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MULTILINGUALISM IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

The current research examines the phenomenon of multilingualism and its implications for foreign language teaching in the European Union and Ukraine. It has been found that multilingualism represents the primary tenet of the European language policy and constitutes a fundamental aspect of language learning. Thus, the EU documents emphasize the importance of diversifying language education a foreign language is regarded as means of intercultural communication and a tool in the dialogue of global cultures and civilizations. This has resulted in the formation of a new paradigm of language teaching. The basic principles of multilingual education have been delineated, and the distinctions between multilingual education and traditional forms of foreign language teaching have been identified. It has been noted that scientific and applied research is being carried out in the EU to develop a new and effective program for foreign language teaching.

It was observed that current trends in the transformation of the EU educational space led to a shift in the requirements for education in Ukraine. It has been concluded that multilingual education in Europe is a highly supported initiative at all levels of public life, with multilingualism forming the basis for the development of language competence among the EU citizens. Ukraine has established a legal framework to promote multilingualism, and initial progress has been made, although challenges remain in implementing this initiative.

Key words: *multilingualism, plurilingualism, multilingual education, foreign language teaching, multilingual competence.*

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МУЛЬТИЛІНГВІЗМ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

Мультилінгвізм – якісна складова процесу глобалізації, яка впливає на різні сфери суспільного життя і, зокрема, на систему освіти, основним завданням якої є підготовка особистості до взаємодії з полікультурним світом. Це передбачає формування в особистості за результатами вивчення іноземних мов базової мультилінгвальної компетентності, а отже зумовлює актуальність цієї наукової розвідки.

Метою статті є з'ясування впливу мультилінгвізму на парадигму навчання іноземних мов в освітніх закладах Європейського Союзу й України.

Для досягнення мети використані такі методи наукового дослідження: пошуково-бібліографічний аналіз, методи емпіричного рівня (спостереження, опис, порівняння), систематизація та контент-аналіз.

З'ясовано, що мультилінгвізм є основним принципом організації мовної політики Європи, однією із визначальних засад концепції вивчення мов. Тож у документах ЄС підкреслюють важливість диверсифікації мовної освіти, а іноземну мову розглядають і як засіб міжкультурного спілкування, і як інструмент у діалозі культур і цивілізації світу. Це зумовило формування нової парадигми навчання іноземних мов. Визначено основні принципи мультилінгвальної освіти, виявлено відмінності між мультилінгвальною освітою та традиційними формами навчання іноземної мови. Констатовано, на теренах Європейського Союзу тривають науково-прикладні пошуки щодо розробки нової ефективної програми, яка б забезпечувала засвоєння іноземних мов у таких аспектах: як засобу національної та регіональної комунікації; як засобу міжнародної комунікації; як засобу досягнення громадської злагоди; як засобу особистого лінгвокомунікативного розвитку.

Зазначено, що сучасні тенденції трансформації освітнього простору Європейського Союзу зумовили зміну вимог до світи в Україні, що передбачає впровадження іноземних мов в освітні пріоритети, в обов'язкову компетентісну складову моделі сучасної особистості. Основним завданням закладів освіти стає формування базової мультилінгвальної компетентності, підготовка особистості до взаємодії з мультилінгвальним і полікультурним світом.

Зроблено висновок, що мультилінгвальна освіта у Європі має потужну підтримку на всіх рівнях суспільного життя, а мультилінгвізм є підґрунтям для формування мовної компетентності громадян ЄС. В Україні на законодавчому рівні створено умови для розвитку мультилінгвізму, зроблено перші успішні кроки, хоча існують і певні проблеми у реалізації такої ініціативи.

Ключові слова: мультилінгвізм, плурілінгвізм, мультилінгвальна освіта, навчання іноземних мов, мультилінгвальна компетентність.

