

**CROSS-LINGUISTIC LEXICAL COMPARISONS IN ELC: INTERNATIONAL
WORDS AND TRANSLATOR'S FALSE FRIENDS
(Comparing English, Russian and Armenian)**

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The given paper presents the results of the experimental teaching with the use of a set of exercises and tasks based on the comparative method. The exercises were developed by us and experimentally validated during our experiment which was conducted with the 1st-year Master students of Faculty of Philology of Gavar State University. Our main aim was to check experimentally the possibilities of using different types of exercises in order to develop the learners' skills of using the comparative method while analyzing linguistic phenomena and summarize the student's knowledge of English, Russian and Armenian vocabulary. The analysis of the word-stocks of English and Armenian languages, their origin and evolvement shows that as both languages have borrowings from Greek and Latin, they both have international words in their word-stock. Russian is the first foreign language for Armenian students. From the fact that Russian has more borrowings than Armenian, we can conclude that with the use of the prerequisite knowledge of Russian vocabulary learners can guess the meaning of English words of international character more easily and effectively.

Keywords: *cross-linguistic comparisons, word stock, vocabulary acquisition, international words, translator's false friends, bilingual homophones, language guess, experimental teaching.*

According to Jambour P. [2] English is a rich language in terms of vocabulary, containing more synonyms than any other language. There are words which appear on the surface to mean exactly the same thing but which, in fact, have slightly different shades of meaning and must be chosen appropriately if a

speaker wants to convey precisely the message intended. It is generally stated that English has around 170,000 words; this estimate is based on the last full edition of the Oxford English Dictionary from 1989 [6].

Algeo J. states that [1]over half of these words are nouns, a quarter are adjectives, and a seventh are verbs. There is one count that puts the English vocabulary at about 1 million words—but that count presumably includes words such as Latin species names, scientific terminology, botanical terms, prefixed and suffixed words, jargon, foreign words of extremely limited English use, and technical acronyms.

Due to its status as an international language, English adopts foreign words quickly, and borrows vocabulary from many other sources. According to Denning & Kessler “this adoption of words from other languages is commonplace in many world languages, but English has been especially open to borrowing of foreign words throughout the last 1,000 years. The most commonly used words in English are West Germanic [2]. “The words in English learned first by children as they learn to speak, particularly the grammatical words that dominate the word count of both spoken and written texts, are mainly the Germanic words inherited from the earliest periods of the development of Old English” [1].

But one of the consequences of long language contact between French and English in all stages of their development is that the vocabulary of English has a very high percentage of “Latinate” words (derived from French, especially, and also from Latin and other Romance languages). According to Gottlieb H. French words from various periods of the development of French now make up one-third of the vocabulary of English [4].

Words of Old Norse origin have entered the English language primarily from the contact between Old Norse and Old English during colonization of eastern and northern England. Many of these words are part of English core vocabulary, such as *egg* and *knife* [1].

English has also borrowed many words directly from Latin, the ancestor of the Romance languages, during all stages of its development. Many of these words had earlier been borrowed into Latin from Greek. Romaine S. claims that “Latin or Greek are still highly productive sources of stems used to form vocabulary of subjects learned in higher education such as the sciences, philosophy, and mathematics” [7].

English continues to gain new loanwords and calques (“loan translations”) from languages all over the world, and “words from languages other than the ancestral Anglo-Saxon language make up about 60% of the vocabulary of English” [3].

