

**FaR 2021****International Forum “Freedom and responsibility in pivotal times”****FORMATION OF A METALINGUISTIC GRAMMATICAL SKILL  
IN TEACHING A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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**Abstract**

The introduction of a second foreign language into the educational space of Russian schools and universities puts teachers in front of the need to find ways and methods of teaching several foreign languages in conditions of limited academic time in order to achieve significant practical, general educational and developmental results. In the process of mastering several languages, metalinguistic consciousness can be formed as the ability to abstract logical operations with several language systems. This article considers the possibility of forming a metalinguistic grammatical skill among students, which contributes to a faster and more effective understanding and application of new language material. The article reveals the fundamental concepts related to the topic: "metalinguistic grammatical skill", "metalinguism", argues the importance of the formation of metalinguistic grammatical skill, studies the difficulties associated with this. The article discusses the principles on which the process of forming a metalinguistic grammatical skill in students is based, and the stages of its formation are determined. In addition to the above goals, the article is intended to motivate teachers to integrate German and English, to rely on the previously studied phenomena of contacting languages, thereby revealing the potential of schoolchildren for metalingualism. Thus, the article reveals the idea of activating the resources of metalinguistic training in order to achieve a set of educational results in conditions of limited time and means of teaching several languages, metalinguistic training.

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*Keywords:* English, first foreign language, German, second foreign language, metalingualism, metalinguistic grammatical skill



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## 1. Introduction

Teaching a second foreign language in schools and universities in Russia has never been as widespread as it is now, which is directly related to the introduction of this subject as mandatory from the 2019/2020 academic year (Federal State Educational Standard of Basic General Education..., 2010). The decision on the need to study two foreign languages was made due to the growing desire in society for the multicultural and multilingual development of the younger generation (Lytaeva et al., 2018). It should be noted that the new millennium is proclaimed by UNESCO as the era of multilingual personalities and polyglots.

Here it is worth highlighting the term – multilingualism – according to the dictionary of linguistic terms, to the same extent, knowledge of several languages, multilingualism (Zakharenko et al., 2008). Polylingualism unites the world and Russian language policy, as well as the educational policy of the Russian Federation and the European Union. The language policy is aimed at integrating the Russian Federation into the world community, communication within which is carried out in the dominant languages (Guz, 2017).

Compulsory study of a second foreign language in schools of the Russian Federation has become widespread relatively recently. That is why there is an increasing need to study the influence of the first foreign language on the second language being studied, in particular, to study the features of teaching German as a second foreign language, taking into account the linguistic patterns of the languages in contact (Acosta, 2011). It is the mastery of the German language on the basis of English that is one of the most successful linguistic combinations, since both languages belong to the same – Germanic – group of languages. Thus, students develop the ability to analyze the linguistic phenomena of a particular language group more deeply, which is more effective for them than mastering a second foreign language, for which the first foreign language is not a support (Glumova & Sukhareva, 2020).

## 2. Problem Statement

In the domestic methodology of teaching foreign languages, the effective aspect of multilingual and multicultural teaching has not been sufficiently studied. Achievements in mastering a second foreign language are reduced to a greater extent to formal practical results.

The methodology of teaching a specific foreign language as a second foreign language on the basis of a specific foreign language as the first in the Russian methodology is not yet sufficiently developed. The features of teaching a second foreign language in schools were considered in the works of I. L. Bim, N. D. Galskova, V. V. Safonova, N. V. Baryshnikov. Some aspects of teaching a second foreign language have been studied, but not detailed, and, accordingly, not implemented in the practice of teaching.

## 3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What is the nature of a metalinguistic grammatical skill?
- 3.2. How is a metalinguistic grammatical skill formed?

3.3. What principles underlie the formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill?

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the article is to study the problems associated with the formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill and to determine the principles underlying this process.

## 5. Research Methods

The provisions presented in the article are based on the analysis of scientific and methodological sources devoted to the issue of teaching a second foreign language; the study of existing federal state educational standards; scientific observation of the educational process at school and university. It is also based on generalization of general and personal pedagogical experience of teaching a second foreign language; the use of comparative linguistic analysis and the method of logical conclusions.

## 6. Findings

In the process of mastering two foreign languages, students form a so-called metalinguistic consciousness. This special form of human language consciousness distinguishes a plurilingual person from a monolingual one and manifests itself as the ability to abstract logical operations with several language systems (comparison, generalization, interpretation, etc.). We are also talking about entering the "third culture" through the study of two foreign languages, which means the mixing of socio-cultural knowledge. The complexity of the concept of "metalingualism" lies in the fact that its formation is more characteristic of natural bilinguals, while learning a second foreign language at school is fraught with the danger of negative transference – interference of the first foreign language (Efimova, 2017; Marei et al., 2019). However, there is also a positive transfer, but metalinguistic consciousness remains the ideal of mastering a second foreign language and subsequent ones.

Grammar is often the most difficult, but at the same time the most important element when learning German as a second foreign language (Miroshnichenko, 2008). Mastering the language system should be based on understanding grammatical units; there is no place for memorization or thoughtless performance of the same type of exercises. Grammatical skills include morphological, syntactic, graphic, spelling skills. The main qualities of a grammatical skill are automatism, error-free execution, consciousness and a low level of tension in performing an action.

