Interlingual interference as a linguistic and cultural characteristic of the current online communication

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Abstract

This paper deals with the problem of the interrelated phenomena of language and culture within the context of bilingual online communication. The study aims to analyze the interferencial influence which languages may share in such a favorable environment not just on the system language level (phonological, lexical-semantic and grammar sublevels), but, through the latter, on the cultural level too, since interlingual interference results in changing the way one reflects reality in the individual mind. The major research methods are contrastive analysis and conceptual analysis, yet other methods are also used to obtain data. Practical applications of the research results may be related to various social-communicative spheres, such as education (courses in intercultural communication, cultural linguistics), or commercial (marketing) communication, as different discursive practices are analyzed in order to show how effective/ineffective linguacultural interference can be when communicative goals are being achieved. The important conclusion is that the bilingual online communication environment plays a significant role in terms of creating a new communicative code with its unique spiritual values specific to different human cultures.

1 **Introduction**

2 In most works on contact linguistics available today, one can find a great number of definitions of the concept of interlingual interference that are quite similar in content, and all tend to laconism at the same time. Being one of the basic ones for the theory of language contacts, this concept is mainly considered as a deviation from a standard variety. Caused by the dominant position of one of the languages in contact in the individual mind, this deviation can be observed both in speech and in language (in the latter case, as a result of interference in speech) (see, for example: [5, p. 12; 21, p. 22, and other authors]. The problem of interference has been of concern to researchers for many decades. However, in recent years, it has been experiencing an obvious update [13, p. 88]. The main objective reason for this has been the intensification of language contacts, a process based on the emergence and development of global bilingualism as a consequence of other numerous and heterogeneous processes of globalization.

3 One of the significant factors characterizing the current state of bilingualism should be evidently considered the born of a qualitatively new form of international, interethnic and intercultural communication, named online communication. The three features used (international, interethnic, intercultural) to describe this type of communication that combines today almost all virtual communication [12], allow us to use the terminological qualifier "global" to describe it here as well. This type of communication is associated with a wide territorial coverage as a consequence of the widespread, universal technologization and digitalization, which naturally leads to interlingual interference.

4 Online communication is defined as perceptual-verbal interaction connected with acts of cognition and creation of meaning-forming systems, manifested in a whole set of principles, among which there are:

5 1) dialogueness and communicability;

6 2) visual-perceptual experience;

7 3) interpersonal communication;

8 4) a tool for cross-cultural dialogue;

9 5) a linguistic component [1].

10 Assuming as a reason for language contacts and, consequently, interlingual interference, at least three of the above principles (3rd, 4th, 5th) radically distinguish online communication from other types of information transmission in the virtual space.

11 Among the basic features that make communication in the virtual space so favorable for language

contacts, we also include such a property as interactivity, which, however, is quite close to the one proposed by V.I. Arshinov, called by the author dialogueness and communicability (1st principle). Taking into account the connection of the real space with online communication, it can be argued that interactivity allows you to enter into a direct dialogue both online and offline. Thus, online communication should be considered a new multilingual cognitive environment in which there is a clash of cultures naturally reflected in various national languages.

12   In this regard, O.N. Morozova notes that today the Internet is a special cognitive environment for self-organization and accumulation of new knowledge as a reflection of reality and, therefore, a product of limitless social and cultural traditions, establishing and building relationships between communicants. Thus, the Internet is a unique social phenomenon that forms a different cognitive system, a system of value-oriented attitudes [9]. Researchers of the past, who laid the foundation for constructing the structure of the paradigm of the theory of language contacts, mostly focused their attention exclusively on the purely linguistic side of the phenomenon of interlingual interference. Despite this, being a process that takes place in language and a result reflected in it, interlingual interference should not be considered isolated from culture. Such an approach that takes into account the cultural factor will not only correspond to the general trend of modern linguistics - the transition from internal linguistics to external linguistics - but will also help shed light on practical issues that in this case include effective international, interethnic and intercultural communication on those linguistic formations of global bilingualism, commonly referred to as a lingua franca.

13   The specificity of lingua franca languages is a special interference pattern, which allows us to talk about the continuous and permanent transformation of languages, and therefore the ways of conceptualizing the reality of the speakers of these languages. The "classic" lingua franca example today is English as a lingua franca. It is this idiom that is most susceptible to the penetration of the norms of other "components" of its languages in the process of their interference influence on each other [14].

