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Multilingual Education in Ukraine: Challenges and Perspectives

Summary: *The article deals with the challenges and perspectives for the implementation of multilingual education in Ukraine. In the first part definitional aspects of multilingualism and the difference between multilingualism and polyglotism are shown. Thereafter, the main principles of the Bologna Process in Europe and its special features in the Ukrainian higher-education system are illuminated. Furthermore, the distinguishing features of bilingual and multilingual education are highlighted. The second part (discussions and results) deals with educational experiences with the introduction and implementation of multilingual education in the Department of English Philology at the Faculty of Ukrainian and Foreign Philology and Art in the Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University (DNU). The authors conclude that multilingual education is a key to success and that co-operative and linguocultural learning promote the development of competent multilingual and intercultural persons and their lifelong learning.*

Keywords: *multilingualism, multilingual education, curriculum, competencies*

Резюме (Владимир Ключев, Алла Анисимова & Людмила Глухова: Многоязычное образование в Украине: вызовы и перспективы): *Статья занимается проблемами и перспективами реализации многоязычного образования в Украине. В первой части представляются различные аспекты многоязычности и различие между многоязычностью и полиглотством. Затем освещаются важнейшие принципы Болонского процесса в Европе и его особенности в системе украинской высшей школы. После этого выделяются признаки различия двух- и многоязычного образования. Вторая часть (дискуссия и результаты) рассказывает о педагогическом опыте при введении и реализации многоязычного образования на отделении английской филологии факультета украинской и зарубежной филологии и искусства в Днепрпетровском Национальном университете имени Олеса Гончара (ДНУ). Авторы приходят к выводу, что многоязычное образование является ключом к успеху и что совместное и лингвокультурное обучение способствуют развитию многоязычных и межкультурно-компетентных личностей и их непрерывному образованию.*

Ключевые слова: *многоязычность, многоязычное воспитание, учебный план, учебные планы, компетенции*

Zusammenfassung: *Der Artikel beschäftigt sich mit Herausforderungen und Perspektiven der Umsetzung mehrsprachiger Bildung in der Ukraine. Im ersten Teil werden definitorische Aspekte der Mehrsprachigkeit und die Differenz zwischen Mehrsprachigkeit und Polyglottismus dargestellt. Danach werden die wichtigsten Grundsätze des Bologna-Prozesses in Europa und ihre Besonderheiten im ukrainischen Hochschulsystem beleuchtet. Weiterhin werden die Unterscheidungsmerkmale der zwei- und mehrsprachigen Bildung herausgestellt. Der zweite Teil (Diskussionen und Ergebnisse) vermittelt pädagogische Erfahrungen bei der Einführung und Umsetzung mehrsprachiger Bildung am Department für Englische Philologie der Fakultät für ukrainische und ausländische Philologie und Kunst an der Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University (DNU). Die Autoren kommen zu dem Schluss, dass mehrsprachige Bildung ein Schlüssel zum Erfolg ist, und dass co-operatives und linguo-kulturelles Lernen die Entwicklung mehrsprachiger und interkulturell kompetenter Persönlichkeiten und deren lebenslanges Lernen fördern.*

Schlüsselwörter: *Mehrsprachigkeit, mehrsprachige Erziehung, Lehrplan, Kompetenzen*

Theory

It is a well-known fact that a language is a bridge between cultures as much as it is a tool for communication. However, its role is not limited only to that. There are three main deeply intertwined functions that a language possesses. Firstly, it is a bearer and creator of the sense. It is closely and inseparably connected with cognitive activity. Secondly, it is a means of cooperating with other people. We influence others through thoughts and feelings that we express by linguistic units. Thirdly, it is a means of memorizing, remembering and transferring skills, ideas and values.

These functions prove that language and culture are closely interconnected. This fact is of a particular importance in the present era of globalization and internationalization, when the borders between countries become freer and communication opportunities become much more favourable and easier. This connection is also essential in the context of multilingualism and polyglottism. As the Welsh scholar E. G. Lewis once wrote: "Polyglottism is a very early characteristic of human societies, and monolingualism is a cultural limitation. It is doubtful whether any community or any language has existed in isolation from other communities or languages ..." (Lewis, 1976 p. 150).

