

METHODS OF BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE TEACHING IN NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITIES: IMPROVING THE COGNITIVE ABILITIES OF STUDENTS

Ludmila Gadzaova

Northern Ossetia State University after K.L. Chetagurov – Russia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9558-0818>
E-mail: gadzaova@list.ru

Elena Goverdovskaya

Chechen State Pedagogical University – Russia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5987-3277>
E-mail: elena_goverdovskaya@mail.ru

Irina Fedotova

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Director of the Institute of Translatology, Russian Studies and Multilingualism, Pyatigorsk State University – Russia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4133-2146>
E-mail: fedotova@pgu.ru

Raisa Buralova

Associate Professor, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Chechen State Pedagogical University, Russia
<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8166-1574>
E-mail: rburalova@mail.ru

Ramisa Mutushanova

Kadyrov Chechen State University – Russia
<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1293-9929>
E-mail: mramisa@mail.ru

Diana Tomaeva

North Caucasus Mining and Metallurgical Institute (State Technological University) – Russia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4343-6301>
E-mail: diana_tomaeva0304@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

Objective: Bilingual and multilingual students often show better results than their monolingual peers. The study aims to formulate a methodology for teaching languages in non-linguistic universities to improve the cognitive abilities of students.

Methods: Qualitative research methods were used, including the analysis of scientific literature and existing methodologies.

Results: The authors have reviewed several teaching methods in a bilingual environment and their advantages. They have concluded that the methods of bilingual language development are based on different didactic approaches to language rather than specific differences in the chosen approach.

Conclusions: Teaching a foreign language in a bilingual/multilingual environment is important for teacher training in various disciplines, expanding the understanding of higher education. Therefore, the authors recommend implementing a bilingual system in the programs of non-linguistic universities.

Keywords: Bilingualism/multilingualism in teaching a foreign language at a university; Multinational region.



MÉTODOS DE ENSINO DE IDIOMAS BILÍNGUE E MULTILÍNGUE EM UNIVERSIDADES NÃO LINGUÍSTICAS: APRIMORAMENTO DAS HABILIDADES COGNITIVAS DOS ALUNOS

RESUMO

Objetivo: Os alunos bilíngues e multilíngues geralmente apresentam melhores resultados do que seus colegas monolíngues. O estudo visa a formular uma metodologia para o ensino de idiomas em universidades não linguísticas para melhorar as habilidades cognitivas dos alunos.

Métodos: Foram utilizados métodos de pesquisa qualitativa, incluindo a análise da literatura científica e das metodologias existentes.

Resultados: Os autores analisaram vários métodos de ensino em um ambiente bilíngue e suas vantagens. Eles concluíram que os métodos de desenvolvimento da linguagem bilíngue se baseiam em diferentes abordagens didáticas da linguagem, e não em diferenças específicas na abordagem escolhida.

Conclusões: O ensino de uma língua estrangeira em um ambiente bilíngue/multilíngue é importante para a formação de professores em várias disciplinas, expandindo a compreensão do ensino superior. Portanto, os autores recomendam a implementação de um sistema bilíngue nos programas de universidades não linguísticas.

Palavras-chave: Bilinguismo/multilinguismo no ensino de uma língua estrangeira em uma universidade; região multinacional.

1 INTRODUCTION

The implementation of new approaches in language studies entails the creation of a flexible system for choosing language-learning conditions, educational forms, and teaching tools. It is essential for a foreign language teacher to follow rigid rules but rather to select those methodological systems that most adequately suit the learning environment (Denisova, 2014; Zimnyaya, 1991).

The academic performance of bilingual/multilingual students is often correlated with their socioeconomic status. However, they perform better than their monolingual peers (Shafazhinskaya et al., 2023). This is explained by the language state and cognitive abilities. The latter are not always manifested in everyday communication but reveal themselves in academic training, show advantages in learning a foreign language, affect the duration and intensity of communication skills and the acquisition of vocabulary, and expand the linguistic background (Goyushova & Kapustina, 2022; Tretyakova et al., 2023).

