



Motivating children from bilingual families to learn a foreign language

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Abstract. The current study was aimed at determining the role and confirming the influence of bilingual families and the educational environment on the formation of children's motivation to acquire skills in a foreign language. The research comprised a total of 436 learners from Russian primary, secondary, and high schools and 100 educators. The objective was to examine the correlation between the motivation of children from bilingual families to learn a foreign language and the influence of the pedagogical community, domestic environment, and social contacts. The study was carried out over 1.5 years on the surveys of teachers and family members as well as by monitoring the language learning process. A motivation model was developed and experimentally tested in primary, secondary, and high school settings. The results of the study revealed the growth of motivation with age. The proposed model can be introduced into any secondary education institution with bilingual enrollment.

Keywords: Bilingualism, children, educational process, foreign language, parents, students.

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INTRODUCTION

Bilingual families frequently emerge in many countries across the world. It is caused by active and constant migration processes, resulting from inter-ethnic armed confrontations, and a desire to improve one's well-being. Often such migratory processes are carried out by entire families who travel to other countries for a permanent place of residence. Since Russia remains an active participant in international migration, the bilingualism phenomenon here is also relevant. Children from bilingual families usually retain their native language. However, they live, learn, and grow in a bilingual environment which does not always positively affect their desire to learn a foreign language. However, these days foreign language (L2) knowledge is considered to be an essential attribute of professionalism in any field. Moreover, it is deemed an instrument of access to many sources of information and remains the mean of international communication. Considering this, the necessity of motivating children from bilingual families to master a foreign language is growing steadily.

A large number of existing studies in the broader literature examined the children's motivation for language learning. This issue was reviewed using psychological, psycholinguistic, and linguistic approaches (Dörnyei, 2001). Researches compared motivation to learn the first and second languages as foreign (Lin, Wong, & McBride-Chang, 2012) and analysed the use of marketing tools in bilingual education (Shyrokova, 2016). The sociolinguistic parameters of studying a foreign language by representatives of the bilingual environment were also reviewed (Makarova, 2013). However, all these studies are more focused on personality and its motivation outside the broader social context, in particular, the influence of the family and teachers, the ideology of the school.

Carreira (2006) indicated a correlation between the motivation of bilinguals and their age. Furthermore, a positive relationship between the perception of the learning environment, the involvement of students, and the need to motivate children from an early age were also noted (Oga-Baldwin, Nakata, Parker, & Ryan, 2017). All these authors note that age is the main motivational factor for teaching a foreign language. Studies indicate that a younger age facilitates language learning and increases the level of language competence. Family relations only partially affect bilingualism. A child in a family studies one of

foreign languages as a second language. Many researchers pointed out the necessity for a more detailed study of students' language learning strategies (Makarova, 2013; Stefánsson, 2013; Mukminin et al., 2017). Moreover, scholars indicated an absence of differences between male and female students in learning English (Mukminin et al., 2018).

Some authors also admitted a lack of motivation and understanding of the importance of foreign languages among schoolchildren. Therefore, they proved the necessity to balance the study load, use additional materials, and implement extracurricular activities to improve academic performance (Ibrahim, Bombieri, & Varenina, 2019). Madeline et al. offered a brief but broad overview of the field of individual differences in language learning (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). Kormos and Csizér (2008) studies outlined factors that influence the motivation to learn a foreign language. They especially emphasized the importance of English-language cultural products and the international position of the English language. Stefánsson (2013) proved that starting to learn L2 at a young age makes a significant difference in language learning. Bird et al. (2005) proposed to provide special conditions for bilingual students to learn foreign languages in an inclusive classroom. Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) identified integrity as the most important factor of motivation. Schmidt (2010) studied the influence of student's intentions for learning L2 on the motivation. De Lamo White and Jin (2011) analyzed problems and approaches to bilingual children, taking into account the socio-cultural, linguistic, and cultural characteristics of degree candidates. Hayashi (2005) confirmed that family, school, and community support are critical for a balanced use of two languages. King and Fogle (2006) pointed to the dependence of motivation on family language policy. King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008) considered family language policy as an incentive for children's development. Kopeliovich (2010) mentioned the inconsistencies between the parents' conscious efforts to impart the heritage language and the actual language practice in the family.