Multilingualism has become a common phenomenon in the modern world and can be analyzed from different perspectives. The Council of Europe makes a distinction between plurilingualism as a speaker's competence (ability to use more than one language) and multilingualism as the presence of various languages in a given geographical area. The EU uses multilingualism for both (sometimes specifying 'multilingualism of the individual') (Warren & Benbow, 2008, p.14).

As a democratic organisation, the EU has to communicate with its citizens in their own language. The same goes for national governments and civil services, businesses and other organisations all over the EU. Europeans have a right to know what is being done in their name. They must also be able to play an active part without having to learn other languages.

This fact makes it possible to state that a way towards multilingualism is a set of actions aimed at supporting educational programs; it presupposes learning at least two foreign languages and performing activities aimed at preserving language diversity, increasing the time for learning foreign languages. Moreover, multilingualism is one of the competences that a modern specialist should possess in order to be successful in his career. This idea has been a central one in the European policy since the very beginning of the European Union existence.

Besides, the Bologna process, which has been shaping the system and principles of modern European higher education, "encourages linguistic pluralism, thus underpinning the multilingual tradition of the European Higher Education Area and increases cooperation and competition between higher education institutions" (Bologna Process, 2009). What is more, "Bologna' aims to facilitate and promote greater mobility so that students will acquire the skills employers are looking for, such as cultural maturity, increased confidence and language skills" (UK HE Europe Unit, 2006).

In 2005 Ukraine, as some other countries of Western and Eastern Europe, joined the Bologna process, which has considerably restructured the learning activity of the whole country. Particularly from 2005 till 2015 a long and meaningful breakthrough has been made, as Ukrainian higher education policy makers and performers had to deal with such new notions as a credit-unit organization of student's learning activity, principle of student's mobility and so on. Such a swift change in the system of education could not but influence the methods of teaching foreign languages, whose role and importance is difficult to be overestimated under contemporary conditions of European integration.

The aim of the present article is to show the peculiarities of the multilingually and multiculturally oriented Master's curriculum for the speciality "Language and Literature (English)" with specialization "Multilingual education" in terms of Bologna process developed by the English Philology Department of Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University within the framework of Tempus joint project DIMTEGU – Development and Introduction of Multilingual Teacher Education Programs at Universities of Georgia and Ukraine.

It goes without saying that when a person speaks at least one foreign language, he has much more opportunities in all spheres of life: career, travelling, interpersonal relations with people from other countries and so on. So, what is the essence of the multilingual education? How does it contribute to personal success?

It should be noted that the key aspects of multilingual education have been studied by researchers from all over the world. In fact, bi- and multilingual education are "umbrella terms that have been used for decades in the literature as evidenced by numerous book-length publications to refer to the regular use of two or more languages for teaching and learning in instructional settings when bi-/multilingualism and biliteracy are two of the explicit long-term goals" (Abello-Contesse & Chandler, 2013, pp. 3-4).

Specifically, bilingual education is defined as a generic concept that refers to various types of educational programs which provide systematic instruction in two (or more) languages for a prolonged period of time and its main principles are summarized as follows:

- the use of two languages as media of instruction in designated areas or school subjects that are usually part of the standard curriculum at the grade levels involves;
- the progressive development of these languages within a school setting;
- the implementation of some form of the educational approach known as content-based instruction;
- the students' overall academic achievement as well as their cognitive development are given consideration, regardless of the language used in classroom (Abello-Contesse & Chandler, 2013, p. 4).

98

However, it is emphasized that beyond these basic principles, a considerable variation can be found in practice depending on the specific educational contexts where bilingual education is implemented.

In its turn, multilingual education is a wider notion. It is, at its best,

1. multilingual in that it uses and values more than one language in teaching and learning;
2. intercultural in that it recognizes and values understanding and dialogue across different lived experiences and cultural worldviews;
3. education that draws out, taking as its starting point the knowledge students bring to the classroom and moving toward their participation as full and indispensable actors in society – locally, nationally, and globally (Hornberger, 2009, p. 198).

