



**Testing As A Method For Determining The Ethno-Lingual-Cultural Balance For Russian And Tatar Speaking Children**

**Danilova Yuliya Yurevna<sup>1\*</sup>, Daniya Salimova Abuzarovna<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Kazan Federal University (Yelabuga Institute) Yelabuga (Russia, Tatarstan)**

**danilovaespu@mail.ru ,daniya.salimova@mail.ru**

**ABSTRACT**

The essence of the work consists in a comprehensive analysis of ethno-lingual-cultural situation in the Republic of Tatarstan (the RT) with a focus on practical results – the creation of tests to identify ethno lingual-cultural balance in the development of bilingual children.

In Tatarstan (the RT) there is a need of the practice-oriented measurement of the level of the balance of the intercultural communicative competence of native speakers of Russian and Tatar lingual-cultures, starting from an early age. Despite the fact that the region created all conditions for full functioning of bilingualism, the practice shows that Russian-Tatar and Tatar-Russian bilinguals prefer the Russian language that means primarily the trend towards globalization and universality.

Carrying out a comprehensive diagnostic test will allow to reveal and describe the level of development of each language in the framework of natural bilingualism, to diagnose cognitive abilities and competence of the child, associated with and driven by the development of two or only one of the two native/non-native languages & cultures, subjecting the bi - or intercultural view of the world.

When working on the material we used such methods and techniques of research as the analysis of scientific and bibliographic literature on the topic, observation, classification, construction of test tasks using the different age characteristics of the subjects and their interpretation.

The authors, who have been working for many years in the sphere of education for bilingual students, and conducting testing of the results obtained in the framework of the International network laboratory for innovative technologies, investigate the problem in different areas: they are language preferences of bilingual children, their testing and improvement of the ethno lingual cultural balance.



The importance and practical novelty of the materials is in the fact, that they can be used not only in the immediate practice of teachers-methodologists, but also in research activities, the training the teachers of Russian and Tatar languages in the Yelabuga Institute of KFU. And in the scientific and educational-methodological aspect it is important the study the vector of formation and development of bilingualism and measuring the competencies in each of ethno-lingual-cultures in connection with the levels of direct language preparation, and in connection with the dynamics of the general age developmental of the child and taking into account the characteristics of his ethno-lingual and socio-cultural environment; the development of professional tools is important.

**KEY WORDS:** Tatarstan, bilingualism, education, ethno lingual-cultural balance, testing.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In RT, one of the most developed cultural and industrial regions of the Russian Federation, a natural bilingualism is developed: the acquisition of two languages occurs organically, because both are part of a holistic picture of the world. The basis of the linguistic and ethno-cultural policy in the Republic are equality and tolerance, that is evidenced by the basic provisions of the Constitution of the RT: "The official languages of Tatarstan are equally Tatar and Russian languages"; "Everyone has the right to use his native language, to choose freely the language of communication, upbringing, education and creativity" (The Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan dated November 6, 1992).

In the RT two of the titular nations coexist and interact, speakers of the two official languages and (inter)national pictures of the world, reflected in state, national and religious holidays (Russia Day, Easter, the Day of sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan, Eid al-Adha, etc.), equally warmly celebrated by both ethnic groups.

However, the objective picture looks slightly different way: the dominant language of communication in various areas of life (especially in urban environments) is Russian, its status is higher than of the Tatar language. The Tatars, as a rule, speak the Russian language well, as education at the Tatarstan educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, colleges, universities), television and radio broadcasting is in Russian.

Although there are specialized bilingual preschools, Tatar gymnasiums, this does not



remove the problem: the Tatars in the RT today have ethno-lingual-cultural "Russification" – there is a unification of ethno-lingual-cultural consciousness of representatives of both indigenous nations. However, in the RT the Tatar language causes the most resistant depth range of national-Russian bilingualism as the language of the family (heritage) and one of the languages of the Republic (native as one of the status) (Kudryavtseva E. L., Hentschel T. 2013). According to opinion polls 19.9% of students-Tatars from mono-ethnic families and 45.5% from the mixed marriages think at the same time of the Russian and the Tatar languages as of native. In fact, half of the children of the Tatars from the mixed families declare bilingualism that allows us to talk about the importance of taking into account the nature of families (mixed\ mono-national) in the study of bilingualism in the region.

