

BILINGUISM IN A MODERN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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Abstract:

The article discusses the significance of studying aspects of bilingualism in a modern secondary school in a multicultural society. An analysis of the problem of bilingualism in schools was carried out. The activities of the school are considered as a social institution that shapes not people in general, but people in and for a specific society. Various definitions of the terms “multicultural society” and “multilingual society” in the modern world and their differences are considered. The current linguistic situation in Uzbekistan is summarized.

Keywords: multicultural society, transnational society, multilingual society, bilingualism, bilingual education, bilingual schools, bilingual education.

Introduction

The current linguistic situation in Uzbekistan is characterized by dependence on a mixed government system: as of 2024, Uzbekistan consists of 12 regions (Viloyat, Uzbek viloyat), one republic (Karakalpakstan) and one city of central subordination (Tashkent). The Republic of Karakalpakstan is part of Uzbekistan, which creates various prerequisites for the functional development of national languages and cultures.

The desire and declaration of independence of Uzbekistan, increasing attention to the languages and cultures of peoples, acceptance Law A Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 21, 1989 N 3561-XI “On the state language” (New edition, approved by the Law Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 21, 1995 N 167-I), development Concepts for the development of the Uzbek language and improvement of language policy in 2020-2030 (Appendix No. 1 to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 20, 2020 No. UP-6084), opening of national education departments in the Ministry of Education, increased volume of book publishing products in national languages (especially educational literature), all this is the process of forming a new national language and educational policy in Uzbekistan. Its main goal is to maximize the social function of the language and culture of ethnic groups. Language is closely related to ethnicity. According to the results of ethnosociological research, language occupies a central place in the structure of ethnic self-perception.

Subjects of the state have become involved in the active process of forming bilingualism or multilingualism. This issue is not new for our country. In the USSR, the state adopted a bilingualism policy. Legally, the languages of all citizens of a multinational state were equal, but many faced a real threat that their native language would be forgotten by part or even the majority of the population. The linguistic nihilism of the younger generation—the reluctance to learn the language of their ancestors and the preference for Russian over their native language—is explained by the lack of social attractiveness of the latter. The official language policy was one-sided: the Russian language. In fact, almost all non-Russians spoke Russian (and not vice versa),



mainly due to its functions in the system of secondary and higher education. Therefore, the process of establishing bilingualism in both directions (national language - Russian and Russian - national) is based on the establishment of bilingualism in schools.

Schools as social institutions shape not people in general, but people in and for a particular society. Schools specialize in the formation of socially significant personality traits. In bilingual environments, schools need to promote functional bilingualism. On the other hand, the relationship between the process of development of bilingualism and the functioning of the social institution of school in a multicultural situation has not yet been studied in modern Uzbek sociology. At the same time, studying this process in this context is of great importance for a complete understanding of the specific content of the function of the school as a “social institution in a multicultural society” and for the formation of an effective national language and educational policy of the authorities. That is why the social institution of school in a multicultural society was chosen as the object of study. The subject of the study is bilingualism in schools of a multicultural society.

Sociology distinguishes two paradigms when studying the problem of bilingualism in schools: the functional or “equilibrium” paradigm and the conflict paradigm. Within the framework of the “equilibrium” paradigm, evolutionary theory, neo-evolutionary theory and structural-functional theory are presented. According to these theories, social balance is maintained through the harmonious relationship of social components. Education here is a holistic structure designed to maintain stability and move from simple or primitive forms to more complex modern forms in response to changes in other structures (L. Bird, R. Merton, G. Homans, T. Parsons). Functionalists view bilingual education as a balancing mechanism by which social equilibrium is maintained. The function of transferring values to schools helps to support the very model of society. They consider bilingualism as a tool for working within the environment (A. Jensen, R. Herrnstein, R. Larkin, X. Gefferd).

Theoretical approaches to the study of bilingualism in the conflict paradigm are group conflict theory, cultural activation theory and anarcho-utopian approach. These theories emphasize the instability inherent in social systems and its natural consequence—conflicts of values and power (R. Collins, S. Bowles, H. Gintis, P. Bourdieu).

The study of socioeconomic, cultural, and educational change through variants of conflict theory became popular in Western sociology in the 1960s and 1970s. Defining the problem of bilingualism in schools from the point of view of the conflict paradigm is no longer inequality of opportunity “in itself,” but rather structured inequality. The existence of inequality of opportunity, mainly in language, is recognized, but it is seen as the result of unfair conditions, and not as a failure of the school (L. Koser, R. Dahrendorf, E. Allardt, M. Camoi, R. Boudon).

Sociological works on the theory of bilingualism are overwhelmingly written by authors from the USA and Western Europe. The term “bilingualism” itself came into widespread use in the 1950s and 1960s. It has become a key term in a vast body of work describing various educational programs and practices for ethnically and culturally diverse societies. The development of modern concepts such as “multicultural”, “multi-ethnic” and “intercultural” education, ethnic education, cultural pluralism and anti-racist education is based primarily on posing and solving the problem of linguistic diversity.

