

### Issues of Lacunas and Lacunar Units in Linguistics

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**Annotation:** The article is dedicated to the description of the concept of lacuna, which is a common issue in language and culture. It discusses the emergence, study, and linguistic significance of lacunas, with a specific focus on their analysis and shortcomings in Uzbek linguistics. The uniqueness and description of the concept of lacuna are emphasized. The current study critically analyzes the interrelation of these two phenomena in linguistics. In-depth research on lacunas provides ample opportunities for studying other languages and cultures. Furthermore, the comparison and identification of lexical lacunas in different languages are highlighted as crucial for the development of vocabulary in a given language.

**Keywords:** lacuna, lacunar unit, language, culture, language structure, linguoculturology, language and cultural studies, translation studies, theory of intercultural communication, cultural studies.

It is an undeniable fact that every object and phenomenon in the world possesses a specific structure, which may not be evident in modern science. Understanding and explaining the nature of these elements have always been of paramount importance in empirical and rational research. Such research is not limited to natural sciences but also plays a significant role in social sciences, particularly in linguistics, as a fundamental approach to language studies. Analyzing the structure of a language, especially as a social phenomenon, helps to better understand its internal nature.

Just as all existing entities have a specific structure, language also has a particular structure, including the presence of gaps in its internal organization. Therefore, differentiating between "existence" and "absence" may seem straightforward, but in reality, both are interconnected and mutually dependent, making their separation quite challenging.

All forms of existence, including language, have inherent structures, with natural gaps in their internal organization. Differentiating between "existence" and "absence" may seem straightforward, but in reality, both are interconnected and mutually dependent, making their separation quite challenging<sup>1</sup>. In modern science, it is evident that the suitability of any object or subject relies on the presence or absence of constituent components. Scholars who have extensively studied language structure have acknowledged the existence of gaps, which are spaces that are known to exist alongside existing units. Moreover, they recognise that these gaps contribute to a more robust lexical surface of the language. In particular, in the views of Ferdinand de Saussure and Wilhelm von Humboldt, there have been serious debates on the absence of "empty signifiers" in the lexicon and the non-existence of the second pole in certain paradigms within the lexical system<sup>2</sup>. The term "lacuna," which emerged during the process of comparing two lexical systems, has become one of the widely used concepts in linguistics in recent years<sup>3</sup>. Nowadays, the concept of "lacuna" is actively utilized in the fields of linguoculturology, translation studies, language and cultural communication theory, and cultural studies. In each field, the concept is applied with its shared aspects as well as distinct perspectives. Researchers employ different approaches depending on the requirements and needs of their respective research areas. Consequently, the research methodology and approaches vary, and the usage of a particular term may semantic (or figurative) changes. The diverse applications of the term "lacuna" in various fields are related to these aspects.

<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand de Sossyur. Umumiy tilshunoslik kursi (Fransuz tilidan I. Mirzayev tarjimasini). – T., "NAVOIY UNIVERSITETI" nashriyot-matbaa uyi, 2019. – B. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Гумбольдт В. Язык и философия культуры. – М., 1985. С.300-304.

<sup>3</sup> Xolmonova Z., Saidahmedova O., Nurillayeva O. Lingvokulturologiyaga oid tushunchalar tadqiqi /monografiya/. – T.: NAVRO‘Z, 2018. – B. 48.

