

UDC 81'37+316.6:1

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32589/2311-0821.2.2025.351780>

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ETHNIC MENTALITY AS A COGNITIVE AND LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK: NEW DIMENSIONS

Abstract

Language, as a means of communication, also functions as a core instrument for encoding and transmitting cultural and cognitive frameworks. It embodies the speakers' worldview, value orientations, and sociocultural norms, acting as a reflection of ethnic mentality and modes of thinking. This paper synthesizes key insights from linguocultural, psycholinguistic, and social/biosocial perspectives to conceptualize the interdependence among mentality, ethnos and language. Ethnic mentality, understood as a system of culturally conditioned cognitive dispositions, shapes communicative strategies, linguistic choices, and interpretive practices. Theoretical foundations trace back to classical linguistics and philosophy of language, which emphasized the link between national language and spiritual culture. Contemporary research extends this view, highlighting mentality as a determinant of communicative norms and cultural scripts. Intercultural communication studies reveal that successful interaction in globalized contexts requires negotiating intersecting identities and cultural resources, while migration research underscores ambivalence between heritage maintenance and host-society integration. Language education research demonstrates the role of metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, evaluating in regulating second-language acquisition, linking cognitive dispositions to communicative performance. Psycholinguistic models, including mindshaping theory, argue that language not only conveys information but also structures thought, externalizing beliefs and enabling shared cognition. Stereotypes, as culturally and linguistically embedded constructs, further illustrate how mentality manifests in discourse: they organize social perception, influence pragmatic expectations, and sustain identity boundaries. Finally, conceptions of ethnos, whether social or biosocial, anchor these dynamics in historical, territorial, and cultural frameworks, reinforcing the interplay between biological, social, and symbolic dimensions. Integrating these strands provides a holistic understanding of language as both a reflection and a constitutive force of ethnic mentality and cognition, with implications for intercultural competence, educational policy, and the mitigation of communicative barriers in multilingual societies.

Keywords: ethnic mentality, linguistic behaviour, ethnos, stereotype, context, psycholinguistics, intercultural communication.

Анотація

Мова виконує не лише комунікативну функцію, а й є ключовим механізмом кодування та передавання культурних і когнітивних структур. Вона відображає світогляд, систему цінностей і соціокультурні орієнтири її носіїв, виступаючи дзеркалом етнічного менталітету та мисленнєвих моделей. У статті узагальнено результати лінгвокультурних, психолінгвістичних і соціально/біосоціальних підходів для концептуалізації взаємозв'язку, менталітету, етносу та мови. Етнічний менталітет як система культурно зумовлених когнітивних установок визначає комунікативні стратегії, вибір мовних засобів і способи інтерпретації. Теоретичні засади дослідження сягають класичних лінгвістичних і філософських концепцій, що підкреслювали зв'язок національної мови з духовною культурою. Сучасна лінгвістика розвиває цю ідею, наголошуючи на ролі менталітету у формуванні комунікативних норм і культурних сценаріїв. Міжкультурна комунікація в умовах глобалізації потребує узгодження різних ідентичностей і культурних ресурсів, а дослідження міграційних процесів виявляють амбівалентність між збереженням спадщини та інтеграцією в нове суспільство. У сфері мовної освіти важливу роль відіграють такі метакогнітивні стратегії як планування, моніторинг, оцінювання, що забезпечують регуляцію процесу навчання другої мови та пов'язують когнітивні установки з комунікативною ефективністю. Психолінгвістичні моделі доводять, що мова не лише передає інформацію, а й структурує мислення, зовнішньо репрезентуючи переконання та забезпечуючи спільне осмислення. Стереотипи як культурно й лінгвістично закріплені конструкції демонструють, як менталітет проявляється у дискурсі: вони

впорядковують соціальне сприйняття, впливають на прагматичні очікування та підтримують ідентифікаційні межі. Соціальні та біосоціальні концепції етносу закріплюють ці процеси в історичних, територіальних і культурних рамках, підкреслюючи взаємодію біологічних, соціальних і символічних чинників. Інтеграція підходів забезпечує цілісне розуміння мови як відображення та водночас чинника формування етнічного менталітету й мислення, що має значення для розвитку міжкультурної компетентності, освітньої політики та подолання комунікативних бар'єрів у багатомовних суспільствах.

