Recommendations for multilingual post-graduate programs

Recomendaciones para programas de posgrado multilingües

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ABSTRACT:
This article deals with recent trends in teaching English and Russian as second languages in Kazakh post-graduate programs. The hypothesis is that the multilingual class environment fosters positive cultural and communicative dynamics and results in enhanced communicative competency of the graduates. The authors offer recommendations for a multilingual methodology based on active student-centered approach. The article defines communicative competence as a set of skills that allows communicating successfully, adapting to the situation and using linguistic variety in foreign languages. Communicative competence includes several aspects such as autonomic and integrated linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, sociocultural, strategic, compensatory ones. Student-oriented methodology supports multilingualism in an interactive environment. The authors make a case for an integrative approach to teaching foreign languages in post-graduate education and recommend ways to redesign curricula, guidebooks, and methodology. Student-centered approach places emphasis on the practical application of foreign languages rather than mechanical memorization.

Keywords: postgraduate education, multilingualism, communicative competence, aspects, integration, comparative methods

1. Introduction
In the Republic of Kazakhstan, post-graduate university education offers two essential tracks: scientific and pedagogic. Most universities use pre-approved state educational programs and traditional teaching methods. All Master's programs in Philology have one or two foreign languages requirement as a linguistic component for the degree. Multilingual competence is essential for future career development of the students who will work at the institutes and universities, research organizations, business and cultural organizations, government and non-government organizations, editorial and publishing companies, etc. (The state obligatory standard of postgraduate education "Magistracy" in the version of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated from May 13, 2016, No. 292).

Nowadays, the global economy requires high levels of bilingual or even multilingual competencies. Professional success often depends on whether an expert can communicate in several languages. Foreign language fluency is seen as one of the primary goals of post-graduate studies. The traditional academic system of foreign language education relies on outdated lingual-didactic approach with many components. However, it is time to revise and update foreign language methodology in the light of new findings and requirements. Emphasis on the development of multilingual competence is one of the possible ways to expand and modernize foreign language methodology in post-graduate programs.

Even though the governmental program "Kazakhstan-2050" treats foreign language acquisition as one of its priorities, it also underlines the role of the native Kazakh language. As President N. Nazarbayev points out, the native language is a national treasure of the peoples and should be cherished and respected. The Program outlines specific ways to support the status of the Kazakh language as the official state language. The Kazakh language should be used in all official situations including schools, workplaces and army. The Program also underlines the importance of the Russian language and describes it "as a historical gift to the nation." Also, the Program sets clear benchmarks for teaching Russian and English as second languages. President N. Nazarbayev emphasized the importance of learning foreign languages, especially English (The "Kazakhstan-2050" Strategy: A new political course of the held state). He emphasized that foreign languages are necessary for integrating Kazakhstan into the world economy and keeping up to date with development.

Mentioning the three languages, the strategy "Kazakhstan-2050" formulates learning objectives for Kazakhstani educational institutions to develop the multilingual competence of the students using advanced methodologies and practical approaches. Foreign language acquisition also expands the essential social and cultural skills of the students. Technological advances and the rapid globalization of economy, education and culture require changes to the national education system (Martynova & Tsymbal, 2014).

UNESCO considers solving the problem of foreign language acquisition as an international priority. Its specialists point out that foreign language acquisition should be developed first and foremost as communicative competence on a base of the formation of all other skills. In post-graduate programs, it means to design and implement new content, forms, methodology and technology to support the foreign language teaching process.

2. Materials and Methods

The article makes a case for an integrated approach of the English and Russian languages acquisition based on the native Kazakh language in post-graduate programs. Methodologies of TEFL (Teaching English as a second or foreign language) and TRFL (Teaching Russian as a second or foreign language) have a long and productive tradition based on substantial conceptual works. The methodology based on different communicative competence offers several approaches developed by the following researchers:

- student-oriented approach (B.M. Bim-Bad, L.L. et al., (1992), I.D. Galskova (2004), E.S. Polat, and others);

Unfortunately, each of the above-mentioned approaches treats only one side of the academic problem of formation of communicative competence. With the indefinite possibilities offered by computer technology, an innovative multilingual approach to TEFL and TRFL in the post-graduate programs leaves much to be desired. That is why the outdated programs should be redesigned.
and updated as soon as possible. The instructors should take professional development courses and learn new methodology, and new foreign language guidebooks and software should be developed and tested to meet the demand for innovation.

