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SELF-CONCEPT OF A BILINGUAL PERSONALITY: METASYSTEM APPROACH

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Аннотация

Background. Despite the significant number of works devoted to the study of self-concept and bilingualism, the study of the self-concept of a bilingual personality within the framework of the metasystem approach has not yet been carried out.

The **purpose** of this study is to identify the differences in the content of the subsystem level of the self-concept of a bilingual personality with different levels of proficiency in the second language.

Materials and methods. The sample included productive and receptive bilinguals studying in the universities of Irkutsk (N = 260). The study of the subsystem level of the self-concept of a bilingual personality was carried out with the help of factor analysis (principal components analysis using Varimax rotation).

Results. The subsystem level of the self-concept system of a productive bilingual personality is represented by the following subsystems: communicative self, empathic self, adaptive self, cooperative self, value self, successful self, regulatory self. The subsystem level of the self-concept system of receptive bilinguals is also represented by seven subsystems, two of which essentially coincide with subsystems of productive bilinguals ("communicative self" and "value self"), but differ in content: communicative self, social self, value self, competitive self, acceptance of self and others, goal-oriented self, emotional resilience.

Keywords: metasystem approach; self-concept; bilingual personality; productive bilinguals; receptive bilinguals; structural-level organization; subsystems

Научная статья |
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Я-КОНЦЕПЦИЯ БИЛИНГВАЛЬНОЙ ЛИЧНОСТИ: МЕТАСИСТЕМНЫЙ ПОДХОД

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Abstract

Обоснование. Несмотря на значительное количество работ, посвященных изучению Я-концепции и билингвизма, изучение Я-концепции билингвальной личности в контексте метасистемного подхода до сих пор не проводилось.

Цель – выявление различий в содержании субсистемного уровня Я-концепции билингвальной личности с разными уровнями владения вторым языком.

Материалы и методы. Выборку составили продуктивные и рецептивные билингвы, обучающиеся в вузах г. Иркутска (N=260). Исследование субсистемного уровня Я-концепции билингвальной личности проводилось с помощью факторного анализа (анализ главных компонент при помощи Varimax вращения).

Результаты. Субсистемный уровень системы Я-концепции продуктивных билингвов представлен следующими субсистемами: коммуникативное Я, эмпатийное Я, адаптивное Я, кооперативное Я, ценностное Я, успешное Я, регулятивное Я. Субсистемный уровень системы Я-концепции рецептивных билингвов также представлен семью субсистемами, две из которых по сути совпадают с субсистемами продуктивных билингвов («коммуникативное Я» и «ценностное Я»), но отличаются по содержанию: коммуникативное Я, социальное Я,

ценностное Я, конкурентное Я, принятие себя и других, целеустрем-
ленное Я, эмоциональная устойчивость.

Introduction

The relevance of the study of the self-concept of a bilingual per-
sonality in the context of the metasystem approach is due to the mod-
ern challenges and crisis moments in the studies of this phenomenon
[4; 5]. Currently, there is a fragmentation in the study of the self-con-
cept of a bilingual personality, which makes it difficult to fully un-
derstand its nature and characteristics [6]. Research often focuses on
individual aspects, which leads to a lack of conceptual foundations
that are necessary for in-depth analysis and the construction of a uni-
fied theoretical model [13].

In addition, the number of empirical studies significantly exceeds
theoretical ones, creating a deficit in theoretical reflection and data
systematization [12; 14]. The variety of approaches and methods used
in these studies complicates the process of generalizing the results
obtained and makes it difficult to form a holistic idea of the self-con-
cept of a bilingual personality [3; 15]. The metasystem approach pro-
posed by A.V. Karpov is a promising tool for overcoming the crisis
state in the researches on this topic.

The purpose of this study is to identify the differences in the con-
tent of the subsystem level of the self-concept of a bilingual person-
ality with different levels of proficiency in the second language.

We assume that there is a significant difference in the content of
the subsystem level of the self-concept system of a bilingual person-
ality depending on the level of proficiency in the second language.

To achieve the purpose the following tasks were set:

1. To substantiate the possibility of using the metasystem approach as a methodological basis for studying the self-concept of a bilingual personality.

2. To conduct a factor analysis and determine the subsystems of the subsystem level of the self-concept of a bilingual personality with different levels of proficiency in the second language.

The metasystem approach makes it possible to consider the self-concept of a bilingual personality in the context of its interaction with other metasystems, such as personal, intercultural and communicative. It creates conditions for a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon, taking into account its complexity and multifaceted nature.

