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ВЛИЯНИЕ ИНТЕРЯЗЫКА НА БИЛИНГВАЛЬНОЕ ПОВЕДЕНИЕ УЧАЩИХСЯ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ОВЛАДЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКОМ

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Проблема и цель. В статье представлен обзор основных идей современных зарубежных и отечественных исследователей по проблеме формирования речевого механизма индивида, изучающего иностранный язык. Авторы ставят целью определить эффективные способы взаимодействия лингвистики, психолингвистики и методики обучения иностранным языкам, способствующие повышению эффективности процесса овладения иностранным языком.

Методология. Для достижения поставленной цели авторы провели анализ литературы в области лингвистики, психолингвистики, методики обучения иностранным языкам и психологии по проблеме исследования. Провели сравнительно-сопоставительный анализ языков, задействованных в речевом механизме билингва. Интегрировали данные психологии, психолингвистики и лингвистики.

Результаты. Ряд авторов скептически относится к идее о существовании третьей языковой системы при двуязычии. В статье приводится аргументация, доказывающая системный характер рассматриваемого явления, в результате чего третья языковая система определяется как промежуточная система, психологически объединяющая три лингвистические системы (родной язык, третья языковая система, изучаемый иностранный язык) и представляющая собой континуум определенных изменений. Этот континуум имеет динамический характер и состоит из серии приближенных систем, каждая из которых всё более последовательно приближается к изучаемому языку. Все изучающие иностранный язык обнаруживают определенные отклонения, т. е. языковые ошибки, наличие и природа которых позволяют преподавателю определить, как далеко учащийся продвинулся в изучении языка.

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Заключение. В статье исследуется актуальное для методики обучения иностранным языкам явление фоссилизации, которое проявляется в интерлингвальном поведении билингва как результат совокупности пяти центральных процессов, являющихся компонентами латентной психологической структуры индивида. Под фоссилизацией подразумевается явление, известное как типичные устойчивые ошибки (errors) в отличие от окказиональных ошибок (mistakes). Авторы рассматривают основные характеристики фоссилизации: её динамичность и устойчивость, которые являются предметом исследования теории речевых ошибок. На основе анализа и интеграции данных лингвистики, психолингвистики и психологии авторами разработаны методические рекомендации по оптимизации процесса обучения иностранному языку. Авторы приходят к выводу, что интерязык представляет собой сложную динамическую систему, постоянно сопровождающую процесс становления билингвизма и базирующуюся на законах лингвистики, психологии и психолингвистики. Изучение природы этой системы может в значительной степени способствовать повышению эффективности процесса овладения иностранным языком.

Ключевые слова: интерязык; промежуточная языковая система; латентная психологическая структура; интерференция; сверхгенерализация; фоссилизация; сопоставительный анализ языков; языковые ошибки; психологические особенности обучаемых; когнитивные стили.

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The impact of interlanguage on students' bilingual behaviour during the process of acquiring a foreign language

Abstract

Introduction. *The article presents an overview of the major ideas of contemporary foreign and Russian researchers on the issue of the speech mechanism formation of a foreign language learner. The authors aim to identify effective synergetic ways of employing linguistics, psycholinguistics and the methodology of foreign language teaching that can improve the efficiency of the language learning process. The authors note that, despite a number of research papers on the subject, published both in Russia and abroad, the science still lacks a clear-cut definition of this phenomenon, and its role in the process of foreign language acquisition is not stated. Thus the research problem of the paper is to study the intermediate language system in the speech mechanism of a bilingual acquiring a foreign language at a given stage. The purpose of the study is to determine the nature and the status of an intermediate language system and its role in foreign language acquisition, and to find out the ways of optimizing the process of foreign language teaching based on the data obtained. In line with the purpose set, the following research objectives were identified: 1) based on the analysis of research literature on the issues in question, to clarify the naming of the intermediate language system and define its nature; 2) to examine the component structure of the interlanguage; 3) based on the integration of data from linguistics, psycholinguistics, and psychology, to determine techniques that influence the dynamics of interlanguage development that can contribute to improving the effectiveness of the teaching process.*