Recent ESL (English as Second Language) methodological trends demonstrate an increasing interest in applied linguistics. One of the great examples of such interest is a guidebook written by professors M.I. Kadeyeva and B.K. Omar (2016) “Қазіргі орыс тілінің сөйлеу және морфологиясы: ұніверситеттің филология студенттеріне әрнапалған оқулық” (“Speech and morphology of modern Russian: Textbook for philology students of the university”).

The authors of «Қазіргі орыс…» (2016) underline the need to have basic knowledge of linguistic theory as a foundation for communicative success. Even though the guidebook is recommended mostly for the philology students, it will be useful to the students of other specialties, studying English as a foreign language. The guidebook explains the foundations of the anthropocentric nature of languages and encourages innovative and creative approaches to linguistic research. The authors describe socio-historical factors that influence the development of language. They focus on etymological, morphological, syntactic concepts. They follow the fluidity of language and its situated contextual nature. The guidebook has several sections on the grammatical system of the modern Russian language and a comparative analysis of the Russian and Kazakh languages (Kadeyeva & Omar, 2016).

"Fundamentals of university linguodidactics" by B.I. Iskak, O.A. Stycheva and B.S. Dlimbetova (2010) is another recent book on pedagogy that deserves attention. The book itself is bilingual, published in Kazakh and Russian. The researchers described the importance of differential pedagogy, basic language teaching methods, presentational methods. They shared their own teaching experience and discussed problems in post-graduate education to offer some solutions. They also provided the framework for lingual didactics and defined the following range of the issues:

1. Recent trends in TESL and TERL in university linguistic programs.
3. Lingual didactics, its subject and tasks, connection with other sciences.
4. The role and purpose of foreign language acquisition.
5. Methods of TESL and TERL defined by the modern requirements.
6. The curriculum design and the choice of materials for the educational-methodical base of each university department.
7. Types of class organization, types of lecture, seminars, workshops.
8. Testing, assessment and grading. Feedback options (Iskak et al., 2010).

The authors advocate for the multilingual approach in post-graduate programs, which means teaching different subjects in different languages, for example, Kazakh, Russian and English. The instructors can use all three languages in their courses by assigning original materials in foreign languages. Students can write essays, reviews, projects or watch free lectures in foreign languages. It will expand their cultural, historical and social horizon and help them to apply foreign languages professionally. The multilingual methodology has high potential because it challenges the students to develop linguistic competencies in several languages at the same time.

After discussing the advantages of multilingual approach, the authors identified obstacles that make its application difficult. First of all, the current Ministry of Education requirements does not make a provision for the multilingual teaching of the disciplines. Secondly, there is substantial inertia in the traditional text-based established methodology of foreign language teaching that put reading and translation with the help of the dictionary in the center. Thirdly, there is a limited number of computerized classes in many universities, absent or limited access to online libraries and databases. At the same time, the authors recommend to try the multilingual methodology and introduce it to all post-graduate programs, especially for philology programs.

The authors defined their object of the research as foreign language methodology in post-graduate professional education. They defined the subject of study as the process of forming communicative competence using integrative and interactive technology. According to the objectives of the study, the authors examined the problem from the following sides:

1. The theoretical side included comparative linguistic, psychological-pedagogical, didactic, methods and the review of the relevant literature.
2. The empirical side included the observation and analysis of language classes and related disciplines and interviews with instructors and students.

3. The conceptual side included modeling.

The present research aims to identify the potential of the integrative approach. Many prominent pedagogues including M.M. Tesheva, et al., (2015), A.Y. Danilyuk (2013), V.N. Maksimova, et al., (2005) viewed the integrative approach in teaching as a way to rationalize and reform the educational strategy. The review of the relevant literature allows us to conclude that the integrative approach has significant potential, especially in the cultural and communicative development of students. We suggest that the formation of communicative competence of the post-graduate students will be more efficient and provide better avenues for their situated professional development. There is a need to develop the model for multilingual post-graduate education supported by integrative and interactive computer technologies. Lingual didactics defines communicative competence developed on the integration of primary linguistic skills (writing, reading, speaking, translating, listening comprehension) in foreign languages. It also takes into account psychological particularities of second language acquisition. Development of communicative competence is based on demonstration, practice and application in an appropriate context. Personal experience and erudition also play an essential role in its development. All theoretical and practical works underline the experiential nature of the communicative approach. As they say, practice makes perfect (Gorbachev, n/d).