Ключові слова: етнічна ментальність, лінгвістична поведінка, етнос, стереотип, контекст, психолінгвістика, міжкультурна комунікація.

Introduction. Language functions not merely as a communicative tool but as a fundamental mechanism for encoding and transmitting cultural and cognitive structures. It reflects the worldview, value systems, and sociocultural orientations of its speakers, serving as a mirror of ethnic mentality and thought patterns. As a sociocultural phenomenon, language embodies the distinctive cognitive frameworks and behavioural models characteristic of a given ethnos.

The theoretical foundation for exploring the relationship between ethnic mentality and linguistic behaviour was laid by scholars such as F. de Saussure, E. Sapir, O. Potebnia, M. Zhinkin, and O. Reformatsky, who argued that the analysis and comparison of cultures must be conducted through national languages, thereby acknowledging the intrinsic link between language and spiritual culture. Spiritual culture, in turn, is formed by national worldview and the mentality of each ethnos. The ideas of the Ukrainian linguist O. Morokhovsky on language evolution and worldview stimulated research into lexical meaning within the framework of nomination theory, functional aspects of linguistic units, and the rhetorical dimension of communication (Ізотова & Потапенко, 2024; Радзієвська, 2024; Chkhetiani, 2025).

Contemporary linguistic research increasingly emphasizes the interdependence between the mentality of an ethnic or social community and the linguistic behaviour of its members. Through linguistic units, conceptual structures, and symbolic systems, language reproduces the specificities of thought shaped by historical experience and sociocultural environment. Mentality, understood as a constellation of stable cognitive and behavioural patterns, shapes communicative strategies, influences lexical and stylistic choices, and governs the interpretation of speech acts. Examining this relationship provides deeper insight into the mechanisms underlying the formation of linguistic norms, pragmatic orientations, and stylistic preferences that define interpersonal communication.

The **aim** of this study is to examine ethnic mentality as a key factor influencing linguistic behaviour and cognitive models of thought, with a particular focus on how language reflects and reinforces ethnic consciousness. Achieving this aim entails addressing several key **objectives**: to examine modern theoretical approaches to defining the concepts of “mentality” and “ethnos”; to outline the dimensions of interaction between ethnic mentality, cognition and language; and to identify the role of culture in mediating this relationship.

The **object of this research** is ethnic mentality. The **subject of the study** comprises the interaction between ethnic mentality and linguistic behaviour.

This analytical inquiry grounds on the premise that ethnic mentality, understood as a system of culturally conditioned cognitive dispositions, determines the selection of linguistic resources and communicative strategies manifested in specific models of language behaviour. Despite the considerable body of work devoted to individual aspects of linguistic behaviour, the systemic influence of mentality on communicative practices remains insufficiently explored, which underscores the **relevance** of this linguistic investigation. The absence of clear criteria for describing this relationship complicates the analysis of how cognitive dispositions shape linguistic choices across social contexts, the

development of effective models for intercultural communication, and the prediction of communicative barriers. This study is particularly relevant in the context of globalization, intercultural dialogue, and the preservation of national identity.

The **methodology** combines several approaches to construct a holistic explanatory model. It includes:

- conceptual analysis to define key constructs such as *mentality*, *ethnos*, and *stereotype*, examining their interpretations across disciplines to identify both convergences and divergences;
- comparative literature review to trace thematic patterns and map conceptual overlaps between linguocultural and psycholinguistic frameworks;
- descriptive and interpretive techniques to outline the defining features of the studied notions;
- interdisciplinary integration to situate linguistic phenomena within broader cultural and cognitive contexts.

Together, these methods enabled the development of a comprehensive and integrative explanatory model.

Results and discussion. Current research on the interplay between ethnic mentality and linguistic behaviour encompasses several key directions.

