Polylinguality as a condition of preservation of cultural values in a modern society

The article is devoted to multilingualism and its functioning in a modern educational society. The article gives grounds for the urgency of multilingualism concepts connected with bilingualism phenomena and discusses the main directions of their development. Multilingualism and polylingualism are the basis for formulating and defining the concepts of multilingual education. The authors have analyzed such concepts as «bilingualism», «multilingualism», «trilingualism», and «polylingualism». The authors also emphasize subject-language integrated learning as one of the multi-linguistic approaches, providing instruction in two subjects simultaneously and being one of the effective mechanisms for forming the professional competence of a future foreign language teacher. The essence of multilingual education is aimed not only at maintaining and developing cultural diversity, norms and forms of activity based on dialogue and interaction of different cultures, but also at the diversity of world politics and culture.

Keywords: bilingualism, multilinguism, trilingualism, plurilingualism, polyglotism, sociological accent, internationalization, individual, micro and macro communities, polylingual approach, subject-language integrated learning, multilingual education.

According to historical chronicles, multilingualism has been always and everywhere, where there was a need for intercultural relations. The term multilingualism appeared in European languages only in the 19th century. In the Webster dictionary, the word «multilingualism» appears in the forties of the XIXth century [1]. The definition multilingualism, as well as bilingualism and trilingualism, has been changed and expanded with time, which led to new meanings in the concept of multilingualism. The term multilingualism is ideally used in the meaning of «additional language skills to the same extent as monolingual people speak their own language». So, the terms bilingualism and trilingualism as varieties of multilingualism in this case mean high proficiency in two or three languages [2].

Such prominent scientists, public men, writers of the East as Mahmoud Kashgari, AlisherNavoi, Al-Farabi, etc. wrote their works in both their native and other (Arabic, Persian) languages. According to the founder of pedagogical science Ya.A.Komensky, polylingualism or «polyglot», has a long history. According to his linguo-didactic concept, «a literate person should know several languages: the native language for «private life», neighboring peoples’ language (languages) for communication, Latin for reading scientific books, Greek and Arabic for philosophers and doctors, Greek and Jewish for theologists. At the same time, a great importance was given to the native language and Latin, which should be learned thoroughly [3].

Ya.A. Komensky distinguished the concepts of language knowledge and language proficiency. He wrote: «the knowledge is needed only in knowledge skills, while knowledge and imitation are needed in work with pen and mouth. Speech must first be understood, which is the easiest, then it must be repeated by
writing, which is a little more difficult, but not so much. To speak means something unexpected, and this is what we can desire, seek and give» [3].

Another valuable statement by Ya.A.Komensky is the applied nature of language learning, which should be «not as a part of education or scholarship, but as a tool for gaining knowledge and giving it to others». From the methodological viewpoint, the author stays modern to this day, since the main language learning criterion is considered to be its practical mastery [3].

As for the problems of bilingualism in modern society, Chingiz Aitmatov tells about two ways of its development: «The first way is to rely completely on the «dependence» of a highly developed language, that is, to use it completely. And the second way is the way of coexistence, that is, the parallel development of the national language using the non-mother tongue» [4; 108].

We have studied the works of scientists, who did research in multilingualism, and analyzed the concepts of «bilingualism», «multilingualism», and so on.

We give several definitions that are in the scientific literature. For example, K.Kh. Khanazarov defines bilingualism as «proficiency and use of two languages» [5; 157].

According to M.S. Dzhunusova, bilingualism is a «socio-linguistic phenomenon that arose as a result of multilingual population communication» [6; 433].

The scientists, studying bilingualism in the social aspect, use the terms «sociological» and «socio-linguistic» as synonyms. However, there is also its differentiated use. Yu.D.Desheriev and I.F. Protchenko define bilingualism as follows: «… the knowledge of two languages in such a way as to express and set out their thoughts in an accessible form for others regardless of interference degree, and the use of internal speech by a bilingual individual within written or oral communication in a second language, as well as the ability to perceive someone else’s speech with full understanding» [7; 35].

B.N. Golovin believes that bilingualism is «the functioning of two languages in the same territory and in the same ethnic environment. In other words, it is the use of two languages by the same population when communicating» [8; 25].

W. Weinreich defines bilingualism as the practice of alternate use of two languages, and those who speak in it are bilingual [9].

According to V.A. Avrorin, «bilingualism is a fluent proficiency in two languages. In other words, bilingualism begins when the degree of second language skills approaches close to the degree of the first language skills» [10; 54].

In the modern world, multilingualism is widespread. And this is due to the modern society demand. Multilingualism gives a person great opportunities for communication, preservation and development of cultures. Peoples’ long-term contacts lead to bilingualism and multilingualism.

M.M. Fomin writes that «the ability to master several languages is a special kind of individual ability. Learning two, three or more languages is a means of accessing a multicultural space. Polilinguism is a term essentially adequate to multiculturalism» [11].

