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DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING UKRAINIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN A BILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT

Summary. This article is devoted to the problem of bilingualism; the affects of this situation on the state of education of international students in Ukrainian universities are considered.

Many linguists were interested in the problem of bilingualism and ways to solve it. One of the first who developed the theory of bilingualism was L.V. Shcherba. He distinguished between two types of bilingualism: pure and mixed ones. Pure bilingualism implies the complete isolation of one language from the other. Mixed bilingualism means the parallel use of two languages. Of course, the language environment of many Ukrainian cities, including Kharkiv, is determined by mixed bilingualism.

Considering the problem of bilingualism, it is impossible not to touch on such a phenomenon as interlingual interference. In linguistics, the term "interference" means the effects of one language on another, that is, the rules of one language are applied in the written or oral speech of the other one. Unfortunately, this often leads to the fact that interlingual interference can cause many inaccuracies. This paper gives some examples of such errors from which we can conclude that it is the interference that explains the phonetic, grammatical and lexical features manifested in a bilingual environment. In addition, the situation of bilingualism is never harmonious or symmetrical. This means that in language practice, one of the communicating languages necessarily occupies a leading position.

The article also expresses the opinion that in the conditions of Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism, it is the interference that can explain such a linguistic phenomenon as Surzhyk. Currently, this term is firmly established in Ukrainian linguistics. Scientists have not yet reached a single conclusion about the origin and essence of this phenomenon, but one thing is certain: Surzhyk is the result of mixing exactly two languages: Ukrainian and Russian.

Having analyzed the situation of bilingualism in the Kharkiv region, we can conclude that bilingualism makes things more difficult for international students: for both those who study Ukrainian and those who study English. Students need to master the basics of a second language to adapt in a bilingual environment.

Key words: bilingualism, language environment, interlingual interference, related languages, language adaptation, Surzhyk.

Introduction. Ukrainian universities enroll a lot of international students, and their number is constantly growing. Of course, due to problems related to the epidemic situation in our country and all over the world, there have been fewer international students in this academic year. Nevertheless, there are enough people who want to get higher education in Ukraine.

The interest in learning foreign languages (Ukrainian, English, Russian) is stimulated by the communicative convenience of getting

an education abroad. A non-native language becomes the intermediary that makes it possible to get a quality education, be successful in business, maintain cultural and economic relations.

According to the statistics, during 2019–2020 academic year, more than 80 thousand international students from more than 150 countries were receiving higher education in Ukraine. The most in demand are medical, pharmaceutical, technical (IT-technologies), economic (management, marketing) fields.

The methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL) in Ukrainian universities is a long-standing one which has passed many years of experience. In the new academic year (2020–2021), all the preparatory faculties and departments of Ukraine switched to teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language (UFL). And, of course, the teachers face very big problems, and above all, with the lack of educational literature. Although Russian and Ukrainian languages are similar both lexically and grammatically, there are a number of points that significantly distinguish these largely related languages. It is very important to focus the attention of methodologists and teachers on filling these methodological gaps which will allow students not only to master the basic language skills, but also to see the Russian and Ukrainian languages from the perspective of a foreign language culture.

In addition, the situation of bilingualism that exists today in Ukraine, and in Kharkiv, in particular, leaves its mark. The issue of bilingualism is extremely acute; specific difficulties arise in the study of the Ukrainian language by both international students and Ukrainian students. First of all, it is a low motivation to study. In the streets of the city, there is almost no communication in the Ukrainian language; informal communication with friends in the hostel and in the university is also held either in Russian, or in their native language. It is very good that in official institutions, in supermarkets, and in transport, foreign students can hear Ukrainian. In addition, they know that after graduating from the preparatory faculty, they will become students at the university, where education is conducted in Ukrainian. And this is the main motivation for learning the Ukrainian language.

Considering the problem of bilingualism, one cannot but touch upon such a phenomenon as interlingual interference. The article will pay special attention to the interference that occurs against the background of the Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism.

Review of literature shows that the problem of bilingualism has been of interest to many linguists for a long time. Among those devoted their research to bilingualism, we should mention such scientists as E.M. Vereshchagin, O.N. Khoroshkovskaya, I.M. Zhovtonizhko, A.P. Kulik, L.I. Stavitskaya, G.I. Tokhtar, and others. L.V. Shcherba was one of the first to develop the theory of bilingualism. It was he who defined the types of bilingualism: pure bilingualism as complete isolation of one language from others

in the speech consciousness of the speaker and mixed bilingualism that involves simultaneous use of two languages. Moreover, these types do not only mix but also interact with each other. The linguistic environment of many Ukrainian cities can be characterized by the phenomenon of mixed bilingualism.

