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## SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

*The article deals with the problem of foreign language learning and multilingualism in the medical field of Ukraine. Reforming the healthcare system in Ukraine and the need for further planning, post-war recovery and development in the context of choosing the European vector, and therefore strengthening international cooperation, require the Ukrainian education system, including in the field of medicine, to respond adequately to the demand for foreign language competence of a modern medical specialist. The stable position of English as a lingua franca in all spheres and increased competition lead to a decrease in the competitive advantages of English language and increase attention to other foreign languages as a means of increasing the competitiveness of a medical specialist in the labour market. In preparing the article, there were identified 24 major medical institutions of Ukraine, reviewed the educational programmes and determined the representation of foreign language education of future medical professionals by educational components (compulsory and elective).*

*The objectives of the article were to consider the features of multilingualism: world trends and Ukrainian realities, to determine the needs for learning a second foreign language for medical professionals in Ukraine and to analyse the response of the medical education system to social demand. It was determined that the choice of a second language for study is due to many factors, in particular socio-economic. The main languages that are best known in Ukraine, besides English, are Polish, German and French. The answer of the educational system in the medical field is the representation of these languages in educational programs, the analysis of which revealed a low level of representation of languages other than English – German, French and Polish. No other languages were found among educational proposals in medical institutions. Foreign students who receive medical education in Ukraine can study Ukrainian as a foreign language. The low level of representation of languages other than English in educational programs may be due primarily to the high expenditure of resources (both financial and time resources, efforts, etc.) necessary for mastering the second additional foreign language for both educational institutions and applicants for education. Defining the peculiarities of studying and teaching a second foreign language for specialists in the medical field, developing and improving a didactic and methodological base for teaching a second foreign language in medical institutions are relevant prospects for further studies.*

**Key words:** *education, multilingualism, foreign language, medical education, second foreign language, educational program.*

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## ДРУГА ІНОЗЕМНА МОВА У ІНШОМОВНІЙ ПІДГОТОВЦІ МЕДИЧНИХ ФАХІВЦІВ

У статті розглянуто проблему іношомовної підготовки та багатомовності у медичній сфері України. Реформування системи медицини в Україні та необхідність подальшого планування, повоєнного відновлення і розбудови в контексті вибору європейського вектору, а отже і посилення міжнародної співпраці, вимагають від української системи освіти, зокрема в сфері медицини, адекватної відповіді на запит щодо іношомовної компетенції сучасного медичного фахівця. Сталі позиції англійської мови як *lingua franca* в усіх сферах та підсилення конкуренції зумовлюють зниження конкурентних переваг англійської мови та зростання уваги до інших іноземних мов як до засобу підвищення конкурентоспроможності медичного спеціаліста на ринку праці. Було визначено 24 основні медичні заклади України, розглянуто освітні програми та визначено репрезентацію іношомовної освіти майбутніх медичних працівників за освітніми компонентами (обов'язковими та вибірковими). Завданнями статті було розглянути особливості багатомовності: світові тенденції та українські реалії, визначити потреби у вивченні другої іноземної мови для медичних працівників в Україні та проаналізувати реакцію системи медичної освіти на суспільний запит. Було визначено, що вибір другої мови для вивчення обумовлюється багатьма чинниками, зокрема соціально-економічними. Основними мовами, якими найкраще в Україні володіють найкраще, окрім англійської, є польська, німецька та французька. Відповідь освітньої системи в медичній сфері є представлення цих мов у освітніх програмах, аналіз яких виявив низький рівень репрезентації інших, окрім англійської мов – німецької, французької та польської. Інших мов серед освітніх пропозицій у медичних закладах не було виявлено. Іноземні студенти, які отримують медичну освіту в Україні можуть вивчати українську мову як іноземну. Низький рівень представленості інших мов, окрім англійської в освітніх програмах може бути пов'язаний передусім з високими витратами ресурсів (як фінансових, так і ресурсів часу, зусиль тощо), необхідних для оволодіння другою додатковою іноземною мовою як для освітніх закладів, так і для здобувачів освіти. Визначення особливостей вивчення та викладання другої іноземної мови для спеціалістів медичної сфери, розвиток і розбудова дидактико-методичної бази викладання другої іноземної мови у медичних закладах є актуальними перспективами для подальших студій.