W. Weinreich states the following in his work: «Certainly, multilingualism is not only a significant phenomenon, but quite common and widespread as well. Among linguists it is customary to consider monolingualism as a rule, and multilingualism as something exceptional. This highly idealized view has a number of sources. Another feature of multilingualism, which can be easily represented as a variable, is the same speaker’s language proficiency. Completely fluent and bilingual proficiency certainly differs from mastering only the beginnings of the second language. But the difficulty of the task facing the person and his failures in duplicating the monolingual norms of each language (in contrast to the «extent» of these failures) are similar in both cases» [9].

According to Professor Sabatkoev R.B., the way to bilingualism and multilingualism begins with the native language. Child’s education and upbringing in his first days at school must be carried out in his native language, that is, in which he thinks. If we start teaching an unfamiliar language at once, then there will be his mental retardation. We should give a proper place to the mother tongue with the subsequent «imposition» of the second and third language system on it at all stages of teaching, which will allow organizing the work on the formation and development of bilingualism and polylinguism at school. When teaching the second language (Russian in our case), the teacher will be able to rely on the knowledge and skills that a child get sat his native language lessons in the field of vocabulary, phonetics and grammar, and when teaching the third (foreign) language — on knowledge and skills acquired both at native and Russian languages lessons [12].
Our analysis of the scientific literature allows us to conclude that there are many definitions of bilingualism and multilingualism, some of which are almost identical, while the others are fundamentally different.

Multilingualism is a distinctive feature of cultural, political and economic diversity of social reality. Multilingualism is determined by the historical interaction of different civilizations and peoples. In these conditions, there is a rational reason to use different languages for performing different social functions and roles. In the modern world, citizens of many independent states need to know several languages at once at a fairly good level.

The modern world of nations is the world of numerous languages with a formal status, as the disciplinary community presumes general linguistic rules.

Multilingualism is a natural phenomenon in the multinational world, which leads to a misunderstanding of different languages’ speakers with each other.

The global context of modern society development, primarily characterized by the IT priority in obtaining the information, places the highest value on the multilingualism phenomenon in this process. Indeed, multilingualism has become one of the important components of social reality, mainly as a mechanism of its construction. This process is impossible without taking into account local and universal discourses, updated with the help of a wide variety of different languages. We can definitely say that multilingualism has become a prerequisite for successful socialization, inculturation and acculturation in modern social reality. Nowadays, the internationalization of life requires including multilingualism in the context of everyday life from individuals, groups, micro- and macro-communities [13].

Language contacts in the education, economics, politics and culture can serve as a clear example. Globalization and social openness enhance the prestige of multilingualism by providing social and economic advantages and social mobility to its speakers.

The sociological context of multilingualism is the study of «language in its social context» [14]. This means that the sociological emphasis is focused on the ways of using the language in different types of society and the factors affecting the ways of using the language (social status, gender, age and educational characteristics).

At the same time, multilingualism as an individual’s ability to use two or more languages, depending on the communicative situation, is one of the important factors in the survival of individuals in the modern global world [9].

Currently, multilingualism is justly considered to be the education indicator. Moreover, multilingualism is an important mechanism for resolving intercultural conflicts and creating conditions for a full social communication. Its humanistic nature is actualized in a successful interaction of different cultures representatives within maintaining their local ethnocultural identity.

When studying multilingualism, such concepts as multilingual approach, multilingual education, etc, become inseparable.

Currently, the multilingual approach is one of the urgent problems in the education system of Kazakhstan, which is aimed at implementing the multilingual education of citizens. Those states, that create favorable conditions for their citizens in getting high-quality and modern education, can successfully develop and enter into a number of leading countries of the world harmoniously.

In the national cultural project «The Trinity of Languages», much attention is paid to the development of three languages: Kazakh as the state language, Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication and English as the language of successful integration into the global economy. The First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev emphasizes in it that «the knowledge of three languages for a modern Qazaqstani is a prerequisite for his own well-being» [15].

The works of Kazakhstan scientist B.A. Zhetpisbayeva are invaluable in developing the implementation of multilingual approach.

According to B.A. Zhetpisbayeva’s viewpoint, multilingual education is «a purposeful, organized, standardized three-languages process of learning, education and individual’s development as a multilingual personality, based on a simultaneous mastery of several languages as a part of socially significant human experience embodied in language skills, speaking activity, as well as emotionally valuable attitude towards languages and cultures» [16; 12].

According to Kazakhstan researchers Zh.Z. Torybaeva and B.A. Toibekova’s study, «a multilingual education is the basis for the formation of a multicultural personality» [17]. They say that «knowledge of lan-
guages, including Kazakh, Russian and foreign languages, enriches personality, forms intercultural communication, tolerance and thinking» [17; 134].

