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# Bilingualism and Multilingualism as Means of Socio-Psychological Adaptation of the Students of Higher Educational Institutions

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## Abstract

The phenomenon of the use of one or more languages has been observed for a long time and is increasing in recent years due to the rapidly developing intercultural and interethnic relations, the spread of mass communication.

In the Chuvash Republic, the Chuvash language is the state language, along with Russian. Chuvash families, especially those that do not live in the administrative centers, speak their native language at home, sometimes combining it with the Russian one. Few representatives of other nationalities (Tatars, Mordvins, Bashkirs, Armenians...) communicate at home in their native and Russian languages. Thus, an interesting variety of languages used in speech is clearly expressed in Chuvashia, especially in rural areas.

Modern migration processes affect the social and psychological adaptation of people. The problem of our research is to determine the impact of bilingualism and multilingualism on the socio-psychological adaptation of students in higher educational institutions. The aim of our study is to establish a correlation between the indicators of the number of languages spoken by a student and his/her ability to social and psychological adaptation. To achieve the goal, we used the complex of the following methods of investigation: the study of the scientific and methodological literature on the problem of research, the observation, conversations, the use of the questionnaire to diagnose the socio-psychological adaptation of students and the mathematical methods of the analysis of the results.

The experimental study was conducted with the students of the faculty of foreign languages and psycho-pedagogical faculty of the Chuvash State Pedagogical University named after I. Ya. Yakovlev.

Results. The obtained data indicate that the students of both faculties have a high level of indicators on the following scales: adaptability, acceptance of themselves and acceptance of others.

General indicators on each scale show that students of the faculty of foreign languages have a higher level of social and psychological adaptation. We used the r-Spearman correlation coefficient to determine the dependence.

There is a significant correlation between some indicators of social and psychological adaptation of students of the faculty of foreign languages and the number of languages they speak. They know more than three languages, adapt easier and faster in a foreign environment than the students of psycho-pedagogical faculty.

In some cases the students of the psycho-pedagogical faculty show low self-esteem, often dissatisfied with their appearance, insecure, anxious, and dissatisfied with themselves.

The experimental study confirmed the theoretical and practical justification of the influence of bilingualism and multilingualism on the socio-psychological adaptation of students. Perceiving information in two or more languages, they are more savvy in terms of forming a linguistic picture of the world. Bilingualism and multilingualism have a positive impact on the ability to analyze and understand the phenomena of a language. They develop memory,

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mathematical abilities, logic, intelligence, speed of reaction. The more languages a person knows, the higher the level of adaptation in the new language environment.

*Keywords:* family life, readiness for family life, adolescents, deviant behavior, pedagogical conditions of readiness for family life.

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## **Introduction**

According to the Russian scientists, preparation for future family life is one of the main tasks. The spiritual will of the famous Chuvash educator Ivan Yakovlevich Yakovlev contains the following words: “One language – one mind, two languages – two minds, three languages – three minds. Be smart”. The positive attitude to bilingualism and multilingualism is expressed in it.

This article is about the concept of bilingualism as a phenomenon of modern society and its influence on the socio-psychological adaptation of people. Bilingualism and multilingualism are the results of the development of different spheres of our life: economic, political, cultural, scientific, social and others.

Intercultural and interethnic relations, mass communication become the reasons for the increase of the use of one or more languages. Migration should also be mentioned, people have a need to communicate in two or more languages.

Language training begins with a birthday and continues at different stages of human development: in a kindergarten, at school, at a higher educational institution. According to British neuropsychologists' studies, about 70 % of the world's population speaks two or more language.

The experimental study was conducted with the students of the faculty of foreign languages and psychopedagogical faculty of the Chuvash state pedagogical University named after I. Ya. Yakovlev. In our opinion, the knowledge of several languages (at a decent level) contributes to faster adaptation of students, makes them successful and confident. The knowledge of several languages contributes to the fact that a person develops different patterns of behaviors, communication skills and social experience.

