

Kazakhstan: From Bilingualism to Polylingualism

Maral Amalbekova

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan

Abstract: The article discusses the phenomenon of bilingualism, its positive influence on the development of human civilization is noted. A person who knows two or more languages expands its communication capabilities, entering into several language communities. In Kazakhstan, as a result of continued domination of the Russian language in the Soviet Union a unique language situation was formed, when the indigenous population used to a lesser extent native language, but rather owned Russian language, becoming bilingual. It is claimed in theory that in Kazakhstan there are two types of bilingualism: Kazakh-Russian (when the Kazakhs speak in Russian) and Russian-Kazakh (when the Russian-speaking Kazakh), but in fact, according to the author, in Kazakhstan, one common type of bilingualism do exist - when the Kazakhs speak in Russian. In addition, main stages of bilingualism in Kazakhstan are named.

Key words: Bilingualism • Multilingualism • Kazakh-Russian bilingualism • Communication capabilities

INTRODUCTION

It is general knowledge that for a long time in all the republics of the former Soviet Union studying of the Russian language was given a lot of attention, while the other national languages were relegated to the background. All the Soviet republics now had a unique linguistic situation, when many members of indigenous ethnic group had a better command of the Russian language, having become Russian-speakers and the native language in everyday life and in their creative work gradually gave way to the Russian language. This situation with the emergence of new independent states has been undergoing changes due to new conceptualizations of the role of the native language and changes in the linguistic consciousness of speakers, who are increasingly using the potential of the native language and culture, or the language of the titular nation in the description of reality.

As a result of these historical and political developments, in Kazakhstan there has widely spread Kazakh-Russian (with predominance of the Kazakh language) and Russian-Kazakh (with predominance of the Russian language) bilingualism.

In linguistics, the common understanding of bilingualism is the ability of a person to use for communication two language systems. Let us compare U.

Weinreich, "Bilingualism is the knowledge of two languages and their use alternate, depending on the conditions of speech communication" [1, 2].

Bilingualism has a long history and wide spread in the world, but it still continues to be a phenomenal occurrence to some degree. A detailed description of its history is provided in the work by U. Bakhtikireyeva, who notes that "in the history of world culture the phenomenon of literary bilingualism has been known since ancient times," [3, 7]. It should be emphasized that this phenomenon is undoubtedly positive, because, as it is noted by many scholars (U. Weinreich and others), who studied this phenomenon, bilingualism is the result of cultural contacts, it is the result of cross-cultural communication. It is through bilingualism that human civilization has developed. It is a known fact that almost all of the language groups adopt something from their neighbors and are themselves the source of certain knowledge and events for other communities, i.e. the process of cultural adoption is usually mutual [4].

Contacting of peoples, cultures, languages has happened for various reasons- geographical proximity, forced seizure of territories, voluntary understanding by group members that they can not live in isolation, that it is necessary to study languages and cultures of other nations (as it happened in Russia during the reign of Peter I, who cut through the "window to Europe", in

Kazakhstan, the famous philosopher Abai in his time realized the need for languages and cultures to contact). But whatever the reason, the bilingualism (or multilingualism) has always been only a positive phenomenon, because, as it is justly remarked by V. Blinokhvatova, “we should at the same time mention the factor of prestige in knowing many languages. This is also confirmed by the wise saying: “So many languages you know, so many times you are human.” Life experience shows us to what extent the knowledge of two or more languages enhances our communicative, social, information space. Thus, knowledge of several languages not only facilitates learning and communication, but also gives a certain freedom of choice of language and speech behavior, which becomes a distinct advantage of bilinguals and polyglots and thus raises their status [5, 19].

In his monograph “Language Interaction Theory” A. Karlinsky writes about the advantage of bilingualism as follows: “The special feature of a bilingual is that he belongs to three language communities: primary (consisting only of monolingual speakers L1), secondary (consisting only of carriers monolingual speakers L2) and bilingual (consisting only of bilingual speakers L1 and L2) [6, 34].

Each successive stage in two to three times enhances capabilities of a person in the field of communication. For example, a trilingual is already a member of the three monolingual communities that speak L1 (1), L2 (2), L3 (3), a member of three bilingual communities that speak L1 and L2 (5), L2 and L3 (5), L1 and L3 (6) and a member of one trilingual language community (7). Thus, his communication capabilities are enhanced by 7 times compared to a monolingual.

Modern Scholars Put Forward Various Classifications of Bilingualism, for Example:

- Based on correlation of bilingualism with a certain society – individual, group and mass;
- Based on the method of learning – natural and artificial;
- Based on the degree of mastery – coordinative (“pure”) and subordinative (“mixed”). Coordinative (pure) bilingualism [7] is a separate use by one person of the two languages which “provides the right formation of speech in L1 and L2 by linguistic balance” [8]. Subordinative (mixed) bilingualism is bilingual, in which the second (acquired) language is somewhat applied to the first one [9, 27].

Concerning the creative (literary) bilingualism a known Kazakhstani linguist B. Khasanov said that it is manifested:

- At the level of bilingual potency, i.e. “hidden” bilingualism of the author;
- At the level of bilingual actualization:
- Explicit combining of elements of two languages;
- Implicit combining of elements of two languages [9, 37].

In contrast to the hidden bilingualism there is open bilingualism which means a separate use by one person of two or more languages in writing two or more works and mixed (subordinative) bilingualism, if in one work written in any national language there are elements of other languages that can be minimally involved in the whole utterance, one or more sentences (proverbs, sayings, aphorisms of public figures of a national culture), phrases with specific words realias, replicas in dialogues, etc. [9, 38-39; 10, 333].

