The Didactic Potential of Communication Technologies in Multilingual Education

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Abstract. The paper examines the didactic potential of communication technologies in multilingual education.

To study in detail the notion of communication technologies, the authors consider notions such as "communication", "intercultural communication" and "educational technologies". The authors define communication technologies, in terms of multilingual education, as a learning process aimed at providing students with intercultural communication skills; intercultural communication in two or more languages with respect of communication rules, interests of the parties involved and the principles of ethics; as well as mutual understanding, new knowledge acquisition and an exchange of experience and knowledge.

The authors suggest a classification of educational technologies in terms of communication in order to identify their features (consistency, construction of algorithms, the possibility to duplicate, reproduce, assess and integrate, comprehensiveness and predictability of learning outcomes) and functions.

The experimental part of the research project aimed to determine learners' attitudes about the use of communication technologies when learning two or more foreign languages and to analyze students' creative works revealing the didactic potential of communication technologies in multilingual education which consists in the following: immersion into the values of a multilingual and multicultural society; expansion of self-identification as the representative of a specific nationality and advanced knowledge about the culture of target languages; values acquisition by interaction partners; familiarization with humane, egalitarian and tolerant ways of living; formation of a values-based attitude to one's home country and culture, linguistic and cultural differences, other nationalities and self with a view to developing an ethno-cultural and sociocultural identification.

Keywords: multilingual education, communication, intercultural communication, educational technologies, communication technologies, didactic potential.

Introduction

The current realities of the world around us and our lives and activities manifest themselves through notions such as globalization, integration and communication, which actually means

unification, internationalization, transformation, development, interaction and impact, convergence and collaboration. In parallel with the above-mentioned positive key concepts related to the processes under way in today's world, there also are negative changes of conflictual and destructive nature. These include imposition of values and ideals to the detriment of national values and cultures; diktat of rules beneficial to some countries yet contrary to the interests of other countries; misunderstanding and disagreement in addressing the global challenges of our time; disregard of the economic interest of individual countries and nations in terms of production development; and national identification. Contradictions relating to the inevitable need to participate in the processes of globalization and national controversies underlying these contradictions can be addressed by cultivating a new-type personality capable of living and working in peace and harmony in the new context of a multicultural and multilingual world aspiring to maintain his or her national identity while understanding and respecting other nationalities. An in-depth study of the notion of "communication", its scope, subjects and content helps clarify the objectives, meaning and challenges of the process of cultivating and educating a multilingual personality. Such a study is essential to understand the concept of "educational technologies" acting as a means for cultivating a multilingual personality.

The idea of communication has a paramount importance in a multilingual world as it covers a broad range of issues concerning the understanding of the Other, the role of language in communication, the establishment of communication space and the awareness of cognitive mechanisms in communication.

The authors used studies by Habermas [45, 52], Apel [2; 48; 49], Luhmann [24; 53], Giddens [13] and Goffmann [14] to realize the philosophical significance of "communication", both as a phenomenon and a notion, and to investigate it through the lens of a number of approaches in the context of modern realities.

Important theoretical research conducted by Ter-Minasova [40], Sadokhin [33], Grushevitskaya [15], Vezhbitskaya [7], Popkov [15] and Hall [46] attest to the conditions created in the process of intercultural communication and aimed at students' mastering several foreign languages, developing their ability to communicate with people of a different cultural background to their own, communicating in several languages and acquiring specific behavioral experience in a multilingual and multicultural space.

Intercultural communication is a core principle of the concept of "educational technology". An analysis of works by Andreyeva [1], Borytko [6], Makhmutova [25], Bespalko [5], Klarina [10, 21], Fridman [44] and Berdichevsky [4] and of research papers by Nazarova and Valeyev [28], Sadulloyeva [34] and Tarasevich [39] identified the characteristics of educational technologies, specified the notion of "communication technologies" and defined their

functions in multilingual education and the types of communication technologies.

Next, a question arose on the role of communication technologies in multilingual education. The authors presented their answer to this question in the present paper.

The **objective of the paper** is to define the didactic potential of communication technologies in multilingual education in order to further elaborate the methodological framework using communication technologies for teaching two and more foreign languages.

Research methods. The research study was conducted at the Moscow Region State University, the Zhangir Khan Agrarian-Technical University and the Orenburg State University. A total of 117 students participated in the project.

The initial stage involved a theoretical analysis of print and online resources, namely academic and methodological papers, monographs, textbooks and teaching aids, since the present paper has both theoretical and practical scope. The aim of the theoretical analysis was to carry out a detailed study of concepts such as "communication", "intercultural communication" and "educational technology" with a view to defining the notion of "communication technologies" in multilingual education, and to classify communication technologies used in multilingual education, which enabled the authors to provide clear definition and detect their functions.

