

**TILTM 2020****Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication****CULTUROLOGY-ORIENTED APPROACH AS A COMPONENT OF STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Vanda Arutyunian (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Department of Language Training, Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Moscow, the Russian Federation]

***Abstract***

The effectiveness of the practice of teaching foreign languages in higher education institutions is largely determined by the presentation of language teaching material by correlating linguistic and cultural information. Along with linguistic knowledge, students studying Economics and Business need a deep knowledge of the ethics of business communication, the culture of the country of the studied language, its history and literary heritage. As the level of preuniversity language training of a certain percentage of the students may not meet the high requirements for students of economic and business specialties at universities, a foreign language teacher faces a difficult task - to find the most effective methods of mastering the proposed language material, taking into account the possible multi-level training of students in the language subgroup. A culturology-oriented approach that demonstrates high performance indicators of teaching foreign languages allows students to present language material in the most accessible form, create a high degree of motivation for students and provide them with a high level of mastery of the linguistic and extralinguistic components of the foreign language. As the language material in the context of this approach, the most interesting is the phraseological fund of the language. In this research, phraseological units and idiomatic expressions of the English language are presented for analysis. The language material considered in the context of a culturology-oriented approach can be effectively applied in the course of teaching a foreign language to students of non-linguistic specialties of higher education institutions.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Culturology-oriented approach, full onomophraseme, idiomatic expression, partitive onomophraseme, phraseological unit.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## **1. Introduction**

Modern higher education in the Russian Federation is on the way to transition from a strict breadth of academism in the educational process to a narrow profile, dictated by modern trends in the development of higher education in the world. Today, it is not enough to complete the first stage of higher education with good theoretical knowledge and practical skills, it is necessary to understand in detail the chosen specialization and its narrow focus. In this setting of the problem, a university student faces the task of mastering knowledge and skills within the framework of educational programs that modern universities are ready to offer, taking into account the orientation for a specific chosen specialty.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The composition of students of higher educational institutions in the fields of Economics and Business is diverse. First-year students are represented by graduates of linguistic schools, schools with an in-depth study of a particular subject (not a foreign language), and secondary schools without a specific specialization. At the same time, very often school graduates who have made a decision to choose an economic or business specialty in the last year of school enter the first year at university.

In this regard, it becomes clear that the level of foreign language proficiency among first-year students is highly varied. A graduate of a linguistic school a priori speaks a foreign language at a higher level than a graduate of a regular school. In this regard, a foreign language teacher at a university has a difficult task – to build the educational process in a language subgroup in such a way that students with different levels of foreign language proficiency feel equally comfortable in the created language environment. The question remains - how to achieve this comfort in the audience, while maintaining a balance between the necessity of presenting a complex language material (as required by the specialty program) and a smooth strategy of immersion students with a lower level of foreign language knowledge in the language environment.

The problem is complicated by the fact that not every university has the principles of distribution into language subgroups according to the level of initial knowledge. Thus, in technical universities with a rare training focus, a group can have up to 30 students; therefore, even if the group is divided into two language subgroups, it will not be possible to distribute the students among groups evenly according to the level of foreign language proficiency. At the same time, the task of teaching a narrow-profile language of the specialty remains. Therefore, it is necessary to understand which methods can help in this matter, taking into account the specifics of the narrow profile of language training.

## **3. Research Questions**

In a modern university, the process of teaching a foreign language is closely connected with the solution of two main tasks – different levels of pre-university language training of students and teaching a language of the speciality that many students are not ready for due to poor pre-university language training. In this regard, the teacher of a foreign language faces a question - which method of teaching the language of the speciality can be the most effective in the current conditions?

Among the variety of methods offered by modern methodologists, there is a choice, but in our study we will focus on one specific method – a culturology-oriented approach to teaching the language of economic and business specialties (Arutyunian, 2016).

The choice of research topic is relevant. Today, many students are aware of the need for a serious study of a foreign language in the chosen specialty. At the same time, in universities there is still a certain percentage of students who, because of delayed awareness of the problem of lack of basic knowledge in a foreign language, did not take measures to improve the level of a foreign language command, hoping that they could increase their level of language competence in the first year of the university. However, in reality, only a few manage to do this. Most of the students with initial problems in learning a foreign language are held hostage to their illusions and lose motivation when faced with the problems of learning a specialty language. Having insufficient basic knowledge of a foreign language, they understand that it is impossible in a short time to raise their basic language level to such an extent that the mastering of the basics of the specialty language does not cause misunderstandings and psychological discomfort. This cohort of students is among the lagging students who are not interested in the process of learning a foreign language at the university and who are seriously disappointed in the language programs (Arutyunian, 2017). Subsequently, such graduates consider it difficult to get a job in the business environment that is not associated with fluency in a foreign language.

