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**IN SEARCH FOR ENGLISH EQUIVALENT FOR ‘LINGUISTIC  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES’**

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**Abstract**

The paper is dedicated to searching for the English equivalent of the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’. Despite the long history of ‘linguistic studies’ in the Russian language pedagogy, in modern scientific discourse there is no uniformity in translating this term into English. The problem of terms divergence observed in the method of teaching foreign languages is explained by the parallel development of domestic and foreign methodical systems, which have formed their conceptual apparatus. The absence of the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ in English is determined by non-homogeneity of English linguistic culture as it is not related to the particular culture. In order to identify the most appropriate translation, the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ was analyzed for its reflection dynamics in some specialized dictionaries. The authors also investigated the ways on how the term functions in the professional discourse of teachers of Russian as a foreign language. As a result of the scientific research, it has been established that one term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ accounts for more than 20 options of its translation. Solving the problem targeted at translating the term into English can help to improve the effectiveness of intercultural professional communication in the international scientific community. The results of the study may be useful for Russian and foreign specialists interested in linguistic and cultural studies.

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## 1. Introduction

Modern requirements for teachers' professional activities include, among other things, their publication activity in the World scientific communities. It implies participation not only in some scientific events held abroad, but also in publishing papers indexed in various English-language databases as Scopus and Web of Science.

Despite the relatively long history of linguistic and cultural studies in Russian language pedagogy, until now the issue of its translation into English still needs to be resolved. This fact is confirmed by the authors of the language pedagogy terminology "Modern Dictionary of Methodical Terms and Concepts" by Asimov and Shchukin (2018): "In the Russian language its conceptual apparatus is formed, terms that are not always consistent in other languages are used, for example: *linguo didactics*, *language (speech) personality*, *logo-episystem*, *linguistic and cultural studies*, *linguo culture rheme*, *background vocabulary and background knowledge*, *foreign language education*, *ethnomethodic*, and etc." (p. 23). Experts explain the difficulties in finding and selecting the equivalents in another language as follows: "The concepts of the two languages often do not coincide, so it is not always possible to choose the right equivalent" (Azimov & Shchukin, 2018, p. 32).

## 2. Problem Statement

Owing to enhanced scientific activity of the Russian scientific community abroad, as well as the development and promotion of domestic scientific journals into the world scientific space since the mid-2000s, when annotation and keywords in two languages (Russian and English) were added to the publications requirements, there was a need to translate terms, including the language subjects as well. The review of some scientific publications on this topic within 2008–2019 showed that there was currently no uniform translation of the term 'linguistic and cultural studies' and the concepts derived from it. Solving the challenge targeted at translating the term into English can help to improve the effectiveness of intercultural professional communication in the international scientific community. The paper attempts to find the most equivalent version of the term 'linguistic and cultural studies' in English.

## 3. Research Questions

According to Kolesnikova and Dolgin (2008), who is the author of *Anglo-Russian Terminology Handbook on Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages*, the reasons for the divergence in the terminology used in describing the method of teaching foreign languages are due to their parallel development: "For a long time, domestic and foreign methodical systems of teaching foreign languages (including English) existed and developed independently, which led to the emergence of two terminological systems, which, despite many direct correspondences and coincidences, differ significantly from each other" (p. 102). The term 'linguistic and cultural studies' is not in any section of this handbook. Something closer to it can be found in the interpretation of the term 'principle' and 'teaching principles' where 'emotional-psychological principles' or affective principles include the principle of co-mastering the culture and the language, which is called language-culture connection (Kolesnikova & Dolgin, 2008). In the same

section, one of the components of ‘communicative approach’ is designated as ‘socio-cultural competence’. Its interpretation is very similar to the linguistic competence that is widely used in modern methodology. Let us compare:

1. English-Russian terminology Guide on the method of teaching foreign languages:

“**Socio-cultural competence** is the knowledge of the cultural characteristics belonging to native speakers, their habits, traditions, norms of behavior and etiquette, and the ability to understand and adequately use them in communication” (Kolesnikova & Dolgin, 2008, p. 104).

2. The Modern Dictionary of Methodical Terms and Concepts:

“**Linguistic and cultural studies competence.** Knowledge of the national customs, traditions, realities that are characteristic to the country of the studied language, the ability to extract country information from the units of the language and use it, making the communication is full and clear. The concept is close to the concept of socio-cultural competence” (Asimov & Shchukin, 2018, p. 32).

In addition to similar components, which are part of both competencies, socio-cultural competence implies the presence of extra-linguistic, psychological factors such as tolerance, openness, sociability. Based on this, we can conclude that the concept of ‘socio-cultural competence’ is still wider than the competence on ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ or language-culture competence.