The academic performance of bilingual and multilingual students is usually higher than that of monolingual students, and not only in linguistic disciplines. However, teaching one or more languages is common in language-oriented universities, which negatively affects the cognitive abilities of monolingual students.



The study aims to develop a methodology for teaching languages in educational institutions that do not specialize in linguistics. The main emphasis is on increasing the cognitive abilities of students and the efficiency of the language learning process.

2 METHODS

Within the framework of this study, we conducted a comprehensive review of various methodological approaches to teaching bilingual and multilingual students a foreign language in non-linguistic universities. The focus was on evaluating and comparing different teaching strategies that integrate professional knowledge with foreign language skills, crucial for professional communication.

The review emphasized a shift towards multilingual didactics, scrutinizing how educational content could be aligned with the globalized professional environment's requirements. This involved analyzing adaptations of existing curricula and the potential for new programs where foreign language competence plays a central role, especially in facilitating linguistic bridges in professional activities.

A significant aspect of the review was the examination of the expanded use of the communicative method in foreign language teaching. We assessed how this traditional approach could be enhanced with innovative elements to increase its effectiveness. The analysis covered a range of methodological approaches and methods focusing on action, behavior, interactivity, and versatility. These were evaluated based on the ideology of subject-specific didactics in foreign languages to provide a comprehensive and practical language learning framework.

The core of the research was the theoretical exploration of bilingual/multilingual pedagogical strategies. We also reviewed the theoretical basics and pedagogical feasibility of these strategies, while determining their alignment with the desired learning outcomes. The effectiveness of these methodologies was assessed in terms of their capacity to facilitate meaningful learning experiences and to bolster students' professional communication skills in a foreign language.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In bilingual/multilingual training programs, students are more likely to master a third language, which turns the specifics of teaching foreign languages into a factor influencing students' proficiency. Empirical data about these relationships are important for curriculum



development, given the difference in success between monolingual and bilingual/multilingual students. “The basis for forming the concept of learning is the awareness of the meaning-forming influence of the subject and social context of the student’s future professional activity on the educational process and its results” (Verbitskii, 1991, p. 36).

The factor of basic (home/school) training is relevant to the mastery of two/three languages at a functionally acceptable level, and the acquisition of a certain set of educational characteristics that ensure a high institutional level. It is necessary to emphasize the aspect of quality, including, the knowledge of linguo-cultural rules and their correct perception, preferably in a communicative context focused on the meaning of learning (Solovyova et al., 2022). Another important aspect is the coordination of meanings and (if needed) various forms of error correction to increase the language awareness of students (Korotaeva & Chuksina, 2020). In our opinion, it is also important to include useful expressions in problem-solving actions that stimulate the active construction of language structures (construction of speech) and activate knowledge about other peoples, their languages, and the world, making connections with the native culture and language of students.

Active and interactive methods of teaching a foreign language play a special role at the stage of developing and activating speech skills since they are able to partially or fully model situations of professional communication into which future specialists are immersed for educational purposes. (Syutkina, 2020, p. 33).

All these and other strategies for creating educational programs aim at understanding language situations and the content of information, providing cognitive motivation, training long-term memory, and expanding the teacher’s functions. The approaches used reveal the predominant success of bilingual/multilingual students (Ramazanova et al., 2022).

Training programs include a cognitively stimulating context for verbal and non-verbal foreign language frameworks.

Proficiency in a foreign language cannot be limited to the acquisition of foreign words and communication skills and abilities, even if those are used in a creative manner. Its mastery presupposes the socio-cultural knowledge of native speakers, as well as a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication techniques. (Obraztsov & Ivanova, 2005, p. 14).