Many scientists have also dealt with the problem of interlingual interference. They are U. Weinreich, N.B. Mechkovskaya, O.A. Shabliy, E. Sapir, T.N. Kurokhtina, and others. Nevertheless, in the methodology of teaching UFL, the problem of the mutual influence of closely related languages is very relevant.

While studying Ukrainian in the Russian-speaking environment, most international students face a number of problems associated with bilingualism. **The purpose of this study** is to analyze the impact of bilingualism on the quality of education of international students in Ukrainian universities and to consider the phenomenon of “interlingual interference” in a direct contact between Ukrainian and Russian languages.

Main body of the research. For international students who come to study at Ukrainian universities, the main task is the acquisition of language of instruction. Until recently, most universities in Ukraine have provided foreigners with the right to choose the language. These, as a rule, were either Russian, or Ukrainian, or English. In the universities of the Eastern part of Ukraine, most of the students chose Russian. In recent years, the policy of universities has fundamentally altered. Now international students are given a choice between English and Ukrainian. Of course, when foreigners come to Ukraine, for many of them, both languages are new, that is, they absolutely do not care which language to learn. However, after some time, students are faced with many problems associated with the phenomenon of bilingualism, which is a characteristic feature of communication in many cities of Ukraine, in particular, in Kharkiv. Foreign learners find themselves in a difficult linguistic situation: on the one hand, they find themselves under the influence of pure bilingualism, it arises in the process of studying at a university (native language plus a non-native one: Ukrainian); and on the other hand, they face mixed bilingualism of the surrounding life (media, shops, markets, communication with teachers, local students, city residents). People who live in a foreign country need accommodation, food, basic necessities of life, transport, etc. [1]. And if there is a different linguistic environment outside the walls of the university, it certainly exerts its influence. In the situation with students studying Ukrainian in the Russian-speaking regions, the task of mastering the elementary word-stock of the Russian language becomes extremely necessary. Foreign language acquisition is very difficult. It is much easier to learn a new language in a linguistic environment. But this is provided that it is monolingual. As for Kharkiv, in everyday communication, people use a variant of the language that can hardly be called purely Ukrainian or purely Russian. For a long period of time, the Russian language dominated in Ukraine, and in most Ukrainian universities, the training was held in this language. But in recent years, the so-called interlanguage interference of languages has occurred in connection with the assignment of the status of the state language to the Ukrainian language. Interference (from Latin *interferens*: *inter* – between + *ferens* – transferring) means the consequences of the impact of one language on another, i.e. the use of the norms of one language in the written and/or spoken language of another. As a rule, this is a conscious or unconscious process of mixing the phenomena of different languages at all linguistic levels. Therefore, cross-language

interference often causes many errors. Researchers of the phenomenon of interference distinguish phonetic, grammatical, lexical and syntactic types of interference. Of course, it is impossible to say with certainty in which sphere of the language the most active interference process takes place [2, p. 53]. However, it is traditionally believed that interference is most noticeable at the phonetic level. This is expressed primarily in the speaker's accent. The systems of the Russian and Ukrainian languages are different in phonological aspects.

Thus, under the influence of the phonetics of the Russian language, variants of phonemes that do not correspond to the literary norm of the Ukrainian language may be used when speaking Ukrainian. For example, devoicing of voiced consonants at the end of a word: *ca[m]* (Ukr. *ca[ð]*), *морo[c]* – (Ukr. *морo[з]*), *нарo[m]* – (Ukr. *нарo[ð]*), *хлe[n]* – (Ukr. *хлi[б]*), *ска[c]ка* – (Ukr. *ка[з]ка*), *любo[ф]* – (Ukr. *любo[в]*). *Akanye* (literally “a-ing”), which is characteristic of the Russian language and which is abnormal for Ukrainian, often appears: *я люблю [малако]* (Ukr. *молоко*), *наша [молать]* (Ukr. *наша молодь*). Of course, it must be borne in mind that pronunciation can depend to a large extent on the characteristics of the speaker and (sometimes) on the conditions of communication.