Unfortunately, the lack of motivation to study a foreign language in a non-linguistic university is not only due to the problem of the initial lack of subject knowledge. Some students are demotivated due to the monotony of the educational process and the lack of creative tasks that they could perform qualitatively based on their personal interests, despite any gaps in language education. In this case, one of the auxiliary components of the educational process can serve as a culturology-oriented approach to the study of linguistic phenomena that are closely related to the national identity of the ethnic group of native speakers.

The effectiveness of teaching foreign languages in higher education institutions is largely determined by the presentation of educational language material by correlating language and cultural information. This approach allows to make the process of learning a foreign language interesting on the one hand and creative on the other. The student becomes a researcher who has a difficult task to solve a linguistic problem and present it to the audience in the right context.

In this regard, along with the knowledge of a linguistic nature, a modern student studying in the field of Economics and Business needs a deep knowledge of the ethics of business communication, the culture of the country of the studied language, its history and literary heritage. A culturology-oriented approach, which demonstrates high performance indicators of teaching foreign languages, allows students to present educational material in the most accessible form and provide them with a high level of mastery of the linguistic and extralinguistic components of the studied foreign language.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to consider the culturology-oriented method as an auxiliary element of motivation of students studying in higher educational institutions in economic and business majors. In our opinion, this method, due to its orientation for the research approach, is of particular interest even for those students whose basic level of the foreign language is not high. Due to the fact that the culturology-

oriented method is based on the etymological analysis of language units, in our research we will apply this method in relation to the phraseological fund of the English language, since these language elements are endowed with a special halo of phraseological image, which hides very informative information that can motivate students with different levels of language training.

## 5. Research Methods

Before starting to consider the main method of research as directly applied to the analysis of phraseological units, we will focus in more detail on the theoretical component of the study. The culturology-oriented method is based on one or another model of cultural interpretation of a linguistic phenomenon. In our research, phraseological units and idiomatic expressions of the English language were chosen as the material to which the culturology-oriented approach would be applied. This choice is not accidental. The phraseology of a language is a unique layer of linguistic units which distinguishes the variety of extralinguistic information and which, in fact, is a “mirror” of the culture of a foreign ethnic group. Phraseological units and idiomatic expressions, being cultural signs, contain and reflect the versatility of the cultural, historical, literary, and social heritage of the ethnic group. Therefore, the study of phraseology and idiomatics in the context of a culturology-oriented approach is the most effective way to study the phraseology of a foreign language by studying the culture of a foreign-language society.

Speaking about the model of cultural interpretation of phraseological units, it should be noted that in this research we will adhere to the model put forward by Kovshova (2013), which is the following sequence of operations that reveal the cultural connotation of a phraseological unit:

- 1) “awakening” meanings related to the distant past of culture in the memory of the original;
- 2) remembering the knowledge and ideas that are associated with the phraseological unit and are necessary for its more accurate use;
- 3) “connecting” the image of the phraseological unit or its association with symbols, stereotypes, mythologems, etc.

Among the principles of the sociocultural approach, on which the culturology-oriented method is based, attention should be paid to the “principle of multispect socio-cultural education ... and the principle of forming students’ general cultural and sociological perceptions about the world’s image, lifestyle, social norms as a means of social regulation of individuals’ behavior and groups in society, social norms, traditions, customs as a means of integrating, streamlining and maintaining processes of society’s functioning” (Safonova, 1996, p. 110).

The component structure of phraseological units and idiomatic expressions is also of particular interest in terms of a culturology-oriented method. Idioms with an onomastic component are a special part of the phraseology of any language. In the research, we will call them onomophrasems. These linguistic units are interesting primarily for the etymological component that is behind the proper noun in the structure of these expressions. In our research, we will consider onomastic phraseological units related to full and partitive onomophrasems. The specificity of this subclass of phraseological units is determined by the variability of their functioning, according to which full onomophrasems and partitive onomophrasems are

defined. Full onomophrasemes are phrases of a phraseological nature, the onomastic component of which is a proper noun that has an undisputed connotative meaning. Partitive onomophrasemes are phrases of a phraseological nature, in the onomastic component of which there is a shift of meaning towards denotation, provided that this component does not have the main connotation (Arutyunian, 2010). The classification of phraseological units with onomastic components into full and partitive onomophrasemes makes it possible to trace connotative-denotative correlations within the idiomatic expression and their influence on the idiomatic image underlying the phraseological unit. For a culturology-oriented method, the recognition of complete and partitive onomophrasemes provides additional insight into the stability of the phraseological image of the unit in question.