The extensive use and popularization of the term "lacuna" began in the 1970s of the 20th century. During the same period, in the fields of linguoculturology, translation studies, and language and cultural communication, there was a significant emphasis on comparative studies of languages, their interrelations, and differences. In these studies, the concept of lacuna was designated with terms such as gap, antonyms, blanks or white spaces on language maps, untranslatable words, irreducible, zero words, lexicon without counterparts, idiosyncratic lacunas, and lexicon without translations.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of lacuna, which is specific to a particular language community and lacks an equivalent in another language, has been defined by various scholars in different periods using the following terms: "equivalentless lexicon" (L.S.Barkhudarov, Ye.M.Vereshchagin, V.G.Kostomarov), "exoticism," "realia" (S.Vlakhov, S.Florin), "xenonym" (V.V.Kabakchi), "logoepeisma" (E.Yu.Prokhorov), "lacuna" (I.A.Sternin, V.L.Muravyov), "unique lacunas" (L.S.Barkhudarov), "absolute linguistic lacunas" (V.L.Muravyov), "realema" (D.R.Djumanova), and so on. Although they may have different names in various sources, researchers' views on this phenomenon, which expresses a concept without having its own name in a language, are similar.

When studying the phenomenon of lacuna, it is essential to identify the basis on which the search is conducted. If the research object is within the scope of a particular language, the researcher focuses only on lacunas in that language. According to I.A.Sternin, "... even if there are similar lexemes in any arbitrary language, there will still be numerous lacunas, that is, empty or unfilled places (gaps) in the lexical-phraseological system of the language"<sup>5</sup>. For example, in the Uzbek language, there is an "adash" that corresponds to certain names, which has an equivalent for young people. However, it does not have any counterpart in terms of different age groups or relation to other individuals.

When comparing two or more languages, we come across lacunas within the scope of different languages. Therefore, in classifying lacunas, it is necessary to distinguish between lacunas within one language and lacunas within the scope of different languages.

So far, this difference has not been explicitly addressed in many conducted studies. French linguists M.Gallio, J.Vine, and J.Darbelnel, who have contributed to linguistics and have defined the term "lacuna" describe it as a phenomenon where a word in one language does not have its equivalent in another language.<sup>6</sup> The aforementioned scholars, in their book titled "A Method for Comparing French and English," provided the following definition of lacuna as a linguistic phenomenon identified through the comparison of two languages: "Lacuna phenomenon occurs when a word in one language cannot be found to have a counterpart in another language."<sup>7</sup>

From the definition itself, it is evident that the term "lacuna" is used to express the concept that is identified in the comparison of two languages and signifies the absence of a counterpart in one of the languages. In preserving its essential terminological characteristics without undergoing significant semantic changes in subsequent periods, the designation of lacuna continues to fulfil its primary foundational function.

One of the prominent scholars who has extensively dealt with the issue of lacunas, VGak, defines lacunas as "gaps in the lexical surface of a language, the absence of necessary words."<sup>8</sup> From this comment, it can be understood that scholars acknowledge the possibility of identifying and evaluating lacunas in a language's lexicon without necessarily comparing it to another language.

<sup>4</sup> Usmonova Sh. Lingvokulturologiya (fanidan ma'ruzalar kursi) T.: Universitet, 2014. – B. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Стернин И. А. Лексическая лакунарность и понятийная эквивалентность. – Воронеж: ВГУ, 1999. – С. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Байрамова Л.К. Лакунарные единицы и лакуны // Лакуны в языке и речи: сб. науч. тр. Вып. 3. – Благовещенск: БГПУ, 2006. – С. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Vinay J., Darbelnet J. Stylistique comparee du fraicais et de l'anglais. – Paris: 1958. P.10

<sup>8</sup> Гак В.Г. Сравнительная типология французского и русского языков. – Ленинград: Просвещение, 1977. – С.261.

**Conclusion** When analyzing specific lacunas within the lexical system, it is possible to identify numerous gaps. The phenomenon of equivalence, which is one of the observed occurrences in lexical comparison, serves to describe the presence of corresponding (equivalent, synonymous) words in the compared languages. In research, the concept of lacuna is designated by terms such as interval, opposite words, lacunas or blank spaces on the language map, untranslatable words, wordless, or wordless or phonetic lexicon, unique lacunas, and translation-less lexicon. Additionally, in the article, the adash lemma in relation to certain names in the Uzbek language has been analyzed. However, lacunarity is a universal category that applies to many languages.

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