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*Yu.A. Vorontsova***LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL INTERFERENCE AND ITS EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN**

Nowadays an increased interest in learning foreign languages for various purposes is observed. Getting a feel for a new culture by mastering languages, representatives of different lifestyles fall under the direct impact of linguistic interference, which manifests itself in intercultural communication. This work is aimed at studying the issues of linguistic and cultural interference arising from the incorrect interpretation of background vocabulary of the foreign language on the example of English-speaking and Russian-speaking culture-specific concepts. The article emphasises the history of examining the issue of interference; the theoretical substantiation of the problem of affecting the bilingual person's one language on another. The article discusses the definition of linguistic and cultural interference; presents communication barriers that arise in the course of learning foreign languages and in intercultural communication, and ways to overcome them; touches upon the problem of culture shock as a social and psychological phenomenon. Particular attention is paid to analysing the examples of extralinguistic realities from the English and Russian languages, the study of which is necessary for mastering communicative competence; to presenting their translation in both languages. The article concludes that the result of the linguistic and cultural interference impact can be both frustrating and positive, contributing to adequate translation and mutual understanding, as well as implementing effective communication.

Keywords: linguistic and cultural interference, adequate translation, culture-specific concept, background knowledge, communication barriers, bilingual person.

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Introduction

Nowadays an increased interest in learning foreign languages for various purposes is observed. Different languages have their own characteristics in forming the language units, which may coincide and have disparities. While studying and teaching foreign languages, participants of this process face various obstacles, one of which is interference. The interfering influence of one communicative skill on another, namely a negative transfer, is expressed in the fact that previously formed methods of fulfilling an operation or action are transferred to outwardly completely or partially similar operations, but different ones in terms of performing methods, which in turn generates impediments.

In linguistics, the problem of interference is considered within the framework of language contacts, and interference is understood as “a bilingual person's violation of the norms and rules for the correlation of two contacting languages” [3]. Expressing interference can be observed both in oral and written speech. Generally, interference is understood only as uncontrolled processes, and conscious borrowings do not belong to this action. The most common type is the interference of the native language into the second one; however, if the second language becomes the bilingual person's main one, it can also affect the native language.

When learning a foreign language, it is obligatory to master not only the word, but also a typified image in the national mentality of the people who are the bearers of the language and culture; otherwise, the concepts of one language are transferred to those of another [10]. Therefore it is necessary to know the country's culture-specific concepts of the language being studied.

The aim of the work is to emphasise the issue how complex and important linguistic and cultural interference is in our time due to incorrect understanding of background vocabulary of the foreign language as illustrated by using the examples from English and Russian culture-specific concepts.

History of studying interference

The history of studying the issue dates back approximately to the second half of the 19th century. One of the first researchers was Russian-Polish linguist I.A. Baudouin de Courtenay, who deemed that this problem was based on speech contacts. According to his viewpoint, when studying a foreign language, not only borrowing individual linguistic units occurred, but also the mutual convergence of languages took place [2, p. 253]. At that time, the term “interference” had neither an extensive use nor gained a foothold in linguistics.

Another prominent linguist L.V. Shcherba made a great contribution to developing this direction. In his work “The Eastern Lusatian Dialect”, written in 1915, he expanded Baudouin de Courtenay's ideas. The Lusa-

tian dialect was chosen as a suitable material for the research as Shcherba had lived for some time among the speakers of the Muzhakovsky dialect, which was considered a transitional dialect between German and Polish. Having mastered this dialect, he managed to collect factual material and analyse it. In the scientist's subsequent works, the problem of the language impact on each other was fully revealed [12, p. 40].

In E.D. Polivanov's works in 1935, errors were identified that were characterised by the native language influence on the studied one [9, p. 236-240]. The contact of the Uzbek and Russian languages was used as a material for the research. Polivanov tried to apply the students' native Uzbek language in teaching Russian. Simultaneously, the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon 'interference' began.

In 1953, the significant work "Language Contacts" of the famous American linguist Ulrich Weinreich was published. The term 'linguistic interference' was beginning to gain widespread acceptance in scientific circles. U. Weinreich defined the interference as the violation of linguistic norms which occurred during the speech of a bilingual person as a result of knowing a foreign language and using them alternately [14, p. 1-7]. Interference was also observed during speech contacts between multilingual teams or in a learning situation.

