



**The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish  
(On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

**The Problem of National and Cultural Semantics of Lexical Units in Spanish (On  
Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

**Anna i. Noskova<sup>1</sup>, Liliya g. Gazizova<sup>2</sup>, Liliya G. Dunnyasheva<sup>3</sup>, David Ocampo  
Estrella<sup>4</sup>**

**1 Kazan Federal University, Institute of Philology and Intercultural  
Communication, anastrella@mail.ru**

**2 Kazan Federal University, Institute of Philology and Intercultural  
Communication**

**3 Kazan Federal University, Institute of Philology and Intercultural  
Communication**

**4 Minsk State Linguistic University, Faculty of Spanish Language**

**ABSTRACT**

This article is within the framework of inter-variant dialectology - a relatively young scientific branch in the domestic Spanish studies, the main purpose of which is to establish the national and cultural specifics of the use of the Spanish language. In turn, the revelation of linguocultural specifics of national variants of the Hispanic area is one of the urgent problems of modern Spanish-American studies. Since the national specificity of speech is particularly evident in comparison, the article considers the communicative behavior of the representatives of two sociocultural communities: Venezuelan and Nicaraguan linguistic cultures.

The choice of the topic is determined by the growing interest in domestic and foreign linguistics to studying the national identity of linguistic culture as a specific form of human existence and society in the world. Language thus acts as a means of constructing and interpreting social reality, including culture, ethnicity, mentality, in the expression of which an important role is played, in particular, by the culturally specific names of the phenomena of the surrounding reality.

The method of continuous sampling from the dictionaries “Diccionario de venezolanismos” by M. J. Tejera, “Diccionario del Español de Nicaragua” by Arellano Oviedo F., “Diccionario de nicaraguanismos” by H.A. Castellón was used to select lexical units that make up the semantic group of “activities” which are specific to the Venezuelan and Nicaraguan variants of the Spanish language and reflect the linguistic



**The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish  
(On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

and cultural specifics of the countries under consideration. The comparative analysis of the selected lexical units was carried out, and linguoculturological comments were given.

**Keywords:** Hispanics, linguoculturology, intercultural communication, semantics, inter-variant dialectology, the Spanish language, national variant, Venezuela, Nicaragua.



# **The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

As is generally known, the national specificity of linguoculture is vividly manifested when comparing different languages. However, in the case of the Spanish language as a poly-national language, it is more appropriate to talk about its different national variants, namely the inter-variant national and cultural specifics: the representatives of individual Latin- American countries are distinguished by original culture, history and characteristic ethnic composition of the population (Gazizova et al, 2016).

As everybody knows, the linguistic and cultural specificity of language is most clearly revealed when analyzing vocabulary, since it is this level of language that is more closely connected with extralinguistic reality and takes a direct part in modeling “the world image” (Kuzmina et al, 2016 ) of the speakers of different national variants of the Spanish language.

In Spanish, a significant layer of vocabulary is inter-variant and culture-specific: these lexical units include the national cultural component, reflecting different traits of national cultures of Hispanic peoples. Thus, the lexical tradition of Venezuela and Nicaragua is characterized by the presence of the so-called Venezuelisms and Nicaraguanisms – the lexical units, being different from the Spanish language, characterizing the special manner of the Venezuelans and the Nicaraguans to conceptualize the surrounding world (Anna et al, 2016 ). Proceeding from this, Venezuelisms and Nicaraguanisms are the lexical units that fill the lacunae of the Spanish language, thus being the designations of extralinguistic reality.

These terms do not have a unique definition. Thus, according to Venezuelan scholar Tulio Chiossone, the criterion for distinguishing Venezuelisms should be a contrast not only with the Spanish norm, but with other national variants of the Spanish language: “To compile a dictionary of Venezuelisms, it is necessary to conduct an intensive study of the words of other countries, for example, “Argentinisms”, “Chilinisms”, “Uruguenisms”, etc.” (Chiossone,1977). According to E. Colmenares, Venezuelisms should be considered both the lexical units that are unknown in the Spanish language in general, and the lexical units that have a different meaning from the Pyrenean language (Colmenares del Valle,1989).



## **The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

The subject of this study is national and cultural semantics of the lexical units that reflect forms of activities in the Venezuelan and Nicaraguan national variants of the Spanish language, with an emphasis on the content and linguocultural specifics of the use of the units being analyzed.

