

Iryna Popova
Alla Anisimova
Iryna Bezrodnykh

Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University, Ukraine

Multilingually and multiculturally oriented Master's curriculum: Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University experience

Abstract

The present article is aimed at showing Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University (DNU) experience in developing multilingually and multiculturally oriented Master's curriculum for the speciality "Language and Literature (English)" with specialization "Multilingual Education". In the first section of the paper the notion multilingualism has been defined, and the difference between multilingualism and polyglottism has been shown. The article goes on to emphasize the main principles of the Bologna Process in Europe and their peculiarities in the Ukrainian system of higher education. Further the distinguishing features of bilingual and multilingual education have been singled out. The second section – Discussion and Results – is aimed at showing practical implementation of principles of multilingual education in Master's curriculum. The curriculum uses the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* as a basis for defining competences and learning outcomes for the whole curriculum and for each syllabus in particular. All the competences have been described and modified so as to meet the higher education demands provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and multilingual education requirements as well. The Master's curriculum of the mentioned speciality consists of five blocks. Each block contains a particular number of ECTS points with account of European higher education demands. Besides, every block includes several disciplines; and after studying them all the necessary learning outcomes and competences are provided. We come to the conclusion that multilingual education is a key to success – as co-learning of languages and linguocultures promote the formation of multilingual polycultural personality that provides a lifelong learning.

Key words: multilingualism, multilingual education, curriculum, syllabi, competences, learning outcomes, specialization, cross-cultural communication.

Introduction

Nowadays, multilingualism and multilingual education are a "fashionable trend" in education process and a distinguishing feature of modern Europe. Although these phenomena have existed for

centuries, they have reacquired their popularity and renewed the interest of specialists only at the beginning of the 21st century, when international relations and mobility have fully occupied the lives of

people and become an integral part of their professional activity. Multicultural diversity, intercultural communication, global social, political and cultural interdependence have become common realia of the modern world, and all of them put pressures on the educational systems.

These days multilingual education offers the best possibilities for young people to become competent and in-demand members of the globalized and polycultural society. However, this aim is not to be achieved easily. There are many unanswered questions and doubts as to multilingual education policy and its implementation, curriculum and syllabi design, teacher professional requirements and development, but there is also much that we understand and know very well, based on empirical research of many countries of the world.

This article highlights educational experience in multilingual education introduction and implementation of English Philology Department (Faculty of Ukrainian and Foreign Philology and Fine Arts) of Oles Honchar Dnipropetrovsk National University (DNU). The department has been working on the Master's curriculum for the speciality "Language and Literature (English)" with specialization "Multilingual education" within the framework of Tempus joint project DIMTEGU – Development and Introduction

of Multilingual Teacher Education Programs at Universities of Georgia and Ukraine. Thus, the given article focuses on DNU experience in forming a polycultural multilingual personality, possessing creative thinking.

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 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..." [0; 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') [0; 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 [0].

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" [0]. 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" [0].

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" [0; p. 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 [0; p. 4].

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 [0; 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 [0].

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* [0] 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.

Curriculum analysis

The aims of Master’s curriculum of the speciality “Language and Literature (English) with specialization “Multilingual Education” in DNU are:

- to get acquainted with the contemporary tendencies in the sphere of philological research and the methods of scientific analysis of cultural and lingual interaction results;
- to acquire mastery in cross-cultural and multilingual analysis and differentiation of linguistic and social peculiarities of definite strata and groups of contemporary European pluricultural multilingual space;
- to apply the acquired knowledge in language teaching activities comparing and contrasting different linguistic systems;
- to get acquainted with the terminology used in scientific philology of the contemporary pluricultural surrounding;
- to know about classification of educational technologies and features in classrooms' organization adopted for the appropriate technology;
- to form a system of pedagogical skills of students;
- to acquire the issues of present day research philological methodology. To explore algorithms of philological scientific research;
- to explore contemporary technical systems which are used in the process of majors teaching and learning in high school establishments;

