

**OS ANTECEDENTES E AS PERSPECTIVAS DA APLICAÇÃO DA  
ABORDAGEM MULTILÍNGUE AO ENSINO DE LÍNGUAS ESTRANGEIRAS  
EM ESCOLAS SUPERIORES RUSSAS SOB A GLOBALIZAÇÃO**

***ANTECEDENTES Y PERSPECTIVAS DE LA APLICACIÓN DEL ENFOQUE  
MULTILINGÜE A LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS EN LAS  
ESCUELAS SUPERIORES RUSAS BAJO LA GLOBALIZACIÓN***

***THE BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVES OF MULTILINGUAL APPROACH  
APPLICATION TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN RUSSIAN HIGHER  
SCHOOLS UNDER GLOBALIZATION***

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**RESUMO:** A iniciativa de introduzir o estudo de outras línguas nas escolas superiores russas ainda precisa estabelecer um envolvimento amplo e contínuo dos alunos e, muitas vezes, não consegue progredir os alunos além do simples uso pragmático da linguagem. Esta pesquisa visa demonstrar a importância do multiculturalismo - aprender uma segunda (terceira, etc.) língua (s) no sistema russo de ensino superior. Falar vários idiomas pode ser uma vantagem em mais de um aspecto. Aprender outra língua abre acesso a outros sistemas de valores e formas de interpretar o mundo, estimulando a compreensão intercultural, a aprendizagem de línguas também visa o desenvolvimento pessoal do aluno, sua adaptação comunicativa e psicológica a outra cultura e língua diferente, e o uso de linguagem para fins profissionais.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** abordagem multilíngue, aprendizagem profissional, comunicação intercultural, competência intercultural

**RESUMEN:** *El movimiento para introducir el estudio de idiomas adicionales en las escuelas superiores rusas aún tiene que establecer una participación estudiantil continua y de amplio alcance y, a menudo, no logra que los estudiantes progresen más allá del simple uso pragmático del lenguaje. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo demostrar la importancia del multiculturalismo: aprender una segunda (tercera, etc.) lengua (s) en el sistema ruso de educación superior. Hablar varios idiomas puede ser una ventaja en más de un sentido. El aprendizaje de otro idioma abre el acceso a otros sistemas de valores y formas de interpretar el mundo, fomentando el entendimiento intercultural, el aprendizaje del idioma también está dirigido al desarrollo personal del alumno, su adaptación comunicativa y psicológica a otra cultura y un idioma diferente, y el uso del idioma con fines profesionales.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *enfoque multilingüe aprendizaje profesional, comunicación intercultural, competencia intercultural*

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**ABSTRACT:** *The move to introduce the study of additional languages in Russian higher schools has yet to establish wide-ranging, ongoing student engagement and often fails to progress students beyond simple pragmatic language use. This research aims to demonstrate the importance of multiculturalism – learning a second (third etc.) language(s) in the Russian system of higher education. Speaking multiple languages may be an advantage in more ways than one. Learning another language opens up access to other value systems and ways of interpreting the world, encouraging inter-cultural understanding, language learning is also aimed at the student's personal development, his communicative and psychological adaptation to another culture and a different language, and the use of language for professional purposes.*

**KEYWORDS:** *multilingual approach professional learning, intercultural communication, intercultural competence*

## **Introduction**

The study examines the impact of a multilingual literacy approach as it has been applied in the teaching of French and English in the Russian system of higher education.

Learning another language opens up access to other value systems and ways of interpreting the world, encouraging inter-cultural understanding and helping reduce xenophobia. Bilingual and multilingual education refers to the use of two or more languages as mediums of instruction. The language of instruction in school is the medium of communication for the transmission of knowledge. The way languages are taught is constantly changing. Much depends on the prevailing concept of language and language teaching paradigms, as well as on the role that is assigned to the language that is taught.

Speaking multiple languages may be an advantage in more ways than one: a new study suggests that bilinguals are speedier task-switchers than monolinguals. Task-switching – the ability to mentally refocus on new goals or to shift attention one type of activity to another – is a valuable skill that has numerous practical uses.

Governments throughout the world are trying to find ways in which English and other languages can work as complementary to each other, rather than in competition.

The problem of multilingualism is considered in Europe not only in the context of early learning of foreign languages, but also in the broader perspective of preserving a multicultural educational space, ensuring academic mobility of students. The opportunity to attend courses at European universities, to write a thesis in the system of international tutoring, is a student's real benefit. Many European universities today are more than ever open for cooperation and partnerships. Based on these considerations, it

would be useful to think about increasing the proportion of language training of students of non-philological specialties (Shchepilova, 2007, p. 7-8).