Ethnic Mentality and Linguocultural Dimensions of Communication under Globalisation and Migration

Scholars in this field examine the integrated role of ethnic mentality and culture in shaping linguistic practices and communicative models. Social factors such as globalization, ethnic identity and status act as additional determinants of language behaviour, thus changing the nature of communication. Safari (2024) emphasizes that language not only reflects but also shapes worldview, while cultural attitudes influence cognitive processes and communicative strategies. The findings suggest that the deliberate selection and application of particular linguistic elements may reflect underlying cultural conceptualisations or cognitive schemas, thereby reinforcing the view that language is profoundly shaped by cultural influences. The author highlights the role of linguistic relativity and cultural norms in modelling behaviour.

Within this approach, researchers also explore how national mentality is reflected in linguistic worldviews, cultural norms, and communicative practices. For instance, Mannish (2024) analyses how the concept of “cultural identity development” became central to minority education programs in Sweden. The “Home Language Reform” guaranteed children the right to learn in their native language. Language policy for minorities is viewed as a space for linguistic practice that negotiates political and social legitimacy. Language thus becomes both a tool for preserving cultural mentality and an object of political ideologies. Since minority language behaviour is closely linked to mental dispositions and cultural expectations, policies supporting native languages foster identity preservation but may also generate tensions between integration and autonomy.

Furthermore, this research direction investigates how differences in ethnic mentality affect intercultural interactions, the emergence of communicative barriers, and strategies for overcoming them.

Baker (2024) conceptualizes communication as a dynamic process in which cultural differences become salient for participants in interaction. Successful intercultural communication, according to this view, requires recognition of the intricate interrelationship between language, speakers’ mentality, and cultural practices. The study demonstrates that the development of communicative competence in a globalized context involves mobilizing and negotiating diverse cultural resources and languages while navigating intersecting

identities, communities, cultural references, and meanings such as nationality, ethnicity, social class, profession, gender, sexuality across multiple levels from local to global.

Polychroniadou and Panicacci (2025) examine the experiences of 65 German immigrants in Greece, focusing on their linguistic and cultural practices and emotional attitudes toward their native language. High socialization in German and pride in its use foster a strong sense of belonging to their heritage culture. Conversely, socialization in Greek and positive attitudes toward their native language create a robust psychological attachment to Greek society without severing ties to German culture. Immigrants experience ambivalence: positive emotions associated with linguistic acceptance coexist with stress arising from cultural antagonism. While striving to preserve German cultural identity, they simultaneously seek active integration into Greek society, as proficiency in Greek reduces social distance but does not eliminate cultural barriers.

Mentality and Language Learning

Research in this domain underscores the importance of considering learners' mental dispositions in shaping effective communicative practices. Here, mentality is interpreted narrowly as an individual's way of thinking and perceiving the world. Cai (2024) investigates metacognitive strategies – deliberate mental actions employed by learners to regulate their own learning, including planning, monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting. In language learning research, these strategies are viewed either as a distinct category alongside cognitive and communicative strategies or as part of strategic competence, a core component of communicative language proficiency. Metacognitive strategies are critical for all aspects of second language acquisition: vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Sun, Zhang and Carter (2024) define metacognition as a key concept for understanding how individuals become aware of and regulate their cognitive processes. Metacognition is multidimensional, reflecting individual differences, and comprises three interrelated components:

- Metacognitive knowledge is information stored in long-term memory about oneself, tasks, and strategies;
- Metacognitive experience is thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and judgments arising during task performance;
- Metacognitive strategies are general skills for planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning.

These components operate interactively, ensuring regulation and control of cognitive activity.

Mentality and Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistic models provide insight into how culturally conditioned cognitive schemas shape the selection of linguistic strategies. Scholars in this domain examine the influence of speakers' cognitive and psychological characteristics on speech behaviour, communicative strategies, and text interpretation.