The contemporary world community is a complex system of relations among states, ethnic groups, and peoples, which has faced new conditions, challenges, and difficulties caused by the emergence of new forms of work organisation, lifestyles, and communication, as well as intense internal and external migration. As a result, the problems of globalization and the impact of multilingualism on it are attracting the attention of scholars. Therefore, multilingualism or plurilingualism – the ability to speak several languages – is a qualitative component of the globalization process that affects various spheres of social life and, in particular, the educational system, with its main task – to prepare individuals for interaction with the multicultural world.

The subject of multilingualism has been the focus of scientific enquiry by a number of foreign and Ukrainian scholars, including A. Wilton, J. Deveille, L. Wei, N. Hornberg, V. Weish, U. Weinreich, B. Azhniuk, S. Zhabotynska, O. Maiboroda, H. Chernenko, L. Shcherba, O. Pershukova, O. Biletska and others.

The **objective** of this research is to ascertain the impact of multilingualism on the paradigm of foreign language teaching in educational institutions within the European Union and Ukraine.

The concept of multilingualism has been found to exhibit unclear semantic boundaries, as evidenced by the findings of scholars who have undertaken studies in this field. O. Yakovleva claims that it is grounded conceptually in the notion of language as a social product, created collectively to meet communication needs and stored in the collective memory, as well as in texts constructed through the use of this language [24].

Furthermore, “multilingualism” is also interpreted as the ability to use several languages both orally and in written form. There are two principal types of multilingualism: national, which concerns the use of some languages within a specific social community, and individual, which pertains to the use of multiple languages by an individual; each selected according to the particular circumstances of the speech situation.

The generic sphere of multilingualism encompasses several specific concepts, the most prevalent of which are as follows:

1. *Pluralism* can be defined as a cognitive state in which an individual can operate with a range of linguistic codes in the process of communication, irrespective of both the manner in which languages are acquired and the degree of linguistic proficiency demonstrated in speech.

2. *Bilingualism* – 1) the ability of a person to use two national languages; 2) a linguistic situation in which society uses two national languages in communication, whether in the same or different spheres; 3) a state in which two languages coexist, and interact in a natural and artificial bilingual environment where social groups speak two languages at the same or different levels.

3. *Multilingualism* is 1) the ability of an individual to use more than two national languages; 2) a linguistic situation in which society uses more than two national languages in communication in the same or different spheres of communication; 3) a social phenomenon that denotes the coexistence of different language communities, in particular in a multilingual city or a multilingual country [2, p. 3].

After a detailed analysis of several specific concepts within the field of multilingualism, N. Korshak has formulated the following definition of this term: “Multilingualism is a linguo-philosophical concept, which is a social product formed artificially or under the influence of historical factors. It determines the balance of two or more languages in the speech and thought sphere of an individual who uses these languages at different stages of communication” [6, p. 76].

The result of an analysis of several EU documents, regulating multilingualism policy indicates that in these countries, multilingualism has evolved from a linguistic phenomenon to a fundamental tenet of European language policy [5; 6; 7]. It has also become a core element of the concept of language learning. This is why the EU’s language policy is aimed at protecting linguistic diversity and disseminating knowledge of languages, taking into account the cultural identity and social integration of the representatives of the various ethnic groups living there. This, in turn, leads to a natural transition from the traditional form of teaching foreign language communication to the use of the principles of intercultural didactics in the teaching process. According to S. Neuner-Anfindsen and E. Meima the European educational space focuses on lifelong learning, from pre-school, secondary and vocational education to higher and adult education; the EU Member States actively promote and support the modernization of education systems [8].

Multilingual education in Europe has been strongly supported at all levels of society and consists of organizing and implementing activities to improve the quality of language teaching, increase the number of languages taught, develop common levels of language proficiency, and protect cultural and linguistic diversity. Over the past decades and to the present day, European scholarship has used the term “plurilingualism” alongside the term “multilingualism” in the context of language learning in a given society [12].

