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THE ORGANIZATION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bilingual learning is widely supported by schools that give extensive opportunities for their pupils to achieve high linguistic proficiency by means of studying in two or more languages. Educational programs for primary school with in-depth study of a foreign language are compiled in the framework of an experimental pedagogical project on the development of a bilingual school of the innovation type, that provides two languages – a state language and a foreign one for the optional use.

The main purpose of learning a foreign language in primary school is the formation of communicative competence provided by linguistic, speech and socio-cultural experience, correlated with the age capabilities of junior schoolchildren. At the end of the 4th grade pupils are supposed to reach level A2, which corresponds to the European recommendations on linguistic education in mastering a foreign language by primary school pupils through speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Contemporary problem in bilingual education is determined by the fact that communicative approaches do not sufficiently take into account the specificity of languages as a reflection of the system of cultural values, on the basis of which specific communities of people and speech behavior of their members are being built [1: 240]. Due to the researches in the field of sociolinguistics (O. Akhmanova, L. Nikolsky), linguistic-cultural studies (Y. Verezhchigin, D. Gudkov, P. Donets, V. Kostomarov, Y. Stepanov), ethnolinguistics (A. Gerd, V. Kononenko, etc.), psycholinguistics (I. Zimnya, Yu. Karaulov, G. Kolshansky) it becomes obvious that for the successful communication in a certain language it is necessary not only to be able to master a language material but also know the specific concepts typical for the ethno-community, possess outstanding knowledge associated with culture and customs of this community of people.

The initial stage in studying a foreign language in the educational institution is extremely important, since during this period, psycholinguistic foundations of foreign communicative competence are required for the further development and improvement. Here the bases for the formation of foreign phonetic, lexical, grammatical and spelling skills, as well as listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are formed within the curriculum requirements. In accordance with the new structure of school foreign language education, the initial stage is determined by 1-4 classes.

The *topicality* of the research is determined by a great number of schools and classes with bilingual education programs across Ukraine and foreign countries. Most primary schools in our country maintain Ukrainian-English, Ukrainian-German, Ukrainian-French and other bilingual programs. Besides, from an international aspect,

bilingualism and bilingual education have a promising perspective, especially in the countries envisioning themselves as global players conscious of their need for interculturally competent population. Bilingualism in early childhood reflects the specific human ability to deal with more than one language at a time and, that's why, encourages implementing bilingual language programs throughout the educational system [2: 580].

Schools with bilingual education programs aim at academic success for all schoolchildren, including primary school pupils, as well as high standards for both pupils and teachers who get professional development that adds more *practical value* to bilingual training.

The *aim* of the current research is to characterize the general principles of bilingual education and establish the main factors for realizing a bilingual education program in primary school in Ukraine.

Bilingual education lies in the immersion of whole classes in a second language which may be partial starting with a small selection of tasks, topics or subjects (such as math and geography) or total covering all subjects. The purist understanding of keeping languages strictly separate is substituted by a communicative style welcoming code-switching, which makes contemporary education approaches close to the aim of fostering the development of bilingual speakers [2: 581].

Bilingual education can be provided in various modes. Thus, some scholars [3; 3: 476; 4: 662] differentiate weak and strong forms. The objective of a weak form program is to get pupils start to study in the foreign language as soon as possible and is often viewed as a track for low-achieving learners or as a remedial program providing them with a limited number of years of bilingual training (mostly 2–3 years) before letting them out into a monolingual educational environment. The strong model of bilingual education is seen as an enriching bilingual program designed to help students achieve a high level of proficiency in two or more languages. Such programs mostly provide pupils with bilingual education during the whole period of their studying at school and aim to help students become bilateral and bicultural.

Though there are many forms of organizing bilingual education programs, there are three models of strong bilingual education that are frequently implemented. They include developmental bilingual education programs for students from language minority groups, immersion bilingual education programs for intensive language learning practice, and two-way bilingual programs known as dual-language or dual-immersion programs.

Bilingual education programs embrace their unique context and special characteristics. Having analyzed their implementation in schools in Ukraine and abroad [5; 6], it's possible to single out *a range of factors to establish bilingual education programs* in primary schools:

- 1) maintaining the students' native language and culture while learning English;
- 2) the majority of the school administration and staff are supposed to be proficient in two languages;

3) facilities and supplies available at school to create a natural communicative and cultural environment like a large number of books in every classroom, both in the native languages or listening centers, a reading corner and a computer center etc.;

4) organizing a class interior in the way that promotes direct communication – arranging desks in groups of four or five so that the teacher moves among the groups and interacts with each pupil depending on the topics and methods;

5) keeping the pupils' right to communicate in both their native and foreign languages accompanied by encouraging teacher-directed and independent learners to be enthusiastic and participate in the lessons to sustain a communicative environment for pupils;

6) creating possibilities of removing successful learners from the classes where English is taught as a second language to develop their skills faster;

7) spending a part of each day with foreign language speakers or talking a target language more to get successfully endorsed into another culture;

8) involving techniques for group, student-to-student and teacher-to-student meaningful interaction focused on instructional tasks;

9) the high level of parents' involvement is second in importance in assuring the success of the bilingual program.

The condition of the effective process of training a second foreign language is the use of a cognitive-communicative approach, which provides a conscious assimilation of the educational-language material of the second foreign language. During the cognitive approach all types of imitative and reproductive exercises become secondary. The main place in the training process is given to the exercises and tasks of cognitive nature, when the second language is a real means of comprehension [7].

To summarize, factors of establishing bilingual education programs in primary schools exhibit three of the most significant elements of effective practices:

1) enthusiastic pupils flexible and active for providing successful learning and development programs;

2) administration, teachers and staff caring about the students and passionate about teaching;

3) parents getting involved and volunteering in their children's educational activities.

Bilingualism develops intercultural competence of primary school pupils and greatly contributes to their understanding of socio-cultural differences.

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