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**INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH
ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION:
THE UK EXPERTS' VIEW**

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The problem of the higher education internationalisation through English as a medium of instruction (EMI) on the basis of studying HE British experts' view is considered in the article. The "higher education internationalisation" term is identified as a two-way process which includes intercultural and educational exchange. It includes the following aspects, which are expected to open wider opportunities for participants of educational process at higher school: international projects, participation in international educational interaction, student and university staff mobility as well as transparent academic and educational space. The importance of launching cooperation with governmental bodies, politicians, heads of universities, academic and teaching staff, Ukrainian and international students has been justified. The relevance of English has been agreed as a compliance criteria and a key tool for achieving the mentioned above goals. The model of policies for university internationalisation and the promotion of English as a medium of instruction has been characterized according to the following levels: national policy; institutional policy and planning. The following factors have been identified as the key ones: administrative initiatives, staffing initiatives, resource initiatives, infrastructure initiatives. The represented model is considered as a basis for further development of Ukrainian educational area in accordance with the recommendations given by the British experts for each level of the higher educational system (systemic and institutional) and for each of the staff groupings (management and EMI teachers). The ways for practical implementation of those recommendations (aimed at initiating correspondent initiatives and getting proper expert support at international level) through integration of Ukrainian universities into international projects have been identified.

Key words: internationalisation, higher education, professional training, teaching special subjects through English as a medium of instruction (EMI teaching), national policy, institutional policy, administrative initiatives, staffing initiatives, resource initiatives, infrastructure initiatives, systemic level, institutional level.

Introduction.

The world movement toward internationalisation at the beginning of the XXI century has conditioned the necessity to identify new priorities for the further development of higher education. The following factors have been leading to the



expected changes: the internationalisation of industry and commerce, with a corresponding internationalisation and mobility of the workforce, which now requires internationally-recognized qualification; as a result, the corresponding internationalization of university education, with students and academics increasingly moving to universities in other countries; the development of transnational education, with universities offering their qualifications in other countries through distance programmes and in-country campuses; the introduction of the Bologna agreement of 1999, which sought to harmonise the structure of degree programmes and documentation, and to develop supporting systems of quality assurance; the consequent need for demonstrable quality in university education, which has led to the publication of annual tables ranking the top universities of the world [1].

The influence of the mentioned above world trends on Ukrainian educational area has been reflected through promotion of interaction between the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine and British education experts focused on the following priority areas: assisting the government in modernising its approaches in higher education for a European future through UK expertise and through capacity-building for these sectors; helping develop the «next generation» of leaders who will succeed to positions of influence in 10-15 years in higher education; helping meet the aspirations of young people in their educational and career needs through stronger educational links with the UK and through the English language; higher education reform, helping shape a university sector which can build effective partnerships internationally, with quality assurance, autonomy and leadership at its heart; achieving transformational change in levels of English in Ukraine's leading universities among both teaching staff and students [2].

Based on the above, English language has become extremely important. And English as a medium of instruction (EMI) currently is considered by British experts as a key tool for internationalisation of higher education aimed at training competitive specialists of high quality.

Considering the results of scientific research concerning the problem of internationalisation and the role of English language in process of the higher education development, it is worth highlighting the most current publications made by the following international researches: J. Dearden [3], O. Frumina [4], A. Guven, J. Parry, T. Ergenekon [5], J. Bolitho and R. West [2], D. Graddol [1] and others. Among the Ukrainian scientists who have been conducting the relevant studies, the following ones should be noted: Y. Krasovska [8], L. Dobrovolska, T. Lyahovska, O. Zabolotna [9], O. Taranovska, O. Nitenko [6], O. Makarova [7], V. Lihachov, I. Tatomyr [10] and others.

In spite of large numbers of those solid studies devoted to considering the role of English language in the process of the higher education internationalisation the problem of building effective internationalisation policy for universities, particularly, through implementation of the international EMI standards as well as through studying and adaptation of successful international practice in the mentioned above context requires further exploration. Therefore, the aim of the study has been identified as the following: to outline position of the UK HE experts concerning the problem of HE internationalisation in the context of providing professional training



through English as a medium of instruction. The following objectives need to be met in order to fulfil the mentioned above task:

1. To characterise the phenomenon of the HE internationalisation in the English language dimension;
2. To study policies for EMI promotion in universities, represented by the British experts;
3. To identify practical ways for implementation of the recommendations given by the UK HE specialists taking into account Ukrainian context.

