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Interrelationship of Bilingual Education and Social-Communication System in Javakheti

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the document is to review the social-communication system in Javakheti in the context of bilingual education. The article discusses issues of bilingualism at the level of ethnic, social and age groups. It shows the tendencies observed in Javakheti's linguistic situation, which is crucial for the bilingual education.

Bilingualism is a linguistic phenomenon common for Javakheti. We have witnessed the process of changing spheres of using languages composing Javakheti linguistic situation. Changes are observed in the factors, which cause bilingualism. These changes have direct effect on the function of each language. The biggest factor is education. Bilingual education has potential for becoming significant resource. Bilingual education and reforming of local non-Georgian schools is an important instrument for promoting integration. For selecting the most appropriate model of bilingual education it is needed to study region's socio-economic system and understand of its characteristics.

Recent studies by the linguists have enabled them theoretically to analyze

diversity of various national languages. They concluded that these languages are the combination of differentiated forms, which at the same time are defined as existential forms, or language variations. In the scientific literature, the same variety of the language is defined differently: some authors define them as existential forms, or language existence forms, while others define these languages as variations, options, or sub-systems and sub-languages. All these definitions are valid and none of them can be superior to others. We will use the synonyms.

At the contemporary stage of development, those components which are part of ethnic languages have their own literature forms, territorial dialects, social slang, argo. We should also remember that the

literature language itself, which is listed as one of the varieties, is diverse. It has various forms: literature, business, and scientific, religious forms, etc. If we observe not the languages, but their varieties in Javakheti, we will conclude that while composing one ethnic language, these varieties or sub-systems also are distributed into various functional spheres. They serve various spheres of relationships and quite often coexist within the same field. Similar to the elements of any system, these components of the ethnic language have their own features, as well as have organization patterns.

Distribution of the language into sub-systems is also called “the state of the language”. According to G. Stepanov, components, which create the state of the language, are ordered in three groups. The first is functional state, which includes official-business, scientific, literature and others forms. The second one is the existential forms, i.e. dialects, popular language, national language, etc. The third group consists of implementation forms – verbal and writing (Stepanov, 1976 b:30).

Social-communication system is the combination of codes and sub-codes which are used in the language make functional addition to each other. Functional addition means that each code or sub-code performs its own function without cross-cutting those of other codes and sub-codes. By doing so they complement each other.

It can be summarized that functional interrelationship of the components of Javakheti social-communicational system create Javakheri linguistic situation at different stages of the existence of the language combination. Prior to describing Javakheti linguistic situation, I will briefly address the issue of understanding concept “linguistic situation”.

Despite certain diversity, scientists are unanimous in the aspects of the definition of the concept “linguistic situation”. Linguistic situation is one of the major concepts of socio-linguistics. Many scientists understand the linguistic situation as combination of languages involved in the communication process with certain administrative-territorial community.

According to Barnett, linguistic situation is operation of various forms of the ethnic language in given national community (Barnett, 1988:188).

Shveitser defines linguistic situation as a model of social-functional distribution and hierarchy of social-communication systems and sub-systems, which coexist and interact in the context of specific political-administrative entity and cultural space in certain period (Shveitser, 1977 d: 133-134; also Nikolski 1976b: 79-80).

According to Tumaniani, it is possible to simplify this statement to certain extent. Linguistic situation means combination of the existential forms of one or several

languages, which fully serves certain society in the framework of such administrative-political entity, as a state and are tightly linked to each other through self-complementary function (Tumaniani, 1981d: 74).

To put in other words, Tumaniani thinks that components of the linguistic situation are bilingualism and Diglosia. This means that in most cases people use several linguistic units, which are functionally linked to each other.

According to T. Sikharulidze, it implies co-functioning and relationship of the existing languages and hindered and non-hindered language units (Sikharulidze 2008:84).

We believe that the most accurate definition comes from the American scientist Charles Ferguson: The language situation refers to a general configuration of the language use in a certain time and a certain place. It consists of such data as which and how many languages are used in certain territory, how many persons speak this language, in what context they speak this language, what are the attitudes of the community to these languages (Ferguson, 1959b: 157).

The definitions show that language situation is quite complex phenomenon. It implies unity of the forms and styles of the same language, as well as entity of various languages in certain territorial, social, geographic, administrative-political context. "Language situation" implies large language

unities – countries, republics, regions and large districts.

