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The Russian Language in Modern Scientific and Educational Environment

PROTO-SLAVIC LEXICAL FOUNDATIONS AS A WAY OF OVERCOMING LEXICAL INTERFERENCE

Iukhimenko Natalia Viktorovna (a)*
*Corresponding author

(a)   Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, 1117198, Mikluho-Maklaya Street 6, Moscow, Russia
natali.yukhimenko1@gmail.com

Abstract

This article discusses the occurrence of lexical interference when teaching Russian language to a Slavic audience, the root causes of this phenomenon, and ways to prevent it. When learning a closely related language, the interference phenomena is more likely than when studying languages entirely different from each other. This is due to the presence of similar, but not identical elements of the languages within the Slavic family. The vocabulary of the Russian language, having a common origin with the vocabulary of other Slavic languages, requires special attention when it is presented to a Slavic audience. When studying Russian vocabulary, words that have proto-Slavic roots do not lead to transposition (positive transfer), since under the influence of the semantic laws of different languages, the semantics of the common root can expand, become more narrow, or change entirely. This results in interlanguage paronyms, homonyms, and antonyms. Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of the educational process, it is necessary to pay special attention to these phenomena and to find ways to overcome lexical interference when teaching Russian to a Slavic audience. The purpose of this study is to propose ways of using the common Slavic lexical foundations to create an effective method of teaching Russian vocabulary to students who are native speakers of Slavic languages.

1. Introduction

The occurrence of interference phenomena is inevitable in linguistic contacts, as the process of performing speech activity in a foreign language with its native speakers, due to "the discrepancy between the norms of the language of the source of interference and the language of the object of interference" (Sarkisov, 2019). It should be remembered that mastering a foreign language, despite the possible positive transfer of skills from the native language system, is a collision with new, radically different semantic and grammatical laws (Pashkovskaya, 2019). Students who are not experienced with the functioning rules of the studied linguistic units, when reproducing oral and written speech, rely on the rules of the native language and the assumption that the forms of the native language and the target language are identical (Brown, 2014). The probability of errors, based on this phenomenon, directly depends on the development of family ties between the native language and the target language. The greater the similarity between them, the more often students borrow the forms and rules for the functioning of units from their native language.

Modern research has identified lexical affinity of the Slavic languages (Kretov et al., 2015), therefore, teaching Russian vocabulary to a Slavic audience will have accompanying interference phenomena. In this case, it is worth being attentive to "cases of coincidence or similarity of the form with complete or partial dissimilarity of the meanings of words in different languages" (Krasnokutskaya, 2018). For example, in the Bulgarian language there are words that are completely analogous to Russian in terms of their outward appearance, but completely different in meaning (Bulgarian стол – Russian стул, Bulgarian гора – Russian лес, Bulgarian майка – Russian мама, Bulgarian булка – Russian невеста) (Flerov & Hristozova, 2017). In our opinion, when presenting Russian vocabulary to Bulgarian students, one should first acquaint them with such interlanguage homonyms, in order to avoid communicative failures in the implementation of speech activity. In general, during the linguistic contact of two closely related languages, most commonly occurring errors are associated with the complete differentiation of the meanings of words of common Slavic roots, the withdrawal of such words from use, and a change in their compatibility (Gajarský, 2016).

For a deeper understanding of the causes of interference in the study of the Russian language by the Slavs, one should turn to research that offers a comparative study of the lexical and derivational systems of Russian and other Slavic languages. And further, use this material in teaching Russian as a non-Slavic language (Markova & Grigoryanova, 2016), (Markova, 2015a, 2019). These studies note the stability of the Proto-Slavic lexical fund in modern Slavic languages, despite the long process of their differentiation. At the same time, the expansion and narrowing of the semantic system of common Slavic roots led to the emergence of interlingual paronyms, while the polysemy of ancient common Slavic root words caused numerous phenomena of interlingual enantiosemia. These processes must be taken into account when teaching Russian as a non-Slavic language - using the context when explaining interlingual paronyms and antonyms, accompanying them with a special commentary, presenting the initial, general meaning of the Slavic root, and explaining semantic similarities and differences. There are also numerous discrepancies in the lexical system of Russian, and other Slavic languages, at the cultural-connotative and word-formation levels (cultural-connotative and lexical-word-formation asymmetry) (Savchenko &

Hmelevskij, 2019). To prevent interference, when faced with these phenomena, a special linguodidactic grouping of lexical material is recommended (according to the symmetry and asymmetry of word-formation nests, the similarity and difference of derivational models, according to semantic, stylistic and cultural differences and similarities of lexemes) (Markova, 2015b).

