# PEDAGOGY

## Bilingualism and structure of multilingual competence

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**Annotation.** The article describes the importance of multilingualism in the modern world, typologization of "multulingualism" is given and the need for multilingual education and the development of multilingual competence are outlined. Taking into account the theoretical foundations of the study, the structure of this competence is determined, it contains: axiological, language, linguistic, communicative, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, intercultural, discursive, cross-curricular, social, media competences and compensatory, pragmatic, cognitive competencies. An analysis of the components of the structure is presented and their interdependence is shown in a scheme where the core and the periphery are specified. The importance of each component and their unity for successful formation of bilingual competence of personality are emphasized.

*Keywords: bilingualism, polilinguism, multilingualism, competence, competency, structure of multilingual competence.*

**Problem statement and relevance.** The relevance of bilingualism in the modern educational space is determined with the stage of formation and restructuring of the education system in Ukraine and especially in view of the implementation of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) concept. In the age of globalization and integration, the possibilities of education, employment, social life are expanding and foreign language communication is becoming a daily necessity, which creates the conditions for satisfying both educational and individual demands – the realities of life. Comprehensive preparation for life in a multilingual society, language acquisition for facilitated communication and interaction with a foreign-language society are the leading concepts of NUS. The reform of the educational process has already had a positive impact on the development of multilingual personality, as the ability to speak native (in case of difference from the state language) and foreign languages takes the second place on the canvas of key competences, according to part one of Article 12 of the Law "On Education", and it is essential for a successful life of every modern person [20]. Modernization of Ukrainian education, globalization and integration of Ukrainian society determine the importance of developing a multilingual personality, competitive in today's labor market and capable of a successful self-realization.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** A theoretical analysis of scientific works has shown that the problem of multilingualism becomes relevant and bilingual education promotes to the intellectual and cultural development of a person who responds to the social demands at the present time. The coverage of the problem was reflected in O. Yakovleva's works where "multilingualism" is considered as a multidisciplinary, multi-aspect, polyvalent phenomenon and the essences of manifestation's features and deterministic connections of multilingualism of Ukrainian society in its interconnection with the processes of reforming the national higher education system in Ukraine are defined [37]. The dissertation researches of Ukrainian scientists Y. Guletska [15], L. Vorotnyak [34] are devoted to the problem of formation of multilingual and multicultural picture of the world. Thus, L. Vorotnyak

reveals peculiarities of multicultural competence's formation of masters in higher pedagogical educational institutions and specifies criteria and indicators of formation levels [34]. Y. Guletska provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical foundations of the content, forms and methods of students' multicultural education at US universities and offers methodological recommendations for using American experience in Ukraine [15].

Works of foreign researchers M. Braun, U. Weinreich, Y. Gafarova, F. Grosjean, G. Khazhgalieva and others devoted to multilingualism are noteworthy. In particular, M. Braun was one of the first who suggested the definition of multilingualism [4], W. Weinreich identifies three types of bilingualism due to the way of language acquisition [35]. The importance of bilingual education and the formation of a multilingual personality are revealed and proved in the studies of Yu. Gafarova, F. Grosjean, G. Khazhgalieva [12, 14, 18].

A considerable number of publications and the monograph by V. Hamanyuk are dedicated to the problem of multilingualism and didactics of multilingualism. In particular, the researcher analyzes the linguistic bases of teaching foreign languages in the conditions of multilingualism, pays attention to the issue of individual multilingualism's formation of citizens, emphasizes the importance of teacher's multilingual competence [17]. In V. Hamanyuk's monograph multilingualism is defined as a pedagogical category in the context of globalization and integration, lingual political models of multilingualism in society and types of multilingualism as a pedagogical category are considered, emphasis is placed on defining the key principles of the concept of multilingualism as a document that regulates not only the development of lingual relations in society but also defines the policy in the field of foreign language learning [16].

Native researcher G. Piskurska describes the essence of plurilingual competence and proposes the structure of professional plurilingual competence [27]. The basic directions' problem of formation of a young person's multilingual and multicultural personality and the influence of lingual and foreign language education are clarified by M.

Tadeeva and A. Chala. The scientist M. Tadeeva also identifies the most important factors that influence positively the formation of the secondary lingual personality [31]. A. Chala outlines the main ways and means of improving the formation of pollinguality and multiculturalism of future teachers [6]. Recently, our countryman O. Khomenko has paid considerable attention to the importance of multilingual education substantiating the expediency of pollingual training in higher vocational school and outlining the ways of its realization [19].

However, there is no single approach to the components of multilingual competence among the variety of interpretations of "bilingualism", definitions of "polilinguism", proving of the relevance and importance of multilingual personality competence's formation. We consider it necessary to consider further the typologization of "multulingualism", to analyze the structure of multilingual competence and to distinguish its components.