A more complete and contemporary definition of interference, proposed by V.A. Vinogradov, was reflected in the "Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary" edited by V.N. Yartseva. According to it "Interference (from Latin *inter* – "between themselves", mutually and *ferio* – "touch", "hit") is the interaction of language systems in the conditions of bilingualism, which develops either during the language contacts, or during the individual mastering of a non-native language; expressed in violations of the norm and system of the second language under the impact of the native one" [7, p. 280].

Thus, the works of both foreign and domestic linguists reflect different views on the essence of the notion "interference" as some scholars understand interference as interconnecting the components of those languages in which communication is carried out, according to others, interference is a change in one language system under the influence of another language.

Communication barriers in linguistic and cultural interference

The term "linguistic and cultural interference" was proposed by the Bulgarian linguist K. Babov to denote those deviations from the norm of the country's culture of the language being studied, which are due to the negative impact of one culture on another [1, p. 28]. K. Babov notes that in the process of learning the Russian language, one can talk about non-linguistic or extra-linguistic interference, i.e. about the impediments caused by the lack of some background knowledge that is country-specific and cultural-historical information [1, p. 28].

When teaching a foreign language, it is necessary to train students not only to speak and write, but also to evaluate the concepts of a new language to avoid replacing one notion with another. In the social and-linguistic aspect it is important to consider the issue of functional load of the second language on the area of its use in comparison with the first language, the degree of fluent speaking (there are several stages – initial, transitional, senior), a specific set of used social-functional components of the second language, i.e. its forms of existence (literary language, Koine, dialect, etc.), the distribution of communicative functions between the first and second languages, including all the forms of their existence, the breadth of using the second language and its perception [4, p. 97].

According to the domestic researcher A.V. Shchepilova, linguistic and cultural interference may be caused not by the language system under studies, but by the core values of the culture that this language reflects. The reasons for emerging this interference may be mental realities, phenomena, norms of behaviour that are not inherent in the student's lifestyle [11, p. 175]. In the process of intercultural communication, its participants face many various impediments or barriers. Barriers of intercultural interaction involve differences in mentalities and national characters; discrepancies in the linguistic pictures of the world, including the perception of time and space; effects of cultural stereotypes; differences in value orientations; disparities of cultural and linguistic norms; cultural-specific diversities in connotations attributed to linguistic units; dissimilarities in communication strategies; specific forms and means of non-verbal communication used in various cultures [6, p. 274-275].

Linguistic and cultural communication barriers can be on the part of the source or sender of the message, the recipient of the message and the environment. A person initiating intercultural contacts with a representative of a different culture may make some inaccuracies and errors that may be caused by lacking information on the values and norms of another culture; using incorrect information on a foreign culture; the human's tendency to see only what they expect and want to notice; influencing the previously received information on the perception of the subsequent one; the uncritical attitude to ethnical and cultural stereotypes.

Occasionally linguistic and cultural communication barriers can lead to such a social and psychological phenomenon as “cultural shock”, an important feature of intercultural interaction which represents the initial reaction of an individual or a group mentality to facing different culture-bound terms. The reaction to accepting a foreign environment can be ambivalent. Alongside with the positive response, people can demonstrate a negative attitude, misunderstanding and rejection of what is “not like ours”. In psychological terms, reactions such as stress, confrontation, scepticism or even aggression may occur. The cultural shock is a conflict situation between the individual’s habitual values, language norms, rules of behaviour inherent in his native cultural environment, and those values, language norms, rules of behaviour that are characteristic of the cultural environment of the language under study.

The strength of the shock reaction is determined by the depth of differences between the old and new cultures; the personality’s psychological characteristics, the ability to quickly adapt to new conditions; the presence or absence of elements of the old cultural environment (for example, family, friends, professional ties) in the new conditions; the degree of openness or closeness of the new culture representatives with whom the individual contacts, etc.

To modify or prevent such impediments the learners of the foreign language should avoid hasty judgments, consciously use more detailed information on the different culture, develop the ability to analyse the thoughts and actions, taking into account the bias, especially in relation to people of a different lifestyle and society [8, p. 31].

Examples of applying background knowledge for mastering communicative competence

The term “understanding” refers to the process of obtaining information that is encoded by means of linguistic signs. Understanding provides communication; it is a universal prerequisite for social interaction, a condition for the interpenetration of cultures, comprehension of the “other” lifestyle. It is impossible to achieve adequate mutual understanding between the participants of intercultural communication without knowledge of the vocabulary abundant with national-cultural components. Linguistic and regional studies are intended to contribute to solving the problem of adequate comprehension of foreign texts considering background knowledge.

