Educational autonomy of a multicultural linguistic personality

Autonomía educativa de una personalidad lingüística multicultural

Svetlana Stanislavovna KUKLINA 1; Maya Nickolaevna TATARINOVA 2; Valentina Semyonovna GULYAEVA 3; Marina Gennadievna SHVETSOVA 4; Maria Yuryevna PODLEVSKIKH 5

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ABSTRACT:
One of the urgent contemporary educational problems is the formation of a student as a multicultural linguistic personality and his/her autonomy. According to the activity-oriented paradigm only active, responsible and autonomous learners are able to enrich their own world vision and become the subjects of learning activities for mastering a foreign language culture in the cultural dialogue. Solution of this problem is especially important for foreign language teaching and learning. The basics of methodological framework of the article are competence related, communicative and emotionally valuable approaches to foreign language education. The aim of the article is to discuss the notion of a multicultural linguistic personality’s educational autonomy in foreign language education. Its achievement was reached through defining his / her characteristics; considering a foreign language learner’s autonomy in light of the requirements of the modern learner-centered paradigm and describing the results of mastering the content of foreign language education in terms of formation of a multicultural linguistic personality’s autonomy. In its turn, it will allow us to to

RESUMEN:
Uno de los problemas educativos contemporáneos urgentes es la formación de un estudiante como personalidad lingüística multicultural y su autonomía. Según el paradigma orientado a la actividad sólo active, los educandos responsables y autónomos son capaces de enriquecer su propia visión mundial y convertirse en sujetos de actividades de aprendizaje para dominar una cultura de lengua extranjera en el diálogo cultural. La solución de este problema es especialmente importante para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Los fundamentos del marco metodológico del artículo son enfoques relacionados con la competencia, comunicativos y emocionalmente valiosos para la educación de lenguas extranjeras. El objetivo del artículo es debatir la noción de autonomía educativa multicultural de la personalidad lingüística en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. Su logro se alcanzó a través de la definición de sus características; Considerando la autonomía de un aprendiz de lengua extranjera a la luz de los requerimientos del paradigma moderno centrado en el aprendiz y describiendo los resultados de dominar el contenido de la educación en
1. Introduction

The most significant characteristics of the XXIst century, which cannot, but affect the process of modern foreign language education, are globalization and multifaceted ties between countries and peoples, the development of an interdependent world, in which economic, political and cultural ties between states are diverging. The society is becoming multicultural, but nowadays there is an urgent problem to preserve the identity and culture of each individual ethnic group.

The modern period is marked by introduction of a learner-centered paradigm with its competence related, communicative and emotionally valuable approaches into the educational process. Consequently, in the centre of pedagogues’ and methodologists’ attention is the personality of a student as a subject of learning activities.

In the field of foreign language education, in terms of students’ real contact with native speakers, representing a variety of cultures, there is the task of formation of a new type of personality and his / her progressive, harmonious and creative development. This aim is in demand by a modern society.

Accordingly, the purpose of foreign language education becomes neither the development of a set of specific foreign language skills nor getting separate cultural knowledge about a foreign country, but the formation of a linguistic personality that will be capable of an active and productive life in a global multicultural society. Such a person aims to possess a strong sense of understanding and respect for other cultures, ability to live in peace and harmony with representatives of different linguistic and cultural groups. He / she will be able to implement the most efficient communication with other cultures, possessing certain potentials, abilities and readiness. All that allows a person to realize his / her potential in a multicultural, globalizing world. A student’s intercultural transformation facilitates the development of such personal qualities as low degree of ethnocentrism, empathy, ability to establish meaningful relations with strangers, perceive members of another culture with respect and understanding.

The formation of this type of personality should be based on understanding both universal cultural concepts, that have a universal value, and specific cultural expressions of these concepts in different ethnic cultures. Such a linguistic personality has been called *multicultural* (Elizarova, 2005; Galskova, Tareva, 2012; Karaulov, 2004; Khalyapina, 2006). In the structure of a multicultural linguistic personality's competences, according to L. P. Khalyapina, "personal qualities, that are in demand in the globalizing polycultural world, are identified" (Khalyapina, 2006, 101).

