

Bilingualism and multilingualism in a globalized society

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Abstract. The peculiarities of modern linguistic situation of the modernized country are discussed in this article; unilateral and bilateral (parity or harmonious) bilingualism are marked; linguistic, psychological, sociological, educational and other aspects of bilingualism are justified. Multilingualism is characterized as the functioning of several (3 or more) languages in a multinational area and speaking several languages based on the needs of communication. There are several forms of multilingualism: a closely related and not closely related. Establishing two or more languages as state ones predetermines multilingualism as a mass phenomenon within certain society. Based on the analysis, authors provide conclusions on building a harmonious, socially effective bilingualism.

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Introduction

The educational system of ancient civilizations has been associated with the functioning of a particular language. As a rule, those were religious texts and literary works, which were inaccessible to the majority of citizen. In oral communication different nationalities used their native language, thus they further contributed to the emergence of national-state establishments.

To solve social and economic problems, the state had to have one common official language, which would help to unite local people. Thus, its inhabitants unwittingly became bilingual. In addition, in order to establish diplomatic, cultural and economic relations with other countries people studied classical and foreign languages. For example, in Tsarist Russia the Tatar language was first introduced into curriculum in the first half of the XIII century. Learning this language was necessary to establish diplomatic relations with eastern countries and to pursue conquest policy.

V. Bartold (1925) wrote that “Tatars, being at the Russian government service, has greatly facilitated establishing business contacts with the governments of Muslim countries” because Tatars spoke several languages [1]. While the majority of the Russians remained monolingual, even when some people were educated to speak foreign languages.

Generally, each stage of the society’s development generates new social problems. In order to harmoniously develop, the society needs to focus resources on solving those issues. This pattern is particularly evident in our times - after the dissolving of the Soviet Union into independent states, which are closely linked with their national linguistic features.

There are more than one hundred nations and nationalities are living in the Russian Federation. Therefore, a distinctive feature of modern linguistic situation of renewed country is its dependence on mixed state structure. The Russian Federation consists of the nation-state, national-territorial and administrative-territorial formations. They are grouped into seven federal districts, creating a variety of conditions for the development of national languages and cultures.

Administrative units, having the status of republics, along with Russian announced their national official languages. For example, in Tatarstan there are two official languages - Tatar and Russian, in Bashkortostan - Bashkir and Russian, in Kabardino-Balkaria – Kabarda, Balkar and Russian. In some republics there are more than two official languages: for example, in the Republic of Mari El – mountain Mari and meadow Mari, in the Republic of Mordovia - Moksha and Erzya etc.

From the functional point of view, languages of the Russian Federation can be classified into following groups [2]:

1. language of international and inter-ethnic communication (Russian language);
2. regional languages for international communication (e.g. Avar language in Dagestan);
3. functionally developed literary languages (Tatar, Bashkir, Yakut, Chuvash etc.);
4. newly created written languages, which developed writing in 1920-1930s; they have less developed functions (e.g. Lezgin, Dargin, Tabasaran, Eskimo etc.);
5. newly written languages for which the script is being developed (Aleut, Nganasan, Negidal, Oroch, Oroch Izhorskaya, Karait, Udi, gypsy, Shor, Enets, Sami, Veps, Karelian);

6. non-written (spoken) languages (e.g., Andean, Karata, Akhvakh, Chamalal etc.).

Functioning of national languages depends on the number of people speaking the same language, the mode of settlement of its speakers, the existence of writing, traditions of language use in different spheres of communication, the degree of national-linguistic identity of their speakers, and social needs for the use of native language in different areas of communication (bilingualism or multilingualism).

Discussion

Based on our analysis language speakers can be sub-divided into several groups based on their language proficiency level – those who speak: state language of the Russian Federation (Russian); official languages of the national republics; only one national language; several languages, one of which is Russian; several national languages of the country, but do not speak Russian; Russian, national and foreign language; multiple languages (polyglots).

This classification relates to language skills, bilingual, and multilingual character of society.