Some attempts to find an analogue for ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ in foreign methods of teaching foreign languages were made in the late 1980s. Thus, the ‘deficiency’ of linguistic cultural studies in the U.S. was considered by Kostomarov (1989) in the publication “American version of linguistic studies”. In his research, the author wrote that the problem lies not only in the specifics of the American nation, but in the fact that English functions as the international language: Recognizing that background knowledge is largely different even among different English-speaking people and that English is the international language as long as the international topics are discussed in it, Hirsch still quotes sympathetically: the English language no longer belongs to any one group or nation.

The same information can be found in the foreign methodology literature. The terminology guide “An A-Z of ELT” by Scott Thornbury, intended to English teachers who teach English as a foreign language (ESL) and English as a second language (ESL), defines the term ‘culture’ as the answers to the questions about the role of culture in teaching languages. One of the questions, in our opinion, gives an answer to the important question: “Why is there no linguistic and cultural studies in the English methodology?”:

Does teaching a second language imply teaching the culture of the people of the target language? If yes, is there now homogenous English culture?

If a language is closely related to the particular people, region, and culture, as in the case of Japanese, Catalan, or Maori, then there is a strong reason for teaching a local culture. This especially relates to the case when integration is motivating, such as if students are planning to travel or settle down in a given culture. In the case of English, which, however, is no longer associated with one particular culture, and which is now used more for practical than integrative purposes (English as the international language), the arguments for including a cultural component in teaching are difficult to support. The globalization of the English language is reflected in textbooks, which tend to cover a wide range of topics, chosen not so much for acquaintance with values, but for general interest and future applicability.

However, in cases where learners' needs are only integrative, as in the case of English as a second language (or English as a foreign language), then the cultural content will be important if the culture being studied is clearly defined (Thornbury, 2006). In our opinion, the answer is quite comprehensive. Thus, if, for example, English is studied in the UK, then students can study the culture of this particular state.

This raises a similar question – is the Russian culture homogeneous? Despite the fact that Russia is a multi-ethnic state, foreigners should familiarize themselves, first of all, with the history, traditions, and everyday life of the Russian people as the dominant ethnic composition of the state in the quantitative ratio. Indeed, speaking about linguistic and cultural studies in the domestic method of teaching Russian as a foreign language, we, first of all, mean the Russian culture. Thus, in general terms of linguistic and regional studies, the Russian culture is homogeneous.

It is interesting to follow the development of the history term in the Russian reference literature.

In the work “Terms of the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language” (Glukhov & Shchukin, 1993), where an attempt was made for the first time to describe the terminology used in the methodology for teaching Russian as a foreign language, the concepts of ‘linguistic and cultural studies’, ‘country studies’, ‘regional studies competence’ are given, but there were no terms ‘linguistic and cultural competence’, ‘socio-cultural competence’, ‘socio-cultural approach’.

It is assumed that this was due to the language pedagogy development: As the communicative methodology developed, the socializing properties of a foreign language as an academic subject increased, since gradually the object of methodological modeling was the situations of not only everyday, but also socially significant communication, which led to the inclusion of socially targeted problems relevant to the countries of the target language including the problems of human civilization at the present stage of development .. (Safonova, 1991, p. 20). ‘Linguistic and cultural competence’ as an established term takes its place in “Dictionary of Methodological Terms” by Azimov and Shchukin (1999). This and subsequent editions include the terms ‘socio-cultural competence’ and ‘socio-cultural approach’ (Azimov & Shchukin, 1999, 2010, 2018).

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

The purpose of the study is to analyze the development of the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ in the terminology system of teaching Russian as a foreign language, to compare its analogues presented in the foreign teaching methods applied to teaching foreign languages, to investigate the functioning of this term in the professional discourse of RFL teachers, and based on the analysis, to identify the most acceptable option in the English language.

#### **5. Research Methods**

To describe the development of the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ in the terminology system of Russian language pedagogy and to compare its analogues in English, specialized dictionaries, including foreign publications, were under analysis. When studying the functioning of the term in the professional discourse of RFL teachers, some scientific articles on linguistic and cultural topics from

2008 to 2019, published in open access on [www.elibrary.ru](http://www.elibrary.ru), were examined, including the electronic editions of the journals “Russian language abroad”, “Rusistika”, “The world of the Russian word”.