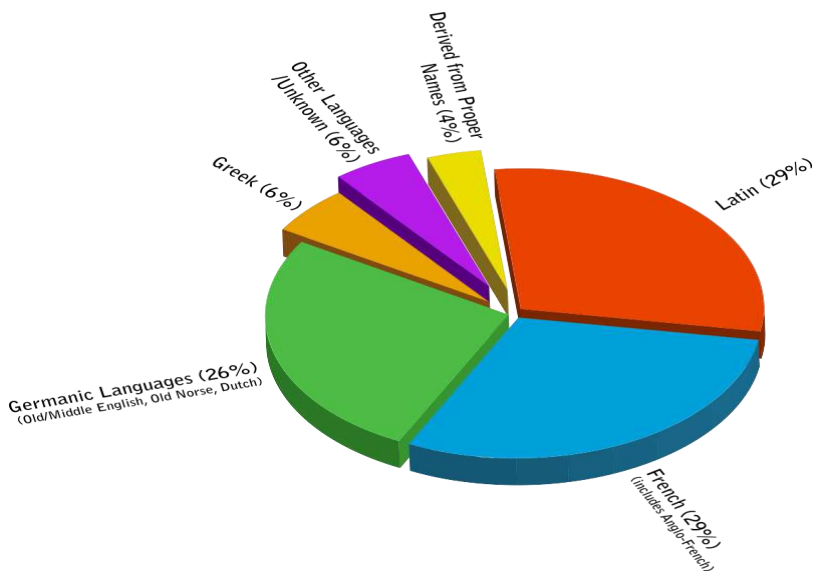


Chart 1: Source languages of English vocabulary

Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language#/media/File:Origins_of_English_PieChart.svg

The Armenian language has a long literary history, with a 5th-century Bible translation as its oldest surviving text. The classical form of the Armenian language borrowed numerous words from Middle Iranian languages, primarily Parthian, and contains smaller inventories of loanwords from Greek, Syrian, Arabic, Mongol, Persian, and indigenous languages such as Urartian. In the Middle ages Armenian borrowed a considerable number of words from Arabic and Turkish. In the 20th century after the incorporation of Armenia into the USSR when two official languages co-existed (Armenian and Russian) Armenian had a large number of borrowings from the Russian language itself and from other languages (mainly European) via Russian.

In spite of the fact that both Armenian (the native language for the learners in our case) and English (the foreign language in our case) belong to the same Indo-European family of languages the review above shows that they have undertaken a completely different paths of development during their history contacting mostly different languages. Nevertheless, as both languages have borrowings from Greek and Latin (or at least use Greek and Latin stems) it can be stated that both languages have international words in their word-stock. This fact should be taken into consideration by the English language teachers working in the Armenian classroom.

The next thing which should be taken into account, is that Armenian learners start to learn English a year later than Russian (at least at the majority of comprehensive schools of Armenia). Therefore, English is the second foreign language (FL2) after Russian, which is considered to be the first foreign language (FL1) for most Armenian learners. Russian compared with Armenian has borrowed more foreign words during its long history. Among these borrowings a great corpora form words of Greek and Latin origin which are still in use in present-day Russian. Moreover, a lot of Greek and Latin word-formation elements (stems, prefixes, suffixes, etc.) are still active in present-day Russian. Here we come to another very useful conclusion: even if there are no equivalents of international words in Armenian, they are likely to be found in Russian. That means that in the English language class with native Armenian speakers we can **use the prerequisite knowledge of Russian vocabulary to help the learners comprehend English words of international character.**

In order to develop the learners' language guess skills based on their knowledge of international vocabulary (based either on Russian or Armenian languages) we have developed a few model exercises which are presented below.

Try to understand the meaning of the following words and word combinations. Remember similar words in Russian or/and Armenian:

Parliament, president, contract, agent, economics, politics, society, ecology, problem, university, institute, signal, program, radio, music, opera, concert, ballet, cosmopolitan, archive, theme, method, debate, discussion, speaker, microphone, camera, center, circus, mixture, computer, meter, mass production, international university, faculty of history, director of the company, vice-director of the firm, agricultural products.

Comparative table of these English words and their Russian and Armenian equivalents shows that there are more similar words in Russian than in Armenian.