**The purpose of the article** is to substantiate the importance of bilingual education and to clarify the structure of multilingual competence through the analysis of its key components.

**Presenting the main material.** Multilingualism is a leading trend in the development of world language policy. Thus, the European Union's actions are aimed at promoting and supporting the multilingualism of all EU citizens. Language Learning Policy – a separate activity direction of the European Commission, that facilites the study of foreign languages [22]. The Council of Europe Action Plan for 2018-2021 emphasizes the value of multilingualism and stresses that "Language learning helps learners to avoid stereotyping individuals, to develop curiosity and openness to otherness and to discover other cultures" [36]. The following official documents are also important: European Cultural Convention, European Social Charter, European Language Portfolio, A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism, Communique of the European Commission – Multilingualism: an Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment, Project "Language Rich Europe", which emphasize the importance of European initiatives implementation in the context of Ukrainian education system.

The need of multilingual education is now recognized by an important majority of scientists of our country too. The Concept of Language Education in Ukraine states that Ukraine is a multicultural and national state, so language education is important. Article 7 of the Law "On Education" specifies separately that the state promotes the study of languages of international communication, English first of all in state and other educational institutions [20]. The state basic and complete secondary education standard approves a separate educational branch "Language and Literature", the language components of which are Ukrainian language, minority languages, foreign languages [32].

Issues of plurilingualism in Ukraine can be considered in the following examples: Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, Ukrainian-Russian-English multilingualism, Ukrainian-Russian-German, Ukrainian-Russian-French, Ukrainian-Russian-Spanish and others.

In view of the diversity of the term "multulingualism", we consider it necessary to generalize the existing definitions of this concept and to identify a common conceptual core and differences in interpretation. Table 1 presents the definitions of native and foreign scientists.

**Table 1.** "Multulingualism"

| Definition of the concept | Source |
|---|---|
| Multilingualism refers to the diversity of languages represented in a certain geographical region. | Multilingual Europe [25] |
| Multulingualism, broadly understood as the ability to communicate in several languages effectively, possesses its irrefutable advantages. | Szczęśniak D. [30] |
| Multilingualism is understood as the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives. | European Commission [10] |
| Multilingualism should be understood as an inherent to all speakers' ability to explore (either independently or in the learning process) and to use more than two languages in varying degrees and for the achievement of different goals. | Sadykova A., Beisemba-ye-va A., Hkalel A. [29] |
| Multilingual education – refer to the use of at least three languages in education: the mother tongue(s), a regional or national language and an international language in education. | Education in a Multilingual World [9] |
| Multilingualism is an indispensable combination of two languages: mastering of several languages and using them in appropriate communication situations. | Yakovleva O. [37] |
| Multulingualism –using of at least three languages in education: the mother tongue(s), a regional or national language and an international language in education. | Education in a Multilingual World [9] |
| Multilingualism is the ability of an individual speaker or a community of speakers to communicate effectively in three or more languages. | Nordquist R. [26] |
| Plurilingualism – knowledge of a certain number of languages or the coexistence of different languages in a particular society. | Com. European Framework [8] |
| Plurilingualism is a list of languages used by a person, including those often referred to as "mother tongue" or "first language" and any other languages or their varieties. | Multilingual Europe [25] |
| Multilingualism is an integral personal morbid growth, which is expressed in the expedient, influential, harmonious communication in the native language and the languages studied, the readiness for cultures' dialogue both in the native language and in the languages of other peoples. | Khazhgalie-va G. Kh. [18] |
| A Multilingual speaker uses different languages either in isolation or mixed, for different purposes instead of using one language for all possible situations. | Cenoz J., Gorter D. [5] |
| Multilingual speaker is anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading). | Li W. [21] |

From the above definitions we can state that the terms "bilingualism", "polilinguism", "multilingualism", "plurilingualism" are considered to be synonyms in the scientific literature. Generalizing the interpretation of "multilingualism" by various scholars, it is appropriate to distinguish the common – this is the individual's proficiency of several

languages. However, the number of languages varies from "more than one" to "three or more". Some scholars have also identified not only proficiency but also the use of languages and communication as components of multilingualism.

In our opinion, multilingualism is not only an ability to master and use several languages, it is a set of competences. On the whole, we agree with N. Evdokimova's statement that "multilingual competence is the united complex, asymmetric configuration of competences which the user bases on and there are a system of linguistic knowledge, understanding of mechanisms of language functioning and algorithms of speech actions, mastery of metacognitive strategies, developed cognitive ability in its basis" [11, c. 6]. It is explained in "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment" that "plurilingual competence is the ability to use different languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction" [8].