Social-communication system in Javakheti mainly consists of three components – Georgian, Armenian and Russian languages (one can also find form of Turkish language, as well as "Gipsy language").

There are Georgian, Armenian and Russian languages in Javakheti. Language of instruction in higher education institutions are Georgian and Armenian. The latter is a priority language (the only Georgian language institution is a college, which was created at Javakheti branch of Tbilisi State University). With regard to everyday communication language – it depends on the skills, target person and specific communication context.

Components of social-communication system are mainly stable; however, they can change over time. Changes in the political system of the country (which is the case in Georgia) – changes in the state structure, economic changes, social and national priorities influence the social-economic system, its components and the functions of each.

Such changes have happened in other countries as well, particularly in post-soviet countries. In the Ukraine the main components of social-communication system are Ukrainian and Russian languages (there are other languages as well, such as Belorussian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Check

and others). These two languages are more or less equal components.

During the Soviet Union, there were both Ukrainian and Russian schools in the Ukraine. Both languages were used in higher education (mostly Russian was used in natural and technical Sciences). In everyday life people could decide themselves which language to use. Starting from 1990 the status and use of Russian language in the Ukraine becomes limited and replaced by the Ukrainian language in the secondary and higher education, science and culture (Direct 2001G: 17).

In Javakheti Georgian language was equalized to other languages not through limiting the functions of the Georgian language, but rather through assigning equal functions to Georgian and Russian languages. This put Georgian in competition to the Russian language (not other languages). This approach was always open and easily visible. This resulted into the creation of certain hierarchy in Javakheti language situation.

Starting from 1990 the function of Russian language in Javakheti changed. Spheres of using Russian language decreased (particularly on the level of certain language), or allowed other languages to enter its sphere, i.e. those spheres where only they were used in the past. Russian language still remains as a strong component and continues to exist with other languages. These changes are related to the general processes in Georgia. These

changes are still happening and gradually affect the language situation in Javakheti, while social-economic situation remains the same.

Language Community. Language community is a group of individuals, which have common social, economic, political and cultural links. In their everyday life, they contact to each other, as well as to social institutions in one or more languages).

The size of the language community may differ in size – it may include the whole population of the country, as well as small social groups as a family, sports team, etc.). The main criteria always are belonging to the social community and regular communications (Gamkrelidze ...2003:427).

In many language communities, such as factory staff, scientific-research institute, secondary school, people tend to communicate in one language. However, in some language communities, such as a family, one or more languages are used during the communication.

In Javakheti language diversity is unevenly distributed. It is more visible in the district centers (cities of Akhaltsikhe and Ninotsminda) and the villages close to these centers with mixed ethnic representation (villages of Khospio, Diliska). Percentage of bilingual individuals is very high. More uniformity is observed in the villages, which are close to the border.

In other words, language uniformity is mainly characterized by monolingualism, whereas language diversity is more characterized by bilingualism. Several cases shall be considered in terms of Georgian-Russian and Armenian-Russian bilingualism:

(a) At the level of ethnic groups (ethnically Georgian, Armenian and Russian language communities). In this case we consider ethnically homogenous administrative-territorial entities, such as population of one village;

(b) At the level of social groups (public servants, students, businessmen, employees of agriculture, pensioners). Focus of our study was both ethnically homogenous, as well as heterogeneous communities;

(c) At the level of age, groups (school children, middle age and elderly groups).

All these groups are separately reviewed below:

(a) Ethnic groups: Bilingual language communities which differ by ethnic criteria mainly reside in the villages of Ninotsminda

and Akahlkalaki districts. Bilingualism is also observed in so called mixed villages where Armenian, Georgian and Russian ethnicities live together. The same situation is observed in those villages as well which is only Georgian or Armenian speaking, but at the same time are neighboring each other.

We would like to emphasize bilingual language community of Georgian (Georgian-Armenian Bilingualism), bilingual language community of ethnically Armenians (Armenian-Georgian and Armenian-Russian bilingualism).

Ethnically homogenous bilingual communities are the biggest in size. They are mainly involved in agriculture (in this respect various language communities are the same). When observing such language communities we made focus on several aspects. The first is the order by which the languages are acquired by the members of each language community.