Vierkant (2024) emphasizes that mentality affects the cognitive processes underlying language production and comprehension. Traditional Gricean theories of language evolution posit that the emergence of language presupposes communicative intentions and the ability to process nested metarepresentations. However, this assumption raises the question of how pre-linguistic beings could possess such advanced mental capacities. The concept of "mindshaping" offers an alternative perspective: language not only transmits information but also shapes thought (the cognitive conception of language). Words function as external carriers of internal beliefs, enabling individuals and others to perceive and interpret mental states. Vierkant suggests that language evolution may have originated not

from communicative intentions but from mindshaping processes, with language gradually becoming a tool for cognitive organization rather than mere information exchange.

To gain a profound understanding of the key directions in the interplay between ethnic mentality and linguistic behaviour, it is essential to explore the concepts of “mentality” and “ethnos”. Contemporary scholarship reveals a lack of consensus regarding the interpretation of the term “mentality”, as well as the absence of a unified terminology. Ukrainian scholars use the term “МЕНТАЛІТЕТ” referring to the collective mindset, worldview, or psychological characteristics of a group, such as a nation, culture, or social community. In studies of social psychology, sociolinguistics, social history, cultural anthropology, and social anthropology the term “МЕНТАЛЬНІСТЬ” traditionally functions emphasizing individual cognitive or psychological traits, or the internal mental structure that shapes perception and thinking.

American philosopher R. W. Emerson used the term “mentality” to express the interconnection between metaphysical and psychological dimensions of societal attitudes. In recent studies, mentality is generally understood as the specific way in which a social group perceives and interprets the world. Scholars define this perception either as a conscious process or as a combination of conscious and subconscious elements (Штепа 2019; Kihlstrom, 2022; Hvorecký et al., 2024).

Modern research identifies links between mentality and sociocultural phenomena, as well as the spiritual life of an ethnos, therefore explaining the intertwining nature of ethnic mentality. Thus, ethnic mentality is viewed as a set of psychological traits, traditional worldview, and modes of perception formed in the process of ethnogenesis, an ethnic type of conscious and subconscious worldview and understanding of the world, which determine behavioural stereotypes, psychological reactions, evaluations of certain events, and attitudes toward the surrounding environment (УТБЕНКО, 2017, с. 96).

Investigating the features of ethnic mentality requires analysis of behaviour, intellectual patterns, and emotional responses of members of an ethnic community. Ethnic mentality is characterized by openness and incompleteness, while both individual and collective consciousness play a crucial role in its formation. Although mentality is subject to change, these changes occur gradually, which allows us to consider it as comprising relatively stable structures of an ethnos’s spiritual life.

The way the world is perceived determines patterns of action, and the content of mentality expressed in the distinctive traits of an ethnic group manifests itself in verbal and non-verbal cultural practices as well as behavioural stereotypes. Mentality shapes behavioural models and directly influences linguistic behaviour, such as directness, emotionality, and politeness. It also serves as a source of stereotypes, which function as expectations of certain communicative behaviours.

Ethnic mentality and Stereotypes: Cognitive and Linguistic Dimensions

A new stage in research on the relationship between ethnic mentality and linguistic behaviour was marked by Walter Lippmann’s seminal work *Public Opinion*. At the centre of his analysis are stereotypes – simplified representations that constitute an integral part of mentality as a mode of world perception. These stereotypes operate at both individual and group levels. Lippmann notes that systems of stereotypes at the individual level may become the core of personal tradition and a means of safeguarding one’s social position. They form an ordered, coherent picture of the world in which habits, tastes, abilities, pleasures, and aspirations coexist. Although stereotypical worldviews may be incomplete, they represent the world to which the individual adapts. Stereotypes guarantee self-respect, project a sense of personal significance onto the external world, and protect one’s social status and rights (Lippmann, 2004, pp. 52–53).

The term *stereotype*, derived from the Greek *stereós* (“solid, firm”) and *týpos* (“form, imprint”), was metaphorically reinterpreted and began to be used in the 19th and 20th centuries to denote members of social groups – gender, racial, class-based, professional, or criminal – united by a set of shared (often pejorative) characteristics. A key means of identifying many social groups is stereotypical jargon or sublanguage (Allan, 2006).