So, the relevance of the study is in the need for the comprehensive, practice-oriented studies, in creating the instruments of definition of the ethno-lingual-cultural balance of the bilingual children.

In this work we set the following goal - to develop tools to identify the degree of ethno-lingual-cultural balance at the bilingual children, preschoolers and students in primary schools of the RT, based on a comprehensive study of the lingual-ethnic-cultural situation in the region. To achieve the goal we have analyzed the contemporary ethno-linguistic situation in the Republic of Tatarstan; the guidelines for the use of practical result of the work have been developed, based on the requirements of the Federal state educational standard (FSES); the tests to determine ethno-lingual-cultural balance of the bilingual children have been developed and described.

A brief analysis of the historical development of the region showed that the contacts between the Russian and the Tatar ethnic groups have deep roots and have been continuing for many centuries (Population // The Official Tatarstan. The official portal. <http://tatarstan.ru/about/population.htm>, Shakurova M. M. 2016, History, culture, religion / The Official Tatarstan. The official portal. <http://tatarstan.ru/about/human.htm>.) The active interaction between the two ethnic groups in cultural aspect leads to mutual borrowing the customs and traditions. Due to religious differences both cultures preserve their identity.

In the new FSES the accent is put at the bilingual education of children, it is indicated (as of today) that preference is given to education with a bilingual basis (Federal state



educational standard of basic General education. M.: Education, 2011). It can be expected that in the near future the schools with a bilingual system of education will dominate in Russia. However, insufficient knowledge of bilingualism as a phenomenon in educational activities can be a major hindrance in the implementation of the plan, so today the new educational programs are actively developing, both by domestic and foreign scientists. The teachers need the professional tools for the competent work with the bilingual children, one of which is the tests for the bilinguals, which we are developing now.

## **2. METHODS**

Test for the presence and level of balanced bilingualism is a new development in Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University. In the framework of the research activities of the International laboratory of distributed participation "Innovative technologies in the field of multicultural education" (Kudryavtseva Ed. E. L., ed. Kudryavtseva; E. L., Timofeeva A. A., Danilova Yu. Yu., Salimova D. A., Boobekova L. B.. Schöneiche bei Berlin: Elena Plaksina Verlag, 2015., Kudryavtseva E. L., Korin I. V. 201), we have developed the tests, taking into account the ethno-lingual-cultural environment of the Republic of Tatarstan for teachers of preschool education (children 3-6 years) and primary schools (7-10 years), approbation and experimental platforms of the laboratory were opened at educational institutions and secondary schools in Elabuga, Mendeleevsk, Nizhnekamsk (Martinkova A. A, Danilova Yu. Yu., Salimova D. A., Kudryavtseva E. L. 2015, Ekaterina L. Koudryavtseva, Daniya Salimova A., Martínková Anastasiya. 2016). The tests consist of subtests:

Subtest 1. "Speaking/ Сөйләм " including: Subtest 1A. "Speaking/ Сөйләм " (based on visual perception for subjects 3-10 years); Subtest 1B. "Speaking \Сөйләм " (including sensory) (not obligatory to conduct, is only used if the tested child of 3-6 years unable to cope with the 1A or 1B); Subtest 1B. "Speaking/ Сөйләм " (low memory and situation) (after 6 years there is a specially selected portion as a substitute of the subtest in writing for those, who don't write).

Subtest 2. "Listening/ Ишетеп белү ", which includes: Subtest 1A. (with a visual component) (3-5 years); Subtest 2B. "Listening/ Ишетеп белү " (without a visual component) (4-6 years, 7-10 years).

Subtest 3. "Read/ Уку " (for the tested 5-10 years).



Subtest 4. "Letter/ Язы " (for test 4-10 years).

For preschoolers another subtest 5 is presented. "Fine motor skills/ Кул хәрәкәте " (3-5 years).

Let us note: grammar is assessed within each subtest except subtest on fine motor skills, and so is not selected as an instrumental component in a separate subtest.

The developed tests can be differentiated according to the type of competences: the tasks, revealing ethno-competences, cultural competences; lingual-competences of the bilingual children.

