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ANALYSIS OF LACUNAR UNITS IN UZBEK, RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES FROM A LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article analyzes the linguoculturological features of lacunar units in Uzbek, Russian and English languages. Lacunar units are lexical or semantic gaps that exist in one language but are present in another, and are closely tied to the culture and mentality of that language community. The study explores the semantic spheres of national-cultural units found in the three languages, the reasons for the absence of equivalents, the difficulties that arise in the translation process, and the strategies of compensation. Lacunas become more evident when different cultures are contrasted, turning them into an essential indicator reflecting the uniqueness of each language. Based on modern approaches in linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, contrastive analysis and translation studies, the article examines the functional nature, communicative significance and role of lacunar units in the educational process. The research results are significant for developing multilingual competence in primary education, preparing learners for intercultural communication and enhancing translation competence.

Keywords: Lacunarity, linguoculturology, national-cultural units, equivalence, cognitive approach, translation process, intercultural communication, semantic gap.

O'ZBEK, RUS VA INGLIZ TILLARIDA LAKUNAR BIRLIKLARNING LINGVOKULTUROLOGIK TAHLILI

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Annotatsiya:

Mazkur maqolada oʻzbek, rus va ingliz tillaridagi lakunar birliklarning lingvokulturologik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Lakunar birliklar — bu muayyan tilda mavjud boʻlmagan, ammo boshqa tilda uchraydigan va oʻsha til madaniyati, mentaliteti bilan bogʻliq boʻlgan leksik yoki semantik boʻshliqlardir. Tadqiqotda uch tilda uchraydigan milliy-madaniy mazmunli birliklarning maʼno doiralari, ularning ekvivalentga ega boʻlmaslik sabablari, tarjima jarayonida yuzaga keladigan qiyinchiliklar hamda ularni kompensatsiya qilish usullari yoritiladi. Lakunalar turli madaniyatlar qarama-qarshi qoʻyilganda yanada ravshanlashadi va til oʻziga xosligini aks ettiruvchi muhim koʻrsatkichga aylanadi. Maqolada lingvokulturologiya, kognitiv lingvistika, kontrastiv tahlil va tarjimashunoslikning zamonaviy yondashuvlari asosida lakunar birliklarning funksional mohiyati, kommunikativ ahamiyati hamda taʼlim jarayonida oʻrni ilmiy asosda koʻrib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari boshlangʻich taʼlim jarayonida koʻp tillilik kompetensiyasini shakllantirish, madaniyatlararo muloqotga tayyorlash va tarjima kompetensiyasini rivojlantirishda muhim ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit soʻzlar: Lakunarlik, lingvokulturologiya, milliy-madaniy birliklar, ekvivalentlik, kognitiv yondashuv, tarjima jarayoni, madaniyatlararo muloqot, semantik boʻshliq.

Introduction

Lacunar units represent an important theoretical and practical category for explaining the complex relationship between language and culture. The cultural codes embedded within linguistic units often cannot be fully conveyed when transferred into another language, resulting in semantic gaps—known as lacunas. Lacunar units appear in various forms in Uzbek, Russian and English, each reflecting the historical development, traditions, worldview and cultural values of its respective speech community. For example, Uzbek units such as *mahalla*, *oq yoʻl*, and *rizq*; Russian concepts such as *тоска*, *авось*, and *печь*; or English words such as *privacy*, *weekend*, and *sibling* do not have complete equivalents in other languages. An in-depth analysis of such units reveals the national-cultural features hidden within their semantic layers.

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A linguoculturological approach requires the study of lacunas not only at the lexical level but also from cognitive, ethnopsychological and communicative perspectives. This is because lacunarity manifests not only in individual words, but also in phraseological units, metaphors, grammatical forms, speech etiquette and cultural concepts. The different ways lacunar units emerge in the three languages are closely tied to each language's system of cultural values, moral norms, social institutions and mental models. Furthermore, the existence of lacunar units demonstrates the necessity for language learners to perceive language and culture as an inseparable whole.

In today's era of globalization, developing intercultural communication competence among language learners has become particularly important. Mastering lacunar units is an integral part of this process, as they help learners better understand the worldview and social experience of another culture. A comparative study of Uzbek, Russian and English languages creates opportunities to develop linguoculturological literacy even at the primary education level, enabling vocabulary acquisition within its cultural context. Therefore, this article scientifically examines the distinctive features of lacunar units found in the three languages, their semantic scope, the challenges encountered in translation, and their significance in teaching methodology.