The Council of Europe, which actively promotes language learning and the acquisition of multilingual competence, uses the term “plurilingualism” to refer to individual multilingualism, defined as the speaker’s

competence to use more than one language, and “multilingualism”, as the coexistence of several languages in a geographical area.

The European Union treats them as identical and considers that the semantic structure of the concept of “multilingualism” is made up of both definitions. The issue of developing multilingual competence – one of the key competences, that every member of society can acquire throughout his or her life, is one of the priority problems of education in Europe [1].

To develop an individual multilingual competence, the Lifelong Learning Programme has been introduced, which provides for the mobility of educational subjects in order to better understand the diversity of cultures. In terms of education, multilingualism has now become a priority at all levels of education [19].

In particular, the importance of early language learning is emphasized [2] “Children should learn at least two foreign languages from an early age”. In other words, foreign languages (most often English, French, and German) are introduced at this stage, but usually partly or fully covered by parents. The greatest variety of languages offered for study is observed in Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Romania.

In *primary education*, all pupils are required to learn two languages in addition to the language of the country in which they live, according to the European Union and the Council of Europe standards. The importance of developing a positive attitude towards other cultures through language programs is also emphasized. Foreign languages (usually English, French, and German) are taught from the first year of primary school in 12 countries, from the middle year of primary school in 7 countries, and from the last year of primary school in 3 countries. One of these languages is compulsory for all pupils. The other languages offered as compulsory or optional foreign languages are Italian, Russian, and Spanish.

Concerning *secondary education*, the documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe place considerable emphasis on the importance of pupils extending their linguistic repertoire and developing proficiency in foreign languages, to enhance future employability and facilitate access to vocational or higher education. Under Recommendation No. (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Modern Languages, the objective of language learning at the secondary level of education is to “continue to raise the standard of communication which pupils are expected to achieve so that they can use the language studied to communicate effectively with other speakers of that language in everyday life, build social and personal relations and learn to understand and respect other people’s cultures and practices” [4]. Despite the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, there are still discrepancies in the number of compulsory foreign languages offered at both the secondary and tertiary levels of education. Currently, the study of two compulsory foreign languages (typically English, German, French, Spanish, and Italian) at both secondary and higher education levels is only introduced in Austria, Estonia, France, Poland, Portugal, and Romania. It is noteworthy that the established level for proficiency in the first language is B2, and the second is B1. At this stage, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is becoming more widespread. It involves the use of foreign languages in the study of science and geography. It is currently accepted that subject and language-integrated teaching represents one of the most effective and efficient methods for developing communicative competence.

In the context of *vocational education* and training, the document of European Commission Communication (2010) “A New Impetus for European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy”, underscores the necessity to prioritize language learning, particularly vocationally oriented language learning, as it facilitates student mobility, engagement in international projects, and prepares future professionals for their respective professions and professional mobility. As in previous levels of education, English, French, German, and Spanish are the dominant languages.

The issue of linguistic diversity and the development of plurilingual skills is of particular relevance at the level of *higher education*, as it represents the final stage before embarking on a professional career. In light of the challenges posed by globalization and the requirements of employers, it is imperative that higher education students, in addition to acquiring essential academic knowledge and developing pertinent skills, cultivate the language abilities, ideally plurilingual, that will be essential for their future work. Several European universities have already implemented a requirement for a certain level of language proficiency as a prerequisite for admission to not only linguistics but also all degree programs. European Union documents also emphasize the importance of diversifying language education by expanding, introducing, and improving the quality and focus of language teaching in higher education, taking into account the context of lifelong learning [8].

