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LEXICOLOGICAL ASPECT OF TEACHING BILINGUAL TURKIC LANGUAGE SPEAKING STUDENTS¹

Olyesya RAZDORSKAYA²

Abstract

Bilingual students that speak Russian and one of the Turkic languages study at many Russian medical universities. The objective of this research is to show the experience of organizing educational activities for the improvement of studying English by the bilingual students. In particular, the experience of the speakers of Kumyk language that join the students' scientific society of the Department of Foreign Languages of Kursk State Medical University is presented. The students are encouraged to make comparative research of the medical vocabulary in English and their native language. The analysis of the medical vocabulary of the Kumyk language made by the students showed that it was mainly represented by the names of body parts. Kumyk phraseological units, which contain somatonyms, i.e. words denoting body parts, were found and compared with the English phraseological units. Comparative analysis of the Kumyk and English proverbs with somatonyms was made, and the proverbs with the same meaning were revealed.

The research has shown that the comparative analysis of Kumyk and English phraseological units and proverbs helps to establish a significant commonality of the native languaculture and the languaculture of the foreign language being studied. In the author's opinion, it promotes memorizing English medical vocabulary by the students and formation of their analytical thinking.

Keywords: The English language, the Kumyk language, comparative analysis, phraseological unit, proverb.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Bilingualism and Higher Education

Students' diversity is becoming common in the universities worldwide. Higher education institutions are trying to introduce the teaching methods adjustable to the students of different nations and ethnicities (Chydenius et al. 2018; Semiao et al. 2023; Zhang et al. 2024).

Cultural diversity can be observed not only among the international students of the Russian universities, but among the Russian students as well. For example, there are bilingual students from the North Caucasian Federal District that study at the universities of the Central Federal District of Russia. It is known that the languages spoken by the students from the republics of the North Caucasus belong to different language families, the Altaic family in

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² Kursk State Medical University, Department of Foreign Languages, razdorski@yandex.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6316-3948>

particular. Representatives of the peoples of the North Caucasus, as a rule, are actively bi-literate individuals who can read and write in their native language and Russian, actively use their language skills, i.e. possess dual or contact bilingualism (Khadzhiev et al. 2018).

Bilingualism as a social phenomenon has long been typical in the North Caucasus. Turkic languages were used by many peoples as a means of international communication, while the Kumyk language was historically widespread in the Northeastern Caucasus (Kidirniyazov 2019: 89). This research deals with medical students that speak Kumyk and Russian languages and are natural bilinguals.

It is known that bilingualism as a concept of modern cognitive science is an interdisciplinary field of research that includes linguistics, psychology, sociology, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropology, ethnology and pedagogy (Rosseyaykin et al. 2024). In modern pedagogy, much attention is paid to the teaching foreign languages for the bilingual students (Sarwat et al. 2022; Aksak et al. 2022). It should be mentioned that the students of Russian medical universities study many language disciplines such as ‘Foreign language in a doctor’s professional communication’, ‘Russian language’, ‘Latin language and the basics of terminology’. In fact, during the educational process, the students are in a multilingual educational environment. This requires teachers to take into account the linguistic features of the native languages of bilingual students and the languages taught to medical students, the linguistic features of the native language’s terminological system, the specifics of interference in the conditions of mastering special vocabulary, and the mechanisms of switching from one language code to another.

2. THE RELEVANCE AND OBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The relevance of this research is explained by the increase in the number of bilingual students at Russian universities and the need to develop new pedagogical technologies aimed at this contingent of students for teaching language disciplines.

I have a long experience of the educational activities with bilingual students, the native speakers of Turkic languages such as Turkish (spoken in Russia by Meskhetian Turks), Uzbek, Turkmen, Azerbaijani, and Karachay-Balkar. Working with bilingual students is also one of the areas of the activities of the Student Scientific Society of the Department of Foreign Languages of Kursk State Medical University. The object of this research is to share the experience of the educational activities under the teacher’s supervision with the medical students that are the native speakers of the Kumyk language.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Analysis of the Medical Vocabulary of the Kumyk Language

The Kumyk language is one of the three Turkic languages spoken in the Daghestan Republic of the Russian Federation. Kumyk belongs to the North-West Turkic group or the Kipchak-Polovtsian subgroup of the Kipchak Group (Yukselen Abdurrazak 2008: 127). The teacher does not speak the Kumyk language, thus the cooperation of the student and the teacher is important. The initial stage of the bilingual students’ activities begins with analyzing the medical vocabulary of their native language. This analysis shows that the medical vocabulary in the Kumyk language is mainly represented by somatonyms, i.e. names of body parts. The nominations of human body parts make up a significant part of the vocabulary of any language; they are characterized by a high frequency of use.