If we speak about the process of formation of bi- and multilingualism in Kazakhstan, Z. Akhmetzhanova highlights four periods in the history of their development: the first period refers to the time of formation of the Kazakh ethnic group, establishment of trade and diplomatic relations with neighboring states, when the nobles knew several languages- Arabic, Farsi, Chinese, Russian; the second period is related to the strengthening of relations with Russia, the emergence of Russian immigrants. It was during this period that the Kazakh-Russian (when Kazakhs speak Russian) and Russian-Kazakh (when Russians speak Kazakh) bilingualism formed. In the first two periods, bilingualism is not so massive; in the third period, which began in the thirties and forties of the XX century, when as a result of forced relocation representatives of many ethnic groups arrived in Kazakhstan and were sent to live in the remote Kazakh auls, where they were forced to learn the Kazakh language. The local population was gradually mastering the Russian language, because most of the immigrants spoke only Russian. Thus, there were some extralinguistic preconditions for the emergence of bilingualism, which is usually formed in two ways: first, in an oral way, through contacts of settlers with the local Kazakh population, i.e. there is natural bilingualism; second, in an oral-written way, when children of immigrants were studying in Kazakh schools of, that is, there is an artificial academic-classroom bilingualism, which is also supported by the natural language environment. Artificial Russian-speaking

environment for Kazakhs was created with opening and increase in the number of Russian schools that were attended by the greater part of Kazakhs; the fourth period is associated with the acquisition by Kazakhstan of the status as an independent self-supporting state, where the Kazakh language is given the status of the state language, the Russian language- the status of international language and the English language- the status of the language of international communication when representatives of non-titular nation have to learn the Kazakh language [11, 300].

For the formation and development of a lingual-creative bilingual person the most favorable was undoubtedly the third period, when, as Z. Akhmetzhanova states, in the result of a specific expansion of the Russian language the Kazakh language was pushed into the background, many representatives of the indigenous nationality had a better command of the Russian language, wrote their works in Russian [11, 301], but nevertheless ethnic consciousness, Kazakh mentality manifested itself in their behavior, was evident in their works, one feels that it is a work created by a Kazakh.

If we consider the bilingual situation in Kazakhstan with a theoretical point of view, we can say, taking into consideration the above mentioned different classifications of bilingualism, that in Kazakhstan there is to a greater extent subordinative (mixed) natural-artificial bilingualism. At the same time it should be noted that while many scholars say about the presence of two types of bilingualism in Kazakhstan- Kazakh-Russian (when Kazakhs speak Russian) and Russian-Kazakh (when Russians speak Kazakh), in fact, in my opinion, in Kazakhstan there is distributed mainly one type- when Kazakhs speak and write in Russian. Both combinations "Kazakh-Russian" and "Russian-Kazakh bilingualism" mean only this one type. When we use the combination "Kazakh-Russian" the ethnicity of the speaker comes to the fore and when we use the combination "Russian-Kazakh"- it is the language used by the speaker (Kazakh speaker). There are a number of examples when Kazakhs freely use the two languages both at the household level and in a creative context, but the examples of the fact that representatives of other ethnic groups speak Kazakh at all are quite few.

If in the XX century Kazakhs though forcibly became bilingual and understood that this fact brought them only advantages, there is no doubt that in the XXI century

they will voluntarily learn any foreign language and become multilingualism as it is required nowadays [12].

Since at the present time on the initiative of the Head of State N.A. Nazarbayev (it was announced by the President in his annual address to the people of Kazakhstan "New Kazakhstan in a New World," February 28, 2007: "... I propose to begin a phased implementation of the cultural project "Trinity of languages". Kazakhstan should be seen around the world as a highly educated country, with a population use three languages...") a national cultural project "Trinity of languages" is launched.

REFERENCES

1. Weinreich, U., 1972. Monolingualism and multilingualism // *Novelty in linguistics- M.: "Progress"-VI-th Edition*, pp: 25-60.
2. Weinreich, U., 1968. *Languages in contact*. ISBN 9027926891. Mouton Publishers, the Hague.
3. Bakhtikireyeva, U.M., 2005. *Creative bilingual personality: National Russian-speaking writer and peculiarities of his Russian literary text.- M., Triada*, pp: 190.
4. *Bilingualism: a social approach* (edited by Monica Heller), 2007. Palgrave Macmillan, pp: 361.
5. Blinokhvatoval, V.M., 2005. *Russian-French bilingualism of the Russian nobility of the first half of the XIX century (on the basis of letters)*. Diss... candidate of philological sciences.- Stavropol, pp: 179.
6. Karlinsky, A.E., 1990. *Language Interaction Theory*. -Alma-Ata: Gylm.
7. Ervin, S. and C.H. Osgood, 1955. *Second language learning and bilingualism*. In *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 59: 135-156.
8. Shaybakova, D.D., 2006. *Functioning of inorganic language in a multiethnic society (on the basis of the Russian language in Kazakhstan)*. Abstract of thesis... doctor of philological sciences, Almaty, pp: 50.
9. Khasanov, B., 1990. *Kazakh-Russian art and literature bilingualism*. Alma-Ata: Rauan, pp: 191.
10. Peter Auer, 2007. *The monolingual bias in bilingualism research, or: why bilingual talk is (still) a challenge for linguistics*. In *Bilingualism: a social approach* (edited by Monica Heller). Palgrave Macmillan, pp: 319-339.

11. Akhmetzhanova, Z.K., 2005. Typology of bilingualism and multilingualism in Kazakhstan: German and Slavic components. In *Life of language and language in life*. Almaty, pp: 299-307.
12. Juldyz Smagulova, Language policies of Kazakhization and their influence on language attitude and use, *International Journal of bilingual education and bilingualism*, publisher - Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, ISSN 1747-7522, 2008.