



# SOME TYPES OF LEXICAL LACUNA (ON THE MATERIAL OF THE RUSSIAN, AZERBAIJANI AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES)

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## Abstract

The article deals with such an interesting and rather complex, multidimensional phenomenon as lacuna on the material of three unrelated languages-

Russian, Azerbaijani and English. The lexical lacunae are systematized and analyzed on the following groups: motivated and non-motivated lacunae. Motivated lacuna is connected with the following fact: the native speakers of the other languages do not have this reality idea. Such lacuna can be revealed in the field of the unequal lexeme. However, non-motivated lacuna is not explained by the absence of the idea. The idea exists, but the native speakers of the other languages did not call it owing to the certain cultural, mental, geographical, social, psychological or other reasons. Perhaps, they did not attach importance to them.

So, non-motivated lacunae are considered on the concrete lexical-semantic groups in the article :1. Family relationship terms which are divided into two groups: a) blood relations; b) marital relationship. It should be noted that there are no special terms of marital relationship in English unlike Russian and Azerbaijani. The terms of blood relations are used together with the word "law" in postposition in order to denote the necessary marital relationship in English. 2. Nature: natural phenomena, flora and fauna. This group includes a lot of various lacunae connected with nature, natural phenomena. Such lacunae are caused by such objective factors as features of landscape, climatic conditions, relief, predominance of concrete animal, bird, insect, fish species etc. Certainly, the main factor is concrete people's perception of nature, natural phenomena. Perception of the world influences nomination, highlighting specific natural objects taking into account the degree of their importance. When studying lacunae it is important to take into consideration both extra- and intralinguistic factors.

**Keywords:** *lexical lacunae, motivated lacunae, non-motivated lacunae, family relationship, natural phenomena, mentality*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The article deals with such an interesting and rather complex, multidimensional phenomenon as lacuna on the material of three unrelated languages - Russian, Azerbaijani and English. Lacuna takes an important place in the peoples' language picture of the world, in translation theory, in intercultural communication, which is very significant at the present stage. It is well known that lacuna, or "vacancy", "gap" can be defined as the unique, original cultural-language phenomenon caused by the numerous various factors and reasons (geographical environment, history, economic, social, cultural, scientific, mental factors etc.). Lacuna exists in one concrete culture, but it has no equivalent in another culture because of these objective and sometimes even subjective reasons. Thus the conditions of the social-economic, social-political, cultural and everyday life of the different peoples, their customs, traditions, rites, psychology, mentality, world view, mode of life etc. which are reflected in the vocabulary and all these factors create the concepts that the native speakers of the other languages do not have. So, if the native speakers of the other languages do not have such concepts, notions there will be no lexical equivalents for their transmission.

A lacuna in linguistics can be explained as a lexical gap or the "absence of a lexical item in the language while there is a concept in the conceptual sphere with zero verbalization". Comparison of some lexemes of the Russian, Azerbaijani and English languages allows to reveal the types of lacuna that can be divided in two groups: motivated and non-motivated lacuna.

Motivated lacuna is connected with the following fact: the native speakers of the other languages do not have this reality idea. Such lacuna can be revealed in the field of the unequal lexeme, for example: in the Russian language: кум (godfather), кума (godmother), поп (pop), попадья (pop's wife), лукошко (a manual basket made of splint or twigs), валенки (felt boots), сбитень (hot drink made from honey with spices) etc.; in the Azerbaijani language: kirvə, fitə, fitrə, günü, yengə, qutab, firmi etc.; in the English language: lunch, pudding, lord, peer, coroner (in Britain: an official who holds inquests into violent, or suspicious death, and inquires into cases of treasure trove), solicitor (in Britain: a member of the legal profession qualified to deal with conveyancing, the drawing up of wills and other legal matters) etc. (Жельвис, 1997: 140). Such words can be given in the dictionaries or in the fiction only with the corresponding detailed

explanations in order to be understood by the native speakers of the other language.

Non-motivated lacuna is not explained by the absence of the idea. The idea exists, but the native speakers of the other languages did not call it owing to the certain cultural, mental, geographical, social, psychological or other reasons. Perhaps, they did not attach importance to them. Thus, non-motivated lacunae can be considered on the concrete lexical-semantic groups.

## 2. FAMILY RELATIONSHIP TERMS

**A) Blood Relations:** in Azerbaijani: mother's sister – xala, father's sister – bibi; mother's brother – dayı, father's brother – əmi; in Russian and in English: mother's brother, father's brother, aunt's husband – дядя, uncle; mother's sister – father's sister – uncle's wife – тётя, aunt.

