



Developing Bilingualism Through Translation: The Case Study of Tatar Language

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Abstract

This article investigates the issues of teaching a foreign language in a bilingual environment. To be specific, we explore the role of translation in second language acquisition. The article focuses on the instruction, prerequisites, and didactic perspectives of using the mother tongue in developing bilingualism, particularly at the initial stage of the development of the communicative skills. Despite different approaches to using the mother tongue that exist in foreign language teaching, translation remains an unavoidable phenomenon in language acquisition. The article explores the problems of language learning and how to overcome these problems in a bilingual environment. Based on the psychological and methodological research in speech production, the article concludes that in the case of sequential bilingualism, the mother tongue facilitates the learner's search for verbal means of the target language to express ideas meaningful to the individual.

Keywords: Mother Tongue; Target Language; Bilingualism; Translation; Communicative Situation.

1. Introduction

There has been a lot of discussion and controversy about the role of the mother tongue in second language learning. Most teachers believe that L1 usage should be reduced and if they use it a lot, they feel guilty. They find it hard to tell why when asked. Against the use of L1, it is the general belief that just as you learn your mother tongue using your mother tongue, English should be taught by English. But an unacceptable and unattainable thought is the notion that the learner should learn English as a native speaker does or strive to 'think in English'. In teaching and learning English, the effect of the mother tongue is both positive and negative. A significant determinant of Second Language Learning is a learner's L1. ... A developmental mechanism is second language acquisition; L1 may be a contributing factor to it (Denizer, 2017; Piniel & Albert, 2018; Xhemaili, 2016). The mother tongue's role in second language learning has always held a great significance in the scope of the research area (Nguyen, 2020). The communicative method's appearance has proclaimed its fundamental tenet to be the acquisition of the target language through intensive speech activities performed in real-life or simulated real-life situations when explanation and demonstration "take the place of translation for new vocabulary items" (<https://www.windsor.ru>).

It usually implies that the mother tongue is driven away from the classroom "with a dirty broom." The only stable strategy is involuntary language acquisition through intensive practice of the suggested vocabulary in typical communicative situations (Chiknaverova, Gazizova, & Mingazova, 2019). The field where this theory can be examined is in the area of teaching practices. Our particular focus is on foreign language teaching in Kazakhstan and Tatarstan, where bilingual students learn English and their mother tongue and Russian. In this case, initial importance is the teacher's



methodology when the responses of students are intrinsically analyzed. Nowadays the status of a foreign language in Kazakhstan has changed considerably. The entrance into the international community, the economic and socio-cultural situation in the country ensured an immense demand for foreign language skills and provided a strong motivating foundation for learning them. Today, foreign language knowledge is no longer a privilege, it's a requirement. There are plenty of opportunities for their research, and no mention of the teaching methods. Despite this, several questions exist that prevent languages from being effectively learned. The psychological unpreparedness of students to learn foreign languages is one of the key problems. Most of us follow the traditions of Soviet learning standards, set too high standards- to speak perfectly without an accent, to write without a single mistake, and to learn the grammar rules that native speakers often do not follow; they do not strive for perfect pronunciation and the selection of correct grammatical forms in everyday speech. Students who have difficulty mastering certain rules are not interested in learning a foreign language, feeling their uncertainty and inability to do this type of activity.

Today, an entirely new methodology is being developed to learn foreign languages, the purpose of which is to develop communicative skills to teach how to communicate, speak, understand and respect another culture. Students should not perceive a foreign language, be it English, German or any other, as an academic discipline, a subject, but should occupy a higher position as an integral part of modern life, as a means of communication. It is therefore on the teachers' shoulders that the difficult and responsible task of creating a relaxed, but practically valuable communication, interaction and language communication between students falls. We need the help of experienced teachers to solve this problem, who are willing to work not only on the language of the students, but also pay attention to the educational process, because we need to teach respect for another culture, not forgetting our culture and customs. At present, the need for advanced training and retraining of personnel is growing rapidly. In this regard, new advanced training programs had to be developed, and methodological seminars had to be held by qualified teachers who could pass on their experience and knowledge of teaching techniques to young people. There is an urgent need to create continuity in the educational process in connection with the changing role of foreign languages (R Gagarina, V Shelestova, P Sheinina, & R Leake, 2019).