Empirical studies mainly concerned with the examination of L2 acquisition level of bilingual preschool children (Iluz-Cohen & Armon-Lotem, 2013), and the analysis of incentives in L2 learning (MacIntyre, 2002). Pirchio, Passiatore, Carrus, and Taeschner (2019) noted that mastering a foreign language by children from bilingual families improves intercultural interaction, language skills, and promotes a positive social climate in a multinational educational context. However, the motivation in L2 learning is not sufficiently studied. Studies on the interaction between bilingual and monolingual educational strategies for optimizing bilingual student development were of particular interest during the research (Cummins, 2005). Bilingual learning strategies have shown a slightly more attractive result, probably because they are close to the family language experience of bilingual students.

The very problem of being motivated to learn a language is well understood, however, the causes and processes of motivation are somewhat understudied. It follows from research practice that the latter is more focused on the behavior of teachers and the influence of parents. Many scholars indicated a relationship between the teachers' motivational practice and the motivation to learn the language by the students (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Klochkov (2014) noted that the European context of the problem of motivating children as well as the need to develop national standards to determine the substantive and organizational framework of bilingual education are well-known to many researchers. Yashima (2002) reviewed the impact of the international status of a particular foreign language on the motivation to learn it. Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner, and Reyes (2004) highlighted the influence of parental support and self-ratings of language proficiency on the motivation. At the same time, many authors mentioned that bilingual education positively affects the development of students' first language skills (Merisuo-Storm, 2007). Vandergrift (2007) focused his attention on listening as a significant and effective form of acquiring a foreign language by representatives of bilingual communities. In turn, Belz (2002) pointed out the necessity of online resources for examining the social aspects of a foreign language. Toumpaniari, Loyens, Mavilidi, and Paas (2015) have also confirmed the necessity in combining physical activities and gestures to improve the foreign vocabulary of preschoolers. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) revealed the role of motivation in learning and using a foreign language in a bilingual environment.

Studies above examined motivation in learning a foreign language by bilingual representatives of various age groups. Researchers focused principal attention on the influence of the family's language policy and approaches to L2 learning process organization on the motivation of children to master a foreign language. All these forms of motivation noted by researchers can be called socially determined. However, motivation does not arise on its own, a student is to be motivated. However, insufficient attention was given to the influence of other subjects of the social environment, the development of learning motivation, the advantages that a foreign language provides to students, and to the participation of other parties in solving the problem. Thus, to achieve the maximum motivation, it is necessary to consolidate the efforts of teachers and family members.

The scientific novelty of current research lies in determining the basic motives of children from bilingual families to learn a foreign language. The introduction of new motivation methods is remarkably

relevant to Russia, where the problem of bilingualism requires new solutions. The purpose of the article is to determine the motivation of children while learning a foreign language and check the commutative effectiveness of teachers and parents. Moreover, research is aimed at creating optimal organizational and pedagogical conditions to increase the motivation of bilingual students. The work's objectives are to:

- analyze the state-of-the-art in motivating children from bilingual families to master a foreign language;
- determine organizational and pedagogical conditions to motivate students;
- develop and employ a motivation model;
- compare findings with the available foreign experience to identify differences and similarities;
- conclude on the peculiarities of children motivation.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The research sample consists of children from different age groups (primary, secondary, high school). The study hypothesis is that the motivation of children from bilingual homes to learn a foreign language will increase in response to a positive commutative effect of family members, teachers, and other actors. The survey covers 100 teachers and 436 children of different ages (93 primary school students, 178 secondary school students, and 165 high school students). The sample is created due to the need to stimulate the interest of children in learning a foreign language from an early age. Notably, all respondents grow in bilingual families. The 1.5-year study involved surveying teachers and family members as well as monitoring the educational process in the following educational institutions: School No. 239, Moscow, Lyceum No. 39, Ozersk (Chelyabinsk Oblast), Lyceum No. 6 "Perspective", Krasnoyarsk (Krasnoyarsk Krai), Gymnasium No. 9, Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk Oblast), Lyceum No. 19, Korolev (Moscow Oblast).

All study participants were selected on the basis of voluntary consent after the essence of the study and its conditions were explained to them. In case with children, consent to participate was obtained from both the parents and the children who participated. None of the study participants knew about the other participants and no participants knew that others were also part of the research procedure. All data received from participants were stored under numbered files, which excluded the possibility of recognition of the opinions of individual participants by researchers.

During the interviews, each of the participants received a questionnaire and answered it independently, and then sent it by e-mail. The opinions of the participants during the polls or discussions were collected by special representatives who sent information from an independent e-mail, which also ensured the confidentiality of the participants in the study.