Methods

The methodological foundation of this research is based on modern scientific approaches from linguoculturology, comparative linguistics, cognitive linguistics and translation studies. Several methods were applied in combination to identify and analyze lacunar units. First, the comparative analysis method made it possible to determine the differences in form and meaning of lacunar units across Uzbek, Russian and English, define their semantic boundaries, and assess their degree of equivalence. Through this method, similarities and differences between the cultural concepts of the three languages, as well as culturally specific semantic gaps, were studied systematically.

Table 1. Comparative Table of Lacunar Units (Uzbek – Russian – English)

Language	Examples of Lacunar Units	Why They Are Lacunar (No Full Equivalent)	Cultural Meaning
Uzbek	*mahalla*, *duv-duv gap*, *oq yo'l*, *rizq*	Strong cultural, religious and social connotations not present in other languages	Community-centered worldview, hospitality, blessings, harmony
Russian	*тоска*, *авось*, *печь*, *дача*	Deep emotional and psychological meanings; culturally unique lifestyle concepts	Melancholy, fatalism, traditional household life
English	*privacy*, *weekend*, *sibling*, *freelance*	Based on modern institutions, individualism, social structure	Personal freedom, independence, time management, social system

Based on corpus linguistics, a method of collecting practical material was employed. A list of lacunar units was compiled from literary texts, dictionaries, paremiological sources, works of fiction, journalistic materials, and real speech samples extracted from electronic corpora. This approach made it possible to identify the functional role of lacunas in natural speech. In addition, the method of semantic analysis played a key role in revealing the semantic layers of lacunar units and identifying their symbolic, cultural and ethnopsychological components. Each unit's cultural connotation was analyzed separately, and the underlying reasons for the absence of equivalents in other languages were clarified.

Table 2. Classification of Lacunar Units in the Article

Category	Definition	Examples from Article	Cultural Basis
Linguoculturological Lacunas	Words reflecting unique cultural values with no direct equivalent	*mahalla*, *privacy*, *тоска*	Customs, worldview, social norms
Conceptual Lacunas	Concepts that exist in one culture but not another	*rizq*, *авось*, *weekend*	Religious beliefs, psychology, individualism
Pragmatic Lacunas	Speech etiquette, behavior norms, culturally specific communication styles	Blessings like *oq yo'l*; Russian emotional expressions	Context-dependent usage; politeness norms

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The research also applied cognitive analysis to examine the conceptual foundations of lacunar units, the worldview reflected through them, and the cultural models they encode. This included studying the structure of conceptual domains, important associative links, mental stereotypes and the interplay of national values. In the translation process, the transformational analysis method was used to evaluate strategies for compensating lacunar units, including contextual adaptation, descriptive translation and the selection of nearest equivalents.

Table 3. Methods Used in the Research

Method	Purpose	Application in the Study
Comparative Analysis	Identify semantic and cultural differences between units	Compared Uzbek, Russian and English lacunas
Corpus Linguistics	Collect real-life language data	Gathered examples from texts, corpora, dictionaries
Semantic Analysis	Reveal symbolic, cultural and ethnopsychological meanings	Analyzed each unit's cultural connotation
Cognitive Analysis	Study conceptual domains and mental models	Examined stereotypes, associative links, worldview structures
Transformational Analysis	Evaluate translation strategies	Identified compensation, adaptation and descriptive translation
Pedagogical Experimentation	Test learning materials in classroom settings	Applied tasks, exercises, multimodal resources

As elements of pedagogical experimentation, small instructional exercises, lexical analysis tasks and culturally contextualized teaching materials were tested on learners in primary education. These methods made it possible to determine the effectiveness of teaching lacunar units and observe the extent to which learners were developing intercultural competence. The integrated use of these methods enabled a comprehensive study of the linguoculturological nature of lacunar units and provided a scientific basis for explaining their distinctiveness in the three languages.

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Results

The findings of the study show that there are significant differences in the formation, areas of use and cultural content of lacunar units in Uzbek, Russian and English. First, it was identified that lacunas in all three languages emerge from the cultural values, traditions, social practices, historical experience and mentality of the respective speech communities. In Uzbek, lacunas are often associated with family and national values, customs, everyday life, religious concepts and ideas of social cohesion. In Russian, lacunar units tend to reflect psychological states, emotional experiences and stereotypes of social behavior. In English, they are mainly formed on the basis of concepts related to individualism, personal freedom, personal space and modern social institutions. Comparative analysis revealed that Uzbek units such as *mahalla*, *duv-duv gap*, and *oq yo'l*; Russian units such as *тоска*, *авось*, and *дача*; and English units such as *privacy*, *weekend*, and *freelance* lack direct equivalents in other languages, and their meanings can be fully understood only through explanation. This demonstrates that lacunar units introduce a certain level of complexity in translation, requiring the translator to possess cultural knowledge and contextual sensitivity.