Language order	Georgian Ethnic Group	Armenian Ethnic Group	
	Georgian – Armenian Bilingualism	Armenian-Georgian Bilingualism	Russian-Armenian Bilingualism
1.	Georgian	Armenian	Armenian
2.	Armenian (Turkish)	Georgian (Turkish)	Russian (Turkish)
3.	Russian (rarely)		Georgian (rarely)

In Georgian ethnic groups, Georgian-Armenian bilingualism is the main form. Big number of Armenian population in Javakheti creates Armenian language environment and Georgian population acquires the Armenian language through everyday relations and communications. Even Adjarian migrants go through various language acquisition phases and start using it. At the same time, there are cases when Turkish and Russian languages are used in the Georgian bilingual group. For example, in the village of Khospio Turkish language has certain use. This use is quite limited and less critical for the language situation; however, it still has certain function.

Turkish language is today mainly used by elderly people among their close relatives. By using Turkish language they emphasize the fact that they are close relatives. In Turkish language, they speak about secret issues, which they do not want to share to others (For example comment about certain event or the behavior of someone, feedback to the family member, etc.).

Russian is used quite rarely. This language is used when people find themselves in different communication context (the person they meet speaks neither Georgian nor Armenian), or when they have to leave borders of the country. Share of such individuals is small among the Georgian population. Therefore, Georgian-Russian

bilingualism is not characteristic for the Georgian-language ethnic group.

With respect to Turkish language, the same applies to the ethnically Armenian language groups. Situation is different with the use of Russian language.

Because of various factors affecting the language environment in Javakheti language situation (these factors will be discussed below), majority of the Armenian population mostly uses Russian language. As a result, Armenian-Russian bilingualism is quite strong. On the other hand, the major factor determining Armenian-Georgian bilingualism is related to such factors as residence in the Georgian village together with Georgian or residence close to the Georgian language.

Both Georgian and Armenian (together with Georgians) bilingual language groups include individuals which use all three languages (Georgian, Armenian and Russian) in the same communication context. Observation showed that such individuals mainly come from the mixed families. Irrespective of the language environment, children acquire mother's language easily. We do not mention separately such type of trilingual language groups. We believe that this is a sub-group of both Georgian-Armenian and Armenian-Russian language groups.

Another important factor, which deserved attention, is age at which the members of the language groups learn the language. Situation

is similar across various languages. Majority of them learn the second language in childhood. Exception applies to those individuals who moved to Javakheti at a later age (for example, Georgians learning Russian) and had to learn the second language for their work and employment (for example, Armenians learning Russian).

It is interesting to study varieties of the language system which are used in the ethnically homogenous bilingual group. As majority of these language groups mainly live

in the villages, we will emphasize three main varieties: (1) literary language, which is spread through mass media; (2) dialect, which is one the main major varieties of the Javakheti language situation; and (3) “everyday language”, which becomes more active when using the second language.

The table below shows the languages that are not used by all members of the language community and are used only certain-sub-group. In this case, we do not use varieties, slangs or argo.

Language Varieties	Georgian – bilingual community; Georgian-Armenian	Armenian bilingual community	
		Armenian-Georgian	Armenian-Russian
Literary Language	Georgian (partly Russian – listening and reading)	Armenian (listening and reading)	Armenian, Russian (listening and reading)
Dialect	Georgian, Armenian, (Turkish)	Armenian, (Turkish)	Armenian, (Turkish)
Everyday communication language	Armenian, (Turkish, Russian)	Georgian, (Russian, Turkish)	Armenian, Russian, (Turkish)

It should be mentioned that all the Georgians who participated in the survey, named Georgian as their mother tongue. Georgian was named by the representatives of the mixed families as well. Majority of the Armenian population named Armenian as their native language (100 persons were survey within each group).

(b) Social groups: We observed several social groups: Public servants (doctors, employees of the local government, etc.), pensioners from urban areas, students

that started to learn the language only four year ago and are expected to graduate soon.

Due to their social characteristics, above-mentioned language communities are more inclined to bilingualism, particularly the first and third groups. It should be emphasized that none of the language groups where homogenous.

Several cases of bilingualism were observed in the group of doctors and students – Georgian-Armenian and Armenian-Russian. These groups also contained quite a few

trilingual individuals with Georgian, Russian, Armenian languages.

