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FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE AND LINGUOCULTURAL APPROACHES IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

The article proposes an assessment framework for linguocultural vocabulary competence in Russian-language instruction at Uzbek universities. It is argued that culturally marked vocabulary cannot be evaluated adequately through translation or isolated definition tests because successful use depends on genre, register, pragmatic boundaries, and culturally conventional scripts. The paper outlines a scenario-based assessment model supported by corpus evidence and learner-data diagnostics. The model integrates five constructs: contextual interpretation, register control, collocational stability, pragmatic appropriateness, and cultural-script awareness. A practical workflow is presented for test design: selecting target items from course texts, verifying meanings via dictionaries, profiling usage patterns with corpus contexts, constructing scenario tasks for comprehension and production, and applying analytic rubrics with reliability checks. The article also discusses digital implementation through tagged feedback banks and micro-corpus links, which increases transparency and supports formative assessment. The conclusion emphasizes that systematic assessment helps teachers move from intuitive judgment to measurable development of intercultural communicative competence.

Keywords: Linguoculturology, assessment, culturally marked vocabulary, scenario-based tasks, pragmatics, register, corpus evidence, Russian as a foreign language, bilingual education, Uzbekistan.


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Introduction

In Uzbek higher education, Russian-language instruction increasingly aims at functional proficiency in academic, institutional, and professional communication. However, the assessment of vocabulary often remains conservative: learners are tested on translation, synonym matching, and dictionary-like definitions. Such procedures are useful for basic semantic control, yet they systematically underestimate linguocultural difficulty. A student may “know” a word in the narrow sense, but still misuse it due to genre mismatch, pragmatic boundary violations, or culturally inappropriate evaluation. From a linguoculturological perspective, this is expected, because a meaningful subset of vocabulary functions as a cultural resource that activates conventional scripts and value-laden interpretations (Maslova, 2001; Sharifian, 2017). Consequently, assessment must be aligned with the actual construct that teachers want learners to acquire: meaning in use, not meaning in isolation.

The problem is not only pedagogical but also methodological. If assessment tasks do not represent the target ability, test results become misleading: they may show “high vocabulary knowledge” while communicative performance remains fragile. In classical models of communicative competence, vocabulary is inseparable from sociolinguistic and pragmatic dimensions (Canale & Swain, 1980). Similarly, language testing theory stresses that a test must be valid with respect to its construct and context of use (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). For culturally marked vocabulary, validity requires tasks that simulate communicative situations in which cultural scripts, register expectations, and pragmatic effects matter.

A practical solution is scenario-based assessment. In scenario tasks, learners are not asked “What does the word mean?”, but “How should this word be interpreted and used here?” The scenario provides participants, social roles, communicative goals, and genre constraints, which mirrors real language use. This approach is compatible with a key insight of discourse and corpus studies: meaning is distributed across recurrent contexts and collocational patterns (Sinclair, 1991). Therefore, scenario-based tasks become stronger when they are


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grounded in corpus-informed usage profiles rather than teacher intuition alone (McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

The framework proposed in this article includes five assessment constructs that together represent linguocultural vocabulary competence.

First, contextual interpretation: the ability to infer culturally relevant meaning from context, including evaluation and implied stance. Learners must recognize that some words carry a predictable evaluative “prosody” through habitual context (Sinclair, 1991). Second, register control: the ability to choose vocabulary appropriate for genre and level of formality (e.g., academic report vs. informal chat). This construct is crucial in Uzbek universities, where students frequently shift between institutional email, classroom discussion, and academic writing. Third, collocational stability: the ability to combine words in typical patterns that signal proficient usage. Collocations are not decorative; they often carry conventionalized meaning and register (Nation, 2001). Fourth, pragmatic appropriateness: the ability to use words and formulas with correct politeness, social distance, and degree of imposition. Politeness theory demonstrates that linguistic choices are socially consequential and culturally patterned (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Fifth, cultural-script awareness: the ability to recognize conventional scenarios and value orientations embedded in culturally marked lexicon, avoiding false equivalence driven by literal translation (Kramsch, 1998; Wierzbicka’s tradition is relevant here, but within this paper the focus remains on applied assessment).