3. Results

A.A. Bodalev used the concept of "communicative competence" to refer to the set of skills to establish contact and communicate successfully with other people (Bodalev, 1989). In university textbooks, communicative competence is measured by "communication success", meaning that the goal of communication was achieved. Some scholars define the concept from the sociological point of view where communicative competence is compared to basic orientation in various situations based on:

1) cognitive and sensory experience of the individual;
2) ability to interact effectively with others;
3) reflection and ability to modify the communication in the process, establish interpersonal relationships and social connections (Kunitsina et al., 2001; Martynova, 2018).

The book "Assessment and Development of Communicative Competence" examines personal psychological characteristics required for successful social communication and defines it as "the ability to establish and maintain the social contacts with people." The authors also place emphasis on the practical nature of communicative acts and write that human communication requires training (Zhukov, 1991).

A scholar S. S. Kunanbayeva contributed to the development of the subject of the theory and practice of modern foreign language acquisition. She reflected on the current condition of the second language teaching in secondary and higher education and recommended the following changes:

1) to redesign activities according to methodological categories of purpose, content, principles, means, etc.;
2) to use different modes of learning as the basis for an educational paradigm;
3) to use innovative approaches to foreign language teaching. Her methodological framework includes modern approaches to communication and redefines its conceptual and methodological characteristics concerning foreign languages.

She also examined substantive and procedural aspects of communication complexes in detail and paid attention to models for classroom management, types of homework and methods of evaluation. S. S. Kunanbayeva wrote that Kazakh higher education only recently started to pay more attention to communicative aspects of foreign language acquisition. She offered a useful typology of practical exercises and methodological advice on how to set criteria and organize the assessment of foreign language learning progress (Kunanbayeva, 2010).

In the process of the research, analysis and class observations we suggest an educational post-graduate model based on multilingual instructional methods. Our integrated approach to communicative competence development is connected to the development of relevant skills and knowledge: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, sociocultural, etc. In our view, post-gradual linguistic competence requires the understanding of grammatical theories, phonology, lexicology,
history of a particular language, sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistic competence develops the student’s ability to choose and use appropriate forms and means depending on the purpose and the situation of communication. Students also should learn to recognize and differentiate the social roles of participants in the dialogue. Discourse competence is the ability to construct coherent and logical statements following different functional styles. Students are required to identify the different types of texts offered for reading and listening comprehension. Sociocultural competence develops an understanding of the cultural norms and expectation for the communication in foreign language. Students should know the profile of the native speakers, their habits, dialects, tradition, rules of behavior, social etiquette. Cultural competence supports the ability to understand and use the foreign language in the different contexts and helps to overcome the cultural barriers and differences. Sociocultural competence integrates the experience of several national cultures. Students should also be trained to compensate for the lacunas in their knowledge to overcome gaps in communication (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Communicative competence development of post-graduate students

To summarize, one could claim that communicative competence is an integral quality responsible for social integration, successful communication and reflection on the communicative situations. Communicative competence is an umbrella term for a set of skills and knowledge that has several aspects that we described in Figure 1 based on our model. The integration and development of the competencies mentioned above in the process of student-centered learning will create conditions for the following critical skills development:

- to identify and perform various social roles;
- to be fluent in verbal communication;
- to use verbal means according to the purpose and modify them according to the situations;
- to identify and be aware of the goals and motives of communication;
- to choose and apply communicative strategies based on the position;
- to manage personal, group and interpersonal space in the process of communication.

In our opinion, the development of the skills mentioned above will result in the better communicative competence of post-graduate students. Multilingual post-graduate education can prepare students for professional success because it creates the environment for the concurrent usage of the native language (Kazakh) and several foreign languages (Russian and English). The integrative approach should use comparative and contrastive methods to improve and develop knowledge of all three languages at the same time.

4. Discussion
Communicative competence also depends on the psychological disposition of the students since everybody has their communicative patterns. We suggest considering it together with a student-centered approach to teaching. Two factors support it:

1) Synergy of competencies of all three languages;
2) Comparative and contrastive methodology.

When implemented multilingual approach can help post-graduate students to achieve fluency in three languages (Kazakh, Russian and English). It will also increase their linguistic and cultural awareness creating conditions for economic, cultural and scientific exchanges. Knowledge of several foreign languages makes graduates more competitive in the job market. The multilingual approach includes innovative linguistic and methodical principles of foreign languages teaching.

