

# The Phenomenon of Multilingual Pedagogy in Education

Maria Druzhinina\*

*Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V.  
Lomonosov*  
Archangelsk, 163000, Russian Federation

Yanan Sun

*Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V.  
Lomonosov*  
Archangelsk, 163000, Russian Federation

Feng Liu

*Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V.  
Lomonosov*  
Archangelsk, 163000, Russian Federation

Elena Solovyeva

*Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V.  
Lomonosov*  
Archangelsk, 163000, Russian Federation

**Abstract-**The purpose of this article is to introduce the ideas of multilingualism. The objectives of the study are a theoretical analysis of the concepts of "multilingualism" and their practical application in education. The authors have examined the long-term experience of teaching with a multilingual textbook which is featured by materials about the culture of the Russian North. The work, contributed by a great international team of authors and translators, contains didactic materials that dynamically form the language competence of students. It was published three times within 15 years and has received international recognition. Russian and foreign colleagues from European, American and Asian countries worked together on the publication. Extensive approbation of the book in education made it possible to supplement content of the work with a large group of authors and translators, as well as improving didactic support for the materials. The article summarizes the prospects of multilingual pedagogy development, its significant role in the preservation of languages and cultures in the international educational context.

**Keywords-***pedagogy of multilingualism, concept of the textbook, language education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of multilingualism is connected to the history of the tower of Babel and is rooted in historical events that occurred before the new chronology.

The whole history of the Tower of Babel [1: 1-3], analyzed by one of our works, which is devoted to the study of multilingualism, clearly demonstrates origins of conceptual ideas of multilingualism [2]. The essence of the primary interdisciplinary assumptions about real events and the further evolution of the concept – multilingualism can be concluded as the following: humanity has been through a long way of its development from harmonious communication in one language, which was Sanskrit, to a situation of mixing languages and dialects. The path from the Golden Age to the Iron was full of disturbance to linguistic and socio-cultural harmony. People stopped understanding each other, trust disappeared, egoism

appeared, so did the desire to build their inner Tower of Babel. The logic of understanding historical events leads to a conclusion that any tower collapses sooner or later, if there are mistrust, weakness of spirit and unwillingness to understand other people. At the same time, synergistically, it is clear that any chaos brings about a new order. Sequentially, there is a need to seek understanding of each other by studying different languages and cultures, as well as rules of communication in different socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, the necessity for the concept of multilingualism arises, on which the foundation of cultural and linguistic diversity is laid.

Let us consider the origin of languages: once there were just a few languages. These were the so-called "proto-languages." Over time, proto-languages began to spread across land, each of them became the ancestor of their language family. Language family is the largest unit of language classification (peoples and ethnic groups) isolated on the basis of their linguistic kinship.

Next, the ancestors of language families split into language groups of languages. Languages that originated from a single language family (that is, descended from a single "proto-language") are called "language groups". The languages of one language group retain many common roots, and have similar grammatical structures, phonetic and lexical elements. Today there are more than 7000 languages from more than 100 language families of languages.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomenon of language pedagogy as a whole is based on ideas of multilingualism. This is evidenced by numerous works on multilingualism in the international scientific community [2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7]. At the same time, language pedagogy is unique in the sense that it provides linguistic, pedagogical, communicative, and sociocultural theories. The theories are actualized in practices of language education and general and professional education [8; 9; 10; 11; 12].

Since the last century, and especially at the turn of the century, the international community has been actively developing and discussing the concept of multilingualism, which aims not only to promote the knowledge of several languages, but also understanding of different cultures, as well as studying the communication in every day, professional, business, and information contexts [6;76].

At the beginning of the XXI century it also began to actively develop the ideas of didactics and pedagogy of multilingualism [8; 9; 10]. In our view, the ideas of the pedagogy of multilingualism have linguistic, didactic and cultural potential that unite peoples, nationalities and representatives of all countries, enrich education with linguistic and cultural values, and ultimately promote peace and understanding, respect and cooperation among all segments of the world's population. The pathos of those words is scientifically based in varied works of the authors of the article [11; 12; 13].

In many definitions of the concept which we are now studying, it is emphasized that the basic feature of multilingualism, which refers to a person's ability to use different languages and, depending on the goal, to use the knowledge of different languages and cultures in new sociocultural situations. A. Kovtun supports this point [14, p. 28]. Other scholars, for instance, V. Smokotin, do not reject the phenomenality of multilingualism, as well as the necessity to study capabilities, resources and using methods of it. But they consider that multilingualism is a global phenomenon which is not limited merely to people's abilities. The phenomenon of multilingualism does also have its international role, which determines the interaction between states and regions [15].

The literature review shows that languages are a cultural phenomenon, therefore the study of the interaction between languages and cultures is particularly in demand in scientific and educational practices. This interaction is most apparently manifested in the border countries because in these regions multilingual persons are in demand. These persons should be able to communicate in different languages in different fields: from daily to narrowly professional communication [11; 13]. Besides, scientists also pay attention to the need to understand cultural specifics of different countries, which is essential for the self-identification of a multicultural person [8; 9; 16].