### **Purpose and objectives of the study**

Therefore, establishing a correlation between the indicators of the number of languages spoken by a student and his ability to social and psychological adaptation is the object of our research activity.

Several tasks were set to achieve the goal. Among them are the following: studying the scientific and methodological literature on the problem of research and choosing the appropriate methodology for the study. The next step is selecting groups of students and distributing them into subgroups in order to determine the number of languages they speak. After it we use the questionnaire to diagnose the socio-psychological adaptation of students. To sum up, we analyze the results and draw conclusions.

There are different points of view about the impact of one language on another in the course of their mastering. In this article we will make an attempt to reveal the concept of bilingualism, its importance and role in the development of modern society. We will also consider whether bilingualism and multilingualism affect the ability of students of higher education institutions to social and psychological adaptation.

### **Literature review**

The term "bilingualism" consists of two Latin words: bi – double and lingua – language. Therefore, a bilingual is a person who can speak two or more languages.

Definitions of "bilingualism", knowledge of two languages at the same time, have some differences in the special literature. According to Dyachkov (1991) bilingualism is studied from different points of view. This phenomenon is studied by many specialists: linguists, psycholinguists, teachers, psychologists, sociologists, etc.

The concept of bilingualism was first defined by Shcherba (1974). "Bilingualism refers to the ability of certain groups of the population to communicate in two languages. Since language is a function of social groups, to be bilingual means to belong simultaneously to two different groups".

There are many kinds of bilingualism. Shcherba (1974) introduced the terms "pure" and "mixed" bilingualism. In the first case, the two languages are completely isolated from each other. Such examples occur when children speak to their parents at home one language, and at school with classmates another. In this case, the two languages are not used alternately. In the second case, in "mixed" bilingualism, people use two languages at the same time, speaking one of them, then the other one. The two languages mix, interpenetrate, adapt to each other. One language is formed as a whole; each concept has two ways of expression, two forms, which facilitates the process of transition from one language into the second.

Many scientists also distinguish natural (everyday), artificial (academic).

Natural bilingualism is formed involuntarily in everyday communication in a multilingual environment, while artificial one develops in the course of conscious purposeful learning in a foreign language environment.

According to Vishnevskaya (2005), the differences between these types of bilingualism are gradually erasing due to the increase in international communication and intercultural contacts.

There is also "parallel" bilingualism, when there is a simultaneous development of two or more languages under the age of three years, and "sequential", when the second language is introduced after the process of mastering the first language.

Children in rural areas of our republic speak two languages from birth: Chuvash and Russian. Children have a natural and parallel bilingualism.

Vereshchagin (1969) identifies a number of indicators to highlight different types of bilingualism.

The first classification is based on the number of actions that are performed when you are able to use more than two languages.

The author distinguishes three types of bilingualism: receptive, reproductive, productive. The first type, receptive, provides the understanding of speech belonging to the secondary language system (when meeting with dead languages). The second, reproductive, when a bilingual reproduces what he read and heard (with independent study of a non-native language in the process of communication). The third type of bilingualism is productive when a bilingual is able to understand and reproduce speech belonging to a secondary language system.

The conditions, when two speech mechanisms are connected to each other, are the basis for the second classification. In a situation where a person in a family uses one language, and at work, in professional activities and in public places communicates in another language, in this case we are dealing with pure bilingualism. With the fluency and interchangeability of languages, we are talking about a mixed bilingualism.