A multicultural linguistic personality is supposed to be responsible, independent and self-reliant in planning, implementation and evaluation of his / her learning activities. Thus, he / she is expected to be as active and responsible in an educational process as the teacher is. Each of the subjects of a foreign language educational process shows interest to one another, recognizes their differences, respects their uniqueness and at the same time, through knowledge and comparison, deepens his / her own self-identity. This understanding of a subject of learning activities may be correlated with the notion of a multicultural language personality’s educational autonomy, which was introduced into pedagogical use at the end of the last century due to the research of foreign (Henner-Stanchina, Riley, 1978; Holec, Huttunen, 1997; Little, 1991; Weinstein, 1987) and Russian (Koryakovtseva, 2010; Kuklina, 2012; Polat, 2000;
2. Materials and methods

The theoretical framework for this article is provided by the following categories: a multicultural linguistic personality, his / her personal components, educational autonomy, a foreign language communicative competence, which together are used to research the problem and reach the aim of the article.

In the process of research of a multicultural linguistic personality’s educational autonomy the following methods were used: scientific observation, classification and generalization of concepts and facts, modelling and designing, the analysis of regulatory documents. The study was conducted *in order to* characterise educational autonomy of a multicultural linguistic personality, able to interact with foreign partners and establish meaningful relationships with them. The achievement of the objective of the article was implemented in the course of a successive solution of the following tasks: a) to define a multicultural linguistic personality’s qualities as a result of mastering the content of foreign language education; b) consider a foreign language learner’s autonomy in light of the requirements of the modern learner-centered paradigm; c) describe the results of mastering the content of foreign language education in terms of the formation of a multicultural linguistic personality’s autonomy.

The solution of these tasks was carried out in stages from the standpoint of the competence related, communicative and emotionally valuable approaches on the basis of Vyatka State University:

– In the first of them (2015) the task was to study the concept of a multicultural linguistic personality and model his / her characteristics, reflecting the results of mastering the content of foreign language education in the interconnection of its components.
– In the second phase (2016) educational autonomy was to be defined and the process of autonomous learning was to be described.
– In the third phase (2017) it was planned to characterize the results of mastering the content of foreign language education in terms of the formation of a multicultural linguistic personality’s educational autonomy.

3. Literature review

3.1 A multicultural linguistic personality

A multicultural linguistic personality’s qualities are defined in our works as possession of
a) a set of national and universal values;
b) the experience of emotional and value attitude to the world cultural values;
c) will as the ability to create a system of values and make efforts to master the world cultural values;
d) a set of personal universal educational actions (UEA), that make the process of mastering the values of the world culture meaningful and provide the significance of doing educational tasks (Tatarinova, 2016, 49).

Figure 1 will present the model of a multicultural linguistic personality as a result of mastering the content of foreign language education in the interconnection of its components.
3.2 Educational autonomy and the process of autonomous learning

Concerning the preparedness of a multicultural linguistic personality for life-long learning as one of a school-leaver’s basic competences, it should be built in schoolchildren from the very first lessons of a foreign language. The teacher does not simply explain to them the necessity of regular and systematic work with a language, but instead actively includes learners in educational activities for mastering it. With this goal he may compare the process of mastering a foreign language with playing the fortepiano, demanding repeated, daily rehearsals of the same piece, so that the movement of one’s fingers became exact and the melody flowed easily and freely. It is the same with the movement of one’s tongue, which does not obey us when we
pronounce a new, unfamiliar word in a foreign language and tries to move as it is accustomed, that is, how we speak in our own language. Furthermore, we must not only pronounce certain words, but precisely those, that acquire a specific meaning when combined with one another for the conveyance of meaning, inherent in the present situation of communication.

This example supports the idea of the necessity of schoolchildren’s active and intensive learning activities while acquainted with new language material, during drills of forming articulatory, lexical, and grammatical habits. Their use in various forms of speech activity in order to expand one’s ability in spoken and written foreign language communication caters to various types of schoolchildren’s activity and their interaction with native speakers of a foreign language. Students, in turn, acquire real readiness to act responsibly and independently, that is, autonomously, in such situations.