The metasystem approach facilitates the development of a structural-level organization of the self-concept of bilingual individuals, emphasizing that it not only covers various aspects but also functions as an integrated system as each level of the system contributes to the formation of the whole, thereby promoting a deeper understanding of the interactions among different components and their influence on the self-concept of bilinguals. Throughout its development the metasystem approach has established itself as a productive research tool in various fields of psychology. A.V. Karpov studied consciousness, activity, mental processes, and more from the perspective of the metasystem approach [7; 8]. The applications of the metasystem approach in the field of personality studies primarily include the works of A.V. Karpov and his co-authors, which investigate: the interconnection of learning ability and the organization of metacognitive processes and traits of personality [9], the structural-level analysis of language competence [10]. M.M. Kashapov and colleagues studied the components of metacognition and metacognitive properties of forecasting as determinants of supra-situational pedagogical thinking [11].

The main ideas of the metasystem approach are: 1) the principle of metasystem; 2) the existence of systems with an embedded metasystem level; 3) the principle of invariant hierarchical structure of systems with an embedded metasystem level [7; 8].

The self-concept system of a bilingual personality is a system with an embedded metasystem level. Moreover, it has a hierarchical structure consisting of metasystem, system, subsystem, component and element levels. The metasystem level of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality encompasses such metasystems as personal, intercultural and communicative [1; 2]. The substantive and structural aspects of this system are most fully manifested at the subsystem level of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality.

Materials and methods

The study involved 260 respondents, students from universities of Irkutsk: 1) productive bilinguals (the level of proficiency in the second language is close to the level of a native speaker, 130 people); 2) receptive bilinguals (the level of proficiency in the second language is higher than basic, 130 people). The following methods were used to achieve the objectives of the study: the Value Orientations questionnaire by S. Schwartz, the Tolerance Index Questionnaire by G.U. Soldatova, O.A. Kravtsova, the Questionnaire "Measuring communicative and social competence" by V.N. Kunitsyna (COSCOM), the Twenty Statements Test by M. Kuhn, T. McPartland (modified by T.V. Rumyantseva), the Self-attitude Questionnaire by V.V. Stolin and S.R. Panteleev, the Diagnostics of Interpersonal Relations by T. Leary (modified by L.N. Sobchik), the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire by R. Cattell (Form C). The study of the subsystem level of the self-concept of a bilingual personality was carried out with the help of factor analysis (principal components analysis using Varimax rotation).

Research results and discussion

The conducted factor analysis of the obtained research data allowed us to identify seven subsystems of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality. Table 1 presents the results of the study of the content of the subsystem level of the self-concept system of bilinguals with different levels of proficiency in the second language.

Table 1.

Subsystems of the self-concept of productive and receptive bilinguals

Subsystems		Subsystems	
Productive bilinguals (71.53% of the variance)		Receptive bilinguals (65.38% of the variance)	
1. Communicative Self (16.23%)		**1. Communicative Self (14.45%)**	
communicative competence	,894	communicative-personal potential	,882
operational-social competence	,861	communicative competence	,851
confidence	,825	confidence	-,715
sociability	,781	physical self	,675
tolerance as a personality trait	,759	self-accusation	-,664
restraint-expressivity	,620	verbal competence	-,535
timidity-courage	,556	intelligence	,528
verbal competence	,534	conservatism-radicalism	,502
communicative-personal potential	,483		
self-management	,441		
2. Empathic Self (14.11%)		**2. Social Self (11.86%)**	
altruistic	,841	social self	,889
selfish	-,758	stability of human relations	,652
communicative self	,734	social tolerance	,581
attitude of others	-,649	practicality-dreaminess	,523
self-accusation	-,639	perspective self	-,512
perspective self	-,553	self-presentation skills	-,455
kindness	,532		
self-interest	,529		
ethnic tolerance	,414		
3. Adaptive Self (10.03%)		**3. Value Self (9.67%)**	
diplomatic	,765	universalism	,874
high normativity of behavior	,720	safety	,642
self-presentation skills	,683	moral guidelines	,591
high self-control	,575	kindness	,455
universalism	,522	hedonism	,426
achievements	,419		
reflexive self	-,412		
self-respect	-,407		
4. Cooperative Self (9.12%)		**4. Competitive Self (9.04%)**	
dependent	,669	selfish	,834
authoritarian	-,621	altruistic	-,652
aggressive	-,606	self-interest	,473
friendliness	,593	practicality-dreaminess	-,444
self-acceptance	,468	attitude of others	,403
moral guidelines	-,451		
hardness-sensitivity	-,435		
emotional stability	-,408		
5. Value Self (8.56%)		**5. Acceptance of Self and Others (8.23%)**	
conformity	,760	ethnic tolerance	,879
traditions	,634	self-acceptance	,827
universalism	,602	self-management	,769
stimulation	,530	socio-psychological competence	,518
power	,431		

