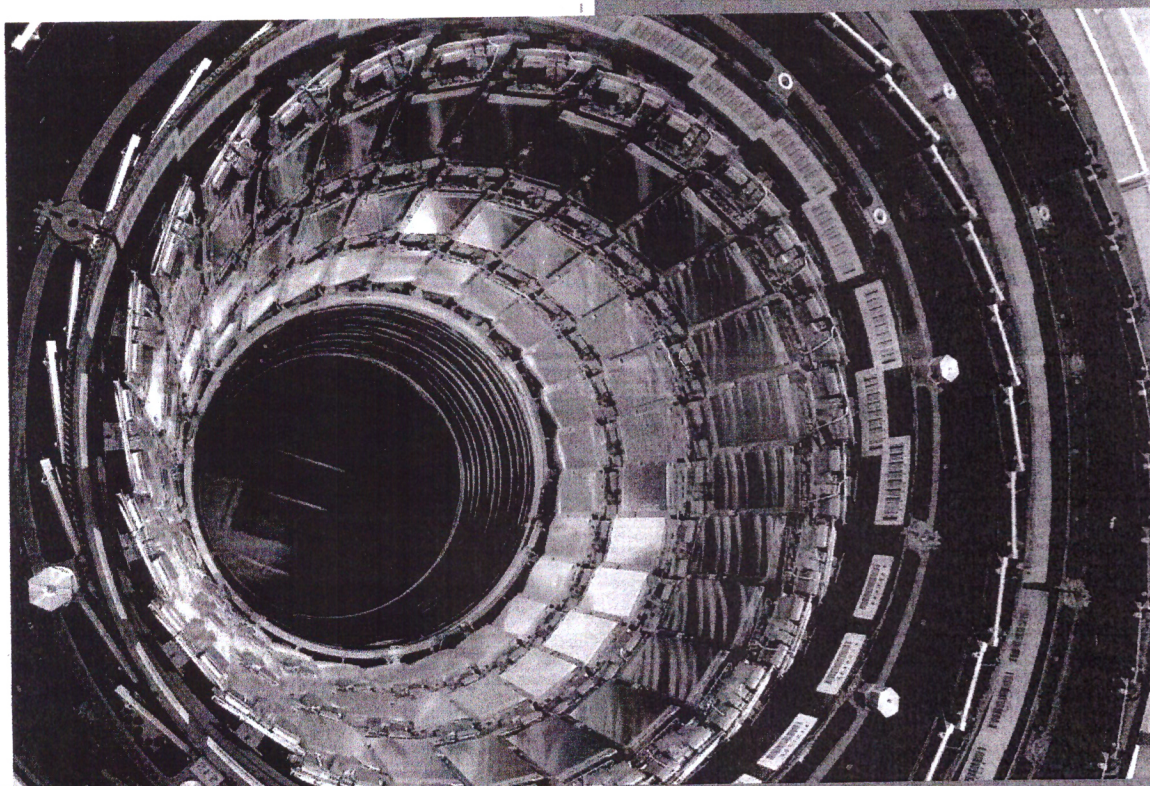


№ 1(16)2013

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Biological Sciences

Pedagogy and Psychology

Architecture and Construction

Philology

History, Philosophy and Sociology

Management, Computer Engineering and Information  
Science

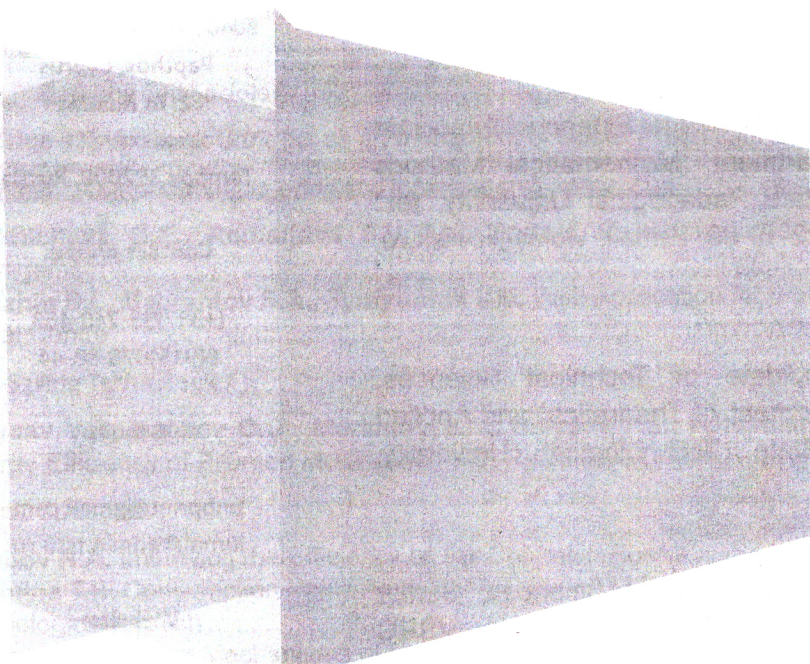
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ISSN 1997-9347