Here the question arises: in what way is it necessary to organize the process of foreign language education in schools, so that, on the one hand, it could provide a student as a forming multicultural linguistic personality with the ability and preparedness to use a foreign language in communication with a native speaker without fail, and, on the other one, equip him / her with means and techniques to independently study languages and cultures, that is, make one an autonomous subject of foreign language interaction and educational activity? Although both components of our understanding of autonomy are closely related, the autonomy of a forming multicultural linguistic personality in learning activities on mastering foreign language communication is the only focus of our attention. In our opinion, this is precisely what will be the result of the formation of learning cognitive competence.

H. Holeč, I. Huttunen (1997) are considered to be the first who introduced the term “educational autonomy”. They characterized it as a student’s ability to take responsibility for his learning activities on himself. The authors call attention to the fact that this ability is not inborn, but is usually acquired through systematic and goal-oriented work of both participants of an educational process (Holeč, Huttunen, 1997). D. Little (1991) considers autonomous learning a self-regulating or self-directing procedure, involving pupils’ active participation in planning and fulfilment of their educational activities, as well as in supervision and evaluation of the received result.

N. F. Koryakovtseva (2010) and E. N. Solovova (2008) are united in the opinion that educational autonomy answers the demands of the modern learner-centered paradigm. Guided by this paradigm, N. F. Koryakovtseva defines educational autonomy in learning activities as the ability of the subject to independently implement, actively and consciously direct them, doing their reflection and correction and accumulating a specific experience (Koryakovtzeva, 2010). E. N. Solovova, in turn, writes about the necessity of the formation of a learner’s readiness for autonomy. Its basis is a student’s ability to concentrate his attention on educational goals and tasks and direct the process of learning himself, supervise and appraise the dynamic of his / her own growth, not lose confidence in his / her own skills in the case of failure, etc. (Solovova, 2008).

Let us consider these results in terms of educational autonomy of a foreign language learner as a multicultural linguistic personality’s formation.

3.3 Foreign language communicative competence of an autonomous multicultural language personality

The importance of observing educational autonomy in foreign language learning activities may be manifested by the structure of foreign language communicative competence of university students. In this instance learning cognitive competence is absent since it is considered to have already been developed at school. At the same time our observations of learning activities in junior students, learning foreign languages at university, show that they, firstly, are weak in their mastery of learning and speech actions that are necessary to solve communicative tasks, and therefore, they often act unconsciously, imitating the teacher’s speech acts or models,
given in the textbook. Secondly, a significant amount of students are not ready for independent organization of their learning activities or their implementation. Thus, a large part of organizational and supervisory work is laid on the shoulders of the teacher. And finally, some students at university do not have growth in certain areas, such as initiative, responsibility, and self-discipline. It negatively influences the quality of foreign language education.

All the enumerated points prove the validity of E. N. Solovova’s idea that “one may achieve real autonomy only with the appropriate preparation of students and necessary academic and methodological support...in an educational process” (Solovova, 2008). Only thusly may secondary school lay the foundation for educational autonomy. In our opinion, learning cognitive competence should be directed at the formation of this base as one of the components of foreign language communicative competence of a multicultural linguistic personality in general education schools.

Cognitive competence represents the preparedness and ability of a school leaver to plan, implement, supervise and evaluate his / her own learning activities in foreign language communication. It will arm a multicultural linguistic personality with capabilities and techniques for independent study of languages and cultures and later self-education with the help of these skills in various spheres of knowledge. At its heart lies, firstly, the experience of cognitive acts, represented as knowledge; the abilities to implement it in foreign language communication; and the means, used to support the effectiveness of the process. The second component is the experience of reproductive learning activity, embodied in the ways of resolving reproductive academic and subject tasks. The third is the experience of creative learning activity, represented as ways of resolving search and creative educational and subject tasks (Kuklina, 2012).

Now we will attempt to answer the question of how to support the successful formation of learning cognitive competence in foreign language classes, so that the described social experience becomes personally relevant, supporting foreign language students’ educational autonomy and preparedness for life-long foreign language learning. We begin with characteristics of learning activities to later show them as a particularity in schoolchildren’s mastery of foreign language communication. This allows one to reveal the actions and operations that students must learn in order to fulfil the process of forming learning cognitive competence to support their educational autonomy.

