

Multicultural Education as a Factor of Formation of a Multicultural Personality

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Abstract: This study considers the issue of formation of multicultural education as a condition of self-development of a future specialist. Multicultural education can provide a future specialist with enabling environment, promoting a balance between developing the universal humanistic personal qualities and the ability to implement the specialist's national and cultural and ethnic needs in their entirety. The objective of this study is to reveal the basic principles and objectives of multilingual education and to form a methodical system of development of the multicultural personality. Analysis of the basic concepts of research based on the study of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical, culturological, sociological literature, government documents and the analysis findings of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, compilation and interpretation of scientific data and modeling. Modern life demands of a person not only to have business and organizational qualities but also the aptitude to take his bearings in a changing environment, the ability to communicate, collaborate, build a career to be a multicultural personality. Cultural integration, exchange of experience, high intellectual demands, a high level of competition, the ability to interact with a wide range of people are the critical factors of success in our modern life. analysis of the work of teachers and psychologists on the development of multicultural education has revealed that the problem has not been given due consideration in the conditions of higher educational institution.

Key words: Multicultural personality, principle, multicultural environment, multicultural education, formation

INTRODUCTION

Today, in the age of globalization and technologisation, intensification of the search for effective conditions, mechanisms for education of the younger generation that would be able to interact with other cultures is being observed. Multicultural education is an effective tool for training the younger generation in the conditions of the interconnected and interdependent world.

Multicultural education is the basis of the formation of the multicultural personality, whose degree of maturity largely determines the positive pattern of personal self-realization in the modern conditions of social relations, competitiveness and social mobility. It should be noted that in the present context the mode of life is unified in a certain way, many national differences are blended, a person loses his roots and moral experience of previous generations loses its value. Therefore, an educator faces

a most important task to use all the unique experience and knowledge of the cultural traditions of peoples, universal human values and world culture in creating a supportive educational environment contributing to the formation of the socially active personality. In other words, multicultural education is necessary to form a competitive specialist, a communicative positive personality, capable of active and effective life in the multiethnic and multicultural environment, who has developed a sense of understanding and respect for other cultures and the ability to live in peace and harmony.

Currently, multicultural education in the Republic of Kazakhstan is one of the main trends in the system of higher education. And a higher education institute is an important stage in the process of formation and development of the personality in the multicultural environment where the core values and principles of life are intentionally formed. This institution can provide a student with an environment that allows a balance

between the universal humanist qualities of the personality and the ability to complete the implementation of its national, cultural, linguistic and ethnic needs.

In this regard, one of the important tasks of universities is expanding a multicultural component of the content of higher education, enabling future specialists to master the world's cultural heritage and foreign languages. Knowing a foreign language provides a direct access to the culture and social experience of other countries as well as calls for a cultural dialogue in the educational process, offering more opportunities for cross-cultural interaction.

Modern education needs a conveyor of knowledge, who is able not only to think but also conceive that is, to generate own meanings of teaching. The self-evolution of an educator, his professional and linguistic self-development which is, in our view, the process of qualitative, purposeful, conscious change of his personality sphere is possible only as a result of reflections on the meaning of being in the profession (Zhetpisbayeva, 2008).

Students from different cultural, ethnic and social groups attend higher educational institutions. The vocational training provided at the institutions and aimed at the training of a future specialist of any sphere must also be focused on understanding the entire whole, not only mastering the professional knowledge and skills but also on creating and improving professionally important personal qualities that are an integral part of a specialist personality. In this regard, the formation of the personality in multicultural environment plays an important role in the training of qualified specialists.

However, the modern educational process at university is still traditional and does not have sufficient capacity to deal with this problem. One of the reasons is the lack of a holistic concept of formation of the multicultural personality of a student in the learning process with the help of academic disciplines. Simultaneously, there are many philosophical, psychological, pedagogical ideas that can form the basis of a set of conditions for efficient formation of the personality of a future specialist of any field in studying foreign languages (Slobodchikov, 1997).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Multicultural education: In the context of globalization, the linguistic sphere of public life is susceptible to significant change to the maximum extent. This can be explained by the fact that the pace and nature of the transformation of political, economic and cultural systems are largely dependent on linguistic, ethnic and cultural,

social and other concrete historical conditions that are specific to each particular country. Remaining a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, Kazakhstan is experiencing a complicated and contradictory period of its cultural and linguistic development which is evidenced by the linguistic situation, the characteristic of which is given in the concept of the language policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It should be noted that almost all the documents in the domain of the language policy present a core idea of the need to master several languages.

