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**POSTGRADUATE COURSES IN LINGUISTICS
AT UNIVERSITIES OF GREAT BRITAIN**

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У статті висвітлюються питання, пов'язані з особливостями професійної підготовки магістрів лінгвістики у Великій Британії. На прикладі відомих британських університетів (Кентський університет, Лідський університет, Есекський університет, Ланкастерський університет, Бірмінгемський університет тощо) проаналізовано магістерські програми з лінгвістики, окреслено їх загальні характеристики та особливості. Автор обґрунтовує структуру підготовки майбутніх фахівців з лінгвістики у цих вищих навчальних закладах, звертає увагу на наявність варіативності та гнучкості освітніх програм, окреслює позитивні моменти британського досвіду у професійній підготовці фахівців-лінгвістів для їх творчої реалізації у системі вищої освіти України.

Ключові слова: магістерські програми, лінгвістика, лінгвіст, Велика Британія, вищий навчальний заклад, Британський досвід

The higher education system in Ukraine is undergoing major changes. The implementation of the 2014 Law on Higher Education has become the most significant step in reforming underpinned by a democratic and pro-European agenda and aimed at transforming higher education system to correspond the needs of a modern economy, promote Ukraine's integration into international scientific activities and become truly competitive in the European Union.

The law outlines new roles and responsibilities for academic and teaching staff at all levels as they are to design and develop curricula of new generation aligned to European and international standards, employ new teaching and learning methods, assessment techniques, understand and use competence frameworks to ensure professional training of high-quality specialists in various fields.

As an object of our study we have chosen postgraduate courses in linguistics at British universities relying on a number of reasons. First of all, British higher education has achieved a worldwide reputation for quality, is recognised and respected around the world. Secondly, British curricula are designed to meet the needs of all students with the use of differentiated teaching and learning activities, celebrate and nurture the talents and intelligences of students. Finally, British universities offer a wide range of postgraduate courses combining various modern, interactive approaches to studying linguistics and produce graduates possessing profound knowledge and understanding of linguistics, key discipline-specific and intellectual skills and being in great demand in the international labour market.

Thus, the aim of our paper lays in 1) analysing the curricula of British universities offering postgraduate courses in linguistics; 2) outlining their general



characteristics and peculiarities; 3) defining positive aspects of British post-graduate courses in linguistics that will be helpful in developing Ukrainian curricula.

The official website for international students launched by the British Council – Education UK – has been of great help as official information on higher education in the UK and results on higher education institutions providing postgraduate courses in linguistics are presented there. However, theoretical framework of our research consists, predominantly, of programme specifications developed by famous British universities (University of Kent, University of Leeds, University of Essex, Queen Mary, University of London, University of Manchester, SOAS, University of London, Lancaster University, Bangor University, UCL (University College London), York St John University, University of Birmingham, University of York etc).

So, modern linguistics «being the scientific study of all aspects of the world’s languages from their sound systems and grammatical structure through the interaction of language with culture, the study of meaning in language and the use of language in modern technology» has always been an area of special interest for those eager to explore and expand its scope [9].

As you can see from *Table 1* a large number of higher education institutions (71) provide postgraduate courses in linguistics (418) [3].

Table 1

Postgraduate Courses in Linguistics at British Universities

<i>No</i>	<i>Name of the institution</i>	<i>Number of courses</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Name of the institution</i>	<i>Number of courses</i>
1.	Manchester Metropolitan University	1	41.	London Metropolitan University	2
2.	University of Bedfordshire	1	42.	City University London	1
3.	Bangor University	15	43.	University of Cambridge	3
4.	Canterbury Christ Church University	2	44.	University of Reading	9
			45.	Middlesex University	1
5.	University of Nottingham	11	46.	Coventry University	1
6.	University of Bristol	5	47.	University of Hull	3
7.	Nottingham Trent University	1	48.	Imperial College London	3
8.	Heriot-Watt University	17	49.	King’s College London, University of London	9
9.	UCL Institute of Education, University of London	1	50.	University of Liverpool	1
			51.	University of Strathclyde	1
10.	University of Surrey	8	52.	UCL (University College London)	19
11.	University of East Anglia	5			