Grammatical interference is one of the biggest problems in linguistics. The fact is that this type of interference is associated with the involuntary transfer of grammatical categories from one language to another. For example, the category of gender: *боль – она* (Rus.) – *біль – він* (Ukr.), *собака – она* (Rus.) – *собака – він* (Ukr.), *посуда – она* (Rus.) – *посуд – він* (Ukr.), *распродажа – она* (Rus.) – *розпродаж – він* (Ukr.). The same tendency can be traced in the wrong formation of the plural of some masculine nouns: *вчителя* (instead of *вчителі*), *друз'я* (instead of *друзі*), etc.

As for the interference errors at the morphological level, it is believed that they occur much less frequently than the phonetic ones, but are more persistent and difficult to correct. Interference errors showing themselves in Ukrainian are modeled by Russian parts of speech and can be attributed to common mistakes. This applies to formation of active participles, degrees of comparison, adverbial participles, declension of numbers; for example: *самий вищий* (instead of *найвищий*), *малюя* (instead of *малюючий*), *п'ятдесяти* (instead of *п'ятдесяти*).

It is believed that the morphological system of any language is resistant to the influence of other languages. But, as we can see, the interference of the Russian and Ukrainian languages is quite active. The main reason for this phenomenon is the proximity of language systems stipulated by the presence of common grammatical categories (gender, number, case system, etc.).

At the lexical level (lexicon is a mobile and constantly evolving part of the language), interference occurs most actively and, as a result, is difficult to control. An example of lexical interference is interlingual homonymy: *человек* (Rus.: a man) and *чоловік* (Ukr.: a husband), *место* (Rus.: a place) and *місто* (Ukr.: a city), *гадать* (Rus.: to try to find out one's future or past) and *гадати* (Ukr.: to think), *неделя* (Rus.: a week) and *неділя* (Ukr.: Sunday). Under the influence of Russian, there is such a phenomenon as a calque (loan-translation) in the Ukrainian language spoken in Kharkiv region. For example: when asked «*Як ти розмовляєш?*», the local people often answer: «*Я розмовляю по-українськи*», although the correct answer is «*українською*»; another example: *на протяженні года – на протязі року* (the correct equivalent

is *протягом року*, because «*на протязі*» means “in the draught”). One must think that the reason for such mistakes is precisely that a person translates Russian words literally, word for word. T.N. Kurokhtina claims: “The process of interference at the lexical level is very difficult to constantly monitor, since this level of the language is always open for the penetration of new units, and this is especially true for closely related languages” [2, p. 55].

Let us consider examples of syntactic interference. According to N.B. Mechkovskaya, interference is the most difficult to overcome at this level. [3]. Under the influence of the Russian language, a simplified use of some prepositions occurs: Ukrainian prepositions *за* + *Accusative* and *на* + *Accusative* are replaced by the corresponding Russian preposition *в* + *Accusative* (*в доказ любові* instead of *на доказ любові*). In case of the influence of the Ukrainian language on the Russian language, an erroneous case government is observed, such as, for example, the use of the prepositional case with the preposition *по* (*зуляли по парках*).

It should be noted that the differences in the syntactic systems of the Ukrainian and Russian languages are minimal. Therefore, the erroneous variants due to the interference are limited.

Thus, we can conclude that interlingual interference occurring in contacting languages is one of the most interesting phenomena that need further research.

In addition, it is an indisputable fact that the language of the media is the unconditional representative of the Russian-Ukrainian interference. The study of this phenomenon can also be the subject of a separate study.

It should be said that it is interference (in the conditions of Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism) that can explain the nature of such a specific linguistic phenomenon as *Surzhyk*. In Russian linguistics, this phenomenon has hardly been studied, but in Ukrainian linguistics, it is very actively discussed. The direct meaning of the word comes from agricultural vocabulary and means bread made from mixed flour. And in its indirect meaning, the term was fixed in Ukrainian linguistics. Scientists argue a lot about the causes of this phenomenon, but one thing is indisputable: *Surzhyk* is the result of mixing two languages, Ukrainian and Russian [2].

The phenomenon of interlanguage interference is the result of mixing the structures of different languages at all linguistic levels, or the transfer of certain structures or elements of one language to another which occurs (or has already occurred) in the speech activity of a bilingual [4, p. 372]. Moreover, the smaller the ethnic distance between languages, the more actively the interference occurs. This fully applies to the sphere of functioning of the Russian and Ukrainian languages.

When choosing a country of study, international students cannot assess the linguistic situation in Ukraine; they are usually guided either by information from the Internet, or someone's advice. And since the use of the Ukrainian language in the world is rather limited, foreigners learn about its existence as an independent language as soon as they arrive in Ukraine. Often they do not even know that in state universities, education is provided in Ukrainian, i.e. the state language. In addition, in many Ukrainian universities, for students who are to complete the core curriculum, there are no special groups for international students, and it means that they will study in groups with Ukrainian students. Therefore, we touch on the problem of language adaptation.