## 6. Findings

Next, we will consider several examples of applying the culturology-oriented method in relation to the phraseological fund of the English language of economic and business discourse. The phraseological units selected for the description are vivid examples that clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of this method in teaching students of economic and business specialties of higher education institutions.

As noted above, in order to identify the cultural connotation of a phraseological unit, it is necessary to 'awaken' in the recipient's memory the original cultural meanings embedded in the expression, to determine the knowledge that will facilitate the appropriate use of the phraseological unit, taking into account the association of the phraseological unit image with existing symbols and stereotypes of society.

We will start the research by considering the phraseological unit *slush funds* – “the amount allocated for bribes, a special purpose fund” (Gulland & Hinds-Howell, 2002). Starting with the etymological analysis of this phraseological unit, it can be noted that the expression is based on the lexical item *slush* “melting snow, snow and water”, first recorded in English in 1640. The lexical item is of Scandinavian origin - in Norwegian, Swedish and Danish there were consonant words whose phonetic sound is imitative of the sound of sloshing. Phraseological unit *slush fund* was first attested in 1839, from an earlier sense of *slush* “to refuse fat” (1756); the money from the sale of a ship's *slush* was distributed among the officers, which was the original sense of the phrase. The extended meaning “money collected for bribes and to buy influence” was first recorded in 1874. The connotative connection is traced by the association of “greasing” palms (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020).

By applying the etymological analysis of this phraseological unit, the student will gain the knowledge necessary for the exact use of this expression in speech and writing and will have a clear understanding of the connotative connections preserved in the expression *slush fund*.

“It also stated that Stans maintained a secret *slush fund* of cash in his office totaling at least \$350,000” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2020).

Now we will consider the phraseological unit *stock market*, which is one of the most widely used expressions of economic discourse. The expression *stock market*, “the place where securities are bought and sold”. was first recorded in English in 1809. Despite the fact that this expression is very common in economic texts, not many students are familiar with the etymological component of this expression. The original Stock Market started its history in the middle of the XIV century and was a fish and meat market in the City of London on or near the later site of Mansion House, so called perhaps because it occupied the

site of a former stocks. At the beginning of the XIV century stocks nominated instruments of punishment and confinement formerly widely used in Europe and America (usually for vagrants and petty offenders) and they consisted of large wooden blocks. The synonymic expression *stock exchange* is attested from 1773 (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.).

From the etymological analysis of this expression, it becomes clear that it originated in English culture, and only later became widespread in American business circles. The expression can raise associations not only with the place of trading in securities, but also preserve the image of a punishment tool, which in some sense may have shares of illiquid enterprises that are also traded on the stock exchange.

“Exuberance in *the stock market* has some genuine economic and financial underpinnings.” - (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, n.d.)

Next we will make an etymological analysis of phraseological unit *to rob Peter to pay Paul* “to take money away from someone or something that needs it in order to pay someone else or use it for something else”. The expression has some equivalents such as *to borrow from Peter to pay Paul* and *to uncliothe Peter to clothe Paul* (Brewer, 2006).

At first glance, these synonymous expressions may be mistakenly classified as partitive onomophrasems, because proper nouns *Peter* and *Paul* are common names widespread on the territory of Great Britain. However, when referring to the cultural and historical component of expressions and based on a detailed etymological analysis of their component structure, which allows us to identify the remaining connotative connections, it becomes clear that we have full onomophrasems. The etymology of these expressions is very interesting and complex, since there are several versions of these expressions’ origin and in this regard, establishing the etymology of these phraseological units is a certain difficulty.

According to the first version, phraseological unit *to rob Peter to pay Paul* (1510s) might be a reference to a big amount of churches dedicated to two saints (Saint Peter and Saint Paul) and have sprung from the fairly common practice of building or enriching one church using the ruins or revenues of another. According to the second version this phrase alludes to an event in the mid-16th century. One of the churches in England (the abbey church of Saint Peter in Westminster) was deemed a cathedral by letters patent. Ten years later, when the diocese of Westminster was dissolved, the church of Saint Peter in Westminster was absorbed into the diocese of London and a few years after that a lot of its assets were expropriated for repairs to Saint Paul’s Cathedral in London (Wikipedia, 2020).

In this case, based on the analysis of the origin of the idiom, we may conclude that the phraseological image of this expression and its equivalents is based on a nomination of the process of using the resources of one object (in this case the church) for the benefit of another object.