To achieve the goals set, the following stage was centered around a survey comprising seven open-ended questions and aimed at investigating the learners' attitude about the use of communication technologies when studying two or more foreign language and at analyzing creative work.

Research results and discussion

The realities of today's world, which are manifest in expanding contacts and interactions and enhanced relationships and interdependencies between governments, peoples of different nationalities and individuals, determine the existence of the so-called "communicative space" [29, p. 6] in which society lives and evolves. Fundamental for the existence of a communicative space, the notion of "communication" is frequently used in various contexts, yet it has not resulted in a profound understanding of this phenomenon, namely, the meaning, content, challenges, functions and mechanisms which define communication.

For a fuller awareness of the communication/education technology relationship, the authors referred to a number of researchers (Apel, Habermas, Luhmann, Cassirer, Wittgenstein, Lotman and Hoffman) who had largely contributed to the study of communication's nature and had pinpointed the ideas of major importance for our research.

As an example, Apel [48; 49] defines the universal rules and necessary environment for communication, highlighting the need to take account of the social and cultural context of communication. The

latter is of special importance in a multicultural world in which the Other must be included into the cognitive process as a participant in this process and a full-fledged interlocutor [29, p. 27]. According to Apel's idea, "an entity opens up in a dialogue on itself and in the entity's inter-subject interpretation" [29, p. 28]. The process of communication implied the establishment of a dialogical or socio-ethical relationship, i.e. that of mutual recognition and of mutual commitment. In communication, Apel assigns a special role to language perceiving it as "a truly historical interrelation of understanding in an ideal communicative community. It acts as an organum of cognition and a means for articulating the outcomes of cognition and transmitting them to the communication partners" [30, p. 69]. Continuing on the ideas put forward by John L. Austin and John R. Searle, Apel perceives the process of communication in terms of speech art theory, given that, besides exchanging information, communicators perform specific acts: they promise, agree, argue and so on. Communication serves to not only transmit messages but also perform acts changing the world. The communicators' communicative intention consists in their desire to be understood, that is, communication focuses on *Verständigung* [49, p. 27], or mutual understanding, mutual coordination and mutual recognition of the parties' claim of significance [29, p. 37].

Apel's works [2] present an "ideal agent of communication" having "communicative competence" and a set of communication rules. Habermas, who elaborated the "significance requirements" for speech acts, proposed an "ideal communicative situation". Of special importance to our study are, in our view, the cognitive, interactive and expressive modes of communication, put forward by Apel, in respect to three aspects of speech (propositional content, interpersonal attitude and the speakers' intention) and to the claim of significance (veracity, correctness of regulations, trueness, clarity, completeness of information, adherence to ethics). In continuation of the idea about communication rules, it should be observed that mutual agreement and mutual understanding in communication is also achievable if, instead of pursuing only their personal interests, communicators appeal to the interest of all those participating in communication, to the interest of all, and consider the goals of the entire communicating community. Apel lists the following among risks undermining the communication process: the participants' lack of information, asymmetry of their statuses, unequal competence and communicative aberrations on the part of social institutions [48, p. 130]. In Apel's opinion, the major mechanisms for eliminating these risks are not only and not so much assessment and detection as respect of response ethics [48, p. 130]. The principle of ethics should be "elaborated as the outcome of an application in a real communicative community, in a specific context, in existing legal and moral traditions within a specific life form" [29, p. 58]. Going forward, this idea of outmost importance to understand the need to

use, as part of multilingual education, the technologies oriented to improve communication skills in the classroom environment and, then, to apply them in everyday life and at work.

Overall, Apel believes that the role of communication is not only to tackle moral problems and conflicts and to deal with difficult situations, but also to foster the establishment of a communicative society taking account of mutual values and interests.

The above-mentioned Theory of Communicative Action, elaborated by Jürgen Habermas, is a valuable theoretical contribution to the comprehension of the notion of communication [45; 52]. In performing a communicative action, personalities strive to find common ground with a view to coordinating their action plans on their way to finding a definition of the situation, shared by all and individually [43]. The outcome of communicative actions is consensus and mutual understanding between dialogue partners [52, p. 128]. This theory's main tenets, to be mentioned within the context of the present study, are the following. First, there is a need for communicative understanding putting all communicators on an equal footing and making them equal subjects of communication; furthermore, one needs to put oneself in the Other's position and realize the meaning of one's own actions through the Other's response [52, p. 21]. Second, communication implies an interpersonal relationship between "the speaker and the addressee", i.e. the participants interact with each other in communicative terms. Third, communication is context-dependent,

