The use of english as a linga aqua to overcome language barriers and raise the level of education in modern conditions

El uso del inglés como linga aqua para superar las barreras del idioma y elevar el nivel de educación en las condiciones modernas

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Abstract

The present research considers the thesis about the determining role of English as a lingua franca. The purpose of the academic paper lies in establishing the features of teaching English as a lingua franca in educational university practices, as well as

determining the mediation level of the Ukrainian educational environment in communication in English. The research methodology is based on a comprehensive approach, where a descriptive method is used to describe the theoretical material; statistical methods and the questionnaire method are used for implementation, processing and analysis of research results. The central place is devoted to the pedagogical experiment. The result of the research has shown the effectiveness of the using English as a lingua franca in the educational process; such practices have received positive feedback on the part of the participants of the educational process. Along with this, the evolution of English as a lingua franca in convergence has been revealed, as well as in the communication process of the participants of the educational process. In prospect, it is expedient to continue systematic studies of the evolution of educational discourse in the era of globalization, to determine the transformations of English as a lingua franca, cultural identity on communication.

Key words: lingua franca, intercultural communication, English, national identity.

Resumen

La presente investigación considera la tesis sobre el papel determinante del inglés como lingua franca, que es condición esencial para una comunicación exitosa en el marco de los procesos de globalización, y se reduce la mediación del espacio comunicativo ucraniano. El propósito del trabajo académico radica en establecer las características de la enseñanza del inglés como lingua franca en las prácticas educativas universitarias, así como determinar el nivel de mediación del entorno educativo ucraniano en la comunicación en inglés. La metodología de investigación se basa en un enfoque integral, donde se utiliza un método descriptivo para describir el material teórico; Los métodos estadísticos y el método del cuestionario se utilizan para la aplicación, el procesamiento y el análisis de los resultados de la investigación. El lugar central está dedicado al experimento pedagógico. El resultado de la investigación ha demostrado la efectividad del uso del inglés como lingua franca en el proceso educativo; dichas prácticas han recibido retroalimentación positiva por parte de los participantes del proceso educativo. Junto a ello, también se ha puesto de manifiesto la evolución del inglés como lengua franca en convergencia, así como en el proceso de comunicación de los participantes del proceso educativo. En perspectiva, es conveniente continuar estudios sistemáticos de la evolución del discurso educativo en la era de la globalización, para determinar las transformaciones del inglés como lengua franca, teniendo en cuenta la influencia de la identidad cultural en la comunicación.

Palabras clave: lengua franca, comunicación intercultural, inglés, identidad nacional.

1. Introduction

Globalization processes in the modern educational process have led to the intensification of studying English, which has given students the opportunity to choose the most effective

and modern technologies for future professional activities (AL-Mansouri, 2021; Bramschreiber, 2012; Ko et al., 2013).

The modern interpretation of the lingua franca concept, which is presented in scientific investigations and practical developments, is used to designate a special sociolinguistic category, that is, a functional type of language that is used in modern conditions as a means of communication and interaction between speakers of different languages in different spheres of interaction (Jenkins & Leung, 2014). Globalization processes have created a requirement for humanity to define and develop a universal communication tool that would allow effective communication between representatives of different countries, regions, and continents. This is precisely the position of English – it is the language of global communication. Such status of English has had a significant impact on pedagogical programs (curricula), teaching techniques as a lingua franca in educational activities. Changes in the approaches of teachers to teaching this language, ways to improve the teachers' skills, the development of new methodological materials and educational complexes have become the scientific issues of recent years. A number of studies in this direction have contributed to the reconfiguration in the teaching English as a lingua franca, the creation of models for the education of teachers who constantly conduct training based on English language programs (Deniz et al., 2016).

It is worth considering the methods of teaching English as a lingua franca, which emphasize the cultural component of communication, on a separate basis. This is a focus on the representation of language as an effective means of intercultural communication. There is also a research standpoint, according to which the effectiveness of teaching English can only be guaranteed in the absence of a single closed culture as a carrier of specific language norms that are directive for their observance (Bowles, 2015). Flexibility and modernity in ELF teaching can be ensured through the development of cultural-linguistic awareness and sensitivity as a main component of the educational process in the context of considering English as a lingua franca. The specificity of teaching is also significantly influenced by the fact that a large number of representatives of different cultures, traditions, linguistic experience use a common language, transforming it in a certain way (Dombi, 2011).

