



FORMATION OF ASSOCIATIVE FIELDS IN THE LANGUAGE CONSCIOUSNESS OF BILINGUAL CHILDREN AND THEIR NATIONAL-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Navruzakhon Matkholikova

Riga Nordic University, lecturer

matxoliqova89@gmail.com, +998916573453

Abstract

This article examines the process of the formation of associative fields in the language consciousness of bilingual children, their psycholinguistic foundations, and national-cultural characteristics. The study analyzes semantic and associative connections that emerge in children's thinking under the influence of two language systems in a bilingual environment. Furthermore, the impact of family environment, social communication, national values, and cultural factors on the linguistic consciousness of bilingual children is highlighted. The article also scientifically substantiates the significance of associative experiment methods, the peculiarities of the development of linguocultural thinking in bilingual children, and their role in cognitive activity.

Keywords: bilingualism, language consciousness, associative field, psycholinguistics, linguoculture, semantic association, national values, child thinking, intercultural communication.

Introduction

In the modern era of globalization, mastering two or more languages has become an important component of social life. In particular, children's acquisition of several languages from an early age is of great linguistic, psychological, cultural, and social importance. Such children are referred to as bilingual children.



Bilingualism directly influences the formation of human thinking, perception of the world, and the development of language consciousness.

Language is the main tool of human consciousness through which individuals comprehend reality, classify phenomena, and accumulate experience. Every word evokes certain associations in human consciousness. This system of connections is called an associative field. Associative fields consist of semantic, emotional, figurative, and cultural relationships among linguistic units. In bilingual children, this process becomes more complex because they develop under the simultaneous influence of two languages and two cultures.

This article analyzes the mechanisms of associative field formation in the language consciousness of bilingual children, their linguopsychological features, and their relationship with national-cultural factors.

The Concept of Bilingualism and Language Consciousness

Bilingualism is the ability of an individual to communicate fluently or to a certain degree in two languages. In linguistics, bilingualism is divided into natural and artificial bilingualism. Natural bilingualism develops when a child grows up in a bilingual environment, whereas artificial bilingualism arises through special educational processes.

Language consciousness refers to the process by which a person perceives and processes reality through language. According to psycholinguists, language consciousness is closely connected with thinking, memory, perception, and associative relations. Since each language possesses its own semantic system, two different conceptual systems function in the consciousness of a bilingual individual.

In bilingual children, linguistic units are actively used in different contexts. For example, a child may communicate in Uzbek at home and in Russian or English at



school. As a result, each language becomes associated with specific communicative situations in the child's consciousness. In this way, bilingual thinking is formed.

The Concept and Essence of Associative Fields

An associative field is a system of semantic and emotional connections formed in human consciousness around a particular word or concept. For instance, the word "mother" may evoke associations such as love, family, affection, home, and childhood.

In psycholinguistics, associative fields are considered an important component of language consciousness because when a person hears a word, images, emotions, and experiences related to that word become activated in memory.

In bilingual children, the formation of associative fields depends on several factors:

- language environment;
- family communication;
- cultural values;
- social experience;
- educational system;
- mass media;
- national mentality.

Associative connections formed in two languages may complement each other in some cases, while in others they may compete.

Formation of Associative Connections in the Thinking of Bilingual Children



Childhood is considered the most active stage in the development of language and thinking. During this period, children begin to perceive reality through language. Every new word becomes associated in the child's mind with a particular object, action, or feeling.

In bilingual children, this process occurs through two linguistic codes simultaneously. For example, although the concepts “uy” and “home” are semantically similar, they may evoke different emotional associations in a child's consciousness.

For a child raised in an Uzbek family, the concept of “uy” may signify:

- family;
- hospitality;
- national dishes;
- kinship relations;
- parental affection.

The English concept “home,” however, may be associated with:

- personal space;
- independence;
- comfort;
- individual lifestyle.

This demonstrates the close relationship between language and culture.

The Influence of National-Cultural Characteristics on Associative Fields



The culture of every nation is reflected through language. Linguistic units embody:

- historical experience;
- traditions and customs;
- religious views;
- moral norms;
- national mentality.

Therefore, two different cultural models are formed in the language consciousness of bilingual children.

For example, in Uzbek culture, concepts such as:

- “non” (bread);
- “ota” (father);
- “mahalla” (community);
- “mehmon” (guest);
- “duo” (blessing/prayer)

possess deep national-cultural meanings.

In Uzbek mentality, “non” symbolizes:

- livelihood;
- prosperity;
- sacredness;
- respect.



In other languages, however, this word may simply denote a type of food.

Similarly, the concept of “mahalla” is associated with the communal lifestyle of Uzbek people, while many other cultures do not have an exact equivalent of this concept.

Thus, associative fields represent the reflection of national worldview in language consciousness.

Development of Linguocultural Thinking in Bilingual Children

Linguocultural thinking is a type of thinking formed through the integration of language and culture. In bilingual children, this thinking develops on the basis of the parallel development of two cultures.

Such children:

- adapt quickly to intercultural communication;
- possess broader semantic thinking;
- are more open to different worldviews;
- demonstrate communicative flexibility.

Research shows that bilingual children often exhibit stronger:

- logical thinking;
- memory;
- analytical abilities;
- creativity

compared to monolingual children.

However, certain phenomena may also occur:



- language interference;
- code-switching;
- semantic confusion.

For example, a child may transfer grammatical structures from one language to another or assign two different cultural meanings to the same concept.

Associative Experiment Method and Its Importance

In psycholinguistics, the associative experiment method is considered one of the most effective ways of studying language consciousness. In this method, respondents are given a stimulus word and their first associative response is recorded.

For example:

Stimulus	Associative Response
Mother	Love
Bread	Prosperity
Home	Family
School	Knowledge

In bilingual children, however, the same stimulus may produce different responses in different languages.

For example:



Word	Uzbek Association	English Association
Home	Family	Comfort
Bread	Breakfast	Food
Father	Respect	Protection

This demonstrates how national-cultural thinking is embedded in language consciousness.

Social and Psychological Significance of Bilingualism

Today, bilingualism is considered an important social phenomenon in the context of global communication. Bilingual children:

- actively participate in international communication;
- understand other cultures more quickly;
- possess greater social adaptability.

Psychologically, bilingualism:

- increases cognitive flexibility;
- develops attention control;
- strengthens cognitive activity.

At the same time, an improperly organized bilingual environment may lead to certain problems:

- language interference;
- uneven vocabulary development;
- grammatical mistakes;



- communicative ambiguities.

Therefore, pedagogical and psychological approaches are crucial in raising bilingual children.

Conclusion

The formation of associative fields in the language consciousness of bilingual children is a complex psycholinguistic and linguocultural process. This process develops through the close interaction of language, thinking, and culture. Mastering two languages enriches children's semantic thinking, broadens their communicative opportunities, and prepares them for intercultural communication.

National-cultural values play a major role in determining the content of associative fields. Through each language, children acquire not only new words but also the worldview, mentality, and values of a particular nation.

For this reason, the study of bilingual children's language consciousness remains one of the most relevant areas of modern linguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguocultural studies.

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