A survey to determine the level of motivation was conducted only among child participants twice: before the start of the study and after a year and a half of the study. Results are summarized in Figure 2. Given the interest of the study and its focus, the most widespread motivation for studying L2 was determined by survey results after the end of the study period; they are summarized in Table 1.

A model for motivating children to learn a foreign language is developed in several stages. At the analytic phase, a survey was conducted on all children selected to identify if they were brought up in bilingual families. The questionnaire embraces categories of native language, language/languages of parents, language spoken in the family, and language preferences. Hereafter, the degree of L2 knowledge is determined. The primary focus is set on bilingual children. They are asked about the language they want to learn and their motivation. Following the information received, the motivation assessment criteria are developed that reflect three levels of L2 learning motivation

- High. A bilingual child clearly expresses an opinion on the language that one wants to learn thoroughly, evaluates the significance of this language; shows a clear understanding of language policy in the family;
- Moderate. A bilingual child shows interest in a foreign language, considering it a mean of communication with peers of other ethnic groups but does not fully understand the language policy in the family environment;
- Low. A bilingual child is confused with communication difficulties in a bilingual family environment; the only motive for learning a foreign language is to overcome the barriers of communication between members of the bilingual family; the child does not see other prospects for applying a foreign language.

After analyzing participants' answers to the questionnaires, the whole set of features was found that allowed determining the level of motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children from bilingual families differ in their attitude towards the L2 learning process. Living in a bilingual environment, some of them feel uncertain about the role of language in their life and future professional activities. Such students may even lose interest in learning foreign languages. Children's motivation depends on the family environment and language policy, on the teaching strategy selected by teachers, and on the use of language learning opportunities. Good parent relationships with a child have a considerable effect on the level of his/her motivation.

The analytic phase provides for the analysis of teacher's education methods, along with parents' influence on a child's acquisition of the second language. Educators examine their L2 teaching toolkit and improve the quality of teaching through joint discussions, self-education, refresher courses, and internships. In turn, parents' analysis of methods for influencing children includes communication with teachers to identify imperfections in family language policy. Besides, parents can select strategies for educative influence on children to stimulate their interest in learning a foreign language.

The conceptual phase is aimed at developing a plan to strengthen motivation by teachers and parents. Within this phase strategies to influence students' motivation in L2 learning were discovered:

1) introduce foreign language as a crucial factor in successful career (conducting training course "Foreign language and professional activities"; establishing interdisciplinary connections on L2 lessons to inform on the use of knowledge in various human activities; inviting parents working as teachers or translators to give language lessons and demonstrate the importance of knowing a second language);

2) discover the possibilities of learning foreign language to improve communication skills and enable cross-cultural dialogue (involving songs, poetry, theater to reveal multiple aspects of a foreign language; organizing role-playing speaking games like "Walking the streets of London", "Visiting a supermarket/hospital in London", etc.);

3) demonstrate the possibilities of a foreign language for new knowledge acquisition (giving advanced tasks and involving into project activities, which require search and use of new information in a foreign language; engaging bilingual students in the development of didactic materials in a foreign language to make educational process more interesting; working in small groups or pairs (monolingual student - bilingual student); introducing online courses and trainings covering a broad range of topics);

4) create like-minded communities in social networks (involving bilingual students in virtual foreign language community creation; conducting online events with prizes, including competitive ones, for example, competition on the best foreign language use);

5) involve the best employers or officials to draw a parallel between language learning and successful self-realization (holding educational events with leading entrepreneurs and business people, preferably graduates of schools where the event is performed, associated with international activities; interviewing guests who succeeded due to a good command of a foreign language by bilingual students).

The proposed activities were carried out involving all the respondents from monolingual and bilingual families. Though, when analyzing the results, the sample with bilingual children was only drawn.

The next discussion phase includes consideration of motivating methods to increase students' interest in foreign languages. Teachers and parents can discuss their comments, suggestions, and recommendations. The implementation phase provides for the application of the program elements developed at the consolidating phase. At the evaluation phase, the results are assessed by teachers and parents, who decide whether children's motivation to learn a foreign language increased or not.

The corrective phase provides for the introduction of adjustments, the attraction of additional resources, and subjects of motivational impact on students. Adjustments are applicable when the level of motivation has not changed at all, or the changes are insignificant. In other cases, it is advisable to go to the final phase, where the level of motivation is measured and the number of students with high, moderate, and low levels of motivation is determined. Besides, at the final phase key motives, results, and recommendations are summarized (Figure 1).