It should be recognized that even in the case when all the administrative divisions of the Russian Federation will have equal rights, the conditions and level of development of national languages and cultures are not the same. The same is confirmed by Academician M.Z. Zakiev (1995): “According to the degree and breadth of application of Russian - national bilingualism hardly rises to the level of national-Russian bilingualism. But this should not prevent it from using harmoniously where necessary in order to ensure equal and free functioning of national languages” [3]. Compact settlement of ethnic groups is a favorable condition for the expansion of social functions of language.

Changing the status of national languages and equitable development of all people and nations in the country gives a new impetus to the dynamism of international relations [4]. This is supported by the long-term vision of the state language policy.

Practice demonstrates that the language that is used as a means of inter-ethnic, mass communication in an independent state or region carries functional load, i.e. it is extensively used governmental affairs, public institutions, as a means of education, as well as in everyday life. In Russia it is the Russian language.

In this regard, R.B.Sabatkoev (1979) mentions the Russian language “as one of the wealthiest and most developed international languages” [5]. Knowing the Russian language allows the younger generation to comprehend the spiritual values of national and world culture, science and technology, promotes even greater convergence

of all the ethnic groups and nationalities of our country. However, the development of harmonious bilingualism in the national republics may lead to the national languages serving the same purpose. This would mean the two or more languages would be considered means of social interaction. Certainly the main role falls on secondary schools [6]. It must be considered that forming a bilingual and multilingual personality lays between typologically different languages at the level of similarity and categorical differences at the inner level [7].

In the last several years different information-communication devices were developed. One of them creates and implements educational process for teaching Tatar as a second language which is based on main principles of modern linguodidactics and supplements the traditional forms of education [8].

Bilingualism as an independent branch of linguistic science was first explored at the end of the XIX century (1885-1890). It became an object of educational research in bilingualism only in the middle of the XX century (since 1953). Significant contribution to the theory of problems of bilingualism, language interaction in contact with the Russian language as the national language of the country and foreign languages were made by renowned researches - psychologists, pedagogues [9, 10, 11, 12] and especially linguists [13, 14, 15, 16, 17].

The problem of bilingualism and multilingualism is the object of psycholinguistics. They confirmed that the harmonious bilingualism is one of the major challenges to overcome language difficulties between nations, to optimize and control inter-ethnic relations [18].

Bilingualism means that the first language is usually a native language and the second is a non-native language of an individual (for example, for Tatars a non-native language is Russian and for Russians it is English or Tatar). In this case, bilingual person has the ability to actively use both languages in the process of communication within a particular social community taking into account the current situation. And he may hold either oral and written (literary) speech or only one form of the act of communication.

Bilingualism is divided into two types: unilateral and bilateral (parity, harmonious or more) bilingualism. The Republic of Tatarstan up to the 30s of the twentieth century was characterized as having bilateral bilingualism which was then connected with the adoption of the Decree on compulsory study of the Tatar language in all public institutions (1921). Further known excesses in the national language policy caused unilateral development of bilingualism,

which led to the disappearance of many languages. Non-Russian peoples of our country became bilingual, i.e. during this period national Russian bilingualism prevailed (Tatar-Russian, Russian-Bashkir, Chuvash-Russian).

The second stage of parity bilingualism originates from the 1990s. It was related to the adoption of laws in the national republics. Those laws established equal right for the national language(s) as well as Russian. The phrase Russian-national bilingualism becomes habitual (Russian-Tatar, Bashkir-Russian, Russian-Chuvash etc.).

Bilingualism as a pedagogical problem in domestic and foreign science is considered in its narrow and broad terms. Narrow understanding of bilingualism means knowledge of two languages - native and second language when the proficiency level in a second language is as close as possible to the level of ownership of native language. Broadly, bilingualism means the ability to use both languages in different areas of communication and 'relative possession of a second language ability in a given volume to use it in certain areas of communication [19].

Bilingualism possession may have a different degree: "from the elementary to the full and free" [20].

American sociolinguist R. Bell (1980) suggests that bilingualism means the situation when two languages merge into one system and at the same time language systems are being saved separately [21].