It should also be borne in mind that learning of languages and cultures is associated with higher levels of human consciousness, intellect and abilities of language switching and deep comprehension of situations. Mechanisms of mobilization and involvement into multicultural and multilingual communication are not fully researched, but such studies are politically in need, especially under the circumstance of the internationalization [11; 14].

Following Gal'skova N.D. and Gez N.I. (renowned Russian linguists) under the language education we mean "education in the field of all (native and non-native) languages and cultures" [17, p. 3].

Linguistic and educational policies of many countries emphasize the need to study the phenomenon of multilingualism and its increasing role in education. The stimulus to the study of this phenomenon is the multilingual and multicultural political strategy of Europe [18; 19]. Within its frameworks, the ideas of studying three to five languages, including the native one, introducing culture-social approach in the teaching and learning of foreign languages are actively promoted and implemented. Another important document for the development of multilingualism is The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It is a system of levels of foreign language proficiency used in Europe.

The main goal of the CEFR system is to provide a method of assessment and training that is applicable for all European languages.

The document also allows:

- To set goals and objectives of the educational process
- To develop and modify work programs for the study of foreign language
- To develop training manuals and other training materials [20]

To recognize the language skills of students for academic and professional mobility Multilingualism should be considered a source of linguodidactic ideas for the development of language education [11; 21].

### III. METHODOLOGY

The first stage of methodological work was aimed at understanding the phenomenon of pedagogy of multilingualism (2001-2002). The second stage was characterized by forming a team of like-minded people, developing the concept of multilingual textbook (2002-2003). At the third stage, text materials with educational purposes were designed (2003-2004). In the fourth stage, the materials were presented in five foreign languages by involving translation consultants and foreign colleagues from England, America, Germany, Norway, France and other countries (2004-2005). At the fifth stage, the textbook was published, which received grant support for publication and the stamp of the Education and Teaching Methods Council (2004-2008). The textbook was supplemented and revised at the sixth stage, followed by appearance of the second edition, realization of which was done with participation of more than 3,000 students and teachers (2008-2015). The seventh stage is still active today (2015-2019). The new edition was published in 2017. It has a section in Chinese, which regarded as an innovation for the northern region of Russia. The textbook was presented at international congresses, conferences, exhibitions, universities, colleges and schools of European and Asian many countries. It became the winner of two international competitions as "the Best University Book", enlisted in the catalog and fund of the German national library. At present, the manual is actively implemented in educational process.

In general, materials on the culture of the Russian North have been used by more than 6,000 Russian and foreign students in various countries, including Germany, Norway, France and China. The materials are usually studied in different forms: individually, in groups in classes (over the period of their implementation, the number was more than 300). Additionally, they are actively referred to in courses and at events in schools, colleges, universities, as well as in libraries.

The main results about the concept of multilingualism are presented by us both in the textbook itself and in scientific works [2; 12]. Concerning the methodology of presenting materials in this article, we focus on the basic ideas of the concept developed by a team of authors and implemented in several editions of the manual. In this article, it is attempted to analyze conceptual ideas of the textbook based on a linguistic synergistic approach to the study of the stated topic.

1. Openness of a system is the fundamental synergistic feature. A multilingual and multicultural person behave in communication, always relying on knowledge of his own culture and native language. By comparing its culture with the others, knowledge system of such a person becomes open to information from external environment.

2. Information exchange as a synergistic characteristic is carried out in the textbook between authors and students, teachers and students, as well as students themselves. Information is also exchanged between subjects of education and sociocultural environment where there are cultural objects, literary phenomena and unique individuals.

3. The relative autonomy of each element of the system in a synergistic context is taken into account in such a way that all proposed topics are autonomous. Students have opportunities to choose a section/sections from the work, which increases interest in studying cultural phenomena in different languages.

4. The synergistic principle of conjugation, which is aimed at active communication between readers and authors, is realized in texts written on the basis of personal perception of the authors. The texts motivate students to learn new materials, since they are written in different genres and are informative, brief and cognitively useful.

5. The principle of ingression is accomplished by combining elements within each section, in which the introductory part is presented in the form of a target-impulse, the main part is in different genres, afterwards it comes communicative tasks and at the end there is a motivating part for further study.

6. Synergistic disingression is aimed at neutralizing connective activities. Readers get the impression that they “set off on an independent journey over the expanses” of cultures and foreign languages. Students have the opportunity to create their own image of Russian culture, to feel peculiarities of traditions and customs, to compare how cultural phenomena are described in different languages.

7. The synergistic phenomenon of mobile equilibrium is created in the textbook because of the variety of interactive tasks. Information is exchanged in the context of the interaction between educational systems and the socio-cultural environments on regional and international levels. Central to this exchange of information, energy, and emotions are all subjects of education: teachers, students, pupils and other learning entities.

