

Побочные эффекты билингвизма

Collateral Effects of Bilingualism

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Аннотация В статье рассматриваются проблемы билингвизма и его влияние на языковую личность. Дается описание видов билингвизма, различных факторов, влияющих на формирование билингвальной компетенции носителя двух языков. Отмечается как положительное, так и отрицательное воздействие иностранного языка на родной и наоборот в зависимости от возрастных и социокультурных условий взаимодействия двух языков в индивидуальном опыте билингва. Анализируются языковые различия на уровнях фонетики, лексики, грамматики и национальной коммуникативной стилистики английского и русского языков, учет которых позволяет достичь высокой аутентичности языковой деятельности билингвов. Особое внимание уделяется национально-окрашенным коммуникативным стратегиям в английском и русском диалоге.

Ключевые слова билингвизм; языковая компетенция; интерференция; языковая самоидентификация; языковая личность; языковая аутентичность; коммуникативные стратегии; национальная коммуникативная стилистика

Summary The article treats of the problem of bilingualism and its effect on the linguistic personality of the speaker. Various types of bilingualism are described in connection with the factors of influence that determine the formation of bilingual competence and performance. Both positive and negative types of influence dependent on the age and socio-cultural conditions in the interaction of the native and foreign languages are considered. Isomorphic phenomena are analyzed on the levels of phonetics, vocabulary, grammar and national communicative stylistics. It is maintained that an adequate degree of authentic language performance can only be achieved on the basis of recognition and profound study of these differences in the process of foreign language learning and teaching. Special attention is given to the dialogue features determined by the nationally accepted communicative strategies.

Key words bilingualism; language competence; language interference; linguistic self-identification; linguistic authenticity; communicative strategies, national communicative style

The French linguist A. Boileau introduced the division of bilingualism into two types – *natural (or subconscious)* and *artificial (or conscious)*. The natural (subconscious) type appears in the process of natural language contacts of native speakers of different languages when the speaker simultaneously disposes of two signifiers for the two signified notions in respective languages.

Artificial bilingualism is the result of a conscious study of a new language. When people start learning a new language they already possess the

competence of their native language. So the learner tends to impose the laws of the native language onto the foreign one. As a result the phenomenon of language transfer appears. The foreign word is perceived by means of internal translation into the native language: seeing a foreign word in a text the learner would correlate it with the native word and only after that with the object, action or notion it denotes. The same kind of interference occurs on the syntactical level both as a result of translation from a foreign language into one's native tongue and in the process of constructing an utterance in a foreign language. The latter undergoes interference to a much greater extent. Two types of transfer are possible under conditions of language code change. In the first case the two language systems are compatible in some parts. For instance English and Russian have such similar categories as number of the noun or future, past and present tense forms of the verb, analytical and morphological degree forms of the adjective. In such cases language transfer is quite acceptable.

It makes all the difference however when the subsystems of the languages cannot be correlated as is the case with gerundial and infinitive complexes that exist in English and are not to be found in Russian. There are more allomorphic than isomorphic phenomena in the grammar of these two languages – well-developed morphology of all parts of speech and their agreement in a sentence in Russian in contrast to English where these features are practically absent due to the analytical laws of this language; three gender forms of all noun classes in Russian that are in fact extinct in modern English, aspectual and case forms of the Russian and English verb, etc.

Thus interference implies deviations that occur in the process of matching two language systems and the greater the differences the more predictable are the mistakes caused by them.

A German linguist H.Schuchardt came to the conclusion that long-term communication between two language communities eventually leads to the reconstruction of both languages and their mutual simplification [15].

British scholars today are seriously concerned about the problem of standardization of English as a global international language which in their opinion puts it at risk and leads to deterioration due to the inevitable process of simplification and loss of its idiomatic recourses.

These deviations based on the incompatibility of different language categories in different languages mould the linguistic expression of a bilingual speaker so that learning a new language does not mean just acquiring new language competences but rather mixing ingrained competences of the native language with the newly acquired ones. Thus foreseeable damages of such linguistic imposition result in the erroneous or even inefficient bilingual performance.

Linguistic efforts of a bilingual speaker aim at achieving complete symmetry and bilingual isomorphism. This tendency is rooted in the ingrained desire of the speaker for the economy of linguistic effort. Consequently, all compatible forms are made the most of and everything that differs is disregarded. There are structures that may have “equivalent” expression in two languages achieved by word for word translation. At the same time the new language is sure to have at its disposal a great variety of synonymous expressions that may be marked stylistically or idiomatically. In spite of that even though the learner may be aware of them in practice he will invariably exploit the only variant that complies with his native linguistic mentality.