Domestic research on bilingualism was carried out primarily within the framework of pedagogy,



linguistics and sociolinguistics. If early scholars supported and legitimized the policy of unilateral bilingualism and the policy of reconciliation and fusion of the Soviet nation, then later works, carried out in the wake of perestroika, contained explicit criticism of the previous state language policy. Publications of the 1980s reflected the Soviet state structure, official and unofficial languages reflected real contradictions in their use (for example, M.N. Guboglo, A.E. Zhannikov, M.Z. Zakiev, M.B. Sadikov, E.V. Tadevoshan, V.A. Tishkov).

Particularly interesting and multifaceted works: Khasanov B.Kh. National languages, bilingualism and multilingualism: searches and prospects. -Alma-Ata, 1989; Ayupova L.L. Questions of sociolinguistics: types of bilingualism in Bashkiria. - Sverdlovsk, 1988; Zhdanov L.A. From two roots: on the importance of bilingualism in a national republic. - Syktyvkar, 1989; Islamshina T.G. Return of the lost: Dialogue about the national. - Kazan, 1991 and many others, in which the problems of state languages and bilingualism are addressed to one degree or another.

The study of bilingualism in modern Uzbekistan is characterized by a wide range of tasks and objects of research. Among them: the study of the formation and development of Uzbek-Russian bilingualism, its broad and intensive parameters:

1. Trends in the development of Uzbek-Russian bilingualism and factors of its spread.
2. Designing the content of Uzbek-Russian and Russian-Uzbek bilingualism among students of pedagogical universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
3. Theoretical problems of the formation of Uzbek-Russian and Russian-Uzbek bilateral bilingualism among students of pedagogical universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
4. Ecological aspects of language and culture.
5. Factors influencing language processes.
6. Problems of multicultural and transnational education.

These studies do not trace the connection “multicultural society - multilingualism - school - bilingual/multilingual person” and do not set the task of modeling bilingual education in a multicultural context. In addition, when the object of research is defined as a specific region, republic, region or CIS, the experience of foreign colleagues, as a rule, does not come into the field of view of the researcher. Most of the research is carried out by teachers, philologists, historians, ethnographers, using only empirical sociological research methods, without becoming an exponent of a certain sociological paradigm in the field of bilingual education.

To determine the optimal model of bilingualism in the general secondary education system of a modern multicultural society using the example of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a necessary condition is to consider the following issues:

- ✓ Identify the characteristics of a “pluralistic”, “multicultural”, “multinational” and “multi-ethnic” society and determine the place of bilingualism in the functional system of schools in multicultural societies;
- ✓ Define the concepts of “bilingualism” and “diglossia” and their possible combinations;
- ✓ Consider the main paradigms and their application in the study of the functioning of bilingualism in schools of multicultural societies;
- ✓ Conduct a comparative analysis of the process of development of bilingualism in Uzbekistan and Russia, identifying common and characteristic features; consider the role of bilingualism in the development of the school system in Uzbekistan and Russia, identifying common and characteristic features;



✓ To present existing models of bilingualism in the system of general secondary education in a multicultural environment and analyze their applicability in the practice of school functioning in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Ethnic problems in general and ethnolinguistic processes in particular are of particular importance in the modern context of Russian and Uzbek society. In specialized sociological studies, linguistic aspects are relatively rarely the subject of comprehensive analysis. On the other hand, the course of modern ethnic processes requires special attention of specialists to the study of the functioning of language. The issue of language is directly related to issues of sovereignty and national self-determination. The question of language has ceased to be just a cultural-ethnic issue and has become political.

The school as a social institution shapes the younger generation for a particular society. In a bilingual environment, schools need to functionally develop a bilingual workforce. Thus, there is a double relationship: multicultural society - bilingualism - school - bilingual individuals. Multicultural society refers to three types of society: multi-ethnic society, multi-national society and mixed multi-ethnic and multi-national society. Uzbekistan and its people are predominantly multinational and, accordingly, multilingual.

In a multinational and multilingual society, an additional function of the school as a social institution is obvious - ensuring bilingualism. It is no coincidence that schools appeal to the “imperative” of developing bilingualism, since it is compulsory for everyone, controlled by state power, tends to develop and is multicultural.

We distinguish between bilingualism as an individual and a social phenomenon. In the first case we are talking about the knowledge and use of two languages by an individual, in the second - about a society in which two languages are officially established or functioning.

For the multinational state of Uzbekistan, the issue of bilingualism is relevant. Historically, three of the four possible combinations of bilingualism and diglossia have been “tried” to date. Taking into account this experience and the modern desire of people to revive their national language, the first option, combining bilingualism and diglossia, is the most acceptable for Uzbekistan and its subjects.