**Ключові слова:** освіта, багатомовність, іноземна мова, медична освіта, друга іноземна мова, освітня програма.

**Problem statement.** Today, in the context of globalisation processes, English plays the role of *lingua franca* in most spheres of life, including medicine. However, it should not be forgotten that this has not always been the case, the socio-political situation in the world is constantly changing and languages both gain and lose their influence. Also, knowledge of a second language is an additional bonus, both in career and in private life. Today, there are about 7000 languages in the world, unevenly represented in social, economic and political life. In the European Union, all 24 official languages are guaranteed equal status, and in 2021–2022 EU project “European Language Equality” implemented (Rehm,

2023: 1). However, translation practice in particular shows that there is no actual equality between languages (Bellos, 2011). For example, the United Nations has chosen six languages as its official or working languages based on the actual distribution of languages in the world community. They include besides English such European languages as French, Spanish (Rakhmatova, Djabbarova, Nuraliyeva, Sherbekova & Matyakubova, 2022: 1605).

**Literature review.** On the one hand, some linguists point out the tendency of linguistic diversity decline, while some languages are dying out (King, 2017: 2), on the other hand, multilingualism remains a stable phenomenon in many regions of the world. An individual can be called multilingual, when he/she “can switch between languages when speaking, reading, and writing (Khalil, 2024: 1). English is a language of universal importance due to the today’s globalisation processes. Nevertheless, despite the prominent role of English in the world, some researchers emphasise its rather complementary role in relation to national languages than a substitute (Rakhmatova, Djabbarova, Nuraliyeva, Sherbekova & Matyakubova, 2022: 1605).

Multilingualism is usually geographically and socio-historically conditioned, defined as a place where a large number of differently-linguistic groups of people live for certain social, economic, political and historical reasons.

According to the researchers Akumbu P. W. and Carlo P. D., societal multilingualism is a distinctive feature of many countries, where several languages are used within one community or by several different communities within one country (Akumbu & Carlo, 2021: 2). However, the presence of different languages on the same territory does not mean that they function equally in the public and private spheres as “even in major multilingual cities, a huge number of languages are mostly spoken in the home or community (the private sphere) and only come out in public on rare occasions” (Al Aqad, 2021: 2).

But in addition to professional benefits, multilingualism has a number of personal advantages, for example, researcher Mohammed H. Al Aqad points out that multilingualism sharpens the mind and makes it develop, biologically changing the brain, improves decision-making, helps to improve the first language, increases networking skills, enhances memory, makes person a better global citizen (Al Aqad, 2021: 6-7).

J. Cenoz distinguishes between *plurilingualism* and *multilingualism*, where the first one refers to the individual aspect of this phenomenon, i.e. an individual who speaks many languages, and the second one refers to the social aspect, when it comes

to a place where many languages are spoken (Cenoz, 2013: 5).

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of English for healthcare professionals. English has an important role in the medical profession, in particular, it is a key language for professional growth, as it enables communication with foreign colleagues, reading scientific journals, modern medical literature, etc. (Rakhmatova, Djabbarova, Nuraliyeva, Sherbekova & Matyakubova, 2022: 1607). Learning English also affects the opportunities for future doctors to publish their research results (Džuganová, 2019: 130). In Ukraine, the status of the English language has recently been officially enshrined (Zakon Ukrayiny pro zastosuvannya anhliys'koyi movy v Ukrayini, 2023). and requires some categories of civil servants, including certain categories of healthcare professionals, which in turn requires a response from both the Ukrainian educational system (preparation, improvement and implementation of educational programmes, examination system, etc.) starting from primary school, and the healthcare system (retraining, advanced training, etc.).

However, while in non-English-speaking countries, English becomes the *lingua franca*, in English-speaking countries, the choice of a second language is determined mainly by socio-economic factors. For example, in the United States, Spanish is highly popular due to its widespread (Dos Santos, 2021: 1), In the UK, according to the study, the most important languages to learn in terms of economic and political feasibility are Spanish, Mandarin and French (Gough, 2020).

**The purpose of the study.** The objectives of the article were to consider the principles of multilingualism: global trends and Ukrainian realities, to identify the needs for learning a second foreign language for medical professionals in Ukraine and to analyse the response of the medical education system to social demand.