Here are a few examples that the author used many times in the audience of Russian students of English which prove this point. When asked to express in English the following phrases *Не забудь запереть дверь; Он не понял этой шутки; Обязательно ответь на это письмо; Я думаю, он не сможет ответить на этот вопрос; Мне предстоит небольшая операция.* Russian learners always gave predictable “Russian-based” equivalents and never more idiomatic English phrases.

Cf. :Don't forget to lock the door versus Remember to lock the door.

He didn't understand the joke versus The joke was lost on him.

Answer this letter by all means versus Don't fail to answer the letter.

I think he won't be able to answer this question versus *I don't think he'll be able to answer this question.*

I'm going to have a small operation versus *I'm going to have a small surgery.*

In all these cases the speakers subconsciously make their choice for the benefit of the Russian mode of expression.

There are three qualitative degrees of foreign language competency usually marked out: *beginning* (when the second language fulfils only the informative communicative function), *intermediate* (when the emotive function is also involved) and *adequate* (when a person starts thinking in the second language). The third level comes closest to the natural type of bilingualism.

The English and Russian of V.Nabokov, English and French of W.S.Maugham or O.Wilde will serve as pertinent examples of the adequate type of bilingual competence.

Concerning foreign language teaching at a university we should be aware that we can only speak of the primary level of competence achieved in class.. Another matter is learning a new language by means of integration in a new language community, e.g. living in the country of the studied language will promptly facilitate the acquisition of the other two levels.

However this situation provokes other problems connected with the risk of losing one's native cultural and social self-identification which entails the deformation of one's linguistic personality.

Numerous studies in the areas of sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguistic culturology consider bilingualism as a grave problem that endangers personal self-identification [14]. So it quite justified to include the point of communication among people of different cultures in the modern definition of bilingualism suggested by the theory of intercultural communication.

We often hear a commonly held view that the most efficient teaching of a foreign language implies an early age the earlier the better and a foreign lan-

guage environment is a guarantee of success. We find both of these factors at work in the immigrant families or families with internationally adopted children.

At the same time research done in this sphere records not only and not so much the positive aspects of the integration process at an early age but quite a number of negative consequences for the learner as well. This sort of analysis can be found in the works of scholars from all over the world [6; 7, 3; 9; 8 et al.].

Linguistic observation done on the basis of numerous languages Korean and French, German and Russian, Italian and German, Greek and Russian, Persian and German, etc. testifies to the fact of the impoverishment of both languages in the use of children and adolescents. Moreover the native language has in many cases been entirely lost. Some findings also register the deterioration of the native language in the use of adult speakers. In the speech of adults it becomes apparent because of the loss of spontaneity of native language performance when the speaker hesitates about making a choice in constructing the utterance, selecting morphological forms, grammatical agreement, word stress etc. [11, p. 93].

A particularly severe damage to the personal language competence is done when the combination of two languages starts at an early age. Progressive acquisition of a new language is always accompanied by considerable losses in the native tongue. In some cases (especially if the native tongue is neglected inside the family) a bilingual child may lose it altogether. This loss according to the findings may be irreversible so that the native language has to be taught anew as a foreign one.

So the modern view on the most favorable age for children to start on a foreign language without irreversible consequences for the native one is 10 or 11 years of age. Moreover the acquisition of the new language should be accompanied by the strenuous maintenance of the first language.

Such drastic damage of the native language can be avoided with adult conscious learners but in this case severe interference caused by the native language is inevitable.

Consistent comparative study of languages enables one to tackle certain problems in the methodology of foreign language teaching, such as error prognostication, prevention of language interference and achievement of ultimate authenticity in the native or foreign tongue.

One of diffuse types of lexical interference is the so called pidginization of language – a phenomenon that has reached unprecedented scale in Russian over the last decades due to the penetration of English borrowings. There is no denial of the fact that a language cannot do without borrowings first and foremost when they denote new technologies and phenomena that come from the outside such as recently assimilated *имиджмейкер, Интернет, пиар* and the latest *ай пэд, смарт-фон, флэш-моб, блоггер, твиттер*.

Most of these borrowings have no synonyms in Russian and often an invisible and dramatic battle for survival is going on. Sometimes Russian synonyms lose ground and disappear into the shadow area of unclaimed outmoded vocabulary. This is what happened to the Russian *ЭВМ* meaning computer, which is quickly receding into the obsolete if not archaic category of words. In such cases resistance is useless and the language automatically adjusts the system either assimilating the new words or replacing them by the native vocabulary.