It was revealed that Kumyk words denoting body parts are not borrowed from the other languages. The examples are: баш (head), кърсакъ (stomach), аякъ (leg), бурун (nose), бармакъ (finger), къол (hand), тиль (tongue). Thus, anatomical vocabulary is formed mainly

by means of the Kumyk language's own vocabulary. Some words denoting body parts in the Kumyk language are similar to their Turkish analogues, for example аякъ (Turkish *ayak*), бурун (Turkish *burun*), тиль (Turkish *dil*), бармак (Turkish *parmak*).

A characteristic feature of the Kumyk language is the presence of medical terms borrowed from the Russian language. It is known that the active flow of Russian borrowings began in the 1920s and 1930s. The examples of borrowed lexical units include the following words: доктор (doctor), больница (hospital), операция (operation), диета (diet), температура (temperature), лаборатория (laboratory), аптека (pharmacy), рецепт (prescription), невропатолог (neurologist), гипотония (hypotension), etc. The spelling and pronunciation of such words do not change in the Kumyk language.

To denote some medical specialties, word combinations formed from the Kumyk (non-borrowed) words are used, for example, гъз доктор (literally: eye doctor) – oculist; тиш доктор (literally: tooth doctor) – dentist. The names of some diseases are formed in a similar way: тамакъ аврув (literally: throat disease) – tonsillitis; тыныш ёллар аврув (literally: air ways disease) – bronchitis. These word combinations are formed in a way characteristic of the Turkic languages: the first word (or the first two words in the word combination тыныш ёллар аврув) has the function of an adjective. This way of word formation is also typical for the English language. Thus, the bilingual students that speak the Kumyk language can easily understand the structure of English medical terms consisting of two or three components.

3.2. Analysis of the Kumyk and English phraseological units

The next stage of the analysis of the vocabulary made by the students is to find Kumyk phraseological units that contain somatonyms. The Kumyk language is rich in phraseological units of this kind. A specific feature of Kumyk phraseological units with a somatic component is the attitude towards a person and his/her assessment according to the peculiarities of the traditional Kumyk ethnic culture, the mentality of the Kumyks, with their customs and traditions, way of life (Sapukova 2020: 352 – 355; Sulayeva 2010a: 91 – 94).

Here are the examples of some phraseological units with somatonyms:

- енгил аякъ (literally: a light leg) or енгил къол (a light hand) - a person who brings happiness, goodness, a lucky person;
- къара юрек (black heart) - an evil person;
- багъыр баш (a copper head) – a foolish person;
- авзуну вапасы ёкъ (literally: a tongue without bones) – a talkative person, a chatterbox;
- къаны бузламакъ (къаны къатмакъ) – the blood is freezing;
- башына къан урду - the blood rushed to the head.

Then the students find English phraseological units, the components of which are lexemes denoting body parts and compare them with Kumyk phraseological units. For example, in the English language there is a phraseological unit *good luck reaches further than long arms* (Loyalty and Luck: Proverbs). But in the Kumyk language there is no phraseological units with the word 'arm' that have the same meaning.

There is an English idiom (phraseological unit with a color component) *black hearted* (The Free Dictionary, 2024) denoting an evil person. This idiom is similar to the Kumyk idiom “къара юрек” that has the same meaning.

In the English language, there are various phraseological units with the word *head*, e.g. *to have one's head screwed on the right way*; *a clear head*; *to be not right in the head*, etc. An

English word *cabbagehead* (The Free Dictionary, 2024) is an analogue of the Kumyk idiom “багыр баш” (copper head) that means a foolish person. One more Kumyk idiom with the same meaning is “такъа баш”, which consists of two components: *skull* and *head*.