As a result, the lingua franca is influenced by the context in which it is used, and such additional influence should be taken into account in the initial process, choosing certain approaches in teaching and learning the language. The specificity of English as a lingua franca, respectively, is the fact that this language is actively used not by one or a few native-speaking cultures, but by many more people around the world. That is precisely why the method of teaching this language should be changed based on the image of a single cultural space of a limited circle of speakers; in today's global world, English is a means of intercultural communication. Changing the context of language perception, methods of its teaching require changes, scientific explorations and pedagogical searches both at the level of students and at the level of training teachers for practical activities. It is necessary to work on the development of new programs for the training of

specialists who use the lingua franca language, as well as apply new technics to training teachers who are not afraid to change their approaches to the process of teaching English as a lingua franca.

Cavalheiro (2015) in his scientific work argues that it is also necessary to work on training programs for teachers that provide new approaches to English as a lingua franca, forasmuch as practical skills combined with theory play a decisive role in the quality preparation of a modern specialist.

2. Aims

The purpose of the research lies in establishing the features of teaching English as a lingua franca in educational university practices, as well as to determining the mediation level of the Ukrainian educational environment in communication in English. The purpose outlined has involved the solution of a number of tasks as follows:

- to establish the main and additional features of English as a lingua franca;
- to determine the components of cultural and linguistic identity of the respondents;
- to characterize the respondents' perception of cultural identity in the space of English as a lingua franca;
- to determine the assessment of learning English as a lingua franca by participants of the educational process.

3. Materials and Methods

In order to effectively implement the research purpose concerning determining the basic principles and effective methods of teaching English in the conditions of globalization, theoretical methods of analysis and synthesis, as well as a descriptive method were used. The pedagogical experiment was the main method of the research, which also involved the application of survey and observation methods. This method is empirical; consequently, the research group was not able to define the proposed educational and methodological complex as universal, the basis for systemic changes in the educational paradigm.

The foreign students in the direction of information technologies who studied English as a lingua franca at Khmelnytskyi National University (Ukraine), at the Faculty of Information Technologies during the 2021 - 2022 academic year were the objects of the present research. The total number of respondents amounted to 20 people studying at the first (bachelor's) level of higher education. All students were grouped into a study group that used the method of learning English as a lingua franca.

A variable in the group is the introduction and approval of the educational and methodological complex, where English is taught as a lingua franca. All students expressed their consent to participate in the experiment; an additional agreement was

signed on the desire to participate in the educational and research project. Having received the consent of the university administration, the research group signed a memorandum guaranteeing the privacy and anonymity of all participants.

The experiment consisted of 3 stages.

At the stage I, the investigation of the components of cultural and linguistic identity was carried out; the place of the principal and additional features of English as a lingua franca was determined; methodical settings were developed; organizational work of teachers and students with methodical and educational material was conducted; consultations of teachers and students were organized. Materials for the survey were prepared based on the theory of cultural identity (Jameson, 2007).

At the stage II, the general picture of the cultural and national identity of the respondents was determined; students' biological, social, cultural and educational data were presented and studied as important parameters for the organization of foreign language learning.

The questionnaire conducted at the (final) stage III contained a block of closed-ended questions designed to demonstrate the respondents' assessment of the features of the proposed learning of English as a lingua franca.

The questionnaire was devoted to the attitude of students to educational materials, their motivation and attitude to learning English language as a lingua franca; the main didactic positions that were involved in the educational process in order to increase the motivation towards learning a foreign language were considered.

The basic difficulties faced by the researchers, include as follows: the relatively short duration of the experiment (within one academic year); the lack of an opportunity to conduct an in-depth qualitative study that would explain the motivation of the respondents' decision-making. All participants of the experiment gave written consent to participate in it; the questionnaire was conducted with preservation of privacy and anonymity of the respondents.

