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BUILDING UP THE COMMON EUROPEAN VALUES IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF FUTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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Ukraine is now on the threshold of entering the European Union, which affects all the life spheres and education in particular. The article deals with analyzing the common European values in terms of their introduction to the teacher training system in Ukraine. The authors draw attention to the issue of multilingualism which enhances learning foreign languages, helps to protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity, and improves the competitiveness of the EU economy. As a result of the theoretical analysis, the authors conclude that building up the EU common values and incorporating them into the process of future foreign language teachers' training is a lifelong process that demands daily and ongoing work as teachers should put much effort into organizing the appropriate educational context and make a new generation of children raised in Ukraine not only feel European but act according to European values. The article also provides the results of the survey that, on the one hand, show that future foreign language teachers are not aware enough of the European policy of multilingualism as well as common European values. On the other hand, students realize the necessity of integrating Ukraine into the European educational environment and the importance of foreign language learning and teaching. The obtained results emphasize the necessity of introducing the Module on "Strengthening



the EU common values through the policy of multilingualism in the education and training of future teachers" into the university's educational process.

Key words: the common European values, a policy of multilingualism, future foreign language teachers, teacher training.

Сьогодні Україна стоїть на порозі вступу до Європейського Союзу. Цей процес впливає на всі сфери життя, включаючи освіту. У наведеній статті проаналізовано загальноєвропейські цінності з точки зору їх впровадження в систему підготовки вчителів України. Автори статті також приділяють увагу політиці багатомовності, яка покращує вивчення іноземних мов, допомагає захистити багате мовне розмаїття Європи та підвищує конкурентоспроможність економіки ЄС. У результаті теоретичного аналізу автори доходять висновку, що формування спільних цінностей ЄС та включення їх у процес підготовки майбутніх вчителів іноземної мови – це процес, що триває протягом усього життя. Такий процес вимагає щоденної та наполегливої роботи, оскільки вчителі повинні докладати чимало зусиль, щоб організувати відповідний освітній контекст і зробити так, щоб нове покоління дітей, які зростають в Україні, не лише відчували себе європейцями, а й поводити себе відповідно до європейських цінностей. У практичній частині статті також наводяться результати опитування, які, з одного боку, показують, що майбутні вчителі іноземних мов недостатньо обізнані з політикою багатомовності та цінностями Європейського Союзу, а з іншого боку, студенти усвідомлюють необхідність інтеграції України до європейського освітнього середовища та важливість вивчення й викладання іноземних мов. Отримані результати підкреслюють необхідність впровадження в навчальний процес університету модуля «Зміцнення спільних цінностей Європейського Союзу через політику багатомовності у навчанні та підготовці майбутніх вчителів».

Ключові слова: спільні європейські цінності, політика багатомовності, майбутні вчителі іноземних мов, підготовка вчителів.

Introduction. The acceptance of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 has become an essential step in promoting and disseminating common European values in the countries of the European Union. According to the treaty, values are moral and ethical foundations of a European society where inclusiveness, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and non-discrimination prevail. Such common values are an integral part of the European way of life, so their dissemination and abidance contribute to Ukraine's rapprochement with the EU standards, thus promoting conditions for our country to become a member of the European Union.

The EU is strongly associated with a set of essential democratic values, and becoming a member of the European Union means accepting, respecting, and protecting the fundamental rights of people (Borca et al., 2020). The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights protects such individual freedoms as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression, and information. Democracy, as one of the EU common values, guarantees the proper functioning of the EU, providing



all the EU adult citizens with political rights such as the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament, the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or their country of origin. Equality should exist in all areas of life: gender equality, political equality, and equal pay for equal work. The rule of law means that everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Douglas-Scott (2011) also believes that human rights presuppose that every EU citizen has to be free from discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

One of the leading European values, along with those listed above, is close attention to language diversity which defines multilingualism as the necessity that allows individuals to reveal the limits of their existence and improve their quality of life (Ziegler, 2013). It should be mentioned that the Core Curriculum English Language Teaching Methodology Bachelor's Level, designed by a team of Ukrainian teachers within the framework of the joint project "New Generation School Teacher", covers the issues dealing with the EU values in learning and teaching foreign languages (Bevz et al., 2020).

Domilescu & Lungoci (2019) understand multilingualism as the ability of individuals to use two or more languages in communication consistently. This ability promotes international mobility and cooperation, facilitates educational and professional integration, and unites citizens within the European community. Multilingualism enhances the communication of people in their languages as well as learning foreign languages, helps to protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity, and improves the competitiveness of the EU economy. Multilingualism is an inseparable part of every common EU value. The EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights supports the rights of any citizen to use any of the 24 official languages to contact the EU organizations, which are obliged to reply in the same language. It should be mentioned that the EU's primary goal is to support and provide language diversity and national identity, thus enabling every EU citizen to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue. In most cases, one of these languages is English.