The English idioms *a runaway tongue*, *an unbridled tongue* and *a loose tongue* have the same meaning as the Kumyk idiom “авзуну вапасы ёкъ” (literally: a tongue without bones). The Kumyk idiom “аччы тилли” (literally: with an evil tongue) consisting of two adjectives means ‘evil-speaking person.’ It is synonymous to the English idiom *to have a sharp tongue*, which means ‘to have a tendency to speak maliciously or critically’ (Farlex Partner Idioms Dictionary, 2017).

The English analogues of the idiom “къаны бузламакъ” are *blood runs cold* or *blood freezes*. To translate into English the phraseological unit “башына къан урду” the English idiom *a rush of blood to the head* (*a sudden rush of blood to the head*) (The free dictionary, 2024) is used.

Some idioms have the same meaning in Kumyk and English, but they include the names of different body parts or organs. For example, an English idiom *sweet tooth* (*to have a sweet tooth*) means *to like to eat sweet things* (Farlex Dictionary of Idioms, 2015). The synonymous Kumyk idiom is “татли тамакъ”, which is literally translated ‘a sweet throat.’

The Kumyk idiom “тамакъ адам” means a glutton, it consists of two components: *throat* and *man*. The English idioms with the component *throat* don’t have the same meaning. An English phraseological unit with two somatonyms *eyes bigger than one’s stomach* (or *eyes bigger than one’s belly*) means *to take more food than one is actually capable of eating* (Farlex Partner Idioms Dictionary, 2017).

The English phraseological unit *a big heart* has the following meanings: 1. An abundance of kindness, selflessness, empathy, or compassion; 2. A great deal of courage, conviction, or determination, especially in the face of adversity (Farlex Dictionary of Idioms, 2015). Unlike the English phraseological unit, the Kumyk phraseological unit “уялу юрек” (a big heart), which has the same synonymous components, denotes an arrogant person. The adjective уялу (big) is used in a negative sense (Tetakayeva 2019: 415).

The comparative analysis of the phraseological units has shown that despite the different regions of living of the speakers of the languages under analysis, there are the names of the same body parts in the phraseological units with the same meanings. The phraseological units of the Kumyk and English languages have typologically common parameters in both structural and semantic aspects.

3.3. Analysis of the Kumyk and English Proverbs

The next step is the analysis of the proverbs containing somatonyms and the proverbs about health. Proverbs are illustrative linguistic material for describing national character traits. Proverbs and sayings are traditionally one of the linguistic sources of knowledge about the national character and mentality. The Kumyk language has a significant number of proverbs with components denoting the parts of the human body. The proverbs with somatonyms are of interest because they reflect historical, cultural or sociological facts in their content. Zh.A. Sulaeva notes, that such lexemes as “баш” (head), “юрек” (heart), “рѣз” (eyes), “тил” (tongue) are most often found in proverbs. Proverbs and sayings with these words convey certain states of a person, his/her feelings or experiences. In the folk picture of the world reflected in the proverbs, the head is associated with the receptacle of wisdom. The lexeme *heart* is often mentioned when it comes to agitation. The lexeme *tongue* is

synonymous with the lexeme *speech*, and the lexeme *eye* symbolizes a keen eye (Sulayeva 2010b: 244 – 248).

We have made an attempt to identify English analogues of the proverbs, which contain lexemes denoting body parts (Table 1).

Kumyk proverbs with literal translation	English proverbs
Башда гъакъыл болмаса, эки аякъгъа гюч бола (If the head doesn't work, it's hard for the legs).	Little wit in the mind makes much work for the feet.
Юреке гелген сёз башына да гелир (What's on the heart is on the tongue).	What the heart thinks the tongue speaks.
Гёзден тайгъан гёнгюлден де таяр (Out of sight, out of the heart).	Out of sight, out of mind.

Table 1. The results of the comparative analysis of the proverbs with somatonyms.