This idiomatic expression was used by an English writer Rudyard Kipling, when in the poem of 1919 “The Gods of the Copybook Headings” he used the idiom *to rob Peter to pay Paul* in the following context:

“In the Carboniferous Epoch we were promised abundance for all,  
By robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul;  
But, though we had plenty of money, there was nothing our money could buy,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: “If you don't work you die””.

The writer criticizes the concepts of income redistribution and collectivism and proposes its featuring in catechisms of the Conservative Campaign Headquarters.

Another example of a full onomophraseme is the phraseological unit **Serbonian bog** which nominates a hopeless situation or a dead-end situation from which it is difficult to get out. The phraseological halo of the expression is based on the historical fact of the existence in Egypt of a large swampy territory of the **Serbonis** to the East of the right branch of the Nile. The peculiarity of this swamp was that visually this section of the landscape gave the impression of solid soil, so it was taken by numerous armies for solid ground, as a result of which armies died in this swamp. It is this historical halo (a place from which there is practically no way out) that became the basis for the phraseological reinterpretation of the expression and its active use as a nomination of a hopeless situation (Wikipedia, n.d.).

“It is a *Serbonian bog*, not indeed where armies whole have sunk, but only Members of Congress.” (Dictionary Online, n.d.).

## 7. Conclusion

Summing up the results of our research, we should note the following:

1. The distinctive feature of teaching foreign languages at non-linguistic specialties is the multi-level degree of students' language training and lack of motivation of some part of students' contingent. In such conditions, one of the most fruitful methods of teaching a foreign language is a culturology-oriented approach, which manages to bring the language material to students in the most accessible form and bring them to a new, higher level of foreign language proficiency. By means of studying the language through the culture, history and literature inherent in a particular nation, a foreign language is mastered at a professional level.

2. The Language material considered in the context of a culturology-oriented approach can be effectively applied in the course of teaching a foreign language to students of non-linguistic specialties of higher education institutions. The interest in studying the phraseological fund of a foreign language leads to increased motivation of students, which is formed as a result of contact with foreign culture and history through etymological analysis of phraseological units.

## References

- Arutyunian, V. (2010). *Lexical and phraseological field “drama theater” in synchrony and diachrony (based on the material of English language)* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=19220273>
- Arutyunian, V. (2016). Osobennosti funkcionirovaniâ èkonomičeskoj frazeologii skvoz' prizmu lingvokul'turnyh reprezentacij (opyt prepodavaniâ studentam neâzykovyh special'nostej vuzov) [Peculiarities of economic phraseology functioning in the context of linguistic and cultural representations (experience of teaching students of non-linguistic specialties in higher education institutions)]. *Communication in the modern multicultural world: national and cultural specifics of discourse construction*, 315-323.
- Arutyunian, V. (2017). Kul'turovedčeskij metod v obučenii inostrannym âzykam studentov èkonomičeskikh i ûrudičeskikh special' [Culturology-oriented method in teaching foreign languages to students of economic and legal specialties of higher education institutions]. *Theory and practice of teaching foreign language in a non-linguistic university: traditions, innovations, prospects*, 3, 22-26.
- Brewer, E. C. (2006). *The wordsworth dictionary of phrase and fable*. Wordsworth Editions.

- Dictionary Online (n.d.). Serbonian bog [Def. 1]. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/serbonian>.
- Gulland, D.M. & Hinds-Howell, D. (2002). *The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms*. Penguin Books Ltd.
- Kipling, R. (1919). The Gods of the Copybook Headings [Digital Edition Version]. [http://kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems\\_copybook.htm](http://kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_copybook.htm)
- Kovshova, M. (2013). *Lingvokul'turologičeskij metod vo frazeologii: Kody kul'tury* [Linguistic and cultural method in phraseology: Codes of culture]. Librokom.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2020). Slush fund [Def. 2]. <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/slush-fund>.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (n.d.). Stock market [Def. 1]. <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/stock-market>.
- Online Etymology Dictionary (2020). Slush [Def. 1]. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/slush>.
- Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.). Stock exchange [Def. 1]. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/stock-exchange>
- Safonova, V. (1996). *Izučenie âzykov meždunarodnogo obšeniâ v kontekste dialoga kul'tur i civilizacij* [Learning languages of international communication in the context of a dialogue of cultures and civilizations]. Istoky.
- Wikipedia (2020). To rob Peter to pay Paul. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/To\\_rob\\_Peter\\_to\\_pay\\_Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/To_rob_Peter_to_pay_Paul)
- Wikipedia (n.d.). Serbonis. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbonian\\_Bog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbonian_Bog)