Testing is carried out taking into account the linguistic and cultural combination. The dominant language for preschool and primary school children is the family language, in Tatarstan – Tatar and Russian. Consequently, tests are made by us in the Russian and Tatar languages, taking into account ethno-lingual- cultural dominant. Questions are asked on two (alleged) native languages, taking turns the languages in the same question with slight variations of the question to understand what stimulus was responded to by the child. Or alternatively: you can put the questions in only one, supposedly "weak" language (in our case Russian and/or Tatar). The instruction if repeated (if any) should be given not in the question's language, but in another language of the child. This is done to identify possible causes for the lack of responses: linguistic, ethno-cultural, due to psycho-physiological (individual) level of development of the child. It defines the requirements to the testers: 1 person – 1 language spoken with the child, if the Russian-Tatar /Tatar-Russian bilingualism takes place, so the testers must be carriers of the Tatar (in our case, D. A. Salimova, D. R. Mukhametshina) and Russian (E. L. Kudryavtseva, Yu. Yu. Danilova) cultures. It is desirable that it would not be the children's teachers.

Parents' participation in testing is possible at the request of the child. In the presence of the parent a child can "close" (as in the presence of a teacher, the child experiences a "fear of mistakes", the answers are slowed, are thought over for a longer time, less verbose). Sometimes due to the presence of the parents, speaking one of the languages at home, it is the language of communication in the family which is obviously enhanced. In such cases, the testing should be carried out either without parent or with his remote presence, i.e. he may be at a remote distance, but in sight area, and to engage in some other activity, clearly not listening, and not reacting to the responses of the



child. One of the main factors in testing (which are a form of conversation-games in familiar environments and according to the rules of communication, known to him) are as comfortable as possible for the test conditions, which allow to increase the objectivity of the obtained test results.

Except the test materials the following is included into the test set for every age, made by us: the comments and guidelines for the testers; validation rasters (sheet of expert evaluation and control matrix) for each subtest.

Test for the presence and degree of development of natural bilingualism is necessary to carry out when the teacher has the impression that any of the children is a natural bilingual or has such potential (which is necessary to develop and maintain purposefully).

### **3. RESULTS**

The main specificity of the developed tests is that they meet in their tasks overall age development level of those being tested (ontogeny of age, speech development, problems and themes of age, media of age, etc.) and this level is checked for bilinguals with regard to the requirements of the respective country, in particular in the range of the RT for the Russian/Tatar ethno-cultural component of natural communication.

For clarity, we present and comment on only some test tasks of different units, with emphasis on the presence/absence of ethno-lingual-cultural marks for different age groups of the subjects.

Subtest "Speaking/ Сөйләм " implies the analysis of speech characteristics of the child taking into account his ethno-lingual-cultural balance. For example, the task on the basis of visual perception, "Look at the picture and tell me what you see" for kids of 3 years:



**Fig.1 Part of the test for kids of 3 years**



Or another of these ta:  
picture: what vegetabl



ook at the

**Fig.2 Part of the test for children of 7 years old**

Figurative series (along with audio and text material) is a necessary part of the tests because bilinguals are maximum visual. These tasks just involve working with a visual component. The picture shows various items (toys, vegetables, animals, etc.) that the child is invited to find and name. It is obvious that the tasks do not contain ethno-component and are not tied to a particular culture. This allows you to use them as an introduction to this section. As it was noted above, the dominant language in this age is the language of the family, so testing involves working with the child in one language, with the duplication (if necessary) in the second language. For example, the above fragment of the task for children of 3 years of age (Fig. 1) can be formulated in the Tatar "Рәсемгә кара һәм сөйлә, син анда нәрсә күрәсен?". Duplication contributes to the determination of predisposition of the child to one of the languages or the lag in the development of this language in the context of obdurately competencies. Such a task will help to identify syntactic, orpho-epic, grammatical features of construction of speech taking into account the expected level of proficiency at a given age according to the standards of the FSES.

The next task (Fig. 3) of this subtest for children of 4 years is given both in Russian and in Tatar languages: "How can you call animals and birds that you see in the picture?" / "Бу хайваннары һәм кошларны ничек чакырырга?".