In terms of multilingual education it should be taken into account that the language itself possesses its own dynamics and is constantly undergoing processes of continuity and change, impacting upon the communication modes of different societies as it evolves. Educational policy makers have difficult decisions to make with regards to languages, schooling and the curriculum. While there are strong educational arguments in favour of mother tongue instruction, a careful balance also needs

to be made between enabling people to use local languages in learning, and providing access to global languages through education (UNESCO, 2003).

All these principles and ideas have been taken into consideration in the process of developing a multilingually and multiculturally oriented Master's curriculum for the speciality "Language and Literature (English)" with specialization "Multilingual education" by the English Philology Department. Besides, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) has been used as a basis for defining the competences for the whole curriculum and for each syllabus in particular.

The knowledge acquired during the period of studies under this specialization will help professionals in the field of international education to resolve the issue of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the field of culture and education, to resolve the issue of Ukraine's integration into the European educational area and collaboration with educational institutions and the EU member-states, as well as to acquire the skills to develop and implement international educational projects.

Masters with a specialization in "Multilingual Education" will get qualification of international scientists, who are majored at countries and regions, including the EU, (their education systems, geography, history, political, cultural, ethnic, spiritual and religious development, etc.), and who study foreign languages and use multilingual approach to study special subjects and, and who have proper skills to prepare and implement international education projects.

Discussion and Results

DNU is situated in Dnipropetrovsk region which is bilingual, because people who live here speak or at least understand two languages (Ukrainian and Russian). When a student enters DNU to study the speciality "Language and Literature (English)", he is expected to possess the knowledge of a foreign language – English. This knowledge is proved by the certificate of External Independent Testing. Besides, from the first term of his first year a student starts learning the second foreign language (French, German, Spanish at option), from the second term of his first year the student starts learning the third language (French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Turkish at option). Choosing the Master's specialization "Multilingual Education", the student studies only his major (English) and second foreign languages. In this case, multilingualism is not only a target, but also a means of instruction.

It should be emphasized that the competence of the graduates of the Master's study curriculum *Multilingual Education* can be defined by the learning outcomes of the curriculum, i.e. the knowledge and skills acquired during the process of study process. *Special competences* in the "Language and Literature (English)", "Multilingual Education" will be acquired through obtaining competences of the five blocks of disciplines.

Master's curriculum in Multilingual Education consists of two parts: mandatory and optional. The whole curriculum is calculated as 3240 hours (90 ECTS)

Mandatory part involves three blocks, and each of them contains a group of subjects and a particular amount of hours / ECTS points. The first block of this part entitled as *Disciplines of professionally oriented humanitarian and socioeconomic training* contains four disciplines and 270 hours (7,5 ECTS). Block 2 *Disciplines of professionally oriented fundamental training* involves five disciplines and 378 hours (10,5 ECTS). Block 3 *Disciplines for professional and practical training* includes four disciplines and 1458 hours (40,5 ECTS).

Optional part of the curriculum contains two blocks. They are *Disciplines according to the individual choice of HEI* consisting of five disciplines and 792 hours (22,0 ECTS) and *Disciplines according to student's individual choice* that includes 3 disciplines and 342 hours (9,5 ECTS). The standards of the Master's curricula are being changed by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine at the moment, so the changes in the number of credits and the number of hours in the credits are possible.

Conclusion

With the view of contemporary global situation cross-cultural, social, educational and other issues have become more interdependent and have been raised to a multicultural dimension. Thus, multilingual communication and multicultural interconnections are of paramount importance in modern Ukrainian society. This fact presupposes definite objectives of Multilingual Education. It gives the possibility to teach such those who can work effectively in educational multinational surrounding. Besides that, Multilingual Master's Education curriculum is aimed at professional training of those who are able to understand the cross-cultural specificity of the educational sphere.

To sum up, we should say that all the disciplines have been designed in such a way as to meet the European and Ukrainian higher education demands and are particularly focused on multilingual and multicultural components. By the time the student has finished the course, he is expected to possess all the competences defined by the Common European Framework of Languages to be a highly-qualified professional and to be competitive in the global career market.

What should be specially emphasized on is that this experience is a completely new one not only in DNU, but also in Dnipropetrovsk region. However, the syllabi of the majority of courses in the curriculum have been developed or modified so as to provide students with multilingual, multicultural and cross-cultural competences that are considered to be the key ones for the specialization "Multilingual Education" as it has been shown above.

100

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