Materials and Methods. *The methods employed in the current research combined the analysis of research literature in the fields of linguistics, psycholinguistics, methodology of foreign language teaching, psychology on the issues under study, the contrastive and comparative analysis of languages involved in the speech mechanism of a bilingual, the method of integrating psychological, psycholinguistic, and linguistic data.*

Results. *Some authors show skepticism with regard to the existence of the third language system in a bilingual setting. The article presents argumentation to prove the systemic character of this phenomenon, which results in defining the third language system as an intermediate system that psychologically combines three linguistic systems (native language, the third language system, the target language), and represents a continuum of certain changes. This continuum is dynamic in its nature, and consists of a series of approximate systems, each of which consistently and increasingly approaches the target language. All learners of foreign languages show certain deviations from the norm, that is, language mistakes, the existence and nature of which enable the teacher to evaluate the student's progress in learning the language.*

Conclusion. *The article explores such a relevant phenomenon for the methodology of foreign language teaching as fossilization, which manifests itself in the interlanguage behavior of a bilingual as a result of the summation of five central processes that constitute the latent psychological structure of the individual. Fossilization is interpreted as a phenomenon known as typical persistent errors as opposed to occasional mistakes. The authors analyze the main characteristics of fossilization, such as its dynamism and stability that make the research subject of the theory of speech errors. Based on the analysis and integration of linguistic, psycholinguistic and psychological data, the authors develop methodological recommendations for optimizing the foreign language teaching process. It is concluded that the interlanguage is a complex dynamic system that continually accompanies the process of developing bilingualism and is based on the laws of linguistics, psychology and psycholinguistics. Studying the nature of this system can greatly enhance the efficiency of the process of foreign language acquisition.*

Keywords

Interlanguage; Intermediate language system; Latent psychological structure; Interference; Overgeneralization; Fossilization; Languages comparative analysis; Linguistic errors; Learners psychological features; Cognitive styles.

Introduction

Due to globalization processes and the development of plurilingualism in the modern world, the issue of spreading and learning different languages is becoming one of the most important subject matters both in linguistics and methodology of foreign language teaching. At the same time it is acquiring new aspects: the structure of language and cognition, predisposition and capacity for learning, mechanisms of synchrony with regard to a changing language consciousness, comparative analysis of target languages, etc.

Capabilities allowing a person to acquire natural languages account for a specific kind of cognition, and are defined as linguistic cognition. However, the essence and the functioning of

linguistic cognitive systems still lack sufficient research at present.

The process of studying these phenomena is based on the integration of a number of research areas, including linguistics, psychology, psycholinguistics, methodology of teaching foreign languages and some others.

From the beginning of the 20th century various research papers published by a number of authors in the above-mentioned fields have made use of the concept “an intermediate language system” that exists in the consciousness of a bilingual speaker between their native language (L1) and their target language (L2).

In recent years, an increasingly popular theory has suggested that the acquisition of a foreign language can be perceived as a creative process of developing a language system, in the



course of which the learners consciously construct and test their hypotheses regarding their target language by relying on various sources of knowledge available to them, such as: a limited volume of knowledge of the target language itself, knowledge on their first (native) language and the communicative function of the language, knowledge in the field of general linguistics, and their life experience (including their knowledge on the environment, people and the universe).

Gradually, through trial and error, as well as through the method of testing hypotheses, learners slowly and persistently establish approximations that become increasingly close to the system of their target language. This state of approximation has been termed “interlanguage”, meaning an intermediate language system located between the systems of the native and the target languages. Certain assumptions about the existence of “the third system” can be found in a number of works by different researchers: V. Rosenzweig¹, S. S. Hosseini and H. R. Sangani [14]. The theory of the third (intermediate) system was substantiated by U. Weinreich² and became widespread in foreign linguistics in the 1970s and 1980s, as reflected in a variety of interpretations known as “approximative systems”, such as developed by W. Nemser [20], “idiosyncratic (transitional) dialects” studied by S. Corder [6], the process of language pidginization, ‘interyazyk’ (*Rus.* interlanguage) in the papers by

N. Rogoznaya³, N. Loseva⁴, A. Zalevskaya and I. Medvedeva⁵, and others.

This issue has not lost its relevance, as evidenced by the works of modern psychologists and linguists [1–2; 5; 7; 9; 12–18; 21–30]. R. F. Esfahani develops Chomsky’s theory of UG – Universal Grammar, the phenomenon influencing foreign language learner behaviour [8]. Understanding of interlanguage and its development over the internalization of linguistic rules seems essential for S. S. Hosseini and H. R. Sangani [14]. L. Nazarenko believes that foreign language learning comprises the development of intra-level and inter-level language relations [19].

