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# INTERLINGUAL INTERFERENCE AND SEMANTIC CHANGES IN THE RUSSIAN SPEECH OF UZBEK-RUSSIAN BILINGUALS

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**Abstract**
This article investigates the phenomenon of interlingual interference and semantic changes in the Russian speech of Uzbek-Russian bilinguals. Particular attention is given to the influence of the Uzbek language on the phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and syntactic structures of Russian speech. The study examines the mechanisms of language interaction, semantic transfer, lexical substitution, calquing, and the contextual transformation of lexical units. It also explores the sociolinguistic and cognitive factors contributing to interference in bilingual communication. The article emphasizes that interlingual interference is not merely a source of linguistic errors but also an important manifestation of language contact and bilingual linguistic behavior. The analysis demonstrates that semantic changes in bilingual speech are closely connected with differences in the conceptual systems, cultural backgrounds, and communicative practices of Uzbek and Russian speakers. The findings may contribute to the development of contrastive linguistics, sociolinguistics, bilingualism studies, and methods of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

**Keywords**: Interlingual interference, semantic change, Uzbek-Russian bilingualism, bilingual speech, lexical interference, semantic transfer, language contact, linguistic adaptation, code-switching, contrastive linguistics.

## Introduction

The interaction of languages in multilingual societies represents one of the most significant areas of contemporary linguistic research. In conditions of intensive intercultural communication, speakers frequently use two or more languages in their everyday, educational, and professional activities. As a result, linguistic systems influence one another, producing various phonetic, lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic changes.

Uzbekistan provides a particularly interesting environment for investigating these processes. The historical coexistence of Uzbek and Russian has contributed to the formation of a multilingual communicative environment in which bilingual speakers regularly interact using both languages. Russian continues to occupy an important position in education, science, business, administration, mass media, and interpersonal communication.

The linguistic behavior of Uzbek-Russian bilinguals is characterized by the interaction of two structurally different languages. Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family, whereas Russian belongs to the East Slavic group of the Indo-European language family. Their differences in

phonological systems, grammatical categories, lexical organization, and semantic structures create favorable conditions for various forms of interlingual interference.

One of the most interesting aspects of this interaction is the influence of Uzbek linguistic structures on Russian speech. Such influence may manifest itself through pronunciation, word formation, grammatical agreement, sentence construction, lexical selection, and the interpretation of word meanings.

Of particular importance are semantic changes that occur when bilingual speakers transfer meanings and conceptual associations from Uzbek into Russian. These changes may result in the use of Russian words in unusual contexts, the expansion or narrowing of their meanings, and the emergence of expressions influenced by Uzbek linguistic and cultural patterns.

The purpose of this article is to examine the main types of interlingual interference and identify the mechanisms of semantic changes in the Russian speech of Uzbek-Russian bilinguals.

**1. Theoretical Foundations of Interlingual Interference**

Interlingual interference is generally understood as the influence of one language on another in the speech of bilingual or multilingual individuals. This phenomenon occurs when linguistic elements, structures, and communicative habits associated with one language affect the production or interpretation of another language.

One of the fundamental studies of language contact was conducted by Uriel Weinreich, who examined the linguistic consequences of bilingualism and described different forms of interference. According to his approach, interference may occur at various levels of language organization, including phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and semantics.

Interference is closely connected with the cognitive mechanisms of bilingual speech production. When speakers use a second language, their linguistic knowledge of the first language may become activated and influence lexical selection, grammatical organization, and semantic interpretation.

In the case of Uzbek-Russian bilingualism, interference is determined by several factors:

the level of proficiency in both languages;

the frequency and intensity of language use;

the dominance of one language in particular communicative situations;

the structural differences between Uzbek and Russian;

the social and cultural environment;

the age at which the second language was acquired;

the influence of education and professional activities.

It is important to distinguish between interference and ordinary language variation. Not every non-standard construction in bilingual speech should automatically be classified as interference. Some forms may represent regional varieties, informal speech practices, or established expressions used within particular bilingual communities.

From a linguistic perspective, interference can be classified into several major types:

Phonetic and phonological interference.

Lexical interference.

Grammatical interference.

Syntactic interference.

Semantic interference.

Pragmatic interference.

These types are interconnected and frequently occur simultaneously in bilingual communication.

**2. Phonetic and Grammatical Interference in Russian Speech**

Phonetic interference is one of the most noticeable manifestations of the influence of Uzbek on Russian speech. It occurs when the pronunciation habits of Uzbek speakers affect the articulation of Russian sounds, stress patterns, and intonation.

The Russian and Uzbek phonological systems differ in several respects. These differences may create difficulties for bilingual speakers, particularly those who acquired Russian as a second language.

One common area of difficulty is Russian word stress. Russian stress is mobile and may distinguish grammatical forms and lexical meanings. Uzbek-speaking learners may experience difficulties in mastering these patterns, especially when their pronunciation habits are influenced by the phonological organization of Uzbek.

Another aspect concerns the articulation of certain Russian consonants and vowels. Differences in sound realization may result in accent-related features in bilingual speech.

