

PHRASEOLOGY AND OPACITY: A MULTI-LINGUAL CONTRAST**Abdukhaliyeva Sarvinozkhon Usmonali qizi**

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Abstract: In this study, we explore the pivotal role of phraseological units (PUs), including idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions, in intercultural communication (ICC) discourse. PUs are closely related to cultural contexts but can also be a source of huge difficulties for non-native speakers to learn, making it harder for everyone involved to understand one another. Using a mixed-methods approach with comparative linguistic analysis and discourse functional analysis, this study aims to classify communicative functions and challenges of phraseological units (PUs) concerning various cultural contexts, notably English and Uzbek phraseology. The findings reveal that being aware of the socio-cultural implications associated with PUs is crucial in developing effective communicative competence and reducing misunderstandings in ICC. This study suggests enhanced pedagogical approaches focused on the cultural contextualization of PUs.

Keywords: phraseological units, intercultural communication, discourse analysis, cultural context, idioms, communicative competence.

Introduction

Intercultural Communication (ICC) is being recognized more and more as a significant field of study in today's global world. It explores the communication between people of different cultural backgrounds, how communication occurs between them, and how it is expressed. Within the vast field of linguistic resources, phraseological units (PUs)—a stable set of words that can be either non-compositional or semi-compositional—enjoy a unique but sometimes difficult role. PUs are the sum of important parts of people's overall wisdom, history, and ideology in societies. When PUs are idiomatic, their significance is obscured: for example, a metaphor for kicking "the bucket" does not imply that kicking the bucket entails kicking a bucket. This literal quality makes them opaque to non-learners of specific cultural background(s). Although they contribute to native discourse through vividness and brevity, they have often come across as "stumbling blocks" in ICC. Specifically, we highlight the need for a rigorous examination of PUs in ICC discourse. In particular, the current study attempts to:

- Determine a few of the main linguistic features of PUs that become problematic in ICC.
- Categorize the communicative uses of PUs (e.g., emotional self-expressions, persuasion).
- Recommend ways to strengthen intercultural communication competence by providing explicit instruction regarding PU cultural settings.

Methods and data**Data Collection and Selection**

The data set for this extended analysis was expanded to retrieve high-frequency phraseological units (PUs) from Russian and German as well as English and Uzbek. By combining these two widely recognized European languages, this makes a clearer contrastive analysis possible, as idioms function not only in languages of mutual Indo-European origin but also in strongly orthogonal languages (Uzbek - Turkic). The improved data was mainly focused on PUs in:

- English: (to bite the bullet e.g.)
- Uzbek: e.g., “ko‘ngli to‘q” - representing satisfaction
- Russian: e.g., “после дождичка в четверг” - literally “after rain on Thursday,” signifying never
- German: e.g., “Tomaten auf den Augen haben” - literally “to have tomatoes on one’s eyes,” meaning being oblivious

Analytical Procedure

A three-stage analytical process was employed; however, the Linguistic Comparison phase was expanded into a Quadri-Lateral Contrastive Analysis. This adjustment enabled systematic comparisons among four distinct linguistic and cultural systems while evaluating both formal and semantic overlaps between English-Uzbek as well as English-German and English-Russian comparisons along with cross-examinations among non-English languages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Degrees of Equivalence and Opacity: A Quadri-Lateral Analysis

This extended contrastive analysis showed a direct association between ICC communicative opacity and linguistic and cultural non-equivalence. Analysis across four languages showed that opacity is most acute when the cultural image behind PU is totally localized.

Category	English Example	Russian Equivalent	German Equivalent	Uzbek Equivalent	Cultural Image/Source
Full Equivalence	to pour oil on the fire	подлить масла в огонь	Öl ins Feuer gießen	o‘tga moy sepmoq	Universal (fire/oil)
Partial Equivalence	to beat around the bush	ходить вокруг да около (to walk around and near)	um den heißen Brei herumreden (to talk around hot porridge)	gapni aylantirmoq (to roll the word)	Functionally similar, image differences
Zero Equivalence	to kick the bucket	дать дуба (to give an oak tree)	ins Gras beißen (to bite the grass)	olamdan o‘tmoq (to pass from the world)	Highly specific, non-transferable

The Zero Equivalence category across these languages reveals deep intercultural issues:

- Russian Zero Equivalence: “На воре и шапка горит” translates literally as "the cap burns on the thief," implying guilt manifested in the nervousness accompanying the use of Russian folklore.
- German Zero Equivalence: “Seinen Senf dazugeben,” meaning to intrude or offer unsolicited opinions, reflects culturally specific practices regarding opinions.
- Uzbek Zero Equivalence: “Dunyoni suv bossa, to‘pig‘iga ham chiqmaydi” suggests deep inner stability or faith in a troubled world, which is a good expression of patience.

The Effect of Cultural Schemata and Proximity

The comprehensive results revealed that there is evidence that language families as well as distances influence equivalence:

- Indo-European Cohesion: More Full or Partial Equivalence among English, Russian, and German was found due to being closely related genetically and sharing Greco-Roman or Biblical origins.
- Cultural Isolation: The relatively high rate of Zero Equivalence in Uzbek compared with European ones was attributed to the use of Turco-Islamic imagery representing local history.
- Metaphorical Density: Compared with Germanic/Russian, both PUs utilize body functions and common objects as heavy metaphors, but in Uzbek the metaphors involve traditional craftsmanship.

Implications for Pedagogical Strategy in Multilingual ICC

The findings suggest that effective pedagogy of PUs in multilingual environments should rely on exploring metaphors as opposed to translating them directly. For example, with a German PU such as "Senf dazugeben," educators should explain why mustard represents an unwanted addition that has a close correlation with norms of participation.

- When explaining "после дождичка в четверг," students must situate its connotations in historical tales that are connected specifically to Thursdays representing unrealistic expectations.

Such an integrative framework demonstrates that effective intercultural communication needs, in the words of Michael Einfeld (1923), to encourage the cultivation of "phraseological empathy" that permits the individual not just to sense but to appreciate the underlying socio-cultural logics that are being translated in a literal sense that is perceived as nonsensical.

It confirms this research further by reinforcing phraseological units as major cultural artifacts with richness within intercultural communication contexts. Their non-compositional nature and their internalized cultural schemata encourage change in language pedagogy; message transmission alone requires a more significant approach, with practical applications closely connected to the context of each unit in question. ICC does not succeed because of simple grammatical proficiency; it is the result of a more profound knowledge embedded in phraseological-cultural literacy.

The analysis therefore advocates shifting towards increasingly culture-focused instructional methods for phraseology that will include the following in curricula:

1. Contextualized Exposure: Presenting PUs within authentic discourse rather than isolated definitions. The contrastive analysis highlights distinctions like Zero Equivalence in the cases where both learners' native phrases and target language equivalents in different circumstances stand out.
3. Cultural Narrative Integration: Informing PU creation from historical or sociocultural contexts. Future inquiries should focus on the creation of standardized corpora covering "high-risk" PUs applicable to common ICC types of operations (e.g. commercial negotiation or academic transactions), and a thorough exploration of psychological processes driving PU interpretation in situ by second language learners would be relevant.

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