A.V. Varenitsa has a similar opinion. She defines multilingual education as «the most important part of modern general education, contributing to the development of other languages, cultural values, traditions, lifestyles by students and also serving as a means for the development of dialectical thinking, personal enrichment and personality formation as a whole» [18].

Z.N. Zangiyeva defines multilingual education as «a purposeful process of introducing the world culture by learning the native and Russian languages, in which language can be an effective means of familiarizing people with material and intellectual culture of peoples, its customs and traditions, since the revival and preservation of intellectual culture, the sense of national identity formation is one of the most relevant under current conditions» [19].

According to the conclusions of Bayandina Z.K and Nurmagambetova Zh.S., «multilingual education is a purposeful process of introducing the world culture by learning several languages, when the languages studied serve as a way to gain special knowledge, to master the cultural, historical and social experience of various countries and peoples» [20].

V.N. Galeyev and Z.G. Nigmatov say that «multilingual education is a purposeful process of introducing the world culture by learning several languages, when the languages studied serve as a way to gain special knowledge and to master cultural, historical and social experience various countries and peoples» [21].

A.V. Shafrikova defines multicultural education within the interactive approach as «a present-day trend in the world process, which affirms the idea that many independent entities are at the core of world civilization». She considers the concept of «multicultural education» as the most comprehensive of all the terms connected with it. Revealing the essence of multicultural education, A.V. Shafrikova emphasizes that it is aimed at maintaining and developing the whole variety of cultural values, norms, standards and forms of activity in this society and is based on the principles of interacting with different cultures. She considers multicultural education in the international and inter-ethnic context as the interconnection of various cultures in the education sector [22].

T.B. Menskaya is close to this opinion and notes that «multicultural education means not only different things for different people in society, but is due to the economic realities and ideology of various societies in general» [23].

The implementation of multilingual education, based on consistency, continuity, sequence [24; 24–28], is possible due to training activities (basic courses content (its parts, sections, paragraphs, accompanying materials, etc.); elective courses; special courses), extracurricular activities (socio-cultural, linguistic practices), research activities.

The basic ideas in the multilingual education implementation are: stimulating and motivating the use of native and non-native languages in accordance with the students’ needs; formation of intercultural communication skills; learning strategy of the native and non-native cultures features through the language, as well as the features of their interaction; going beyond native culture, acquiring cultural mediator’s qualities without losing one’s own national and cultural identity; rest on students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge; focusing of learning content on the socio-cultural situation of the country, region, the languages of which are being studied.

Such types and forms of activity and technologies contribute to the effectiveness of the multilingualism formation process as: interactive lectures by using different languages, information and communication projects, game and role activities (excursions, distance travel, interviews), sign- and context-oriented technologies (using elements of cultural dramatization, semiotic text analysis, analysis of household items, art), workshops of values-based orientations, using distance learning technologies, interactive communications (ICQ, Skype, mail-agent), etc.

Affirming the fundamental role of languages in the multilingualism formation, attention should be paid to the fact that students respect cultural traditions, differences, uniqueness of peoples, tolerance, positive attitude towards the foreign cultures manifestations due to learning the native and foreign languages. The language, perceived as a part of culture, becomes a means of its knowledge.

F.H. Kirguyeva notes that «learning language only as a discipline in class is not enough for a full language communication. Therefore, a change towards a multilingual education, which in most schools of Western, Central Europe, the USA and Canada was already considered to be a very promising direction in learning languages already in the 60–70s of the XXth century, has become an objective necessity today» [25].

In these conditions, the higher school faces new tasks, the purpose of which is to provide highly qualified
specialists who have mastered not only professional knowledge, but are also ready for intercultural communication, independent problem solving, having critical and creative thinking and culture and are proficient in foreign languages. To do this, it is necessary to create a multilingual and multicultural space for training future teachers, to ensure the social and academic mobility of young people who are ready to teach subjects in both their native and foreign languages. This means the creation and development of modern educational research centers with international participation, design and implementation of new technologies, the formation of a staff retraining system in Kazakhstan. New training requirements also determine new approaches to the organization and implementation of the educational process. Rapid changes in the educational services require the same mobility from the universities. Therefore, the advanced training, the introduction of innovative teaching technologies and the use of good practices from leading world universities should become the norm for each teacher.

One of such approaches is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which makes it possible, for example, to combine learning English or German and a special subject, i.e. to expand the general educational space through a functional approach to teaching a second language [26, 27]. The specific feature of this approach is that «language becomes a tool for learning non-language subject, in which both language and subject play a cooperative role» [28; 58]. The attention is focused both on the content of special texts and necessary subject terminology. Moreover, the language is integrated into the curriculum, and the language immersion need for discussing case material significantly increases the motivation for using the language in the context of the topic being studied [29]. Content and Language Integrated Learning is such a teaching method in which some subjects are taught in foreign languages. Thus, teaching students their native and foreign languages stands together. Teaching is given in two languages in such a way that a language in learning situations is used, appropriate to the situation and teaching aims. According to the CLIL method, the second language can be used on all disciplines in all classes, except mother tongue [30].