The lexical constituent part of the national variants of the Spanish language has more than once been the subject of a special study in the field of lexicography (Firsova N.M., Shcherbakova E.V.). However, despite the steady interest of linguists in the problems of intervariant lexical synonymy in the Spanish language, the specificity of the national variants considered in terms of expressing professional activity in them has not, until now, been the subject of special study. This explains the choice of the research topic. The relevance of the study is determined by its socio-constructivist tendency, involvement in such dynamically developing areas of modern linguistics as linguoculturology, intervariant dialectology, intercultural communication, discourse analysis, as well as a steady interest in the problems of interaction of language, culture and ideology. It becomes important to turn to the topic of inter-variant lexical correspondences, particularly in the sphere of designation of professions and occupation, which is of particular significance against the backdrop of ever expanding international contacts with Latin-American countries, globalization of the contemporary cultural and mental space, and, accordingly, the need for an accurate translation of lexical units in the sphere of professional activity.

### **2. METHODS**

The research is performed in the context of the poststructuralist anthropocentric paradigm and proceeds from understanding of the language as a social practice. As a general method for studying the national and cultural specifics of lexical units in Hispanic cultures of language, an inductive method has been chosen. At the stage of gathering and interpreting the material, an analysis of the meanings of the dictionary definitions selected by the method of continuous sampling from the dictionaries of Venezuelisms and Nicaraguanisms was applied (Tejera, 1993; Arellano, 2007; Castellón, 1939). The linguistic units that have reference to a profession or a type of human activity were chosen. When interpreting the material and comparing the data of



## **The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

two national variants of the Spanish language, descriptive and comparative methods were used, as well as methods of semantic and stylistic interpretation.

The material of the study was the selected vocabulary definitions, reflecting occupation and professions in total volume of 212 units (65 Venezuelisms and 147

Nicaraguanisms). The linguistic analysis of vocabulary definitions is conducted taking into consideration socio-cultural and historical contexts of their making and interpretation

The methodological research basis was the linguoculturological conception, presented in the works by Russian linguists S. G. Vorkachev, V. V. Vorobyov, V. I. Karasik, V. A. Maslova, G. G. Slyshkin, the conception of interviant synonymy in the Spanish language - by N. M. Firsova, T. Chiossone, E. Colmenares del Valle; as well as the conception of gender as a socio-cultural construct, substantiated in the works by E.S. Gritsenko, A.V. Kirilina, D. Cameron, L. Litosseliti, D. Sunderland and the basic theses of the critical discourse- analysis in the works by T.A. Van Dijk and N. Fairclough.

### **3. RESULTS**

The analysis of vocabulary definitions has shown, that, in its majority, Venezuelisms, reflecting the forms of occupation, serve to reflect and designate the purely Venezuelan types of labor activities. Thus, a number of lexemes mirror the concepts of “seller” and “worker”, which are formed from the name of a product or a thing with which they work. For example: *arepero* - a manufacturer or a seller of corn tortillas (from *arepa* - corn cake); *billeteero* – a seller of lottery tickets (from *billete* - lottery ticket); *camburero* - a seller of bananas (from *camburo* - banana); *cauchero* - 1) a plantation worker who gathers rubber produced by caoutchouk; 2) a tire changer who changes and fixes tires (from *caucho*- rubber); *majaretero* - a seller of sweets maharete (from *majarete* – sweetness made from puree of sweet corn); *perrocalentero* / *perrocalientero* – a seller of hot dogs (from *perrito caliente* - hot dog).

Of particular interest are the lexemes that have metaphorical nature. So, for example, the word *mochilero* is a worker who deals with garbage from the door of a house to a trash can or garbage truck, it is formed from a *mochila* - knapsack, which indicates that members of this profession often use garbage bags. The word *maletero* is an outbound



## The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

merchant of fabrics, toiletries, etc., it is formed from the word *maleta* - a suitcase that hints at an impressive sized bag in which he carries samples of products.

It is curious that some professions are marked on the basis of gender as a social construct that accumulates the ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman in the Venezuelan linguistic culture community. So, we have revealed the forms of labor activities, being characteristic only for women, namely: *aeromoza* - board-conductor (from *aero* - air and *moza* - a young girl); *cachapera* - a female manufacturer or a seller of *cachapa* (from *cachapa* - *cachapa*, a traditional Venezuelan dish made from corn); *mesonera* - a night bar/cabaret worker, who receives a percentage of the booze bought by customers (from the *mesón*- tavern).

A particular group consists of the professions, related somehow to healing or transition to another world. So, from the words *muerte* - death and *rezo* - reading of prayers are formed the words *muertero* - a man who clothes a dead person and *rezandero* - 1) a man who reads the burial over the deceased; 2) a doctor who heals with the help of prayers. Interesting are the lexemes of Indian origin: *chamarero* is a doctor, *piacha / piache / piachi* is an Indian physician and *yerbatero* is a man who practices traditional medicine or cures with the help of rituals (presumably from *hierba* - grass).