The future specialist gets experience of professional activity on the basis of universal human values, which is the main result of the modeled innovative culture in the pedagogical space (Narcy-Combes, 2018a; 2018b).

Intercultural dialogue as a critical component of modern society should contribute to the self-identification of a person in the cultural space. This research aims to demonstrate the importance of multiculturalism – learning a second (third etc.) language(s) in the Russian system of higher education.

Technical progress and rapid development of computer technology make major adjustments to the work of modern university teachers, open up new opportunities in improving the educational process (Abramova, Korotaeva, 2019; Artyushina, Sheypak, Golov, 2017). The demand for graduates skilled in sophisticated decision making and cultural and language nuances will be driven by AI's biggest problem. The unpredictable nature of machine learning means it is not always easy for technology trained developers to justify the conclusions of their systems. So the in-demand graduates of the 2020s may be those with philosophy and language degrees that are currently unfashionable. The supply of these graduates is already limited (Templeman, 2020, pp. 76-77)

Stable and actual features of professional skills (the ability to extract information on the speciality from foreign sources, and use it in the industrial activities, the ability to communicate and negotiate with potential colleagues, investors within professional boundaries; ability to plan education and establish links between forward-looking, strategic, tactical and operational objectives of education) can be motivating (Artyushina, Sheypak, Golov, 2017, p. 282).

On the other hand, language teaching is aimed primarily at the student's personal development, his communicative and psychological adaptation to another culture and a different language, and only then the formation of practical communication skills and the use of language for professional purposes (Seregina et al., 2019, p. 7-8).

The future specialist gets experience of professional activity on the basis of universal human values, which is the main result of the modeled innovative culture in the pedagogical space (Sergeeva et al., 2019, p. 24). Nowadays there is a tendency to advance the generalist approach in English language teaching for a more versatile workforce. Multitasking, multi-purpose of foreign language training and expanding the

portfolio of competencies of graduates of non-linguistic universities tends to become contemporary demands (Chuksina, 2021, p. 40).

## Literature review

### *Definition of bilingual education*

UNESCO General Conference Resolution 12 in 1999 adopted the term "multilingual education" to refer to the use of at least three languages, a regional or national language and an international language in education. The resolution supported the view that the requirements of global and national participation and the specific needs of particular, culturally and linguistically distinct communities can only be addressed by multilingual education (30 C/Resolution 12: Implementation of a Language Policy for the World Based on Multilingualism, 1999, p. 35-36).

### *Advantages of bilingual education*

Bilingualism has already been associated with a number of cognitive advantages, and now a study Language and Cognition from A. Prior & B. MacWhinney has investigated how bilingualism might enhance crucial task-switching skills in young adults. Researchers compared single-task and mixed-task reaction times to determine how reaction time and accuracy differed between groups and trial types. Bilinguals were much faster than monolinguals on trials that required task-switching.

Task-switching and executive control contributes to a growing body of evidence suggesting that bilinguals enjoy enhanced executive control compared to monolinguals. Executive control refers to a combination of cognitive abilities – including task-switching – that help you make decisions, control impulses, and plan thoughtfully. It's long been thought that constant management and monitoring of two languages improves executive control. The A. Prior & B. MacWhinney study "demonstrated a robust bilingual advantage in performance, suggesting that lifelong bilingualism may lead to enhanced efficiency in the executive function of shifting between mental sets" (Prior, Macwhinney, 2010, p. 260).

There are bilingual schools in which all or most of the lessons are conducted in a non-native language. In Canadian "immersion classes", for example, English-speaking children begin their education by learning all subject through French. According to reports, they reach a high degree of proficiency in the second language without receiving formal instruction in it, and do not suffer in other aspects of their education. The growing evidence shows that early bilingualism can provide students with benefits

that go beyond knowing more than one language and that bilingual children typically develop certain types of cognitive exibility and metalinguistic awareness earlier and better than their monolingual peers (Templeman, 2020, p. 46).

Factors internal to the student also affect language learning. Student's responses to opportunities or demands to learn more than one language depend on their temperament and other personality variables, including motivation, learning styles, intellectual capacity, sensory abilities (e.g., hearing and vision). The move to introduce the study of additional languages has yet to establish wide-ranging, on-going student engagement often fails to progress students beyond simple pragmatic language use.