It is a common practice among European universities to offer the state language as the main language of study. Additionally, most of these institutions provide the initial stages of instruction in foreign languages (FL),

regional, or minority languages. The increasing globalization of higher education, coupled with the growing international mobility of students and academic staff, and the desire to attract a greater number of international and immigrant students has led to English becoming the second language of instruction in many higher education institutions, claims N. Petrychenko [19, p. 60]. Thus, the majority of learning materials and textbooks are now offered in English. The websites of almost all universities are presented in a variety of languages, which suggests that they are making special efforts to attract international students and receive additional funding. In line with the recommendations of the European Union and the Council of Europe, many universities provide opportunities for non-native language students to study foreign languages, with almost half of them offering a choice of more than four languages.

It is worth noticing that within the European Union, scientific and applied research is currently being conducted to develop a new and effective program that would ensure the acquisition of foreign languages in the following areas:

- as a means of national and regional communication;
- as a means of international communication;
- as a means of achieving social harmony;
- as a means of personal linguistic and communicative development [10].

Current trends in the transformation of the EU educational space have resulted in the shift in the requirements for the education in Ukraine. This has led to the introduction of FL as a mandatory competence component of the model of a modern personality for life in new conditions. In particular, the Law of Ukraine “*Pro osvitu*” (On Education) and the Concept of the New Ukrainian School of Communication identify FL as one of ten key competencies that a Ukrainian school graduate should master.

The key objective of contemporary educational establishments is to prepare individuals for successful interaction with the multilingual and multicultural world. The shift in the status of FL, which are currently perceived as both a means of intercultural communication and a tool in the dialogue of modern world cultures and civilizations, has resulted in the formulation of new objectives for their study. It is necessary to adopt a new paradigm for language teaching and the development of language technologies, with a focus on the “practical mastery” of languages.

To achieve this goal, educational institutions are faced with the task of providing students with instruction in two or even three languages. This has led to the necessity of transition from the traditional approach to foreign language teaching to one, that prioritizes communication, incorporates the fundamental principles of intercultural didactics into the teaching process, and emphasizes the significance of the multilingual aspect. S. Zhabotynska also highlights the necessity for language policy and language planning in Ukraine to be shaped by the principles of multilingualism. Furthermore, she emphasizes the importance of introducing scientifically based and effective bilingualism/multilingualism programs that take into account not only socio-political and socio-economic but also physiological and psychological factors [13].

As previously stated, the restructuring of foreign language teaching in educational institutions is significantly influenced by two key factors outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for newcomers to the European Community: 1) “levels” of language proficiency; 2) correlation of trends in the social development of the language paradigm, including multilingualism and plurilingualism [23].

Multilingualism is achieved through diversification, which can be defined as the diversity of languages offered in a given educational establishment, whether at the school, university, or of other level. This can be achieved by offering students the opportunity to learn more than one language or by reducing the dominant role of English as a means of international communication.

The plurilingual approach is predicated on the assumption that as individuals expand their language experience, from the level of everyday speech to the language of the community in a broad sense and further to the languages of other nations; they do not perceive these languages as clearly delimited mental blocks, but rather, form a communicative competence within which all language knowledge and experience are components and in which languages intertwine and interact. In different situations, an individual can flexibly use different components of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor. For instance, partners may switch from one language to another; alternatively, they may utilize their knowledge of several languages to understand the content of a text presented in an unfamiliar language by learning words from a common international vocabulary. Furthermore, they may achieve a certain level of communication by using and experimenting with alternative forms of expression in different languages, using paralinguistic means (such as facial expressions, gestures *etc.*), and radically simplifying the use of language [14].

From this perspective, the objective of language learning undergoes a significant transformation. Previously, the objective of language education was to attain proficiency in communicating in one, two, or three languages, each of which was considered in isolation with “an ideal native speaker” as the unquestionable model. Currently, the outcome of language learning should be personal multilingualism, which involves a deliberate differentiation between language systems and a relatively free transition from one language to another, depending on changes in the situation and life necessities [20].

