


## BEING A BILINGUAL IN MODERN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

S. Buchatskaya, Candidate of Psychology, Associate Professor, Head of Foreign Languages Chair  
M. Kotsyubinskij State Pedagogical University of Vinnitsa, Ukraine

The authors consider the issues of effective functioning of a bilingual in conditions of intercultural communication. The analysis of psychological and psycholinguistic aspects of bilingualism is offered, as well as the number of rules and recommendations for successful conduct of the interethnic dialogue.

**Keywords:** bilingualism, bilingual, intercultural communication, socio-cultural, psycholinguistic peculiarities, communicator.

Conference participant,  
National championship in scientific analytics,  
Open European and Asian research analytics championship

 <http://dx.doi.org/10.18007/gisap:ps.v0i11.1489>

### INTRODUCTION

Modern trends in intercultural communication encourage the international community to realize that humanity exists at the crossroads of cultures and language systems, and therefore the interaction of its members can be provided by means of effective communication, that is to say ability to use several languages. A person who knows at least two languages, in other words, a bilingual, getting into a different cultural and linguistic environment, has a chance to contribute to the values of the world language map, communicating with representatives of other cultures. Although learning a language and becoming bilingual, i.e. acquiring the new language proficiency, doesn't mean that you know all the grammar and vocabulary of the language, but it means understanding another culture and developing another identity, notwithstanding the ethnic communities you live in.

The problems of definition of bilingualism and its types, as well as interrelation between bilingualism and foreign language acquisition have been reflected in the works of foreign researchers (E. Bialystok, K. Hakuta, J. Cummins, A. Zalevska, E. Wiley and others). Interest in bilingual education and psycholinguistic approaches to the study of this notion can be traced in numerous publications and interpretations of modern Ukrainian linguistics (F. Batsevych, S. Kuranova, L. Zasiakina). However, functioning of a bilingual as a competent communicator

in terms of intercultural behaviour has not been the object of complex analysis yet.

#### Purpose

The paper aims to provide a relevant analysis of existing approaches to bilingualism and point out the main characteristics of a communicator in modern intercultural communication in favour of psycholinguistics.

#### The study

Despite the diversity of approaches in the study of bilingualism in modern linguistic and psychological studies, substantial differences still exist in concepts and definitions of the notion, requiring detailed coverage. Analysing the above mentioned phenomena, it should be assumed that most researchers agree that bilingualism as such arises in condition of close economic and social ties and coexistence of representatives of different ethnic groups. However, the phenomenon of bilingualism can occur even when the speaker is studying a foreign language in an artificially created foreign environment (school, university courses).

Historically, bilingual education was predetermined by different objective socio-political factors and has influenced the quality of mastering the phonetic system, second language constructions, direct perception and understanding of other cultures so far. In this case, getting involved in another culture and becoming the part of a global intercultural communication a bilingual can meet some challenges

and milestones.

According to F. Batsevych "communication of people always occurs within a particular culture using specific ethnic language, unique world language maps, as well as the laws of communication, elaborated within this particular language and culture. Getting into different cultural and linguistic environment, a person actually finds himself in another world of values and laws of communication. Ignorance or inadequate use (imitation) of speech-related verbal and nonverbal behaviour standards causes difficulties in communication between different linguistic-cultural communities and can cause a variety of communication obstacles." [1]

In order to set the relationship between culture and communication by revealing cultural patterns characteristic to various nations and to avoid failures in positive intentions of participants in the process of communication, the term "intercultural communication" was offered. The notion which later played a key role in Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions and E. Hirsch's theory of cultural literacy was introduced into scientific circulation by American anthropologist Edward T. Hall. [5] Theoretical study of guidelines put forward by E. Hall in his work «The Silent Language» became the basis for an integrated science that investigates the interrelation between the nature and results of the communication process and the degree of its members' awareness, caused by the density of social ties and the way the information

is exchanged between members of the community.

Thus “bilinguals, often broadly defined as individuals (or groups) who obtain the knowledge and use of more than one language” [6] are expected to manifest complex psychological and socio-cultural linguistic behaviour. It should be emphasized that knowledge of another peoples’ language is an essential component of intercultural communication and the very first step in establishing successful communication between people of different nations and cultures. Addressing a representative of a specific culture tactlessly and ignoring the linguistic peculiarities can make the communication impossible even before it starts. Failure to understand meanings of the metaphorical and symbolic systems leads to confusion, comic situations and sometimes even conflict.

The situation described further introduces not only individual style, personality and experience of two employees from different countries working together and speaking English, but also the existence of cultural expectations. These people expect others to behave according to their own cultural rules and ways. For example, Edmundo from Spain expects Sakiko from Japan to look at him while they speak to each other (formal situation). In his culture eye contact is an important part of communication. When she doesn’t frequently look at him in the eye, he thinks that she isn’t listening to him. Sakiko on the contrary is acting in accordance with her own cultural rules. In her country it is common to look away while speaking and listening. Moreover she feels uncomfortable when a man sits very close to her as such behaviour is considered impolite in Sakiko’s culture. [4]

The situation proves that the lack of knowledge of another culture can lead to embarrassing or amusing mistakes, and may also confuse or even offend people we wish to communicate with.