4 574 cases were observed from the perspective of the order of the language accusation (note: the numbers out of brackets

indicate order characteristic for the majority of the language communities. The numbers in the brackets indicate the order characteristic for the minority of the language community).

Languages	Georgian-Armenian			Armenian-Russian			Georgian-Russian-Armenian		
	Doctors	Students	Pensioners	Doctors	Students	Pensioners	Doctors	Students	Pensioners
Georgian	1	1	1	-	-	-	2(1,3)	2(1,3)	2(1)
Russian	-	-	-	2(1)	2	2	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)
Armenian	2	2	2	1	1	1	1(2)	1(2)	1(2)

23 % of ethnically Armenians in the Doctors' language situation named Russian as their native language and Armenian as a second language. The main language for them became language of instruction at school. Their interest towards the Georgian language is caused by its status as a state language (need for office work in the Georgian language, professional development opportunities in the Georgian language, desire to pass professional attestation successfully).

34 % of the same group have received higher education in Russian language (most of them received it outside Georgia, only 3 % of them – in Georgia). 82 % of non-Georgian students consider Armenian as their native language irrespective of the language of instruction at school. For the remaining 18 % family language played a decisive role. They were also affected by the education.

Unfortunately, we do not have data on earlier period. However, the following

information is interesting for exploring attitudes to the native language:

The data shows that in the families they mainly speak in Armenian or Russian. Russian is a dominant language in communication as well – 64 % of the surveyed persons named Russian as a second language. The status of Georgian is also getting better – 17 % of the survey population named Georgian as a second language.

It is interesting to look at how the varieties of the language systems refer to the above-mentioned social groups. Georgian members of the group are mainly trilingual. They are characterized by the features of ethnically homogenous level. Below we present the information of only non-Georgian members. Sequence of the language varieties fits frequency of their use.

Language varieties	Doctors	Students	Pensioners
Literary Language	Russian, Armenian	Armenian, Georgian, Russian	Russian, (Armenian)
Dialect	Armenian, (Georgian)	Armenian, (Georgian)	Armenian, (Georgian)
Everyday language	Armenian, Russian (Georgian)	Armenian, Georgian, Russian	Armenian, Russian, (Georgian)
Professional Language	Russian, Georgian, Armenian	Georgian (Russian)	Armenian (Russian)

(Note: the language given in the brackets indicates non-stable components of bilingualism (trilingualism). The languages out of the brackets are stable components with their varieties.

As the table shows, Georgian language is the most stable component of the bilingualism (trilingualism) characteristic for the students' language communality. This can be explained by several reasons. Georgian language is the language of instruction in higher education, which means that:

- (1) They use literary language as opposed to other non-Georgian language communities;
- (2) Georgian language is needed for professional activities of the members of all these language groups (as well as all others);
- (3) Although majority of the language community do not speak Javakhian dialect of the Georgian language, if needed they can easily switch from

their native language to Georgian language;

- (4) They have acquired professional knowledge in this language, which means that they know it quite well. This is one of the opportunities for non-Georgian bilingual to switch from the native language to the Georgian one without any barriers.

Russian and Armenian channels are equally utilized in Javakheti (78 % use Russian channels, 74 % - Armenian ones). In addition to this, Georgian watches Georgian channels. Volume of information received Russian and Armenian languages is equal. Respondents prefer to receive information in the language they already do.

Respondents reported that they mainly watch entertainment and music shows. Armenian language programs of the Public Broadcaster are not very popular among Javakheti population. 29 % of the respondents

watch these programs regularly or systematically. 71 % do not with them at all.

According to the statistics, respondents get familiar with the newspapers quite frequently, particularly doctors and pensioners. Out of 50 respondents 26 reported that they did not read newspapers at all. Out of the same number, 39 students reported they read newspapers. Such high percentage of those reading newspapers can be explained by the fact that newspapers are available for the population in their native language.

Information about the Georgian respondents is presented below.

Receives information in:

- Georgian language – 78 %
- Russian language – 17 %
- Armenian language – 5 %.

The Armenian population receives information in the following languages:

- Armenian language – 45 %
- Russian language – 49 %
- Georgian language – 6 %.

Situation is different with regard to receiving other types of information (for example, scientific and professional information). Majority of students and doctors receive this kind of information in Russian language. The majority prefers to have information in Georgian.