Learning activities are a process of resolving academic tasks (Vergeles, 2006; Davydov, 2004; Zimnyaya, 1999; Markova et al., 2007; Elkonin, 1995), which schoolchildren direct toward acquisition of new, enriched learning activities methods. It flows in subject-related situations, the substance of which is composed of a small part of social experience, intended for assimilation. The acceptance of an academic task brings with it a system of academic and subject-related actions. Included in this are the actions of the contents analysis, their comparison with what was acquired earlier, making a plan to solve tasks, and modelling the objects’ most common relations. Using the model, a student fulfils a number of academic and subject-related actions, implements control over their correctness and evaluates their accuracy. As a result, he / she acquires a method to solve academic tasks and appropriates a fragment of social experience, advancing his / her formation as a subject of learning activities at a slightly higher level. Acquired experience allows him / her to solve more difficult problems in the future in new subject-related situations.

All the enumerated academic actions one may call universal, demanded by students in order to solve any school tasks in any subject-related situation, which may arise, for example, in history, mathematics, geography, or without a doubt, in a foreign language class. These very actions allow students to plan their learning activities, realize that plan completely and exactly, implement control over the final product and its evaluation. In the case when they know the goal of their actions, they are able to fulfil the demanded operation effectively and feel responsibility for their own contribution to the creation of the planned product and the quality
Now we will show the peculiarities of learning activities in foreign language communication teaching. They are defined significantly by the fact that a foreign language, as opposed to other scholastic subjects, is simultaneously the goal of study and the means of acquiring new social experience, which occurs through the act of mastering a language (Zimnyaya, 1999). Therefore, the process of learning foreign language communication in the frame of a cycle of lessons on a theme is, for convenience, separated by methodologists into four stages (Passov, Kuzovleva, 2010). Thus, a foreign language undergoes a gradual change from the goal of assimilation to a means of comprehending one’s surroundings. In each of these four stages, as we have shown in this work, schoolchildren are included in various forms of learning activities, solving reproductive, search, and creative academic tasks.

On the level of forming habits, learners solve reproductive tasks of varying degrees of difficulty. They use imitative, substitutional, transformational and properly reproductive operations while working with minimal speech patterns in the form of phrases of different volume and quality. This allows students on the level of improving their habits to take part in search learning activities. While interacting with the contents of conversational texts, throughout which they locate needed operations among already mastered skills, they successfully solve the tasks, aimed at the construction of small monologues or dialogues.

Only in the wake of this learners can move on to solving creative tasks. It takes place initially on the stage of skill development and lastly on the functional conversation stage, where it serves a cognitive, transformative, and value-oriented activities due to the fact that a foreign language becomes a means of communication. Here students act independently in new, formerly unknown situations, and create new rules of acting in order to receive an original result. Its volume and quality are in accordance with the program demands. The success of this process is the result of students’ learning activities. As a matter of fact, they become proficient in foreign language communication within a conversational theme. More than that, schoolchildren make a step in their growth as subjects of learning activities and foreign language communication (Kuklina, 2013).

As we can see, each academic task requires equally adequate learning and subject-related operations to be digested gradually and necessarily in the stated sequence. A multicultural linguistic personality should master them for autonomous learning during independent study of languages and cultures. The mastery of all the aforementioned is intimately connected with the process of forming habits and skills for foreign language communication. It requires not only explanation from the teacher’s side in the form of rules, instructions, and implementation, but also active, conscious actions from students, applying language material to solving speech tasks, gradually moving from reproduction to production and creativity, working individually, in pairs and in groups.