which is crucial as communication rules change in the light of changing conditions. Moreover, social roles differ in various contexts, thus enabling the elaboration of the self's own identity [29, p. 71]. When applied to the present study's context, this idea implies a multicultural space, a multilingual personality as well as the formation and maintenance of national identity. Fourth, Habermas perceives language as an element of communication and an interaction tool rather than an isolated system or an instrument for describing reality. Without going into the details of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, it is worth mentioning another important conclusion for research on communicative technologies, namely, Habermas' pointing out three borderline cases of communicative action: instrumental (conversation), normative and dramaturgical ones. In the first case, information and knowledge, perceived in terms of truth, are targeted at success by coordinating and defining optimal objectives and means. In the second case, Habermas refers to "the socially integrating agreement about values and norms instilled by the cultural tradition and socialization" [52, p. 180]. The third notion points to the public-doer agreement relationship, in other words, it is a question of the actor's subjectivity and one's creation of a specific image of oneself, or self-presentation.

Luhmann elaborated the notion of communication which implies a "certain historically specific and context-dependent event" [53, p. 70] rather than the transmission of a

specific content from one individual to another. Otherwise stated, communication is an operation during which knowledge and non-knowledge are redistributed. Another noteworthy idea is the fact that communication is built on consciousness, since only consciousness is capable of sensual perception and "the functioning of (oral and written) communication implies sensual elements" [29, p. 122]. Our analysis of Luhmann's works leads us to another conclusion of major importance for our study: communication has a specific structure (message, information and understanding). To be more precise, communication covers "the potential of meaningfully informing and continually thematized messages which, put together, can accomplish communication" [54, p. 45].

Given that communication is, above all, a language-related process, it is impossible to gloss over Ernst Cassirer, a German philosopher who explored the symbolic content of communicative forms [51]. According to Cassirer, language reflects the emotive aspects of life, the impact of a person's pragmatic interests and language fantasy. Cassirer focused more on the symbolic nature of language itself rather than on its direct relationship with communication, yet he surely played a role in enhancing the communicative perception of culture.

Of great interest is, in our view, Wittgenstein's parallel between the communicative situation and language games due to their similarities such as communication goals, a specific range of participants, their background knowledge and the existence of rules,

specific vocabulary and grammar [56, p. 47]. Another important statement is the fact that this game's rules can be understood only through participation in it because it is impossible to comprehend the meaning of communication from outside, without directly participating in it. In Wittgenstein's opinion, language also participates in interaction and understanding, and its being consists in using it, since "what is hidden in language's statics manifests itself in its action and dynamics" [29, p. 178; 35, p. 75].

Of interest for our study are Erving Goffman's works on 'the process of regionalization' or locality, i.e. a zone or a physical location where communication takes place; corporal space and the body area in which experiences, feelings and intentions can be read (in this, Goffman elaborates on Apel's idea about communicative space); and a 'dramaturgical action' necessary for describing motivations and communication preparation procedures. According to Goffman, the following are the features of everyday communication in time and space: openness/closedness and routinization (transfer of a number of actions into a reproducing, or cyclical, process). For the purpose of communicative technology classification, the authors consider important the following typology, suggested by Goffman, of communicative interaction forms and co-presence: meetings/gatherings, public events/activities, spontaneous and unfocused interactions (presence of coordinated interactions and clear delineation of participants). Also noteworthy are T. Hall's physical

distance areas for communication positioning and localization (distance of physical intimacy, personal distance, social distance and public distance) [13]. Shibutani's works [31, p. 11] contain valuable ideas on communication as a means of action and exchange and focus on the possibility to provide cooperative mutual assistance and to coordinate actions of considerable complexity. Let us also mention Cooley [31, p. 11] who perceives communication as a mechanism affecting the development of human relations.

An analysis of works by Russian researchers (V. P. Konetskaya, M. M. Nazarov, A. V. Sokolov, I. P. Yakovlev, M. S. Kagan, P. O. Zverintsev, A. P. Panfilova, F. I. Sharkov, L. V. Komarova and V. N. Pereverzev) leads the authors to the following generalizations:

1. Communication is defined as: a) a process of information transmission and perception (Konetskaya [22, p. 9]), social interaction (Gavra [12, p. 13]), informational interaction (Yakovlev [47, p. 10]), an informational subject-object connection (Kagan [31, p. 11]), exchange of information (Zverintsev, Panfilova [31, p. 11); b) a system with subsystems which often applies to specific areas of knowledge).

2. Communication objectives are said to be the following: a) mutual understanding; b) acquisition of knowledge by interpreting information messages (Pereverzev [32, p. 15]); and c) cross-transfer of information, emotions, meanings and values.

