V. Yashkina

В. В. Яшкіна

В. В. Яшкина

*Oles Honchar Dnipro National University
Дніпровський національний університет імені Олеся Гончара
Днепропетровский национальный университет имени Олеся Гончара*

LIFE LONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ITS ROLE IN FORMING MULTILINGUAL MIND: EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ПРОТЯГОМ ЖИТТЯ ТА ЙОГО РОЛЬ У ФОРМУВАННІ МУЛЬТИЛІНГВАЛЬНОГО РОЗУМУ: ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИЙ ДОСВІД

НЕПРЕРЫВНОЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА И ЕГО РОЛЬ В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ МУЛЬТИЛИНГВАЛЬНОГО РАЗУМА: ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЙ ОПЫТ

In the focus of attention in the article are challenges of multilingual education reflected through the prism of prominent European multilingual universities' experience. Crucial issue considered is whether they aim to develop a multilingual and multicultural competence in all students or a considerable part of the student population, or whether they allow students to follow a monolingual programme in the context of a multilingual university environment. The higher demand for international mobility among students and staff is one more incentive to adapt the educational programme at least in part and open it to other target groups, supported by a more heterogeneous staff. It is common knowledge that many European universities have parallel programmes in English and native languages, which aim at separate student groups. At the same time there are those which integrate programmes and expect their students to follow at least part of their studies in both languages. The main difficulty for the latter is the case of how to prepare a shift in language of instruction. This is the problem all universities with different languages at undergraduate and master's level have to face, and there is no easy solution. One step towards lessening tension is the «early start direction»: a renovation in views to primary school education. As far as the academy itself is concerned, the increasingly dominant role of English in research makes it necessary to add English as a language of instruction. Without English as a *lingua franca* there would be much less communication and mutual understanding amongst Europeans today.

Keywords: multilingualism, multilingual and monolingual programmes, language of instruction, early start, lingua franca.

У дослідженні сконцентовано увагу на викликах, з якими стикається сучасна мультилінгвальна освіта, та які розглянуто на ґрунті досвіду деяких провідних європейських університетів. Центральним питанням є таке: чи націлені університети на формування мультилінгвальної та мультикультурної компетентності в усіх студентів без винятку (у переважної більшості студентів), або вони дозволяють студентам обирати монолінгвальні програми в контексті мультилінгвального університетського оточення? Високий попит на міжнародну мобільність як серед студентів, так і серед викладачів вишів є ще одним чинником, що стимулює до адаптування програм сучасним вимогам, навіть частково. Загальновідомо, що багатьма європейськими університетами пропонуються паралельні програми навчання англійською та місцевими мовами, які скорельовано на окремі групи. В той же час існують і заклади з інтегрованими програмами, які надають студентам змогу опанувати частину навчального навантаження двома мовами. Як здійснити просування студента на шляху до іншої, ніж рідна, мови викладання – є найважливішим питанням для другого типу закладів. Ця проблема постає перед усіма

мультилінгвальними університетами і не має простого вирішення. Одним із варіантів усунення проблеми є так званий «ранній старт»: оновлений погляд на початкову освіту. В рамках академічної освіти вочевидь зростаюча, за даними наукових розвідок, панівна роль англійської, у свою чергу, підкреслює необхідність її введення як мови викладання. Без англійської як «мови-посередника» сучасна Європа буде мати набагато менше шансів до комунікації та взаєморозуміння.

Ключові слова: мультилінгвалізм, мультилінгвальні та монолінгвальні програми, мова викладання, «ранній старт», «мова-посередник».

В центре предлагаемого исследования – «вызовы», которые встают на пути современного мультилингвального образования и рассматриваются сквозь призму опыта некоторых ведущих европейских университетов. Ключевой вопрос заключается в следующем: нацелены ли университеты на формирование мультилингвальной и мультикультурной компетентности у всех студентов без исключения (у подавляющего большинства студентов), или же студенты вправе выбирать монолингвальные программы в контексте мультилингвального окружения? Высокий спрос на международную студенческую и преподавательскую мобильность является еще одним стимулом к адаптации (возможно и частичной) программ к требованиям времени. Для специалистов не секрет, что многие университеты предлагают параллельное обучение на английском и местном языке, и оно направлено на отдельные группы студентов. Одновременно существуют университеты с интегрированными программами. Как осуществить продвижение студента к восприятию неродного языка обучения – является сложным вопросом. Один из вариантов его решения – «ранний старт»: обновленный подход к обучению в младшей школе. Возрастающая роль английского языка, и это подтверждается исследованиями, подчеркивает необходимость его введения в качестве языка преподавания. Без английского как языка-посредника современная Европа будет иметь меньше возможностей для коммуникации и взаимопонимания.

