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## Psychological and Sociolinguistic Mechanisms of Bilingual Competencies Formation and Development in the Heterogeneous Ethno-Linguistic Educational Context of Dagestan

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**ABSTRACT.** The aim of the paper is the research into the didactic foundations of the bilingual competence formation and development through the psychological and sociolinguistic context of ethnical heterogeneous communities of Dagestan. **Methods.** Linguocorrelation analysis. **Results.** The didactic processuality of the speech activity of a native Dagestan language speaker is a result of psychological and sociolinguistic factors in the context of bilingualism in one of the native Dagestan and Russian languages and should be based on the data of linguocorrelation analysis. **Conclusion.** The corpus is a linguodidactic basis for effective teaching pedagogies in both the Russian and native languages, it is used as a tool of educational technology for overcoming interference errors in Russian and native language speech of Dagestani bilinguals.

**Keywords:** sociopsycholinguistics, heterogeneous ethno-linguistic of Dagestan, bilingualism, competencies, linguocorrelation analysis, didactic technology.

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## Социопсихолингвистический механизм формирования и развития билингвальных компетенций в условиях гетерогенного этноязыкового пространства Дагестана

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**РЕЗЮМЕ.** Цель статьи – раскрыть дидактические основы формирования и развития билингвальных компетенций через социопсихолингвистический механизм в гетерогенных условиях этноязыкового Дагестана. **Методы.** Коррелятивный анализ. **Результат.** Дидактическая процессуальность речевой деятельности дагестанской языковой личности в контексте национально-русского двуязычия обусловлена социопсихолингвистическими факторами и должна опираться на данные лингвокоррелятивного анализа. **Вывод.** Лингвистический корпус данных, полученных в результате коррелятивного анализа различных уровней сопоставляемых (русского и литературных дагестанских) языков, является лингводидактической основой образовательной технологии преодоления интерферентных ошибок в русской и родной речи дагестанцев-билингвов.

**Ключевые слова:** социопсихолингвистика, билингвизм, компетенции, дагестанский полилингвизм, интерференция, лингвокоррелятивный анализ, дидактическая технология.

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### Introduction

The analysis of sociopsycholinguistic mechanisms of speech activity of a polylingual person is a key means for determination of the didactic foundations of the bilingual competence formation and development processes of students in a heterogeneous ethnolinguistic region.

Every activity, including speech, is based on the relevant skills. Speech skills are functional only in close connection with each other, as part of the communicative skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The effectiveness of the communicative skill-forming process depends on the phased interaction of certain automated skills, which, in turn, are determined by the optimal method of their development.

Moreover, in the conditions of interlanguage transfer, it is necessary to take into account the skill interference effect, when previously formed skills of performing operations are transferred to outwardly similar, but internally different operations, and that gives rise to errors.

Forming and developing communicative competencies, which are in a broad sense the ability to realize motivated intent through a universal switch code in speech practice, are goals for teachers that engaged in bilingual education. The algorithm of didactic actions that provide an optimal path for the successful development of speech culture that is known to be free from interference influence is essential for working with bilingual students. The productivity of these actions is demonstrated by data from the linguocorrelation analysis of the contacting languages.

### The heterogeneous ethnolinguistic environment of the Dagestan Republic

#### *What bilingualism is*

It is known that a well-defined distinction between the social and structural aspects of language is an achievement of 20th century science. In sociolinguistic studies, the main criteria for analyzing multilingualism are based on the functioning of the language in society: membership of a social collective, the nature of contacting languages, population coverage, historical stages of bilingualism,

social activity and passivity, significance in public life, etc.

Linguists point out that bilingualism occurs, first of all, through socio-economic factors. Z. U. Blyagoz put forward the thesis that the process of contacting languages often results in bilingualism. Furthermore, Blyagoz considers the close socio-economic communication and long coexistence of two or more groups speaking different languages to be a condition for bilingualism [5].