In general, succession mechanisms have been established between primary, secondary and secondary schools in the field of a foreign language. But for a successful mastery of a foreign language, there must be a link between school and university programs. Seminars need to be conducted with the participation of university professors and foreign language teachers from high school. The obsolescence of schoolbooks and textbooks is one of the current issues in language learning. It is impossible to ignore the linguistic changes occurring in foreign languages, particularly in English, in an era of rapid development of all spheres of social activity. Dictionaries are published in Europe every year, publishing new words included in the lexicon of a given year as well as notes on changing pronunciation and expanding the meaning of many words in dictionaries. There is no time available for domestic authors of foreign language textbooks to follow these changes. The choice of training kits approved by the Ministry of Education and Science for foreign publishers can be considered justified, since these courses are systematic, based on modern concepts, taking account of the European requirements for foreign language proficiency. Today, the solution to this problem lies in the simultaneous use of domestic and foreign textbooks, allowing students to master modern living languages with the least energy expenditure. An applied character has been acquired by language teaching, while it was relatively abstract and theorized earlier. Aristotle also derived the famous triad of ethics of teaching, which is best correlated with modern requirements: contact with the audience with the logo. For the speaker, the actor, the teacher of a foreign language whose role implies the first two incarnations, this rule holds true. The teacher's functions have changed significantly in the educational process. In this case, the teacher's personality fades into the background, its influence on the audience, which in turn, does not decrease, but increases on the contrary. But of course, the most important thing is the teaching methods for foreign languages. The linguistic-social and cultural one is one of the most serious and comprehensive methods of learning a foreign language, which implies an appeal to such a component as the social and cultural environment. Proponents of this technique firmly believe that when teachers and students try to master only the "lifeless" lexical-grammar forms, the language loses its life. Somebody noted that "personality is a cultural product." And our language mistakes most convincingly confirm this. We think in Kazakh or Russian, and only then do we translate words into a foreign language, compare them with grammar rules, and then we speak a phrase. That process is too exhausting at the beginning of training. It is necessary, therefore to teach him immediately to think and speak English. This is how children learn to speak their native language, absorbing the language literally. But no grammatical rules are known to them. They're going to learn that theory much later. This



principle is the basis of many modern methods of learning foreign languages. Language learning is inextricably linked to literature. This treasure of popular wisdom is fully revealed in literature, concepts like loyalty, friendship, true feelings and love. Teachers often seek to use theatrical elements like scene participation, role-playing games and small performances so that they can learn a language in a given context and a life situation. Learning a foreign language is mainly about cultivating and building four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is very important former productions. Teachers of foreign languages in the region are therefore very careful to perform short plays in English. By taking part in such events, many students gain invaluable experience. This helps them to overcome the internal hurdle which does not allow them without hesitation and fear of being misunderstood to speak a foreign language.

Each person's vocabulary is mostly individual. It reflects their life experiences, living conditions, familiar words, and phrases, traditionally included in everyday life of their family and immediate environment. That is to say; it is socially and culturally dependent on each character. If a communicative task is meaningful to the speakers, it has priority over their search for linguistic means of expressing thoughts (Buxo-Lugo, 2017; Loy & Smith, 2019; Papafragou, Fairchild, Cohen, & Friedberg, 2017; Rubio-Fernandez, Mollica, & Jara-Ettinger, 2018; Vanlangendonck, Willems, & Hagoort, 2018). They involuntarily resort to linguistic structures and vocabulary of their mother tongue. Hence, sequential bilingualism is mediated by translation as an unavoidable phenomenon in the development of communicative skills.

1.1. Research objective

Learning a foreign language in a non-native environment is a far more time-and-effort consuming process than being immersed in a target language environment for involuntary language acquisition (Abramova & Shishmolina, 2017; Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2017; Matthew, 2020).