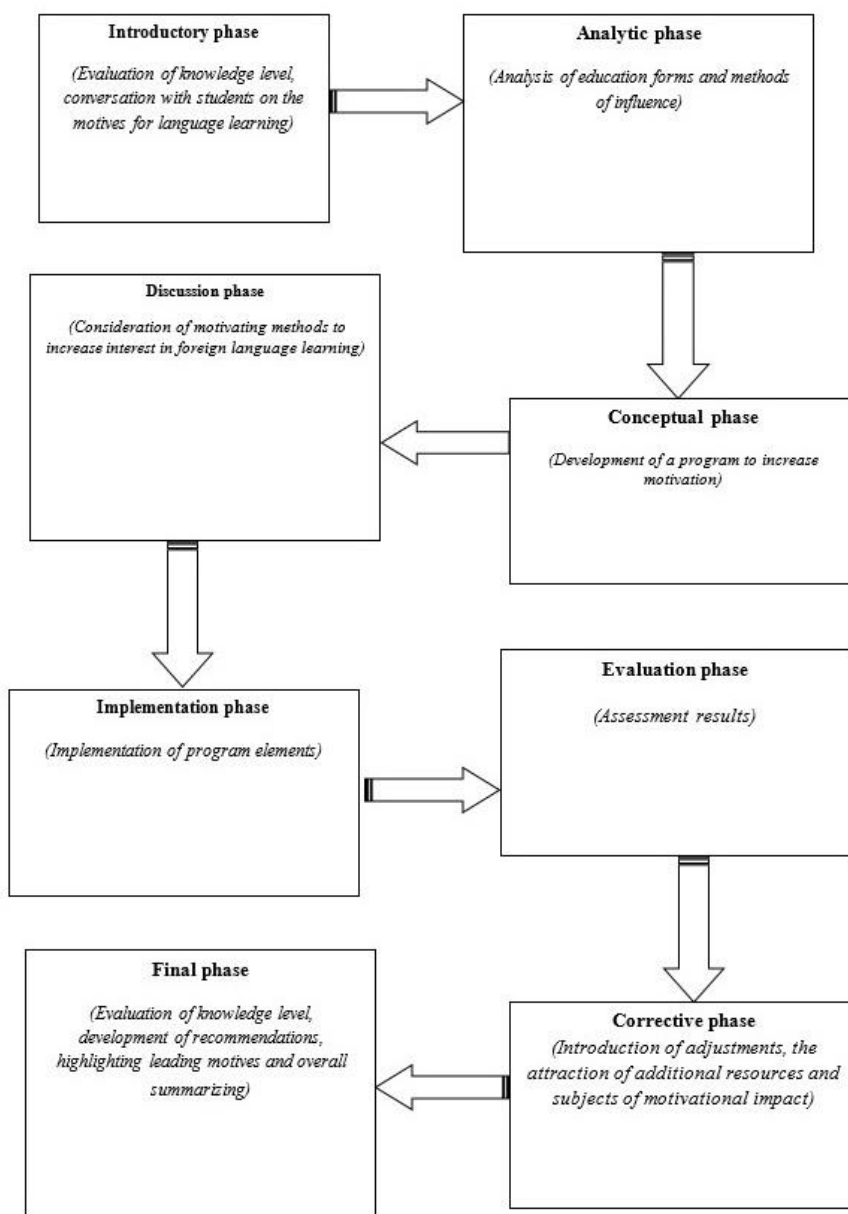


Figure 1. Motivation model

The current survey allowed identifying the principal purposes of learning a foreign language by bilingual children. They include achieving mutual understanding in family and between peers, academic success, and overcoming language barriers. What is notable, Moscow and Moscow Oblast students' key motives for mastering a foreign language differ from the ones of students from other educational institutions under consideration. Moscow and Moscow Oblast schoolers express the desire to achieve social recognition in formal and informal groups as well as success in future professional activities. It may be explained by the fact that big cities provide more opportunities for knowledge application, which positively affects students' motivation to achieve excellent results in language learning. Table 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the main motives determined by the respondents.

