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**ENGLISH IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION:
GLOBAL PRACTICE AND STEPS TOWARDS EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION**

The demand for English proficiency is increasing substantially all over the world as the language dominates every walk of life. It has remained one of the working languages of the EU and the Council of Europe, which gives it even greater significance. The purpose of the article is to analyze the experience of incorporating English into the sphere of public administration of foreign countries and review the initiatives directed to supporting the promotion of English as a communication tool of public officials. The article discusses the requirements for English proficiency in the countries' civil service systems as well as the attempts made to improve English fluency of public officials. It has been discovered that when appointing civil servants, most national governments in Europe require proficiency only in the official (state or national) language, which reflects the EU language policy of multilingualism and multiculturalism. It is highlighted that Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia appear to be the only countries within the EU that oblige their civil servants at the official level to present a certificate or otherwise prove language fluency. The work in the EU

bodies presupposes knowledge of one of the working languages of the EU. Asian countries (China, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc.) tend to set the knowledge of English for public officials as a prerequisite for appointment more often. Research has demonstrated that the Ukrainian government has made attempts to improve the level of the English language among civil servants since its European integration aspirations, by cooperating with national and international organizations, arranging workshops, professional development courses in English, providing opportunities for joining self-study courses and platforms. Nonetheless, more measures must be taken to motivate, stimulate and encourage the development of civil servants' English skills.

Keywords: *the English language, public administration, civil servant, language proficiency, job requirements, EU experience.*

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АНГЛІЙСЬКА МОВА В ПУБЛІЧНОМУ УПРАВЛІННІ: СВІТОВА ПРАКТИКА ТА КРОКИ ДО ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ

Попит на знання англійської мови значно зростає в усьому світі, оскільки вона домінує в усіх сферах життя. Вона залишається однією із робочих мов ЄС та Ради Європи, що надає їй ще більшого значення. Метою статті є аналіз досвіду впровадження англійської мови у сферу державного управління зарубіжних країн та огляд ініціатив, спрямованих на підтримку просування англійської мови як інструменту комунікації

державних службовців. У статті розглядаються вимоги до рівня володіння англійською мовою в системах державної служби країн, а також спроби поліпшити рівень володіння англійською мовою державними службовцями. Виявлено, що більшість національних урядів країн Європи при призначенні державних службовців вимагають володіння лише офіційною (державною або національною) мовою, що відбиває мовну політику ЄС щодо багатомовності та мультикультуралізму. Наголошується, що Польща, Словаччина та Словенія є єдиними країнами в ЄС, які на офіційному рівні зобов'язують своїх державних службовців пред'являти сертифікат або іншим чином підтверджувати вільне володіння мовою. Робота в органах ЄС передбачає знання однієї з робочих мов ЄС. Країни Азії (Китай, Південна Корея, Індонезія, Малайзія та ін.) частіше встановлюють знання англійської мови для державних службовців як обов'язкову умову для призначення на посаду. Дослідження показало, що український уряд робить спроби підвищити рівень володіння англійською мовою серед державних службовців з моменту набуття євроінтеграційних прагнень, співпрацюючи з національними та міжнародними організаціями, організовуючи семінари, курси підвищення кваліфікації англійською мовою, надаючи можливості долучитися до курсів та платформ для самонавчання. Тим не менш, потрібно вжити більше заходів для мотивації, стимулювання та заохочення розвитку навичок володіння англійською мовою державними службовцями.

Ключові слова: англійська мова, державне управління, державний службовець, володіння мовою, посадові вимоги, досвід ЄС.

Problem statement. By gaining candidate country status, Ukraine has moved a step forward to embrace the European values and global culture. To understand the culture and values of other peoples even if they are mentally close, it is important to develop certain communicative skills. In the context of

international communication, English is often considered the language of choice. Spoken by approximately 1.5 billion non-native speakers worldwide [32], English is a lingua franca of business communication and interpersonal cultural exchange. Mastering the English language is a key to successful employment and further career promotion. In the EU, a foreign language competence is considered a basic skill which must be acquired by every EU citizen and will help them thrive in any EU country [23]. Additionally, the English language remains one of the official languages of the Council of Europe, despite the UK leaving the EU.

According to the Eurostat statistics [16], English has become the principal foreign language for upper secondary schools students in Europe, with 96% learning it in the European Union. It is important to note that the same is true about Ukraine – English is the most widely taught foreign language in Ukraine, with the majority of students studying it as their first foreign language.