The use of the mother tongue comes in handy when we disclose contextual and situational meanings of linguistic units in a foreign socio-cultural environment (Bourina & Dunaeva, 2019; Irena, Natalia, & Marina, 2018; Kecskes, Obdalova, Minakova, & Soboleva, 2018; Krasnopolskyi, 2018). The article discusses the challenges of language learning in a bilingual community and how to solve these issues.

2. Methodology

It is common knowledge that context is a common ground that brings a speaker and an audience together and reflects, more specifically, certain aspects of this ground that a listener needs to know to understand a particular statement. The meaning of the situation means that a speaker and a listener share mutual information in their current communication physically. An additional context, the linguistic context, refers to the common ground created from the previous linguistic experience of the speaker and the listener. A speaker and a listener may have shared experiences or cultural understanding in addition to the situational and linguistic context. This common knowledge can again be interpreted as an intrinsic sense in so far as it is essential for the listener to comprehension of a language input. The intrinsic context depends on listener information, which is also called texts, schematics, mental model etc. However, syntactic and morphological interpretation of the elements within a text may be necessary to understand the meaning of vocabulary objects using the linguistic context. The study, conducted in Kazakhstan and Tatarstan, is based on theoretical analyses of the role of translation in foreign language acquisition and bilingualism. The use of the mother tongue is examined in terms of associations established between concepts and speech. Accordingly, the education process is subdivided into phases, which characterize the learners' progress in language acquisition. Each phase is described in the psychological and methodological contexts of language learning in a bilingual environment. We work from the bottom-up: from the individual intentions to meaningful utterances in the L2, mediated by situationally and contextually relevant translation in the L1. This study assesses whether the mother tongue is an obstacle or an assistant in developing practical bilingualism.

3. Results and Discussion

I. Epshteyn was the first to mention the objective conflict in learning the second/foreign language (Frumkina, 2003). That means that thinking is an association between concepts and speech. If the concept \mathcal{Y} has the word $\mathbf{C1}$ in the first language, it has the second word $\mathbf{C2}$ in the second language. Then, according to the word-concept association, the established $\mathcal{Y} \mathbf{C1}$ will hinder the establishment of $\mathcal{Y} \mathbf{C2}$. The development proceeds in the following way: $\mathbf{C1Y} - \mathbf{C2Y} - \mathbf{C1C2Y}$. Even when this association is consolidated, the inner establishments within it still contradict each other. Once a



solution to this contradiction is found, the learner becomes more efficient. However, to teach communication, we need to create conditions for social interactions. In the late 1950s, Bruner showed that the development of a child's cognitive activity depends on how successfully the child uses words as signs that generalize and replace individual real objects. Later, in the 1990s, Bruner emphasized that this symbolic mediation is not formed in the laboratory, but in the context of social life, where the creation of meanings is determined by culture rather than nature (Bruner, 1990). The second language becomes a social tool when the possibility of interaction is provided (Barkhuizen, 2016).

In subsequent bilingualism, the learners' attempts to speak another language are involuntarily based on word patterns and sentence constructions of their mother tongue. This translation stage has several complicated phases due to interference problems (Lekova, 2010; Putra, 2020; Torekulova & Beisembayeva, 2020). Here, we underline the fact that when we mention bilingualism, we assert that the subject should be an individual. Accordingly, we divide this process into the following phases: perception, repetitive and practical levels.

At the initial stage, the individual listens to perceive words of the target language and identifies foreign words and their specific features. The developed stage of this phase comes when the individual understands the general meanings of written or spoken words. However, their contextual and situational meanings remain unclear. The learners cannot fully interpret the relationship between the context and the word at this phase of perception. By comparing one language to another, learners become aware of the socio-cultural implications their utterances might have in the communicative situations of a foreign language environment.

The phase of repetitive bilingualism has a broader range. This level is signified by the ability to repeat the outspoken words of the second language on the spot, recall these words from memory later, and verbalize ideas with the words read or heard sometime earlier. In this phase, the learner can restate the information gained with the help of the second language. However, learners experience specific problems with fully restating the information and need scaffolding to refer to in order to do the task. Nonetheless, this phase can directly give way to an adequate level through intensive practices.

