METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LINGUOCULTURAL SPEECH COMPETENCE THROUGH TEACHING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AND IDIOMS IN FRENCH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract. The thesis examines French phraseological units and idioms as a means of forming the linguocultural (speech-cultural) competence of university students. It analyses the cultural information encoded in French idioms, describes the types of French–Uzbek phraseological correspondence and their didactic implications, and proposes a methodology that includes criteria for selecting phraseological material, a sequence of learning stages and a system of tasks. Criteria for assessing students' phraseological and linguocultural competence are also outlined.

Keywords: phraseological unit, idiom, linguocultural competence, French as a foreign language, cultural connotation, phraseological equivalence, interference, lexiculture.

A learner who speaks grammatically correct French may still sound unnatural or fail to grasp what a native speaker really means. One major reason is the gap in phraseological knowledge. Idioms such as *poser un lapin* (to stand someone up) or *coûter les yeux de la tête* (to cost a fortune) are used daily in French conversation, the press and films, yet their meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of their components. When students interpret them word for word, communication breaks down. Phraseology is the layer of language where national culture is most concentrated. Images of food, animals, religion, history and everyday life fixed in idioms reflect the way a community perceives the world. Teaching idioms therefore serves two purposes at once: it enriches students' active vocabulary and gives them access to the cultural code of French speakers. In university practice, however, phraseology is often presented as a list of expressions to memorise, without cultural commentary,

comparison with the native language or communicative practice. As a result, students recognise few idioms in authentic speech and almost never use them in their own. The aim of the research is to develop and substantiate a methodology for forming students' linguocultural speech competence through the systematic teaching of French phraseological units and idioms.

Since Ch. Bally, who first described stable word combinations in French as a separate object of study, phraseological units have been defined by three features: semantic integrity (the meaning of the whole differs from the sum of its parts), structural stability and reproducibility in speech. In Uzbek linguistics these features were systematically described by Sh. Rahmatullayev, and in comparative phraseology by A.V. Kunin. For the methodologist, a fourth feature matters most: cultural connotation, i.e. the evaluative and associative information the image of an idiom carries for native speakers. R. Galisson introduced the notion of *charge culturelle partagée* (shared cultural load) the implicit cultural meaning that native speakers attach to words and expressions but that is absent from dictionary definitions. He called the field that studies it *lexiculture*. French idioms are especially rich in such load. Gastronomy is a clear example: *mettre son grain de sel* (to interfere uninvited), *raconter des salades* (to tell lies), *ne pas être dans son assiette* (to feel unwell). Historical and religious memory is also present: *tomber de Charybde en Scylla* (from bad to worse), *revenir à ses moutons* (to get back to the point, from the medieval farce *Maître Pathelin*). E.M. Vereshchagin and V.G. Kostomarov showed that such units function as "accumulators" of national culture, and that their teaching requires a linguocultural commentary.

Methodology of Teaching Phraseological Units

Selection of material. The phraseological minimum for students is selected according to five principles:

frequency - priority is given to idioms attested in contemporary spoken French, the media and corpora rather than archaic or bookish ones;

linguocultural value - units whose image reflects French history, traditions, cuisine or mentality;

contrastive relevance - a balanced inclusion of all four correspondence types, with emphasis on analogues and non-equivalents;

thematic grouping - idioms are organised by semantic fields (emotions, character, money, time, food, the body), which aids memorisation;

stylistic marking - the register of each unit (familiar, neutral, literary) is indicated so that students use it appropriately.

The main sources for selection are the dictionaries of A. Rey and S. Chantreau, I. González Rey's description of French phraseology, as well as authentic films, songs, podcasts and press texts.

Stages of work**.** Each phraseological unit passes through four stages:

Contextual presentation. The idiom is first met in an authentic context (a film episode, a comic strip, a news headline). Students guess its meaning from the situation before receiving a definition, which develops a strategy of contextual inference.

Semantic and cultural interpretation. The teacher or students explain the literal image, the figurative meaning and the origin of the unit. For example, *poser un lapin* is traced to 19th-century slang, where *lapin* meant an unpaid service. A linguocultural commentary is given and the unit is compared with its Uzbek correspondence.

Reproductive practice**.** Students fix the form and meaning through matching, restoring missing components, choosing the right idiom for a situation and correcting interference errors (for instance, literal calques from Uzbek).

Productive use. Students use idioms in their own speech: retelling a story with idioms, writing a dialogue or a short sketch, commenting on a cartoon, translating texts with phraseological units into Uzbek and back.

Task types. The system includes tasks of increasing complexity:

guessing tasks "What does it mean?" with an illustration of the literal image;

contrastive tasks finding the Uzbek equivalent or analogue and comparing images;

etymological mini-research students present the origin of a chosen idiom;

phraseological dictionary project each student keeps a thematic French–Uzbek glossary with examples and cultural notes;

translation tasks rendering idioms from literary and journalistic texts, choosing between equivalent, analogue and descriptive translation;

creative tasks writing a short story or a dialogue built around a given set of idioms.

The essential condition is that every unit be connected with a cultural commentary and with the students' own language. This turns phraseology from a list of expressions into a means of intercultural understanding, in line with M. Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence.

French phraseological units and idioms are an effective means of forming students' linguocultural speech competence because they combine linguistic and cultural information in a compact, memorable form. Their teaching should rely on a contrastive analysis with the Uzbek language, since the type of correspondence full equivalent, partial equivalent, analogue or non-equivalent determines both the difficulty of a unit and the techniques required. The proposed methodology, based on principled selection, four stages (contextual presentation, interpretation, reproduction, production) and a graded task system, allows students not only to understand idioms but to use them consciously and appropriately. Further research may focus on compiling a learner's French–Uzbek phraseological dictionary with cultural commentary.

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