The best way to achieve this would be to introduce children to foreign languages early; thus, if Ukrainian language education sticks to the main principles of the EU's multilingualism policy and strengthens the EU common values through the education and training of future foreign language teachers. Furthermore, it will give young people opportunities to hone their language skills by engaging in learning and training abroad and supporting vocational and educational mobility.

Unfortunately, an average Ukrainian student very often receives a given amount of out-of-date knowledge at school because the way of teaching in contemporary Ukrainian schools does not motivate children to learn (Elkin et al., 2016). Moreover, from our own experience, we can say that Ukrainian school leavers leave school without a working knowledge of a second language and are unaware of the EU common values. For this reason, to overcome existing difficulties, it is essential to get the proper understanding of the EU common values to impact on professional training of future foreign language teachers, which have a direct influence on the improvement of language learning and teaching as a modern pedagogical priority.



Literature review. The questions of professional training of future foreign language teachers have been under discussion in the numerous works of both foreign (Asderaki (2020), Borca (2020), Domilescu & Lungoci (2019), Ziegler (2013), Veugelers (2017)) and Ukrainian scholars (Bevz (2020), Ikonnikova (2018), Kolisnichenko (2021), Komar (2021), Kylyvnyk (2022), Zolotukhina et al. (2021)). Nevertheless, the issue of introducing the EU common values into the educational system of Ukraine still requires further investigation.

The fundamental values that determine the development of European education are human dignity (is untouchable, respected, and protected by all society members); freedom (every person is free from the influence of state power, religion, and social groups); democracy (citizens' participation in social life, democratic policy, and democratic society; equality (equal rights for all citizens before the law); tolerance (tolerant personal relationships, tolerance for different social and cultural groups, inclusive society); the rule of law (education is based on agreements voluntarily and democratically agreed by the countries of the European Union); respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities; national and international orientation (Zolotukhina et al., 2021).

The Council Recommendation on Common values, Inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching encourage the EU Member States to 1) increase the sharing of these shared values at all levels and types of education and training; 2) promote a European dimension of teaching; 3) facilitate inclusive education; 4) support teachers and teaching in order to strengthen the positive and inclusive common sense of belonging to the EU, foster tolerant and democratic attitudes towards the unity and diversity, social, cultural and historical heritage of the states belonging to the Union (The Council of the European Union, 2018). Accordingly, the EU policy in the field of common values dissemination can be summarized as follows: stimulating attention, facilitating the exchange of best practices, collecting information by research, and providing advice and support (Veugelers et al., 2017).

In order to achieve these goals, special attention must be paid to teachers' training, as they are considered the main pillars of education and the critical actors in promoting European values. Moreover, being the most crucial resource in the learning process, teachers need constant professional development to bring fundamental changes to the educational system of Ukraine (Komar, 2021).

In this perspective, Ziegler (2013) offers a conception of language teachers as agents of change in the societies of the 21st century. The conception implies a willingness to engage in professional development, to learn from the learners, develop one's own identity as a language teacher, working towards plurilingual education and the EU common values rather than merely facing diversity and multilingualism. Language teacher education then allows professionals to construct knowledge in line with local contexts, workplaces, and individual repertoires (Ziegler, 2013).

This vision aligns with Borca's (2020) view, which proves that it is not enough for a language teacher to be informed about the EU and the major European current issues. It is more critical to adhere to the common European values, illustrate them daily in a teacher's work (human rights education activities, activities related to values or focused on the development of critical thinking), and actively interact with all the



participants of the learning process (students, their parents, community members). It demonstrates the need for the authors of teachers' training programs to plan, make changes, manage, incorporate examples, illustrate, bring arguments for the possibility of such activities and give space for reflection/self-reflection on teaching practice (Borca, 2020).

For this purpose, Domilescu & Lungoci (2019) suggest expanding the current curriculum from a curriculum for each language taken in isolation to a curriculum for several languages introducing general language education, which helps learners establish metacognitive control over their competencies and strategies. This way, learners could be encouraged to become more open to other people's cultures and languages.

