



## IMAGE IS AN ELEMENT OF LINGUOCULTUROLOGY

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### ABSTRACT

*This article explores the notion of “image” as a key analytical category in linguoculturology. It examines the term’s historical development, semantic complexity, and application in various disciplines, including linguistics, literary criticism, semiotics, and cultural studies. The paper pays special attention to the linguistic and cultural image as a mental-linguistic construction that reflects the worldview and cultural values of an ethnos. Through comparative analysis, the article demonstrates how the image of the horse functions differently in English and Uzbek cultural contexts, emphasizing its symbolic, archetypal, and national representations. The study concludes that the image, being multilayered and culturally coded, must be understood not only as a linguistic unit but also as a bearer of collective memory, tradition, and identity.*

### Introduction

*Image* is one of the most common-and ambiguous-terms in modern literary criticism. Brooks and Warren define it as “the representation in poetry of any sense experience.”<sup>1</sup> Another handbook defines it as “a mental picture evoked by the use of metaphors, similes and other figures of speech.” In his “*New Art of Poetry*”, Hugh Kenner says that images are “what the words actually name”<sup>2</sup>; an image is “a thing the writer names and introduces because its presence in the piece of writing will release and clarify meaning.”<sup>3</sup> There are thus at least three bases for definition: an image may be that which is sensuous, or figurative, or particularly meaningful. Nor does image have a syntactic dimension. It may be a noun, adjective, adverb, or verb. It may be a simple term, such as “a dome,” or it may be a complex set of terms, such as “Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, / Stains the white radiance of Eternity.”<sup>4</sup>

The word *image* is of Latin origin and goes back to the noun *imago* (n. p. *imago*), which in Latin meant *image, likeness, reflection, representation, portrait, ghost*.<sup>5</sup> This term is related to the verb *imitārī* - to imitate, from which the English *imitate*<sup>6</sup> also comes. Thus, the original

<sup>1</sup> Brooks C. & Warren R.P. Understanding poetry, third edition, 1938

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2871916>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2871916>

<sup>4</sup> Frazer R. The Origin of the Term “Image” // College English. – 1959. – Vol. 21, No. 7. – P. 385–389.

<sup>5</sup> Ernout A., Meillet A. Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots. Paris: Klincksieck, 2001. P. 305.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/word/image>



meaning of the word implied not just visual reproduction, but also the idea of imitation, imitation of something that already exists in reality. In the Middle Ages and Early Modern times, the Latin *imago* became actively used in theology and philosophy, for example, in the expression *imago Dei* - image of God, denoting the spiritual and moral likeness of man to God<sup>7</sup>.

*Images* are one type of the broad category of *signs* proposed by Peirce.<sup>8</sup> Although his ideas are complex and have changed over time, the three categories of signs that he distinguished stand out:

The *icon*, which relates to an object by resemblance to some quality of the object. A painted or photographed portrait is an icon by virtue of its resemblance to the painting's or photograph's subject. A more abstract representation, such as a map or diagram, can also be an icon.

The *index*, which relates to an object by some real connection. For example, smoke may be an index of fire, or the temperature recorded on a thermometer may be an index of a patient's illness or health.

The *symbol*, which lacks direct resemblance or connection to an object but whose association is arbitrarily assigned by the creator or dictated by cultural and historical habit, convention, etc. The color red, for example, may connote rage, beauty, prosperity, political affiliation, or other meanings within a given culture or context; the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman claimed that his use of the color in his 1972 film *Cries and Whispers* came from his personal visualization of the human soul.

An image is a key analytical unit in linguacultural studies, acting as a link between language, thinking and culture. In the linguacultural approach, an image is understood as a mental-linguistic construction through which ideas about the surrounding world that are significant for native speakers are fixed and transmitted in the language. It not only reflects typical ways of perceiving and interpreting reality, but also serves as a carrier of cultural values, ideals and social attitudes.

The definitions of *image* and *literary image* are of scientific interest. The notion of "image" is polysemantic and is widely used not only in linguistics, but also in a number of sciences, such as philosophy, history, literary criticism, anthropology, psychology, mythology and art criticism.

According to Ozhegov's explanatory dictionary, *image* is

- 1) appearance, appearance;
- 2) in a work of art: type, character;
- 3) in art: a generalized artistic reflection of reality, clothed in the form of a specific individual phenomenon<sup>9</sup>.

T. F. Efremova interprets *image* as the appearance of someone, something as a literary reflection of ideas and feelings in sound, word, colors, etc.; as a generalized character, type created by an artist<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Imago Dei The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotic\\_theory\\_of\\_Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce#II.\\_Icon,\\_index,\\_symbol](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotic_theory_of_Charles_Sanders_Peirce#II._Icon,_index,_symbol)

<sup>9</sup> Ожегов С.И. Словарь русского языка: Ок. 53 000 слов / под общ. ред. проф. Л.И. Скворцова. 24-е изд., испр. М.: Оникс, Мир и Образование, 2007. 1200 с.

<sup>10</sup> Ефремова Т. Ф. Новый словарь русского языка. Толково-словообразовательный. М.: Русский язык, 2000.