Table 1: Comparative table of some words of international character

English	Russian	Armenian
parliament	парламент	խորհրդարան
president	президент	նախագահ
contract	контракт	պայմանագիր
agent	агент	գործակալ
economics	экономическая наука	տնտեսագիտություն
politics	политика	քաղաքականություն
society	общество	հասարակություն
ecology	экология	բնապահպանություն
problem	проблема	խնդիր

university	университет	համալսարան
signal	сигнал	ազդանշան
program	программа	ծրագիր
radio	радио	ռադիո
music	музыка	երաժշտություն
opera	опера	օպերա
concert	концерт	համերգ
ballet	балет	բալետ
archive	архив	արխիվ
theme	тема	թեմա
method	метод	մեթոդ
debate	дебаты	բանավեճ
discussion	обсуждение	քննարկում
speaker	спикер	խոսնակ
microphone	микрофон	խոսափող
camera	камера	տեսախցիկ
center	центр	կենտրոն
circus	цирк	կրկես
mixture	смесь/микстура	խառնուրդ
computer	компьютер	համակարգիչ
meter	метр	մետր
mass production	массовое производство	զանգվածային արտադրություն
international university	международный университет	միջազգային համալսարան
faculty of history	исторический факультет	պատմության ֆակուլտետ
director of the company	директор компании	ընկերության տնօրեն
vice-director of the firm	заместитель директора фирмы	ծեղնարկության փոխտնօրեն
agricultural products	сельскохозяйственные продукты	գյուղատնտեսական ապրանքներ

In this case we count on the knowledge of Russian of our learners. It should be mentioned though that a few decades ago the same or similar equivalents of these international words were widely used in Armenian too. But today we try to use Armenian words made up of Armenian stems and affixes rather than international ones, e.g. *Internet* - *համացանց*, *computer* - *համակարգիչ*, *president* - *նախագահ*, *minister* - *նախարար*, *system* - *համակարգ*, *online* -

wangánq, firm - ձեռնարկություն, forum - համաժողով, balance - հաշվեկշիռ, manager - կառավարիչ, formula - բանաձև, leader - առաջնորդ, menu - ճաշացուցակ, local - տեղային, collection - հավաքածու, site - կայք, marketing - շուկայագիտություն, contact - կապ, communication - հաղորդակցություն, nostalgia - կարոտախիտ, syrup - թանձրահյութ, certificate - հավաստագիր, deficit - պակասորդ, audit - հաշվետարուում, license - թույլատրագիր, association - միություն, phonogram - ձայնագրություն, monopoly - մենաշնորհ, expert - փորձագետ, colleague - պաշտոնակից, presentation - շնորհանդես, modernization - արդիականացում, essay - խոհագրություն, processor - մշակիչ, client - հաճախորդ, etc.

Native Russian speakers easily guess the meaning of a great number of international words thus making the English vocabulary acquisition more time-consuming. We have conducted a small experiment to make sure of it. A list of school subject titles was suggested to native Armenian and Russian speakers. The learners were asked to translate the subject titles. Those with Russian as their mother tongue easily completed the task in a couple of minutes. Those with Armenian linguistic background had certain difficulties. Below is presented the table with subject titles in English, Russian and Armenian offered as an experimental task:

Table 2: Subject titles in English, Russian and Armenian

English	Russian	Armenian
Algebra	алгебра	Հանրահաշիվ
Geometry	геометрия	Երկրաչափություն
Geography	география	Աշխարհագրություն
Physics	физика	Ֆիզիկա
Chemistry	химия	Քիմիա
History	история	Պատմություն
Literature	литература	Գրականություն
Astronomy	астрономия	Աստղագիտություն

It should be mentioned that while performing cross-linguistic comparisons we should not neglect a phenomenon called translator’s false friends. **False friends** or **bilingual homophones** are words in two languages that look or sound similar, but differ significantly in meaning. The term originates from a book by French linguists describing the phenomenon, which was translated in 1928 and entitled, “false friend of a translator”.

Below are the examples of false friends in English and Russian which can cause certain difficulties if not comprehended correctly in the context.

Table 3: Translator’s False Friends (English words and their Russian counterparts).

English	Russian incorrect translation	Russian correct translation
list	лист	список
trace	трасса	след
marmalade	мармелад	джем
jam	джем	варенье
magazine	магазин	журнал
actually	актуально	реально
biscuit	бисквит	сухое печенье

While enhancing the language guess of the learners we should remember that it can be done through the following:

- ✓ by acknowledging international words in the learners’ mother tongue or another language they already master;
- ✓ by guessing the meaning of new words in the context;
- ✓ by guessing the meaning of new words by typical affixes (prefixes, suffixes, international word-building elements, etc.).