The multidisciplinary analysis of the meaning and dynamics of multilingualism from the perspectives of multilingual societies and language communities is presented in the book by A. Sarda & U. Bhattacharya (2019). It reveals how educational language policy can nullify advantages of multilingual society leading to the loss of indigenous, tribal, minority and minoritised languages in India. Immigrants' perspectives on language immersion education are discussed in the paper by L. M. Dorner (2010). M. M. Lypez & M. A. Mendoza (2013) performed a case study to examine response to intervention implementation with Emergent Bilinguals in a large urban district. The unequal social and educational conditions to which native language speakers are subjected are being studied by many researchers; A. Jakubowicz (1988), J. Freeland (1996), O. Inbar-Lourie & S. Donitsa-Schmidt (2019) are among them.

A. A. Leontiev's studies demonstrate the significance of sociological research and the sociological factor in the analysis of the phenomenon of multilingualism and its variants in multinational states (Leontiev, 1970). Leontiev identifies two types of bilingualism: 1) homogeneous language communities, united by one language; 2) heterogeneous linguistic communities united by more than one language. Moreover, the second type of bilingualism consists of two subtypes: a) symmetrically heterogeneous linguistic communities (where native languages are united by an intermediary language); b) asymmetric-heterogeneous linguistic communities (where one of the native languages serves as an intermediary language).

Heterogeneous language environments are each formed in a specific way, affected by the number of languages used and the distribution of functions between them. Multilingualism in a heterogeneous environment depends on the interaction of language statuses such as official and unofficial (native): mother tongue, state language, world language, regional language, local language, foreign language/s. The need to master these languages is determined by the upbringing or education context, professional purposes and other (for example, religious) special activities (Language for Special Purposes).

An interesting approach to the social aspect of multilingualism / bilingualism is seen in works of K. Kh. Khanazarov. According to the researcher, bilingualism is defined if people speak the second language enough to get around and coordinate their actions with native speakers of the contact language. Thus, knowledge of two languages may be unequal in fluency, competence, and mastery, use of both languages meet the main purpose – they serve as a means of communication, exchanging thoughts and coordinating joint actions [15].

Since working as a teacher in multilingual societies means being a part of the language-in-education policy, it is important to highlight the methodological advantages of the unique sociolinguistic context of the multicultural community. The role of a language teacher in the multilingual educational context has been the focus of different studies. The work of Kathryn I. Henderson (2019) demonstrates the way teachers as language policymakers navigate and interpret in dual language bilingual education implementation and the tensions involved. Henderson states that elitism of the dominant language and embedded language ideologies can be problematic for students in bilingual (especially dual-language) education environments. Effective didactic methods applied to teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students are under study in the works of T. Kleyn & Sh. A. Reyes (2011), M. L. Párez Cacado (2016), D. Christian (2016). Though the societies and languages analysed by these authors differ, the challenges and opportunities faced by linguists are quite the same and solutions should be of interest to contacted languages.

### *The origins of Dagestani bilingualism*

From the sociological point of view the Russian heterogeneous linguistic environment is represented by two main types of bilingualism: Russian/native Dagestan and native Dagestan/Russian.

The origins of *Russian/native Dagestan* bilingualism go deep into the history of the peoples of Russia and are associated with the initial resettlement of Russians among numerous non-Russian ethnic groups in various areas and regions of the country. According to academics, Russian/native Dagestan bilingualism in the pre-revolutionary period had three main models of development (Tuboglo, 1987). In the first model, the ethnolinguistic life of Russians in the multiethnic environment progressed until the individual mastered one of the native languages and reached the stage of stable usage of two languages in some areas of life. In the second one, native speakers lost their native language while acquiring a second language, therefore new monolingualism was established as a result. In the third model, the opposite process took place, whereby after the intermediate stage of bilingualism speakers lost the target language and the original native language monolingualism was restored.

