

PROBLEMS OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF BILINGUALISM: MODERN RESEARCH AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

This paper examines the problems of linguistic identity among bilinguals, its impact on personal self-determination, and language interaction. Modern research in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics analyzes the factors influencing the formation of bilingual identity, including social conditions, cognitive processes, and cultural characteristics. The study also discusses the prospects for further research in this field, considering the development of neurolinguistics and digital technologies.

Key words: bilingualism, linguistic identity, self-determination, social conditions, neurolinguistics, digital technologies.

In the context of globalization and intensive migration processes, bilingualism is becoming increasingly widespread, necessitating the study of linguistic identity. The question of which language a person perceives as their native language, in which language they think, and what emotions they associate with each is central to sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

Bilingualism can arise due to natural sociocultural processes or as a result of individual choice. However, regardless of the reasons for its formation, bilingualism often raises questions of identity, especially when languages have different statuses in society. Modern research indicates that bilingual identity is not a stable category and can change under the influence of external and internal factors.

The formation of linguistic identity in the context of bilingualism is a complex and dynamic process influenced by numerous factors. Key among them are social conditions, proficiency levels in each language, emotional attachment to languages, and cultural context. According to V. Yu. Mikhaltchenko, bilinguals may feel a sense of belonging to one or more linguistic communities, largely determined by their communicative practices and life circumstances.

Among the social factors influencing bilingual identity, the role of family, the educational environment, and state language policies are particularly significant. For example, studies by T. G. Prokopenko show that children of migrants often experience an identity conflict: at home, they speak one language, while at school and in public places, they must use another. As a result, a mixed linguistic identity may develop, where both languages are equally perceived as 'native', or one language gradually becomes dominant while the other fades into the background.

Beyond social aspects, cognitive and psychological factors also play a crucial role in shaping linguistic identity. Y. A. Zalevskaya describes the phenomenon of 'linguistic schizophrenia'— a state in which bilinguals feel like different personalities when using different languages. This is because each language carries specific cultural codes, values, and behavioral models. For example, G. D. Tomakhin's research suggests that bilinguals may exhibit different communication styles depending on the language they use: one may be associated with more formal interactions, while the other encourages more emotional expression.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, bilinguals also demonstrate distinctive features in their perception and processing of linguistic information. According to studies by J. Fishman, bilinguals often engage in code-switching — the practice of mixing elements from two languages within a single conversation. This phenomenon is especially common among individuals raised in bilingual environments where both languages are used simultaneously. Some researchers view code-switching as a sign of cognitive flexibility, while others see it as an indication of linguistic uncertainty.

An interesting aspect of bilingual identity relates to diglossia — a situation where one language is perceived as more prestigious while the other is considered less significant. C. A. Ferguson noted in his research that in societies with strong diglossia, bilinguals may feel pressure from speakers of the dominant language, leading to the gradual erosion of identity associated with the less prestigious language. This process is particularly evident among migrant generations: children often transition to the majority language, losing their connection with their parents' native tongue.

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Modern research on bilingual identity also explores neurolinguistic aspects. D. Grosjean established that in bilinguals, both languages remain active even when only one is being used. This supports the hypothesis of parallel language activation in the brain, explaining bilinguals' ability to switch languages effortlessly. Advanced technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) enable in-depth exploration of these processes, opening new avenues for understanding bilingualism.

Additionally, in recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the influence of digital environments on bilingual identity. Social media, internet content, and multilingual online communities contribute to the development of hybrid forms of linguistic identity, where individuals use different languages depending on the context. Research indicates that young bilinguals often blend elements of both languages in online communication, leading to the emergence of new forms of linguistic expression.

Overall, bilingual identity is a multi-layered and evolving construct shaped by a combination of social, psychological, cognitive, and cultural factors. Modern studies provide deeper insights into the mechanisms of its formation and transformation, as well as predictions about its development in the context of globalization and digitalization.

The issue of linguistic identity in the context of bilingualism remains one of the key topics in modern linguistics. Research demonstrates that bilingual identity is shaped by various factors, including social conditions, cognitive processes, and language proficiency levels. In the context of diglossia, migration, and globalization, this process becomes particularly complex, requiring an interdisciplinary approach. The development of modern technologies, such as neurolinguistic research and the analysis of digital linguistic practices, opens new possibilities for understanding bilingual identity and its evolution in the 21st century.

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