The creation of textbooks aimed at eliminating the negative transfer caused by interlingual paronymy, homonymy, and enantiosemia, is of keen interest for researchers and methodologists (Dapcheva, 2005; Gajarský, 2020; Rozboudova et al., 2019).

2. Problem Statement

Since lexical interference is one of the primary problems in teaching Russian in a Slavic audience, there is a need to find a universal means of acquainting students with the phenomena of interlingual homonymy, paronymy and enatiosemia.

3. Research Questions

The study examined the following issues:
- Possible causes of interlingual interference
- Types of errors in interlingual interference among Slavic students
- Ways to prevent interlingual interference among Slavic students

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between commonalities and dissimilarities of Slavic lexical foundations as one of the most effective ways to prevent lexical interference when teaching Russian to Slavic students.

5. Research Methods

The basic methodological foundations of the work were the provisions of the communicative approach and the teaching method, taking into account the native language of students. Theoretical research methods were used - analysis and synthesis, pedagogical modelling.

6. Findings

One particular component of teaching the Russian language to the Slavs is the predisposition of students to commit lexical and stylistic mistakes, within the background of interlingual interference. The similarity of languages in this case is not a benefiting factor, but, on the contrary, complicates the learning process, especially the development of productive speech skills. When reproducing speech, the operation of calling a word (Gal'skova & Gez, 2006) is complicated by the consonance of the forms of the native and the target language. Students, having a limited time to select the desired lexical unit, replace it with an analogue, guided by the semantic laws of their native language.

6.1. Types of errors within interlanguage interference among Slavic students

The following categories of mistakes can be distinguished that are made by speakers of Slavic languages when learning Russian, due to interlanguage interference:

- Errors related to the expansion or contraction of semantics of the common Slavic root (*беда* Russian несчастье – *bída* Czech бедность, нужда, лишения, беда – *беда* Serbian беда, несчастье, нищета; *дело* Russian работа, надобность, сфера знаний, предприятие, событие, поступок, судебное разбирательство и т.д. – *dílo* Czech произведение, творчество, дело, труд – *дело* Serbian дело, действие, поступок, произведение, творчество, преступление)
- Errors related to different connotations of the common root (*родина* Russian – *rodina* Czech семья, семейство; *черствый* Russian засохший, несвежий, нечуткий – *čerstvý* Czech свежий – *чврст* Serbian твёрдый, крепкий)
- Loan-translation - occurs if a word with a Proto-Slavic root has been replaced in Russian through borrowing; we can talk about some "linguistic purism" of other Slavic languages in comparison with Russian, which since the 18th century has been actively borrowing words from the languages of the Italic and Germanic branches (Russian *газета* – Czech *noviny* – Serbian *новине*; Russian *каникулы* – Czech *prázdniny* – Serbian *школски распуст*; Russian *айсберг* – Czech *ledovec*; Russian *солдат* – Czech *voják* – Serbian *војник*; Russian *билет* – Czech *vstupenka* – Serbian *улазница*)
- Errors associated with the application of different derivational models to words derived from a common root (Czech dům – domEK, Russian дом – домИК)

6.2. Ways to Prevent Interlingual Interference when teaching Slavic Students

Lexical interference is primarily associated with the phenomena of interlingual paronymy and enatiosemia, which arise as a result of semantic shifts in common Proto-Slavic roots within related languages. In this case, in order to create effective ways of presenting Russian vocabulary to a Slavic audience, it is necessary to rely on linguistic comparative studies of Russian and other Slavic languages, just as teachers need knowledge of the "lexical structure of the compared languages, universal semantic laws, and basic types of semantic transformations" (Erofeeva, 2015, p. 1100).

In our opinion, the using a compilation of common Slavic lexical foundations can become an effective way to prevent lexical-semantic interference, when teaching Russian to a Slavic audience. With professionally oriented teaching (i.e. philologists-linguists), one can turn to an explanation of semantic laws, according to which changes to the meaning of common Slavic roots occured. At the same time, you can use another way of presenting Russian vocabulary: a word from the students' native language with a corresponding common Slavic root, the meaning of the root in Russian, word-formation elements of the Russian language, and the word in Russian. So, students immediately get an idea of the meaning of the common root in the Russian language and its word-formation system. In addition, on the basis of the compilation of common Slavic foundations, the selection of units can occur to create lexical minimum

with words of Proto-Slavic origin, and the creation of exercises aimed at training the use of interlingual antonyms and paronyms.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the use of a compilation of common Slavic lexical foundations can contribute to the creation of an effective general methodology for teaching Slavic languages. Preventing language interference is necessary in order avoid diminishing student motivation. In addition, the presentation of common lexical roots serves to increase students' interest in the Russian language and Russian culture in general, to mitigate culture shock, as it clearly shows the kinship not only of languages, but also Slavic cultures in general.

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