The purpose of this study is to clarify the concept of an intermediate language system, as well as its structure, its nature, and its role in acquiring a foreign language by the individual, and to look for ways of optimizing the process of foreign language teaching based on the data obtained.

In accordance with the above-mentioned purpose, the following research objectives were identified:

- 1) based on the analysis of research literature on the issue, to clarify the naming of the intermediate language system and define its nature;
- 2) to examine the component structure of interlanguage;
- 3) based on the integration of data from linguistics, psycholinguistics, and psychology, to

¹ Rosenzweig V. Y. *Language contacts: Linguistic issues*. Leningrad, Nauka, Leningrad Branch Publ., 1972, 80 p. (In Russian)

² Weinreich U. *Languages in Contact: findings and problems (Publications of the Linguistic Circle of New York, #1)*. New York, 1953, 148 p.

³ Rogoznaya N. N. “Me you no understand”, or Interlanguage. *Russian Language Abroad*, 2003, no. 1, pp. 53–56. (In Russian)

⁴ Loseva N. V. Several Aspects of Using the Interlanguage Theory in the Methodology of Foreign Language

Teaching. *Human and their Language: Papers of the XVI International Conference of the Academic School and Seminar named after L.M. Skrelina, Herzen University*. St Petersburg, Skifia Publ., 2013, pp. 296–301. (In Russian)

⁵ Zalevskaya A.A., Medvedeva I.L. *Psycholinguistic Problems of Academic Bilingualism: a study guide*. Never, Never State University Publ., 2002, 194 p. (In Russian)



determine techniques that influence the dynamics of the interlanguage development that can contribute to improving the effectiveness of the teaching process.

Materials and Methods

This research employs such methods as the analysis of research literature on the problematics in question in the fields of linguistics, psycholinguistics, methodology of foreign language teaching, contrastive and comparative analysis of languages involved in the speech mechanism of a bilingual, the method of integration of psychological, psycholinguistic, and linguistic data.

The intermediate system is based on the observable product of the learner's speech production, which stems from their attempts to reproduce the norm of the target language [11; 20; 25], as well as on the predicted linguistic behavior of language learners, associated with the form of utterances that are produced with the help of the given system.

Psychologically relevant data for the process of learning a foreign language is made up by three sets of utterances: 1) utterances in the native language (L1); 2) utterances produced in the language of the intermediate system (IL); 3) utterances produced by the native speakers of the target language (L2). The totality of these utterances forms the basis of the study of psycholinguistic processes underlying the interlanguage behavior of foreign language learners.

According to L. Selinker [25], the latent psychological structure of the individual incorporates five central and a whole row of peripheral processes. The central processes are as follows.

1. Language transfer. This group includes cases of interlingual interference resulting from

the influence the native language exerts on the learners.

2. Mistakes caused by the methods of training (transfer of training). One of the most common mistakes in this group can be illustrated by such an example as the students' mixing up of the forms of personal pronouns "he" and "she" in favour of the predominant use of the first form. L. Selinker explains this by the fact that dictionaries, along with the illustrative material used in textbooks and exercises tend to employ "he" as a prevalent form.

3. Strategy of foreign language learning. Currently psycholinguists cannot give a conclusive definition of the term "strategy" with relation to language learning.

4. The communication strategy in a foreign language. This point refers to the cases of violation of the language norms characteristic of the target language that occur in the process of communication and are caused by certain internal motives of the speaker. The following can provide an example: the omission of affixes of plural forms and personal endings brought into effect in order to accelerate the expression of the speaker's intention (so as to avoid causing the listener's annoyance by reflecting too long over the proper implementation of an utterance).