*Recent syntheses of research on second-language literacy development* suggest a broadly accepted definition of transfer to be the ability to learn new language and literacy skills by drawing on the previously acquired resources (August, Shanahan, 2006; Riches, Genesee, 2006). In these conceptualisations, the investigative focus has moved to identifying the cognitive and linguistic resources available to second language learners when learning the new language as well as developing literacy skills in that language(s) rather than viewing prior language learning as either a negative or positive influence.

The literature on the effect of previously learnt languages on the acquisition and use of new foreign languages has been growing steadily in the last two decades (Littlewood, 2010; Bender, Beller, 2013; Chang, 2017; Condamines, Narcy-Combes, 2015; Dewaele, 2010; García, 2009; Iakovleva, Hickmann, 2012; Jardou, 2018; Knight, Power, 2011; Korotaeva, 2020; Narcy-Combes, Narcy-Combes, 2019; Wehbe, 2017; Wei, 2017; White, 2018; Xue, 2016; Geva, Yaghoub-Zadeh, Schuster, 2000).

The dependent variables considered in the literature can roughly be divided into two distinct categories: firstly, studies that look at traces of other languages known in the actual speech production of a new target language [phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon]; secondly, studies that consider cognitive effects linked to multilingualism that might enhance the learning of a new target language.

Investigations into cross-linguistic relationships in first and second language literacy skill development have shown that phonological awareness skills are positively correlated across languages (Geva, Verhoeven, 2000; Proctor et al., 2006). Proctor, August, and Carlo et al., found a “compelling relationship” between the first and second language of students in their investigation into reading comprehension. Language

specific knowledge, orthographic distance and fluency also play a role in second language reading performance.

In the contemporary literature there now exists two abiding frameworks for understanding language transfer: linguistic interdependence and contrastive analysis.

The core tenet of the first framework of linguistic interdependence (Sparks et al., 2009; Cummins, 1984; Genesee et al., 2006) is the belief that all languages are interdependent in a learner's brain: that is, linguistic communication relies upon common underlying proficiencies that reside in a neurobiological processing system from which all languages operate and that the specific neurological tissues employed to subserve these acts are notably consistent across people, cultures and language codes (MacSwan, Rolstad, 2005, p. 32).

The second framework, contrastive analysis, also maintains a central concern with commonalities between languages universal principles, but in this case the core focus is upon structural similarities between languages rather than skills. Within this perspective, considerations of universality are foremost: what structural (e.g. phonological, syntactic, semantic) similarities and differences exist between the languages, that can either assist or hinder the learning of the languages through an analytic process of comparing and contrasting.

Kemmerer (2012) argues that typological generalizations occur in the vast majority of all studied human languages. The body of research that underpins this notion is drawn from the field of generative linguistics, in particular, the work of N. Chomsky and others who are continuing to develop the theory of Universal Grammar [UG]. This theory points to the limits of variation in human language systems, to those core principles that underpin the various structures and forms of structure dependence that are universally evident in human language systems: linearity, discreteness, recursion, dependence and locality. These characteristics are considered to be universal, or applicable to all languages.

Most of the literature in the field of language transfer can now be viewed from within one or both of these frameworks. The notion of transferable or general language operating skills and understandings that is a central concern of these frameworks was also central to the multilingual literacy approach being reported on here. However, the investigative focus was upon how such frameworks could be used in classroom praxis as a heuristic for languages and literacy learning rather than an examination of the magnitude of language transfer within any specific language domain.

### *The MLL approach*

The evolving argument that arose from the ongoing review of published literature was that learners of a new language may be advantaged by approaches that draw upon the innate, universal structure of languages and innate [language] learning processes that can be built upon using the language interdependence and contrastive analysis frameworks. In other words, it is logically possible to combine innate, language-specific constraints [or parameters] with general, universal language properties and learning mechanisms.

A new approach that integrates languages in daily classroom practices can improve this situation: a multilingual literacy approach. The theoretical framework that drives this approach draws form from the notions of universality and transfer that are established in the literature from applied linguistics and cognitive neurosciences to classroom pedagogy.

The MLL approach was based upon the fundamental observation, or idea, that the developmental process by which human beings acquire languages and develop the literate skills for their varied use is readily predictable: it is universal. Hence, the MLL approach calls for universal, developmental schedules for the teaching and learning of languages and literacy.