Multilingual education is the foundation of formation of the multilingual personality whose degree of well-formedness in many respects determines the positive nature of personal self-realization of a person in the present conditions of social relations, his competitiveness and social mobility.

The contemporary language situation in Kazakhstan has attached special significance to the problems of the education system. This feature is associated with the generation of the idea of 'Trinity of languages' which was put forward by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2004. The public response, including the scientific and pedagogical community, proved to be controversial: from criticizing for no reason to seeking the theoretical and methodological foundations of the idea and developing the mechanisms for its implementation.

Despite the fact that the essence of this idea was explained concisely and very clearly, its interpretation in the criticism is defined as the dominance of the English language. Noting the groundlessness and destructiveness of this criticism, we believe that attention should be paid to the essence of the concept of 'trinity.' In our understanding, its essence is expressed as follows: positivity of the development of trilingualism is possible for the Kazakh community provided there is a single political, ideological and cultural platform. And this platform has already been defined in the explanation of the essence of the 'Trinity of languages' project by its creator: Kazakh shall be studied as the official language, Russian shall be studied as the language of interethnic communication and English shall be studied as the language of successful integration into the global economy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The factors of multilingual education in a certain sense act as derived values of its bases. If the bases determine (or explain) the potentiality for the implementation of educational activities in the field of multilingual education, the factors can directly affect

them. Multilingual education is a focused organized, triunique process of learning, education and development of an individual as the multilingual personality based on the simultaneous acquisition of several languages as a 'fragment' of different cultures of humanity. The content of multilingual education should include systematic knowledge and skills in the field of native and official languages as well as in the field of one or more foreign languages in accordance with the cross-cultural paradigm of modern linguistic education. The fundamental ideas in the implementation of multilingual education in the context of intercultural communication are:

- Motivating and encouraging the use of different languages in accordance with the needs and interests of students
- Forming the skills of cross-cultural communication
- A strategy of continuous learning the features of certain cultures and peculiarities of their interaction through the language
- Going beyond one's own culture and acquisition of the qualities of the cultures mediator without losing own cultural identity
- The ability of learners to create a single meaning of current developments with a conversation partner, representing a different culture, on the basis of knowledge of the various cultures and skills in both discussing these differences, mediating between cultures and changing the learners' own attitude towards them
- Reliance on the culturological and linguistic cross-cultural knowledge of learners
- Provision of the language studying content in accordance with the socio-cultural situation in a particular country (or region) (Makaev, 1999)

We are considering the language as a factor of culture, firstly because it is its integral part which we have inherited from our ancestors, secondly, the language is the main instrument through which we learn the culture; thirdly, it is the most important of all the phenomena of cultural order as it is an integral part of culture.

Now a days, multilingual education is a powerful factor and effective mechanism for: improving the competitiveness of the native language due to the fact that it is activated in the field of receiving cultural and other various, significant information; strengthening the status of the Russian language as the official language of interstate relations in the CIS countries (there is an objective necessity of functioning a common intermediate language and due to the historical factor, only the Russian language can perform this function).

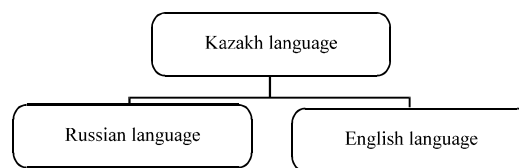


Fig. 1: The education principle in the multilingual system

At present, some principles of learning in the multilingual system have been formed (Antonova, 2005):

- The Kazakh language the Russian language the English language
- Studying the languages should go hand in hand and the native language should serve as a base
- Teaching a foreign language should be projected for training
- Verbal thinking, mastery of new means of expression of thought and the world of the target language

The development of a person's multilingual consciousness occurs through the development of speech via mental oral and written communication. The development of speech is the development of thinking. Speech is impossible without thinking, without the outrunning internal process (Kim and Uteulieva, 2010) (Fig. 1).

One of the objectives of education is the task of familiarizing the younger generation with global values, forming teenagers' ability to communicate and interact with representatives of other cultures in the universal space. Since the role of languages in the modern world is very important, the issue of teaching languages and improving the language proficiency of students and school teachers, who need to know their own language and English, the language of international communication are being raised before the community. The main objective facing school teachers is the education of the multicultural personality, knowing the customs and traditions of its people, having a command of several languages, being capable of providing communicative and activity operations in the three languages in all situations and striving for self-development and self-improvement (Kim and Uteulieva, 2010).