6. Successful Self (7.34%)		6. Goal-Oriented Self (6.12%)	
achievements	,843	authoritarian	,745
perspective self	,506	courage	-,541
safety	-,513	self-dependence	,532
social tolerance	,429		
7. Regulatory Self (6.14%)		7. Emotional Resilience (6.01%)	
self-management	,643	emotional stability	,652
self-dependence	,630	self-acceptance	,467
calmness-anxiety	-,470	tension	,424

The study of the subsystem level of the self-concept system of productive bilinguals revealed the presence of seven subsystems (Table 1), each occupying a specific place within the self-concept system of a bilingual person. The first subsystem Communicative Self is the most significant in terms of contribution to the overall dispersion in the group of productive bilinguals. This subsystem is a complex structure that plays a key role in the successful interaction of a bilingual personality in a multilingual environment and includes such components as communicative competence, operational social competence, confidence, sociability, tolerance, verbal competence, communicative-personal potential, self-management, emotional significance of social contacts and readiness for risk and cooperation.

In the next subsystem, Empathic Self, caring for others is a key aspect that helps to create deep and meaningful social connections. Kindness helps to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance, which not only enriches social interactions but also enhances the sense of belonging to a group, which is important for the formation of the self-concept. Self-interest allows receptive bilinguals to maintain a balance between caring for others and satisfying their own needs, and ethnic tolerance helps to accept differences. At the negative pole of the subsystem there are such variables as selfishness, attitude of others, self-accusation and perspective self, which may indicate deep problems in the development of a positive self-concept of receptive bilingual personality.

The third subsystem Adaptive Self at the positive pole includes such characteristics as diplomacy, high normativity of behavior, self-presentation skills, and high self-control, which allow a bilingual person to effectively interact with representatives of different cultures and adapt

to changing environmental conditions. These qualities contribute to the development of universalism, which, in turn, enriches social experience and contributes to the achievement of significant results in interpersonal relationships and professional activities. However, at the negative pole of Adaptive Self there is lack of emotional self attitude and self-respect, which can lead to internal conflict and decrease in self-confidence.

The fourth subsystem, Cooperative Self, includes variables that determine social interaction and interpersonal relationships of productive bilinguals. At the positive pole this subsystem is characterized by conformity, friendliness, self-acceptance, which contribute to the creation of harmonious relationships with others and strengthening the social support. At the same time, at the negative pole of Cooperative Self such aspects as emotional stability, authoritarianism, aggressiveness, and moral attitudes are observed. The subsystem Cooperative Self provides a balance between individual needs and social expectations, but the absence of moral principles can negatively affect the overall self-concept of a productive bilingual, creating additional barriers to self-regulation, social adaptation and the formation of a stable identity, which emphasizes the importance of developing clear personal values and moral guidelines.

The next subsystem Value Self reflects the value system of a productive bilingual personality, which determines his behavior and decision-making in the context of multilingualism and multiculturalism, combining such key values for bilinguals as conformity, respect for traditions, universalism, stimulation, and power.

The sixth subsystem Successful Self encompasses achievements that the bilingual individual perceives as significant, and also includes the idea of perspective self. Successful Self is characterized by a lack of emphasis on the value of safety, which allows productive bilinguals to explore new cultural horizons and opportunities for self-expression more freely. Social tolerance promotes openness and willingness to interact with representatives of different cultures.

The seventh subsystem Regulatory Self focuses on the process of self-regulation that contributes to the formation of a stable self-concept of the bilingual personality. This subsystem includes variables such as

self-management and self-dependence, which play an important role in managing the internal states and emotions of the individual, and anxiety. A high level of anxiety can negatively affect bilingual's ability to self-regulate, reducing his confidence and making decision-making more difficult.