The second observation, or idea, was that once knowledge or skill for using a language has been obtained then that is an available resource for the teaching and learning of another: cross-linguistic transfer. Thus, the MLL approach was built upon: a task analytic approach to the selection and sequencing of activities for languages and literacy learning; in-step collaborative planning across L1 and L2 programs; the use of translanguaging and the development of a metalanguage for comparing and contrasting linguistic features and processes. The learning of additional languages beyond the L1 leads to increased levels of metalinguistic awareness, and that this in turn leads to accelerated rates of acquisition for subsequent languages.

Iakovleva highlights the usefulness of the Theory of Structural Ambiguity and its implications for the study of foreign language acquisition by adults. The structural ambiguity hypothesis (Müller, 1998) attributes particular importance to the properties of the languages involved and predicts that transfers should occur in a single direction, notably from a systematic language to a less systematic language. The way in which FL is taught, and especially the acquisition and practice strategies put in place, are much

more important than the fact of exposure to FL in the natural environment (Iakovleva, 2012, p. 562-563).

## **Materials and methods**

This is an analytical-descriptive research that obtained data from questionnaires and interviews. Content analysis and model structure have been used to analyze the data.

This study was conducted among students of three faculties of the Moscow Aviation Institute, which has extensive experience and long-standing traditions of teaching foreign languages as part of the training of engineers in aviation specialties.

A total of 85 people were interviewed: 35 students who studied English, 35 students who studied French, 10 English teachers who did not study French and 5 French teachers who did not study English.

The study was carried out at the MAI Aerospace Foreign Language Department in order to assess the results achieved during a survey and find out possible ways to improve the process of its preparation. A survey was conducted in the following groups of respondents:

- 1] teachers at the department (15 people);
- 2] students (bachelors/specialists) of technical specialties of the university [level of complete higher education, including the stage of professionalization in teaching foreign languages (35 people);
- 3] masters and graduate students (stage of teaching a foreign language: scientific and communicative pragmatization) (35 people);

The following goals were set:

- 1) To assess the impact of the multilingual approach to foreign language teaching on the process of formation of professionally oriented intercultural communicative competence;
- 2) To evaluate the influence of the a second (third etc.) language(s) learning in the Russian system of higher education student's personal development, his communicative and psychological adaptation to another culture and a different language;
- 3) To estimate the optimal for condition for the teaching of language for professional purposes;



4) To identify key problems of the multilingual approach to foreign language teaching.

## Results and discussion

For comparative analysis, the vocabulary used in situations of oral and written communication in the framework of the program on foreign languages for higher education institutions was selected.

**Table** contains everyday vocabulary that is completely similar in meaning and spelling. These examples indicate the presence of common morphemes for these two unrelated languages: opinion, pollution, probable, principal, air, photo, parents, rare, tube, poison, page, science, rare, silence, image, production, source, influence, different, application

**Table** includes the common vocabulary of English and French with the same meaning, with slight differences in spelling. For example, the differences are in the absence of a finite unpronounceable "e", in nouns the last two letters "re" in French and "er" in English: exercice/exercise; commun/common; nombre/number; fréquent/frequent; environnement/environment; difficile/difficult; équation/equation; réduction/reduction; résistance/resistance; recevoir/receive; preparer/prepare; introduire/introduce; people/people; propre/proper; mémoire/memory; honneur/honor; heure/hour; letter/letter; space/espace; rivière/river

**Table** includes general technical vocabulary of two languages, completely matching in meaning and spelling: satellite, aviation, substance, combustion, friction, surface, structure, composition, installation, altitude, empennage, projectile, endurance, fuselage, fin, combustion

Finally, **Table** contains general technical vocabulary of two languages with the same meaning, with slight differences in spelling.