In D. N. Ushakov's dictionary, *image* is defined as follows:

- 1) image - appearance, type, likeness (book);
- 2) a vivid, visual representation of someone or something;
- 3) an artistic reflection of ideas and feelings in sound, word, colors, etc.;
- 4) a character or type created by an artist or actor<sup>11</sup>.

Researcher E.B. Borisova examines the notions of image and imagery, pointing that these phenomena are poorly studied and have differences in the interpretation of the concept of image not only as a literary concept, but also as a linguistic category. Thus, E.B. Borisova offers a definition of the concept of *literary image*: "By literary image we will understand <...> a fragment that has an independent life and content and is created by the author through the creative use of the richness of the literary language"<sup>12</sup>.

According to T.V. Nadozirnaya and L.A. Skubachevskaya, a literary image is "any phenomenon creatively recreated by the author in a work of art. It is the result of the artist's understanding of some phenomenon or process"<sup>13</sup>. For researchers in the field of philology and linguistics, the linguistic component of the literary image is important, which is studied primarily in linguistics and literary criticism.

Some researchers, such as M. Afshar and E.P. Savchenko<sup>14</sup>, assign the linguistic and cultural image the role of a type of concept that "has national and cultural specifics, but at the same time contains distinctive features and signs of a recognizable representative of a particular ethno cultural community" while it is also noted that images are formed under the influence of cultural and national characteristics of countries, in which real images arise.

Firstly, we believe that such a view of the linguistic and cultural image unfairly narrows this concept, since if we talk about an image as a concept, that is, "a discrete mental formation that is the basic unit of a person's mental code and has a relatively ordered internal structure"<sup>15</sup>, we have to recognize its primacy from the point of view of mental processes, as well as postulate the orderliness of the internal structure. We consider both of these statements to be incorrect: the image can be created by different linguistic means, differ in complexity and multidimensionality. For example, images of countries consist of many elements: labeled realities, significant cultural phenomena, social features, etc. In this case, it is impossible to talk about the "baseness" and simplicity of the linguistic and cultural image.

For example, the image of a horse in English-speaking culture can be embedded in the following levels:

*from the wild force of nature (mustang, stallion)*

<sup>11</sup> Ушаков Д. Н. Толковый словарь русского языка. М.: Альта-Принт, 2005. 1216 с.

<sup>12</sup> Борисова Е. Б. О содержании понятий «художественный образ» и «образность» в литературоведении и лингвистике // Вестник Челябинского государственного университета. 2009. № 35 (173) Филология. Искусствоведение. Вып. 37. С. 20–26.

<sup>13</sup> Надозирная Т.В., Скубачевская Л.А. ЕГЭ 2009: Литература: Справочник. М.: Эксмо, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Афшар М. Имена собственные в лингвокультурном образе Ирана (на материале русских художественных текстов) / М. Афшар // Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики. — 2019. — Т. 12. — Вып. 7. — С. 117–120. — DOI: 10.30853/filnauki.2019.7.24. — EDN FIWDQK. Савченко Е.П. Стилистические средства создания лингвокультурного образа идеального героя в тексте оригинала и в переводе (на материале произведений Я. Флеминга) : автореф. дис. ... канд. филол. наук : 10.02.20 / Е.П. Савченко. — Москва, 2013. — 188 с.

<sup>15</sup> Попова З.Д. Понятие «концепт» в лингвистических исследованиях / З.Д. Попова, И.А. Стернин. — Воронеж : Воронежский государственный университет, 1999. — 30 с. — EDN UDAYCZ.



*to individualism* (freedom, open range) and up to  
*the romantic image of adventure* (rider, journey, frontier)

In, Uzbek culture the hierarchy can be different:

*basic image*: living force, movement, means of transport;

*cultural image*: national pride, loyalty, fortitude;

*archetypal image*: bridge between worlds, symbol of courage and sacrifice.

In turn, images are not basic units, but more complex ones that arise from simpler notions. However, in some cases, they can be considered as mental units. We consider it logical to approach the structure of linguistic and cultural imagery from a field perspective. Obviously, core and peripheral definitions make up one or another image.

The image of a horse in literature cannot be identical to the zoological characteristics of a real horse. It is impossible to adequately reproduce the fullness of the natural properties and behavioral characteristics of a horse in the reader's mind, since the literary image is formed under the influence of artistic intention, genre specificity and cultural and symbolic attitudes of the era. The image, as a product of authorial imagination and interpretation, is reflected in readers' minds through the prism of literary tradition, associative sequences and personal experience, being distorted or transformed in the process of perception.

Summarizing the definitions presented above, we will give our understanding of them: an image is a mental, stereotyped perception and reflection of phenomena and facts taking place in the world, including purposefully formed attitudes towards these phenomena through mass communication and psychological influence. The linguistic and cultural image is studied in the unity of language, consciousness, and culture based on the discourse in which it is mainly used. It is important to understand that the linguistic image reflects national and cultural characteristics significant for the linguistic community where it was formed. Therefore, the linguistic and cultural images have national and cultural specificities and stereotypical characteristics that are realized through language. An image in linguacultural studies is not just a reflection of reality in language, but a complex multilayered structure that captures the worldview attitudes and cultural and national specifics of a people.

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