State language and educational policy depends on the foreign and domestic policies of the state. In Uzbekistan, the transition from a policy of assimilation to a policy of pluralism made it possible to declare the proclamation of diglossia. The choice between language policy (policy of assimilation or pluralism) depends on how the role and significance of language is assessed. If language is seen as a problem, the result is a call for assimilation, fusion and integration. In this case, the majority language becomes a socially cohesive lingua franca. When language is viewed as a right, the emphasis is placed between the rights of the individual and the rights of the linguistic group. When language is seen as a resource, that is, a guarantee of social and economic progress, it is desirable to maintain cultural and linguistic diversity. The organization of bilingual education demonstrates a commitment to a “language as a resource” orientation.

Disputes between theoretical and programmatic definitions of bilingual education depend, first of all, on the theoretical paradigm within which bilingual education is studied. Formal research, as well as hypotheses, goals, and strategies, follow a theoretical “framework.” The dialectical approach, in our opinion, allows us to combine some provisions of the two paradigms presented in the field of research on bilingualism in school.



From the point of view of the “equilibrium” paradigm, the most important are the following provisions:

- Bilingual education is an equilibrium mechanism that functions to maintain social balance;
- Bilingual education involves intercultural contacts;
- Individual bilingualism functions as a tool for activity in a multicultural environment;
- A second language can be acquired if it is used as a language of communication and learning.

Within the framework of the “conflict” paradigm, we used the following provisions:

- Education is part of the ideological structure of society and therefore depends on ideological and political changes. The development of bilingual education is a special case of this dependence;
- Studying the development of bilingual education in isolation from social factors and contexts is not far-sighted and unpromising.

A comparative analysis of the process of development of bilingualism in Uzbekistan and Russia shows that both countries have accumulated some experience in the field of organization and functioning of bilingual education. The language policy and educational systems of Uzbekistan and Russia include: the status of “second” languages as national ones; the equal right of former linguistic minorities to develop their culture and preserve their traditions and languages through educational institutions; pluralism in educational language policy; absence of diglossia (at the social level) and (at the individual level). Despite a number of similar modern transformations, such as the legitimation of bilingualism (at the individual level), it is impossible to “transfer” the practice of organizing bilingual education for a number of reasons. Of particular importance are the national structure, the historical roots of the problem, the economic situation, the duration of the solution to the problem, the type of multiculturalism, etc.

The achievement of bilateral bilingualism in Uzbekistan was facilitated by the democratization of the state and the division of management and control functions between the ministries of education in each region, the desire of Uzbek-speaking parents to educate their children in a Russian-speaking environment, and the fact that for Uzbek-speaking Uzbekistan, Russian is the second national language and an international language.

Therefore, in order for bilingualism to work in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to develop a bilingual model of general secondary education.

Analyzing possible models of bilingual education and comparing them with the practice of different types of schools in the Republic of Uzbekistan, we can conclude that none of the considered models exists in the Republic of Uzbekistan in its pure form. What they have in common is that the curriculum is based on the study of several languages, but the achievement of bilingualism is not defined as a goal. In other words, in Uzbekistan, a multinational state, a contradictory situation has developed where diglossia is legalized and bilingualism is required at the individual level, but in schools where two state languages are taught, the goal of achieving bilingualism is not set. In our opinion, this contradiction can be resolved by reorienting the goals of bilingual education. Priority should be given to socialization for full participation in society (and society is bilingual), development of competitive language skills and maintenance of ethnic identity. All four models of bilingual education meet these goals. The "immersion" model is suitable for monolingual students from the relatively homogeneous Russian-speaking and Uzbek-speaking regions of Uzbekistan. Native language preservation models are suitable for the minority native language speakers. The two-way bilingual education model is acceptable in situations



where schools have a balanced mix of minority and majority language speakers and where at least half of the students speak a second official language (traditionally Tatar). The basic “model of bilingual education is most acceptable for representatives of the linguistic majority (Russian-speaking in Uzbekistan). These possible models of bilingual education at the macro level in the conditions of Uzbekistan, firstly, guarantee the preservation of the pluralism that has developed in modern educational practice, and secondly, do not exclude having some common features.

The formation and strengthening of such models requires consideration of social, economic and political contextual issues that are critical to the realization of bilingualism and bilingual education. The study of cognitive functioning, motivation, and learning success or failure in bilingual education models includes the educational context of power relations, culture, associations, and parental involvement. The bilingual education model, with its four elements—input, context, process, and outcome—is an attempt to organize understanding of bilingual education at the micro level.

If the creation of a bilingual education system meets the needs of society, then the education system aims not only to improve the language proficiency of citizens, but also seeks to influence their language habits, as well as improve mutual understanding between people with different languages and different cultures and promote better social integration. The effectiveness of bilingual education can be assessed many years after leaving school by comparing their attitudes towards the languages available, the groups that speak them, and the cultures expressed in those languages.

We believe that studying the problem of biculturalism in bilingual societies and its reflection in the mirror of school education is promising.

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