Statement of the problem. In their research, foreign scholars prove the lack of educational courses on the European Union and its shared values within the school and University curricula (Asderaki, 2020). The same data is also given by Ukrainian researchers (Bevz (2020), Ikonnikova (2018), Kolisnichenko (2021), Komar et al. (2021), Kylyvnyk et al. (2022), and Zolotukhina et al. (2021). It has become clear that a vital dimension of education for democracy and human rights demands urgent changes in the professional training of future foreign language teachers. According to the analysis of the scientific sources, we conclude that a specific necessity exists to conduct a study on students' (future language teachers') perceptions of European values.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to explore and report on Bachelor students' (future foreign language teachers') knowledge, assessment, and attitudes to the EU common values, to investigate their teaching needs dealing with a shared understanding of the EU values significance for inclusive societies and values' dissemination through interactive and innovative pedagogical methods.

Methods. The scientific paper consists of two parts. The first part (theoretical) deals with a review of the official documents (the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000), the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), the Council of the European Union (2018)) elaborated by the European Commission, specialized articles and papers addressing the issue of common values in the European context. In the second part (practical), we represent the analysis of the online questionnaire aimed to identify students' (future foreign language teachers') perceptions of the EU common values, the extent to which students are acquainted with these values, and how they think these values could be promoted by them, as future language teachers. In addition, we have conducted small-scale research among Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University students to identify their attitude toward integrating Ukrainian education into the European educational environment. The available number of participants was 242.

Results and Discussion. Due to the results obtained, 34,7% of students consider integrating Ukrainian education into the European educational environment a positive process. In comparison, 46,7% of the respondents believe it is a more positive than negative process. The students were also asked to list the common European values they are aware of. Such common values as tolerance (71,9%), equality (69%), human rights (69%), freedom (67,4%), human dignity (66,1%), justice (59,1%), absence of discrimination (54,5%), freedom of movement (47,1%) were mentioned by the future



teachers. Only 33,1% and 21,5% of students know such values as individual freedom and the rule of law, respectively. This percentage distribution can be explained by the fact that nearly all the syllabuses of subjects taught in the University include topics that more or less (but not enough) deal with the European education system, based on the common European values. Future teachers were also offered to respond to the question, "How do the common European values influence your personal development and the development of Ukraine in general?" Thus, 57,9% of future teachers think that the common European values positively impact broader possibilities for education and employment and contribute to the integration of Ukraine into the European environment. Some respondents (40,1%) believe this impact is neutral. Thus, the figures are nearly the same. Half of the students are not acquainted enough with common European values and the advantages Ukraine might take from European integration.

The question "What does the term "policy of multilingualism" mean?" was answered the following way. 52,1% of the respondents believe multilingualism means protecting and preserving the diversity of languages in the EU countries and promoting language learning. On the other hand, 20,7% of students think it is a set of events (political, legal, administrative) aimed at regulating language issues in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, future foreign language teachers are not aware of the EU common values and multilingualism policy. For this reason, with the view to the policy of multilingualism and in order to go in line with the EU values, which sets the improvement of language learning and teaching as a priority, Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University (Ukraine) is going to introduce the course "Strengthening the EU common values through the policy of multilingualism in the education and training of future teachers". The Module is annually targeted at Bachelor students (in their 4th year of studies), whose sphere of interest deals with teaching foreign languages to pre-schoolers and primary school children. The primary school teachers of foreign languages are those people who can lay the foundation for the EU common values among the youngest representations of European society. The module aims to strengthen the EU common values through the European policy of multilingualism while training future teachers. It will enhance the educational process of Ukraine as well as make it go in line with European common values and language standards. Such educational policy will provide the foundation for learning and teaching foreign languages early and promote spreading the EU common values.

Conclusion. The results of the theoretical analysis of scientific literature proved that most scholars consider education one of the central elements of promoting EU democratic values. Additionally, it should be noted that building up the EU common values is a life-long process that demands daily and ongoing work. Therefore, teachers should put much effort into organizing the appropriate educational context and make a new generation of children raised in Ukraine feel European and act according to European values. According to the survey results, we can also conclude that, on the one hand, future foreign language teachers are not aware of the European policy of multilingualism and common European values.

On the other hand, students realize the necessity of integrating Ukraine into the European educational environment and the importance of foreign language learning



and teaching. Our theoretical research and survey results show that some amendments should be introduced into future foreign language teachers' training in reorganizing the syllabuses of the subjects taught. We believe that obtained results emphasize the necessity of the introduction of the Module on “Strengthening the EU common values through the policy of multilingualism in the education and training of future teachers” into the curriculum as future foreign language teachers need unique competencies to foster identification of schoolchildren with Europe and European values. Different perspectives of the research include the design of the Module syllabus, the University teacher's toolkit, and the student's manual, piloting this Module with Bachelor students (future foreign language teachers) of Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University.

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