In accordance with the generalized understanding the term «internationalisation» is considered as a process of a particular product adaptation to the language and culture peculiarities of a certain region which is different from that one where it was designed [11]. So, naturally, each industry has got its own features which identify a specific interpretation of the mentioned above phenomenon. For instance, in economics «internationalisation», first of all, is considered as an extension of economic activities beyond the boundaries of the particular national economic systems through launching multidirectional contacts aimed at increasing industrial productivity and effectiveness [12]. The UK education experts consider the «internationalisation of higher education» term in the context of cooperation with governmental bodies, power, politicians, heads of universities, teaching and academic staff as well as UK students and applicants from another countries through the dissemination of the UK experience, encouraging the educational policy dialogues, and support of international cooperation and partnership [13].

Due to complexity of the phenomenon under research it is reasonable to say that the process of university internationalisation in the English language dimension has a problematic character in its essence. Particularly, the conclusions based on the results of the meeting between representatives of the British Council in Ukraine and Ukrainian universities aimed at achieving common understanding of the mentioned above phenomenon could be of some interest (25/05/2017, Kyiv). It was agreed that HE internationalisation could be described as a two-way process which includes intercultural and educational exchange. It comprises the following aspects, which are expected to open wider opportunities for the participants of the educational process at higher school: international projects, participation in international educational interaction, student and university staff mobility as well as transparent academic and educational space. The following aspects have been identified as the key ones: accessibility of educational services through the distance education development, double degrees, Master's degrees delivered for foreign students in English.

English language has been identified both by British and Ukrainian education specialists as a key skill in the XXI century and as one of those criteria which provides correspondence of the educational services quality to the modern requirement. Also, it could be considered as a key tool for achieving the mentioned above objectives. Therefore, establishing HE internationalisation policy has become extremely relevant both for the UK and Ukraine, particularly, through EMI promotion. British experts who currently study the problem of internationalisation, Rod Bolitho and Richard West, mention in their report that it is difficult to know what a coherent policy of improving English in the context of university internationalisation might



look like. And there would seem to be no models in the literature [2, p. 70]. Therefore, based on the results of the survey carried out among selected universities in the UK, Sweden and former-Soviet countries they have designed their own model according to the following levels [2, p. 71]:

National policy: permitting and supporting EMI in universities; setting national targets for university rankings; identifying priority («research») universities; funding upgrading of priority universities; setting EMI targets (number of courses, etc.); easing employment visa bureaucracy; specifying minimum CEFR levels for university teachers.

Institutional policy and planning: clarifying the extent of autonomy available to the university in key-decision making; developing internationalisation and EMI institutional policy; to plan: setting rankings targets; setting recruitment targets for overseas students; setting EMI targets of percentages of courses taught in English for departments/institutes/staff at undergraduate, Master's and PhD levels; establishing a dedicated international office; establishing dedicated «rankings» teams; setting targets for partnership and exchange programmes; setting targets and regulations for double degrees; developing EMI guidelines; policy on English language websites, literature and signage; developing international conference policy.

Administrative initiatives: stating «taught in English» on degree certificates; adding «translator» qualification to degrees taught in English; making English proficiency a graduation requirement; permitting PhD theses to be written and defended in English; introducing English competitions and prizes; introducing international English exams; becoming a centre for international exams; establishing regular English language testing: entry testing, progress testing, exit testing.

Staffing initiatives: providing EMI incentives (e.g. pay bonuses); English proficiency as a recruitment/promotion criterion; English publications as a recruitment/promotion criterion; English as a heading in personal academic development plans; providing English for academics classes free of charge; recruiting foreign staff and researches; improving salaries and employment conditions of ESP (English for specific purposes) teachers; providing in-service training for ESP teachers; facilitating cooperation between EMI and ESP teachers.

Resource initiatives: improved ESP teachers' library and resource facilities; improved academic library facilities in English; access to international electronic library and database facilities; improved ELT (English language teaching)/EMI support facilities: writing centre, translation support, publications support, journal support, conference support; international student support centre: English language support, host language and culture support, social, visa and medical support, improved and expanded ESP provision.