Bilingualism is often regarded as the most common type of multilingualism. Representatives of various branches of science: psychologists, linguists, educators, philosophers, sociologists – were interested in studying bilingualism.

The term "multilingualism" (in Tatar - kypellelek, English - multilingualism, German - mehrsprachigkeit) has Russian origin and is also understood as the distribution of the various languages in society, the ability of individuals to communicate by means of multiple languages. The Republic of Tatarstan is multilingual because there are representatives of more than a hundred nations and nationalities.

The phenomenon of multilingualism in many regions is not as common as bilingualism. The functional status and degree of use of several languages have a small geography, often limited to secondary education.

Multilingualism can be closely related (e.g., possession of closely-related languages: Russian - Ukrainian - Belarusian, Tatar - Bashkir -Turkish, etc.), irrelevant, i.e. possession of three or more unrelated languages (e.g. Russian -Tatar - Udmurt,

Tatar - Russian - English etc.). At the same time, the declaration of two or more languages as state languages determines multilingualism as a mass phenomenon in a certain area. For instance, in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan people learn foreign languages except the state languages. It can be qualified as the development of trilingualism. The representatives of other nationalities (Chuvash, Mari etc.) master their native language. The situation of trilingualism is widespread. It positions a student before the difficulties associated with the interference of three linguistic systems.

Multilingualism is a mass phenomenon, has its own problems and requires long term researches in several aspects [22]:

1. psychological: the study of speech issues (training + study) in several languages which occurs when in the communication process: psychic phenomena of multilingual behavior, regularities of formation the multilingualism, early or late bilingualism ;

2. linguistic: questions concerning language contacts and the changes in the structure of the lexicon, the semantics of individual languages, and interference phenomena of transposition;

3. educational: the development of effective methods and techniques in language teaching in the situation of multilingualism;

4. philosophical and sociological - the problem of influence of multilingualism on the various processes and the role of multilingualism in society.

Let us consider the psychological moments of formation of multilingualism.

I. Epshteyn (1916) studied the possible ways of multilingualism [23]. He established the autonomy of languages in a mind of an individual, explained the phenomenon of linguistic interference and suggested ways to reduce the interfering influence of multilingualism. In psychology I. Epshteyn's multilingualism methods (experiment and questionnaire) are now widely used.

B.V. Belyaev (1965) believes that there are practical and school ways of learning a foreign language [24]. The first practical way of learning a foreign language coincides with the assimilation of the native language, schooling language is carried out by conscious study (from theory to practice).

V.A. Artemov (1969) explored problems of perception and understanding of speech [25]. He emphasizes that learning a foreign language is not related to the formation of a new way of thinking in this language. Thinking is independent of the language. Sharply rejecting the idea of a direct method, it is believed that this method is applicable only in childhood.

V. Vildemek (1963) holds the idea that if an individual speaks perfectly native language, multilingualism can be adopted much easier [26]. However, if the mother tongue proficiency is not developed, multilingualism impoverishes his speaking abilities.

New language situation in the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet period has significantly expanded functional boundaries of bilingualism (multilingualism). The norm of the country now is national-Russian and Russian-national bilingualism, and in many cases - national bilingualism. "National-Russian bilingualism when studying Russian language people of other nationalities living in Russia promotes the inclusion of people to Russian culture and unique world of living in ethnic groups, forms respect about other nations" [27]. However, language proficiency remains at a low level.

Conclusion

To develop a harmonious, socially effective bilingualism it is necessary:

1. To fully develop and strengthen national-Russian bilingualism by creating the social, legal and financial base;

2. To constantly strengthen national Russian bilingualism. Russian language is universal information storage of humanity, is a powerful means of inter-ethnic communication in the multi-language state. Russian language opens the doors to the achievements of civilization. According to expert estimates, about 80% of all the information stored in the world can be expressed in two languages - English and Russian;

3. To form a real situation of psychological domination of the native language in learning a second language;

4. To raise the prestige, social importance of national languages in the Russian socio-cultural space.

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