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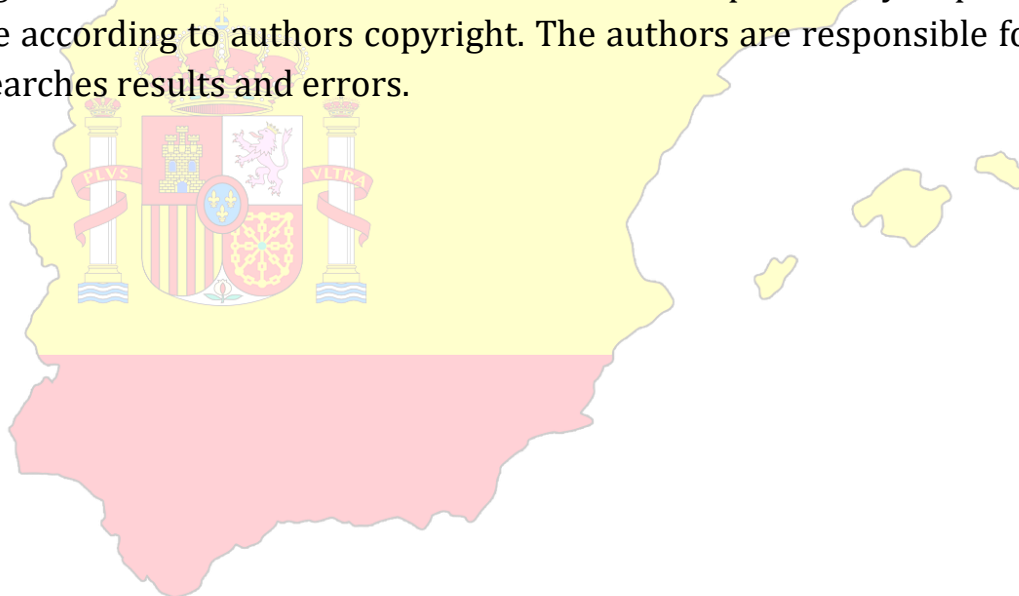


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LINGUOCULTURAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “DISEASE” IN MEDICAL DISCOURSE IN UZBEK AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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Abstract. This article examines the linguocultural representation of the concept of “disease” in Uzbek and Russian medical discourse. The study focuses on how the words *kasallik*, *dard*, *xastalik* in Uzbek and *болезнь*, *недуг*, *хворь* in Russian express not only biomedical meaning, but also cultural, emotional and social evaluations. Medical discourse is understood as a communicative sphere where scientific terminology, patient narratives, ethical norms and cultural beliefs interact. The analysis shows that Uzbek discourse often conceptualizes disease through the semantic fields of suffering, cure, patience and social empathy, whereas Russian discourse more visibly combines clinical objectification with metaphorical models of struggle, burden and social disorder. The findings confirm that disease is not merely a physiological state, but also a culturally interpreted experience.

Keywords: medical discourse, disease concept, Uzbek language, Russian language, linguoculturology, concept, metaphor.

Introduction. In contemporary linguistics, medical discourse is studied not only as a system of professional terms, but also as a form of culturally conditioned communication. The concept of “disease” is especially important because it connects biological reality with social experience, personal fear, moral evaluation and collective memory. In both Uzbek and Russian languages, disease is expressed through several lexical units with different stylistic and cultural shades. While official medical texts prefer neutral terminology, everyday speech and doctor–patient communication frequently use emotionally marked words.

The relevance of this topic is connected with the development of comparative linguoculturology and intercultural medical communication. According to discourse theory, language reflects social relations and institutional power; therefore, medical discourse contains the authority of the doctor, the vulnerability of the patient and the cultural expectations of healing.[1] Wierzbicka’s theory of key words also shows that culturally significant concepts are encoded in national vocabularies and reveal the worldview of a speech community.[2] Thus, the concept of disease can be interpreted as a linguocultural unit that includes lexical meaning, metaphorical associations and pragmatic functions.