Consequently, a new objective has been established in Europe, namely the development of a linguistic repertoire that encompasses all language abilities, including those of a paralinguistic nature. H. Levchenko assumes that the languages offered for study in educational institutions should be diversified, and students should be provided with enhanced opportunities to develop their plurilingual competence, which includes a particular focus on the socio-cultural component [16]. The scientific community considers this to be a significant factor that largely determines and predetermines the use of language in specific situations, thereby affecting the foreign language communicative competence of students. The awareness of the norms of behaviour, values, and rules of communication is essential for selecting the appropriate speech register, while the lack of socio-cultural context knowledge can be especially decisive. The cultural approach to learning a FL is currently a priority, as it enables not only the acquisition of linguistic competence but also the understanding of the worldview of a native speaker. This, in turn, facilitates the formation of a multicultural linguistic personality.

The formation of a multilingual multicultural personality is a process that involves at least four language systems:

- the first language (mother tongue);
- the second language of everyday communication – a language that is not a mother tongue, but is used by a person in everyday communication practice as the state language, the language of mass media, the language of education;
- the first language (L1), which is typically introduced first in the educational system and offers certain advantages due to the greater number of hours allocated for its study in the educational process;
- the second language (L2), which is usually introduced at a later stage in the educational process, with less class time allocated to studying and teaching from the primary level [22].

In reforming the education system in Ukraine, the results of research conducted by foreign and domestic scholars in the fields of philology, psychology, philosophy, and education were taken into account. In particular, in 2012, the compulsory study of two FLs was introduced in secondary school, starting in the fifth grade. The value of this combination lies in the fact that the mastery of two languages fosters the development of metalinguistic consciousness, a distinctive form of human language consciousness that is characterized by the capacity to perform abstract and logical operations with multiple language systems. Metalinguistic consciousness plays a pivotal role in the framework of multilingual education. It provides the growth of linguistic competence and creates an environment conducive to the professionally oriented activities of a modern individual.

It should be noted that higher education institutions play a key role in the development of multilingual competence both at the individual and societal levels

The significance of multilingual education as a pathway to specialized and professional knowledge, and as a component of advanced language education, is determined primarily by the general trend towards European integration in economic, cultural, and political spheres. In the field of education, this trend gives rise to the aspiration to integrate subject knowledge and focus on the knowledge of a holistic picture of the world. Multilingual education provides students with wide access to information in various subject areas, new information following individual needs, and the opportunity for continuing education, which in turn gives them additional chances to compete in the European and global labour market.

In the classical sense, teaching a FL is predicated on the assumption that a certain standard must be achieved, ideally at the level of a native speaker. This implies that the language itself is the primary object of learning. The majority of traditional teaching methodologies, including those based on the communicative approach, are based on this idea. In the context of multilingual education, the language serves as the medium of instruction, i.e. the content of the discipline of foreign languages is taught.

This principle serves as the foundation for contemporary European educational initiatives aimed at further integration of language and content of education. The central approach is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The principal objective of this approach is to teach a specific discipline in a language that is not native of the students. In this case, the subject is not necessarily related to language learning, for instance,

the teaching of the history of Spain in English. The distinctive feature of these projects is that a student at the post-secondary level acquires knowledge in a non-language discipline simultaneously learning a FL [9, p. 8].

The outcome of multilingual education is the acquisition of fundamental multilingual proficiency, which enables it to be regarded not only as an alternative mode of language learning but also as a means of attaining specialized knowledge, understanding the values of global culture, and developing the social and communicative capabilities of an individual. A. Anisimova highlights the principal characteristics of this alternative approach to learning a foreign language:

- language is a means of learning;
- integration of the language and the content of the discipline being studied;
- the use of several languages in the learning process;
- the main goal is to develop communicative and multilingual competencies [10].

Nowadays, multicultural and multilingual education, based on the study of both native and foreign languages, represents a significant element in the modernization of the objectives and content of the national education system in Ukraine. In the context of globalization, economic integration, and the creation of a single European labour market, higher education institutions are striving to provide training for European-level specialists capable of working in the pan-European market.