In Russian and English: brother's, sister's son – племянник, nephew; brother's daughter, sister's daughter – племянница, niece.

In Azerbaijani it is more concrete and detailed: bacı oğlu – sister's son, bacı qızı – sister's daughter; qardaş oğlu – brother's son, qardaş qızı – brother's daughter. There is no special word for these relatives in Azerbaijani.

In Russian: двоюродная сестра (uncle's or aunt's daughter), двоюродный брат – uncle's or aunt's son). There is gender difference in Russian: двоюродная сестра (female), двоюродный брат (male).

In English: there is no gender difference in English: cousin may denote both a man and a woman. In Azerbaijani it is more concrete and detailed: əmi qızı – father's brother's daughter; əmi oğlu – father's brother's son; dayı oğlu – mother's brother's son; dayı qızı – mother's brother's daughter – etc.

It is very interesting that there is such a term as *sibling* in English unlike Russian and Azerbaijani. It means "each of two or more children or offspring having one or both parents in common; a brother or sister".

There are also such a lexeme in English as *grandparents* which is lacking in Azerbaijani and Russian: нənə, baba, бабушка и дедушка – grandmother and grandfather.

In Russian and English: внучка – granddaughter, внук – grandson. There is no gender difference in Azerbaijani: both a granddaughter and grandson – *nəvə*.

If it is essential, one ought to stipulate, for example: oğlan *nəvəsi* – grandson, qız *nəvəsi* – granddaughter.

**B) Marital Relationship.:** There are also quite a lot of lacunae among the marital relationship. The Russian and Azerbaijani languages are remarkable for their various terms of marital relationship, especially the Azerbaijani language unlike English. Historically relationship, family traditions, rites were very important and significant for Turkic peoples including the Azerbaijani people. Each relative was denoted by the special relationship term regardless of the degree of relationship:

In Russian: husband's mother - свекровь, husband's father - свёкор, wife's mother - теща, wife's father - тесть.

In Azerbaijani: both wife's and husband's mother – qayınana, both wife's and husband's father – qayınata.

In Russian: husband's sister – золовка, wife's sister свояченица.

In Azerbaijani: both husband's and wife's sister – baldız.

In Russian: husband's brother – деверь, wife's brother – шурин.

In Azerbaijani: both wife's and husband's brother – qayın.

In Russian and Azerbaijani: son's wife - невестка/сноха, gəlin; daughter's husband – зять/kürəkən.

There are also other original terms of marital relationship in Azerbaijani unlike Russian and English: yeznə - sister's husband; bacanaqlar - sisters' husbands; elti - brothers' wives.

The following interesting fact should be noted: it is well known that in olden days Azerbaijani men used to have two and more wives. Women married the same man were called *günü*. “Turkish people have always attached great importance to the blood and marital ties. So relationship terminology takes an important place in the Turkic peoples' vocabulary. It is one of the

most ancient layers of the Turkic languages” (Xəlilov, 2008: 105).

In English the verb to *marry* is used in reference to both a man and woman. But there are two different verbs in Russian and Azerbaijani depending on gender: жениться, evlənmək – only about a man; выйти замуж, ərə getmək – only about woman.

There are no special terms of marital relationship in English unlike Russian and Azerbaijani. The terms of blood relations are used together with the word “law” in postposition in order to denote the necessary marital relationship: mother-in-law (both husband's and wife's mother), father – in – law (both husband's and wife's father), sister – in – law (both husband's and wife's sister), brother – in – law (both husband's and wife's brother), son – in – law (daughter's husband), daughter – in – law (son's wife).

There are also special terminology for adopted children and adoptive parents in Russian unlike Azerbaijani and English.

The words *ögey* and *step* are used in preposition in Azerbaijani and English to denote these notions. Compare:

- мачеха – *ögey ana*, stepmother
- отчим – *ögey ata*, stepfather
- падчерица – *ögey qız*, stepdaughter
- пасынок – *ögey oğul*, stepson

## 2. NATURE: NATURAL PHENOMENA, FLORA AND FAUNA

There are a lot of various lacunae connected with nature, natural phenomena. Such lacunae are caused by such objective factors as features of landscape, climatic conditions, relief, predominance of concrete animal, bird, insect, fish species etc. Certainly, the main factor is concrete people's perception of the nature, natural phenomena. Thus perception of the world influences nomination, highlighting specific natural objects taking into account the degree of their importance. Significance of nature is undeniable.