## 6. Findings

As part of the work, we examined the functioning of the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ and concepts derived from it in the domestic scientific discourse. Since we are interested in the availability of an equivalent in English, we analyzed the publications of Russian and foreign specialists in the field of RFL on the site of the scientometric database eLibrary.ru, in the journals “Russian language abroad”, “Rusistika”, “The world of the Russian word”. All publications were done within 2008–2019. In total, more than 800 works were considered containing the terms ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ and the adjective derived from it that can be used in some titles and keywords. However, a prerequisite was the translation into English of the title and keywords, so fewer publications were selected for the comparative analysis. Our work allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

At the moment, there are more than 20 translation options for the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ (Table 1):

**Table 01.** Translation options of the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’.

‘Linguistic and cultural studies’ in Russian articles (titles and keywords)	Translation of keywords / titles into English
linguistic and cultural studies	Linguistic country-studying / linguistic countrystudy / linguistic country studies Linguistic and country studies Culture-oriented linguistics / culture-oriented linguistics Country study Linguistic culture Linguocultural science Linguistic and area studies Linguogeography Culture-through language studies / culture-through-language study Area and cultural studies Linguistic and area studies Studies of the country's culture and geography Linguistics / Linguistic Linguocivilization Linguistic and cultural studies Linguacultural studies / Lingua cultural studies Language and area studies Linguistic and regional geography / Linguistic regional geography Linguoculture Regional geography Linguacountry study Lingvostranovedenie

There is also no uniformity in the translation variants of the adjective ‘linguistic and cultural’ related to studies or a subject. Examples include (Table 2):

**Table 2.** Examples of no uniformity in the translation variants of the adjective ‘linguistic and cultural’ related to studies or a subject

‘Linguistic and cultural studies’ in Russian articles (titles and keywords)	Translation of keywords / titles into English
Linguistic and cultural competence.	The cultural-country competention Language and country studies competence Linguistic country studies competence Language and area competence
Linguistic and cultural commentary	Linguistic and cultural comments
Linguistic and cultural material	Linguacultural material
Linguistic knowledge	Linguo-cultural skills
Linguistic and cultural aspect	Cross-cultural diversities (linguistic aspect)

There is no uniformity even in the writing of the terms themselves. Authors in the same translation allow: a) combined / separate spelling (Linguistic country-studying / linguistic countrystudy); b) singular and plural (linguistic country study/ linguistic country studies) c) different grammatical forms (Linguistic country-studying/ linguistic country study) d) spelling with or without a hyphen (Culture-oriented linguistics / culture oriented linguistics).

We found one case of transliteration [lingvostranovedenie].

The most common translation is ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ (in 8 publications).

There is a substitution of the concepts: ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ is often translated as ‘linguo-cultural studies’ (Linguacultural studies, Linguocultural science).

Such ‘term creativity’ in translations is due to the fact that the term ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ is absent in the specialized dictionaries. For example, we could not find it in “The English-Russian Terminological Reference Book on the methodology of teaching foreign languages: a reference manual”. The reason stated above – the concept ‘English culture’ in the framework of a language course is not as homogeneous as the Russian. However, this does not mean that ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ in this context cannot have a corresponding equivalent in English.

Considering the above, we can choose from the listed translation options ‘linguistic and cultural studies’ and offer the closest equivalent. To do this, we give the definition of the term’s authors (E.M. Vereshchagin, V.G. Kostomarov): “Cultural linguistics is the aspect of teaching the Russian language to foreigners, in which, in order to ensure the communicative environment for learning and to solve general educational and humanistic tasks, the cumulative function of the language is put into practice linguo-didactically and the addressee is acculturated, where the methodology has the philological nature familiarization is carried out through the Russian language and in the process of it studying” (Vereshchagin & Kostomarov, 1990, p. 5). The latter is very important to understand the essence/idea of linguistic and regional studies. “Why is it so insistently said that linguistic and regional studies act only through the language and certainly in the process of studying it? These two restrictions contribute to homogeneity preservation of linguistic and cultural aspect” (Vereshchagin & Kostomarov, 1990, p. 5). Based on this, we consider the most appropriate option as ‘culture through language studies’. First, ‘culture’ here reflects not so much culture as acculturation. Secondly, in foreign literature they still use

the concept 'culture': "In the United States, there is a tendency to use the term 'culture' when it comes to acquaintance with the traditions, everyday life and norms of behavior of the particular people in the process of learning a foreign language.... In the English-language research literature, an integrative course in studying a foreign language and culture of a native speaker is referred to as Cultural Studies" (Kebekova, 2006, p. 81). Also, in our opinion, in translation it is very important not to forget to use the preposition 'through', because it sufficiently reflects what the authors had in mind.

## 7. Conclusion

The divergence in terminology in different languages complicates the development of the international scientific dialogue. Uniformity, adequacy in the terminology use is an important condition for enhancing scientific activity abroad. In this regard, the analysis on how the term 'linguistic and cultural studies' functions and is used in the national scientific discourse was carried out and its dynamics was presented in some specialized dictionaries.

Currently, there are more than 20 options of the translation 'linguistic and cultural studies' as the term used in language pedagogy. Such freedom in 'term creativity' is due to the fact that this concept has no close analogues in the English linguo-didactic tradition, because many researchers point to the inhomogeneity of the English linguistic culture.

Having considered the options of translation the term 'linguistic and cultural studies' into English, we can offer the option 'culture through language studies', which is most consistent with the meaning the authors put across.

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