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Lexicology and Multilingualism

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issues where multilingualism as a linguistic phenomenon is successfully revealed in the Lexicological studies, namely, in the five lexicological problematic questions of the course, and the whole topic is dedicated to the Multilingual aspect in Lexicology.

It covers the description of CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) and some aspects of its influence on the process of development of students' multilingual competence. It is emphasized that multilingualism has become a widespread phenomenon in modern society. A considerable number of people speak more than two languages in their everyday life due to historical, social, or economic reasons. This is one of the causes why multilingual competence has been defined as one of the key competences that a modern competitive specialist should possess according to the European System of Higher Education. CLIL is usually thought to play an increasingly important part in language education, both as a feature of foreign teaching and learning, and as an element of bi- and multilingualism, that was evidently presented in the course of English Lexicology. The ability to apply multilingual competence is one of the key objectives of the curriculum. Multilingual competence presupposes that speakers use different languages for different contexts and purposes, but their influence on the languages may differ. The article gives a detailed description of the features typical of CLIL. So, subject learning combined with language learning leads to the formation of multilingual knowledge, which contributes to the development of multilingual competence.

Keywords: CLIL, multilingualism, bilingual education, multilingual education, multilingual competence, lexicology.

Introduction

Nowadays, it is hardly possible to imagine our life without communication in its broadest sense. This interaction occurs both on national and international levels. To make the process of communication successful, one must be aware of some linguistic, cultural and political issues.

The idea of multilingualism and multilingual education has been attracting researchers' attention for a long time.

Multilingualism as a societal phenomenon contains a great number of aspects and notions in its multifacet structure. What should be pointed out within the framework of the present

research is the two key principles stored in the notion *multilingualism*.

On the one hand, multilingualism is an ability of a particular community or group of people to speak more than one language and to use this ability in their everyday lives. Besides, 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. However, the first official guidelines on multilingualism were highlighted by the European Union Commission only in 2005 (Knight, 1999).

On the other hand, the term "multilingualism" is applied when describing a simultaneous and peaceful coexistence of different linguistic communities on one specific geographical or geopolitical territory (Knight, 1999).Moreover, multilingualism is guaranteed in the official documents of the EU and adopted by decision-making authorities and translated into and issued in eleven languages.

Multilingualism has become a common phenomenon in the modern world and can be analyzed from different perspectives. Other scientists introduce another term *plurilingualism* making 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).

As a democratic organisation, the European Union 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.

Theoretical background

However, the level of awareness of multilingualism varies considerably. It is guaranteed at the highest level of political representation. In meetings held at the highest level of the European Council, simultaneous interpretation is provided and all the documents are translated into eleven languages (Truchot,

2004). This is also the case in plenary sessions of the European Parliament.

The idea of multilingualism and multilingual education has been attracting researchers' attention for quite a long time. The European Union is striving to implement a multilingual component as a part of its general policy into all the spheres of social life (Mehisto, 2008).

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).

Specifically, bi-/multilingual 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 the 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 achievements as well as their cognitive development are given consideration, regardless of the language used in classroom (Abello-Contesse& Chandler, 2013).

In addition to that, multilingualism is understood in multilingual education as a multilingual competence that means to have high proficiency in two languages but be relatively monocultural (Baker, 2011).

Identifying the extent to which individuals should be proficient in each of their languages is essential for understanding which goals are attainable in multilingual education and in the process of acquiring a multilingual competence.

Moreover, acquisition of multilingual competence has become one of the key demands of the higher education; this is a competence that a competitive specialist should possess. However, there comes a question how a person can acquire a multilingual competence.

Methods

One of the answers to this question is to do that through **CLIL** type approach that is

Content and Language Integrated Learning. CLIL is usually thought to play an increasingly important part in language education, both as a feature of foreign language teaching and learning, and as an element of bi- and multilingualism. As students develop their language competences, they are able to deal with more complex topics, so teaching material needs to offer learners an interesting and challenging subject matter (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Lasagabaster, 2009) .

It is worth mentioning that CLIL is generally thought to be a "dual-focused approach" that gives equal attention to language and content; it is an educational approach where curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language.

CLIL has been identified as very important by the European Commission because it can provide effective opportunities for students to use their new language skills. At present, it is common knowledge, CLIL type approach has become frequently adopted in European HEIs in the field of economics, humanities, law etc.