In the practical phase, the target language can interact quickly with the mother tongue. Although the learner's mother tongue has a dominant position, the comparison and contrast between the mother tongue and the second language are already automatic. The learner can easily compose identical utterances in both languages. We believe that the so-called pragmatic bilingualism is the reflection of this significant level.

However, to develop communicative skills, learners should be exposed to real-life speech, and teachers should motivate students to produce meaningful utterances. It is a fact that colloquial speech does not stick to strict grammar rules. This sometimes leads to incoherence between linguistic knowledge and authentic speech. If the rules are practised in isolation from the communicative situation, in isolation from the grammatical function of the linguistic phenomena, this will cause problems when we transfer from one language to another. Del Hymes (1972), who offered the term 'communicative competence' in deliberate contrast to 'linguistic competence,' observed that a person who has only linguistic competence would be 'a social monster', producing grammatical sentences disconnected from the context in which they occurred (Dervin & Jackson, 2018; Hymes, 1972).

M. V. Panov and later the team of researchers led by E. A. Zemskaya suggest that colloquial speech is a unique system existing in parallel with literary language. At each level of the spoken language, be it phonetics, morphology or syntax, the speaker uses the patterns that are characteristic of colloquial speech. Speaking, in its most general form, is associated with the information contained not in the text of the utterance itself, but in the communicative situation taken as a whole. This approach allows us to study both colloquial speech and communication strategies from a new angle, raising several important problems, such as speech errors. The concept of error is relevant only compared to the concept of the norm (Zemskaya & Kapanadze, 1978). The existence of two functional systems - colloquial speech and literary language - entails the idea of two different norms and, consequently, the need to clarify which particular norm is behind this or that error. Grammatical correctness implies the norms of literary language, which are inappropriate when transferred to a situation of informal oral communication. The development of oral communicative skills means tolerance of grammatical errors, which do not impede comprehension, as errors demonstrate the learners' progress in language acquisition (Marusenko, 2017).

To overcome this problem (errors), methodologists suggest making more use of prefabricated language. At the initial stage of language acquisition, both in the L1 and L2, the learner is strongly dependent on formulaic language, described as multi-word units, which include collocations, idioms, lexicalized sentence stems and so on. It was Michael Lewis who introduced the concept of "grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (Lewis, 1993) into linguistics (Lewis, 1993), which assumes that we do not substitute the words we have in stock into grammatical formulas generating artificial speech incomprehensible to a native speaker, but we immediately turn to lexical chunks, ready-made lexical and grammatical combinations, the basis of fluent speech, which does not require a detailed analysis of its components. Some linguists consider proverbs and winged phrases to be lexical chunks. In any case, their number, according to the most conservative estimates, covers hundreds of thousands of phrases that children master gradually, as they improve in their native language. This process takes years of constant practice in the language environment.

Nuttinger and DeCarrico emphasize that it is the ability to use lexical phrases that help us speak fluently. Prefabricated speech allows the speaker to focus on the large structural units of discourse without focusing on the individual words we utter (A. K. Ashrapova, Svirina, & Litvinenko, 2020; Nuttinger & DeCarrico, 1992). Formulaic language works as a social tool when retrieved from memory and used in certain situations to solve communicative problems. Fluency, literacy, and authenticity are the three features characterizing the use of lexical chunks. They guarantee that each individual achieves their communication aims. They also provide the use of these multi-word linguistic units is truly situationally and contextually relevant. In this case, translation serves to create a good association between the linguistic unit and the specific communicative situation when stylistic preciseness is observed. The speaker matches the L1 linguistic unit, used in the same situation, to its equivalent in the L2, evaluating its phonetic, morphological, syntactical, and socio-cultural parameters as well as the register of use. Being fully aware of the lexical semantics in the mother tongue, the learner, if provided with an appropriate equivalent, will convey the same meaning in a similar situation and say "Happy birthday!" to a person on the day of his/her birth.

As we know, of crucial importance in this phase is passive exposure to foreign speech, which is listening and reading, which creates a second language environment. In this way, the teacher assists the learner in comparing the relevant phrases of the mother tongue and their equivalents in the target language so that the learner can stick to the norms of the L2.