To build assessment tasks aligned with these constructs, a staged workflow is recommended. The first stage is selection of target items. Teachers compile a list from course texts and learner output, prioritizing items that are frequent and communicatively risky: realia, cultural keywords, pragmatically sensitive units, and precedent-related expressions. The second stage is lexicographic verification: core meanings and stylistic labels are checked in authoritative dictionaries to secure semantic baseline (Maslova, 2001). The third stage is corpus profiling: teachers extract multiple contexts for each item (for instance, 20–40 concordance lines) and identify stable collocations, typical modifiers, genre distribution, and pragmatic frames. This step is essential because

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culturally conditioned meaning often becomes visible only through repeated usage patterns (McEnery & Hardie, 2012; Sinclair, 1991).

The fourth stage is task construction. A balanced assessment package should include both comprehension and production formats. For contextual interpretation, a suitable task is “context choice”: learners read three short excerpts and select where the target word fits, explaining which contextual cues (genre, evaluation, social roles) justify the choice. For register control, a “rewriting task” is effective: learners rewrite an informal message into an academic email, preserving content but adjusting lexical choices to institutional norms. For collocational stability, a “pattern completion task” can be used, where learners complete a sentence with the most typical collocation among plausible alternatives; this tests collocation as a probabilistic competence, not as random memorization (Nation, 2001). For pragmatic appropriateness, scenario-based role prompts work well: learners formulate a request to a professor, a complaint to a service provider, or a formal inquiry, with specific constraints on politeness and distance. For cultural-script awareness, a “script identification task” can be used: learners choose which short scenario best matches the cultural meaning of a word, then provide a brief contrastive note explaining why a literal translation would be insufficient (Kramsch, 1998; Sharifian, 2017).

The fifth stage concerns scoring and feedback. Because linguocultural competence is multidimensional, analytic rubrics are more informative than single holistic scores. A practical rubric can allocate points across (a) semantic adequacy, (b) register alignment, (c) collocational naturalness, (d) pragmatic effect, and (e) cultural-script fit. Such rubrics also support formative assessment: learners see exactly which dimension requires improvement. To reduce subjectivity, departments can apply basic reliability measures by double-scoring a small subset of scripts and discussing disagreements until rubric interpretation is consistent (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). In Uzbek contexts, this step is particularly important because judgments about “appropriateness” can vary between instructors who rely on different experiences with Russian discourse. A further advantage emerges when assessment is connected to learner corpus practices. If teachers store anonymized learner responses and tag recurrent errors

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(e.g., false equivalence, register drift, collocational mismatch), they can build a feedback bank that improves over time (Granger, 2003). This bank becomes a pedagogical asset: it supports targeted remediation and helps standardize instruction across groups. Moreover, tagged errors provide empirical evidence for revising tasks and refining explanations, which strengthens construct validity in an applied sense.

Digital implementation can enhance transparency and learning impact. In a learning management system, each scenario task can link to a micro-corpus: a short set of authentic contexts that illustrate the target word’s typical usage. Learners can inspect evidence, complete the task, and then compare their choices with corpus patterns. This is a controlled version of data-driven learning, where evidence is curated for pedagogical clarity (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Digital delivery also allows rapid formative cycles: short quizzes can be repeated with varied contexts to test whether improvement transfers across genres rather than remaining tied to a single example.

The framework has practical implications for curriculum design. If assessment focuses on linguocultural competence, teaching must provide corresponding learning opportunities: glossaries with register labels and cultural notes, collocation-focused exercises, and explicit training in institutional communication. The alignment between instruction and assessment is critical: otherwise, scenario-based tests may appear unfair to learners trained only on translation lists. When alignment is achieved, assessment becomes a learning instrument: students understand that vocabulary mastery means appropriate usage, not only recall.

In conclusion, culturally marked Russian vocabulary in Uzbek universities requires assessment methods that reflect meaning in discourse. Translation and definition tests capture only a narrow semantic layer and can mask persistent pragmatic problems. A scenario-based, corpus-informed framework offers a feasible and scalable solution: it operationalizes linguocultural competence through observable constructs, supports analytic scoring, and enables iterative improvement through learner data. By making genre, register, collocation, pragmatics, and cultural scripts assessable, teachers can support measurable

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growth in intercultural communicative competence, which is the real educational objective in bilingual academic environments.

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