A quality control tool is a technique for using authentic communication tasks; descriptions of situations, behavioral patterns, or activities at a certain moment of speech; interpretation of any function of behavior; consolidation of meanings; designation of the



intentions of interlocutors and communication partners that can be observed and interpreted. Communicative meanings should be properly described and be realistic rather than abstract. They demonstrate proficiency in vocabulary and grammar, linguistic background, social status, and general literacy and culture.

The relationship between cognitive abilities in the context of bilingualism has a positive impact on mastering the lexical and grammatical minimum. Although vocabulary is changeable, students can reproduce texts using acquired (available) language means.

Mastering foreign language speech meets various interests of students, allows them to consider their individual characteristics and inclinations, which naturally creates the most favorable regime for the practical use of language as a means of communication. (Zimnyaya, 1991, p. 70).

An advanced level allows the use of a wider range of lexical units and morphosyntactic schemes, technical terms, cause-and-effect and temporal structures of subordinate clauses, direct speech with the correct inversion of interrogative sentences, and narrative means for expressing the simultaneity and sequence of actions. These skills are based on the cognitive abilities of bilingual/multilingual students who demonstrate a higher level of proficiency in a foreign language due to their desire for optimization. In the bilingual/multilingual environment, teachers show greater willingness to test new concepts and invest more effort in the educational process. In the context of teaching strategies, they use images of objects to accompany their actions, i.e., they explain actions visually as they are performed, which better influences working memory and contributes to overall cognitive development.

Thus, these data clearly indicate the advantages of bilingual/multilingual students over their monolingual peers in terms of the duration and intensity of foreign language learning and attitudes towards other languages and learning methods (cognitive motivation, stimulation through content analysis, quality of information) that influence the knowledge obtained. The use of these methods can compensate for certain shortcomings associated with the selection of advanced students and control data from a detailed survey of bilingualism/multilingualism.

The difference in the use of teaching methods arises from didactic approaches to teaching foreign languages since bilingual/multilingual education is not based on special didactics. One possible explanation is that teaching a content area requires an intensive application of methods for more motivated and prepared students who have reached at least an intermediate level (Yespolova et al., 2019). There is a need to attract teachers



with good mastery of a foreign language and high methodological competence who are ready to take responsibility for the educational process. These important issues for bilingual/multilingual education have been empirically tested and included in the subject matter of non-linguistic degrees as an element of the pedagogical profile in accordance with the requirements of language policy and its scientific support. The pedagogical component is introduced into vocational education with special (subject-specific) linguistic, didactic, and methodological aspects in conformity with the principles necessary for the preparation of subject teachers proficient in a foreign language. It also depends on their individual linguistic and cognitive abilities closely related to various external contexts.

The results of studies on this topic are heterogeneous. Within the framework of this article, it is impossible to distinguish between individual cognitive abilities and personality traits, determine the combination of languages, and control various social aspects. However, we gained positive results regarding the consistent acquisition of a second language in bilingual/multilingual programs. We focus on the intelligence, working memory, and cognitive control skills that manifest themselves during learning and are facilitated by an increase in the duration and intensity of training. A differentiated approach to learning indicates that the methods used stimulate cognitive abilities and bring good results. Many bilingual/multilingual students are considered high-performing if the bilingual nature of regional universities and the potential of their educational environment are capable of facilitating their development. It is also necessary to include foreign language classes in the programs of vocational training. However, the fundamental trend is numerous positive effects of bilingual/multilingual programs which, if continuously improved, are of practical significance. From the social and political perspective, we are still at an early stage in the exploration and implementation of these issues.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Teaching a foreign language in a bilingual/multilingual educational environment is important for mastering all disciplines. These methods allow students to learn a foreign language and comprehend the general process of obtaining higher education. In addition, they can be transferred to other forms of pedagogical intervention, such as interdisciplinary teaching and the exchange of materials and strategies with colleagues. This will help teachers and students gain valuable experience and gradually improve the quality of education.

If this collaboration is maintained over several years, it will offset the negative



consequences experienced by monolingual students with low social status or other non/low-achieving students. To clarify these relationships, further research on individual, social, and other factors is required.

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