Zhetpisbaeva B.A., Kubeeva A.E. consider that the idea of using the principle of subject-language integrated learning arose as a result of the increased requirements for the level of foreign language proficiency with a limited scope for its study. This approach allows two subjects to be taught simultaneously, although the focus may be on either language or non-language subject. CLIL views foreign language learning as a tool for learning other subjects. Language learning goes through a subject area, i.e. the CLIL lesson is not a foreign language lesson, but a foreign language subject lesson. At the same time, this contributes to a rethinking of the needs and abilities of schoolchildren to communicate in their mother language [31].

The experience of implementing this method shows that when developing a training course based on this methodology, it is necessary to take into account 4 «C» of CLIL methodology: Content is the knowledge, skills, subject area skills that are progressing. Communication is the use of a foreign language in teaching with the emphasis on its use. Cognition is the development of cognitive and mental abilities that form a general idea (specific or abstract). Culture (cultural knowledge) is providing oneself as a part of culture, as well as awareness of alternative cultures [32].

The development of training activities based on the CLIL methodology is implemented taking into account the following recommendations:
1) it is necessary to plan and organize each lesson, based on four principles: Content/Communication/Cognition/Culture;
2) each lesson should have clearly defined goals, learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria, and reflection;
3) the teacher should regularly conduct his classes’ self-analysis based on the Content and Language Integrated Learning checklist;
4) it is necessary to use supportive and formative assessment in practice and alternative forms of assessment;
5) it is necessary to develop and select high-quality materials, visual aids and authentic texts for Content and Language Integrated Learning on all subject courses.

Thus, Content and Language Integrated Learning as one of multilingual approaches is one of the effective mechanisms for forming a future teacher’s professional competence. The effectiveness of a future teacher’s professional competence is largely due to his mastery of knowledge and skills in the aspect of Content and Language Integrated Learning.

In the globalized world, multilingualism as a personal quality and as a modern world trend is also an important factor in increasing the individual’s competitive growth, creating positive communicability and the ability to live in a multicultural and multilingual environment.
The urgency of multilingual education is determined, first of all, by global trend towards integration in the economic, cultural and political spheres. Given these trends, it provides a person with a wide access to information in various subject areas, obtaining new information in accordance with individual needs and continuing education opportunities, which creates additional chances to compete in the pan-European and global market of specialists.

An important socio-political determinant of multicultural education development is an intensive development of integration processes as an important component of today’s world development, as well as the desire of Kazakhstan and other countries to integrate into the world and European socio-cultural and educational space, preserving national identity at the same time. Integration processes contribute to the transformation of Europe into a multilingual space. The mobility of people, their motivation to learn foreign languages, as well as setting and maintaining contacts within their own country and abroad increased since the borders between states have been opened.

In conclusion, it should be noted that multilingual education is currently urgent, since this form of the educational process is the best way to learn mother tongue, develop dialectic thinking, broaden the outlook and form a multicultural personality. It is a person with multilingual and multicultural competence that is defined as the central category. Multilingual education is an integral part of modern general education. It helps students learning other languages, peoples’ cultural values and traditions, lifestyles, young people’s education respecting foreign life values.

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Контъюнктив касирге қогамдағы әлемді құндылықтарды сақтау шарты ретінде


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Полилингвальность как условие сохранения культурных ценностей в современном обществе

Статья посвящена рассмотрению вопросов об актуальности полилингвального образования в Республике Казахстан. Авторами проанализированы понятия «двуязычие», «многоязычие», «трёхъязычие»,
«полярность». Кроме того, обоснована актуальность концепций многоязычия, связанных с явлениями двуязычия, изучены основные направления их развития. Понятия «полярность» и «мультilingualизм» являются составляющими базы для формулирования и уточнения концепций полилингвального образования. Авторами акцентировано внимание на предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение как один из полилингвальных подходов, поскольку оно осуществляет обучение по двум предметам одновременно и является одним из эффективных механизмов формирования профессиональной компетенции будущего учителя иностранного языка. Полилингвальное образование направлено не только на сохранение и развитие всего многообразия культурных ценностей, норм и форм деятельности, базирующихся на принципах диалога и взаимодействия различных культур, но и необходимо для доступа к многообразию мировой политики и культуры.

Ключевые слова: двуязычие, многоязычие, трёхъязычие, полилингвизм, полиглотия, социологический акцент, интернационализация, индивид, микро- и макросообщество, мультilingualизм, полилингвальный подход, предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение, полилингвальное образование.

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