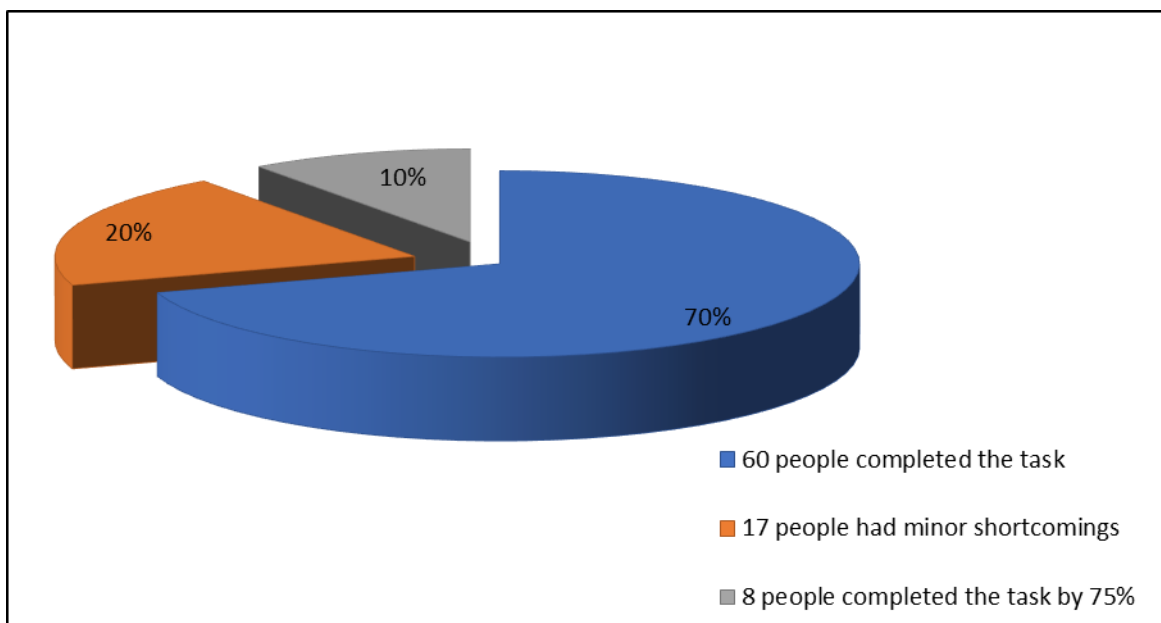
**Table 1.** Vocabulary of English and French languages

English	French
Environment pollution is a general problem.	La pollution de l'environnement est un problème general
Aviation is developed in Russia.	L`aviation est développée en Russie
The surface properties are influenced by	Les propriétés de surface sont influencées

temperature	par la température
The atmospheric pressure changes with altitude	La pression atmosphérique change avec l'altitude
The success of any research depends on precisely defining its objective	Le succès de toute recherche dépend de la définition précise de son objectif
To maintain a constant temperature in a small or large container is a very important technical problem	Maintenir une température constante dans un petit ou un grand conteneur est un problème technique très important
The scientist is often interested in a problem disregarding possible consequences of its solution.	Le savant s'intéresse souvent à un problème sans tenir compte des conséquences possibles de sa solution

In addition, students studying English were invited to translate several phrases from French into English, using methods of comparison and linguistic guesses. In contrast, students who studied French were asked to translate the same sentences from English into French.

According to the results of the survey, a figure was compiled that showed that 100% of the respondents, that is, all 85 people, completed the task. Moreover, 60 people completed the task completely, which is 70%. 17 people had minor shortcomings – 20%, and 8 people, that is 10%, completed the work by 75%. According to the results of the survey, the chart was compiled.



**Figure 1.** Survey Results

## Conclusions

1. The survey results prove that knowledge of one foreign language helps to more quickly master another one. The results confirm that it is easier to learn a second foreign language based on knowledge of the first foreign language.

In particular, English and French have great similarities: the lexical structure has common morphemes, which helps to expand the vocabulary of a foreign language due to the word-formation process. The results of this research project provide an opportunity to popularize bilingual training.

2. Learning one of these two languages as a second foreign language can be easier in terms of mastering vocabulary, relying on already acquired knowledge and using a comparative analytical method. Having identified common morphemes, one can use them to expand the volume of vocabulary and guesses about the lexical meaning of a word.

3. Metalinguistic understanding of languages was advanced when the initial language of instruction for new and complex material was the same as the students' home language.

Results from this study demonstrate that when the aforementioned theoretical notions are adopted into daily classroom teaching and learning activities, there is a qualitative and quantitative improvement in student literacy learning.

There is also experience in the integration of various subjects within the framework of the higher education. A number of Russian technical higher schools give lectures on mathematics, physics and strength of materials in foreign languages.

4. However, in addition to factors contributing to the development of integrated learning within the framework of the general system of teaching foreign languages, there are also factors that can negatively affect this process. These include: the extreme heterogeneity of students in terms of foreign language proficiency, the low level of student motivation, the insufficient attention to the study of foreign languages, especially in non-linguistic universities, the lack of teachers who are equally good at two or more foreign languages, as well as specialized vocabulary in various fields of knowledge.

5. The key findings of the study support the argument that this MLL approach can advance the development of integrated languages programs that will generate measurable literacy outcomes. The continuation of this work can serve as a comparative analysis of grammatical categories of these two unrelated languages, which will also help in the study of two or more foreign languages.

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