Figure 1 shows the "weight" of the identified subsystems of the subsystem level of the self-concept system of productive bilinguals.
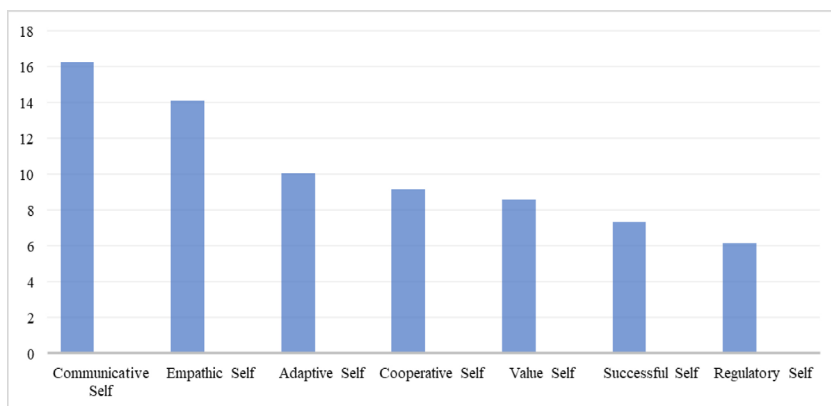

Fig. 1. "Weight" of subsystems of the self-concept system of productive bilinguals

Based on the analysis of the data presented in Figure 1, we can identify three groups of subsystems of the self-concept of productive bilinguals. The first group, which occupies the central place, includes Communicative Self and Empathic Self subsystems. These subsystems emphasize the importance of interpersonal interaction and emotional sensitivity for productive bilinguals. The second group of subsystems, including Adaptive Self, Cooperative Self, and Value Self, refers to the aspects of the self-concept associated with socio-cultural adaptation and interaction. These subsystems focus on the individual's ability to effectively adapt to various social and cultural conditions, cooperate and interact with others, as well as on the internal values and beliefs that guide their behavior and decision-making. The third group of subsystems includes Successful Self and Regulatory Self. It refers to the aspects of the self-concept related to personal effectiveness and self-control.

The subsystem level of the self-concept system of receptive bilinguals is also represented by seven subsystems (table 1), two of which coincide in essence with the subsystems of the self-concept of productive bilinguals ("Communicative Self" and "Value Self"), but they differ in their content.

The first subsystem Communicative Self includes both positive and negative components. Communicative-personal potential and competence contribute to the confidence in the intercultural communication, however, at the initial stage of language learning, elements of uncertainty and insufficient verbal competence may appear, which can sometimes lead to doubts about one's own abilities. At the same time, the absence of self-accusation allows receptive bilinguals to perceive their mistakes and failures more constructively, which contributes to the development and improvement of skills. Physical Self and high level of general culture serve as additional resources supporting the individual in overcoming the communication barriers. Conservatism can sometimes limit personal development.

The second subsystem Social Self reflects the interaction of receptive bilinguals with the surrounding social environment. At the positive pole there are such components as social self, stability of human relationships, social tolerance, and practicality, which contribute to the formation of a stable self-identity and confidence in the intercultural communication. At the negative pole of this subsystem there are such aspects as perspective self and self-presentation skills, which can limit personal growth and interfere with effective interaction with others.

The third subsystem Value Self includes variables such as universalism, safety, moral guidelines, kindness, and hedonism. Universalism promotes openness and tolerance. Safety provides emotional stability and confidence, allowing receptive bilinguals to overcome language barriers and establish social connections. Moral guidelines and kindness form the ethical basis of interaction, contributing to the creation of trusting relationships. Hedonism, as a pursuit of pleasure and self-expression, can serve as motivation to learn language and actively participate in new social contexts. These values form the basis of the receptive bilingual's self-concept.

On the positive pole the subsystem Competitive Self is characterized by the desire for competition and self-affirmation, which can contribute to the development of self-confidence and motivation to learn second language. Being interested in others can contribute to the formation of social bonds and strengthen the intercultural communication. However, at the negative pole of the subsystem we can see selfish and impractical approach to communication, when personal ambitions and daydreaming make it difficult to establish real contacts and interactions. This can lead to a decrease in the altruistic motivation that is necessary for the successful integration into a new language environment.

The fifth subsystem Acceptance of Self and Others includes ethnic tolerance, self-acceptance, self-management, and socio-psychological competence. This subsystem emphasizes the importance of inner harmony and social adaptability both for the formation of a positive self-concept of receptive bilinguals, and for successful interaction in diverse cultural environment.

The sixth subsystem Goal-Oriented Self includes such characteristics as authoritarianism and self-dependence at the positive pole, as well as courage at the negative pole. This subsystem helps to strengthen the self-concept of a receptive bilingual. However, at the negative pole, emotional restraint and caution can limit opportunities for active communication and, therefore, hinder the full development of the self-concept.