The courses in the curricular should be developed in such a way that they should correspond to the requirements of formal education to make the students' competences on the global arena. In this way, subject learning is combined with language learning without overcrowding the timetable.

Thus, such an approach presupposes language instructions in English as *lingua franca*, moreover, the professors and instructors are not native speakers of English that meets the requirements of CLIL type approach.

It should be mentioned that CLIL lessons are usually timetabled as content lessons that is our students master all the majors mentioned above in English, while the target language (English) continues as a subject in its own right in the shape of foreign language lessons.

In an attempt to identify the linguistic capacity of multilinguals, the researchers (Cenoz; Gorter, 2011; Knight, 1999) agree that multilingual competence involves using several languages appropriately and effectively for communication in oral and written language.

There are a number of reasons why CLIL is important in language education and development of students' multilingual competence:

1. Enriching the content of language learning and teaching makes it more interesting and more challenging. Language teaching which concentrates only on linguistic development does not provide the same opportunities for developing pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences; the intellectual challenges offered by good CLIL teaching have the potential to enhance cognitive growth;

2. Combining language classes with subject learning is a way of using time more efficiently;

3. All subjects have their own kind of literacy; the 'languages' of literature and history, for example, have specificlinguistic and discourse features. Language teaching at universities needs to help learners to acquire these subject literacies, and the development of study skills is an important part of making progress in language competences (Kemp, 2009).

It should be mentioned that multilingual approach involves learning subjects such as history, literature or others, through a foreign language. It can be very successful in enhancing the learning of languages and other subjects, and helping students develop their multilingual competence.

Having completed such a course with CLIL type approach the students are supposed to acquire multilingual competence in the field-specific and professional domain, understanding of national and international dimensions of their profession, knowledge and understanding of how multilingual and multicultural individuals and communities operate in such contexts where linguistic and intercultural skills are required.

The aim of the article is to define the peculiarities of CLIL and to figure out the part it plays in acquiring Lexicology as a fundamental discipline in a multilingual aspect.

The results of the research conducted in the framework of the Tempus Project DIMTEGU "Development and Introduction of Multilingual Teacher Education Programs at Universities of Georgia and Ukraine" (530360-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-GE-TEMPUS-JPCR) have been accumulated in separate chapters of the textbook of Lexicology of Modern English: theory and practice (Anisimova, 2017).

Results and discussions

Inspired by the ideas of multilingualism some units of the course of Modern Lexicology are presented in the multilingual aspect (Anisimova, 2017).

As far as lexicological studies are concerned, a multilingual aspect is revealed in phraseological units, borrowings, in links with other branches etc., that is among the fourteen specific problems the course of Lexicology contains, the multilingual research is done in five units.

The material of the course addresses fundamental issues of Modern English Lexicology, namely, the general description of Lexicology as a branch of Linguistics and its specific problems. The material proposed serves as an effective tool for understanding the lexical and semantic peculiarities of Modern English Lexicology and leads to students'

awareness in doing their own linguistic research.

There are different linguistic aspects. Any language is the unity of different aspects: *grammar, vocabulary,* and *sound system.* As Lexicology deals with the vocabulary system, it is definitely connected with all the rest of the aspects. The word is studied in several branches of linguistics and not only in Lexicology, and the latter, in its turn, is closely connected with *General Linguistics, the History of the Language, Phonetics, Stylistics, Grammar* and such new branches of language studies as *Sociolinguistics, Cognitive Linguistics, Multilingual Studies* and some others.

Lexicology is bound with *Sociolinguistics* as well as with other Studies in a multilingual aspect.

Sociolinguistics, which deals with relations between the way the language works and develops and the facts of social life, language, is the reality of thought, and the thought is developing with the development of society. Every phenomenon of human society finds its reflection in the vocabulary.

Sociolinguists see multilingualism as a socially constructed phenomenon and a bilingual or multilingual person as a social actor. It is also important to mention that for a multilingual speaker, language choice is not only an effective means of communication but also an act of national identity.

Li Wei states that "every time we say something in one language when we might just as easily have said it in another, we are reconnecting with people, situations, and power configurations from our history of past interactions and imprinting on that history our attitudes towards the people and languages concerned; through language choice, we maintain and change ethic group boundaries and personal relationships, and construct and define "self" and "other" within a broader political economy and historical context" (Wei, 2008).