For the subsequent comparative analysis and revelation of interviant synonyms, 147 Nicaraguanisms, belonging to the semantic group “form of work activities”, selected from the Nicaraguan lexicographic publications have been studied (Tejera, 1993; Arellano, 2007; Castellón, 1939). Note that more than half of them (80 lexical units) had pejorative meaning or had a non-normative usage label. As a result of the analysis, the following groups of lexemes have been identified, reflecting the forms of labor activities associated with: trade (*abarrotador* - a seller of chandlery, *truchero* - an owner of haberdashery, *vendeagua* - a man who sells water, *vendecomida* - a man who sells food, *mecatero* - a man selling ropes, etc.); work on the street (*cambiadores* - a street money-changer, *taxero* - a taxi driver, *lustre* - a shoeshine boy, *lava-vidrios* - a glass washerman, etc.); agriculture and livestock breeding (*arreador* - a timber floater, *buscacasitas* - a turtle nest seeker, *comprachanchos* - a pig buyer, *compraqueso* - a cheese purchaser, *rejo* - a milker assistant, etc.), as well as specific for Nicaragua (*cachorro* - a young soldier of Sandinista army, *vahero* - a specialist in preparing wago,



## The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

*puntero* – a sugarcane cleaver, *cortador* - a cotton or coffee picker, *cascarero* – a balsa bark picker). The national and cultural specificity of the selected Nicaraguanisms is undoubtedly conditioned by extralinguistic and linguistic factors, which is also characteristic of other national variants of the Spanish language (Yakubova et al, 2016). Attention is drawn to the huge number of nationally-specific lexical units which denote the varieties of criminal activities. For example, in Nicaragua, the lexeme “thief” is often used, and thieves differ not only in their specialization (money, cars, jewelry, pets), but also in the ways of committing a crime (they are cheating, tearing jewelry off the neck, snatching bags) and a place of theft (shop, street, car, house). Examples: *arrancacadenas* - a thief who tears chains off the neck; *chapeador* - a thief who steals things from the car; *enchole* - a thief who steals from his own house or from relatives; *gato casero* - a thief who knows the situation in the house where he committed a larceny; *plagiador* - a thief; *robacaballos* - a thief who steals horses; *rompecadenas* - a thief who snatches chains; *rosquillero* - a thief who specializes in theft of car tires. Great many of lexemes, denoting the activities of thieves, have an extra-linguistic ground: the main problem for the police in Nicaragua is exactly larceny (La prensa, 2016 ).

As the analysis of the units shows, the most common derivational model is the mixed wording verbo + nombre: *arrancacadenas* results from the addition of *arrancar* (snatch) and *cadenas* (chains) and the affixal way of word building by means of typical suffixes that denote occupation “-dor” and “-ero”. For example, in the case of the Nicaraguanism *rosquillero*, derived from the noun *rosquilla*, which means the sweetness of ring-shaped cracknel (Diccionario

deamericanismos–URL:<http://www.asale.org/recursos/diccionarios/damer> (accessed: 05.05.2017).

The low level of economic growth and high level of unemployment, the availability of weapons and drugs, and the growth of organized crime are the main reasons that lead to the increase in violence and crime in Latin America (Impacto New York. Criminalidad y Violencia en América Latina – URL: <http://www.impactony.com/criminalidad-y-violencia-en-latinoamerica/> (accessed: 05.05.2017) .





## **The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

These extralinguistic facts could not but be reflected in the Nicaraguan national variant of the Spanish language. The nicaraguanisms, related to the offer of intimate services (*arrastrada, patrullera, playo, vaga, zangana* - a woman of easy virtue), obtaining money by fraud (*cachero, oportunista* – a man who loves to profit at another's expense, *platera* - a fraudulent person who trusts people and deceives them; *filero* - a person who sells his place in line) and receiving or giving bribes (*mordedor, venadero* - a grafter, a bribe-taker, *logrero* – a corrupt politician) have been identified.

The prevailing number of lexical units that describe illegal activities can be explained by the fact that the Latin American region remains one of the most criminal in the world, as evidenced by the official statistics, according to which half of the ten most criminal countries are the Caribbean countries (BBC Mundo. Índice de criminalidad 2016 – URL: <http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-38171437> (accessed:05.05.2017) .