*Native Dagestan / Russian* bilingualism in Russia also has its own history and stages of development. Initially, it was formed on the basis of economic, political, cultural contacts of the non-Russian population with the Russians. Later, especially after 1917, native Dagestan / Russian bilingualism became widespread.

The heterogeneous ethnolinguistic environment in Dagestan has its own distinct characteristics affected by socio-economic origin, historical stages of development, areas of functioning, and the specific interaction features of the Russian and Dagestan languages due to the different structures of the languages.

In Dagestan, unlike any other republic or region, a unique language environment has developed: three dozen languages are spoken in a relatively small territory. The following literary languages are among them: Russian, Avar, Dargin (Dargwa), Kumyk, Lezgi, Lak, Tabasaran, Agul, Tsakhur, Rutul, Nogai, Tat, Chechen and Azerbaijani. Each native language has a variegated dialect system. In this sort of linguistic continuum, the Russian language functions as a tool of interethnic

communication, resulting in a kind of “cooperation” between the local native languages and the Russian language.

Native Dagestan / Russian bilingualism is the most studied type of multilingualism in Dagestan. The problems of native Dagestan / Russian bilingualism were considered in historical aspect by G. G. Gamzatov (1978), sociolinguistic aspect by A. A. Abdullaev (1984, 1995), G. I. Akhmedov (1999), A.-K. S. Balamamedov (1992), G. G. Bourzhunov (1979), R. I. Gaydarov (1979), R. E. Gamzatov (1980), A. G. Gyulmagomedov (1986), A. K. Shagirov (1972), etc. and didactic aspect by G. G. Bourzhunov (1975, 1979, 1991, 2004), K. E. Dzhamalov (1998, 2008); Yu. U. Desherieva (1981); Z. M. Zagirov (1988); N. G. Isaev (1993); G. I. Magomedov (1990, 2004); T. I. Magomedova (2009); G. N. Sivridi (1982, 2004), M. I. Shurpaeva, (1980, 2004), etc.

The Russian language was mastered by some ethnic groups of Dagestan at the end of the 19th century. For instance, long before 1917, Lak artisan workers mastered the Russian language and spoke it almost exclusively outside their native region, and partially in Dagestani towns. An interesting fact to be noted is that in this period the Russian language was exclusively learned by men traveling a lot for business, while Dagestani women, as a general rule, were monolinguals because they had almost no connection with the world outside their mountainous village they lived in.

Later, however, speakers of other Dagestan languages mastered and spoke the Russian language since for many social reasons native Dagestan/Russian bilingualism became an essential part of everyday life. The socio-economic transformations that occurred after the revolutionary changes in the country led to the expansion and strengthening of socio-political, economic and cultural connections between the Dagestani peoples and the Russians. This resulted in the urgent need to know the Russian language.

The first period of cultural development (1920s-1930s) was marked by the eradication of total illiteracy of the population, whereby the native languages and the language of interethnic communication had relatively narrow areas of application. The number of Russian speaking people increased mostly due to migration caused by the processes of the

rational distribution of productive forces. In addition, the national composition of many regions of the country changed greatly as a result of a large-scale resettlement of representatives of different nationalities and ethnic groups from mountainous regions to the plain. Russian was used in the workplace and became a must-know working skill.

### ***Sociolinguistic typology of Dagestani bilingualism***

Linguic research data on the development of *native Dagestan / Russian* bilingualism in Dagestan show that the more complex the region's ethnic composition is, the more fluent indigenous peoples are in the Russian language. Nowadays the native Dagestan/Russian type of bilingualism is predominant in the republic: it is used by 80% of the population.

An interesting outcome of studies confirmed two ways of developing this type of bilingualism. In rural areas, children start learning Russian at the age of 6-7, when speech and thinking skills are already formed. The adult population (teachers, civil servants) speak Russian mainly in the classroom or during official meetings. Other rural officials, although they know Russian, read Russian fiction, newspapers or magazines, speak Russian occasionally. The older generation of rural residents (65 or older) does not communicate in Russian. Women of this age do not speak Russian in the villages.