The key concept of contemporary multilingual education is the cultivation of comprehensive socio-cultural competence and the genuine interpretation of the nuances of intersubjective communication between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The social essence of modern multilingual education is based on the development not only linguistic but also general social competence with the capacity to understand behavioural patterns within diverse cultural contexts. It offers a solution to the problem of the destruction of the hierarchy of nationalities by instilling a critical outlook and worldview, as well as developing the communication capabilities of the individual. Furthermore, this educational system encourages a more profound and meaningful appreciation for the nation's language and culture. Collectively, these factors contribute to a more stable, secure, and reliable socio-cultural exchange of ethnic values, facilitating the conscious preservation of national culture among native speakers and fostering a more positive socio-cultural experience within each individual society.

In a multilingual society, the efficacy of FL instruction is directly correlated with the communicative and linguistic-cultural concept of language education, which serves as the foundation for interrelated language and cultural learning. The primary objective of language teaching at both secondary and higher education levels is the formation of not only linguistic but also communicative, and cultural competence, as well as the development and cultivation of cross-cultural skills and multilingual thinking [18].

The previously outlined considerations collectively give rise to the necessity for revised standards in teacher education. Teacher education in Linguistics should help future educators to position themselves not only as teachers of a specific language but also as general language educators. They should demonstrate an appreciation for all languages and linguistic competencies, and find ways to introduce and promote linguistic diversity, irrespective of the language they are teaching. It would be beneficial for teachers in comprehensive schools to work with alternative educational establishments, combining formal and non-formal learning experiences to develop a more realistic understanding of the language situation as a whole. Teachers need to be aware of the specific linguistic tools that each student possesses and how these can be used as an educational resource. Appropriate methods can be developed on the basis of the results of analytical studies on language education conducted under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Teachers/lecturers should be aware of the successes and progress of learning in other sectors of education in order to be able to evaluate the results of their colleagues' educational activities in other fields.

In light of the above, it can be concluded that the term “multilingualism” belongs to the category of concepts with unclear semantic boundaries. The substantial aspect of this concept is a language as a social product, created by a community to meet the needs of communication and is stored in the collective's memory, as well as in texts constructed through the use of this language. The generic field of multilingualism encompasses a number of specific concepts, the most prevalent of which are pluralism, bilingualism, and multilingualism.

The organization of European language policy is based on the fundamental principle of multilingualism, which is also a defining characteristic of the concept of language learning. Following the above, the transition to a new paradigm of language teaching and the technologies of practical language acquisition has become a natural progression. The distinctive characteristics of this approach can be summarised as follows:

- language is regarded as a means of learning;
- the integration of a foreign language and the content of the discipline being studied;
- the use of several languages in the learning process.

Concurrently, the European Union is engaged in scientific and applied research aimed at developing a new, effective programme that would facilitate the acquisition of foreign languages in the following areas: as a means of national and regional communication; as a means of international communication; as a means of achieving social harmony; and as a means of personal linguistic and communicative development.

Transformations in the educational area of the EU have led to a shift in the requirements for education in Ukraine, which provides for the introduction of FL into educational priorities, and into a mandatory competence component of the model of a modern personality. The primary objective of educational institutions is to cultivate fundamental multilingual proficiency, which is a pivotal competence that an individuals can develop throughout their lifetime, equipping them with the capacity to engage with a multilingual and multicultural environment.

Multilingual education in Europe has strong support of all levels of public life. The result of multilingual education is the attainment of basic multilingual competence, which allows it to be considered not only as an alternative way of learning a language, but also as a way of acquiring special knowledge, learning the values of world culture and developing social and communicative abilities of an individual. Ukraine has created conditions for the development of multilingualism at the legislative level, and the first successful steps have been taken, although there are certain problems in the implementation of such an initiative. Further scientific research is required to investigate the potential benefits of integrating a multilingual component into the educational programmes of higher education institutions.

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