5. Overgeneralization of linguistic phenomena in the target language. This feature is caused by the lack of knowledge on a range of rules functioning in the target language, and, as a result, their violation (intralingual interference). A good example of this can be provided by one of the typical mistakes occurring at the initial stage of learning English, such as the disuse of the ending "-s" at the end of the verb in the 3rd person singular in the Present Simple tense.

In addition to the five basic processes described above, there also exist peripheral ones, which, to some extent, also affect the interlanguage behavior of students (pronunciation

of words based on the orthographic principle or pronunciation based on the principle of cognate matching, hypocorrection, etc.).

Results

III.1. The phenomenon of fossilization

At the present stage of research development, we cannot say decisively and unequivocally, which one of the five above-mentioned processes corresponds to the data available for our observation, that is, whether a certain constituent of adherence of the interlanguage system is the result of language transfer, transfer of skills, or both collectively. However, in most cases, a researcher has the means to see an answer. These five central processes in conjunction with the peripheral ones cause fossilization in the interlanguage behavior of the learners.

From the psychological perspective, fossilization refers to a mechanism that exists in the latent psychological structure of the individual and produces phonological, morphological and syntactic forms in a foreign language in the learner's speech, that do not meet the standard norms of the target language, even after a certain period of time spent on learning the language.

The linguistic aspect of fossilization is made up by linguistic elements, rules, and subsystems that a native speaker of a given language (L1) is trying to keep in their intermediate language (IL) as applied to their target language (L2), regardless of the age of the learner, or the number of explanations and instructions that they receive in the target language [25, p. 219]. It also includes the forms that are not generally present in the foreign language speech of learners but have a tendency to appear under extreme conditions (anxiety,

stress, poor health and so on). This phenomenon is known as back-sliding.

The linguistic notion of fossilization describes a phenomenon that is widely known as typical resistant faults (errors), in contrast to randomly occurring occasional faults (mistakes).

1. One of the main characteristics of the fossilization process is its dynamism. The heterogeneity of this process makes it difficult to single out any one of its specific phases: all speakers of a foreign language show certain deviations, depending on how far they have advanced in the process of language acquisition towards the target language system.

2. Another important feature of fossilization is its stability, which results in the fact that numerous structures of the intermediate system remain in the learners' language for a long time (or forever, in most cases) and display themselves regularly in their utterances. Consequently, psycholinguistic structures, even after having been seemingly eliminated from the speech of learners, are constantly present in the mind of the learner, preserved by the fossilization mechanism by means of one of the five above-mentioned processes. This allows L. Selinker to put forward a hypothesis, according to which the interlanguage identifications, that psychologically unite three linguistic systems (L1, IL and L2), get activated in the latent psychological structure whenever any attempt of the learners to produce an utterance in L2 takes place.

III.2. The third system

Several authors express a sceptical opinion of the idea of the third system existing in a bilingual setting (Vereshchagin [28]; Karlinsky⁶). Their argumentation in this regard is as follows: if bilingual speech was based on a third system,

⁶ Karlinsky A. E. *The Fundamentals of the Theory of Language Interaction*. Alma-Aty, "Gylym" Publ., 1990, 181 p. (In Russian)



then incorrect speech utterances would be generated on a regular basis. In reality, however, they are generated with accordance to the regularities of a probability process. Since there is no strict determination between the given meaning and its realization in the speech, there is no reasonable basis to postulate the existence of a third system under bilingualism [28]. While sharing the point of view stated above, A. Karlinsky complements it with the following conclusions⁷:

– The third system (as opposed to the language system as a social phenomenon) is not characterized by stability, it has a tendency for transformation in the course of life of a given individual, and it is dependent on the level of their proficiency in L2.

– The third system has no history in the conventional sense, it reflects a synchronous state of interaction between two languages that does not change due to the influence of internal (intrasystemic) or extralinguistic factors (the development of science, culture, etc.), which is true for the processes of a language change, but in the context of acquiring a certain level of language proficiency by the bilingual learner. Its character is flawed, while there are practically no languages existing with a flawed system.