### 3.4 Personal Components of an autonomous multicultural language personality

However, the formation of a multicultural linguistic personality involves not only the mastery of its core competencies in the field of foreign language education, but also the emergence of a learner’s system of values, the development of individual abilities, volitional sphere, emotional competence and emotional intelligence, i.e. harmonious enculturation a student to life. As a result, currently, very few people deny that modern foreign language education along with cognitive development must focus on introducing important social values to schoolchildren, development of their emotional-volitional sphere, production of affective stereotyping, on which human behaviour is based. It is achieved through the formation of the experience of emotionally valuable relations in educational activity (Tatarinova, 2016). Its content and participants, represented by orientation to such values, as responsibility, initiative, discipline and self-discipline, assistance, support, etc. are a part of social experience that a multicultural
linguistic personality must master (Ribakova et al., 2016). Mastering the EVC of foreign language education content by a multicultural linguistic personality would not be possible beyond organizational forms, which by structure and contents are made adequate for interaction between a few individuals, participating in certain social and personal interrelations. In the course of these an exchange of operations, techniques, results, images and ideas, feelings and information occurs. Thus, mutual understanding is achieved and along the way cooperation is used to receive the expected result.

In connection with this now we will discuss cooperative and collective forms of learning activities. They are related by the fact that students’ interaction is a functional unity; they are interconnected through a common goal and motive. The very interaction is directed toward receiving a common product with the help of joint acting, and toward a collective final result. The contents of such activities are distinguished by their place in the structure of cooperative and collective academic activity and by the correlation of individual contributions of their participants in solving academic problems.

This has allowed us to name the following forms of interaction: a) common planning; b) the distribution of individual operations, their concordance, and organization; c) the choice of methods and means to complete these operations; d) the realization of a plan with the help of the chosen methods and means; e) the transfer of operations, explanation of the method of completion and tracking the accuracy of completing the first operations; f) the current control of the intermediate outcome; g) the control of the final result and evaluation (Kuklina, 2013).

The presence or absence of this or another kind of interaction in the learning activities depends on the type of cooperative academic activities. If cooperative-individual learning activities are organized, then students will only enter into interaction while planning and controlling the final product. In cooperative-successive learning activities interaction has a place during the realization of the plan when students explain the method of completing the activity and help one another implement it if it is necessary. And finally, in cooperative-interactive learning activities students work in close connection in all phases. Consequently, the success of mastering direct or indirect communication depends in a significant manner on whether students can interact, that is, take part in all the enumerated forms of interaction. Their very interactions together with the afore-described universal and subject-related actions will enter into that dose of social experience that students should master for the successful acquisition of foreign language communicative competence (Fahrutdinova et al., 2014).

Concerning the value-oriented experience, the conditions for its acquisition are contained in collective learning activities. This may be explained by the fact that it is implemented by a compatible, efficient and goal-oriented collective subject (Kuklina, 2013). The goal, contents and collective evaluative orientations of the said act are personally relevant for the members of the subject and due to this are understood as a general, demanded unity of efforts for successful solving of academic problems and achieving the planned results. Special attention should be given to the collective evaluative orientations, which include the ideas of morality, responsibility, demand, openness, collectivism, contact, organization, efficiency, and informativeness. These are the values that are entirely necessary for students’ educational autonomy.

4. Results

The findings of the research have helped to identify the main notions of the article. It is stated that educational autonomy is a student’s ability to take responsibility for his learning activities on himself, independently implement, actively and consciously direct them, performing reflection and correction of the educational actions and accumulating required experience. Schoolchildren’s readiness to do all that is the necessity for the formation of their learning cognitive competence as a component of foreign language communicative competence. Cognitive competence represents a school leaver’s preparedness and ability to plan, implement,
supervise and evaluate his / her own learning activities in foreign language communication. It includes the experience of cognitive acts, represented as knowledge; the experience of reproductive learning activity, embodied in the ways of resolving reproductive academic and subject tasks; the experience of creative learning activity, represented as ways of resolving search and creative educational and subject tasks; the experience of emotional-evaluative relations in an educational activity, its content and participants, represented by orientation to such values.

Activities, that foreign language learners are to perform for gaining cognitive competence, consist of universal academic and subject-related (speech) actions. What’s more, they should be included into various interactions, typical of language communication. The presence or absence of this or another kind of interaction in a foreign language learning process depends on the type of cooperative academic activity and on the phase it takes place in.