The views of researchers N. Galskova and N. Guez are also noteworthy, they noted the following: "…multilingualism cannot be considered as a set of individual foreign language competences possessed by a person who knows several languages. This competence has a complex multicultural and multifaceted character, which manifests itself in its integrative essence and different levels of proficiency in its main components" [13].

Our countryman O. Khomenko considers "polylinguism is not only the ability of a person to speak several foreign languages in certain specific communication situations for realisation of communicative needs but also a social phenomenon, a component of globalization, a special type of thinking that embraces cultural values and is open to dialogue" [19]. We share his opinion and consider it appropriate to use this very interpretation of the term in our further research and in outlining the structure of multilingual competence.

In our study, we consider multilingual competence as a general concept that consists of competences and competencies. Despite the fact that the word "competence" in English is "competence" or "competency", for our study the distinction is significant. There are a considerable number of interpretations of the mentioned terms in the scientific literature, but there is no unified view of the essence of their concepts. However, we adhere to the opinion of I. Zimnyaya, who interprets: "competency" (компетенція) – potential, cognitive quality, set of knowledge and rules for their using; "competence" (компетентність) – actual, personal, knowledge-based quality, intellectually and personally-conditioned social and professional characteristics of a person, his or her personal quality [38, c.9].

Thus, we define "competency" as a set of knowledge, proficiency, skills in a particular field and "competence" (a concept that is broader than competency) as the ability to act on the basis of acquired knowledge. We also consider it necessary to identify and distinguish the following components of the structure of multilingual competence relying on the diversity of approaches' analysis to study the problem of multilingualism.
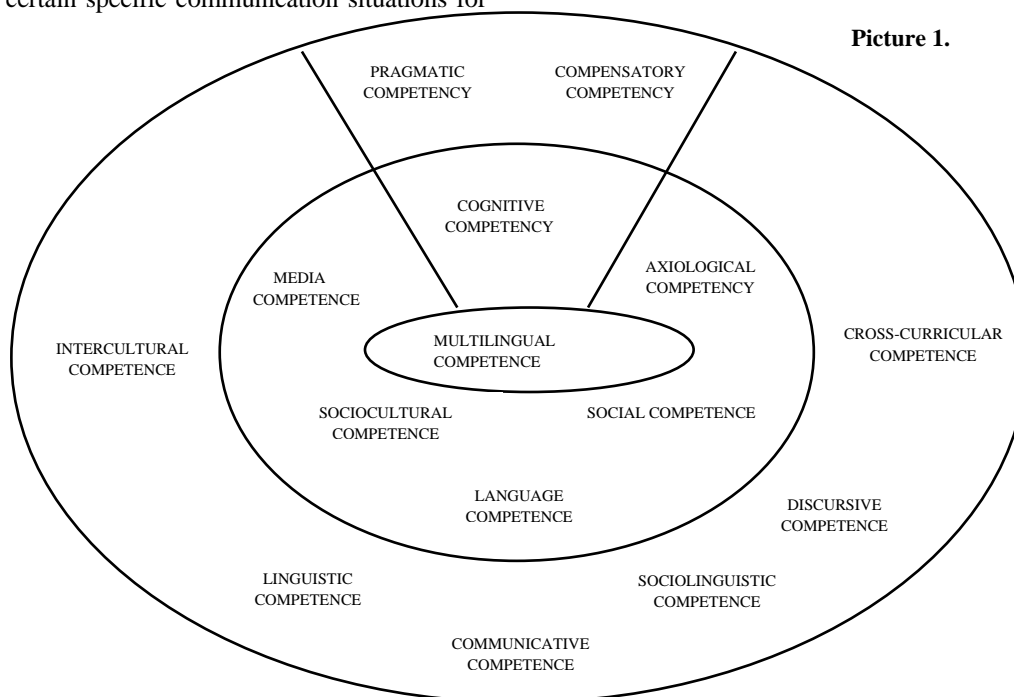


**Picture 1.**

*Axiological competence* involves understanding the importance of learning a foreign language, its value in further activities, knowledge of the outside world, interest in values of another culture, traditions and customs, striving for tolerance in the multinational world, readiness for global exchange of values [29].

A necessary component of the structure is *language competence* or language code. The mastery of personality in public speaking and the qualitative presentation of his/her own thoughts in writing were appreciated even in Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece periods. O. Potebnya spoke about philosophy of language: "A national consciousness cannot be formed without language. There is no nation without language" [28]. We will understand language competence as mastery of applying knowledge, skills, attainments in language activity of an individual, is a person's ability to understand and reproduce information: a means of communication. "A person's language competence includes the ability to operate with means of language, to choose communication situations, to adhere to the

norms of spoken or written literary language; the skills and ability to use language quickly, automatically, appropriately; the ability to understand and express content (meaning), to generate new language forms, the ability to use all means of language stylistically correctly" [23].