4. Literature Review

Successful communication between representatives of different cultures and nations requires the use of a common language – that is, lingua franca. English is one of such languages; consequently, numerous studies are devoted to considering the important role of this language in communication processes and intercultural communication (Deniz et al., 2016). Communication between representatives of different cultures can be ensured by means of English, despite the fact that not all participants of the communication are authentic speakers of this language (Köktürk, 2012; Bilal et al., 2019). In such cases, English should be used in a different way; this way of using it affects the quality of

interaction and understanding, forasmuch as the knowledge level of the interlocutor's language may be far from native, and it does not imply its free use.

In a number of studies (Tashakori & Haghighat, 2019; Rababah, 2020; Kaur & Birlik, 2021), cultural identity is presented as a multidimensional, complex feature, which in the dynamic context of learning is a useful perspective for considering the need to introduce methods of learning English as a lingua franca into university education. A separate position is the consideration of intracultural aspects of being in mastering English as a lingua franca (Kramsch, 2014; Sifakis, 2014).

Taking into consideration the main positions of the theory of cultural identity (Jameson, 2007), a methodology has been developed for working in experimental groups that help to find out the influence of cultural identity on the communication in English of foreign students studying in the Ukrainian higher educational institutions. According to Jameson's theory (Jameson, 2007), cultural identity manifests itself at the verbal level through six components as follows: social affiliation, profession, geography, life philosophy, linguistic and biological traits in the cultural aspect.

The studies were carried out on the features of intercultural communication in Finnish - Swedish business communication (Kankaanranta & Lu, 2013; Grazzi, 2015). It was revealed that while using English as a lingua franca, all respondents did not allow more frank, simple, more private communication; on the other hand, while communication took place in their native language, it was more informal, easy and open. In continuation of such studies, a hypothesis was put forward that differences may decrease in case of long-term interethnic communication in English. By the way, the signs of convergence were mentioned in some scientific works, which sometimes occurred during intercultural communication between Finns and Koreans (Jung, Louhiala-Salminen, 2012).

The problems of teaching English as a lingua franca are also part of the research paradigm in pedagogy, linguistics and teaching methodology (Tawafak et al., 2018; Kuzmina et al., 2020). Representation of a language as an effective means of intercultural communication is based on methods of teaching English as a lingua franca. In particular, flexibility in teaching EFL should be ensured by the rejection of a single target culture as a bearer of specific language norms, which should be strictly observed (Grazzi, 2015). The development of cultural competence and sensitivity towards a language should be the main focus of education in the context of considering English as a lingua franca.

Specific features of English as a lingua franca were studied. It is also influenced by the fact that this language is used by many speakers who influence it through the knowledge of their languages and cultures and the introduction of their peculiarities into the language being studied. Thus, the number of non-native English speakers exceeds the number of native English speakers (Dombi, 2011; López-Barrios & Debat, 2014).

5. Results

Let's consider educational practices where English is taught taking into account its position as a lingua franca, where the motivation to learn English, the formation of communicative and professional skills, the creation of texts in oral and written form in the conditions of a multinational professional environment is presented.

The core position of the language of the globalized world is its widespread use in various communicative situations, various discourses, by speakers of different languages and cultures, and pronunciation, lexical composition and syntagmatic relations depend on this. This factor was taken into account during the 1st (preparatory stage) of the project.

The English language has basic and additional features, as a lingua franca, necessary for its wide use and assimilation by non-native speakers. Attention to the features of grammatical constructions and pronunciation is necessary in order to ensure the intelligibility of the language between speakers in the conditions of international communication.

The main features should be taken into account in the development of teaching methods, preparation of the educational and methodological complex for the course. Non-core features will not play a significant role in successful international communication with a lingua franca; however, in our opinion, they should be discussed within the framework of the language learning program. Lexical stress and features of vowel pronunciation can be presented as particular qualities of English. It is also possible to present grammatical variations in different forms of English as a lingua franca; consequently, this has been introduced during the first preparatory stage of the experiment.

Table 1.
Basic and additional features of the English language as a lingua franca (author's development).

Basic features	Additional features
initial clusters of consonants;	consonant sounds [θ], [ð] and [ɫ];
all consonant sounds apart from [θ], [ð] and [ɫ];	final clusters of consonants;
distinctions between lengths of vowels;	reduced and weak forms of vowels;
mid-central NURSE vowel	intonational tones;
linguistic stress	stress-based rhythm;
	the individual vowel quality
	lexical stress

At the 2nd stage of the program, respondents were surveyed about their cultural and linguistic identity in the context of learning English as a lingua franca.