We define stereotype as a culturally mediated, systematically organized, and relatively invariant cognitive construct constituting a segment of the collective worldview, that encapsulates the outcomes of a community’s epistemic engagement with reality and functions as a schematized, conventionalized representation, serving as a prototypical matrix for conceptualizing objects, events, or phenomena.

Contemporary scholarship adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the study of stereotypes, enabling the identification of multiple dimensions of the phenomenon. Modern research distinguishes three major approaches to stereotype analysis: sociolinguistic, ethnocultural, and linguocognitive.

Stereotypes as Cultural and Linguistic Constructs

Depending on the classification criteria, stereotypes are categorized as social, personal, familial, gender-based, age-related, national, religious, consumer, political, racial, professional, and others. Positive and negative stereotypes play a significant role in social development, reflecting favorable or hostile attitudes of community members toward social objects.

The social dimension of stereotypes is complemented by a linguistic component, their verbal realization, making stereotypical linguistic features of various social groups an object of scholarly inquiry. The concept of stereotype is closely linked to connotations (additional meanings) of linguistic units, which originate from encyclopedic knowledge of their denotation (stable core meaning) as well as from experience, beliefs, and biases associated with the contexts in which these units occur (Allan, 2006).

The interconnection between *ethnos*, mentality, and language can be studied through linguistic stereotypes that serve as communicative instruments promoting cohesion within a cultural community and expressing its distinctive cognitive patterns. Linguistic and mental archetypes constitute the essential and foundational framework, whereas linguistic manifestation, shaped by ethnopsycholinguistic factors, mirrors the mental consciousness of members of a particular ethnocultural group.

Beukeboom and Burgers (2019) stress that language not only signals which social categories become targets of stereotyping but also serves as a primary vehicle for transmitting stereotypical information. Stereotypes can lead to significant societal issues, including prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict, particularly when category boundaries are perceived as rigid and members as highly similar and possessing immutable characteristics.

Dahlberg-Dodd (2025) analyzes how “Mock Foreigner” speech in Japanese media functions as an ideological construct that reinforces linguistic stereotypes and positions white foreignness as the default identity through exaggerated portrayals of non-native speakers. Thus, negative stereotypes may lead to confrontation and conflicts while positive stereotypes consolidate individuals within a sociocultural system, enabling the differentiation of “us” versus “them”. Linguistic stereotypes may play a constructive role in preserving traditional features of national culture, yet under certain conditions, they can lead to extreme forms of exclusion, including genocide.

Ethnos as a Core Attribute in the Study of Mentality and Linguistic Behaviour

Across diverse scholarly approaches that prioritize different components in analysing the relationship between mentality and linguistic behaviour, the concept of *ethnos* is

consistently regarded as an essential and inseparable attribute. The science of language and linguophilosophy at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries recognized the necessity of understanding and investigating the spiritual essence of human language, its synergistic, ethno- and anthropocentric nature (Бацевич, 2009, с. 168), thereby emphasizing the importance of research aimed at uncovering the interconnection between ethnos, mentality, and language in contemporary studies.

Modern scholarship identifies two principal approaches to defining ethnos: social and biosocial. Proponents of the social approach argue that the core of the concept lies in features representing cultural unity and shared consciousness. Other significant characteristics include territorial commonality, as well as economic and political cohesion. The widely accepted concept of ethnos proposed by British philosopher and ethnologist Anthony D. Smith assigns a decisive role to the social factor. According to the researcher, the fundamental attributes of national identity include:

1. a historic territory, or homeland
2. common myths and historical memories
3. a common, mass public culture
4. common legal rights and duties for all members
5. a common economy with territorial mobility for members (Smith, 1991, p. 14).

In later works, Smith formulates the attributes of ethnos as:

1. a proper name;
2. common myths of ancestry;
3. shared memory;
4. cultural differentiation;
5. connection to a homeland;
6. elite solidarity (Smith, 2010, p. 14).