14   Considering the case of modern Russia (as the most "territorially close" case), where Russian-English bilingualism is the most common form of artificial bilingualism, O.R. Bondarenko emphasizes the role and importance of the second language in the communicative space of the state. In Russia, the number of Internet users, according to Global Digital, reached 85% in 2021 (see: [18]). According to Bondarenko, being a powerful tool for implementing the policy of globalization, the anglicization of the Russian-speaking cultural environment is a source of development of bilingualism [3]. As with any lingua franca [10], linguacultural interference, in fact, arises in a bilingual situation and gives rise to it.

15   Thus, English, being the second language for most bilinguals, influences their first language(s). If at the system levels this process finds certain obstacles due to the lack of a pronounced consolidation of the norms of the second language (English) in comparison with the first one, and denotative similarities, then at the linguacultural level it proceeds more naturally due to the fundamental significance of the utterance as a sign and a complete thought, and not a system unit. Thus, in linguacultural terms, interfering norms are understood as cultural concepts (models, categories, which, according to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [7], are often metaphorized), fixed in the language in the form of real or potential statements.

16   **Materials and methods**

17   To carry out the practical part of the study, we have analyzed single lexical units and complete utterances selected in the segment of online communication or inevitably related to the latter, and divided these into three groups: everyday speech, education, politics, and commercial. The object of research in this material are linguacultural interferemes, i.e. minimum interference units, belonging to the lexical-semantic level of the language system, as well as to the conceptual level reflected in any natural language. Interferemes, while they pass to the second lingua franca (Russian-English lingua franca in our case), get fixed in this idiom as norms under a crucial impact of online communication, which has been fast developing recently because of different factors. Among these factors, the social consequences of COVID19 must be considered the most relevant to the present day.

18   The research is aimed to demonstrate the influence of online communication on the way one perceives the reality as a result of linguacultural interference.

19   A combination of two types of analysis, contrastive [4, p. 102] and conceptual [7], makes the basis of the research methodology. This enables to reveal traces of linguacultural interference at the conceptual level through the lexical-semantic level. Availability of such traces, interferemes, is linked with the bilingual medium in online communication.

20　　Contrastive analysis of interferemes in the online communication segment enables to reveal similarities and differences in the norms of the lexical- semantic levels in the involved languages. Conceptual analysis affords ample opportunities for the interpretation of the data obtained during the analysis of the units referred to the lexical-semantic level.

21　　**Results and discussion**

22　　An utterance as a sign of a complete thought is a unit, which, due to the universal nature of thinking (in contrast to the non-universal nature of various contacting languages at the system level), is more easily exported and fixed in the object language of interference. At the same time, it is not necessary to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in a second language, since the same thought can be expressed through the available communication resources of fundamentally different degrees of complexity. In other words, as a sign, this unit can be isolated from the flow of speech, while its referent "transmits a non-linear, multifaceted thought that is not divided into separate tangible segments" [11, p. 24]. Thus, what is important here is not so much the form as the content, not so much the signifier as the signified of the statement as a sign.

23　　Despite this, "easier" in this case does not mean "without any obstacles". So, in one culture, an argument may be associated with war, and in another, with dance. At the same time, in many Eastern cultures, in particular in the Arabic, the dispute cannot be likened to a dance, since Arabic dances with the participation of a male dancer are a much rarer phenomenon than in European cultures; and since it is traditionally forbidden for a woman in Arab culture to enter into an argument with a man, the argument here can in no way be likened to a dance [15, p. 61]. In this case, there is a logical error that prevents the export of a linguacultural norm, which can be nominated as "linguacultural divergence".

24　　As a different, opposite precedent, let's consider　　an exampleof linguaculturalinterference　　in its development. In a study conducted in 2014 with the participation of American and Russian bilingual students (English-Russian and Russian-English bilingualism) and aimed at revealing the concept of The Dream of Life, the influence of the conceptual interfereme no corruption was observed. At the same time, Russian-English bilinguals immersed in the content of the concept The Dream of Life did not have the sign of no corruption as a normative for their conceptual model [17]. However, according to the results of a sociological survey already conducted in 2020, it is this feature that today is one of the dominant ones in the Russian youth' prosperous life perception [8].

25　　Undoubtedly, there are quite a lot of factors that determined this change in the consciousness of this citizen category, and they are not limited exclusively to those belonging to the linguistic sphere. However, the convergence and mutual influence of languages in the global bilingualism and rapidly developing online communication context should be considered as one of the main driving forces for the transformation of views on priorities in terms of quality of life.

26　　The reliance on the sociological research method without the useof data related to the secondlanguage is due to the extralinguistic nature of theresulting interference. The results of the survey reflect the presence of an already russified concept, which once again confirms the idea that the level of second language proficiency plays an insignificant role in the emergence of favorable conditions for linguistic and cultural interference. Here, disregard of the respondents' abilities of using the second (English) language as a tool of intercultural communication is not so significant, since non-bilinguals can also be participants in a bilingual situation of communication.