3. The following types of communication are distinguished:

interethnic, interpersonal, mass, business, political, social and – of special concern to us – intercultural communication.

The definition of the latter "is evident from the term itself: it is communication between people of various cultural backgrounds" [40, p. 17], which calls for the following clarification: it is not only communication but also "proper mutual understanding" [8, p. 26].

In the context of multilingual education which creates conditions conducive to the study of several foreign languages and, consequently, cultures, intercultural communication implies not only and not so much communication between people coming from different cultures as communicators' overcoming of intercultural differences, mutual understanding and impact on each other as part of a socially conditioned exchange of information of different nature and content, activated by various means [33, p. 79]. Intercultural communication develops the following skills: - interacting with people of other cultural groups and switching "when meeting another culture to other linguistic and non-linguistic behavioral patterns";
- "awareness of the limits of one's own culture and language" [4, p. 9];
- speaking several languages, display of verbal behavior in different linguistic environments and acquisition of behavioral experiences reflected in the lexical system of several languages [27]; and
- the ability to combine disparate and fragmented information into a comprehensive worldview, to make the

most of changes, to learn, to find one's way and keep balance in an unusual situation [23, p. 14].

Multilingual education is a "goal-oriented process of joining global culture by means of several languages when the languages studied act as a way to acquire specific knowledge and the cultural, historical and social experience of various countries and peoples" [3]. This kind of education cultivates the unique and individual psychology of a person communicating with the world from the perspective of his or her linguistic experience in order to manifest his or her free initiative and tolerance and to engage in an efficient dialogue of cultures. Among the essential conditions for establishing multilingual education are the creation of a multicultural social space and selection of motivating information sources and language means and tools that would naturally become part of education.

This paper focuses on communication technologies which, in the authors' view, are effective in intercultural communication and conducive to communicators' mutual understanding and acquisition of each other's values and collaborative quest for producing new values.

To provide a more concise definition of communication technologies, let us now turn to the notion of technology. Just as there is no common identification of this notion, there is no clear definition of it. An analysis of available definition reveals that pedagogical (educational or learning) technologies are interpreted as a teacher-learner relationship (M. I. Makhmutov [25], M. Choshanov [25]),

character-building (A. P. Bespalko [5]), education management (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, USA), which is a combination of "psychological and educational patterns, <…>, teaching forms, methods and tools as well as means of education" (Likhachev [16]), "pedagogical patterns, objectives, principles, content as well as forms, methods and means of education and upbringing" (V. I. Andreyev [1]) defined by their possible dissemination and reproduction (V. I. Andreyev [1]), integrity and comprehensiveness (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, USA), construction of algorithms (L. M. Fridman, M. I. Makhmutov) and consistency (T. Sakamoto [16], M. V. Klarin [20; 21]). In our view, projected results (I. P. Volkov [15], V. V. Guzeyeva [16]) and "problem analysis and problem-solving planning, implementation, assessment and management" (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, USA).

According to A. L. Berdichevsky, "communication technology is a combination of teacher and learner techniques ensuring effective learning, the achievement of learning objectives and foreign language acquisition in a most rational manner with least possible trouble [4, p. 334].

The authors define communication technologies, in terms of multilingual education, as a learning process aimed at providing students with intercultural communication skills; intercultural communication in two or more languages with respect of

communication rules, interests of the parties involved and the principles of ethics; as well as mutual understanding, new knowledge acquisition and an exchange of experience and knowledge. Communication technologies play a vital role in "developing language competencies within the context of vocational guidance as further improvement of the communicative competency in foreign languages with regard to the willingness for interpersonal and intercultural professional communication in foreign languages" [55]. Each technology is a process going through various stages (preparation, the event itself and analysis) and implementing, according to a specific algorithm of action, a plan based on values and objectives.

Overall, our analysis revealed that educational technologies contribute to students' attainment of self-identification and self-expression; exchange in knowledge, ideas, experiences and work methods (O. Bassis) [50]; stimulate active and independent learning, increase the time available for it (work at one's own pace and increased productivity) and ensure the use of the knowledge gained in practice; integrate various academic disciplines and knowledge; and implement creative activities aimed at producing creative products (projects or roles).

In terms of multilingual education, communication technologies offer the following opportunities:

- familiarization with the values of a multilingual and multicultural society; in-depth knowledge of oneself as belonging to a certain nationality

and of the culture of the languages studied (technologies being focused on searching for, analyzing, assessing and acquiring information; on motivating to study two or more languages, the cultures of countries where the studied languages are spoken and one's own culture; on detecting personal meaning; and on exchanging experience and knowledge).