Ключевые слова: мультилингвализм, мультилингвальные и монолингвальные программы, язык преподавания, «ранний старт», «язык-посредник».

Contemporary studies in the field of multilingualism, especially in European multilingual contexts show that for the recent decades there has been increasing interest to this expanding phenomenon in Europe, though the number of research studies tackling the analysis of language use and language attitudes towards multilingualism is still limited.

This article intends to partly contribute to forming common multilingual awareness both inside and outside modern classroom considering the fact that classrooms across the world are increasingly populated by students and teachers of diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

The research material is provided, basically, by contemporary research studies grounded on the students' own assessment, together with the information and the knowledge they gain. It leads to the establishment of students' attitudes towards different languages, the speakers of these languages and the learning process itself. Thus, different investigations focus on the analysis of the language use and the language attitudes.

Europe has been multilingual for at least 2.5 millennia [1, p. 126], and with changing patterns of migration language contact situations within Europe have been constantly changing. Looking at linguistic and cultural diversity in this way raises the question of how mother tongue and second language (and culture) may be understood in relation to each other, and what implications alternative views of this relationship may have for educational practice [3].

Not only the changed political reality and the globalized economy, but also changes in the academic world itself, have gradually impelled European universities to abandon the monolingual approach and try to accord some place to other languages in their institutional design. As far as the academy itself is concerned, the increasingly dominant role of English

in research makes it necessary to add English as a language of instruction. The higher demand for international mobility among students and staff is another incentive to adapt the educational programme at least in part and open it to other target groups, supported by a more heterogeneous staff.

Unfortunately, language import leads to imbalance: the group of people associated with a more influential language is usually seen as more powerful or economically and culturally superior [6]. When power relations change, patterns of language borrowing do, too. The issue of linguistic borrowing as a threat is taken up in the contribution by many (Antje Wilton, Annick De Houwer, John Benjamins, Jacomine Nortier, and others) who illuminate the conflicting effects that English as language with high prestige has on public perception in Europe.

In European language history, the changing patterns of linguistic diversity and political power have given rise to a number of languages gaining a wider than regional currency. For example, the establishment of Latin as *a lingua franca* in most parts of the Roman Empire was promoted by a number of factors such as the dominance of Roman political, economical, technological and military power, cultural superiority and the development of a literary tradition. Latin shared the role of a European *lingua franca* with Greek, which was the main language of wider communication in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire [5, p. 82].

Latin continued to be used as *a lingua franca* throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period. As such, it served different speech communities and various domains of discourse (Haye, 2005; Maass & Volmer, 2005). With the rise of the so-called vernacular languages as literary languages in Europe and the establishment of national languages in early modern European history (Gardt, 2000) other languages than Latin were increasingly used as *linguae francae* in certain areas of public and private life. Obvious examples are the use of French as the language of diplomacy and German as a supra-regional *lingua franca* as well as an international language of learning and modern science (Carli & Ammon, 2008). Present-day situation indicates that English has won the status by many positions, being currently *a lingua franca* that educated people operate throughout Europe.

For some universities it is a matter of principle: does it still make sense to stick to a monolingual university system while students are supposed to master more languages to perform well in research and on an increasingly international labour market and find their way in multicultural communities? Other universities believe it is necessary, in order to continue to attract sufficient student numbers in an increasingly market-oriented academic world, where international competition might be the decisive element to realize minimum numbers for survival or marginal success.

In order to cater for the higher education of students as well as following European language policy recommendations, a rapidly growing number of primary schools have in recent years started offering English from the first year of school. The aim is to have more pupils reach high levels of proficiency and a good pronunciation by giving them an early start.

More and more primary schools in Europe offer English as a first foreign language (Blondin, Candelier, Edelenbos, Johnstone, Kubanek-German &

Taeschner). Researches note that the results of this pre-secondary English instruction are quite variable, with some pupils having a much higher degree of proficiency than others. In a unique study, they compare the levels of English proficiency reached by a group of Dutch pupils with access to English through the media, and a group of Dutch

pupils without such access. In addition, in each of these groups they distinguish between pupils who are in so-called «bilingual education», which means they receive English-medium instruction about 50 % of the time, and «monolingual education», where English is restricted to a few hours' instruction per week.