**Main part.** The medical profession is mostly closely related to communication and includes communication with patients, the patient’s family, and colleagues, including those abroad, which makes it especially important for medical staff to acquire language competence. It is therefore quite logical that bilingualism and multilingualism are becoming important for healthcare professionals (Dos Santos, 2021: 2). Researchers note that language communication skills have an impact on the quality of health care (Mackinova, Kopinec, Holonic & Stanciak, 2019: 773).

The situation with multilingualism among healthcare professionals is unique, as all healthcare professionals are required to learn Latin. However,

it is worth noting that learning Latin, which is not a language of communication and therefore does not fulfil one of the main functions of language, namely communicative, is learning a dead language and is limited mainly to medical terminology, and therefore cannot be called a full-fledged foreign language learning, although it may facilitate the acquisition of Romance languages in the future.

Of interest are the results of the study by K. Patriksson et al. language barriers exist can have both advantages and disadvantages in daily care since as colleagues of multilingual doctors expect them to perform translation roles, which increases their workload (Patriksson, Nilsson & Wigert, 2022). The researchers' attention is also drawn to the problem of providing language support to patients and doctors (Krystallidou, Langewitz & van den Muijsenbergh, 2021).

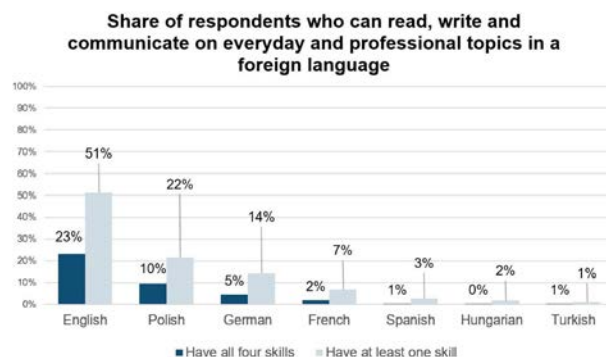
Knowledge of English language does provide preferences in the training and professional activities of a medical professional, being the Lingua franca for medical professionals around the world, however, it is worth noting that given the increase in both academic and professional mobility, knowledge of English is becoming a mandatory competence rather than a bonus. Given the legal status of the English language in Ukraine (Zakon Ukrayiny pro zastosuvannya anhliys'koyi movy v Ukrayini, 2023), and the mandatory proficiency in English after graduation from school and university, as well as the mandatory proficiency in English for certain professionals and civil servants, we can say that there is a shift from perceiving English language skills as an additional bonus in the assessment of a specialist in the labour market to perceiving lack of English as a career obstacle and inability to hold certain positions. Thus, increased competitiveness requires the professional to offer some other skills and, in the case of foreign language competence, this may be knowledge of an additional foreign language. Learning any foreign language requires both material (money to attend courses, a tutor) and non-material (time, effort) resources, and therefore, given the need to speak English, it will be an absolute priority, while resources for learning a second foreign language will be limited.

Learning a second foreign language has its own peculiarities compared to learning a first language. First of all, learning a second foreign language implies that the learner already has experience of foreign language acquisition, which influences the learning of a second foreign language. A person who learns a second foreign language has an idea of the process of language learning methods, the main difficulties faced by learner, is aware of learning characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, and which methods and ways of organising learning

are suitable for him or her. On the other hand, having experience in learning a foreign language can have both positive and negative effects. Learning different languages is unique; one language may be easier for one person to learn and more difficult for another. The experience of learning a second foreign language cannot be absolutely identical to the experience of learning the first, even if they were learnt at the same time, and especially if the person started learning the first foreign language (usually English, as today English is considered a must) in childhood/school age, and the second in adulthood. First of all, when a person recalls his/her experience of learning a language at a younger age, he/she does not take into consideration age-related peculiarities that play an important role in language acquisition. First of all, when people recall their experience of studying a language at a younger age, they do not take into consideration their age-related characteristics, which play an important role in learning. Secondly, the methods that were effective when one was younger may be less effective when learning as an adult. It is also necessary to take into account the circumstances of life during the period of study: workload, negative events in life, health status, etc.