According to the theory of cultural dimensions of contemporary Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede each person perceives the world under the influence of individual characteristics of own

psyche, social environment, specific characteristics of ethnic culture, and therefore is the carrier of a certain way of thinking and potential actions.

In terms of our investigation a deep insight has been made in the psychology of language which reflects specific features of a personality. A number of researchers interpret bilingualism being guided by the theory of triple language phenomena: 1) speech activity, detected in the process of speaking and comprehension; 2) language systems (comprehension results in a certain period of development of the society fixed in grammar books, dictionaries); 3) language material – total amount of what is said and understood by a social group. From the point of psychological mechanisms of speech and mental activity the emphasis should be placed on different means of emotional verbalization, specific abilities to express oneself in different languages. Activity approach in the study of bilingualism allows differentiating various functional loads of bilingual skills in relevant communicative situations.

S.I. Kuranova summarizes that “modern communicative environment encourages people to choose behaviour strategy depending on the situation and circumstances, the focus of which is always language reflecting the key features of the personality and all national and cultural community [8]. Thus, the course of interaction depends largely on the social positions of participants of communication, and their internal (psychological and cognitive) states. These socio-pragmatic aspects determine the sender’s and the recipient’s communicative roles, their views on the “objects” of communication and attitude towards them.

In sum, we identify factors that contribute to successful intercultural communication, in other words, skills or abilities one should acquire in cross-cultural communication:

**Communication skills:** skills in listening, speaking, and writing to others in order to exchange information effectively;

**Interpersonal skills:** skills in dealing with people, cooperating with

them, and being sensitive to people’s needs;



**Cross-cultural skills:** skills in relating to people of different nationalities and cultures, especially in understanding their beliefs and values.

## Conclusions

The present study of psycholinguistic characteristics of a bilingual in terms of intercultural communication helped to understand the fact that any person with the help of the language can convey a sense of communication appropriateness and effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts.

One can clearly see by now that bilingualism is very complex and multidimensional linguistic behaviour where a communicator should acquire cross-cultural competency, that is to say be well aware of the “social skills” of an international lifestyle required to adapt to a new environment.

## References:

1. Batsevych F.S. (2002) The atmosphere of dialogue: attempt psycholinguistic research. *Linguistics.*, No. 4-5 (pp.)
2. Batsevych F.S. (2009) *Basics of communicative linguistics: textbook - 2nd ed., Ext. - K., EC "Academy" – 376 p. (Series "Alma Mater").*
3. Cummins, J. (2000) *Language, Power and Pedagogy. Bilingual Children in the Crossfire.* - Clevedon. UK., Multilingual Matters.  <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2001.10162800>
4. English, L.M., Lynn, S. (1995) *Business across cultures: Effective communication strategies.* - New York., Longman – 176p.
5. Hall E.T. *Proxemics Current Anthropology.* – 1967., No. 9.
6. Hakuta, K., Bialystok E., and Wiley E. (2003). *Critical evidence: A test of the critical period hypothesis for second language acquisition.* *Psychological Sciences*, 14 (1), 31-8.  <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.01415>
7. Hecht, M.L., Warren, J.R., Jung, E. & Krieger, J.L. (2005). *The communication theory of identity:*

Development, theoretical perspective, and future directions. Theorizing about intercultural communication., pp. 257–278 Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

8. Kuranova S.I. (2012) Fundamentals of psycholinguistics:

a course book - K., EC "Academy". – 208 p. ("AlmaMater" series).

**Information about author:**

1. Svetlana Buchatskaya - Candidate of Psychology, Associate

Professor, Head of Foreign Languages Chair, Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University named after Mikhail Kotsyubinskii; address: Ukraine, Vinnytsia city; e-mail: svitusik@gmail.com



# INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

OF SCIENTIFIC AND INNOVATIVE  
ANALYTICS OF THE IASHE

- DOCTORAL DYNAMIC SCIENTIFIC AND ANALYTICAL PROGRAMS
- ACADEMIC SCIENTIFIC AND ANALYTICAL PROGRAMS
- INTERNATIONAL ATTESTATION-BASED LEGALIZATION OF QUALIFICATIONS
- SCIENTIFIC AND ANALYTICAL PROGRAM OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION IMPROVEMENT
- DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ANALYTICAL PROGRAMS
- BIBLIOGRAPHIC SCIENTIFIC-ANALYTICAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
- BIBLIOGRAPHIC SCIENTIFIC-ANALYTICAL DOCTORAL PROGRAMS
- AUTHORITATIVE PROGRAMS



<http://university.iashe.eu> e-mail: [university@iashe.eu](mailto:university@iashe.eu) Phone: + 44 (20) 71939499