Consequently, the learner first develops listening comprehension skills both in learning the L1 and L2. Listening activities develop an ability to retrieve the information stored in memory and find the translation equivalent to understand what is being perceived fully. Then, the learner attempts to communicate his/her response in the second language environment. To solve the problem of adequately expressing one's ideas by means of a foreign language, that is, to find the correspondence of the lexical content of the phrase to the norms of authentic foreign language speech, we need a teacher, an adviser, a counsellor, who ensures the adequacy of thought verbalization. To assess the learner's speech, the teacher uses speaking/ situation/ intonation/ social measurements and determines its contextual relevance. Moreover, in teaching the second language, it is necessary to develop the learners' self-assessment, which should be a necessary component of bilingual people's competence. In the case of an erroneous statement, this self-assessment should give rise to a feeling of uneasiness. And interestingly, this feeling gets stronger as the language skill gets more mature with less scaffolding provided for bringing the learners' utterances closer to authentic speech.

The second phase is mostly based on imitation. If the translation from the L2 into the L1 plays a crucial role in explaining the meaning and function of a linguistic unit in a specific socio-cultural context, imitation comes as a second stage in the development of speech skills in the target language. Learners who successfully imitate their teacher usually gain good orthoepy results and develop a good sense of intonation, tone, the accent of a competent user. A free, flexible imitation is essential in becoming a bilingual person. By imitating specific details and nuances of the second language, learners manage to create utterances both meaningful to them and appropriate in certain communicative situations. Blackmore says, "imitation is an advantage of human being.....A human mind is a veritable factory for new memes. Every word in your vocabulary is a meme, and you routinely mix them up to produce unique new sentences, but so are all the more complex ideas you come across. All my ideas about evolution and memes have come from taking old ones and putting them together in new ways. It is certainly a creative process but not, I think, one that requires a conscious creator inside my head" (Blackmore, 2007).



At this stage, translation from the L1 into the L2 might prove to be more effective. The main aim of the translation didactics is to eliminate the restriction and inhibition barriers, replacing the right-wrong grammatically correct concept with the communicative concept and empowering imitation mechanisms. I.e., empowering the identifying ability of information collections (Van Dijk). Familiar contexts prompt the use of appropriate verbal reactions both in the L1 and L2. By providing contact with the language in use, we improve the learners' comprehensive skills and enforce their willpower in self-correction. At the practical level, the established critical sense helps assess the skills gained in the course of intensive learning activities. In sequential bilingualism, the mother tongue facilitates the search for verbal means in the L2 to express ideas meaningful to the individual. This is especially true of learning a foreign language in a non-native environment.

4. Summary and Conclusion

The role of the mother tongue in developing bilingualism is associated with the use of the mediator language as a base for the development of individual strategies for language use, in particular, the strategies aimed to overcome difficulties in the perception as the learner perceives the world through his/her mother tongue. In a non-native language environment, translation is a common practice of disclosing the meaning of a word or a phrase as it ensures the appropriateness of production in a certain socio-cultural situation. Thus, it seems impractical for methodologists or applied linguists to eliminate translation from the second language learning (A. K. Ashrapova et al., 2020; A. Ashrapova, Litvinenko, & Shakirova, 2019). However, providing social context is of crucial importance in the development of speech skills. Thus, language exposure remains a mandatory condition for the successful implementation of communicative strategies as it helps create a second language environment. Another condition is the tolerance of grammatical errors, which do not impede comprehension. In this case, formulaic language, ensuring fluency, literacy and authenticity, works as a social tool when retrieved from memory and used in certain situations to achieve individual communicative aims (Alsu Ashrapova, Zharkynbekova, Svirina, & Loginova, 2019). The role of the teacher, as a counsellor, advisor and assessor, is eventually replaced by self-analysis and self-assessment based on reflection.

4.1. Contribution

The article concludes that the mother tongue promotes the learner's quest for verbal means of the target language in the event of sequential bilingualism to communicate ideas that are meaningful to the person.

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