Table 1. The main motives to learn determined by the respondents

| Educational institution | Motives to learn L2 | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------|
| | wider access to information | mutual understanding | social recognition | future professional success | desire to master the parent's native language | positive example |
| School No. 239, Moscow | | | | | | |
| Lyceum No. 19, Korolev (Moscow Oblast) | | | | | | |
| Lyceum No. 39, Ozersk (Chelyabinsk Oblast) | | | | | | |
| Lyceum No. 6 "Perspective", Krasnoyarsk (Krasnoyarsk Krai) | | | | | | |
| Gymnasium No. 9, Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk Oblast) | | | | | | |

The results of studying motivation for L2 learning, presented in Table 1, demonstrate that the motivation is largely determined by the environment, teachers and parents. This can be confirmed, for example, by the fact that the two types of motivation ("wider access to information" and "mutual understanding") have been mainly chosen by students of only one lyceum. Two other types of motivation ("social recognition" and "future professional success") are also represented mainly in two educational institutions.

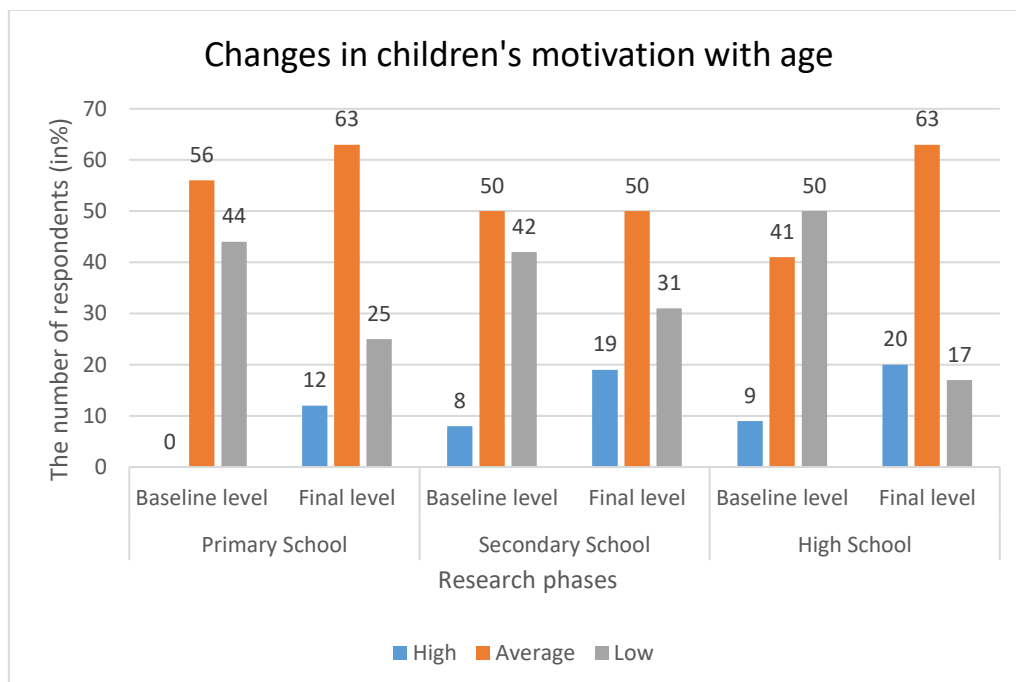


Figure 2. Changes in children's motivation with age

The presented diagram clarifies that students' motivation improved. As the surveyed age increases, the number of respondents with a low motivation level decreases due to the progress in knowledge and students' shift to the group with a high and medium level of a foreign language. As can be seen from Figure 1, in all cases, the percentage of students with an average level of motivation remains almost unchanged, but the number of students with a low level decreases and the number with a high level increases. This trend is especially noticeable for primary school (from 0% of students with high motivation to study to 12% - after graduation; the percentage of students with low motivation decreased from 44% to 25%, that is, almost twice).

The maximum manifestation of this trend can be observed for students of higher education: the percentage of students with high motivation increased from 9% to 20%, and the percentage of students with low motivation decreased from 50% to 17%. Such a spectacular change may be associated with a more conscious approach of older students to preparing for the future adult social and professional life.