Learners’ interactions together with universal and subject-related actions are a dose of social experience that students should master for successful acquisition of foreign language communicative competence. This social experience in this case helps school leavers in the future independently acquire necessary information and apply it in practice to solve various types of problems, set up contacts, working together in various fields, so that throughout one’s whole life he / she will have the possibility of finding his / her own place, feel comfortable, work, think, and try new things.

All in all, a student’s level of foreign language communicative competence (the result of mastering a set of intellectual components of the content of foreign language education) and the level of the personal components development (the result of mastering the EVC) are still low. Thus, it prevents school leavers from interacting with their foreign partners, establishing meaningful relationships with them and perceiving members of another culture with respect and understanding. At the same time educators search for ways and methods of making a foreign language student an autonomous multicultural linguistic personality. The idea of his / her purposeful development, stated in the article, turns out to be fruitful for it.

5. Discussion
The research of educational autonomy as an important characteristic of a multicultural linguistic personality, completed by foreign and Russian scholars, and its use by educators show their interest in the ideas, presented above. It can be explained by the fact that students, learning a foreign language in secondary schools, have many problems in this process.

In the course of the research we used:
– the theory of learning activities, created by V. V. Davydov, D. B. Elkonin, A. K. Markova and developed by their disciples as a process of solving learning problems with the help of academic actions, used by students for them to climb up a new stage in their development as active, cognitive, responsible and independent learners (Davydov, 2004);
– the ideas of N. F. Koryakovtseva about productive learning activities as an opposition to reproductive ones, where the former is the feature of educational autonomy (Koryakovtseva, 2010);
– the concept of a multicultural linguistic personality, studied by a team of researchers (N. D. Galskova, G. V. Elizarova, Yu. N. Karaulov, E. G. Tareva, L. P. Halyapina). Of utmost importance for the present study are L. P. Halyapina’s views on the formation of this type of personality, based on universal values and specific ethnic terms (Halyapina, 2006).

At the same time, there are very few scientific works, devoted to educational autonomy of a multicultural linguistic personality, and they are largely debatable.

6. Conclusion
So, the achievement of the goal of the present theoretical research, namely, the description of
educational autonomy of a multicultural linguistic personality, able to interact with foreign partners and establish meaningful relationships with them, was carried out in several stages.

– In the first of them (2015) the concept of a multicultural linguistic personality was studied and his / her characteristics, representing the results of mastering the content of foreign language education in the interconnection of its components (SC, PRC, PCC and EVC), were modelled.

– In the second phase (2016) educational autonomy was defined and the process of autonomous learning was described. The conclusion was drawn that educational autonomy answers the demands of the modern learner-centered paradigm and allows students to independently implement and actively direct their own learning activities, reflecting and correcting the process; thus obtaining social experience.

– In the third phase (2017) the results of mastering the content of foreign language education in terms of the formation of a multicultural linguistic personality’s educational autonomy were characterized:

a) The result of mastering intellectual components of the content of foreign language education (the SC, PRC and PCC) is foreign language communicative competence of an autonomous multicultural language personality. This makes students proficient in foreign language communication within the programme requirements and adds to their development as subjects of learning activities and foreign language communication in the totality of its constituents. It is especially closely connected with the formation of learning cognitive competence as a component of foreign language communicative competence.

b) The result of mastering the EVC are personal components of an autonomous multicultural language personality, allowing one to establish meaningful relationships with strangers, perceive members of another culture respectfully and attentively, realize the importance of national and international values, be ready for establishing emotionally valuable relations with peoples and cultures, be strong-willed and possess a set of personal UEA.

All said does not only characterize the personal component of collective learning activities and show a part of emotionally valuable experience, which must necessarily be mastered by students, but also describes educational cooperation as a multilateral equal and active interaction of all participants in a multilingual educational process. It creates optimal conditions for the formation of students’ foreign language communicative competence and also promotes the formation of their own system of values, the development of their individual abilities, volitional sphere, emotional competence and emotional intelligence.

The novelty of the current research is as follows:

1. It provides the notion of educational autonomy of a multicultural linguistic personality.
2. The authors point out the directions of the development of a multicultural linguistic personality’s educational autonomy in foreign language education.

References


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