

THE ROLE OF BILINGUALISM IN THE FORMATION OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

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Abstract

This article describes the concept of bilingualism, the emergence of bilingualism and its socio-cultural conditions. The study of a second language, the transformation of the ethnic identity of a bilingual person in bilinguals, the emergence of the phenomenon of two cultures and the simultaneous transformation into a carrier of two cultures are given.

Keywords: Language, bilingualism, dialect, psycholinguistics, globalization, ethnography.

Introduction

The earliest primitive human communities gradually evolved into clans, and later into tribes. Each tribe had its own language or dialect. When a tribe split due to certain socio-political or territorial reasons, related clans emerged. These related clans, though sharing a common language, eventually turned into a people who spoke different dialects or subdialects within that language. “Two factors played a decisive role in the emergence of new dialects and languages: time and distance. As time passed and distances grew, new dialects and languages began to form” [7, p. 212].

Language, being a constantly evolving phenomenon, both influences and is influenced by other languages. Scientific and technological advancements, trade, cultural and domestic relations, and even wars and invasions have all left their mark on language. A review of language history reveals the outcomes of such external influences. For instance, many words in modern Uzbek literary language are of Arabic and Russian international origin.

Bilingualism is the ability to speak and understand two languages. For Turkic peoples, bilingualism has been a continuous and widespread phenomenon throughout their historical development and across various territories. Ancient

and intensive manifestations of bilingualism include Turkic-Mongolic, Turkic-Finno-Ugric, Turkic-Persian, and Turkic-Arabic language interactions. The features resulting from these interactions have persisted to this day. On the one hand, they can be observed in the Turkic languages of Siberia and the Volga region, and on the other hand, in the Turkic languages of Central Asia and the Caucasus. During the Soviet era, Turkic-Russian bilingualism became a fundamental aspect of linguistic life. Bilingualism may also occur between dialects—for example, Tajik-Uzbek bilingualism exists within the Bukhara dialect [5, p. 14].

Since 1979, the issue of teaching mother tongue and second languages (such as Russian or Uzbek) to preschool children has been the focus of Uzbek scholars, methodologists, and psychologists (F.R. Qodirova, R.M. Qodirova, G.Kh. Jumasheva, D.R. Babayeva, D. Abdurahimova, L.R. Mirjalilova, N.Sh. Nurmukhammadova, among others). All researchers emphasize that children's speech and its development should not be examined in isolation but rather in connection with the pedagogical influence of adults. This approach is justified, as contemporary scientific research confirms that language acquisition and social interaction are interdependent processes. Language development is a creative process, though not spontaneous [2, p. 11].

The term "bilingualism" originates from Latin: "bi" means "two" and "lingua" means "language." A bilingual person (bilingualist) is someone who uses two languages in daily life—their native language and one foreign language—and is capable of speaking fluently in both. Today, many individuals are learning two or even three languages at once. However, does this make them all bilinguals? True bilinguals are those who master the second language as proficiently as their native tongue.

In today's multicultural society, studying bilingualism has become especially urgent. Speech activity is a means for every nation to express and affirm its identity. It reflects the national spirit and uniqueness of a people. Bilingualism eliminates national barriers and enables simultaneous communication among all members of a multilingual society.

Experience has shown that childhood bilingualism depends on the role each language plays in a child's life, the contexts in which bilingualism is used, and the degree of exposure. There are several distinct conditions for the formation of bilingualism in children:

A child grows up in a bilingual family and is exposed to communication in two languages from birth;

A child speaks their native language at home but acquires another language through interactions outside the home (with neighbors, relatives, and others);

A child learns the second language purposefully through both formal instruction and informal communication in preschool settings.

According to psycholinguistic literature, genuine bilingualism develops only when an individual can fully express any thought in at least one language. If a person's speech is not fully developed in either language, their thought structures may be disrupted, leading to difficulties in expression. This can result in psychological stress, communication breakdown, and harm to the individual's social identity. Such a phenomenon, known as "semi-lingualism," is also risky for society, as affected individuals may struggle to regulate their emotions or articulate their needs and desires. When people are unable to express themselves, they may be unable to compete equally or participate in conventional communication, sometimes turning to alternative behaviors, including aggression. Therefore, it is crucial to support and correct a child's speech development from early childhood. Programs like "Ilk start" positively influence the acquisition of both native and subsequent languages. "The earlier a language is acquired, the easier and more completely knowledge is absorbed" (N.I. Zhinkin).