Similar results on the connection between motivation and L2 knowledge of the bilingual people were achieved by many researchers. In particular, related studies were conducted in China among Hong Kong fifth-year students (Lin et al., 2012) and in Texas to measure the L2 competence of respondents (Makarova, 2013). However, a clear connection with motivation was not noticed. This study is different since it distinguishes the level of motivation for three levels of the school and tracks its change over a much longer period (one and a half year) than in other similar studies, where the study time does not exceed 9 months. In research performed among the Japanese children, the motivation level in primary and secondary schools was taken into account. In contrast with the results achieved in the current paper, Carreira (2006) noticed a decrease in motivation with an increase in the age of respondents. The reason for this discrepancy in results requires further more specialized studies. Among the studies that were held in private schools, the one conducted in Jambi (Indonesia) bilingual high school is of particular interest. There, the main emphasis was placed on differences in foreign language learning strategies for male and female representatives (Mukminin et al., 2018). In the present study, there are no gender differences, because during the study they turned out to be irrelevant. The reason for this may be a longer study time, during which small motivational features among men and women can be erased, but at the same time, they are revealed during shorter study periods.

A study in Russia and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, covered elementary school students and their family members. It was aimed to determine the respondents' attitude to a foreign language and demonstrate a lack of motivation through the incomplete understanding of foreign language importance (Ibrahim et al., 2019). In the Hungarian survey, Kormos and Csizér (2008) described the motivation for learning English as a foreign language in three distinct learner populations: secondary school students, university students, and adult language learners. For the secondary school students, it was an interest in English-language cultural products that affected their motivated behavior, whereas international posture as an important predictive variable was only present in the two older age groups. Such an approach correlates with the main motivational strategies offered in the current study – improving L2 motivation via cultural products and promoting L2 learning as a key to successful career. Pirchio et al., (2019) assessed the outcomes of a school intervention program aimed at improving interethnic relations among primary school children in Italy, through foreign language learning activities, based on the narrative format model.

The research in Korea, performed by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) examined the link between the teachers' motivational practice and their students' language learning desire. The current research also investigates the relationship between the motivational actions of the teachers' community and the level of motivation of students from bilingual families to learn a foreign language. Though, unlike Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), family support and the organization of appropriate language policy were also under consideration. At the same time, the current research presupposes a longer research period and is applied to three age groups of participants - from the primary school to the higher school.

Bernaus et al. (2004) investigated the effect of the cultural background of immigrant children aged 12 to 16 on affective variables in learning languages in Spain. Researchers established that the cultural background interacted with language studied to influence scores on the measures of parental encouragement and self-ratings of language proficiency. The study of bilingual families and their children's language learning from the point of view of studying emigrants is one of the most important tasks of further studies that will supplement this work.

The question of motivating preschoolers to learn languages was reviewed by few scholars. Shyrokova (2016) paid attention to marketing approaches to the bilingual education of preschool children, while Toumpaniari et al. (2015) confirmed the positive impact of physical activity and gestures as a means for teaching. Studies of preschoolers are especially important, based on the data of the current study, and show a significant change in motivation to learn L2 among the primary school students.

This study significantly differs from previous ones, since it is aimed at creating organizational and pedagogical conditions in educational institutions to show that mastering a foreign language helps to achieve career success, enables cross-cultural communication, and provides acquiring unique knowledge and experience. Thus, parents are recommended to follow an adequate language policy, and jointly with educators, develop basic tenets of motivation theory to motivate children better.

CONCLUSION

The problem of motivating children from bilingual families to learn a foreign language was studied in many countries of the world (USA, Japan, Italy, Spain, Hungary, South Korea). The educational system implemented various approaches to encourage motivation in students of a wide age range to study a foreign language, considering the peculiarities of the bilingual family environment from which they come. In the process of examination, optimal organizational and pedagogical conditions to increase the motivation of children from bilingual families were distinguished.

Motivational model was applied to children from primary, secondary, and high schools. This model is based on the joint efforts of educators and parents and provides for the accumulation of available experience in encouraging children to learn a foreign language.

The procedure for determining factors that encourage children to learn a foreign language is somewhat similar to that in other studies. However, its main difference lies in the integrated use of innovative pedagogical and methodological approaches and the appropriate work in the family to explain the importance of language education and its advantages. Moreover, parents should engage themselves in the process of mastering a language that is not native to them to emphasize their language position and increase children's motivation.

Parents' opinion is crucial for children motivation. If parents in cooperation with teachers manage to reveal the importance and benefits of foreign languages in the modern world, children's motivation will increase. Moreover, attracting leading employers and famous people who will show on their own example what opportunities a foreign language gives, will significantly increase the motivation to learn a foreign language among schoolchildren. The provided examination confirms that the motivation of children from the bilingual environment will improve under the positive influence of family members, teachers, and other authoritative people. The model proposed in the study can be implemented by any institution of general secondary education that offers secondary education services to bilingual students.

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