## A) Fauna:

in Russian and English: заяц - hare, кролик – rabbit. In Azerbaijani: both of them – dovşan. In Russian and English: лягушка - frog, жаба - toad. In Azerbaijani: both of them – qurbağa. In Russian and English: пчела - bee, оса – wasp. In Azerbaijani: both of them - arı. In Russian and English: бабочка - butterfly, мотыльк – moth. In Azerbaijani: both of them – kəpənək.

There are three different denoted notions in Russian: бабочка – butterfly, мотыльк – an insect with wings that is similar to a butterfly, usually flies at night, and is attracted to light; моль – clothes moth. Compare: In Russian and Azerbaijani: моль – güvə – clothes moth.

In Russian: конь – only mole of the domestic horse, лошадь – the general name for a number of animals in the Equid family. In Azerbaijani and English only *at* and *horse* etc.

The interesting lacunae can be revealed during comparison of the words denoting “dwelling of the animals, birds, insects”, for example: in Russian and English: берлога – den, логово – lair, нора – holle, burrow, гнездо -nest, дупло -hollow, лежбище – rookery (a place on land where sea animals live), муравейник – anthill.

It is clear that each of these words is used depending on kind of the concrete animal, bird, insect, for example: nest (bird), den, lair (bear), burrow, hole (wolf, fox, hare, mouse), hollow (squirrel), rookery (seals, walruses), anthill (ants).

In Azerbaijani language all mentioned notions are denoted by one general word – *yuva* which certainly limits the ability of expressing of the language. Such notion uses the corresponding explanation: qartal yuvası – eagle’s nest, qarğa yuvası – crow’s nest; ayı yuvası – bear’s lair, dovşan yuvası – hare’s burrow, dələ yuvası – squirrel hollow, ilan yuvası – snake’s hole, qarışqa yuvası – anthill etc.

In Russian and English: стая, отара – flock, pack, стадо, табун – herd, косяк – shoal. Each of these words is using depending on concrete kind of animal, bird, fish: отара – flock of sheep, goats, стадо – herd of (cows, oxen etc.); стая (flock of birds; wolves; fish), косяк – only about fish and birds.

In Azerbaijani all mentioned notions are denoted by one general word – *sürü*: canavar sürüsü – pack of wolves; at sürüsü – herd of horses, inək sürüsü – herd

of cows; it sürüsü – pack of dogs etc.

The word *qatar* is used only in relation to cranes in Azerbaijani: durna qatarı – flock of cranes etc.

## B) Flora:

In English: there is difference between the ordinary flowers and flowers that grow on the tree and bushes: the former are called “flowers”, the latter are called “blossoms”. There is no difference in Russian and Azerbaijani, both of them are called *цветок* – *gül*.

In Russian and Azerbaijani: вишня - albalı, черешня - gilas. In English: both of them – *cherry*.

There are a lot of names of the different forests depending on the concrete tree species in the Russian language, for example: бор - pine forest, дубрава - oakwood, осинник - aspen forest, рябинник - rowan forest etc. Such kinds of forests are denoted only by means of word – combinations or in a descriptive way in Azerbaijani and English, for example: дубрава – palid meşəsi – oak forest; ельник – küknar meşəsi – fir grove, осинник – ağsaçovaq meşəsi – aspen forest, березняк – ağsaçaуın meşəsi – birch forest etc. The general words *meşə* - *forest* are used in nomination of such kinds of forests. “Such detailing indicates that in this segment of the Russian people’s consciousness a large number of cognitive classifiers are used, therefore the forest acts as a focal point, a landmark in the surround space. As can be seen from the examples considered, when the forest is objectified in Russian, the following feature is verbalized: the concrete tree species” (Быкова, 2002: 43).

## C) Natural Phenomena:

In Russian and English: оттепель - thaw, капель – eavesdrop. In Azerbaijani these natural phenomena can be denoted only by detailed descriptive way: the period of warmer weather that thaws ice and snow; in English: icicle - in Azerbaijani it can be given with the explanation: a hanging, tapering piece of ice formed by the freezing and dripping water etc.

In Russian: позёмка/поземица. It can be given only by descriptive way both in Azerbaijani and English: blizzard during which the grassroots wind blows.

In Russian: проталина. It can be given only by word – combinations in English – *thawed patch* and by descriptive way in Azerbaijani: qarı ərimiş yer – the place where the snow melted and the earth opened.

In Russian: прорубь – ice hole, in Azerbaijani by descriptive way: a hole cut through the ice of a river, lake, pond etc.