**Fig.3 Part of the test for children of 4 years**

It is noteworthy that while answering, ethnic and cultural component (which is missed in the images) is clearly evident: for example, in Russian the man's call for a chicken sounds like "chick-chick", for a dove – like "guli-guli", for a cat like "kitty-kitty", in the Tatar respectively – "chip- chip", "gel-gel", "dog-dog".

There is the number of tasks in the test in which the ethno-cultural component is introduced initially on a visual level. As an example, here is a snippet of the task (Fig. 4) in the Tatar language for children of 5 years old: "Апаң бәләш пешерә. Бәләш өчен нерсәләр кирәк икәннен сора? / Sister baked bales. What products are needed for its preparation?"



**Fig.4 Part of the test for children of 5 years**

So, there is the ethno-component in the context of this task – " бәләш ". It's not only (and non-equivalent) a category of baking products, but an element of national culture: бәләш (a baked cake made of unleavened dough, usually stuffed with potatoes and meat, cut in pieces) is an integral part of the festive treats on the table from the Tatars. And for children to 5 years this "puzzle" needs to be embedded in their linguistic and cognitive picture of the world.

The next task (Fig. 5) is for the children aged 6-7 years also contains ethno-component and assumes basic notions about the attributes of (national) clothing, and their





nominations in the Tatar language. The tested is offered to find differences in the pictures, name them and list how many of them are in total: "Рәсемдә нәрсә үзгәргән? Үзгәреشلәрне әйт һәм сана!"



**Fig.5 Part of the test for 7 years old children**

When you reply you need to call the elements of Tatar national clothes: a skull cap (headdress), an ichigo (shoes), a kushak (tied belt), a shirt, a jacket. In case of difficulty it is proposed to list them in Russian or is given a picture of the same type of task, but is already focused on the Russian culture. For example,



**Fig.6 Part of the test for children of 6 years old**



Alternatively, it is possible to offer both pictures and on the basis of the fact how many details of the difference the child lists, to conclude what culture the child gravitates more.

A fragment of the task "Укы/Reading" from the test for children of 6 years old (Fig. 7) in the Tatar language: "Дәрес жавапларны тап һәм билгелә / Read, identify and find the right answer."

		А. ӘЙЕ/YES	В. ЮК/NO
1	Агач оча / Tree flies		
2	Песи ашый / Cat eats		
3	Йорт йөри / House goes		
4	Кәжә мияулы / Goat meows		
5	Кызыл кыяр / Red cucumbers		
6	Ат чаба / the Horse is galloping		
7	Машиналар йөри / Cars go		
8	Жәй көне кар ява / In a summer day it's snowing		

**Fig. 7 Part of the test for children of 6 years old**

This assignment is due not only to linguistic, but also to extra-linguistic factors. The basis of it is, on the one hand, the idea of logical adjacency of the reality of the environment and, consequently, of their concepts and categories, on the other hand - syntagmatic, i.e., the nature of lexical meaning, its scope, which determines its semantic structure and lexical-semantic compatibility. And finally, the communicative competence of the child: at the tested to 6 years of age it should be formed the idea of the relationship of lexical compatibility of the words if between the realities, which they call, is the relationship of logical adjacent (for example, the answer " ӘЙЕ /Yes" in the case of Ат чаба – "the horse is galloping", Машиналар йөри – "cars go"), if there is no subject-logical connection, no words can be combined with each other (the answer is "юк/no" in the case Агач оча – "the tree flies", Кызыл кыяр – "red cucumber").



Presented tasks are intended to determine the child's relationship to a given culture, to identify his response to the ethno-lingual-cognitive markers, contained in the test. This type of job allows you to determine more accurately the degree of differentiation of languages for a child, because when he replies to the questions he has to activate categorical knowledge about the Tatar/Russian ethnos, as well as about phenomena that have no analogue in another culture. Moreover, the tested itself needs to determine what language he should answer: either the task is given, in which he, based on the content, chooses the language, or the assignment of a neutral character, where the motivation for the implementation is given only through the use by the tester of the specific (Tatar/Russian) language.