Our research on the topic under study allowed us to determine the metalinguistic grammatical skill as an automated component of consciously performed speech activity that ensures the correct (error-free) use of grammatical forms of contacting languages. The metalinguistic grammatical skill is formed and improved in the process of mastering two foreign languages on the basis of comparison, comparison, analysis of grammatical phenomena of contacting foreign languages.

Next, we will move on to the conclusions made on the basis of the study of the goals, content and terms associated with the formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill. So, the goals of teaching a second language in general education institutions are generally identical to the goals of teaching a first foreign language. But the «Horizonte», which is the current basic educational and methodological complex for

teaching German as a second foreign language in most schools, is designed, among other things, to promote the formation of students' relationships between the languages being studied (Averin et al., 2012). This, however, is not the main purpose of teaching a foreign language. It is also worth noting that the learning goals are directly related to the development of students' communicative and linguistic competence.

In turn, the «Horizonte» contributes to the realization of the main goal: the development of a linguistic repertoire where there is a place for all linguistic skills. In addition, the authors argue that the perfect (at the level of native speakers) mastery of one or more languages separately from each other is not the goal. This is justified by the fact that the concept of multilingualism has recently become a defining one in the approach of the Council of Europe to the problem of learning foreign languages.

The complexity of teaching a second foreign language is explained by the specifics of artificial triglossia, which puts students in front of the need to solve many tasks simultaneously (Olimova & Adambayeva, 2016). Cognitive and contrastive approaches in teaching a second foreign language should contribute to the successful overcoming of difficulties.

The formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill occurs during the performance of a series of exercises, including the comparison and analysis of lexical units and grammatical phenomena of the studied languages. The combination of the linguistic experience available to students, acquired by them during the study of the first foreign language, and the desire to master new foreign language knowledge, skills and abilities allows us to implement one of the leading principles in teaching a second foreign language – ***the principle of intensification***.

This principle implies the use of such techniques and forms of work that would allow students to successfully master the grammar of a second foreign language in conditions of a shortage of educational time. Another fundamental principle in the formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill is ***the principle of taking into account artificial subortinative trilinguism***, which implies the construction of teaching a second foreign language on the basis of the first, and the study of the first, in turn, on the basis of the native language (Baryshnikov, 2003). ***The principle of contrastivity*** of mastering grammatical material implies the analysis and comparison of grammatical structures of the studied languages for equivalence/lacunarity at all stages of mastering the material: perception, comprehension, memorization, consolidation and application.

When students start learning a second foreign language, they have the ability to reflect that formed by the first foreign language, so it is easier for them to restore or independently establish connections between the phenomena of the studied languages. The contrastive analysis of grammatical phenomena creates conditions for transference, which favourably affects the assimilation of a second foreign language, and simultaneously levels or reduces the risk of interlanguage interference (Ignatova, 2015; Nikiforova, 2016). The principle of linguistic and cultural comparison is also of great importance in the formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill, since the presence or absence of individual grammatical phenomena in the compared languages is often due to their national and cultural specifics (Ovsyannikov, 2009). For example, in English there is no form of polite address (*germ.* «Sie», *russ.* «Вы») and the related forms of the imperative; the grammatical gender of English nouns, unlike German and Russian, is based on a natural gender attribute, etc.

The implementation of the above principles creates conditions for linguistic abstraction – a supra-linguistic level of perception that allows us to consider the studied languages not only as a means of communication, but also as a subject of linguistic research, and ultimately contributes to the effective formation of metalinguistic grammatical skill.

The formation of a metalinguistic skill, like any other, is carried out in stages. The first stage- introductory and preparatory, where the introduction of new language material takes place-involves the use of step-by-step instructions and memos that facilitate the perception and understanding of interlanguage similarities and differences and stimulate the cognitive activity of students. Visual supports, which are previously studied English grammatical structures, are of great importance at this stage. Thus, the similarity in the use of the indefinite and definite articles in English and German becomes obvious thanks to the following Table 1:

**Table 1.** The similarity in the use of the indefinite and definite articles in English and German

<i>I have <b>an</b> apple.</i>	<i>Ich habe <b>einen</b> Apfel.</i>
<i><b>The</b> apple is tasty.</i>	<i><b>Der</b> Apfel ist schmackhaft.</i>

At the stereotyping-situational stage, the metalinguistic skill is automated during the execution of a series of language and conditional speech exercises by students. In this case, the critical understanding of the contacting language systems ensures the metalinguistic nature of the exercises. A special role is played by translation, substitution and transformation, which form such qualities of the skill as stability and stability.

At the varying-situational stage, conditions are created for the use of worked-out grammatical constructions in communicative situations to form the flexibility of the metalinguistic skill. At this stage, we can also talk about the interaction of three linguistic systems – the native, first and second foreign languages. This is because the expression of one's own thoughts in external speech in a foreign language is preceded by their formulation in internal speech on the basis of a system of values, worldview, cultural identity of the student, formed by means of the native language and native culture. This means that the level of proficiency in the native language will directly affect the mastery of foreign languages.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that the use of special methods, techniques, exercises aimed at comparing, comparing, analysing at least three contacting language systems activates the development of metalinguistic consciousness of students. This result allows us to speak about the formation of such mental processes as thinking, attention, memory, analysis, motivation in students, which is directly correlated with the goal of forming and developing a multicultural language personality as a strategic result of foreign language education.

The formation of a metalinguistic grammatical skill contributes to the achievement of practical, general educational, developmental and personal results as complex components of the communicative competence of a multicultural language personality.

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