- values-related enrichment of interlocutors (axiological technologies aimed to enrich the educational process with linguistic, country-specific and cultural knowledge; and to familiarize student with global, national and personality-oriented values accounting for their successful integration into the diverse, multicultural and multilingual world);

- humane, egalitarian and tolerant ways of living; formation of a values-based attitude to one's home country and culture, linguistic and cultural differences, other nationalities and oneself with a view to developing an ethno-cultural and sociocultural identification (technologies aimed at establishing intercultural and inter-language relationships and developing the ability to listen and understand the interlocutor, engage in a dialogue and keep up a conversation; and at improving the ability to act in various everyday and professional situations involving multicultural and multilingual communication as part of search, practical, project and research activity.

Instead of providing students with ready knowledge, communicative technologies in multilingual education encourage them to acquire knowledge on their own within the framework of

organized activities, to express their personal opinions instead of reproducing set phrases and clichés, and to master a range of work methods available in various linguistic cultures in relation to themselves, the Other and the world. In doing so, students learn different mechanisms for searching information while languages act as a tool for independent search and absorption of information.

With specific regard to foreign languages in communication technologies, it is noteworthy that switching from one language to another (for instance in role playing) requires responsibility, responsiveness, attention, good memory and the ability to make oneself understood by the interlocutor by various means (explication, synonymy, antonymy and non-verbal methods), to choose one word, decision or rule out of many and to assume responsibility.

Acquiring knowledge through communicative technologies for use in professional life and communication in the present-day multicultural and multilingual world is a major task, but not the only one. More importantly, there is a need to develop practice-oriented skills to be used in intercultural communication. These include the ability to accept cultural facts (search, selection, interpretation, assessment and comparison); to appreciate the significance of cultural phenomena, notions and actions during intercultural communication; to compare cultures and languages; to engage in and keep up a conversation on specific topics with people of different cultural and national backgrounds; and to respond appropriately in various situations. Communicative technologies create a professional context and enrich the educational process with elements of professional activity [34, p. 192] (situations focused on professional communication, discussion or research of professional topics and participation in professional practice-oriented projects and research studies).

There is no straightforward answer to the issue of communication technology classification. Overall, it should be observed that communication technologies are based on teacher-student and student-student communication relationships. Teachers act as full-fledged participants of joint educational activities.

M. V. Nazarova and A. A. Valeyev identify role-based types of communication in which students play various roles and discussion-based communication involving students into the problem-oriented discussion of this or that topic [28, p. 74]. A. A. Isayev and I. Yu. Isayeva divide technologies into "dialogue ones (problem-search dialogues, heuristic conversations, case-by-case method and discussion-based lectures), play-based ones (didactic, creative, business, role-playing and organizational activities), training ones (communicative, socio-psychological and skill-oriented activities) and creative ones (creative assignments, brainstorming and project methods)" [17, p. 180].

The analysis allowed the authors to identify the following communicative technologies in multilingual education: discussion-based, role-based, project and training ones.

Discussion-based technologies (round tables, philosophy cafés, French ateliers, discussions and debates) provide students with the opportunity to do the following:

- improve their speech, public speaking and listening skills;

- outline challenges, set goals, search for and analyze information;

- self-present and express their opinions in a well-argued manner;

- talk in a logical and convincing way;

- foster interaction in several foreign languages;

- develop a tolerant attitude towards national and cultural specificities and points of view different from their own.

Discussion technologies are a training organization structure that implies an exchange of view of relevant value-oriented topics with the use of multimedia presentations, videos, podcasts, texts, iconographic and other resources. The following are some examples of discussion-based technology:

- *Preserving Cultural Heritage in Classical Russian Literature,* a philosophy café organized by the authors. Quote of the day: "Spiritual culture is comparable to wheat. Wheat nourishes man. In his turn, man takes care of wheat by pouring wheat into granaries. This way, grain is stored like heritage from one crop to another," from *The Aviator* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery;

- *I Am a Translator*, a round table. Quotations for discussion: "Translation is nothing but happiness. I would compare the art of translation to a musical performance. It's an interpretation" (L. Lungina); "When translating, a person signs, paints a self-portrait and is as he or she is" (L. Lungina);

- *One is responsible for one's planet*, a French atelier based on Antoine de Saint-Exupery's literary works;

- *Love is what runs the world*, a multilingual discussion; and

- *Does our first language need to be protected?*, a debate.