Accordingly, one of the main tasks in teaching English is to form a secondary linguistic, bicultural, interlingual or multilingual personality. Such a person, having mastered the language and culture of the country that speaks a foreign language, must simultaneously obtain the skills to evaluate their own culture from the foreigner’s viewpoint. It is in the mind of such a person that a dialogue of cultures can take place.

Lack of background knowledge results in the reader’s non-perceiving the text. Frequently this happens due to the recipient’s not being able to decode the key artistic image. The information on what is described by the text creator and the recipient is not interpreted equally, a person understands the text when he grasps the meanings and the context referred to in it. Lexical concepts can be common among different speakers if the concept is adequately expressed in two languages.

To accomplish an adequate translation, it must be as close as possible in its meaning to the original and at the same time comply with the rules of the language into which it is translated. Adequate translation is the reconstruction of the unity of the original content and form by means of another language. Achieving translation equivalence (“translation adequacy”), despite the differences in the formal semantic systems of the two languages, requires from the translator, first and foremost, the ability to make numerous and qualitatively different interlingual transformations, or translation transformations, – for the target text (TT) to transmit the information contained in the source text (ST) with the maximum possible completeness, in strict compliance with the norms of the target language (TL) [5, p. 55]. To do this, the students take into consideration such a phenomenon as interference, i.e. the transfer of the native language features to the foreign language under studies to avoid its negative impact.

If one asks an English student: “*What did you spend your scholarship on?*” the question will sound rather strange, since a scholarship for a British student is not a cash allowance that is handed out, but the money that is transferred to education and is included in the tuition fee. If one considers the equivalence degree of the English word “*scholarship*” and the Russian word «*стипендия*», it will be evident that the Russian word expressing this concept is more consistent with the phrase “*monthly allowance*” i.e. a term that indicates “*the regularity of the scholarship paid and the amount of money*”. On the one hand, this term is indicative of the regularity of the scholarship paid, and, on the other hand, of the fact that it represents a sum of money. Thus, this phrase will be meaningless for a British student as a phenomenon of linguistic and cultural interference occurs.

If English students are asked to complete a series of phrases: – “*a Russian schoolboy on a hot July day*” ..., – “*the students of 5 “A” differ from the students of 5 “B” in that*” ..., – “*during the break, the student*

can” ..., the meaning of which is quite clear to them and is determined by the topic “*education*”, “*training*”, the results obtained can clearly show that the examinees are not familiar enough with the Russian education system. In the course of the experiment, the lexical concept and the lexical background of the English language system words, namely “*class*”, “*stream*”, “*break*” are completely identified with the words of the Russian language. As it is widely known, academic lessons in the UK finish on the July 27th, classes are divided into streams depending on the students’ abilities and breaks can last up to two hours.

The connection of the people’s history and culture with the language is especially clearly revealed at the idiomatic level. A large number of proverbs and sayings reflect specific national features, have the linguistic imagery that is rooted in the people’s history, their way of life, customs, traditions, for instance: “*to have one’s cake and eat it*” – «*и волки сыты, и овцы целы*» meaning “*to have or do two things that one desires that are normally contradictory or impossible to have or do simultaneously*”. Because “to have” can also mean “to eat,” this expression may seem redundant. However, it is based on the meaning of “to have” as “to possess,” i.e., to maintain possession of one’s cake while still eating it, an obvious impossibility. Another example “*a cat may look at a king*” – «*не богу горшки обжигают*» denotes that the world does not present everything ready to a person, and only a human himself can do something depending on his desire and patience to get a headway.

In the English language there are a large number of fixed phrases of literary origin, many of them are widely used in everyday colloquial speech. From childhood any Englishman knows such phraseological units from L. Carroll’s books “*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*”, “*Alice through the Looking-Glass*”, as: “*to smile like a Cheshire cat*” – «*улыбаться до ушей*» meaning “*to grin very broadly and persistently, especially in a smug, mischievous, or self-satisfied manner*”. The fixed phrase was popularised by the cat with the ability to disappear whose wide smile would remain after the rest of it had vanished. Another idiom “*mad as a hatter*” – «*сойти с ума, помешаться*» denotes “*to go completely crazy or deranged; particularly eccentric*”.

Definitely, it’s actually kind of hard to determine to what extent the whole imagery, national colouring of a given English set-phrase is preserved when it is translated into the Russian language. The following example: “*don’t tell tales out of school*” – «*не разноси сплетни*», «*не рассказывай небылицы*» means “*not to share secrets or spread rumours with other people, as doing so will likely cause problems for someone else and will alienate you from them*” or “*to speak, to try to keep on good terms with a teacher by betraying other kids*”. It is characteristic that the very appearance of idioms or set phrases is sometimes determined by changes in the people’s public life, the presence of such conditions in which the social significance of words becomes so relevant that it acquires symbolic features.