When these programmes started there was some worry that an early beginning may lead to delays in the development of the first language and that adding another language might be a problem for pupils who enter the educational system with another language than mother tongue. Evaluations have shown that so far these worries are unwarranted and that both English and mother tongue develop well in the system [2].

Both in Great Britain and Ireland as well as in continental Europe, children in bilingual families may grow up with English as a L1 in the home in addition to another language that is being learned [5, p.97]. There is both practical and research evidence suggesting that the number of families who use English at home but who have no family ties with an English-speaking country is on the rise. More and more young parents in continental Europe with the same monolingual language background who have learned English as a L2 apparently decide to speak English to their offspring, in addition to or instead of their L1.

Research evidence from a large survey of language use in approximately 18,000 families in the officially Dutch-speaking region of Flanders, Belgium (De Houwer) supports this: English featured among the top 4 languages being spoken in the bilingual and multilingual families that were part of the sample (besides French, Arabic and Turkish). Yet there has been no large immigration wave from Englishspeaking countries into Belgium.

Many of the families in the survey who used English at home held Belgian or other citizenships that are not traditionally connected with English. Further practical evidence suggests that throughout Europe, many students from linguistically mixed couples without a connection to an English-speaking country overheard English at home through conversations between their parents and thus were exposed to English as a third-first language. Students who did not have English as a L1 may have started to learn English outside the home from an early age onwards. This is particularly the case in Great Britain and Ireland, where families with an immigration background often speak a language other than English at home [7]. This study supports the view that contexts of acquisition should be fully taken into account in explanations of early bilingual development.

The early acquisition of English as a second language in today's Europe is a process that is also more and more taking place outside Great Britain and Ireland (programmes are being developed also for Brazilian Portuguese, French, German, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Spanish students).

It may also be offered at universities through partial immersion, that is, through the fact that teacher addresses the audience exclusively in English for some of the time. There is a direct relation between the amount of exposure to a second language in the university context and the degree of proficiency one can expect.

Even when competence in English is not an issue because all interlocutors involved have a very high command of the language, successful communication can be influenced and even threatened by cultural aspects. This point is taken up by Susan Gass and Daniel Reed in their account of a cooperative project between Anatolia College in Greece and Michigan State University involving the development and implementation of an English testing procedure. Several cross-cultural problems arose during this enterprise that were not language related. Rather, the underlying cultural diversity and the particular culturally

defined notions of the importance of testing were determining factors in how English and the testing of English were dealt with.

Contemporary research studies testify to the many different facets of language policy in a multilingual and multicultural Europe. They acknowledge the interdependence between cultures, languages and situations that influence and determine the use of *lingua franca* in Europe. It seems wise to move away from the common conception of unidirectional and powerful influence of English on linguistic diversity and cultural independence. Without English as a *lingua franca* there would be much less communication and mutual understanding amongst Europeans today.

Conclusion. To establish relevant attitude of students as well as beneficial outcome in education, universities have two solutions. They may limit the use of English as instructional language to a few, well-defined contexts and maintain the national language in its dominant role. Alternatively, they may try to go further and follow a more radical multilingual policy, which involves a transformation of the university administration as well, and demands a multilingual competence of both academic and administrative staff and the students. This will evolve more environmental languages, one alongside the others.

References

1. **Green, D. H.** (1998). *Language and History in the Early Germanic World*. Cambridge: CUP, 272 p.
2. **Goorhuis-Brouwer, S. de Bot, K.** (2010). Early English language teaching in the Netherlands: The impact on first and second language acquisition. *International Journal of Bilingualism* (13), 47–52 p.
3. **Field, F.** (2002). Linguistic Borrowing in Bilingual Contexts. *Studies in Language Companion Series* (62). 172–174 p.
4. **Jacomine, N.** «The more languages, the more English?» *A Dutch perspective* (113). Volume 8. 128–132 p.
5. **Houwer, Annick D., Wilton, A.** English in Europe Today. Sociocultural and educational perspectives. The Braden: PT, 137 p.
6. **Thomason, S.** (2001). *Language Contact. An Introduction*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 5–11 p.
7. URL: http://www.cilt.org.uk/community_languages.aspx
8. **Leeuwen, Van Theo and Humphrey, Sally** (1996) «On learning to look through a geographer's eyes», in Ruqaiya Hasan and Geoff Williams (eds), *Literacy in Society*, New York: Longman, 372 p.

Надійшла до редакції 29.11.2019