According to A.N. Shechukin, language adaptation for international students is a system of teaching methods that serves to

overcome psychological and linguistic barriers to communication in a foreign language environment, promotes the activation of language skills, includes training in hearing-pronunciation communication features, speech and behavioral stereotypes; it is provided by intensive speech practice and is especially successful in conditions of the language environment [5]. So, the analysis of the problem of language adaptation of international students in Ukrainian universities gives every reason to consider their linguistic situation very difficult, mostly because of bilingual environment they have to face.

Having started to learn Ukrainian, students do not immediately notice the Russian-speaking environment, but very soon they find themselves in the situation of bilingualism. Despite the status of the Ukrainian language as the state language, in hostels, in shops, in the streets, international students can hear local people speak Russian. Therefore, very quickly the vocabulary of students is replenished with Russian words. And although in past years (when the language of instruction was Russian) foreigners needed a lexical minimum of Ukrainian words, nowadays, the situation is quite the opposite.

Conclusions. After analyzing the language problems that arise among foreign students studying at Ukrainian higher educational institutions, we come to the following conclusions:

1. When studying at Ukrainian universities, international students should learn Ukrainian and English with taking into account the Russian linguoculturological aspect. This will make it possible for them to form their language behavior in accordance with the realities of the country where they live and study.

2. Considering the real needs of foreign students, it is necessary to introduce teaching in two languages. Unfortunately, at the preparatory faculty, this is hardly possible because of lack of academic hours.

3. At an advanced stage of training, we can talk about the advisability of introducing a parallel study of the minimum conversational second foreign language course.

Some universities solve this problem as follows: they add several hours to the curriculum for learning Russian as an option, both for Ukrainian and English groups.

Thus, the main reason for the difficulties for international students studying the Ukrainian language is the situation of bilingualism. According to L.T. Masenko, “the total bilingualism that is observed today in some cities and regions on the territory of Ukraine, contributing to the processes of mixing Russian and Ukrainian language norms, is... one of the reasons for the interference within the speech of bilinguals” [6].

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Криволапова О. В. Труднощі викладання української мови як іноземної у двомовному середовищі

Анотація. Статтю присвячено проблемі білінгвізму (двомовності); розглянуто, як впливає така ситуація на стан навчання іноземних студентів в українських вишах.

Проблемою білінгвізму і способами її вирішення цікавилися багато лінгвістів. Одним із перших, хто розробив теорію білінгвізму, був Л.В. Щерба. Він розрізняв два типи двомовності: чисту і змішану. Чиста двомовність передбачає повну ізоляцію однієї мови від іншої. Змішана означає паралельне вживання двох мов. Звичайно ж, мовне середовище багатьох українських міст, у тому числі й Харкова, визначає саме змішана двомовність.

Розглядаючи проблему білінгвізму, не можна не торнутися такого явища, як міжмовна інтерференція. У мовознавстві термін «інтерференція» означає наслідки впливу однієї мови на іншу, тобто норми однієї мови застосовуються в письмовому або усному мовленні іншої. На жаль, це часто призводить до того, що міжмовна інтерференція може стати причиною безлічі неточностей. У даній роботі наведено приклади таких помилок, з чого можна зробити висновок, що саме інтерференцією пояснюються фонетич-

ні, граматичні та лексичні особливості, які проявляються у двомовному середовищі. Крім того, ситуація білінгвізму ніколи не буває гармонійною або симетричною. Це означає, що в мовній практиці одна з тих мов, що контактують, обов'язково займає чільну позицію.

У статті також висловлено думку про те, що в умовах російсько-української двомовності саме інтерференцією можна пояснити таке мовне явище, як суржик. Натепер цей термін міцно затвердився в українському мовознавстві. Науковці ще не дійшли єдиного висновку щодо виникнення і сутності цього явища, але незаперечно одне: суржик – це наслідок змішування саме двох мов: української та російської.

Проаналізувавши ситуацію білінгвізму в Харківському регіоні, можна зробити висновок, що двомовність дуже ускладнює становище іноземних студентів: як тих, хто вивчає українську мову, так і тих, хто вивчає англійську. Студенти мають потребу в оволодінні основ другої мови для адаптації у двомовному середовищі.

Ключові слова: білінгвізм, мовне середовище, міжмовна інтерференція, споріднені мови, мовна адаптація, суржик.