The language policy of Kazakhstan puts forward 'reasonable transformation of language culture on the basis of equitable use of three languages: the official language, the ones of interethnic and international communication,' and allows us to carry out a gradual entry into the mobile mega cultural world (Samasheva *et al.*, 2006). Being proficient in the Kazakh, Russian and foreign languages is becoming an integral component of personal and professional activity of the

person in the modern society. All of this taken together leads to the need for a large number of citizens who can speak the three languages practically and professionally and, therefore, gain a real chance to take a more prestigious position in society, both in social and professional term.

At the moment, the issue of multilingual education centered on the individual with a multilingual and multicultural competence is urgent for us. Multilingual education is an important part of modern general education and contributes to students mastering other languages assimilation cultural values and traditions of the peoples of the world, their lifestyle as well as to education of youth in the spirit of respect for the worldview values of other nations. Multilingual education is the best tool for learning the native language, development of dialectical thinking, broadening of outlook and forming the multicultural personality. The objective of multilingual education is:

- Forming the concept of multilingualism in the individual
- Cultivating tolerant attitude to the linguistic and cultural differences, overcoming negative ethno-social stereotypes
- Developing language skills with native speakers of different cultures
- Forming the culture of interethnic communication in the individual

As previously noted, multilingual education is the best tool for learning the native language, development of dialectical thinking, broadening of outlook and forming the multicultural personality. What is the multicultural personality? According to many characteristics given, it can be concluded that the 'multicultural personality' is an individual with developed linguistic consciousness. Such a personality must have vivid artistic and aesthetic consciousness, thinking, imagination, subtle feelings and love of beauty.

The multilingual personality is considered to be a competent mother-tongue and non-mother-tongue speaker, who should systematically and steadily show four competences (Fig. 2).

Modernization of school multilingual and multicultural education, personal development in the multi-ethnic information and communication space of the Republic of Kazakhstan leads to forming the functional literacy of the linguistic identity. We need a system of linguistic education, where there should not be division

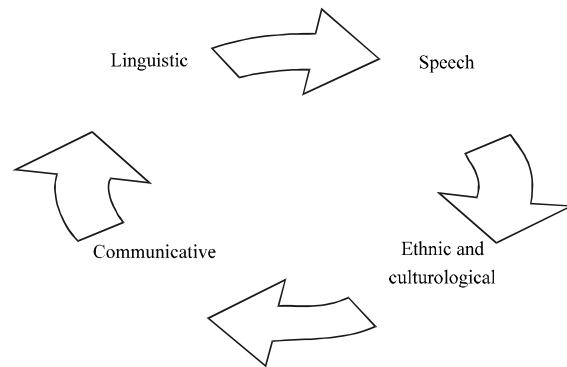


Fig. 2: The four competences of the multilingual personality

into teaching the mother tongue, the language of international communication and foreign languages which states the Concept of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. They should be taught and learnt in parallel and interconnected, i.e., it is necessary to create multilingual training systems which will contribute to the development of language skills. Multilingual education is included in the system of liberal arts education, the essence of which is study of man in his relation to the world. The official language, the Russian, English and German languages enrich students not only with new knowledge but also with new creative experience. During the study of these languages, the culture of different peoples is also studied. Understanding the world, customs is transferred to the language and it is important to know the language to avoid obstacles when dealing with representatives of different nations.

Today, no country in the international arena can remain in the linguistic isolation and it is forced to use foreign languages. According to UNESCO experts, the minimum number of languages that a person should know in the third millennium will be at least three.

'As many languages you know as many times you are a human being'. This ancient wise saying is currently important. Modern Kazakhstan and the world are rapidly changing before our eyes. Due to the development of science and technology, the concepts of time and space are disappearing. All borders are becoming less distinct and the world that used to consist of the closed little worlds of separate states is becoming a single, interconnected organism. We are entering the era of globalization of economy and knowledge and lifelong learning. Therefore, not only the future but also the present society demands of us knowledge of foreign languages. The modern world increasingly needs people who can think creatively, analyze and understand others. And a foreign language is one of the best means to develop these skills.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the above, studying a foreign language helps prepare the functionally literate multilingual and multicultural personality and create conditions for the social, intellectual and personal development of the individuality of mother-tongue speaker.

Thus, the development of society dictates the increasing demands for the training of a specialist. Intensive renewal of manufacturing technologies, integration of scientific knowledge, the increasing the number of complex scientific and practical problems of interdisciplinary nature pose the task of preparing a specialist who would be ready for a creative and constantly changing professional activity before higher vocational school. In this regard, the modern institution of higher education must introduce new approaches to professional multilingual education, providing, in addition to its fundamental nature and compliance the requirements of state educational standards, the

development of personal qualities of the future specialist, his starving for professional and linguistic self-development.

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