Table 2.
Components of cultural and linguistic identity (author's development).

Components	Parameters
Profession, occupation	Educational field, future profession, place of study
	Economic, social, educational level
Social status	Nationality, region, city (village)
Sociocultural data	Religious and political identity
Philosophical and religious beliefs	Language, mother tongue, dialect, polylingualism
Linguistic aspect	Race, ethnicity, gender, age
Biological and cultural characteristics	

Taking into account the main positions of the theory of cultural identity (Jameson, 2007), it is possible to find out the influence of cultural identity on the features of communication in English by foreign students in joint study groups. The broad and multidimensional context of cultural identity, into which a new language is gradually interwoven, is a useful perspective for the implementation of successful intercultural communication.

In the process of interviewing, parameters of cultural identity were established in groups of respondents.

In the course of the survey, it has been established that all respondents have the same educational level, study in two related specialties; the group has a large number of respondents who are bilingual. Such people usually find it easier to perceive foreign languages. In addition, students from Nigeria use English as a second language, while students from Morocco use French as a second language. Therefore, the practice of using the language as lingua franca is familiar to more than 50% of respondents. Such kind of the survey contributed to the creation of educational programs and tasks that would take into account the professional features, social and linguistic realities of the group.

Table 3.
Map of cultural identity (according to Jameson, 2007) in groups, which are taught in English (author's development).

Educational direction, future profession, place of study	**122 Computer science - 8 people** **126 Information systems and technologies - 12 people**
Nationality, ethnicity, region, city (village)	Hausa (4 people), Igbo (2 people) - Nigeria Arabs (3), Jews (1) – the city of Rabat (3), the city of Sale (1) (Morocco) Arabs (3) – the city of Amman (2), the city of Irbid (1), Jordan Arabs (1) – the city of Tyre, Lebanon Chinese (2) - Gansu Province, China Uighurs (4) - Hunan Province, China
Language, mother tongue, polylingualism	Polylinguals – 14 people: second language is English (6 people); the second language is French (4 persons); the second language is Chinese (4 people). Only Chinese (2 persons); Only Arabic (4 people)

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Gender, age	Females - 6 people, males - 14 people.
	20 years old (16 people), 22 years old (3 people), 24 years old (1 person)
Religious and political identity	Muslims - 11 people
	Buddhists - 2 persons
	Christians - 6 people
	Jews - 1 person
Economic, social, educational level	Incomplete higher education - 20 people
	Representatives of the middle class - 20 people

At this stage, the respondents' vision of cultural identity in the space of using English as a lingua franca was also presented. The results are presented in percentages.

As it can be observed from the results of the table, the study group is multinational; consequently, this makes it possible to see how the respondents perceive themselves and others in the process of communication in English. By the way, another positive point was revealed while interviewing respondents for the collection of such data: the project participants were able to speak and analyse the purpose and features of their own perception of intercultural communication, as well as the motivation for using English as a lingua franca. Only 33% of all respondents consider it a priority to understand the language of their interlocutors. From among the respondents, 80% of the Chinese and the Uyghurs have prioritized the situation of communication when you are understood. That is, work on high-quality pronunciation has become the most important aspect.

Table 4.
Summary data of respondents' perception of cultural identity in the space of using English as a lingua franca (author's development).

№	Respondents	Years of staying	Country of origin	Country of staying	Purpose of communication (priority)
1	The Chinese	2020 -2022	China	Ukraine	I am understood (80%)
	The Uyghurs		China	Ukraine	I understand (20%)
2	The Moroccans	2020 -2022	Morocco	Ukraine	I am understood (50%)
					I understand (50%)
3	The Nigerians	2020 -2022	Nigeria	Ukraine	I am understood (60%)
					I understand (40%)
4	The Jordanians	2020 -2022	Lebanon	Ukraine	I am understood (80%)
			Jordan	Ukraine	I understand (20%)

At the III stage of the research, a survey was conducted regarding the respondents' assessment of using the methodology of teaching English as a lingua franca. The results of work and training on the project were collected and systematized; the conclusions of the effectiveness of the implemented measures were summarized. Respondents were offered a series of statements with which they had to agree by placing a '+' sign opposite the statement. The respondents were allocated as follows: table G1 - Nigerian students, G2 - Chinese students; G3 - Moroccan students; G4 - students of Lebanon, Jordan. For

80% of Chinese students (Chinese and Uyghurs), the priority is correct pronunciation, a situation where you are understood.