The most difficult group in terms of determining the national and cultural content is formed by background vocabulary. It has been proved that if one compares conceptually equivalent words in various languages, they will differ from each other due to the fact that each of them is associated with a certain body of knowledge. From the field of education, such words, for instance, are: “*boarding-school*” and «*школа-интернат*». Both of them include the notion “*a school in which children study and live.*” However, it is known that in Russia «*школы-интернаты*» are attended by young people whose parents need financial assistance for a number of reasons, so children in such schools are fully supported by the state. In England, on the other hand, the tuition fees at the “*boarding schools*” are extremely high, since they make up basically all the most famous and privileged private schools, in which the children of only well off parents can afford to study.

Another example of this type includes calling the Russian phrase «*первый этаж*» the “*ground floor*” in English and the Russian phrase «*второй этаж*» the “*second floor*” in English. It comes from the time when most houses only had a ground floor, so the first floor was the first floor on top of that. The “*first floor*”, where there are residential or office premises, may physically be on the second floor, but it was called the first because it is the first functional one. To avoid confusion, the lobby elevator, from which there is an exit to the street, is indicated by the letter ‘G’ (ground floor), and there is always an asterisk next to it meaning that from this floor there is an exit to the street.

Another engaging fact is the limited use of such a school-essential verb as “*to study*” meaning “*to apply one’s mind purposefully to the acquisition of knowledge or understanding of a subject*”. It is widely employed in the works on pedagogy in the combination “*to study different subjects*”, often occur in university everyday language alongside with the verb “*to read*” denoting “*to examine and grasp the meaning of written or printed characters, words, or sentences*”, for instance, “*He’s studying English*” = “*He’s reading English*” – «*Он изучает английский язык*». But even in these cases the verb “*to study*” is often replaced with the verbs with a broader conceptual basis, namely: “*to do*” meaning “*to perform an act, duty, or role*”, “*to have*” denoting “*to hold for use, contain, possess, own*”, “*to take*” implying “*to get into one’s hands, con-*

rol, or possession”, etc. It should also be noted that, judging by the context, the verb “*to study*” emphasises more academic forms of education, which are characteristic of university teaching in England, therefore, English school usage is characterised by applying a construction with multivalent verbs.

It is worth mentioning how important it is when teaching foreign languages to avoid loan translation of the word-combinations based on culture-specific concepts. For instance, synonyms “*class*” and “*form*” in the meaning of “*a set, collection, group of students*”, have some differences in meanings as “*class*” denotes “*a group of people who are taught together*” and “*form*” denotes “*a grade in a British secondary school or in some American private schools*”. From the definition it follows, that “*class*” is “*a group of students*” and “*form*” implies “*the division of students by age*”. Another example compares the phrase «*классный руководитель*» and “*class teacher*”. Using them as equivalents, it is easy to mislead students, as they denote culture-specific concepts, which have significant differences on both languages. From the description it is inferred that «*классный руководитель*» is “*a teacher who is responsible for academic performance and behaviour in the classroom, conducts parent-teacher meetings, class hours, monitors marks in the diaries*” and “*class teacher*” means “*a teacher who takes one and the same class for most of its lessons*”, therefore, the phrase «*классный руководитель*» corresponds in English to the phrase “*form master*” meaning “*a teacher who is in charge of a class or a form for administration purposes*”.

It is widely recognised that, the division into “*streaming*” in an English school is determined by the students’ abilities and academic performances, in accordance with which, the letter values “*A*”, “*B*” are used to designate classes where the most capable students study, the tops of the list, the letter values “*C*”, “*D*” are employed to specify classes where the trainees with average abilities get knowledge. As it is assumed that during the academic year it is possible to transfer from class to class depending on the progress achieved, in each class there is a list of performance successes, the so-called “*class list*”. English people using the phrase “*class list*” always mean “*a list categorising students according to the class of honours*”, i.e. “*the student’s ranking order in the discipline*”. Thus “*class list*” differs from the similar phrase «*список класса*» in Russian in its background knowledge, as it is a matter of common observation that in a Russian secondary school the “*class list*” is compiled alphabetically and remains unchanged throughout the academic year.