*Linguistic competence* involves the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, rules of language functioning, as well as knowledge of interconnection between the mother tongue and the studied languages, similarity and difference at the level of language systems, linguistic and language norms. Linguistic competence involves the knowledge of terminology in a particular field and the ability to use this knowledge in the language context, orally and in writing [29].

The next important component is *communicative competence* that came to light in a person's ability to use language skills in a particular situation for effective communication with others. I. Beh defines communicative competence as the set of knowledge about the norms and rules of natural communication – dialogue, disputes, negotiations, etc. [3]. N. Chomsky understands "communicative competence as the ability that is necessary to perform certain language activities in the native language" [7]. According to F. Batsevich "communicative competence is language skills in a particular context and communication situation, ability to understand an interlocutor, influence him/her effectively" [2]. In this way, we find out the basic principle of communicative competence. It is the continuous interaction between the object and the subject of communication or to understand and to be understood.

*Sociolinguistic competence* is distinguished that concerns the sociocultural conditions of language use. The sociolinguistic component permeates the whole process of communication between representatives of different cultures even then when its participants are often unaware of the impact.

*Sociocultural competence* is the complex of knowledge, attainments, skills and abilities of a person that are necessary for communication in different languages in different situations depending on the cultural traditions of countries which languages are used.

In our view, it is appropriate to distinguish between sociocultural competence and *intercultural competence*, as the latter differs with the ability to solve problems during intercultural interaction, using formal and informal styles of language behavior. "Intercultural competence refers to the effective and responsible behavior in relationships between representatives of different cultures" [1].

*Discursive competence* is characterized by the ability to understand different types of statements, to build logical and related statements, to apply a variety of functional styles that have a clear composition [29].

*Compensatory competency* includes the ability to use different strategies to support a dialogue: to attract and hold the interlocutor's attention, to suggest the topic for communication, to initiate converse, to support conversation, to end communication [29].

Some scholars also point out *pragmatic competency*. This is the ability to talk logically and consistently, the ability to use linguistic means: the production of language functions, acts of speech, etc.

*Media competence* is singled out in the new version of the concept of the introduction of media education in Ukraine, which, in our opinion, should also be added to the structure of multilingual competence as "media competence is the ability to interact effectively with the media space, to understand correctly and to evaluate information, to analyze, to pass it on to others, following to media values, preferences and standards" [33]. Successful formation of multilingual competence requires monitoring of innovations in the political, economic, cultural and other spheres, events in the world – to be informed and aware. Media competence helps to defend a personal position, promotes critical thinking and phenomena's objective evaluation, forms the culture of communication and forms the individual's expression in social networks and not only.

*Cross-curricular competence* should not be overlooked which is especially important for a multilingual personality and is interpreted as the ability to operate with knowledge, skills, attainments, ways of activity and attitude not only in foreign languages but also in a range of other subjects and subject areas.

*Social competence* – we understand the ability to work with others, to appraise reality adequately, the ability to resolve conflicts, to be responsible for the consequences and to achieve a balance between needs, requirements and desires.

Last but not least, in our opinion, *cognitive competency* – the system of abilities of an individual which determines his/her readiness for self-education, personal and professional growth.

The above mentioned allows us to state that the structure of multilingual competence is a system of interrelated and interdependent components which provides its functioning as a whole. We have investigated the competences and competencies that, we believe, are parts of multilingual competence. We also presented the structure in the form of a diagram (see Pic. 1), where all the components are placed according to their importance and dependence.

**Conclusions.** The study of bilingualism is predetermined with today's realities. Now multilingualism is the worldwide phenomenon, the time's trend, the necessity, the prestige. The expediency and necessity of multilingual education is recognized by scientists and is being implemented in countries around the world. Multilingualism is considered not just as the combination of a certain number of languages, but as the phenomenon with its own peculiarities. The development of economy, the mobility of population, the spread of international contacts promote and emphasize the importance of the development of a multilingual personality. It is the development of multilingual competence that enables us to interact in the world of professional space, to act as a facilitator in intercultural communication, using the potential of all languages spoken by an individual and learning through life.

The scientists' achievements are a number of definitions of bilingualism, polilinguism, multulingualism, competence, competency, the definitions of multilingual competence / competency are given. However, it was not taken into account the presence and unity of all components of the multilingual competence's structure in previous attempts. We have taken into concideration the specialists' achievements in linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, education, etc. in our structure of multilingual competence. The constituent structures, that we defined, form the nucleus and the periphery and do not exist in isolation but

interact, complement each other. Therefore, multilingual competence is multipurpose personal quality, which involves not only mastering but also understanding the importance of learning foreign languages, willingness to communicate in any environment, the ability to use and gain experience and provides comprehensive personality development.

We see the prospect of further research in improving the structure of multilingual competence and reasoning its practical significance.

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