As the table shows, bilinguals of all three groups use everyday language. Nevertheless, Georgian is unstable component of their bilingualism. It is less frequently used than Russian. It seems that despite the importance of everyday relations, stability of the components of the bilingualism is determined aspects.

We think that above-mentioned issue is closely related to the other functions of the language and sphere of its use. Also, observation of the group of students demonstrated the importance of education as one of the spheres of use.

(c) Age Groups. Three groups can be identified by age distribution. The first group includes school students. We observed that bilingualism was formed in early childhood. The second groups consisted of middle-age people, and the third group – bilingual elderly people. 50 persons were surveyed in each group. Similar to the bilingual communities at the social group level, groups are not ethnically homogenous at the age group level either. However, we tried to ensure ethnically balance (50 / 50 %). The data is based on the survey of the inhabitants of the town.

Age Group	Ethnically Georgians		Ethnically Armenians	
	Georgian-Armenian Bilingual	Georgian-Russian Bilingual	Georgian-Armenian Bilingual	Georgian-Russian Bilingual
School Age 11-17 years	42	14	8	26
Middle Age 18-50 years	47	40	15	48
Elderly Older than 50 years	44	38	9	45

As the table shows, bilingualism is more characteristic for middle-age group. The following patterns were observed in the first group.

First, Georgian children actively use Armenian language. Level of bilingualism among them is so high that Armenian children have no need to communicate in Georgian to them. Several factors account for such high level of bilingualism, such as mixed families, Georgian relatives, etc.

Second, as we observed those kids who achieved bilingualism by the age of eight, have strong bilingualism. It is so strong that sometimes children have problem to name a native language between the two when they are asked to do so. Starting from age 11 spheres of the language use significantly increase. This can be explained by the fact that as children grow older sphere of their interests is also widening.

Armenian children use Russian in more spheres than Georgian students. However,

they use Russian language less frequently than representatives of other groups. This can be explained by the fact that gradually Russian is becoming less functional. Among the surveyed students, girls are more inclined to communicating in the second language, than boys. The percentage is as follows: 28 % - girls, 23 % - boys. This difference is statistically insignificant.

Majority of the Armenian languages, who are Armenian-Russian bilinguals, mainly communicate in Russian to their father, than mothers: 38, 5 % of children mentioned that they mainly speak with their fathers in Russian, and 24 % mentioned they speak in Russian with mothers. Sometimes they also use Russian language for communicating with classmates, teachers and relatives.

Respondents were asked what language (languages) they used at most outside of their families. Results showed that among bilingual Armenians 97 % use Armenian, 7 % use Russian and 3 % - Georgian. Ethnically

Georgian students reported the following: 18 % use Georgian, 3 % - Russian, 48 % - Armenian.

We also asked children: What language do you want to use during the communication with representatives of other ethnic groups. We received quite interesting results – 41-42 % of the respondents reported that they prefer to use Georgian language first and then other languages. 33% of Armenian children named Armenian as a preferred language of communication, 19 % - Russian, 34 % - Georgian. Only 14 % reported that they can communicate in any language acceptable for those they communicate with.

The survey showed that students of Russian and Armenian schools in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda think that lack of the knowledge of the Georgian language is not barrier for them in the social life. 28 of them 50 respondents reported that lack of the Georgian language does not create any problem for them. They face certain problems only when they leave their community or district. 12 students reported that due to the limited knowledge of Georgian they have

problems outside of their community. Only 10 students think that limited knowledge of Georgian is problematic for them.

Non-Georgian students reported that they are planning to pursue higher education in Georgia and outside it. Those students who plan to pursue higher education outside Georgia (mainly in Russia or Armenia) mainly indicate two reasons for not choosing Georgian higher education institutions: (a) Due to the limited knowledge of Georgian they will not be able to pass exams: (b) They have relatives outside Georgian and strongly count on their help.

The table shows results of the observation aiming to explore use of the second language among the relatives and family friends. The first table lists data on ethnically Armenian bilingual children, the second table – ethnically Georgian children.

These data demonstrates that Russian language is still very strong among non-Georgian citizens of Georgia. Despite the end of the Soviet Union, Georgian-Russian and Armenian-Russian language contacts are still critical.

Table 1.