The lexical background represents information on the social reality, the knowledge possessed by the average native speaker and it is an important component of communicative competence. Ignoring the lexical background leads to numerous violations of the language norm, or even merely to forming phrases that are meaningless for a given culture. So, for instance, a teacher’s question: “*What did you have to do as a home assignment?*” would seem strange to English schoolchildren, they might think that the teacher has actually forgotten for some reason what home assignment he gave the students. This phrase, uttered in Russian «*Что Вам было задано на дом?*» is not only far from being redundant, but also has become stable due to its frequent repetition in the classroom, and therefore can be ranked among the established forms of speaking etiquette that perform the motivation function, in this case, the question «*Что Вам было задано на дом?*» serves as an order to check homework.

Another example shows the significance of background knowledge for the speaker to gain the communicative competence. Comparing the following two phrases spoken by the teacher in Great Britain: “*Andrew, come out to the front, please!*” and “*Andrew, come out to the blackboard, please!*” it is undoubted that each of them is an imperative. However, it is customary in an English school that in the first case, the student must come forward and turn to face the class. After hearing the second phrase, the student must go to the blackboard and complete some written tasks on it. In Russian schools, these two phrases correspond to one «*Идите к доске!*» Thus, the Russian imperative «*Идите к доске!*» and the English instruction “*Come out to the blackboard!*” can have orders for different reactions and behaviour. Therefore, their identification causes behavioral interference, alongside with linguistic and cultural impediments.

As numerous examples prove, the national-cultural content of the vocabulary plays an important role in applied linguistics, and especially in the practice of teaching a foreign language.

Conclusion

It should be concluded that nowadays the issue of linguistic and cultural interference of one language system elements into another during the language contacts is of great importance being an object of scientific disputes. Cultural integration makes itself evident in the fact that, while maintaining their identity, the peoples’ cultures are moving closer as R.D. Lewis in his book “*When Cultures Collide: Leading across Cultures*” notes that “*cultural diversity is not something that is going to go away tomorrow, enabling us to plan*

our strategies on the assumption of mutual understanding. It is in itself, a phenomenon with its own riches, the exploration of which could yield incalculable benefits for us, both in terms of wider and more profitable policies and activity” [13, p. 17].

The result of linguistic and cultural interference can be both rather frustrating and positive, contributing to adequate translation and mutual understanding, as well as implementing effective communication. Focusing the attention on the phenomenon of linguistic and cultural interference, its prediction and prevention, will facilitate to avoid communication failures as lack of background knowledge creates certain obstacles, slows down the process of interaction, leads to misunderstanding. So, to achieve greater success, it is necessary not only to master a foreign language, but also to gain the knowledge of the cultural characteristics.

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Vorontsova Yu.A., Candidate of Pedagogy, Associate Professor at Department of Foreign Languages
Bryansk State Technical University
Bul'var 50 let Oktyabrya, 7/2, Bryansk, Russia, 241035
E-mail: Voroncova.yuliya@mail.ru

Ю.А. Воронцова

ЛИНГВОСТРАНОВЕДЧЕСКАЯ ИНТЕРФЕРЕНЦИЯ И ЕЁ ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И РУССКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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Сегодня наблюдается возросший интерес к изучению иностранных языков для различных целей. Приобщаясь к новой культуре путем овладения языками, представители разных культур попадают под прямое воздействие языковой интерференции, которая проявляется в межкультурной коммуникации. Данная работа направлена на исследование вопросов лингвострановедческой интерференции, возникающих из-за неправильной интерпретации фоновой лексики иностранного языка на примере англоязычных и русскоязычных реалий. В статье подчёркивается история изучения вопроса интерференции; теоретическое обоснование проблемы воздействия одного языка билингва на другой. В статье рассматривается определение лингвострановедческой интерференции; представлены коммуникативные барьеры, возникающие в ходе изучения иностранных языков и в межкультурном общении, и способы их преодоления; затрагивается проблема культурного шока как социально-психологического феномена. Особое внимание уделяется анализу примеров экстралингвистических реалий из английского и русского языков, изучение которых необходимо для овладения коммуникативной компетенцией, представлению их трансляции на обоих языках. Делается вывод о том, что результат влияния лингвострановедческой интерференции может быть как отрицательным, так и положительным, способствующим адекватному переводу и взаимопониманию, а также осуществлению эффективной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: лингвострановедческая интерференция, адекватный перевод, реалии, фоновые знания, коммуникативные барьеры, билингв.

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Воронцова Юлия Александровна, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент кафедры «Иностранные языки»
ФГБОУ ВО «Брянский государственный технический университет»
241035, Россия, г. Брянск, бул. 50 лет Октября, 7 (корп. 2)
E-mail: Voroncova.yuliya@mail.ru