Methods. The research uses comparative-descriptive and linguocultural methods. The material consists of common Uzbek and Russian lexical units connected with illness, selected from explanatory dictionaries, examples of everyday medical

communication and stable expressions. Uzbek units include kasallik “disease”, dard “pain/sorrow/disease”, xastalik “illness” and bemor “patient”. Russian units include болезнь “disease”, недуг “ailment”, хворь “sickness”, больной “sick person/patient” and related collocations. Dictionary data were used to define the denotative meanings of these units, while semantic and pragmatic interpretation was applied to reveal their cultural connotations.[3],[4]

Results

The first result concerns the semantic structure of the Uzbek concept of disease. The word kasallik is the most neutral and terminological unit. It is used in medical documentation, diagnosis and public health discourse, yuqumli kasallik “infectious disease”, surunkali kasallik “chronic disease”, irsiy kasallik “hereditary disease”. In contrast, dard has a broader semantic field. It can denote physical pain, illness, emotional suffering or a deep personal problem. Expressions such as dardiga davo topmoq “to find a cure for one’s pain” and dardini aytmog “to express one’s pain/problem” show that disease in Uzbek culture is closely related to compassion and shared human experience. The word xastalik sounds softer and more literary than kasallik, which allows speakers to reduce the harshness of diagnosis.

The Russian concept is organized differently. The word болезнь is neutral and widely used in scientific and everyday speech: инфекционная болезнь “infectious disease”, хроническая болезнь “chronic disease”. The word недуг is stylistically elevated and often expresses sympathy or a softened attitude toward illness. Хворь is colloquial and may have an archaic or folk tone. Russian medical discourse also uses the adjective больной, which can refer both to a patient and to something abnormal, as in больное общество “sick society”. This metaphorical extension demonstrates that disease may function as a model for evaluating social, moral and political problems.[4]

The second result concerns metaphorical conceptualization. Following cognitive metaphor theory, disease is frequently represented as an enemy, burden, punishment, disorder or test.[5] Uzbek discourse often contains the model “disease is suffering that requires cure and patience.” This is visible in the semantic connection between dard, davog “cure” and shifo “healing”. Russian discourse often activates the model “disease is an enemy or destructive force”: бороться с болезнью “to fight disease”, победить болезнь “to defeat disease”. Although similar metaphors exist in Uzbek, Russian public and media medical discourse tends to use struggle metaphors more directly.

The third result concerns pragmatic function. In both languages, speakers may soften disease-related information through euphemism. Instead of naming severe illness directly, Uzbek speakers may use ahvoli og‘ir “his/her condition is serious” or sog‘lig‘i joyida emas “health is not good”. Russian speakers similarly use серьёзное состояние “serious condition” or проблемы со здоровьем “health problems”. Such euphemisms protect the patient’s emotional state and reflect cultural norms of politeness in medical interaction.

Discussion. The comparison demonstrates that the concept of disease in Uzbek and Russian medical discourse has a shared biomedical core but different linguocultural accents. Uzbek speech emphasizes relational and emotional dimensions: illness is often presented as *dard*, a state that can be understood, shared and cured. This reflects the social importance of empathy, family support and moral endurance. Russian speech, by contrast, more frequently combines the clinical and metaphorical: disease is a pathological object to be diagnosed, controlled or fought. Medical discourse also creates a special institutional relationship in which the doctor's professional language and the patient's personal narrative may differ.[6] This tendency corresponds to the broader history of medical discourse, in which the patient's body becomes an object of professional observation.[7]

However, the differences should not be absolutized. Both languages contain scientific neutrality, emotional mitigation and metaphorical extension. The same patient may be called *bemor* or *больной* in institutional discourse, while in everyday speech the speaker may choose softer, more personal words. Therefore, the linguocultural interpretation of disease must consider genre, speaker status, communicative aim and context.

Conclusion. The concept of "disease" in Uzbek and Russian medical discourse is a complex linguocultural phenomenon. It includes objective medical meaning, emotional evaluation, metaphorical models and pragmatic strategies. Uzbek discourse foregrounds suffering, cure and empathy through words such as *dard* and *shifo*, while Russian discourse foregrounds clinical classification and struggle metaphors through *болезнь*, *больной* and related expressions. The study confirms that medical translation and intercultural healthcare communication require attention not only to terminological equivalence, but also to cultural meanings hidden behind disease-related words.

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