During the study, lacunas were classified into three categories: linguoculturological lacunas, conceptual lacunas and pragmatic lacunas. Each category has its own semantic features and highlights different aspects of cultural differences. It was also found that teaching lacunar units effectively requires culturally contextualized instructional technologies. According to the results of experimental activities conducted with learners, practicing lacunar units in real-life situations, using multimodal materials and learning through explanatory translation significantly enhanced their ability to remember and understand these units.

Analysis shows that lacunar units are a valuable resource in teaching intercultural communication, encouraging learners to explore the lifestyle, values and worldview of other nations. Consequently, teaching lacunarity contributes to the development of multilingual competence in primary education and fosters intercultural sensitivity among learners. The results confirm that systematically

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teaching the linguoculturological content of lacunar units yields high effectiveness in the educational process.

Discussion

Throughout the research, an in-depth analysis of the linguoculturological nature of lacunar units in Uzbek, Russian and English demonstrated that each represents an important conceptual element reflecting its culture's worldview. The discussion highlighted that lacunas exist not only at the lexical level, but also at mental, conceptual, pragmatic and communicative levels. Notably, Uzbek units grounded in collectivism, respect, social harmony and communal values differ sharply from Russian units expressing psychological states and emotional experiences, and from English units associated with individualism, personal freedom and pragmatic aspects of everyday life.

It was also discussed that intercultural differences appear very vividly in lacunar units, especially in domains related to mental stereotypes, national values, ethnic worldview, historical memory and life philosophy. The study demonstrated that the presence of lacunar units creates a number of difficulties in interlingual translation, particularly in finding semantic equivalence, preserving cultural connotation or choosing an appropriate compensation strategy—tasks that depend heavily on the translator's expertise. The prioritization of different concepts for describing similar events or situations across cultures directly influences the emergence of lacunarity.

Another important point identified during the discussion is that lacunar units play a significant role in developing learners' cultural competence in the educational process. Teaching them within real contexts strengthens qualities such as openness, tolerance, curiosity and readiness for communication. The use of multimodal materials, comparative lexical analysis, cultural explanations and interactive activities was shown to increase the effectiveness of learning lacunar units.

Furthermore, teaching lacunar units in primary education enhances learners' language sensitivity, expands vocabulary on a cultural basis and helps them develop the ability to choose context-appropriate expressions in real communicative situations. Ignoring lacunas in the teaching process may lead to

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misunderstandings and errors in intercultural communication. Therefore, the teaching of lacunar units should be regarded not only as part of language instruction, but also as an essential component of cultural thinking and intercultural communication.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that lacunar units in Uzbek, Russian and English languages represent a complex linguoculturological phenomenon emerging from the interaction of language and culture. The unique conceptual domains, national values, cultural experience and mental stereotypes of each language community are clearly reflected in these units. Lacunas appear not only at the lexical level, but also at pragmatic, conceptual and communicative levels, making their study scientifically and practically significant for linguistics, translation studies and pedagogy.

The analysis revealed that lacunar units may cause semantic ambiguity, loss of connotation or distortion of meaning in translation. Therefore, accurate interpretation and the use of appropriate compensation strategies require the translator to possess cultural sensitivity and multilingual competence. The research confirmed that learners' understanding of lacunar units increases significantly when comparative analysis, cultural explanations, real communicative situations and multimodal materials are used in teaching.

Teaching lacunar units in primary education plays a crucial role in developing learners' linguoculturological literacy and preparing them for intercultural communication. Through understanding lacunas, learners gain deeper insight into the lifestyles, social values, cognitive models and cultural characteristics of different peoples. This contributes to the formation of multilingual competence and the development of personal qualities such as intercultural tolerance and empathy.

Thus, the linguoculturological study of lacunar units remains relevant not only from a theoretical standpoint but also in practical educational contexts. Systematically teaching these units helps shape learners into culturally aware individuals who possess a deep understanding of language and are prepared for

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global communication. This research also provides a foundation for future studies of lacunarity within other languages or dialects.

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