– The impact of the “third” system on the speech of a bilingual learner is one-sided in its nature, as it is manifested only in L2 speech, while the learner’s speech in L1 remains beyond its influence and is constructed in compliance with the rules of this language.

– Linguistic experience does not have any credible evidence of the real existence of “the third system”. So far, nobody has been able to describe it in a satisfactory manner. What is usually presented as a description of “the third

system”, in reality proves to be a list of differential features of the two specific languages, which serve for the bilingual learner as a basis for the identification of the latter in the course of their language activity.

The following arguments can be proposed in response and objection to the above-mentioned criticism regarding the third system.

The main reason for most points of the criticism consists in what can be seen as an almost complete lack of elaboration of the stated problem (which in itself is a component of the theory of speech errors) in the Russian academic literature.

Systematization and closer examination of persistent errors allows an observer to point out their regularity. This is reflected in the fact that persistent errors are collective in their nature, and marked by a periodic recurrence. The lack of conclusive evidence for the existence of the third system in the form of its comprehensive description, can be explained, on the one hand, by the relative “youth” of this hypothesis, and, on the other hand, by the virtual impossibility to describe the entire language system within the framework of one study, especially taking into account the number of “the third language systems” that significantly exceeds the number of languages and is equal in its number to the total of possible binary combinations between existing languages, that is to say, virtually limitless. Nevertheless, one can identify a certain number of most frequent combinations (Russian – English, English – German, etc.). In other words, the number of language systems is limited, while the number of “third systems” is limitless, which, however, does not rule out the possibility of describing every one of them.

Having said the above, we can conclude that interlanguage is a complex dynamic system that

⁷ Karlinsky A. E. *The Fundamentals of the Theory of Language Interaction*. Alma-Aty, “Gylym” Publ., 1990, 181 p. (In Russian)



is closely associated with the process of bilingual development and based on the rules and principles of linguistics, psychology and psycholinguistics.

Neorolinguists (P. Berroir [4], A. I. Ansaldo [3], B. T. Gold [10]) think that learning two or more languages modulate some goal-directed behaviour, which might result for bilinguals in having more resources than monolinguals for dealing with interference.

A comprehensive research of the nature of interlanguage system can have immense implications for enhancing the effectiveness of foreign language learning.

As an example, the following methodological recommendations can be suggested.

Let us list the processes of the latent psychological structure of an individual that we consider most relevant for the methodology of foreign language teaching.

These, first and foremost, are the language transfer (interference) and overgeneralisation (intralingual transfer).

According to the interference theory, overcoming the interfering influence of the native language removes all difficulties in foreign language acquisition, due to the fact that all other language elements should be transferred from the native language to the target one with ease.

As methodological studies show, different learners who are native speakers of the same language make different mistakes, many of them not caused by interference. These include errors stemming from deficiencies in the acquisition of learning material, features of the learning situation, and, most importantly, errors caused by overgeneralization (intralingual interference).

In addition, not all language errors predicted on the basis of comparative analysis find realization in the learners' speech.

And, finally, as numerous studies have shown, the task of a complete comparative description of two (or more) languages at every language level is practically unachievable.

Overgeneralization, identified by L. Selinker as a further component of the latent psychological structure, is defined by the methodology in our country as intralingual interference. This phenomenon is a wrong generalization of linguistic experience within the framework of the target language, when characteristic features of the studied language are applied to the areas of the language of which they are not typical.

Such mistakes are made by many students when learning a foreign language, and their number indicates that the phenomenon of overgeneralisation should be taken into account no less than the phenomenon of interference. This is particularly important due to the universal character of this phenomenon, and native speakers of different languages make the same mistakes caused by overgeneralisation. Another fact that attests to the universality of this phenomenon is as follows: while acquiring their own mother tongue, American children often apply the principle of overgeneralization to the formation of past tense forms, e.g. go – goed, fly – flied⁸.

The attempt to predict linguistic errors by using contrastive analysis (apriori) was critically perceived by other members of linguistic community and representatives of foreign language teaching methodology⁹, who considered it more expedient to study linguistic difficulties

⁸ Brown H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1987, 285 p.