Table 5.
The result of the participants' assessment of the experiment of learning English as a lingua franca (author's development).

Question	G1	G2	G3	G4
English is an international language that helps students communicate and learn	65%	60%	63%	68%
English becomes a tool for professional growth	27%	29%	24%	25%
Communication in English is a means of increasing the communication capabilities of a professional	43%	37%	30%	28%
Students can get additional knowledge of the profession, more opportunities to win a grant, competition, project	18%	14%	20%	22%
Communicative English proficiency affects the possibility to find a better job on the labour market	65%	47%	64%	58%
Knowledge of phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, conversational ability, listening skills affect the success of communication and conversation	74%	74%	82%	70%
Learning a foreign language is faster in the process of active communication	42%	33%	28%	24%
English language skills contribute to the development of students' professional skills	43%	40%	48%	42%

The approach to the respondents' perception of cultural identity in the space of English as a lingua franca will provide a real picture of the respondents' motivation; this will contribute to the effective learning of a foreign language in the context of acquiring professional, intercultural skills, and improve the ability to communicate in an international environment. These skills are necessary for working in a global world, where people of many nationalities and languages can work coincidently in the same structure. The statement about the need to know and use knowledge of phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, speaking ability, and listening skills for successful communication has received the greatest approval from the respondents (75% of the respondents in total). On average, 64% of students have identified English as the language of international communication, which is necessary for study and work.

6. Discussion

A number of studies have considered the problems of effective learning of English as a lingua franca (Kankaanranta, Lu, 2013; Bayyurt, Akcan, (2015). Along with this, the search for pedagogical technologies continues that can be effectively applied in the educational environment and affect the motivation of learning English. As the conducted research shows, the demand for using English as an international language is growing steadily (75% in total). 55% of students turned out to be bilingual; that is, they have experience of using the language as lingua franca (English, French) for interethnic communication. For the majority of respondents (75%), for controlled motivation, it is important to understand that the success of international communication with the help of

lingua franca is related to knowledge of phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, speaking ability, listening. Mastering the means of implementing knowledge of the language of international communication provides opportunities for quality education, including mastering a profession in international groups. This makes it possible to improve one's professional level and be easily involved in the educational process. In this regard, our research notes a general positive assessment of the approach to teaching English as a means of international communication.

In the study of communicative features of communication in English as a lingua franca (Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, 2010); Kankaanranta, Lu, 2013), specific features of communication in the business environment between representatives of international Finnish companies located in Beijing and Shanghai are considered. The scholar has found that the evolution of English as a business lingua franca can be detected in the signs of convergence shown by the respondents when evaluating Chinese - Finnish professional communication in English (Vettorel, 2014). Three components of cultural identity were also highlighted, which were defined as particularly relevant in professional communication in English and stimulated openness and directness, namely: professionalism, young age, use of English as a lingua franca. In our research, more than 64% of students have identified English as the language of international communication, which is necessary in further professional activities.

7. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted, on a practical level, international communication using English as a lingua franca is a dynamic hybrid that significantly depends on discursive practices and contexts in which it is implemented. It is important to understand that the lingua franca is not a monolithic stable system in the educational process, it is a communication resource, changes in which depend on the social-cultural and economic and political changes of the global world.

The demand among students towards using English in education and professional work practice is steadily growing. Therefore, the development of methods of teaching English as a lingua franca is relevant. This will also influence the motivation to learn foreign languages. The majority of students (a total of 54%) have identified the importance of learning English as a lingua franca for further professional development.

The choice of an English language curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning are strongly influenced by the context in which the resource will be used. This aspect also affects approaches to the motivation of participants in the educational process.

English in the global world should not be perceived as the product of only one native-speaking nation, one culture. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to work on the development of new forms and methods of teaching, where the image of not a single carrier culture is used, but a focus on language as a means of international

communication. These changes in the context of the perception and use of English as a lingua franca require changes in the methods and content of the teaching and training of English language teachers at the global level.

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