Through the social perspective we define ethnos as a social community – a group of people united by common origin, culture, language, a distinct name, and an awareness of their unity, as well as their difference from other groups. Thus, ethnos is viewed as a social collective that distinguishes itself from others primarily through the recognition and acceptance of characteristic attributes that simultaneously unite its members and differentiate them from outsiders. From the standpoint of social influence, the features that define ethnos and pertain to culture form several layers: everyday life (customs, habits, behavioural stereotypes, tastes), linguistic communication, and self-identification.

The Biosocial Approach to Ethnos and Its Implications for Language Behaviour

The biosocial approach to defining ethnos integrates biological and social factors. Biological components include the evolutionary development of the community, anthropological characteristics of the population, and the natural-geographical conditions of ethnic territories. Social factors encompass self-identification and differentiation from other collectives, historical development, social organization, economic activity, and the specificity of everyday life, traditions, customs, and culture. The subjective dimension of ethnos is represented by the awareness of each member that they belong to a distinct community, their **ethnic self-consciousness**. The features a community uses to distinguish itself from others may vary in nature – anthropological (physical), behavioural, linguistic, religious or customary. The objective component of ethnos is constituted by shared culture.

Conclusions. The interrelation of ethnic mentality, cognition, and language constitutes a complex and dynamic system, wherein each component mutually influences and reinforces the others. In the context of contemporary globalisation and intensified migration processes, these interdependencies are subject to significant transformation. Global flows of people, ideas, and cultural practices contribute to the reshaping of ethnic identities and mental

frameworks, often leading to hybridisation or reconfiguration of traditional cognitive and linguistic patterns. So, ethnic mentality is a relatively stable yet evolving system of culturally conditioned cognitive dispositions that shapes the worldview, communicative and language behaviour, and emotional responses of an ethnic community, encompasses traditional psychological traits, patterns of thought, and perception formed through the historical process of ethnogenesis.

Consequently, it becomes possible to delineate distinct features of ethnic mentality as they manifest in the modern world, reflecting both enduring cultural legacies and adaptive responses to transnational influences. Ethnic mentality emerges during the process of ethnogenesis, forming as an integral component of an ethnic group's spiritual life. It encompasses a traditional worldview, psychological traits, and characteristic modes of perception that define collective identity. This mentality significantly influences language and communication, determining linguistic choices, communicative strategies, and behavioural models in social interaction. Moreover, ethnic mentality reflects typical behavioural stereotypes, emotional responses, and intellectual patterns, shaping evaluative attitudes toward events and the surrounding environment. It functions as a culturally conditioned cognitive system – a set of dispositions formed under the influence of traditions, values, and historical experience. Acting as a mediator between culture and individual behaviour, it ensures continuity within sociocultural dynamics.

Although ethnic mentality is relatively stable and evolves gradually, it remains open and incomplete, susceptible to transformation under external influences. Its development results from the interaction of collective and individual consciousness, where shared cultural memory and personal experience intertwine. Thus, ethnic mentality represents a complex, dynamic phenomenon that underpins the worldview, communication, and behavioural patterns of an ethnos while maintaining adaptability in the face of changing sociocultural conditions.

The research confirms that ethnic mentality is a key determinant of communicative practices, influencing cognitive mechanisms, cultural scripts, and interaction strategies. These findings underscore the necessity of integrating linguocultural and psycholinguistic approaches to achieve a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Future research should focus on the linguistic behaviour of speakers as shaped by the shared cultural norms, values, and historical experiences of their ethnos, emphasizing the ways in which ethnic mentality influences language use and cognitive patterns. This involves investigating the impact of ethnic mentality on the formation of linguistic models and communicative strategies, examining how speakers employ language within diverse ethnic communicative contexts, and studying linguistic performance across various types of discourse. Such inquiries will contribute to a deeper understanding of the interrelation between cultural identity, cognitive frameworks, and language behaviour in both monolingual and multilingual environments.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

No artificial intelligence tools or materials were used in the manuscript.

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Дата надходження до редакції 09.09.2025
Ухвалено до друку 18.11.2025

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