Knowing English is a crucial factor in the area of public administration, where effective communication is essential for successful representation of the country image and government authorities, establishing partnerships with European countries and boosting a personal brand. In the Law «On Civil Service», the term «professional competence» is defined as the ability of an individual to apply specialized knowledge, skills and competencies within the scope of their job description [28]. Consequently, in accordance with the recent draft law No 9432 «On the use of the English language in Ukraine» the responsibilities of public officials will include the necessity to communicate in English in order to perform «the assigned tasks and duties properly» [29]. Thus, public administration students, aspiring to work in government agencies, non-profit organizations, or international institutions, and acting civil servants will now be required to use English to engage in policy analysis, advocacy, and public service delivery.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The changes in the language policy of teaching and learning a foreign language have been a subject of scientific interest of V. Borova, N. Demianenko, Y. Harust, L. Hodunko, O. Lokshyna, O. Sadovets, O. Tarnopolskyi, H. Tovkanets and others. The works by V. Hamaniuk, T. Kovalova (minority and regional languages) discuss the expediency of introducing new approaches to language education and the peculiarities of its reforming in view of innovative and technological development.

The European standards, the EU language policy and possible ways of their implementation into the Ukrainian education system were researched by A. Androshchuk, L. Boiko, N. Pak, V. Shur. The methodology of teaching and learning a foreign language for professional purposes was studied by R. Hryshkova, Y. Kapenko (physicians), O. Malynovska, S. Nikolaieva, O. Pavlova (medical doctors); the same aspects in the area of training and professional development of civil servants were addressed by V. Bogatyrtseva, H. Dyvnych, I. Rozgon, V. Shur.

It should be noted that since Ukraine gained independence, the authorities have implemented a number of initiatives to enhance the accessibility to and popularity of English among the population, with a particular focus on improving the communicative competence of civil servants and local government officials. The promotion of English was underpinned by a number of earlier governmental initiatives and legislation, namely:

Sustainable Development Strategy «Ukraine-2020», according to which it was assumed that by 2020, 75% of secondary school graduates would be able to demonstrate proficiency in at least two foreign languages, with their knowledge confirmed by internationally recognized certificates. This ambitious target is aligned with the European Union's goal of fostering proficiency in two foreign languages among its citizens. As part of implementing the strategy and integrating Ukraine into the space of European politics, economy, science and

education, 2016 and 2018 were pronounced the Year of English and the Year of German [8, p. 56] respectively;

the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine «On adoption of State Standard of Primary Education»: English becomes the main second language to be taught and learnt from the first year of schooling [30];

«The Conceptual foundations of State Policy on the Development of the English Language in Higher Education» project by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, which contains the recommendations to higher education institutions (HEIs) on improving the methodology of teaching languages, intensifying learning opportunities and enhancing the language requirements for higher education applicants.

the implementation of the National Foreign Language Learning and Promotion Initiative «Ukraine Speaking» in cooperation with the Go Global organization and Lingua Skills platform [17];

the cooperation with the international organizations (British Council, Cambridge University, USAID) for arranging training sessions, language workshops and providing free access to online education platforms and courses (Open University, Coursera, EdEra, etc.).

The purpose of the article is to analyze the experience of incorporating English into the sphere of public administration of foreign countries and review the initiatives directed at supporting the promotion of English as a communication tool for public officials.

The objectives of the article are: to examine the articles of the draft law «On the use of English in Ukraine» which can impact the work-life of public administrators; to study the use of foreign languages in the civil service internationally and its implementation in public administration of the state; to analyze the government initiatives related to the ways of improving the English proficiency of public officials.

Presentation of the main material. Under the draft law initiated by the President of Ukraine in June 2023, English is to be recognized as a language of international communication in the areas of public and civil life in Ukraine and the teaching and learning of the English language is to be supported and promoted by the national government of Ukraine [29]. The draft law aims at encouraging the use of the English language in Ukraine and its integration into the public sphere. As stated by the top Ukrainian politicians and officials, its main objectives are to enhance the country's competitiveness, attract investment and tourism [33], to stimulate demand for the English language among the Ukrainian population in general [18]. It can help facilitate the development of a more erudite, competitive citizenry with new opportunities.

The prospective adoption of the draft law will affect a range of laws: «On transport», «On the citizens' appeals», «On Local State Administrations», «On Armed Forces», «On Border Control», «On preschool education», «On higher education», «On Supporting the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language», «On Civil Service» and others [29]. Consequently, as almost all spheres of social activities will undergo changes, a considerable number of concerns have arisen from NGOs, Ukrainian language supporters, cultural and government institutions, which argue that giving priority to English in public and social life over Ukrainian and minority languages and other EU languages, may not only result in a reduction of those willing to learn a different foreign language, but may also lead to a decline in the status of the Ukrainian language. Additionally, giving one foreign language a special status over other languages contradicts both the Constitution of Ukraine under which the state is obliged to support the learning of different foreign languages, and the laws and aspirations of the European Union, where the slogan «united in diversity» is trending. One noteworthy aspect of the new legislation, however, is the elimination of Russian as a communication tool and its replacement with English, particularly in Article

8 of the Law «On Refugees and Persons in Need of Complementary or Temporary Protection».