Play-based technologies (didactic, creative, business, role-playing and organizational activities) belong to communicative technologies. They help students overcome their language barrier to speak coherently; improve their understanding of relevance and importance of learning foreign languages and using them in professional activities; motivate and increase their interest in foreign languages; and play an important role in deepening students' understanding of culture and its symbolical meaning. The use of play-based technologies implies setting a communication goal, defining participants (role distribution), drawing on the participants' language and background knowledge, sticking to specific rules and using appropriate vocabulary and grammar. The following are some examples of play-based technologies:

- *Defending the Main Points of a Presentation,* a role game aimed at teaching students to prepare a presentation based on theoretical material or to analyze, discuss and assess a practical work);

- *Being a Pro*, a talk show;

- *A Recipe for Success* (about famous people who succeeded in life and as professionals);

- *The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page*, a discussion on the quotation by Saint Augustine about travelling and famous travelers;

- virtual travelling (an activity aimed at studying speech patterns, clichés, terms, dialogue/polylogue writing, descriptions, discussions and letter-writing);

- dramatic games (staging plays, musical and poetic works, exploring literary works as games and playing the roles of literary characters);

- theme-based role-playing (topics: *National Behavior, Mimics and Gestures; National Communication Traditions;* or *National Speech Specificities and Polite Expressions*).

Project technologies are implemented on the basis of research, search, creative, prognostic and analytical projects. The technological process takes place according to the following stages: goal-setting, planning, specific problem-solving and real-life practical transformation [17, p. 181]. The pedagogical prospects of project technologies are manifest in the following:

- development of students' research skills; independent and team work skills; presentation skills; assessment and analytical skills; leadership abilities, competitiveness, decision-making skills and the sense of responsibility;

- incitement to be active, independent, creative and imaginative; and

- consideration of students' individual abilities and competence in foreign languages.

Projects carried out as part of communication technologies aim to make students proficient in foreign languages, improve their linguistic and philological skills, familiarize them with country-specific information and teach them situational communication. Depending on specific goals, the typology of projects can be presented in the following way:

1) language projects: learning projects (development of communication skills); linguistic projects (study of language phenomena and realities); and philological (philological research, study of the word etymology);

2) country-focused (historical, geographical, ethnographic, socio-political and cultural) projects [41, p. 24]. Some examples include *The Homeland,* a multilingual game presenting different countries and languages, or *The Multilingual University*, a project aimed at developing a higher education system based on multilingualism and tolerance towards various nationalities and cultures).

Besides the above-mentioned projects, it is worth mentioning prognostic and analytical projects having the following objectives:

- communication, information and publication (*Famous Professionals, Family Values* (customs, traditions, relationships, responsibility, duty, love, wedding, marriage and parenthood);

- communication, information, self-advertising (appropriate self-assessment, self-analysis and self-

control): *My Profile, My Instagram Profile*;

- intercultural communication and dialogue of cultures: *I am the MSOU Student* (the university's positioning among foreign students), *My Profession and I* (my professional future).

Research projects are targeted at knowledge acquisition in professional activities and the development of research skills (search for, selection and evaluation of information; autonomous observation skills; experience in one's area of specialization; and solution of research problems in academic writing and participation in competitions, seminars and conferences). As an example, the authors offered students to engage in the following research projects:

- conduct an associative experiment during multilingual activities and online and analyze the results;

- examine feature films, produced by foreign filmmakers in different languages, and literary works on Russia and the Russians;

- write academic papers and make presentations on the following topic: *Translating Russian Silver Age Poets*. Quotations for analysis: "A prose translator is a slave, a poetry translator is a rival" (V. O. Klyuchevsky); "Translating one work from one language into another is like flaying it, taking it across the border and dressing it in a national costume there (K. Kraus);

- *The Concept of Seduction in E. L. James' 'Fifty Shades of Grey'* in English and its French, Russian and Spanish Translations;

- *Cultural Aspects in Translation*. Quotation for analysis: "All languages and cultures are variations of the same topics. That is why they are mutually yet never fully translatable" (I. D. Levin);

- project work: *The Russians Viewed by Foreigners; Foreigners Viewed by the Russians;* and *My Country Viewed from Abroad.*

The authors used *training technologies* in order to develop the following three aspects of student personality: the cognitive aspect (acquisition of new knowledge and exchange of knowledge), the emotive aspect (empathy and motivation) and the activity-based aspect (use in various types of communicative technologies, expansion of interaction practices and activation of the subjective attitude). The above technologies are a system oriented at developing the algorithms of cognitive learning actions and ways of solving various tasks. The authors successfully conducted these training sessions: *Employment in Multinational Companies, The Successful Self-Presentation of a Multilingual Personality* and *A Professional's Motto in Terms of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism.*

The objective of the survey was to identify students' attitudes towards communication technologies as a means for developing communicative competence in multilingual education.