- to master a method of syllabus writing of majors at the institutions of higher education;
- to apply the acquired knowledge in language teaching activities, and thus explore the details of the second foreign language through the first foreign language;
- to introduce modern approaches in foreign languages teaching, to form professional and teaching skills in the field of teaching foreign languages in accordance with the Bologna process;
- to develop interest in language learning, language planning and language use in education, as well as, to stimulate critical thinking and analytical skills;
- to analyze theories based on knowledge accumulation and models that emphasize the accumulation of human capital.
- The curriculum develops the following *social and individual competences*:
 - comprehension and understanding of multicultural behavioral ethic norms;
 - adherence to bio-ethic principle; ability to identify humanitarian priorities of personal professional activity and implement them in practice;
 - understanding of healthy lifestyle necessity and abidance to it;
 - ability to learn and study; capacity to gain knowledge in new specific cross-cultural fields, and form new special skills/habits in accordance with professional functions and typical tasks;
- power for criticism and self-criticism; ability to analyze personal activity, regulate and control it;
- creativity, systematic analytical thinking;
- adaptability, communicative skills; effective communication capacity;
- goal-reaching persistence.
- In the process of study the student is expected to master the following *general scientific and instrumental competences*:
 - basic cognizance in Philosophy, Psychology, Pedagogic, Multilingual Education; knowledge which allows personal cultural, multicultural and social development, understanding of ethic values, national history, economics and law, comprehension of links between social causes and results, and ability use this knowledge in professional field;
 - basic knowledge in IT sphere; capacity in modern soft and network usage;
 - ability to communicate orally and in a written form in Ukrainian;
 - multilingual ability to use Ukrainian and foreign languages in all main types of communication activity (speaking, reading, listening comprehension, writing) and while translation on the grounds of phonetic, lexical and grammar

competences in English, second and third foreign languages;

- basic computer skills; ability to use the computer and modern soft in professional activity; skills in conducting information, ability to use IT in prediction, project-making and analyzing information as a source of personal intellectual support.

Besides, specialization “Multilingual Education” is aimed at acquiring the following *general professional and specialized professional competences*:

- mastering the system of linguistic knowledge, which includes knowledge of the main phonetic, lexical, grammatical, word-building phenomena and principles of functioning of the major and second foreign languages, their functional diversities;
- structurizing and integrating knowledge from various spheres of professional activity and ability to use this knowledge in solving different professional tasks;
- knowledge of the methods of contrasting languages concerning those languages which are learned (Ukrainian, Russian, English, German/French);
- detection of potential mistakes in using language units, which are connected with interference between native, major and second foreign languages;

- finding ways of correcting those mistakes in using language units, which are connected with interference between native, major and second foreign languages;
- possession of methods and principles of contrasting languages, having different structure, on different levels.

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. The learning outcomes of the curriculum are described below. *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). Block3 *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)*.

Block 1 *Disciplines of professionally oriented humanitarian and socioeconomic training* contains four disciplines: *Civil defence, Professional safety, Pedagogics and psychology of higher school* and *History of major language country (Great Britain)*.

The courses *Civil Defence* and *Professional Safety* are aimed at acquiring knowledge and practice of civil protection, professional safety and health training. They are mandatory and have not been modified.

The courses *Pedagogics and psychology of higher school* and *History of major language country (Great Britain)* are also obligatory according to the demands of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine. However, a

special focus on multilingualism and multiculturalism has been added into the syllabi of these courses.

The next block **Block 2** includes five *disciplines of professionally oriented fundamental training: Methodology and structure of scientific research, Methodology of teaching majors at higher school, Theory of literature, General linguistics* and *Contemporary trends of contrastive linguistics of native, major and second foreign languages*. It should be noted that four of these disciplines are not new, but they have been modernized with account of the demands for the specialization "Multilingual Education".

A course that is completely new within this block is *Contemporary trends of contrastive linguistics of native, major and second foreign languages* aimed providing students with approaches and techniques adopted in comparing several languages: Ukrainian, English, German / French. The main objective of the course is to acquire the terminology, theories on contrastive linguistics and to explore peculiarities of linguistic patterns shared in different languages.

Block 3 involves *disciplines for professional and practical training* contains four disciplines: *Major foreign language (English), Scientific-research project in*

* *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*

multilingual training of students, Teaching practice and Diploma paper. This block includes the disciplines that are directly connected with specialization “Multilingual Education” and are aimed at development of multilingual and multicultural competences. We find it necessary to describe these courses.

The course *Major foreign language (English)* is aimed at forming communicative competence of students within the limits of the English curriculum for the 5th-year of study (master's degree); to develop students' comprehension of the English speech that is typical of native speakers. After the acquisition of the course, the students will have acquired the following professional competences: skills for annotating, reviewing, analyzing and translating original English texts of different genres; skills for the choice and application of the topical vocabulary from discipline.

The main objective of the course is to develop productive speaking on the extended subjects.

The goals of the course *Scientific-research project in multilingual training of students* are to conduct a research with the aim to practice the scientific skills acquired in a course of studying multilingual disciplines namely Contrastive Linguistics (grammatical aspects, lexical aspects, phonetic peculiarities) as well as issues related to cross-cultural

interaction between Ukrainian, Russian, English, German / French.

Teaching practice is aimed at getting practical skill of teaching, ability to organize the audience, to prepare and develop the lesson for the students of a definite age range. Special attention is paid to the understanding of organization of higher education studying process as subject-subject cooperation of a teacher and a student. Course objectives are (1) familiarizing Master degree students with the peculiarities of studies organization in a higher educational institution and the specific character of teaching activity; (2) multilingual pedagogic and methodological training for pedagogic practice and working as a teacher.