### **4. DISCUSSION**

The national and cultural specificity of the above-mentioned Venezuelisms and Nicaraguanisms is determined by the phenomena and representations that are typical of the inhabitants of the Latin- American countries under study. Thus, it can be argued that the vocabulary typical of a particular Latin- American variant of the Spanish language comprehends a national cultural component and serves as a kind of reflection of history, traditions, culture and lifestyle of the population of a particular Spanish-speaking country.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

A comparative analysis of Venezuelisms and Nicaraguanisms reflecting the forms of labor activities has revealed a practical lack of interviant synonymy, which is indicative of the national and cultural specifics of the variants of the Spanish language under consideration.

It should be noted that the Venezuelisms with the connotation “profession” have been exposed to be half as much (65 lexical units) than the Nicaraguanisms (147 lexical units). Nevertheless, the predominant number of Nicaraguan references to the form activities have a pejorative coloring or a dictionary non-standard usage label or





## **The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish (On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

archaism. The data obtained may indicate a high degree of desire to preserve the language norm in this country.

The analysis has also shown that some lexical units, in both the Nicaraguan and Venezuelan national variants, are characterized by vivid stylistic marking (vernaculars, vulgarisms, taboo vocabulary) against the background of more neutral usages in stylistic terms, indicating the intensity of emotional experience of the individual and lingvoculture on the whole. It is a question of a certain set of vocabulary of the semantic group “labor activities” that can be considered as emotive markers of linguistic culture. The lexical units to have been analyzed contain the peculiarities of the linguistic cultures under consideration, formed under the influence of various extralinguistic factors and, as a result, they are a distinctive culturally determined element of social reality, a reflection of history, customs, traditions, culture and lifestyle of the population of Venezuela and Nicaragua.

### **6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The research is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

### **7. REFERENCES**

- Anna I. Noskova, Elena A. Pleujova. 2016. Análisis semántico de los realia en el español de Venezuela // *TonosDigital, revista electrónica de estudios filológicos*, - № 30. Pp. 1-22.
- Arellano Oviedo F. 2007. Diccionario del Español de Nicaragua (Dictionary of Spanish in Nicaragua) / *F. Arellano Oviedo*. – Managua: PAVSA. – 415 p.
- BBC Mundo. Índice de criminalidad 2016 – URL:  
<http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-38171437>  
(accessed:05.05.2017)
- Chiossone T. 1977. El lenguaje erudito, popular y folklórico de los Andes venezolanos / T. Chiossone. – *Caracas: Biblioteca de Autores y Temas Tachirenses*, p 299 .
- Castellón H.A. 1939. Diccionario de nicaraguanismos (Dictionary of nicaraguanismos) / H.A. Castellón. – *Managua: Talleres Nacionales*, – 148 p.



**The Problem Of National And Cultural Semantics Of Lexical Units In Spanish  
(On Material of Venezuelan And Nicaraguan Words Reflecting Forms of Work)**

*Revista Publicando, 4 No 13. No. 1. 2017, 215-224. ISSN 1390-9304*

Colmenares del Valle E. 1989. La codificación del venezolanismo / E. Colmenares del Valle // Estudios lingüísticos y filológicos en homenaje a María Teresa Rojas. – Caracas: Universidad Simón Bolívar, P. 69-91.

Diccionario de americanismos – URL:

<http://www.asale.org/recursos/diccionarios/damer> (accessed: 05.05.2017)

Gazizova L.G., Dunyasheva L.G. 2016. The Importance of the Use of Media Discourse in Foreign Language Teaching / L.G. Gazizova, L.G. Dunyasheva // *Proceedings of ICERI2016 Conference (14th-16th November 2016, Seville, Spain)*. P. 5772-5783.

Impacto New York. Criminalidad y Violencia en América Latina – URL:

<http://www.impactony.com/criminalidad-y-violencia-en-latinoamerica/>  
(accessed: 05.05.2017)

Kuzmina E.K., Danilova O.A. 2016. The development of ethno-cultural competence of the students in non-language high school // *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication - TOJDAC. - July Special Edition - P. 1027-1031*

La prensa – URL: <http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2016/06/09/nacionales/2048609-robos-principal-problema-de-seguridad-en-managua>(accessed: 05.05.2017)

Tejera M.J. 1993. Diccionario de venezolanismos / dirección y estudio preliminar de María Josefina Tejera. – Caracas: Academia Venezolana de la Lengua/ Universidad central de Venezuela, Facultad de Humanidades y educación, *Instituto de Filología «Andrés Bello»*, 1547 p.

Yakubova, D., Pleuchova E., García Muñoz R. 2016. Linguistic and Cultural Characteristics of the Caribbean Spanish // *The Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, vol. 20, special issue .Pp. 263-268.