Grammatical interference is also significant. Uzbek is an agglutinative language with a system of suffixation, whereas Russian is a highly inflectional language characterized by grammatical gender, case, and agreement.

One of the major difficulties for Uzbek-speaking bilinguals is the Russian category of grammatical gender. Since Uzbek does not have an equivalent grammatical gender system, speakers may experience difficulties in selecting appropriate forms of adjectives, pronouns, and past-tense verbs.



For example, the following sentences illustrate typical agreement difficulties:

Моя брат работает в университете.

Этот книга очень интересная.

The normative Russian forms are:

Мой брат работает в университете.

Эта книга очень интересная.

These examples illustrate possible grammatical interference and should not be interpreted as universal characteristics of Uzbek-Russian bilingual speech.
Differences in case government may also contribute to grammatical difficulties. Russian verbs and prepositions frequently require particular case forms, whereas Uzbek expresses many grammatical relations through suffixes and postpositions.
Consequently, bilingual speakers may transfer familiar grammatical patterns from Uzbek into Russian.

**3. Lexical Interference and Semantic Transfer**
Lexical interference occurs when words, meanings, or lexical associations from one language influence the use of another language.
In Uzbek-Russian bilingual communication, lexical interference may manifest itself in several ways:
direct borrowing of Uzbek lexical units;

replacement of Russian words with Uzbek equivalents;

literal translation of Uzbek expressions into Russian;

incorrect selection of Russian synonyms;

transfer of Uzbek semantic associations into Russian words.

One important mechanism is semantic transfer. It occurs when a bilingual speaker uses a Russian lexical unit according to a meaning or conceptual association established in Uzbek.

For example, bilingual speakers may construct Russian expressions by translating Uzbek phrases word for word. Such constructions may be understandable to other bilingual speakers but sound unusual or non-standard to native Russian speakers.

The following examples illustrate this process:

| Uzbek expression | Possible literal Russian rendering | Normative Russian equivalent |
|---|---|---|
| Ishim bor | У меня есть работа (in a context meaning an obligation) | Мне нужно идти по делам |
| Ko‘nglim ayniyapti | Моё сердце тошнит | Меня тошнит |
| Boshim qotdi | Моя голова застыла | Я не могу разобраться |
| Ko‘nglim qoldi | Моё настроение осталось | Я разочаровался / разочаровалась |
| Gapim bor | У меня есть слово | Мне нужно с Вами поговорить |

These examples demonstrate how the literal translation of Uzbek expressions may lead to semantic and phraseological interference.
However, it is important to note that not all literal translations are necessarily incorrect. Their acceptability depends on the context, lexical compatibility, and established usage in Russian.

Another manifestation of lexical interference is the use of Uzbek words within Russian sentences. This phenomenon is especially common in informal bilingual communication.

For example:

Я сегодня пойду в махаллю.

Нужно подготовить хокимият документы.

Such examples demonstrate the incorporation of culturally specific Uzbek lexical elements into Russian discourse. Some of these words refer to social or administrative concepts that do not always have exact one-word equivalents in Russian.

## 4. Semantic Changes in the Russian Speech of Uzbek-Russian Bilinguals

Semantic changes represent one of the most complex aspects of interlingual interaction. They occur when the meaning of a lexical unit changes, expands, narrows, or acquires additional contextual associations.

In bilingual speech, semantic changes may result from the transfer of meanings from the first language to the second language.

Several mechanisms can be identified.

### 4.1. Semantic Expansion

Semantic expansion occurs when a word acquires additional meanings or is used in a wider range of contexts.

In bilingual communication, Russian words may develop additional associations under the influence of Uzbek conceptual patterns.

For example, the Russian word уважение may be used in contexts where the Uzbek concept of hurmat includes not only respect but also social responsibility, age-related hierarchy, and culturally established forms of interpersonal behavior.

The two concepts overlap but are not completely identical in all contexts.

### 4.2. Semantic Narrowing

Semantic narrowing occurs when a word is used in a more restricted meaning than it normally possesses.

For example, a Russian lexical unit may be associated primarily with a specific institutional or professional situation among bilingual speakers.

The word справка, for instance, may be understood mainly as an official document required for a particular administrative procedure. Although this is a legitimate meaning of the word, its interpretation in everyday bilingual communication may become closely associated with local administrative practices.

### 4.3. Semantic Calquing

Semantic calquing occurs when the semantic structure of an expression in one language is reproduced through lexical elements of another language.

This process is particularly noticeable in the translation of idiomatic expressions and culturally specific phrases.

For example, the Uzbek expression ko‘ngli tog‘dek ko‘tarildi may be literally rendered into Russian as его душа поднялась как гора. However, the natural Russian equivalent would be он очень обрадовался or у него поднялось настроение.

The literal version reflects the semantic imagery of Uzbek, whereas the normative Russian expressions convey the intended meaning using established Russian linguistic patterns.

### 4.4. Semantic Shift and Cultural Reinterpretation

Semantic shift involves a change in the meaning or conceptual associations of a lexical unit.

In Uzbek-Russian bilingual communication, certain Russian words may acquire local cultural connotations because of their association with Uzbek social practices and institutional realities.