Diploma paper. The students are supposed to do a research with the aim to practice the scientific skills acquired in a course of studying linguistic disciplines within the framework of multilingual curriculum (branches – linguistics, stylistics, linguo-stylistics) applying comparative and contrastive approaches with special emphasis on multilingualism as well as to issues related to cross-cultural interaction between Ukrainian, Russian, English, German / French. The objectives of the diploma are as follows: (1) to master terminology, theories on related disciplines; (2) to develop critical thinking in scientific sphere; (3) to develop

skills in translating professional and scientific discourse and others.

Block 4 and **Block 5** of the Master's curriculum is an optional part of the curriculum which means that the disciplines are chosen either according to the individual choice of a HEI or according to student's personal choice.

Block 4 *Disciplines according to the individual choice of HEI* contains four disciplines: *Multilingual Education in Contemporary European Cultural Space*, *Sociolinguistics*, *Second foreign language (German or French)* and *State examination*.

It should be noted that the first two courses of this block are brand new. The course *Multilingual Education in Contemporary European Cultural Space* is a completely new one. It is aimed at providing the students with theoretical knowledge and abilities of their practical implication in the sphere of multilingual education in contemporary European cultural space. As a result, the students will be provided with multilingual competence in higher education how to promote and motivate language learning (especially languages for specific purposes).

The course *Sociolinguistics* is also a newly developed one in the Master's curriculum. It is aimed at deepening awareness of the social nature of the

language, its social functions, its role in the multilingual social continuum, impact of social factors on different elements of the language system in diachronic aspect. After completing the course, the students will acquire mastery in cross-cultural communication analysis and differentiation of linguistic peculiarities of definite social strata and groups of contemporary European pluricultural multilingual space.

The course *Second foreign language (German or French)* is a part of multilingual education in its broad meaning.

State examination is a type of control that provides insight in the development of knowledge and skills. It is expected to show whether the students have acquired mastery of the course and to demonstrate whether all the competences have been developed. According to the curriculum, State Examination is situated in Block 4, which means that it is up to a HEI to decide whether to hold the examination.

Finally, **Block 5** *Disciplines according to student's individual choice* contains three disciplines: *Literary studies*, *Theory of intercultural communication*, and *topical problems of linguistics of the native, major and second foreign languages* and *Varieties of the major foreign language (English)*. In this block we find the courses that the student chooses for himself. It should be emphasized

that this block reflects the topical problems of multilingual education and develops multilingual and multicultural competences.

Having in the aim an emphasis on multilingually and multiculturally oriented language teaching/learning (especially languages for specific purposes) process and integration into common European space, Master's education with the multilingual component focuses on issues related to cross-cultural interaction between Ukrainian, English, German/French for life-long learning. This process is supplied by the resources of libraries, IT technologies (Moodle platform) and computerization, Web- and electronic resources, which support students and academic staff with their learning/teaching process.

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.

References

- Abello-Contesse Ch., Chandler P. M. Bilingual and Multilingual Education in the 21st Century: Building on Experience / Ch. Abello-Contesse, P. M. Chandler. – Multilingual Matters. – 352 p.
- Council of Europe. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. – 2001.
- Dewaele J., Wei L. Multilingualism, Empathy, and Multicompetence / J. Dewaele // International Journal of Multilingualism. - 2012. - P. 1-15.
- Education in a Multilingual World. UNESCO Education Position Paper. – 2003. – 39 p.
- Guide to the Bologna Process. The UK HE Europe Unit // <http://www.unl.pt/data/qualidade/bolonha/guide-to-the-bologna-process.pdf>
- Hornberger N., Vaish V. Multilingual Language Policy and School Linguistic Practice: Globalization and English-language Teaching in India, Singapore and South Africa / N. Hornberger, V. Vaish // Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education. - 2008. - P. 1-15.
- Hornberger, N. H. Multilingual Education Policy and Practice: Ten Certainties (Grounded in Indigenous Experience) / H. h. Hornberger. – Language Teaching. – 42 (2) – 2009. – P. 197-211.
- Lewis E. G. Bilingualism and bilingual education: The ancient world to the renaissance / E. G. Lewis // J. A. Fishman (Ed.), Bilingual education: An international sociological perspective. – Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1976. – P. 150–200.
- Multilingual Europe: Reflections on Language and Identity / Ed. by J. Warren and H. M. Benbow. – Cambridge, 2008.
- Multilingualism in the European Union // http://www.ecose.org/gr8parents_files/multilingualism_in_eu.doc
- The Bologna Process 2020 – The European Higher Education Area in the new decade Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009 //

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/leuven_1ouvain-la-neuve_communicu%C3%A9_april_2009.pdf

Wilton A. Multilingualism and foreign language learning / A. Wilton // Handbook of Foreign Language Communication and Learning, K. Knapp & B. Seidlhofer (eds). – Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009. – P. 45-78