I speak with	Georgian	Russian
Mother	+	+
Father	–	+
Grandparents	–	+
Friends at school	–	+
Georgian friends	+ (–)	–
Other relatives	+ (–)	+ (–)

Table 2.

I speak with	Armenian	Russian
Mother	+	–
Father	–	–
Grandparents	+	–
Friends at school	+	–
Georgian friends	+ (–)	–
Other relatives	+ (–)	–

For future development, Georgian and English are priority languages as compared to Russian and other languages. Respondents from Russian and Armenian schools were asked which language they would improve. Answers of the respondents were distributed as follows: Georgian (48), English (46), Armenian (18), Russian (18), German (9), French (3), and Greek (5). These numbers demonstrate growing interest to Georgian and Armenian, as well as indicate that children know these languages worst and they have strong desire to improve them. Above-mentioned desire to learn these languages can be considered as a step to integration.

Languages of economically and politically strong countries have real potential to become a second language for those with other mother tongue and ethnicity.

Students express the desire to learn English for various reasons. First, as they acquire this language, they become more competitive at the labor market. They also get chances to move to other countries and be employed there. The desire to improve Georgian language is inspired by the recent

changes in the country. As for Armenian and Greek, students want to improve knowledge of these languages, as they are their mother tongues.

The survey reveals patterns of the non-Georgian groups in Samtskhe-Javakheti. Majority of the respondents think that office work should be executed in Georgian. Fewer (20-30 %) think that language of official office-work should be in Georgian and Armenian and/or Russian. Respondents indicated that they (40 %) do not speak Georgian language, as they did not have opportunity to learn it. Another reason maybe the fact that Armenians have no real or little need to use this language in everyday life. Non-Georgians anticipate certain problems in the future due to the limited knowledge of Georgian language. Mainly, they think that they may have problems being employed in Georgian organizations, as well as pursuing education is Georgian higher education institutions.

Respondents think that the best way to improve knowledge of the Georgian language is to pay more attention to it at schools. Every

fourth surveyed person in Javakheti thinks that his/her motherland is Armenian, and Georgia is the second motherland. Nevertheless, slightly more than half of the respondents in both regions link their future to Georgia.

As far as language of information is concerned, half of the population receives information in Russian and another half – in Armenian. 68 % of the respondents watch the Armenian-language programs of the broadcaster regularly or periodically. The local TV station offers its population Armenian translation of “Kurier”. 82 % of the respondents mentioned that they are interested in such a program. However, few of them continue watching it due to the bad quality of translation. According to the survey results, students in Javakheti read the press – they mainly read a newspaper “Vrastan”. They prefer it to the “Samkhretis Karibche” which is published in Georgian and Armenian languages.

Bilingual education and reforming of local non-Georgian schools are important instruments for achieving integration. Therefore, it is important to launch informational campaign for promoting the idea of bilingual education. In the transition period, the government should ensure choice for school students.

It is suggested to create a legislative package on bilingual education, which will define major directions of the bilingual

education. The important precondition for implementing this policy is to define these goals and directions. As Hornberger pointed out, bilingual education is a resource and not a problem which needs to be solved” (Hornberger, 2000: 173). Werges emphasizes two different approaches to bilingual education. According to the first approach, the main purpose of bilingual education is to switch from the native language to the second language. The second approach is different from the first one and implies parallel process of the acquisition of two languages (Werges, 2014: 14).

Trillos identifies five major goals of bilingual education and should be considered for the development of respective policy: (1) Bi-cultureless, or the ability to feel integrated in the community both in the minority and majority one; (2) Bilingualism, or the ability to speak to speak to languages; (3) Exposure to the values of two different cultures; (4) Positive attitudes towards different linguistic and cultural groups; (5) Equal opportunities for educational opportunities of ethnic minorities (Trillos, 1998: 6).

Georgia can share experiences from other countries (such as Baltic states, the US) and plan first volunteer bilingual programs. In parallel preparations can be made for preparing for the second and mandatory stage. “It is suggested that multilingual education is volunteer and upon its successful implementation schools gradually launch

various models of multilingual education. This will help us to avoid political complications a required on mandatory multilingual education may have caused”

(Tabatadze, 2008: 22). Similar to this, schools should start bilingual education gradually and on a volunteer basis and not instantly.

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