Infrastructure initiatives: improved teaching and lab facilities; improved conference facilities; English-language signage; improved student/staff accommodation; English – language areas and facilities (e.g. cafe) [2, p. 71].

The following conditions have been identified as the key ones for the successful implementation of the mentioned above model: it is assumed that EMI is being introduced or expanded as part of a broader policy of internationalisation by the institution and/or the government; it also assumed that internationalisation and



EMI are being pursued as part of a quality enhancement programme rather than merely as a source of international students and fees; the initiatives have to be top-down, or at least fully supported by the university administration, if they are to be effective; the policy needs to be systematic, coherent and well-funded; the policy needs to involve coordinated initiatives at all levels: administrative, staffing, resourcing and infrastructure; some of the initiatives involve systemic change in university structure and regulations [2, p. 72]. In the context of our research, devoted to exploring current possibilities for Ukrainian universities to put into practice the mentioned above model and to continue cooperation with the British expert team, it has been found that the mentioned above priorities have been built into on-going «English for universities» project initiated by the British Council in Ukraine and joined by Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University (VDEUNU) in 2017 [14]. It is worth noticing that a two-year Baseline Study (2014-2016) had been carried out by the UK consultants in 15 Ukrainian universities. It has been diagnosed the problems which are still common for the whole system of higher education in Ukraine in the context of establishing policy of internationalisation in Ukrainian universities and promotion of professional training through English as a medium of instruction. The correspondent recommendations have been represented in the UK experts' report in 2017 [2].

In particular, based on APTIS results the levels of English proficiency among the academics under assessment have been identified as B1 or B1/B2 on average according to the CEFR descriptors. As the UK experts mentioned it could be regarded as barely adequate and represented one of the concern areas. As it was identified the majority of the Ukrainian academics themselves expressed a need for advance.

Also, EMI teachers' voluntary consent to take English proficiency testing (which allows of checking all for skills or just a particular one) has influenced on the results. It means that not all academics took the examination. Not all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) were examined among those teachers who gave their consent to be diagnosed. So, the British experts stated that taking into consideration the fact that the results were based on survey of a small and unrepresentative sample, English proficiency levels among a broader and more representative group would almost certainly be lower.

Examining current capability, capacity and curriculum to improve standards of teaching through English the UK education specialists stated current impossibility to assess objectively the mentioned above aspects because of the following factors: levels of EMI provision vary considerably in Ukrainian universities; unrealistic statements of some universities to increase the number of EMI programmes by as much as 50% taking into consideration the limited staffing resource with an adequate English proficiency level; absence of a long-term institutional strategy to develop and improve EMI standards in major part of Ukrainian universities. Assessing EMI curriculum, the UK experts focused not on the academic content but on the way in which it was delivered. As it was stated most classes they observed relied on traditional teacher-fronted lectures with little student participation [2, pp. 94-96]. On the basis of the conclusions made by the UK researches we can summarise that lack of awareness concerning necessity to change teaching methods towards interactivity together with



increasing the number of EMI programmes can be identified as one of the biggest obstacles for the further development of professional training through English as a medium of instruction in Ukraine. Studying the UK education experts' position concerning the HE internationalisation prospective in EMI dimension it is noteworthy to consider the approach offered by the UK researches aimed at systematisation of the mentioned above process in accordance with the following levels:

Systemic level requires: national strategy for universities, particularly, for teaching through English as a medium of instruction; national standards and curriculum; incentives and support system for EMI lectures; adequate level of English proficiency; effective operating of the state and international partnership systems; sufficient resources.

Institutional level requires: institutional internationalisation policy; quality enhancement and assurance; a clear rationale and support for EMI; an action plan aimed at achieving the mentioned above objectives; upgraded teaching techniques and proper professional support for teachers and academics.