First, it was necessary to define the students' understanding of the notion of communicative technologies in multilingual education. The survey responses revealed that, overall,

students agree that they refer to a specifically organized "learning process" (96%), they allow to "develop communication skills in several languages" (86%), "acquire new knowledge" (84%) and "exchange knowledge in several languages" (91%). Some responses were more concise: "it is intercultural communication" (27%) and "the aim is to communicate in several languages and understand each other" (18%).

Among the students' preferred technologies, selected from a list of suggested technologies, were discussion-based ones, in particular philosophy cafés and multilingual discussions in which students acted as moderators, speakers and translators. The students remembered best the following activities:

- philosophy cafés on the topics *Where is happiness?* (centered around the eponymous song by Christophe Maé, *Il est où le bonheur?*), *Secrets to Success* (reflection on the questions *What is the road to success like?, Is there advice on how to be successful?* and *Who or what influences us in our achieving success?*);

- a discussion of documentaries about Emmanuel Macron and Elon Musk, *Top 10 films on success stories*, *Top 10 Success after failure*.

- a multilingual discussion on the topic *Life with No Memories is Life with No Future* (finding the answers to the following questions: What do memories mean to you? With what are they associated? What reminds us of important people and events in our lives? Are these mostly positive or negative memories? How to get rid of unpleasant memories?); and

- song analysis: Joe Dassin's *Souviens-toi* and Garou's *La rivière de notre enfance*.
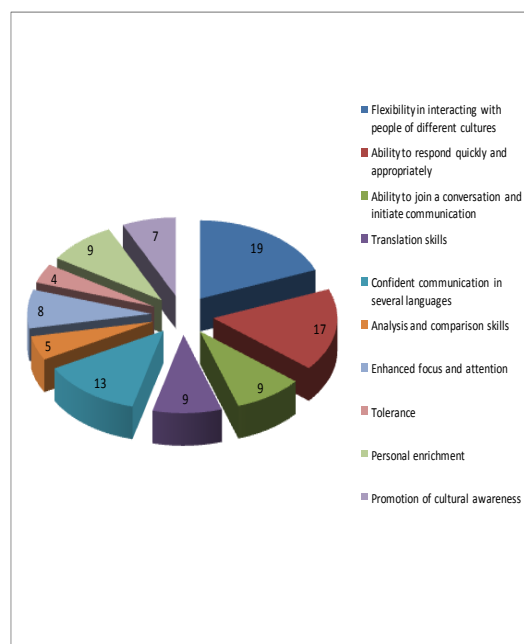

Fig. 1. Skills acquired in multilingual education with the use of communication technologies

When asked about personality traits and skills acquired in multilingual education with the use of communication technologies, the students provided the following answers (Fig. 1):
- confidence in their ability to communicate in several languages and to quickly switch from one language to another;
- flexibility in interacting with people of different cultures and in different languages;
- ability to respond quickly and appropriately;
- ability to "join a conversation and initiate communication";
- ability to analyze and "compare linguistic and country-specific elements in various cultures";

- building on "experience in communicating in different languages and in different situations";
- fostering "tolerance for other languages and cultures; and
- translation skills.

Asked about the topics discussed in class using communication technologies, most of the students highlighted the topics focused on cultural and national specificities: national stereotypes; national holidays, customs and cuisine; family relations across countries; nation-specific values of the youth; languages as a tool or a goal in the global multilingual space. The students were less interested in inter-ethnic relations and conflicts and their own position in intercultural communication, since they neither fully understand their role and responsibility nor relate themselves to the events discussed.

Topic	Number of students	%
National stereotypes	114	97
Family relations across countries	89	76
Inter-ethnic relations and conflicts	61	52
Nation-specific values of the youth	101	86
Languages as a tool or a goal in the global multilingual space	73	62
National holidays, customs and cuisine	117	100
"Myself" when communicating and interacting with others (people of other nationalities)	56	48

Table 1. Communication technology topics in multilingual education

The following are, in order of ranking the problems faced by the students in arranging and participating in communication technologies: "poor knowledge of languages", "difficulty in switching from one language to another", "lack of vocabulary", ignorance of social norms, rules of behavior and "common clichés for use in different situations" and "I don't know what to say".

The students are happy with a "well established structure" and a "fixed action pattern" fit for various contents, which allows students by dint of repetition to overcome their language barrier and the 'us-them' stereotype. The students also like to act as translators because, as they put it, "I feel free and light", "I realize I can do it" and "I realize where and how I can use the language".