The motivation factor also plays an important role in language acquisition (Purba, 2018). Researchers point to positive correlations between grit, mindset and motivations and success in learning languages (Liu, 2022). The first foreign language is usually taught at school or even at preschool age. The motivational component naturally has age-related differences.

The most widely learnt foreign languages in Europe are English, German and French (Martinaj, 2020: 161). For Ukraine situation is slightly different – according to the 2022 survey, Polish is the second most spoken language in Ukraine, followed by German. (see Figure 1).



**Fig. 1. The ratio of foreign languages by level of proficiency in Ukraine (Yashnyk, 2023)**

As we can see, the number of respondents who speak English and Polish significantly exceeds the

number of those who speak other languages. According to the survey of B. Goncharenko, Y. Yakovenko the popularity of the Polish language can be explained by the geographical neighbourhood of the two countries, cultural and economic ties, the presence of a Polish-speaking minority, especially in the western regions of Ukraine, and, since 2022, with the beginning of the full-scale invasion, by the mass migration of Ukrainians to Poland in search of asylum (Goncharenko, Yakovenko, 2023: 2). The study also shows that 86 out of 114 respondents study Polish at universities in the Kyiv region despite the mass migration and the security situation in the country, concluding that the motivation of studying Polish language goes beyond the desire to leave the country, but is also determined by cultural, political and economic factors (Goncharenko, Yakovenko, 2023: 5).

The popularity of the German language, meanwhile, has both historical and economic reasons, in particular among Ukrainian migrants, after the start of the full-scale invasion, the highest paid jobs are in Germany, especially in the medical field: €1,500–€2,100 per month (Shavrans'ka).

If we look at how the medical education system responds to social demand, we see that the first foreign language taught in Ukrainian medical schools is English, while second foreign languages are rarely offered and are represented by German, French and Polish, which corresponds to the distribution of languages in the aforementioned graph. A review of the programmes of the main higher medical institutions of Ukraine showed that foreign language training for healthcare professionals is mainly represented by the subjects of English, English (for professional purposes), foreign language, foreign language (for professional purposes), basics of scientific communication in a foreign language, business English, Latin, Latin and medical terminology. The subjects of foreign language or foreign language (for professional purposes), the basics of scientific communication in a foreign language are either designed for English or without specifying which foreign language will be the subject of study. Some study programmes include specialised subjects such as linguistic and culture-oriented linguistics. In programmes for specialities at the intersection of medicine and linguistics, for example, the programme «Applied Linguistics. Medical Terminology and Sectoral Translation (English) 2024 (revision 2023-02)

Bachelor's Degree» of The Ivano-Frankivsk National Medical University, the second language course («Practical course of the second foreign language (German, French, Polish)» 18.5 ECTS credits) is presented in three languages. Some programmes offer a foreign language (second) course, mainly as an elective, and one programme offers German for medical purposes (second foreign language) as an elective component. For foreign students, the study of Ukrainian as a foreign language is offered. The number of credits allocated for the study of a foreign language varies from three to six credits, with rare exceptions, 18–19 credits are offered. Therefore, we can conclude that English is the most common educational offer in the curricula of medical schools in Ukraine. In most cases, when the name of the subject does not specify which language is offered for study (foreign language, foreign language (for professional purposes), it does not indicate which languages can be chosen.

**Conclusions.** Due to the fact that English retains a dominant position in the world, the knowledge of it is becoming more and more a prerequisite for successful professional activity and career growth and is no longer considered as a special advantage, but rather as a necessary skill. Therefore, such an advantage may be the possession of another foreign language, in addition to English. The choice of a second language for study is determined by many factors, in particular socio-economic. Among the languages best known in Ukraine, besides English, are Polish, German and French. The answer of the educational system in the medical field is the representation of these languages in educational programs, the analysis of which revealed a low level of representation of languages other than English – German, French and Polish. No other languages were found among educational proposals in medical institutions. For foreigners, however, the opportunity to learn Ukrainian as a foreign language is available. This situation may be caused, first of all, by the need for both educational institutions and educational applicants to spend a lot of additional resources on mastering another foreign language. The prospects for further research include determining the features of studying a second foreign language for specialists in the medical field and developing and improving the didactic and methodological base for teaching a second foreign language in medical institutions.

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