# Components of Scientific and Technological Progress

*SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL JOURNAL*



**№ 1(16) 2013**

**Paphos, Cyprus, 2013**

UDK 800.732

## Linguistic Diversity and the Phenomenon of Bilingualism

O.A. Kolykhalova

*Moscow State Pedagogical University, Moscow*

**Key words and phrases:** artificial languages; bilingualism; cultural identity; cross-cultural communication; linguistic diversity; multilingualism; natural diversity; spiritual development.

**Abstract:** The paper explores the phenomenon of bilingualism as an important source of society's spiritual development. Linguistic diversity is a unique fact and it can cause the formation of bilingualism/multilingualism. But cultural bilingualism is impossible without a means of mass media that produce bilingual, semi-manufactured products and stereotypes that become widespread among the broad masses of the population.

At the present time more than five thousand different languages and an even larger number of dialects exist. Many languages do not have anything (or almost anything) in common. Some of them are the property of an extremely small number of nationalities. The Biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel stated that the descendants of Noah tried to erect a tower to the sky itself, but the Lord, judging them for their pride, deprived them of the common language that made it possible for them to understand each other. This narrative, in which linguistic diversity is explained as the punishment of God, has determined our attitude toward languages for many centuries. As a result the conviction has arisen that linguistic diversity is essentially undesirable. In reality this fact may be observed as an important source of society's spiritual development and it is necessary to re-examine the policy that at the present time threatens the existence of numerous small languages. If this does not happen, the ability to receive the knowledge and experience accumulated by a significant part of mankind will be lost forever. Linguistic diversity is a unique fact whose significance has been underestimated in coping with reality on a theoretical and practical level.

Not a few attempts have been made to replace the natural diversity of humanity's languages with one. In addition to the efforts made during the Enlightenment, in the second half of the nineteenth century there were followers of artificial languages like Volapük and Esperanto, which acquired millions of supporters all over the world. Many Esperantists not only hoped that it would become a universal auxiliary language everywhere, but that it would be left as the only language in the world at a later stage. A single language is often seen as a necessary connecting component for the formation of the new nations. The need to surmount the linguistic and cultural barriers that have become sharper in recent decades as a result of the strengthening of integral processes may be accomplished by various means. One of the widespread means consists in having two peoples, living on contiguous territories but speaking different languages, master their neighbor's language. This is called active two-sided bilingualism. If only one of the two communities masters the neighbor's language, it is called active one-sided bilingualism. The representatives of an extremely small number of linguistic communities, living near larger ones, usually master several neighbors' languages. Such people may play an important cultural role as intermediaries and translators. Another resolution of the problem of intercultural communication is also possible, when bearers of two or more native languages from adjacent areas understand their neighbor's language, but do not speak it. In such situations all the participants in the discourse speak in their native language, but partners understand them. This is called passive bilingualism (or multilingualism). It is especially widespread among the bearers of the various Turkish or Mongolian languages in Central Asia, but is also encountered in the various regions of Africa and New Guinea. In all the cases presented above the discourse arises in a language that is native to at least

one of the groups participating in it. Frequently it is such that a language that is not native to any of the conversationalists fulfills the role of the instrument of interethnic discourse. Such situations arise in discourse between Europeans and non-Europeans, let us say, when a Russian, Frenchman, Norwegian, Hungarian and Japanese man speak to each other in English. Such a language, which is used for discourse by people from different countries, is called a lingua franca. Many such languages exist in the world, and their status is connected with a whole number of causes. One cause may be that the bearers of the language possess the cultural characteristics that are attractive for others or attain cultural or political supremacy over others, which gives their language prestige in the eyes of those who speak other languages. Many lingua francas owe their rise to commercial ties, when the bearers of the said language carry their commodities to the ends of the earth, and their own language with them, which their buyers learn, at least on an elemental scale. In the past on the "silk road" that crosses all Asia such Iranian languages as Sogdian and Middle Persian, and in more recent times New Persian, functioned as commercial lingua francas. Some commercial languages have become transformed into pigeon (hybrids). They are languages where the grammar and vocabulary have become impoverished and distorted. Many of these pigeons in locations where in course they have forced out the languages that gave rise to them become basic for the local population. Such languages are called creole.