Overall, the tasks of all the subtests are distributed in a way that to have the opportunity to study not only the kid's knowledge of a culture of the peoples, but also to assess his language competence. During the testing, taking into account the specificity of the pronunciation, you can define, in what language environment a child grows, and whether the impact of this environment on the child's bilingualism is in general (Klimchak O., Fatkhutdinova V., 2015).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Insufficient study of the influence of bilingualism on educational process has led to the fact that in the domestic educational space there is lack of research regarding this issue: almost no development of the question of the dependence of successful education of a child from the degree of languages balance. Therefore, the aim of our work was the creation of a methodology that will determine the level of the ethno-lingual-cultural balance with bilingual children. Although it is well known that the knowledge of several languages enriches a person, bilingualism may cause contradictions in the attitude of the child living in a bilingual environment, because different languages and different cultures express different attitude to the same phenomena in the life of society.

We have briefly analyzed the language situation in the Republic at the present stage. The practical part of our work is devoted to the development of tasks involving the ethno-lingual-cultural capabilities of a child- bilingual. To do this, we have studied the work of scientists (E. L. Kudryavtseva, etc.), with experience in compiling exercises for the assessment the level of competence. The result of study was a set of exercises,



covering listening, speaking, reading and writing and revealing the level of the ethno-lingual-cultural competence of a child -bilingual.

The test results allow teachers to identify the level of balance of ethno-lingual cultures(Russian and Tatar), the level of intercultural communicative competence, to perform the difficulties of the bilinguals with the definite ethno-linguistic combinations (Russian-Tatar, Tatar-Russian), to systematize and categorize their errors ("typical" for this combination/ this age or the individual), to identify "gaps" in ethno-linguistic-cultural picture of the world of the child, the process of his debilinguization/ fossilization of one of the languages, etc. followed with specific recommendations to educators, educational institutions and parents. These recommendations will allow you to adjust the work (including extra-linguistic, cognitive, and actually linguistic factors) to further harmonious development of the child - bilingual in the world of the 21st century.

#### **4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

#### **5. REFERENCES**

- Ekaterina L. Koudrjajtseva, Daniya Salimova A., Martínková Anastasiya. 2016. Innovative Tools for the Prevention of Psycho-Pedagogical Problems, for Bilinguals Aged 0 – 14 in the "Triangle of Mutual Safety Integration". In: The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS. Volume XII, P. 1-451 (July 2016).2016.No. 7. P. 96-102.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.07.16>.
- Federal state educational standard of basic General education. M.: Education, 2011.
- History, culture, religion / The Official Tatarstan. The official portal.  
<http://tatarstan.ru/about/human.htm>.
- Klimchak O., Fatkhutdinova V., 2015.Teaching foreign languages in a multicultural bilingual society// iceri2015: 8th international conference of education, research and innovation. Vol., Is. P. 3801-3804.
- Kudryavtseva E. L., Hentschel T. 2013. Test of the balance of natural bilingualism - the problem statement // The Education and training of young children. 2013. No. 1. P. 174-175.



- Kudryavtseva Ed. Kudryavtseva E. L., ed.; E. L Timofeeva., Danilova A. A., Yu. Yu., Salimova D. A., Boobekova L. B.. Schöneiche bei Berlin: Elena Plaksina Verlag, 2015. Comprehensive diagnostic tests for German-Russian bilingual children from 3 to 14 years: practical recommendations for testing bilingual children and adolescents /. 128 p.
- Kudryavtseva E. L., Korin I. V. 2013. Creation of a single system of tests to determine the level of intercultural competence // Russian language abroad. No. 3. P. 14-25.
- Martinkova A. A, Danilova Yu. Yu., Salimova D. A., Kudryavtseva E. L. 2015. Problems of self-presentation and self-identification of children-bilinguals: accounting of the cultural component in testing // The world of science, culture, education. Gorno-Altai. No. 5 (54). P. 325-329.
- Population // The Official Tatarstan. The official portal.  
<http://tatarstan.ru/about/population.htm>.
- Shakurova M. M. 2016. Tatar-Russian bilingualism: problems of teaching language // Philological Sciences. Issues of theory and practice. Tambov: Gramota, No. 10(64): in 3 h. 2 H. P. 211-214.
- The Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan dated November 6, 1992 (with changes and additions). <http://base.garant.ru/8108000/#ixzz3kNzMhYSh>.