In terms of cross-linguistic comparisons it was interesting to develop tasks and experimentally validate them on recognizing typical affixes and guessing the meaning of new words.

Below is the example of an exercise which aims at developing the language guess skills by the recognition and comprehension of typical affixes.

Try to understand the meaning of the words in italic. Pay attention to the structure of the words and the noun used with it:

Agriculture - *agricultural* area, music - *musical* school, history - *historic* events, president - *presidential* elections, parliament - *parliamentary* elections, comfort - *comfortable* flat, fun - *funny* story, sun - *sunny* day, cloud - *cloudy* morning, happy - *unhappy* woman, honest- *dishonest* man, legal - *illegal* contract, regular - *irregular* verbs, responsible - *irresponsible* person, possible - *impossible* thing.

This task realizes the didactic potential of word formation as a source to reduce the time and effort in a new vocabulary acquisition. Together with cross-linguistic comparisons it is possible to anticipate the meaning of new words without looking them up in a dictionary.

During our internship we decided to check experimentally the possibilities of using different types of exercises in order to develop the learners' skills of using the comparative method while analyzing linguistic phenomena and summarize the student's knowledge on English, Russian and Armenian vocabulary.

Our experiment was conducted with the 1st course students of master's degree of Faculty of Philology of Gavar State University. The exercises were selected according to the topic of the lessons taking into account the linguistic background of the learners.

The main aim of the experimental teaching was to see if additional materials can lead to the effective development of the analyzing skills.

The **specific objectives of the experimental teaching** were the following:

- To choose exercises and then analyze their didactic potential;
- To develop various types of exercises and tasks which can motivate the interest of the learners towards learning the English language;
- To promote the development of analyzing skills of the learners.

We had developed several exercises that were aimed at developing students' language guess skills based on their knowledge of international vocabulary. The text and the comprehension questions were retrieved from [8, p13]. After reading the text and answering the questions students were assigned to find the Armenian and Russian equivalents of some international words. The text with the comprehension questions is given below.

American jazz is a mixture of sounds borrowed from such varied sources as American and African folk music and Christian gospel songs. One of the recognizable characteristics of jazz is its use of improvisation: certain parts of the music are written out and played the same way by various performers, and other improvised parts are created spontaneously during a performance and vary widely from performer to performer.

The earliest form of jazz was ragtime, lively songs or rags performed on the piano, and the best-known of the ragtime performers and composers was Scott Joplin. Born in 1868 to former slaves, Scott Joplin earned his living from a very early age playing the piano in bars along the Mississippi. He wrote more than 500 compositions, the most famous of which was "The Maple Leaf Rag".

1. The text is about
 - a) Jazz in general and one specific type of jazz
 - b) The various sources of jazz
 - c) The life of Scott Joplin
 - d) The major characteristics of jazz
2. According to text, ragtime was

- a) Generally performed on a variety of instruments
 - b) The first type of jazz
 - c) Extremely melancholic and sad
3. Which of the following statements is true according to the text?
- a) Scott Joplin was a slave
 - b) Scott Joplin was a famous musician.

The students then were asked to guess the meaning of the English words from the text and then to fill in the table with their Russian and Armenian counterparts.

Table 4: International words from the text

English	Russian	Armenian
jazz	джаз	Ջազ
music	музыка	Երաժշտություն
folk	народный, фольклорный	Ազգային
characteristic	характерный	Բնորոշ
ragtime	регтайм	Ռեգթայմ
improvisation	импровизация	Իմպրովիզացիա
composer	композитор	Կոմպոզիտոր
piano	пианино	Դաշնամուր
spontaneous	спонтанный	Ինքնաբուխ
bar	бар	Բար

This exercise helped the students to realize the importance of cross-linguistic comparisons while reading texts, vocabulary acquisition, etc. It showed them clearly that via Russian, which has a large word-stock of international words, it is much easier for them to guess the meaning of the English words.