27　　In itself, the unmediated situation of communication between English-Russian and Russian-English bilinguals is not common. However, the current rapidly developing online communication makes the convergence of languages - and hence the linguacultural interference - a familiar, everyday phenomenon. This kind of indirect communication from the point of view of interlingual interference is not very different from the natural conditions of communication among bilinguals and only contributes to the intensification of language contacts. At the same time, the forms of language expression remain the same, since modern technologies allow communicants to see and hear each other without pauses and delays, and electronic correspondence has been widely used all over the world for more than two decades. As already noted, at present, one can observe a rapid increase in the online communication segment.

28　　Hence, A.L. Zverev and A.V. Bashkov [23] prove the influence of online communication on the development of Russian citizens' political views, although they argue outside the context of bilingual interaction. At the same time, it is the bilingual specificity of the Internet environment that, as in the case of the study of students' ideas about various life issues, cannot interfere with the linguacultural aspect of the formation and consolidation process of norms that determine political views under the influence of linguacultural norms existing in one of the languages in the bilingualism situation (source language of

interference). S.V. Volodenkov, speaking about the conditions of the currently existing information society and the evolution of the Internet, points to the global nature of the space within which political discursive practices are implemented [20]. And here it would be appropriate to turn again to the term "global" as a universal determinant for describing interrelated processes, as well as international, interethnic and intercultural ways of communication, obviously prevailing in the digital space and generating linguacultural interference similar to the one already given earlier. In the social and communicative sphere of politics, this problem is topical due to the purposeful creation of conditions for linguistic and cultural interference, which is an integral part of digital information intervention, threatening the state information security in an era of rapid development of information and communication technologies.

29   O.R. Bondarenko explores in her work the problem of the linguacultural influence of the second language for the Russian-English bilingualism in the field of education, considering it negative and proposing to reconsider the goals, objectives and content of teaching English as a foreign language in educational institutions of the Russian Federation, as well as declaring the need for a shift in emphasis from purely foreign country studies to the parallel and comparative ones with native country studies [3]. Some of the relevant examples in the educational context are: *Fake* → 'фейковый'; *random* → 'рандомный'; *musthave* → 'мастхэв'; *followers* → 'фоллоуверы'; *cashback on everything!* → 'кэшбэчь на все!'; *horror* → in *от этого 'хоррора' у меня мурашки по телу побежали* (advertisement on the radio Vesti FM [19] on November 12, 2019.); *harassment* → in *это же настоящий 'харассмент'!* (V. Soloviev's radio remark in the program Full Contact [22]); *friendzone* → 'Френд-зона' (name of the program about the CIS countries on the radio station Vesti FM); OK → 'ОК'; wow → 'yay' [[3, p. 7-8].

30   It is difficult to disagree with the remark about the need to use a parallel-comparative method of presenting material in English classes as a foreign language, especially taking into account what L.V. Shcherba says about the uselessness of the "non-contact" method for "mental development of students, children or adults, because language learning has educational value only when it teaches the analysis of thought through the analysis of means of expression. And this can be achieved only by studying languages in parallel and always looking for their corresponding elements. Only then does language learning become a powerful tool for shaping the mind, releasing thought (by comparing linguistic facts) from the shackles of language and forcing students to notice a variety of means of expression and their meaning to their most subtle shades" [16, p. 67-68]. However, according to L.V. Shcherba, such an approach is possible only when using the translation method [ibid.] or by interpreting interfering linguacultural concepts through the prism of the picture of the world of the first language (in this case, Russian), which in itself negatively affects speech skills (especially oral speech activity). After all, Russian and English form in this case only one system of associations, and bilinguals being placed in new conditions in the rapidly flowing process of speech-thinking activity (which is valuable for the science of language in itself) inevitably face a choice between two signifiers, representing only one, albeit conceptually changed, element of this associative system, and they are not always able to make an unmistakable choice at the systemic or linguacultural level.

31   In addition, let us consider from a communicative point of view O.R. Bondarenko's proposal of to describe the Russian-speaking culture and disseminate information about it outside the Russian Federation through the English language. The student, having this kind of attitude, will not only be obliged to learn a variety which is completely different from the national variety of the English language. Moreover, it will be some artificially created Russian-English lingua franca. Most importantly, the student might face a communicative failure due to the excellent socio-cultural background of the English-speaking society.