The seventh subsystem Emotional Resilience includes such components as emotional stability, self-acceptance, and tension. Emotional stability allows receptive bilinguals to effectively cope with the emotional challenges that arise in the process of learning a new language and interacting with native speakers. Self-acceptance promotes the development of a positive attitude toward one's own shortcomings and mistakes, which is a necessary condition for reducing the anxiety and stress associated with the language barrier. Tension can manifest itself as a fear of failure and social evaluation, which complicates the active participation in the intercultural communication and slows down the process of language acquisition.

Figure 2 shows the "weight" of the identified subsystems of the subsystem level of the self-concept system of receptive bilinguals.
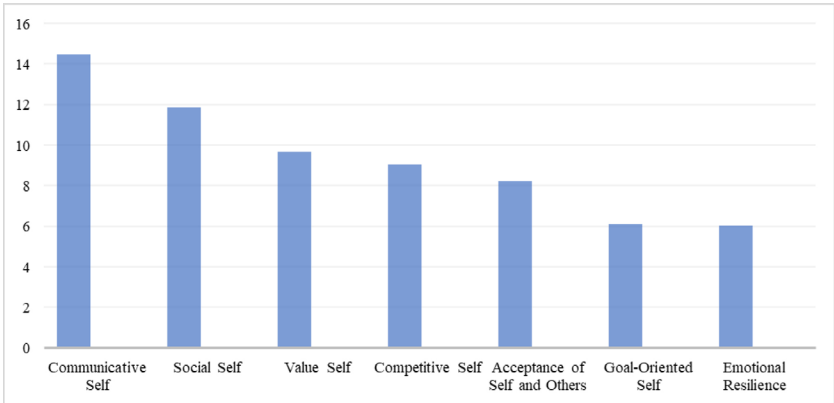

Fig. 2. "Weight" of subsystems of the self-concept system of receptive bilinguals

Analyzing the data presented in Figure 2, three groups of subsystems of the self-concept of receptive bilinguals can be identified. The first group of subsystems includes Communicative Self and Social Self. It emphasizes the importance of effective interaction, successful socialization, and the establishment of interpersonal connections for the self-concept of receptive bilinguals. The second group of subsystems includes Value Self, Competitive Self, and Acceptance of Self and Others. These subsystems focus on internal beliefs and principles, the pursuit of achievements, as well as not only self-acceptance but also a tolerant and open attitude towards others. This group of subsystems fosters harmonious relationships and personal development. The subsystems in the third group, such as Goal-Oriented Self and Emotional Resilience, relate to aspects of personal effectiveness and psychological stability. They highlight the ability of receptive bilinguals to set and achieve goals, as well as the capacity to cope with difficulties and stress.

Conclusion

1. The obtained data provide insights into the characteristics of the self-concept of bilingual individuals with varying levels of proficiency in

the second language. Using the metasystem approach as a methodological basis for studying the self-concept of a bilingual personality allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between language proficiency and self-perception.

2. The self-concept system of a bilingual personality is a system with an embedded metasystem level. Moreover, it has a hierarchical structure consisting of metasystem, system, subsystem, component, and element levels. The metasystem level of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality encompasses such metasystems as personal, intercultural, and communicative. The system level shows the integrity and objectivity of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality. The subsystem level of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality consists of seven subsystems responsible for the manifestations of the overall functionality of the bilingual personality's self-concept system, which includes an embedded meta-level. Each subsystem contains specific components that, when combined, ensure qualitative and functional homogeneity. The subsystem level of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality is quite dynamic and can be reorganized depending on the proficiency level in the second language. The component level of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality consists of the scales of the methodologies used in the study. The same component can be included in various subsystems, within which it acquires qualitatively new properties. Under certain conditions, components of the system can transform into new subsystems, as they have their own structure and internal hierarchy. The elemental level consists of questions and statements from the research methodologies. Elements lose the qualitative definiteness of the whole but they can become components. They are also characterized by "dual belonging", that means they can simultaneously be elements of the self-concept system of a bilingual personality and elements of the metasystems that the self-concept system of a bilingual personality is included.

3. This hierarchical framework highlights how bilingual individuals navigate their identities across different linguistic and cultural contexts, reflecting the dynamic nature of their self-concept. The interplay between these metasystems suggests that bilinguals may experience a multifac-

eted identity that is shaped by their language use, cultural experiences, and social interactions. Understanding these nuances can inform educational practices, therapeutic approaches, and intercultural communication strategies, ultimately fostering a more inclusive environment for bilingual individuals.

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