To sum it up, the analysis of the word-stocks of English and Armenian languages, their origin and evolvement shows that as both languages have borrowings from Greek and Latin they both have international words in their word-stock. Russian is the first foreign language for Armenian students. From the fact that Russian has more borrowings than Armenian, we can conclude that with the use of the prerequisite knowledge of Russian vocabulary learners can guess the meaning of English words of international character more easily and effectively.

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**ՄԻՋԼԵԶՎԱԿԱՆ ԲԱՌԱՅԻՆ ՀԱՄԵՄԱՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆԻ
ԴԱՍԱՎԱՆԴՄԱՆ ԳՈՐԾԸՆԹԱՑՈՒՄ. ՄԻՋԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԲԱՌԵՐԸ ԵՎ
ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆԶԻ ԿԵՂՇ ԸՆԿԵՐՆԵՐԸ**

(անգլերենի, ռուսերենի և հայերենի զուգադրական քննություն)

ԳԵՎՈՐԳՅԱՆ ԱԼԲԵՐՏԻՆԱ

*ԳՊՀ բանասիրական ֆակուլտետի «Անգլերեն լեզու և գրականություն»
բաժնի մագիստրատուրայի շրջանավարտ*

ՍԱՐԳՍՅԱՆ ՌՈՒԶԱՆԱ

*Մանկավարժական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ,
ԳՊՀ օտար լեզվի և գրականության ամբիոնի դասախոս*

Հոդվածում ներկայացված են հայկական լսարանում անգլերենի բառապաշարի ուսուցման ընթացքում համեմատական մեթոդի հիման վրա վարժությունների և առաջադրանքների կիրառմամբ փորձարարական ուսուցման արդյունքները: Մենք մշակել ենք վարժությունների և առաջադրանքների համակարգեր, որոնք փորձարկվել են Գավառի պետական համալսարանի

բանասիրական ֆակուլտետի մագիստրատուրայի առաջին կուրսում: Մեր հիմնական նպատակն էր ստուգել սովորողների՝ համեմատական մեթոդը օգտագործելու հմտությունների զարգացմանը միտված տարաբնույթ վարժությունների և առաջադրանքների կիրառման հնարավորությունները լեզվաբանական վերլուծություն անցկացնելիս՝ հիմնված անգլերենի, հայերենի և ռուսերենի բառապաշարի վրա: Հիմնվելով ռուսերենի վրա՝ հայալեզու ուսումնառողները կարող են օգտագործել լեզվական կոահումը անգլերենի միջազգային բառերի իմաստը հասկանալու համար:

Բանալի բառեր՝ միջլեզվական համեմատություն, բառամթերք, բառապաշարի յուրացում, միջազգային բառեր, թարգմանչի կեղծ ընկերներ, լեզվական կոահում, փորձարարական ուսուցում:

КРОСС-ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИЕ СРАВНЕНИЯ НА УРОКЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА: ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ СЛОВА И ЛОЖНЫЕ ДРУЗЬЯ ПЕРЕВОДЧИКА

(Сопоставление английского, русского и армянского языков)

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В данной статье представлены результаты опытного обучения с использованием заданий и упражнений, основанных на применении сравнительного метода при обучении лексике английского языка в армянской аудитории. Нами были разработаны упражнения и задания, которые были экспериментально проверены во время опытного обучения с участием студентов первого курса магистратуры филологического факультета Гаварского государственного университета. Нашей основной целью было проверить путем эксперимента возможности использования различных типов упражнений и заданий, направленных на развитие умений учащихся использовать сравнительный метод во время анализа лингвистических явлений на базе словарного запаса английского, армянского и русского языков. Анализ происхождения и развития словарного состава английского и армянского языков показывает, что в обоих языках есть заимствования из греческого и латинского, в результате – большое количество интернациональных слов. Русский язык является первым иностранным языком для армянских учащихся. Количество

интернационализмов в русском языке больше, чем в армянском. Опираясь на пререквизитные знания интернациональных слов в русском языке, учащиеся-армяне могут использовать языковую догадку для семантизации незнакомых им лексем-интернационализмов в английском языке.

Ключевые слова: *кросс-лингвистические сравнения, словарный запас, освоение словаря, интернациональные (международные) слова, ложные друзья переводчика, языковая догадка, опытное обучение.*

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