32   "Artificial contrast" against a socio-cultural background may be appropriate, as is the case below, when the speaker deliberately seeks to interfere with linguistic and cultural norms - for example, in order to promote his product on the market. It is reasonable to assume that, having a relative link to a particular culture, the product in the mind of an individual is associated with the speech patterns, categories and metaphors inherent in this culture, and this can positively (or negatively) affect the sale of the product.

33   For better understanding of the essence of our assumption, let's consider the case of an advertisement for Lay's chips (a US trademark). Although the company has long entered the global market, the Russian buyer cannot (to some extent) but associate the products of this company with the "Western world", where genetically modified products are allowed. In the commercial, a variation of the well-known composition by the Bravo band («Браво») - Moscow Beat «Московский бит») -is played, while the text of the song is changed as follows:

34   У (1) <u>нашей картошки</u> есть своя цель. Стать однажды чипсами Lay's. Но сперва её нужно

вырастить.

35   (2) <u>Посадить, полить и собрать</u>. Клубни лучшие отобрать. Порезать, обжарить, по пачкам разложить.

36   (3) <u>От полей Российских, от полей родных</u>. Мчит картофель вкусный до пачек Lay's твоих.

37   (4) <u>Липецк, Брянск и Тамбов</u>. В списке тех городов. Где у картошки цель есть. Быть в пачке Lay's! Быть в пачке Lay's! Быть в пачке Lay's! [22].

38   Here an attempt is made to attach elements, important from the communicative and pragmatic point of view, to the word-sign Lay's as a foreign brand. (1) наша картошка 'our potato': the possessive pronoun 'our' and its variations are especially inherent in the Russian communicative norm and most often expresses a positive assessment of the noun to which it refers; a potential statement is 'Lay's is our potato.' (2) The element посадить, поливать и собрать 'planting, watering and harvesting' indicates the natural essence of the process of creating a product, which corresponds with the conceptual good fruit model for Russians: our cucumbers, our tomatoes, etc.; as an example of a potential statement, Lay's are our own potatoes. (3) The element от полей Российских, от полей родных 'from Russian fields, from motherland fields' brings the brand sign closer to the potential statement "buying Lay's is patriotic". (4) The element of cities enumeration refers the recipient to the original content of the composition associated with the classics of the national stage.

39   From this point of view, it would be appropriate to mention the definition of the notion of the language contact (one of the main conditions for interlingual interference) - given by L.V. Shcherba: the process of creating a unified system of associations and equalizing concepts while maintaining differences in signifiers [16, p. 60-74).

40   The significance of the results obtained is revealed in the dynamic power of linguacultural interference that is able to determine the behavior of both the individual and the society. In the first case, we are talking about ideas, about the idealistic picture of the world that the students surveyed strive for, and in the second, about consumer behavior in the food market, where domestic brands compete with foreign brands. In fact, we can talk here about any social and communicative sphere characterized by linguacultural interference. The assumption about the dynamic power of linguacultural interference is based on the aforementioned study by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [7], who, however, do not focus on the bilingual nature of the emergence of the universal cognitive metaphors they describe. It should be added that, having a similar nature, linguacultural interference can be purposefully used in manipulative strategies, sincea bilingualsociety and a separate bilingual individual who is part of it identify themselves with two languages in the era of globalization.

41   **Conclusions**

42   Thus, in studies of interlingual interference, attention should be paid not only to the systemic, but also to the linguacultural level of the national language. The convergence of languages leads to the fact that the metaphorized models and categories fixed in them as norms are imported and exported, respectively, into the object language of interference from the source language of interference (in W. Labov's terminology [6, p. 185]). The above processes secure the status of a full- fledged communicative code for the "classical" lingua franca, capable of performing the function of a bearer of unique spiritual values of the human culture. Obviously, global bilingualism and online communication play a significant role here, changing the form of interlingual interference.

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Аннотация

This paper deals with the problem of the interrelated phenomena of language and culture within the context of bilingual online communication. The study aims to analyze the interferencial influence which languages may share in such a favorable environment not just on the system language level (phonological, lexical-semantic and grammar sublevels), but, through the latter, on the cultural level too, since interlingual interference results in changing the way one reflects reality in the individual mind. The major research methods are contrastive analysis and conceptual analysis, yet other methods are also used to obtain data. Practical applications of the research results may be related to various social-communicative spheres, such as education (courses in intercultural communication, cultural linguistics), or commercial (marketing) communication, as different discursive practices are analyzed in order to show how effective/ineffective linguacultural interference can be when communicative goals are being achieved. The important conclusion is that the bilingual online communication environment plays a significant role in terms of creating a new communicative code with its unique spiritual values specific to different human cultures.