Continuation table 1

12.	Queen Mary, University of London	5	53.	Queen's University Belfast	3
13.	University of Glasgow	5	54.	Birmingham City University	1
14.	Cardiff University	13			
15.	Kingston University	1	55.	Birkbeck, University of London	4
16.	University of Aberdeen	5			
17.	University of Sussex	3	56.	Lancaster University	8
18.	University of Leeds	18	57.	Open University	1
19.	University of Essex	27	58.	University of Huddersfield	1
20.	Ulster University	4			
21.	University of Sheffield	8	59.	Durham University	3
22.	University of Stirling	3	60.	University of Bath	4
23.	University of York	12	61.	Aston University	9
24.	University of Dundee	1	62.	University of Leicester	6
25.	University of Brighton	6	63.	University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD Carmarthen / Lampeter / London)	2
26.	Swansea University	14			
27.	Anglia Ruskin University	6			
28.	University of Exeter	1			
29.	University of Kent	6	64.	University of Oxford	4
30.	University of Central Lancashire	3	65.	Goldsmiths, University of London	2
31.	Newcastle University	24	66.	University of Birmingham	12
32.	University of Portsmouth	5			
33.	York St John University	10	67.	SOAS, University of London	6
34.	University of Greenwich	2			
35.	University of Southampton	4	68.	St Mary's University, Twickenham	3
36.	University of Warwick	7			
37.	University of Westminster	5	69.	University of Wolverhampton	1
38.	Aberystwyth University	1	70.	Northumbria University	1
39.	University of Edinburgh	9			
40.	University of Manchester	10	71.	University of Roehampton	9

Mostly, postgraduate courses in linguistics lead to Master of Arts (MA) (University of Manchester, SOAS, University of London, Lancaster University, York St John University, University of Kent, University of Leeds, UCL (University College London), Bangor University, University of York, University of Essex, Queen Mary, University of London, University of Birmingham, University of Brighton etc.) [1; 2; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13].



However, there are certain universities also offering Master of Science (MSc) (University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Aston University, UCL (University College London)), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) (University of Cambridge, Swansea University, Canterbury Christ Church University, University of Sussex, University of Greenwich, Goldsmiths, University of London, University of Reading, King's College London, University of London) and Master of Letters (MLitt from the Latin *Magister Litterarum*) (University of Stirling) degrees in linguistics as well [3]

Having studied postgraduate curricula in linguistics at British universities we have outlined their general characteristics and peculiarities. To begin with, the programmes are run on a modular basis to meet the needs of the following categories of students: those with a degree in linguistics who wish to pursue more research-oriented topics before proceeding to a research degree; those with a degree in linguistics who wish to pursue more language-based study; those with little or no previous training in linguistics who wish to acquire a knowledge of the discipline; those with little or no previous training in linguistics who wish to take a degree as a conversion course before; proceeding to a research degree.

Concerning study mode the programmes can be full-time (1 year), part-time (mainly 2 years; occasionally 3 years (SOAS, University of London, Bangor University) and max 5 years (York St John University)) and online (1-7 years (Birmingham City University)). Speaking about the programme structures they usually consist of three components, namely, *core* (compulsory; obligatory) modules, *optional* (option) modules and *dissertation*. The total number of ECTS credits to be gained by students is equal to 180.

In general, core modules offered by most British universities cover key areas of linguistics. They are Phonetics, Phonology, Semantics, Pragmatics, Foundations of Linguistics, Academic Skills in Linguistics, Research Methods. It should be mentioned that the students who have a BA in Linguistics may be exempt from compulsory modules which they have already covered as a part of their first degrees.

We find rather interesting the selection of core modules at University of York. They are Concepts and Consequences in Grammatical Theory, Sociolinguistic Theory, Trends in Linguistics Theory and Dissertation Proseminar. As we can see the emphasis is put on the development of argumentation skills and the ability to undertake independent analysis of linguistic data, as well as on the development of critical thinking in evaluating competing approaches to the same paradigms [5].