#### D) Lacunae Related To Human:

In English: a finger (of the hand), a toe (of the foot). There is no difference in Russian and Azerbaijani: both of them – палец, barmaq.

There are interesting lacunae in Russian which characterize a person from the different sides (appearance, character, manners, profession etc). They can be expressed either by word-combinations or descriptive way in Azerbaijani and English, for example: блондин - fair man, sarışın (kişi, qadın); брюнет - qara saçlı adam, qarayağız, dark haired man; шатен – şabalıdı saçlı adam, brown – haired man.

There are different color shades of hair in Russian that have no equivalents in Azerbaijani and English and they are expressed by one common word, for example: белокурый, белобрысый – sarışın, blond; рыжий – sarı, red (these words do not express the real shade of this color). Бородач – uzunsaqqal adam, bearded man; толстяк – kök, şişman adam, fat man etc.

In Russian: учитель, педагог, преподаватель. In Azerbaijani and English both of them: müəllim – teacher.

In English: lawyer, attorney, barrister, solicitor (depending on the specific type of activity, for example: solicitor – a person who tries to obtain business orders, advertising, etc.). In Russian and Azerbaijani all of them – адвокат, vəkil.

There are interesting lacunae among the coloronyms related to animals and birds, for example:

In Russian and Azerbaijani: каурый – kürən (only about horses). In English it is expressed by the compound adjective: light chestnut.

In Russian: сизый – dark gray color with bluish – whitish tint (only about birds and plants). In Azerbaijani and English it is also expressed by the compound adjective: göyümtraq, kəl ağı – dove-colored.

In Russian and Azerbaijani: сивый – çal, grey– blue (only about horses). In English: ash grey.

In Russian: вороной – dark black (only about horses). In Azerbaijani and English: zil qara – black etc.

There are also other interesting lacunae related to the different notions, for example: in Azerbaijani: *yerikləmək*. This verb has no equivalents either in Russian or in English. It can be expressed only by the detailed descriptive way in these languages: the state of a pregnant woman when she desires something specific from food, fruits, vegetables etc.

In Azerbaijani: there are two verbs in Azerbaijani that means “to put on” – *geymək* and *taxmaq*. The verb *geymək* is used only in relation to clothes and shoe, for example: paltó geymək – to put on a coat; papaq geymək – to put on a cap; ayaqqabı geymək – to put on shoes etc. The verb *taxmaq* is used only in relation to jewelry and eyeglasses: saat taxmaq – to put a watch, sırğa taxmaq to put on earrings; eynək taxmaq – to put on eyeglasses etc. There is no difference between these notions in Russian and English. The verbs надеть and *to put on* are used in all cases, for example: надеть шляпу – to put on a hat; надеть кольцо – to put on a ring etc.

Another interesting lacuna: there are two verbs in Azerbaijani language that mean *to fall*: *yıxılmaq* and *düşmək*. The verb *yıxılmaq* is used only in relation to living beings, for example: uşaq yıxıldı – the child fell; at yıxıldı – the horse fell etc. The verb *düşmək* is used only in relation to inanimate objects: fincan əlimdən yerə düşdü – the cup fell to the floor; kitab rəfdən düşdü – the book fell off the shelf etc.

There is no difference between these notions in Russian and English, all of them are expressed only by the verb упасть – to fall, for example: Девочка упала –The girl fell; Собака упало –The dog fell; Дерево упало –Tree fell etc.

In Russian: сутки –24 saat –24 hours; кипяток – qaynar su – very hot boiling water etc.; in English: weekend – həftə axırı – конец недели.

“Lexical unexpressed concepts represented by intralinguistic lacunae exist in the national consciousness, as they are reflected in nature, they reflect the denotations which present in national reality...”

The national specificity of thinking is not derived from language but from reality, while language only reflects in its semantics and names those differences that are communicatively relevant to the people for one reason or another” (Стернин; Попова; Стернина, 2004: 20).

### 3. CONCLUSION

Thus, the national specificity of thinking is determined not by the national language, but by the national reality. The absence of a lexical unit (intralingual or interlingual lacuna) does not mean, the absence of a corresponding concept in the people's mind except in cases of motivated interlingual lacunae reflecting the absence of specific objects or phenomena among the people.

The comparative study of the different languages makes it possible to reveal a lot of interesting and original facts, general and characteristic features in their vocabulary. Besides, analysis of lacuna allows to understand the different peoples' mentality, world outlook, psychology, traditions and specific character.

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