A different situation exists in the cities of the republic. Dagestani cities are multinational and the Russian language is a main means of interethnic communication there. Most families are mono-ethnic as a rule and children learn the native (Dagestan) language there within a family. If a family is a multi-ethnic one, the native languages of the parents are extremely passively understood. The children are receptively bilingual but productively Russian-monolingual; throughout a conversation, the parents speak their native language and the children speak Russian outside family life, in social spheres such as institutions, schools, and in general communication. Cities limit the contexts where native languages are used, and this leads to the loss of the native language among young people there. Also, the active role of the Russian language is due to the multilingual multiethnic environment of these cities. However, today the migration of Dagestanis is increasing greatly, and rural

residents, who are productively monolingual in one of the Dagestani languages while being receptively bilingual in Russian, are moving to large regional centers on the plain area of Dagestan, to multicultural cities and suburban villages, where the Russian language is the main means of interethnic communication.

The second type of bilingualism is *Russian/native Dagestan*. It is a complex and little-studied issue. According to up-to-date research the need for Russians to learn the languages of the indigenous nationalities of Dagestan is declining. On the one hand, Russian-speaking city dwellers are seldom interested in learning native Dagestani languages. In the vast majority of families with a mixed ethnic composition, if one of the family members is a Russian, that person is not bilingual and does not speak the native language. On the other hand, the desire to learn a language is not always satisfied. The lack of textbooks, phrasebooks, dictionaries addressed to non-Dagestanis as well as no optional teaching of native languages in schools, and the ineffective teaching methodology base complicates the development of Russian/native Dagestan bilingualism in the republic.

The third type of bilingualism, the *native/non-native Dagestan one*, is an unstudied topic because the history of its development and the current state is a grey area. There are some historical data about local bilingualism when communication between Kumyks and Dargins, as well as between Avars and Kumyks, was set in the Kumyk language.

The current heterogeneous linguistic situation in this multiethnic multicultural region is determined by the priority of native Dagestan / Russian bilingualism, which has a certain typological picture of dominant sociolinguistic features. These features include:

- *structural difference* caused by the fact that Russian is an inflective language, whereas Dagestani languages as well as Cheche and Tat have agglutinative-inflective structure, while the Kumyk, Nogai, Azerbaijani languages are agglutinative ones;

- *productivity* as a bilingual is able to express his/her own thoughts in different languages;

- *mass character* because the majority of the population speaks two or more languages at the same time;

- *immediacy* due to direct interrelation between the languages and thinking;

- *contact* provided by bilingual verbal communication with native speakers;

- *subordinativity* when a bilingual violates the system and norms of the second language;

- *disorganization* in conditions of unplanned teaching in early childhood;

- *parallelism* induced by mastering of the second language on base of the first language;

- *combination of two multilingual units* that are combined into one simultaneously possessing their original characters;

- *linguistic activity* whenever bilingual refers to both languages;

- *confusion* occurred while code switching within one discourse.

#### **The processes of bilingual competencies formation and development**

Language is a system of phonetic, lexical and grammatical means; it is a symbolic system, which includes symbols and rules for their combination. Therefore, linguistic competence includes the ability of a speaker to understand and produce an unlimited number of linguistically correct sentences with the help of acquired linguistic signs and rules for their combination. To do this properly, a person must know sufficient elements of the language system, the rules of how language units function. This knowledge, which includes phonetics and graphics, morphology and word formation, syntax and the lexical minimum, make up the content of linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is "possession of an information system about the language being studied by its levels: phonetics, vocabulary, word composition and word formation, morphology, syntax of simple and complex sentences, the basics of text style" [26]. *Bilingual competence*, in our opinion, can be defined as a set of ideas about the systems of two languages and the possibilities of using these systems in practice.