The optional modules may vary from year to year and are in the related fields of applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, forensic linguistics etc. Here is the list of the most common optional modules in linguistics: Advanced Phonology/Semantics Theory, Language Acquisition, Linguistics of Sign Language, Morphology, Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Language Teaching, Bilingualism, Historical Linguistics, Language and Sex, Sentence Processing, Language Rights, Corpus Linguistics, Language Learning, Introduction to Discourse Studies, Language Processing, Forensic Linguistics, Cognitive Linguistics, Stylistics etc. Thus, students are provided with a wide range of linguistic-related fields and can expand their understanding of different areas that suit their interests.



Some universities provide students with an opportunity to learn a new language or improve the skills they already have. The advantages of such an opportunity consist in the following: enhance communication skills; enrich experience while traveling abroad; increase career prospects. The courses culminate in a sustained period of independent research and the production of a dissertation. The necessary amount of words can vary, namely, 8000–10000 (UCL (University College London), SOAS, University of London, University of Leeds, University of Edinburgh, University of York); 10000–12000 (Queen Mary, University of London, York St John University); 12000–15000 (University of Manchester, University of Kent); 16000 (University of Essex); 20000 (Bangor University). Each student is assigned a supervisor, a member of staff who has research interests most closely connected to that topic. The supervisor will liaise with the student to enhance their ability to focus the scope, methodology and content of the dissertation and give advice throughout the duration of this research. The dissertation will be a substantial piece of written work, enabling students to develop an independent research project.

Of our interest has also become the MA in English Linguistics being a flexible distance learning degree provided by Birmingham City University. The course structure is divided into 3 stages. At Stage 1 (Postgraduate Certificate) students are to master 2 core modules and 1 optional. At Stage 2 (Postgraduate Diploma) they are to study the core module plus a further option from the Stage 1 list. At Stage 3 (Masters) the dissertation must be completed.

So, the course is made up of two components – taught modules and a dissertation. As students progress through the course, they will gain a number of credits, and the accumulation of them will enable students to gain a series of staged qualifications [2].

As regards teaching and learning methods the programmes are delivered through a combination of lectures, small-group teaching (backup classes), tutor-led and student-led seminars and tutorials, demonstrations, weekly department seminars, group exercises, open discussions, role plays, a virtual learning environment, independent study etc. Some courses also involve problem-based workshops or practical classes allowing students to engage with linguistic data and theory. Students also have the opportunity to attend subject-related conferences and talks by visiting speakers.

Assessment techniques generally imply project reports, essays, a portfolio, seen and unseen, aural and oral examinations, critiques of theoretical and methodological proposals in the literature, presentation assignments, technical exercises, dissertations, extended written analyses of data, written coursework, tests, end-of-course questionnaires etc. It should be mentioned that higher education institutions provide high-quality IT facilities, state-of-the-art media laboratories, laboratories for psycholinguistics experiments, eye-tracking labs, all-purpose teaching rooms etc [1; 2; 4; 6; 10; 11; 13].

So, postgraduate courses in linguistics at British universities aim to enable students to obtain postgraduate qualifications (MA, MSc, MPhil, MLitt) in one year (full-time), 2–3 years (part-time) or 1–7 years (online), provide smooth transition to doctoral work in case they wish to pursue their studies further and enhance further



development of critical, analytical and other transferable skills acquired at first degree level which employers seek. Students are equipped with the necessary training in a wide range of fields, namely, core areas of linguistics (phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics) and are prepared for postgraduate level writing and research (research skills), ultimately for their dissertation. Also, they are offered optional modules to develop themes covered in the core module or explore the relationship between language and other disciplines, such as stylistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics etc.

As a result future professionals can both develop extensive knowledge in linguistics and pursue their own interests due to plenty of freedom specified in the curricula. Research-led teaching ensures to address the latest challenges and breakthroughs in the field and a wide variety of learning and teaching methods as well as assessment techniques used are tailored to the learning outcomes of the different modules.

Therefore, the abovementioned positive aspects of British curricula designed for those interested in postgraduate qualification in linguistics should be taken into consideration while developing national curricula.

Rather perspective we consider detailed study of programme specifications in MA Linguistics at University of Edinburgh as it has a long history of the subject of Linguistics. We believe the obtained data to be quite useful for improving future linguists' professional training at native universities

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