Lexicological studies in a multilingual aspect give us assurance to state that *phraseological units* are the heritage of the language showing national verbalized peculiarities of mentality, cognition, and special acquisition of the worldview. The issue of links between language and culture is of crucial importance in Modern linguistics. As a result, the most significant are the linguistic aspects that depict the national originality and national peculiarity of a definite notion.

Phraseology represents both physical worldview and social, psychological state of a human being, as well as his emotions, feelings and inner world. All these allow us to state that phraseological semantics of value is anthropocentric, because the very person is the reflection and the leaner ideals of definite statements as well as systems of knowledge.

From our point of view in the phraseological units (idioms) with flaura component there coded the information on archaic belief and understanding of environmental space by the representatives of a definite ethnos (Ex. '*fresh as a daisy, pure as a lily*', '*come up to rose'*; *an apple oddiscourse, "to hand smb a lemon',* etc).

Borrowings as one of the results of language replenishment vividly show the multilingual character of the language.

The English vocabulary has a mixed character. The leading role in the history of its development belongs to the word formation and semantic changes patterned according to the specific features of the English language system. This system absorbed the vast majority of loan words according to its own standards. So, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish old borrowings from a native word. For example, the word *cheese*, *street*, *wall*, *wine* belong to the earliest layer of Latin borrowings (Anisimova, 2017).

However, there are a lot of loan words which can be clearly defined as borrowed because of their peculiarity in pronunciation, spelling, and morphology. The initial position of the sounds [v], [dʒ] and [ʒ] is a sign that the word is not of native word-stock: vacuum (Latin), valley (French),vanilla (Spanish). The initial [ʒ] occurs in comparatively late borrowings: gendarme.

Another indicators of borrowings are initial letters *j, x, z* and such combinations as *ph, kh* in the root indicate the foreign origin of the word; *philology* (Greek), *khaki* (Indian).

Some letters are pronounced differently depending on the origin of the word. That is why, letter *x* is pronounced as [ks] or [gz] in words of native and Latin origin respectively, or as [z] in *xylophone* (Greek). Such a combination of letters as *ch* is pronounced as [tʃ] in words of native origin (*chair, child*), as [ʃ] in words of late French origin (*machine, parachute*), and [k] in words of Greek origin (*epoch, Chemistry*) (Anisimova, 2017).

From the standpoint of multilingualism the linguistic phenomenon for *barbarism* attracts special attention. Barbarisms are words taken from other languages used by the English people in conversation or in writing but not assimilated and which have corresponding English equivalents; *addio, cia-goodbye.*

It should be mentioned that the criteria of barbarism revelation are: strange pronunciation and strange spelling. Barbarism enters languages in 2 ways: through oral or written speeches.

Another manifestation of multilingual character of the language in a lexicological aspect is the phenomenon of the English language varieties.

Considering the varieties of the English language to which we study such national varieties as American English, British English,

Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English. We should specify *European English* as a territorial variant.

Speaking about Europe, we may state that English functions here as a *lingua franca (ELF-English as Lingua Franca)* – a language used by people whose first (native) languages are different. This thought has also been supported by such linguists as Allan James (2000), Petra Jesenska (2007), Antje Wilton (2011) and others. This statement may also be proved by the fact that English takes the leading position in the list of the official languages of the European Union (EU). All the business letters and documents are written in this very language. According to Eurostat (the European Statistical System), English is the most widespread language in the EU countries.

Moreover, the variety of English functioning in Europe is considered by many linguists (James, 2000; Jesenska, 2007; Wilton, 2011) to be an independent one, so there have been more and more articles researching another variety of English called *European English* or *Euro-English***.**

Conclusions

So, multilingualism is an interdisciplinary issue of concern. As for the *linguistic perspective*, the research carried out within its framework concentrates on the questions connected with *language acquisition, knowledge and use*. The key objective here is to define the nature of multilingual knowledge.

While working on multilingualism we are interested in essentially the same three key issues – *multilingual knowledge*, *multilingual acquisition* and *multilingual use*. However, the research methodologies differ from the ones applied within the framework of linguistic perspective (Anisimova, 2017).

Thus, the research perspective described allows the researchers to analyze the multifacet phenomenon of multilingualism from different perspectives: multilingualism as an ability; multilingualism as a coexistence of linguistic communities on one territory; multilingualism as a linguistic phenomenon; multilingualism as an educational issue, where the courses in the curriculum are supposed to provide students with multilingual, multicultural competences. The use of CLIL type approach as well as a linguistic phenomenon of multilingualism includes many aspects, that is why it still requires further investigation.

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