8. The increase in the activity of students and the teaching system itself while using the textbook leads to synergistic changes in the ratio between assimilation and de-assimilation in terms of cognitive processes and the obtained knowledge. All these processes are non-linear, they can have fluctuation and bifurcation phenomena, nevertheless, they allow one to conceptualize and acquire something new about cultural and linguistic phenomena.

9. Progress in the acquisition of linguistic and cultural characteristics is ensured by relatively reaching sustainability of elements in an educational system. This means that the textbook harmoniously balanced cultural and linguistic phenomena. The tasks are focused on diminishing difficulties, the principle of information sufficiency and cognitive load is counted, feedback is provided, the possibility of self-adjustment is offered, optimality of sections is well thought, and learning efficiency is achieved thanks to the dynamic work on the twenty sections of the textbook.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

This section briefly presents three types of results of a study that has, in our opinion, the practical significance and the method of transferring accumulated over many years of adjustments experience into the implementation and dissemination of the concept of multilingualism.

First, we studied how the textbook has been changed and improved during the period from 2004 to 2017. The primary changes are concerned with the following points: language inaccuracies, typographical errors, wording and design of tasks for texts in the second edition. The third edition significantly enriched content and elaborated structure of the work. A large section in Chinese has been included. The team of authors, translators and consultants has expanded considerably. The book added completely new materials about the Arctic topics with new tasks for the texts too. Besides, the title of the book was changed, and its cover and preface were updated. All of these, supplements and new materials firmly prove positive dynamics of the quality of work by a large creative team. It is not by chance that in 2018 the book became a winner of the competition of the best University publications.

Secondly, we have generalized methods of visualization of materials used in the book. The visualization of materials was one of the basic ideas of the multilingual concept. Students and adult readers need visual aids when learning other languages and cultures. The form of visualization used in the book are quite diverse: photos, pictures, posters, advertisements, drawings, logos, collages, background skins,

colors, framing situations, background, sociogram, tables, and many others. Most of the photos are copyrighted, which gives the work a special value. Here is one example (figure 1).



Figure 1. Arkhangelsk Jazz Friends (from Drummer: A. Barandov's Private Archive)

Tasks to texts have different didactic characters, showing didactic capacity of authors and their original designs. For example, they can be designed as a table (table 1).

TABLE 1. TASK 2.18.3. WHAT DID THESE FAMOUS PEOPLE DO TO MAKE THE ARKHANGELSK REGION FAMOUS? MATCH THE FAMOUS PEOPLE'S NAMES WITH THEIR OCCUPATIONS.

<b>Fyodor Abramov</b>	founder and art director of State Academic Northern Russian Folk Choir
<b>Nikolai Rubtsov</b>	Russian Orthodox Christian presbyter, canonized by Russian Orthodox Church in 1990
<b>John of Kronstadt</b>	Russian lyric poet
<b>Joseph Brodsky</b>	Russian writer and literary critic
<b>Antonina Kolotilova</b>	poet, winner of Nobel Prize in Literature, 1987

Third, we present results of the survey for students' and teachers' opinions about advantages and disadvantages of the textbook "Culture in the North. Pedagogy of Multilingualism". During 2005-2018, we have conducted the brief survey for students on average three times per year.

We selected 200 questionnaires by random sampling. The advantages of the textbook in students' mind are: novelty of materials, non-standard tasks, desire to work with texts and corresponding tasks, chance to improvise and be creative, rich choice of materials, projects and discussion in a team, comparison of several languages, presentation of materials in their native language, etc. The disadvantages for students are: insufficient time to study materials, black and white printing of photos and drawings, the lack of video and audio recordings, the complexity of the perception of materials in the context of culture and language. In wishes to authors from students, gratitude was expressed. They also wish for further improvement of materials and more experiments with materials of the textbook. They peculiarly remember extracurricular activities based on the materials: presentations, interactive tasks, communication, broadening of horizons, usefulness of events and other moments.

Thus, the results of the introduction of the textbook and the implementation of its concept of multilingualism show a positive trend. The ideas of multilingualism and cultural diversity are sound and recommended for dissemination and active use in the international educational context.

### V. SUMMARY

Pedagogy of multilingualism, which is growing in the international educational context, makes a great contribution to the development of language education policy at all its levels: global, European, federal, regional and institutional. Because it supports the most progressive and politically significant initiatives of representatives of scientific and educational communities, for example, language support in the international context, the work of unions and associations, the formation of foreign language policy of native speakers, the study of languages and cultures of different countries and for different purposes and participation in research and cooperation of scientists and teachers. The long-term use of the multilingual textbook in the educational process, its improvement and the results of positive motivation for studying different languages and cultures indicate the special role of the pedagogy of multilingualism in education and the prospect of development of this scientific direction.

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