To summarise it might be reasonable to consider current situation in the mentioned above context according to the levels represented by the international experts. Particularly, at the systemic level the UK specialists have been identified a clear need to upgrade and internationalise universities across Ukraine; to recognize the value of English in academic institutions and research. Also, they point to the absence of the national strategy on promotion teaching and learning English and teaching special subjects through English as a medium of instruction, as well as lack of a clear EMI rationale with the correspondent support (financial, professional, resources, etc.). It has been identified the necessity to agree specific targets for each university in the mentioned above context (e.g. numbers of programmes, target dates, etc.); to implement into practice the National ESP Curriculum prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine together with the British Council in Ukraine [15], to promote documentation and training compliance with the standards and procedures of the Bologna process. There is also some concern about lack of effective partnerships of some Ukrainian universities focused on the EMI teachers' links establishing within Ukraine and internationally. At the institutional level according to the results of the UK experts' research there has been identified lack of a well-coordinated implementation of the correspondent policy. Particularly, «some universities stated that it was not their place to introduce an institutional policy. Other universities do have such initiatives, but these are often driven by the enthusiasm of individual rectors, deans or heads of department». [2, p. 85]. In the mentioned above context the experts consider the current situation as unsatisfactory when teaching through EMI in major part of Ukrainian universities is based on individual initiatives, but not on the agreed institutional planning. The researches state that most current and potential EMI teachers require methodological training to make their delivery more effective, particularly, for those students whose English may be weak. As a separate point the UK experts point to the necessity to increase the working time volume reserved for a high-quality design of the study programmes and lectures in English.

In accordance with the mentioned above priorities the following VDEUNU action plan has been designed for 2017-2018 academic year, which has also been



approved by the British Council in Ukraine as part of the university participation in the «English for universities» project:

1. to develop and approve the provisions, to provide practical implementation of the «English for Everyone» project initiated by the VDEUNU. It is aimed at: popularisation and intensification of the English language study by different segments of the population in the region; improvement of the quality of teaching English, teaching specific subjects in English; intensification of interaction with the international community, in particular, with potential foreign entrants; enhancement of experience exchange within the given context. The project is expected to serve on permanent basis.

2. To disseminate and share successful experience gained by the «agents of change» within the «English for Universities» project through organization of relevant activities (seminars, open lectures, workshops, round tables, conferences, webinars, publication presentations, etc.).

3. To design and publish learning and teaching materials for delivering disciplines in English.

4. To place educational video materials in English on the University's website and in the MOODLE system (micro-lecturing, recording of performances during the following events: trainings, seminars, conferences, etc.)

5. To introduce the reward system for teachers who teach specific subjects in English and create teaching and learning complexes in English.

6. To organise operation of the consultation and registration centre for international examinations in English: IELTS, APTIS.

7. To provide training of the staff for the consultation and registration centre.

8. To complete development of the VDEUNU conception of teaching foreign languages.

9. To improve/update study programmes of English for bachelors and masters in accordance with the approved provisions of the national ESP Curriculum.

10. To create information base of free Internet resources for mastering English on the University's website.

11. To design programmes for optional courses of English language.

12. To launch the English language courses on the basis of the Institute of International Relations.

Conclusions.

The article represented the problem of the higher education internationalisation in the context of teaching through English as a medium of instruction, and studying the UK education experts' position. The results of the study could be summarised as the following:

1. It has been identified that the «higher education internationalisation» term could be considered as a two-way process which includes intercultural and educational exchange. It includes the following aspects, which are expected to open wider opportunities for the participants of the educational process at higher school: international projects, participation in international educational interaction, student and university staff mobility as well as transparent academic and educational space. The UK practice indicates the importance of launching cooperation with governmental



bodies, politicians, heads of universities, academic and teaching staff, home and international students. Also, it justifies the relevance of successful practices dissemination through encouraging education policy dialogues as well as providing support for international cooperation and partnerships in the mentioned above context. English language proficiency has been highlighted as a key point in the context of meeting modern requirements and achieving the mentioned above goals.

2. The position of the UK HE experts in the context of establishing the policy of the university internationalisation, particularly, through teaching special subjects in English has been characterized. The model of policies for university internationalisation and the promotion of EMI represented by the UK consultants in Ukraine has been analysed. The mentioned above model includes the following levels of implementation: national policy, institutional policy and planning. The structure is also focused on the following initiatives: administrative, staffing, infrastructure and resource.

3. The relevance for further adaptation and implementation of the best UK practices through the following recommendations given by the international experts, which require correspondent changes at systemic and institutional levels has been *justified*. We strongly believe that the participation of the Ukrainian universities in the international projects, aimed at the HE internationalisation and the English language promotion, would facilitate their development, particularly, through getting international expert support.

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