For example, the words махалля, хашар, and сумаляк are used in Russian-language discourse in Uzbekistan to refer to culturally specific concepts. Their meanings cannot always be fully expressed through direct Russian equivalents.

Such lexical units demonstrate how bilingual communication reflects the cultural environment in which language is used.

## 5. Phraseological Interference in Bilingual Communication

Phraseological units represent an important area of interlingual interference because their meanings are frequently figurative and culturally determined.

Idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions often contain conceptual images that cannot be translated literally without changing their meaning.

Uzbek-Russian bilinguals may transfer the imagery and structural patterns of Uzbek phraseological units into Russian.

For example:

Uzbek phraseological unit

Literal translation

Russian equivalent

Ko‘ngli tog‘dek ko‘tarildi

His heart rose like a mountain

Он очень обрадовался

Boshi osmonga yetdi

His head reached the sky

Он был на седьмом небе от счастья

Yuragi orqasiga tortdi

His heart moved backward

У него душа ушла в пятки

Qo‘li gul

His hand is a flower

Он мастер своего дела

Og‘ziga talqon solgandek

As if someone put flour in his mouth

Как воды в рот набрал

These examples reveal differences in the metaphorical organization of Uzbek and Russian phraseology.

Phraseological interference may be observed in the speech of bilingual individuals who understand the meaning of an expression in Uzbek but reproduce its structure in Russian.

The study of such constructions provides valuable information about the relationship between language, cognition, and culture.

**6. Pragmatic Interference and Cultural Factors**

Pragmatic interference concerns the influence of one language's communicative norms on the use of another language.

It is not limited to grammar or vocabulary but also involves politeness, forms of address, conversational strategies, and the organization of interpersonal interaction.

Uzbek and Russian cultures may demonstrate different preferences in certain communicative situations.

For instance, Uzbek communication frequently emphasizes respect for age, social position, family relationships, and interpersonal solidarity. These factors may influence how Uzbek-Russian bilinguals address interlocutors in Russian.

The use of expressions such as уважаемый, дорогой, or брат may reflect social and cultural associations that differ from their conventional usage in particular Russian-speaking environments.

Another example concerns indirect speech strategies. In some situations, Uzbek speakers may prefer indirect requests or suggestions as a means of demonstrating politeness. When these patterns are transferred into Russian, they may influence the structure and pragmatic interpretation of utterances.

Thus, pragmatic interference reflects the interaction of linguistic and cultural systems and demonstrates that successful bilingual communication requires not only grammatical competence but also sociocultural awareness.

**7. Implications for Teaching Russian to Uzbek-Speaking Students**

The investigation of interlingual interference and semantic changes has considerable practical value for teaching Russian to Uzbek-speaking students.

Teachers should recognize that many linguistic difficulties arise not simply from insufficient knowledge of Russian but also from the transfer of established Uzbek linguistic structures.

Therefore, contrastive analysis should become an important element of Russian language instruction.

The following methodological activities can be recommended:

1. Comparative lexical analysis. Students compare Russian and Uzbek lexical units and identify differences in meaning, usage, and connotation.
2. Translation exercises. Learners translate idiomatic expressions and identify cases in which literal translation produces unnatural constructions.
3. Error analysis. Students examine examples of bilingual speech and correct phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and syntactic interference.
4. Phraseological exercises. Learners compare Uzbek and Russian idioms and identify their semantic equivalents.
5. Contextual vocabulary practice. Students use polysemous Russian words in different communicative situations.
6. Communicative simulations. Students participate in dialogues and professional discussions that require the appropriate use of Russian lexical and pragmatic resources.

The effectiveness of these methods depends on the systematic integration of comparative, communicative, and professionally oriented exercises.

Particular attention should be given to the distinction between genuine language errors, regional speech features, and accepted bilingual lexical practices.

**Conclusion**

Interlingual interference and semantic changes in the Russian speech of Uzbek-Russian bilinguals represent complex phenomena resulting from prolonged language contact and the interaction of two different linguistic and cultural systems.

The analysis demonstrates that interference occurs at phonetic, lexical, grammatical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Among these, lexical and semantic interference are particularly significant because they directly reflect the influence of Uzbek conceptual structures on Russian speech.

Semantic transfer, calquing, semantic expansion, narrowing, and phraseological interference reveal the mechanisms through which bilingual speakers reorganize linguistic meanings and adapt expressions to their communicative needs.

Furthermore, the influence of Uzbek cultural and social patterns contributes to the development of specific pragmatic features in Russian bilingual speech. These features demonstrate that language contact is not merely a structural process but also a reflection of cultural interaction and cognitive adaptation.

From an educational perspective, the study of interference provides an important foundation for improving Russian language teaching among Uzbek-speaking learners. Comparative linguistic analysis, contextual vocabulary exercises, phraseological comparison, and systematic error analysis can contribute to the development of accurate and effective Russian speech.

In conclusion, the investigation of interlingual interference and semantic transformation offers significant opportunities for further research in contrastive linguistics, bilingualism, sociolinguistics, and intercultural communication.

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