With the expansion of the boundaries of the missionaries' activity they continued to use this language in other regions, thereby giving it the features of an artificially introduced lingua franca. With the curtailment of missionary work in many parts of the world and the implantation of European religious sects these languages in some cases were transformed into secular lingua francas. A similar situation took shape where the colonial or occupation administration chose one of the local languages as its working language. Usually such a language was widespread in the given region and had the advantage of a certain prestige. The languages of the mother country connected with colonial or a similar type of rule, past or present constitute another type of lingua franca. Even after the acquisition by the colonies of independence these languages in the majority of cases preserve the functions of a lingua franca, usually among the groups within the population that make up society's elite. These have great popularity, especially among youth. The result of linguistic interaction primarily depends on the social conditions of contact. "A language does not overcome its rivals on the strength of its internal qualities, and therefore its bearers are more likely to be military, fanatic, cultured, or enterprising" [1]. But one must observe that the language of the more developed culture is not always dominant (or victorious). The attempt to explain the question of how two (or more) languages can co-exist in the consciousness of bilingualism. It is understood that the actual contact among languages occurs through the individual's bilingualism. One must observe that multilingual situations are rarely balanced. The rarity and instability of balanced bilingualism is explained by the fact that the co-existence of two languages in the socio-ethnic conditions in the form of a symmetrical model does not actually occur in one society. According to the contemporary scholars, B. Gavarnie, A. Martina and E. Khaugen the autonomous (without blending) possession of two languages exceeds the psychological abilities of the ordinary person [2]. As a rule, in the linguistic consciousness of the ordinary person the separate features and structure of the new language are erroneously assimilated with the similar characteristics of the native (or basic, dominant) language. The interference (imposition) of the two language systems, their partial identification and blending are most often the result of this. Moreover, stabilized bilingualism is impossible and for a functional causes: two languages cannot be functionally identical. One of the languages, as a rule, is the basic for family discourse, while the other acts as an external (public) one. This disrupts the psychological balance of the languages in the bilingual's mind. In his speech is observed the tendency to select a different language depending on the theme and situation of the discourse, the purposes and subjects of the communication. Depending on the degree to which the bilingual masters the two languages, an individual's bilingualism can be symmetrical (the possession of the two languages to an equal degree) or asymmetrical (the mastery of one is better than the other). The distinction between autonomous or combined bilingualism depends on how the two languages function in the bilingual's speech. With autonomous bilingualism a person builds his speech on each language, only using the resources characteristic for it. With combined bilingualism speech in the language that they know less well is constructed with the assistance of the resources of the basic (dominant) language. It is natural that the increase in the amount of speaking activity in the second language exceeds the bilingual's knowledge of that language. The communicative

strength of the first language completes the building of the second: both languages begin to fuse and become somewhat identical. When such processes of greater or less fusion of languages occur in the linguistic consciousness and speech of many subjects of a given society, it can be said that the process ceases to be a matter of individual speech and instead embraces the entire language. Among the common prerequisites for interference is the fact that, speaking in the second language, a person unconsciously uses the norms and structures of his native language. This to an equal degree can ease mastery of the second language or lead to persistent errors. The closer the two languages the more the individual relies on his own first language. The interference associated with this type of bilingualism is observed more and is overcome with great difficulty.

One language's influence on another assumes special forms. For example, fashion, prestigious images, and social standards influence the formation of the speaker's attitude towards a language, its styles, dialects, and speech, i.e. their linguistic ideals. This dependence is apparent in the typological similarity of the standard stylistic systems of the corresponding languages. Given the presence of stylistic influence, the similarity of the contexts in which the languages exist is mostly cultural and ideological. This is the basis for the formation of the phenomenon called cultural bilingualism. It is characterized by mass (and massive) borrowings, which penetrates the consciousness of the bilingual (and on a broader level enters the language) from above, through the interpreters, important journalists, ideologists, and politicians, i.e. those who master a prestigious foreign language as a result of numerous cultural contacts. In this instance the second language becomes an indicator of eliteness, being part of the chosen, affiliation with a definite circle, the basis for working out a specific jargon, tonal and stylistic originality that consciously cultivates and reproduces the current elite stratum. Cultural bilingualism is impossible without a means of mass information and communication that produces and prints definite bilingual, semi-manufactured products and stereotypes that become widespread among the broad masses of the population.

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#### Языковое разнообразие и билингвизм

О.А. Колыхалова

ФГБОУ ВПО «Московский государственный педагогический университет», г. Москва

**Ключевые слова и фразы:** искусственные языки; билингвизм; культурная идентичность; межкультурная коммуникация; языковое разнообразие; мультилингвизм; природное разнообразие; духовное развитие.

**Аннотация:** В статье рассматривается феномен билингвизма как важный источник духовного развития общества. Языковое разнообразие является уникальным фактом, способствующим формированию билингвизма/мультилингвизма. Однако развитие билингвизма невозможно без участия средств массовой информации, которые являются источником распространения двуязычных продуктов и стереотипов среди широких масс населения.

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