A child is a social being from birth. At each developmental stage, they have distinct social characteristics and tasks, which require appropriate pedagogical conditions to fulfill. In early childhood, emotional communication is the primary form of activity. If a child is deprived of emotional contact with adults, this may hinder development from the very first months of life [3, p. 38].

Nations and ethnic groups cannot develop in complete isolation. The diversity and proximity of languages compel people to learn foreign languages. Learning other languages not only facilitates communication, information sharing, and economic exchange, but also enriches one's own culture by incorporating elements of the culture associated with the new language. Such cultural-linguistic exchange has always existed and has taken on new significance in today's globalized world.

Globalization has a dual impact on nations. On one hand, barriers between nations—especially language barriers—are being removed, allowing cultures and

peoples to intermingle. This fosters diversity while preserving ethnic distinctiveness, enabling the coexistence of different cultures and identities worldwide. On the other hand, globalization can also prompt individuals to take renewed interest in their origins and cultural roots. Learning and preserving one's history and traditions has become a source of pride and a way to prevent cultural extinction.

One visible form of globalization is interethnic marriage. In such families, often consisting of two or more ethnicities, languages, and cultures, we can observe both positive and challenging aspects of globalization. On one side, ethnic boundaries are softened and racial hostility diminishes because family members learn each other's language and culture. On the other side, each individual naturally strives to preserve their cultural and national identity and to instill pride in that heritage in their children.

Another manifestation of globalization is the growing necessity to know at least one foreign language to fully participate in modern society. The increasing number of multilingual individuals, growing cultural exchange, and prevalence of interethnic families all contribute to the phenomenon of bilingualism and biculturalism. Learning a foreign language also offers insight into the values, customs, and traditions of its speakers. As international integration deepens, the need to cultivate bilingualism grounded in intercultural understanding becomes increasingly relevant.

In Russian and foreign literature, the issue of bilingualism has been addressed by prominent scholars such as L. Scherba, G. Vereshchagin, U. Weinreich, V. Avrorin, and A. Zalevskaya. However, discrepancies and disagreements among researchers underscore the need to systematize knowledge in this area. Moreover, the issue of interrelatedness between cultures in the process of language acquisition remains underexplored, which highlights the scientific novelty and practical relevance of this study.

Modern research into the interaction between language and identity builds on the historical development of linguistic theories that consider language as a phenomenon linked to culture. German philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt viewed language as a creative process reflecting a nation's unique worldview and contributing to its spiritual growth. The most heuristic methodological approach to studying language and identity is the romantic linguistic paradigm, associated with V. von Humboldt, K. Vossler, and in Russia,

A. Potebnya and M. Bakhtin. E. Sapir and B. Whorf's hypothesis of linguistic relativity also provided a foundation for empirical inquiry.

As bilingualism develops, children not only acquire two languages early but also begin to make conscious choices between cultures. Therefore, the formation and study of bilingualism must consider the harmonious interaction of all its dimensions, as bilingualism often involves close connections between two languages, cultures, and ethnic groups.

In a bilingual family, a child learns not only two languages but also two cultures. In monoethnic families, parents typically represent a single culture—e.g., Russian-speaking households—while in bilingual families, the child becomes both bilingual and bicultural. In contrast, children in monoethnic households may acquire bilingualism without becoming bicultural. This may lead to deficiencies in sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and ethnocultural competence, beyond just language skills.

Culture is multifaceted and multilingual, yet remains unified and coherent. As U. Weinreich argued, culture can only manifest its full richness when there are linguistic connections between speech communities. Such unity develops through cultural interaction. It is well known that almost all language communities borrow from their neighbors and, in turn, serve as sources of knowledge and experience for others. Cultural and value-based development occurs best in conditions of interethnic harmony [1, pp. 25–60].

Concepts and ideas related to events, nature, human-made objects, technological processes, customs, and rituals are assimilated and transmitted through language, resulting in cultural diffusion. Alongside cultural exchange, the assimilation of words denoting these concepts occurs, leaving a mark on the receiving culture. Thus, the development of the material sphere influences the formation of the spiritual sphere—and vice versa.

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