The students do not have difficulty in learning several languages: on the contrary, they find it easier to study each new language and are ready to study three languages. According to the learners, communication technologies in multilingual education aim not only to teach speaking, but also listening skills ("it is necessary to be

attentive listeners and be ready, at any time, to engage in a dialogue or act as a translator); reading skills ("preparation requires reading many texts", "finding and analyzing information" and "visiting many websites in search of interesting information"); and writing skills ("my preparation work includes producing and writing down my own text", "necessary when preparing a presentation").

The surveyed students were asked to write an essay on the topic *Foreign Languages in My Future Profession*.
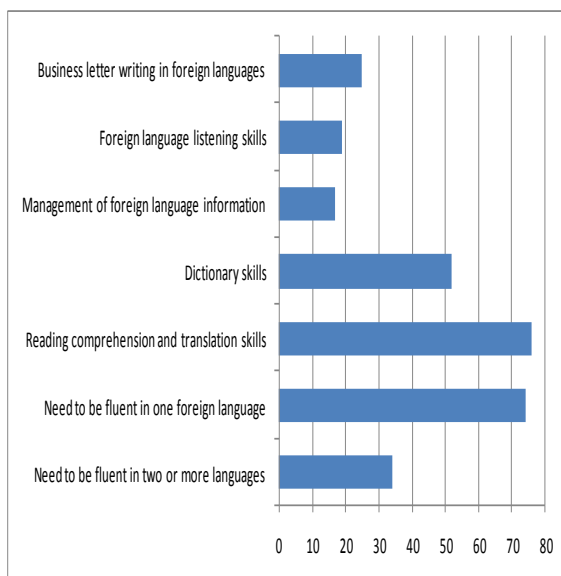

Fig. 2. Analysis of the essay *Foreign Languages in My Future Profession*

An analysis of the students' essays revealed that most of the students (74%) are sure about the need to master two or more languages. According to 34% of the respondents, being fluent in two or more languages is the imperative of our time (for future work and life). For professional purposes it is necessary to read effectively in a foreign language,

translate, be a good dictionary user and feel confident in handling business correspondence.

Excerpts from the respondents' essays:

"My dream is to have a job with international mobility. To this purpose, I'd like to be fluent in English and another language" (Maxim K., 1-year student, Department of History, Political Sciences and Law, MRSU).

"I intend to do my masters abroad. In my view, being fluent in one language is not sufficient" (Svetlana M., 2-year student, Department of History, Political Sciences and Law, MRSU).

"I would like to teach Russian as a second language. To do that, I plan to brush up on my English and learn French at the university" (Darya T. 2-year student, Department of Russian Philology, MRSU).

"I will work in an international company. We have a three-language policy: I'm a native Kazakh speaker, I'm fluent in Russian and I'm studying English" (Alibek, Kh., Department of Economics and Business, Zhangir Khan Agrarian-Technical University).

Difficulties in teaching listening skills and work with primary sources also affect the students' attitude towards the development of their listening skills and information management in foreign languages. Overall, the students think that they will deal with printed sources of information, hence their focus on the relevant skills.

Students pointed out professions (translators, managers and journalists) requiring knowledge of languages for an employment position. They are,

however, little aware of professions of the future such as business market analysts, ad writers, territory brand managers, art appraisers, telemedicine (virtual) doctors, online lawyers, big data specialists and others. In these positions, specialists deal with information in various languages and communicate with colleagues from other countries in real time and in the remote mode. Consequently, they have to master several foreign languages. The surveyed students (81%) limit themselves only to the job market of their country of residence, although some students (11%) believe that they can easily find a job abroad, if necessary, or work online. The students are fully aware of the fact that fluency in foreign languages "opens up and enlarges the scope for the implementation of the skills acquired in university in future professional activities"; allows them to "pursue a career, for in instance, in the civil service"; "earn a higher salary" and is required "for work in international companies" and "for enhanced competitiveness".

An analysis of the survey and the essays revealed that the topic under discussion is not only relevant but also of greatest importance as it highlights the significance of communicative technologies in the students' future professional activities and multilingual communication.

Conclusion

Communication technologies in multilingual education are in high demand, correspond to the objectives, modalities and content of intercultural communication and develop the language and communicative competencies in intercultural communication, necessary for life and work in a multicultural and multilingual world. In communication technologies, language is becoming a necessary tool to express a person's own opinions. The objectives, content, instruments and modalities of assignments ensure communication in a multilingual space established by means of communication technologies. Students work on various situations possible in their future professional activities. The need to respond to real, significant, exciting and surmountable challenges in a proper and spontaneous manner and to switch from one language to another incites students to learn foreign languages. Their acquaintance with national realities and standards of conduct leads students to retain relevant information and to make a deliberate choice of a specific professional environment in the future.

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