

LEXICAL LACUNAE AND THEIR CORRELATION IN THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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The paper examines the challenges foreign students face with printed texts, particularly in summarizing, memory retention, identifying main ideas, and retelling, focusing on the translation and cultural implications of lexical lacunae between English and Russian.

Keywords: lexical lacunae; non-equivalent lexis; phenomenon; language; lexical gaps; idioms; classification; translation; concepts.

ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИЕ ЛАКУНЫ И ИХ КОРРЕЛЯЦИЯ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И РУССКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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В статье рассматриваются проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются иностранные студенты при работе с печатными текстами, особенно при составлении резюме, сохранении в памяти, выявлении основных идей и пересказе, с акцентом на перевод и культурные последствия лексических пробелов между английским и русским языками.

Ключевые слова: лексические пробелы; неэквивалентная лексика; феномен; язык; идиомы; классификация; перевод; концепты.

When we compare the vocabulary of different languages, we often notice certain inconsistencies between the source and the target language. As a result, there can be identified gaps in the semantics of one of the languages [1]. These gaps are often referred to as lexical lacunae, non-equivalent lexis, untranslatable terms, lexical inconsistencies etc. [2]. These are various names for the same phenomenon. It occurs because of the absence of one-to-one equivalents in one of the contrasting languages.

Lexical lacunae can be found in almost all languages of the world. Cultural, social and historical development and conditions of life of the peoples generate concepts unfamiliar to the speakers of other languages. Communication in a foreign language requires not only a good command of

the language, but also the knowledge of social and cultural life of the country, whose language is spoken.

The study of lexical lacunae is important for language learners, because such lexical units influence mutual understanding between the participants of communication and present much difficulty in translation. Moreover, they carry rich information about the culture of the language. The translation of lexical units with no direct equivalents nearly always results in the loss of a certain amount of culture-specific information.

There are plenty of examples of such words. For instance, such English words as «*challenging, cheesy, thirsty, sibling, in-laws, facepalm, FOMO (Fear of missing out), fortnight, etc.*» do not have direct equivalents in Russian and are referred to as lexical lacunae.

The subject matter of this research work is lexical lacunae in the English and Russian languages. The scope of this research work is the correlation of lexical lacunae in the English and Russian languages. The main aim of this research paper is to explore different ways of translation and interpretation of lexical lacunae in the English and Russian languages.

Achieving this aim involves the following objectives:

- to research the understanding of the term «lacunae» by different scientists;
- to analyse the existing classification of lexical lacunae offered by V.L. Muravyov (based on the vocabulary of the English and Russian languages);
- to explore how the translation and interpretation of lexical lacunae are connected with the cultural aspect of each language.

In our research work, we applied a traditional descriptive method together with contrastive and comparative methods, which let us analyse and describe lexical units, reveal general and peculiar features of the English and Russian languages.

While researching the understanding of the term «lacunae» by different scientists we noticed that most scientists, though they used different terminology, defined «lexical gaps» as phenomena that have no equivalents in another culture or a complex of differences in the contrasting languages and cultures that might complicate mutual understanding between the participants of intercultural dialogue. We can make a conclusion that lexical lacunae are culture-specific words, which reflect not only the language system of a particular country, but also its national culture.

Having analysed the classification of lexical lacunae offered by V.L. Muravyov, we can claim that it is quite detailed and describes lexical lacunae as a linguacultural phenomenon, which exists on different language

and culture levels. Absolute linguistic and stylistic lacunae represent the most widespread types, as they include a wide range of set expressions (idioms, phrasal verbs), as well as professional words, and neologisms. For example, the word «*sibling*» which means a brother or sister. In Russian, we can explain how many children in the family are younger or older than you are, without highlighting their age. Relative linguistic lacunae are quite difficult to define, as it is necessary to do comparative statistical calculation of the use of lexical units in the two compared languages. For instance, the phrase «*street food*» means prepared or cooked food sold in a street or public place, to be eaten immediately. Vector lacunae have quantitative distinctions as a result of inconsistencies of conceptual scopes in the source and the target language. The example is the Russian word «*часы*», which is a genetic lacuna in the English language, as there is no general concept to express all the types of clocks and watches with the help of one word. Stylistic lacunae arise when there is lack of phraseological units with the same stylistic colouring in one of the two different languages. [3] They are often literary words, that is why they are related to a particular style of speech. The examples are words, representing journalistic and official styles (*a byline* – a line at the beginning or end of a piece of writing in a newspaper that gives the writer's name) and some archaisms, historicisms, dialectisms, neologisms, barbarisms and slang words as well.

Ethnographic lacunae are directly related to extra-linguistic reality, their existence is due to the absence of realities characteristic of one culture in another culture, thus the participants of the intercultural dialogue should have a deep knowledge of the national culture, household, and national character of the speakers of another language.

Exploring the ways of translation and interpretation of lexical lacunae in the English and Russian languages, we can single out some of them:

lexical lacunae can be rendered with the help of the phrases, expressing the major concepts, though we should make sure that culture specific information is not lost;

lexical lacunae can be rendered with the help of free word-combinations, as they help to explain untranslatable words in the target language;

some parts of the sentence can be changed or paraphrased in order to provide the proper meaning of the source text and to compensate for the lack of equivalent word in the target language.

Considering everything, we must say that lexical lacunae reflect the mental and cultural identity of different nations; they represent the gaps of experience, lack of knowledge about other cultures, thus they deserve further study.

The result of this research work is a booklet of lexical lacunae, which was created to raise awareness about lexical lacunae among language users and popularize them.

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