In the Chuvash Republic, the Chuvash language is the state language, along with Russian. Chuvash families, especially those that do not live in the administrative centers, speak their native language at home, sometimes combining it with the Russian one (Ifont & Tovar-García, 2015). Few representatives of other

nationalities (Tatars, Mordvins, Bashkirs, Armenians...) communicate at home in their native and Russian languages. Primary education in most regional centers is conducted in Russian and Chuvash. At secondary school, the process of education is conducted exclusively in Russian, Chuvash is not used as a language of teaching, and is taught as a subject. One (most often English) and in some cases two foreign languages are also compulsory for studying at school. Thus, an interesting variety of languages used in speech is clearly expressed in Chuvashia, especially in rural areas (Ifont & Tovar-García, 2018). However, there is no evidence that the reason for speech disorders of a child and a slowdown in language acquisition is the presence of children from early childhood in a bilingual environment (Ivanova, 2019).

On the contrary, many scientists believe that early learning of two languages has a positive impact on the development of a child. An adequate picture of the world is formed in the consciousness of an individual, contributing to the development of the process of communication, teamwork, mutual assistance. Bilingualism and multilingualism help people of different nationalities to communicate, the language of international communication is widely used (Mkrtycheva & Miltseva, 2017).

Modern migration processes affect social and psychological adaptation of people. In our research work we study the influence of bilingualism on the socio-psychological adaptation of students.

Social and psychological adaptation of students is one of the most difficult stages in the development of a personality.

Socio-psychological adaptation is a process of interaction, during which there are changes in the individual, the human psyche in society. The student has to realize his or her new social role, a new kind of activity. New relationships appear: student – student, student – teacher. Many students change their social conditions. The process of adaptation has a strong impact on the social status of a student. There is a development of self-consciousness and professional self-determination at this age stage (Lutsko, 2008). The adaptation process is influenced by many factors. We decided to find out how bilingualism affects this process.

## **Methodology**

Modern migration processes affect the social and psychological adaptation of people. The problem of our research is to determine the impact of bilingualism and multilingualism on the socio-psychological adaptation of students in higher educational institutions.

The aim of our study is to establish a correlation between the indicators of the number of languages spoken by a student and his/her ability to social and psychological adaptation. To achieve the goal, we used the complex of the following methods of investigation: the study of the scientific and methodological literature on the problem of research, the observation, conversations, the use the questionnaire to diagnose the socio-psychological adaptation of students and the mathematical methods of the analysis of the results.

An important aspect of successful adaptation is the ability of students to communicate with peers and teachers, the ability to demonstrate practical knowledge of languages. To study the influence of knowledge of two or more languages on the socio-psychological adaptation of students, we have compiled a questionnaire and to study the socio-psychological adaptation, we used a personal questionnaire (Rogers & Dymond, adapted by Osnitsky, 2004). The study was conducted on the basis of the Chuvash State Pedagogical University with the students of the faculty of foreign languages (FFL) and the faculty of psychology and education (FPE).

During the study, we conducted a survey to identify the number and level of language proficiency. According to the results of the survey the following groups were distinguished: I group – students who speak Russian, a national (native) and a foreign language (basic level); II group – students who know more than three languages. The analysis of questionnaires of students / showed the following results: FFL: group I – 21 people (65.6%), group II – 11 people (34.4%). FPE: group I – 28 people (90.3%), group II – 3 people (9.7%).

We have made a diagnostics of socio-psychological adaptation of students with the help of a personal questionnaire (the authors Rogers and Dymond, adapted by Osnitsky, 2004). This method allows us to identify the socio-psychological adaptation of students, i.e. attitude to yourself and to others. Socio-psychological adaptation is characterized by the following integral indicators: adaptability – maladaptation, self-acceptance – rejection of yourself, acceptance of others – rejection of others, emotional comfort – emotional discomfort, internal control – external control, domination – escapism (avoiding problems).