#### **Speakers of Dagestan languages**

The didactic processuality of the formation and development of the bilingual competence of a Dagestan language speaker in the context of native Dagestan / Russian bilingualism is due to psychological and sociolinguistic factors and should be based on data from linguistic correlation analysis. The psychological and sociolinguistic mechanisms of this process are primarily subordinated to the practical goals of linguodidactics, and can be represented by: 1) *the sociolinguistic charac-*

teristics of the team of the study group (family, school, university), compiled by taking into account the type of educational motivation, individual typological characteristics of team members and the sphere of vital interests of each team member, etc. 2) *the psycholinguistic model of the bilingual community*.

The sociolinguistic characteristic of the study group reflects the complex of those social factors that are significant from the standpoint of the practical goals of linguodidactics. In this case, the social role of the language acquires special significance, and this is represented in a number of responsibilities: *the communicative function* (the level of communicativeness in the study group; the communicative development of the individual); *the culture-bearing duty* (the sphere of vital interests of the educational team; a fixed attitude that is determined by the cognitive need); *the directive function* (the role of the reference group in the team of the study group, particularities of pedagogical communication).

Therefore, factors such as the method of mastering the language, social activity or passivity in bilingualism, the role of using internal speech, and the degree of speech interference are directly or indirectly reflected in the sociolinguistic characteristics.

#### ***Typology of Dagestani bilingualism dynamics***

An important condition for the psychological and sociolinguistic approach to bilingualism, according to many researchers, is the provision of the dynamic nature of bilingualism [12], [8]. Moreover, the bilingual state of an individual is available in dynamics; it means the process of formation and developing of such a state.

According to N. V. Imedadze (1959), the dynamics of the bilingual state includes four stages (types) of bilingualism: 1) combined bilingualism with a dominant system of the native language and a system of non-native languages subject to interference; 2) combined bilingualism with two mutually interfering systems; 3) coordinated bilingualism with a dominant system of the native language and a system of non-native languages, which is not subject to interference, but at a low level of proficiency; 4) perfectly coordinated bilingualism with knowledge of two languages, approximating the level of the monoglot.

This approach to the specification of the process of bilingualism allows us to determine the stages of the bilingual state from the point of view that speech is a way of forming and formulating thoughts in the concept of speech activity [29]. In this case, these levels can be represented as follows: 1) the lower stage when the formation and formulation of thought through the mother tongue is followed by the translation of the speech into a non-native language; 2) the intermediate stage is the formation of thought in the native language with its subsequent formulation by means of the non-native language; 3) the stage of bilingual existence is when the formation and formulation of thoughts proceeds immediately by means of the non-native language.

The proposed idea of the dynamics of the bilingual state can be used in the organization of teaching of both the native and non-native languages to Dagestan bilinguals; it helps to reveal the features of the bilingual state of a person as well as his or her educational and speech activity, which are all taken into account and are coordinated in the process of bilingualism formation.

In addition, the indicated concept presupposes a new understanding of the speech development of a person in the broad context of the communicative development of a personality. Communicative development is identified through the ability to express and interpret a thought properly, that is closely related to the concept of the communicative age, which refers to a certain stage of development of communication and learning activity of a person, characterized by a consistently formed ability to solve increasingly complex communicative tasks [29]. The level of communicative development is determined by the formation of all types of speech activity. The effectiveness of speech activity is revealed in its product and is characterized by productivity. Productivity is seen in the completeness of the thought expression and the adequacy to all the means and methods of formation and formulation of thought required by a given communication situation.

#### ***Some reasons of interference errors***

However, communicative productivity in the conditions of interlanguage transfer is not always positive. Psychologists, for instance, point out the interference of skills, when the interfering effect of one skill on another ("negative transfer") is shown by the fact that

previously formed methods of performing operations are transferred to outwardly similar but internally different operations, and this gives rise to errors. Differences in the articulation bases and phonological systems of the native and non-native languages can be one of the reasons for this negative transfer. In this case, interference consists of equating the sounds of the second language with the sounds of the native language (a peculiar speech accent). The objectivity and spontaneity of this process is due to the vision of a foreign language “through the prism of the native language” [4], “sifting” of the second language through the “phonological sieve” [27] of the native language.