The Council for Cultural Cooperation developed an assessment framework for 21 languages. It is noteworthy that English was the first on the list that also includes many other European languages. Russian takes a special place in the list since it is regarded as a strategic foreign language. The criteria were developed from scientific concepts pioneered by J. Van Eck who defined sociocultural competence as a certain degree of familiarity with the sociocultural context of language functioning. His definition is limited because it positions sociocultural competence only as a kind of knowledge about the sociocultural environment and does not take into account other competencies such as sociolinguistic, strategic, and social (Van, 1986).

We suggest some clarifications to the definition of communicative competence as seen in Figure 1. In our view, the implementation of multilingual educational programs integrated with computer technology can offer a comprehensive development of the communicative competence of post-graduate students. Naturally, the application must be gradual with a room for review and optimization. The pilot stage can be done with a few focus groups.

As noted above, the overarching purpose of multilingual post-graduate education is to develop communicative competence in the context of integrative foreign language teaching methods. Integration (Latin integration - connection, restoration) means the unification of separated elements in the interconnected system. From a scientific perspective, integration exists as a logical category describing the process opposing differentiation. It is interesting to observe that modern scientific advances are often intersectional and integrated with different systems, which, in turn, exist of relations of mutual dependence and interdependence (Krayevskiy, 2011).

When applied to education, the principle of integration is a crucial element of teaching instructions, methods and materials. The integrative approach brings the policy of integration to the pedagogical process. The role of educational integration demonstrates its heuristic significance and yields to a conclusion: integration is a requirement for multilingual integrative approach because it creates a dialectical interconnected system of scientific ideas, aspects and properties.

Pedagogical integration has to become a leading principle in post-graduate programs. It is based on the following principles of logic: the law of connection, the principle of a part and the whole, the principle of the cause and the effect. They should be applied to the design of programs, curricula, content materials, textbooks, methods and forms of instruction. Speaking about the link between social interpersonal communications and integration, we rely on the theory offered by B.A. Takhokhov. He championed integration in education in the form of interdisciplinary ties and insisted that its application can bring learning to a new level and create what he called "a monolith of knowledge" (Takhokhov, 2003).

Practical psychology is also interested in studying integration and its role in the development of intellectual and creative abilities. Integration builds on associative and inter-system links and helps to create generalizations necessary at each stage of both cognitive and research activities. Looking for the solutions for pressing educational problems in Kazakhstan, it is needed to consult the tradition and acknowledge the researchers working in the field of graduate education. In this respect, we want to mention the dissertation research on the topic "Inter-Subjective Communication and Bologna System of Education" by B. Kozbagarova. The chapter of the dissertation is devoted to the review of literature on integrative approach by A.A. Beysenbayev, K.O. Shayheslyamov, B.M. Tazhigulov, P.Sh. Turekulov and A.G. Kazmagambetov who described the need for integration in universities as "a requirement for improving the quality of education" (Kozbagarova, 2009).

5. Conclusions
In the article, the authors L. K. Geykhman and I.V. Stavtseva (Geykhman and Stavtseva, 2015) discuss the introduction of an integrative approach to the communicative competence training. In
our opinion, foreign language acquisition will benefit from the multilingual format in post-graduate programs that allow a significant amount of hours to self-study making the organizational skills very important. Intersectional knowledge creates synergy, which is defined as an interdisciplinary field of scientific research. Synergy is interested in the laws and principles of self-organization and integration of different systems, including social, cultural, and linguistic. It played an essential role in our understanding of multilingualism in post-graduate education.

For the educational perspective, many subjects should be taught in clusters. Scientific themes often overlap with each other as part, whole, cause, effect, etc. Integration should become a leading approach to modern education. In the future, we will continue our research of integrative method and its application in teaching the Kazakh language and Foreign Languages (Russian, English), especially in philology post-graduate programs. Integration can involve not only comparative grammar of three languages but also translational transformations and relations, functional styles, and many other teaching materials.

6. Recommendations
The integrative approach to teaching foreign languages at the post-graduate level can create a platform for the implementation of multilingual programs, curricula, textbooks, and other materials. Development of communicative competency must take place at the forefront and become the primary goal at the post-graduate level. Post-graduate students should redirect their attention from mechanical memorization of essential grammar and vocabulary and pursue a learning objective of mastering a wide range of competencies. Of course, multilingual instruction will not solve all pressing problems in the Kazakhstani system of higher education, but it can be the first step. Our recommendations are not final and will be expanded and detailed in the future. The multilingual model of post-graduate education offers creative directions for every instructor to develop the integrative approach to the modern requirements. We believe that it can enhance and supplement class and extracurricular activities at the post-graduate level.

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