

PERCEPTION OF RUSSIAN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS BY BILINGUAL STUDENTS: COMPARATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL ASPECTS

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Abstract

This article addresses the perception and comprehension of Russian phraseology within the contexts of artificial and natural bilingualism in Uzbekistan. We conducted a comparative analysis of the phraseological corpus, identifying types of interlinguistic equivalence and determining the proportion of non-equivalent units within Uzbekistani school curricula (textbooks for grades 4–6). The article presents the results of an experimental study that identified typical errors in idiom interpretation, such as literal decoding and a lack of background knowledge. Particular attention is paid to the "cultural component" as a primary factor determining language acquisition difficulties. The study demonstrates a direct correlation between the intensity of the linguistic environment and the depth of understanding regarding the figurative structure of speech.

Keywords: Non-equivalent phraseology, Russian-Uzbek bilingualism, interlinguistic equivalence, cultural component, linguoculturology, interference, linguistic environment, idiom.

Introduction

The relevance of this topic is driven by the status of the Russian language in Uzbekistan as a vital medium of interethnic communication and its integral role in the educational system. Phraseology, often described as a "mirror of culture," represents one of the most challenging layers of language acquisition in a bilingual environment. While full equivalents are internalized by students almost automatically due to the alignment of imagery in both the native and target languages, non-equivalent phraseological units pose a significant barrier.

The problem lies in the fact that modern instruction often focuses strictly on semantics (meaning), while ignoring the etymological and cultural background. This results in "artificial bilingualism," where a student knows the literal translation of the words but fails to grasp the hidden cultural code embedded within the metaphor. The aim of this work is to analyze how cultural differences influence the comprehension of idioms and to identify which types of phraseological units encounter the most resistance during the learning process.

Theoretical Foundations and Classification

The study is based on the classification of cross-linguistic equivalence (following A.N. Baranov), which categorizes the phraseological corpus into full equivalents, partial equivalents, analogues, and non-equivalent units. Particular attention is paid to the latter, as they transmit the unique cultural and historical code of a nation.



In this context, non-equivalence is viewed not merely as a lack of direct translation, but as a "lacuna" in the student's background knowledge. This gap leads to a loss of national flavor and results in the distortion of meaning during the process of perception.

Educational content analysis

A quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted across schools, specifically examining Russian language textbooks for grades 4–6 in Uzbekistan. Out of 106 identified units:

- 53.77% are analogues (different imagery with similar meanings), requiring the student to switch between two distinct worldviews (linguistic pictures of the world).
- 4.72% are non-equivalent phraseological units, which represent the greatest linguodidactic challenge.
- In terms of semantic cohesion, phraseological unities (V.V. Vinogradov's classification) predominate. In these units, the overall meaning is motivated by the figurative sense of their individual components.

Cultural specificity of imagery

The article provides a detailed analysis of phraseological units that present significant challenges for Uzbek bilinguals:

- Animalistic Imagery. The idiom "*Medved' na ukho nastupil*" (literally, "A bear stepped on one's ear") is rooted in the specific perception within Russian culture of the bear as a symbol of clumsiness, particularly regarding musical ability.
- Precedent-Setting Phenomena. Expressions of Classical (Antique) origin, such as "*Sizifov trud*" (Sisyphus's labor), "*Damoklov mech*" (Sword of Damocles), and "*Akhillesova pyata*" (Achilles' heel), are perceived by bilinguals as abstract constructs. This is because the underlying mythological narratives are not part of the indigenous Uzbek tradition and are primarily borrowed as literary calques.

Experimental study

To test the hypothesis regarding the influence of the linguistic environment on idiom comprehension, an experiment was conducted involving three groups: 40 bilingual schoolchildren, 10 bilingual adults, and 10 monolinguals.

- Schoolchildren. A distinct tendency toward literal interpretation (decoding individual components rather than the holistic meaning) was identified. For instance, "*otkryt' Ameriku*" (to discover America / "to reinvent the wheel") is perceived as "acquiring a new skill," while "*medved' na ukho nastupil*" is interpreted as a literal physical action.
- Bilingual Adults. This group demonstrates "functional comprehension"—they know the appropriate context for usage but often lack the etymological foundation or cultural background of the expression.
- Monolinguals (Control Group): Participants in this group show a deep understanding of the "inner form" of the phraseological unit and its broader cultural context.

Conclusion and Practical Significance

The study confirms that in conditions of artificial bilingualism (where the Russian language is restricted to the classroom environment), the phraseological layer is acquired fragmentarily.



- **Exposure and Comprehension:** The success of idiom comprehension is directly proportional to the intensity of the linguistic environment. Students who use Russian in their daily lives (domestic settings) perform 50% better in comprehension tasks.
- **Educational Recommendations:** To overcome the cultural barrier, it is essential to integrate linguocultural commentary into the educational process. This approach should reveal the etymology and "inner form" of non-equivalent units.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis and the experimental study, we have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Dominance of Analogues. Within the educational discourse (grades 4–6), over 53% of phraseological units are analogues. This requires more than rote memorization from bilingual students; it necessitates complex mental operations to reconcile differing linguistic pictures of the world.

2. Cultural Lacunarity. The primary difficulty for Uzbek students lies in non-equivalent units rooted in Classical mythology (e.g., *Sisyphus's labor*) or specific Slavic realia (e.g., *a bear stepped on one's ear*). The absence of corresponding imagery in the national tradition leads to a literal perception of the idiom's components.

3. Role of the Linguistic Environment: The experiment confirmed the hypothesis that phraseological comprehension directly correlates with language use outside the classroom. Students restricted solely to classroom instruction provide incorrect interpretations in **50% of cases**, whereas adult monolinguals demonstrate both semantic comprehension and a mastery of the cultural background.

4. Methodological Recommendation. To minimize the "comprehension barrier," the school curriculum should integrate elements of linguocultural commentary, focusing on the origin and "inner form" of non-equivalent units.

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