment tools such as intercultural portfolios, reflective essays, and scenario-based evaluations.

The integration of cultural linguistics and national–cultural semantics into Spanish language teaching in Uzbekistan offers a transformative path toward deeper linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence. By understanding the cultural meanings encoded in language, students become more effective communicators and more empathetic global citizens. This approach strengthens the position of Spanish within Uzbekistan’s higher education system and aligns with broader educational reforms that emphasize cultural openness, innovation, and international collaboration.

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