The recipient language is capable of defence by means of self-tuning in favour of its own resources. A good example of such adjustment of newly borrowed words and their replacement by the native vocabulary is the current expression *live journal* that is being replaced by the Russian *живой журнал (жж)*, or *e-mail*, whose Russian equivalent *электронная почта* or just *почта* is enjoying equal rights in current usage. The latter example demonstrates its resilience by the newly formed combinations like *открыть почту, просмотреть почту, загрузить почту, скинуть на почту*.

However there is a simultaneous process of indiscriminate acceptance of unnecessary foreign words (*суггестивный, интродуктивный, перформанс, промоушн*) some of which could be described as vocabulary junk (*вау, унс, пуш-ап эффект*).

Grammatical interference is a frequent and obstinate use by Russians speaking English Past Indefinite verb forms instead of Present Perfect or Past Perfect to describe past actions or events, avoidance of Progressive verb forms, Present Perfect Continuous forms, Absolute Participle Construction and Verbal Complexes. Using articles doesn't come easy to Russians for the obvious reason of their absence in the Russian grammatical system and consequently in the Russian national linguistic mentality.

Nevertheless the grammatical level of a foreign language presents fewer difficulties for mastering than phonetic, lexical and stylistic levels, perhaps because it's the most stable part of the language conforming to an established set of rules.

Stylistic mistakes are among the most frequent and difficult to overcome.

They manifest themselves in the wrong contextual use of words and their connotations, ritual and etiquette formulas, inappropriate use of literary and colloquial vocabulary and phraseology, etc.

The specific combination of typical linguistic forms, selected by the speakers from the totality of all potential forms provided by the grammatical system of any language may be defined as the grammar of speech which determines the national stylistics of any given language. Comparing sets of such forms by English and Russian speakers makes it possible to observe a number of differences in their use. This contrastive analysis allows to reveal the salient features of the national stylistics of communication that in its turn moulds one's linguistic personality.

The most appropriate province for this sort of contrastive stylistic analysis is the dialogue since it contains a great variety of communicative types of forms. It demonstrates a whole range of questions, replies and imperatives. The para-

digm of question types is especially numerous. They range from questions that require information to quasi-interrogatives, such as advice, imperative or confirmative in the form of questions and others.

Questions that require information in Russian are normally more straightforward and less variable than in English. The English communicative culture affords the speakers to avoid question forms when asking for information in order not to put pressure on the interlocutors and give them freedom of choice if they want to leave this inquiry unanswered. So, instead of the question about where one could find a bank or where the nearest bus-stop is situated the speaker would say *I'm looking for a bus-stop* or *I wonder if there's a bank nearby*. Such dialogue strategy enables the addressee to stay out of the conversation in case she or he is unwilling to get involved in communication.

Advice and instruction also manifest a wider range of etiquette forms in English in addition to a greater degree of tolerance in their linguistic expression. Apart from the assertive advice type that has a similar mode of expression in both languages (cf. *Тебе необходимо сменить обстановку* and *You need a change*) the English speaker would more often choose to deliver advice in the form of a question (*Do (don't) you think a change would do you good?*).

The same tendency is even more conspicuous in imperative utterances. With the exception of some specific registers of communication (such as administrative, or military spheres or emergency situations) here again the generally accepted norm of communication in English gives apparent preference to the tolerant forms among which quasi-interrogatives and imperatives in the form of a question take the lead: e.g. *Why don't you...; How about...; What would you say to...; What do you think of...; Wouldn't it be a good idea...* and the like. Such communicative strategy testifies to the high degree of mutuality of the English communication which is marked by granting the participants the right for the free choice of whether to get involved in the conversation. This strategy of the English dialogue may be defined as communicative tolerance.

As for Russian requests, advice and imperatives they are much more categorical and peremptory in character. Advice may sometimes take a milder form of a question but we would almost never find imperatives or advice modified by the form of a question which is not so insistent or demanding by nature.

On the whole the national stylistics of communication in English is marked by such features as a great variety of conversational formulas; communicative proxemics in the choice of forms that guarantee psychological private space and avoid direct pressure on the interlocutor; communicative tolerance; interactive and consultative quality of communication.

In terms of comparative description Russian communication features such traits as a higher degree of categoricity, imperativeness; less variety of etiquette speech patterns; straightforwardness in contrast to proxemics; less tolerance and reliance on the interlocutor's involvement.

All these factors should be taken into account in the process of learning and teaching a foreign language in order to diminish negative factors and enhance the positive ones in the process of bilingual education and self-identification.

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