In psycholinguistics, bilinguals who do not master the non-native language, provide the mechanism for generating interference errors. These bilinguals are repelled by the program of speaking their native language; it is related to the level of conscious control carried out in the native language, and is usually error-free. The transition from subjective to objective code, that is, from a code of images and schemes to elements of a real language, is associated with a number of operations, in particular, the operation of selecting the necessary means of the target language for expressing intention.

It is at this stage, due to the non-identity of the systems of concept expression in the native and non-native languages, that “seam divergence”, called an error, can occur [16] because of the operations of choosing the language means from the non-native language.

A. A. Leont'ev sees in errors an indication of the “weaknesses” of speech mechanisms: “... error is one of the most important tools for studying the normal, proper functioning of the speech mechanism, it is a signal of “a seam divergence” in the speech mechanism and it can help to reveal the nomenclature and hierarchy of such “seams”; that is, the internal structure of speech ability” [18].

In our case, the formation of secondary speech skills is a learning process whose purpose is to develop productive bilingualism. When using the Russian language as non-native, as well as when using the native language, bilingualism should focus only on the semantic content of speech, while the lexical-grammatical design of thought should be done intuitively, without long thinking process.

This means that language fluency is characterized by the mastering skills based not on knowledge, but on automated skills, and large-scale training is highly necessary for the formation and development of them. The training is the practicing of speech skills that are activated in the process of speech activity, therefore, skills must be provided by speech practice.

Educational speech practice is carried out in a specially created educational speech environment where the principle of communicative orientation of education should be paramount.

### Conclusions

The effectiveness of the process of formation and development of bilingual communicative competencies depends on the phased interaction of automated speech skills, which, in turn, are provided with an optimal algorithm of didactic actions.

The main means of detection of negative transfer are identification and recognition of distinctive features through comparison and contrasting, the usage of opposition (correlation) on syntagmatic, paradigmatic, semantic parameters.

The ideas of “being based on the first language”, conducted from the standpoint of modern psychology and psycholinguistics, are associated with the creation of a whole “set of measures that make up the educational process while taking into account the native language of students” [3], and being familiar with the students’ local culture [13]. Such a methodological package of activities, according to the authors, includes the development of programs and textbooks, as well as teacher training. In turn, errors caused by interference of the native language should be taken into consideration while organizing the second-language material programs and textbooks, the means and principles of preventing errors and overcoming the difficulties should also be indicated.

The process of formation and development of the bilingual competence of a Dagestani in the context of uniqueness (more than 30 native Dagestan languages and the Russian language) should be provided with a specific methodological platform, because of the socio-psycholinguistic factors of the heterogeneous ethnic language environment of Dagestan. The linguodidactic basis for identifying speech interference and overcoming these errors in Russian and native speech of Dage-

stani-bilinguals is a linguistic corpus of data [22; 23].

The principle of linguocorrelational analysis, which is based on the theory of language correspondences used in translation practice, has a special significance during the socio-psycholinguistic process of mastering two languages. The correlative description juxtaposes the facts of two languages; it involves not only convergence, but also discrepancies, and ultimately, it establishes correspondence in the two languages. This is a method of searching in two languages for such units that

would express the same segment of reality. The correlative description is based on comparative linguistics and corresponds to one of its practical goals: the search for optimal solutions for teaching the second (non-native) language.

The linguistic corpus of data formed as a result of the correlative analysis of various levels of comparable (Russian and literary Dagestan) languages is a linguodidactically developed technology for overcoming interference errors in Russian and native speech of Dagestani-bilinguals.

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