

Bilingual Mental Lexicon: A Contrastive Psycholinguistic Study Of Word Retrieval In English And Uzbek Speakers

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Abstract

This thesis examines the mechanisms of word retrieval in the bilingual mental lexicon of English-Uzbek speakers. It analyzes how bilingual individuals access words in both languages, what factors influence the speed and accuracy of retrieval, and how cultural and linguistic differences manifest in this process. The findings aim to provide a deeper understanding of the cognitive and psycholinguistic aspects of bilingual word processing and to offer insights relevant to language teaching and translation practice.

Keywords: bilingual mental lexicon, word retrieval, English-Uzbek bilinguals, psycholinguistics, cross-linguistic influence, lexical access, language dominance, tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon

Аннотация

Данная работа исследует механизмы извлечения слов из ментального лексикона у билингвов, говорящих на английском и узбекском языках. Анализируется, как билингвы получают доступ к словам на обоих языках, какие факторы влияют на скорость и точность воспроизведения, а также как культурные и языковые различия проявляются в этом процессе. Результаты направлены на более глубокое понимание когнитивных и психолингвистических аспектов обработки слов и предоставляют ценные рекомендации для обучения языкам и практики перевода.

Ключевые слова: билингвальный ментальный лексикон, извлечение слов, англо-узбекские билингвы, психолингвистика, межъязыковое влияние, лексический доступ, доминирование языка, феномен «на кончике языка»

Introduction. The bilingual mental lexicon refers to the cognitive system that stores and organizes words in the minds of bilingual individuals. Word retrieval is the process by which these stored words are accessed and produced in communication. For bilingual speakers, retrieving words can be more complex due to cross-linguistic interference and varying levels of proficiency in each language. This thesis investigates word retrieval in English-Uzbek bilinguals from a contrastive psycholinguistic perspective, focusing on speed, accuracy, and cultural influences.

Main Part. This study draws on experimental and descriptive data to analyze word retrieval patterns. A series of tests, including word recall tasks, word association tasks, and reaction time measurements, were administered to English-Uzbek bilingual participants. The findings suggest that retrieval is influenced by language dominance, word frequency, emotional salience, and context. Participants showed faster retrieval in their dominant language, with increased tip-of-the-tongue experiences in their second language. Cultural factors also played a role: words connected to cultural practices and daily life were retrieved more quickly in Uzbek, while academic and technical terms were more accessible in English. These findings are discussed in light of current psycholinguistic theories, including the Revised Hierarchical Model and the Bilingual Interactive Activation Model, which account for both conceptual and lexical connections between languages.

Additionally, the study observed code-switching as a strategy to compensate for retrieval failures. This suggests that bilinguals navigate between their two languages fluidly, activating both lexicons when necessary. The analysis also highlights the role of cognitive resources such as working memory and attention in managing the demands of bilingual word retrieval.

Conclusion. The bilingual mental lexicon operates as a dynamic and integrated system. Word retrieval is influenced by linguistic, cognitive, and cultural factors. Understanding these processes can inform language teaching strategies, improve translation practices, and contribute to psycholinguistic theory. This research provides valuable insights into how bilinguals access and produce words in two languages, emphasizing the need for further cross-linguistic studies.

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