We have obtained the following results, which are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of personal questionnaire data (Rogers &amp; Dymond, adapted by Osnitsky, 2004)

№	Indicators	ППФ	ФИЯ
1	Adaptability	28 (90%)	30(93%)
	Maladaptivity	3 (10%)	2 (7%)
2	self-Acceptance	20 (64%)	29 (90%)
	Self-denial	11 (36%)	3 (10%)
3	Acceptance of others	26 (83%)	22 (68%)
	Non-acceptance of other	5 (17%)	10 (32%)
4	Emotional comfort	18 (58%)	23 (71%)
	Emotional discomfort	13 (42%)	9 (29%)
5	Internal control	14 (45%)	25 (78%)
	External control	17 (55%)	7 (22%)
6	Dominance	20 (64%)	24 (75%)
	Ability to be driven	11 (36%)	8 (25%)
7	Escapism (avoiding problems)	9 (29%)	5 (15%)

The data obtained indicate that the students of both faculties have a high level of indicators on the following scales: adaptability, acceptance of themselves and acceptance of others.

General indicators on each scale indicate that students of the faculty of foreign languages have a higher level of social and psychological adaptation. We used the r-Spearman correlation coefficient to determine the dependence.

There is a significant correlation between some indicators of social and psychological adaptation of students of the FFL and the number of languages they speak. There is a direct strong dependence on the following scales: adaptability ( $r = 0,54$ ), self-acceptance ( $r = 0,8$ ), acceptance of others ( $r = 0,83$ ), emotional comfort ( $r = 0,71$ ).

In our opinion, another important factor that affects the indicators of adaptation is academic performance, or rather the results of the Unified State Exams, which is much higher among the students of the faculty of foreign languages. The students of the faculty of psychology and education, future psychologists have an average score of 183, and the students of the faculty of foreign languages 230 or more.

## **Results**

The study showed that there is a relationship between knowledge of two or more languages and levels of social and psychological adaptation. We have come to the following results.

Students of the second group, who know more than three languages, adapt easier and faster in a foreign environment than students of the first group, who do not have this indicator.

One of the indicators was "self-acceptance". The students of the second group are able to accept themselves as they are, often notice and enjoy the details of everyday trifles. They are less prone to self-blame, accept themselves without changes and embellishment. However, the students of the first group have low self-esteem, often dissatisfied with their appearance, insecure, anxious, dissatisfied with themselves.

The next indicator was "acceptance of others". Members of the second group are characterized by such features as tolerance and openness, love for the people around them, respect for others. They accept the world without fear of condemnation, they are not afraid of being judged for their actions. That is unusual for students of the first group.

Now let us consider such an indicator as "emotional comfort". Emotions have a positive or negative attitude of students to learning activities, affect the relationship with teachers and classmates. Students of the

second group experience positive emotions in the educational process in the development of new educational material, demonstrate a stable emotional and cognitive attitude to the subjects studied, characterized by enthusiasm. They try to get knowledge on their own, improve their educational work, engage in self-education. All this contributes to the creation of emotional comfort in the learning process at the University. Students of the first group show themselves insufficiently mature as individuals, experience anxiety, but there were no depressive symptoms. Although they sometimes show negative emotions, in general, they are dominated by positive emotional states. Tension in interpersonal relations was not revealed.

Students of the second group strive to be always leaders, successfully solve complex problems, uniting a team, establishing friendly relations with fellow students.

The number of students of the second group (34.4%) at the faculty of foreign languages is much higher than at the faculty of psychology and education. Indicators of social and psychological adaptation of students are also higher. This allows us to conclude that bilingualism, trilingualism and multilingualism affect the development of the student's personality favorably and the ability to adapt to their own and foreign language environment.

### **Discussions and Conclusion**

This study summarizes the theoretical developments on the problem of bilingualism and socio-psychological adaptation of students. The experimental study confirmed the theoretical and practical justification of the influence of bilingualism on the socio-psychological adaptation of students.

The representation of the world for the bilingual and multilingual people is much wider. Perceiving information in two or more languages, they are more savvy in terms of forming a linguistic picture of the world. Bilingualism and multilingualism have a positive impact on the ability to analyze and understand the phenomena of a language. They develop memory, mathematical abilities, logic, intelligence, speed of reaction. The more languages a person knows, the higher the level of adaptation in the new language environment.

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