⁹ Rosenzweig V. Y. *Language contacts: Linguistic issues*. Leningrad, Nauka, Leningrad Branch Publ., 1972, 80 p. (In Russian)



aposteriori, i. e. after a completed fact of interference.

Representatives of this school of thought believe that the analysis of speech errors has the advantage over contrastive analysis in that it covers a larger group of linguistic phenomena and deals with the factual material.

The advantage of the analysis of linguistic errors lies in the fact that its conclusions are more specific and concrete: while comparative analysis predicts the areas of possible occurrence of interference, the analysis of the facts of interference demonstrates the points of its manifestation.

Consequently, in order to improve the efficiency of the educational process, it seems appropriate to draw on both of the above-mentioned concepts: interference and overgeneralization on the one hand, and the theory of linguistic errors on the other.

This integration of studying errors both apriori and aposteriori, makes it possible to develop a database for linguistic errors caused by the processes of interference and overgeneralization.

Identifying the causes of language errors enables the teacher to use methodological techniques for the prevention of potential errors, as well as the timely elimination of factual errors aimed at avoiding their fossilization.

III.3. The strategy of learning a foreign language

The next process included in the latent psychological structure of an individual, according to L. Selinker's findings, is the strategy of learning a foreign language.

In methodology, strategies are interpreted as "a combination of knowledge-based methods and efforts, which are used by learners to

understand, remember and use their knowledge of the language system and to develop their speech skills and abilities"¹⁰.

However, keeping in mind that the learning process is bilateral in its character and involves the teacher as well as students, then the notion of "strategy" also covers the efforts of the teacher in organizing the learning process, so we can acknowledge that this concept also includes combinations of intellectual techniques and efforts used by the teacher to organize the educational process effectively.

These techniques should take into account various individual psychological characteristics of learners that are relevant for foreign language acquisition. These include the types of the nervous systems of students: inert/labile type of nervous system, level of anxiety, ability to show empathy, extroversion/introversion, etc., as well as their cognitive styles, that is, the ways in which the interiorization of the environment is carried out.

Among a large number of cognitive styles observed in an individual, there is a group that influences the successfulness of foreign language acquisition. These include: the dominant role of the perception of the environment (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), field dependence – independence, the dominant role of one of the hemispheres of the cerebral cortex, tolerance, reflexivity – impulsivity, and others.

If we take into account the classification of students according to the type of learning (type of intellect) and subsequent individualization of teaching with regard to each of the types we will be able to improve the efficiency of teaching foreign languages [15].

¹⁰ Azimov E. G., Shchukin A. N. *A New Dictionary of Methodological Terms and Notions (theory and practice*

of language teaching). Moscow, IKAR Publ., 2009, 448 p. (In Russian)



Conclusion

Since interlanguage is a heterogeneous process, and all speakers of a foreign language show certain deviations from the norm, depending on how far they have advanced on their route to the system of the target language in the process of its acquisition, interlanguage is subjected to constant changes in the process of language acquisition and represents a continuum of more or less consistent changes.

It can be assumed that this continuum consists of a series of approximate systems, each one of them gradually and steadily approaching the target language in such a way that we can always evaluate the learners' knowledge at any point in this continuum [6, p. 154].

Consequently, regular monitoring in the form of testing, control tasks or quizzes allows the teacher to assess each learner's stage of their progress in a foreign language, and take appropriate measures to optimize their speedy

advance in the space of the continuum that constitutes the substance of interlanguage.

Main conclusions

1. Interlanguage is a phenomenon that constantly emerges as a result of contact between two or more languages, and affects the communicative behavior of bilinguals.

2. Interlanguage represents a developing language system and reflects the linguistic competence of learners both in dynamic and static aspects.

3. Interlanguage of learners in a monolingual language environment is characterized by certain similar features.

4. Integration of the analysis of psycholinguistic and linguistic processes, which underlie the interlanguage mechanism, allows us to develop methodological techniques that contribute to improving the effectiveness of the foreign language acquisition process.

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