In the Kumyk language, there are also many proverbs about health and diseases. Some of them have no analogues in English or Russian, for example: «Аврувун яшырагъан сав болмас» (The one who hides his illness will not recover), «Авругъанны ястыгъында сав оьлюр» (On the sick person's pillow, the healthy one will die) (Gadzhiahmedov, 2015: 12). Table 2 shows the proverbs that have analogues in the languages under consideration.

Kumyk proverbs with literal translation	English proverbs
Байлыкъдан савлукъ яхшы (Health is better than wealth).	Health is better than wealth.
Аз аша, кёп яша (Eat little, live long).	Don't live to eat, but eat to live.
Аврувну хадирын сав билмес (A healthy person can't understand a sick person).	Health is not valued till sickness comes.
Авруйгъангъа бал да аччы (Honey seems tasteless to a sick person).	Wealth is nothing without health.
Ажжалы етмей оьлмес (You can't die before your death).	A man cannot die more than once.

Table 2. The results of the comparative analysis of the proverbs about health and diseases.

3.4. Using the Results of the Comparative Analysis in Teaching Bilingual Students

The analysis of lexical units denoting body parts showed their widespread use in the languaculture of the Kumyk people, as evidenced by the proverbs, sayings and phraseological units. The comparative analysis of Kumyk and English phraseological units and proverbs helps to establish a significant commonality of the native languaculture and the languaculture of the foreign language being studied. The presence of proverbs about health of approximately the same content in different languages, Kumyk and English, confirms the presence of universal values in the way of thinking and culture of peoples who speak different languages. It promotes memorizing English medical vocabulary by the bilingual students and formation of their analytical thinking.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis of the medical vocabulary of the foreign and the native languages is made in the 'multicultural space' that promotes mastering a foreign language, and a dialogue of cultures takes place in the minds of students. The experience of the author's educational activities with the bilingual students can be represented in the form of a system of levels of perception and description of experience (Klarin 2016: 558):

1. **Learning conditions (learning environment):** in our case, these conditions are characterized by the presence of monolingual and bilingual students among Russian citizens studying at a medical university. These students study English, which is a compulsory subject for Russian medical students.

2. **Teacher's actions in the process of teaching:** making a comparative analysis of the lexical and grammatical features of the student's native language and the English language in order to identify the native language's positive interference. As Gottardo and Grant put it, we should see, if the languages assist each other (positive transfer) or interfere with each other (negative transfer) (Gottardo et al., 2008).

3. **Methods of interaction between the teacher and the students:** usage of innovative methods of teaching aimed at the development of the students' analytical and critical thinking, reflective skills (including self-reflection). The linguistic diversity available at the university makes it necessary to provide pedagogical support to students, and in some cases, compensatory training.

4. **Priorities (beliefs, values) and the aims of education:** understanding different worldviews and the distinctive features of representatives of different nationalities, preventing conflict situations among the students of different nationalities, formation of positive interpersonal relations and the students' tolerant attitude to the diverse cultures.

5. **Roles (identities):** At the classes of English and in the process of research activities in the student scientific society, the students become equal participants in the educational process, their subjectivation takes place. The interest of bilingual students and the teacher in the students' native languages (and, therefore, culture) becomes a factor in motivating students to join the student scientific society of the Department of Foreign Languages of the Kursk State Medical University.

6. **Educational ideal:** It seems necessary to teach the students in the context of intercultural and interethnic dialogue, which results in both the achievements of students in scientific activities in the humanities departments, and the development of new approaches and technologies by the teacher to improve teaching English for the medical students, both monolingual and bilingual.

The experience of teaching English for the bilingual students has shown that there is a necessity for the teacher to be the facilitator in the classes and during extracurricular activities of the Students' Scientific Society, to create a motivating teaching environment and to view the students' diversity as challenging. Many years of experience working with bilingual students have shown that it is more often that they join the Students' Scientific Society of the Department of Foreign Languages and present the results of their own research at conferences on linguistics. This can be explained to a certain extent by the desire for self-presentation of the students as representatives of their nationality. The potential of bilingual students is revealed in the conditions of cooperation in the teacher-student dyad under the condition of a productive organization of joint activities based on the pedagogy of cooperation. The development of students' analytical thinking is more effectively realized in the multilingual environment by means of the formation of different types of thinking - conceptual, logical, and abstract.

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