Since Ukraine gained its independence, the language policy of the state has advanced in two principal ways: promoting the Ukrainian language as the state language (especially thanks to the active stance of pro-Ukrainian civil society) and developing national minorities languages required and regulated by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages that came into force in Ukraine in 2006 [14]. The significance of developing proficiency in foreign languages was highlighted during the reform of education in the early 2000s, and since 2018, English has been a compulsory subject in the academic curriculum from the first year of primary school in Ukraine [30].

Pursuant to the Law of Ukraine «On Civil Service» [28], the requirements for fluency in the languages pertain to the civil servants of category A and candidates for such a position. The language requirements refer to fluency in the state language (Ukrainian) and proficiency in a foreign language that is one of the official languages of the Council of Europe. The Standard Requirements [31] for civil servants of category A position specify the choice of languages, acquiring proficiency in English and French. Under the draft law, the choice will narrow to only one language – English, but the requirements for professional fluency in the language will be expanded to certain civil service positions of categories B and C, especially those whose job description presupposes carrying out tasks related to international cooperation. Proficiency levels for categories A, B and C are to align with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and usually are set at B2 level for professional communication. It is proposed that prior to taking a position, public officials of defined categories must take a free English language exam organized by the central executive body in order to determine their fluency level or provide a certificate from a relevant authority attesting to the level of their foreign language proficiency [29].

It is also worth noting that the tendency to define English proficiency as a mandatory component of professional competence for holding a vacant position in the public (civil) service is not unique to Ukraine. The analysis of the available publications and legislation shows that such a tendency is also observed in Asian countries such as India, South Korea, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and in the Philippines. In China (Hong Kong), for example, all civil service applicants are typically expected to demonstrate language proficiency in English and Chinese before applying for a job. The requirements for the English proficiency level vary depending on the rank of the position and job nature [1]. In South Korea, the knowledge of a foreign language is tested at the second stage of recruitment examination [21].

This practice of introducing foreign language requirements in the civil service of a state, however, is not as widespread within the EU as it is in other countries. Poland is the exception. In Poland, to become a civil servant, besides having an M.A. degree, a 3-year experience as a civil service employee, the applicant must have a good command in one of the languages: either one of the EU working languages or in Arabic, Belarusian, Chinese, Icelandic, Japanese, Norwegian, Ukrainian or Russian [22]. According to the legislation of Slovakia and Slovenia, English fluency is required only if the job instruction presumes international contact. The analysis of legislation and scientific works [2; 3; 7; 20; 22] proves that civil servants of a particular country must be proficient in the official language(s) of that country. Thus, in Canada and the UK, which are English-speaking countries, civil servants must have a good command of English and/or French/Welsh, respectively [5; 24]. In Germany, knowledge of foreign languages is not a criterion for holding a civil service position; however, it is a basic skill for social and professional activities [7]. Moreover, in mid-2023, due to the increased number of migrants and expats who need to be served but are not fluent in German, some German officials suggested making the knowledge of English a requirement in German administrative institutions in

order to provide qualified services to non-German speakers [27]. Proficiency in at least two EU official languages is a specific prerequisite for applying for a post with the EU institutions [20]. As Ukraine is approaching the EU membership, it needs highly qualified specialists who will be able to work directly with European partners and process regulatory information in the original.

Different countries incorporate various strategies into promoting proficiency in languages other than their native one. The review of the available materials and legislation of the EU on approaches to teaching and learning the languages reveals that at the EU level, the language policy is oriented towards the development of multilingual competences as well as cultural and linguistic diversity – the principles which are further reflected at the level of national education systems and in institutional policies. According to the EU language policy, it is recommended that every citizen of the EU member-country should master proficiency in at least two foreign languages [23]. The first compulsory introduction to a foreign language in the EU countries, as well as in Ukraine, starts at a primary school. Moreover, the language mastery must be attained before learners complete upper-secondary education. Despite supporting linguistic diversity within the EU, English as a second or foreign language predominates in academic curricula: it is a compulsory subject in most EU upper-secondary schools with over 80% of learners learning it. The statistics show that in European countries between 5% and 15% of the education budget is allocated to the teaching of foreign languages, and since English is the most frequently opted for as a first foreign language, most of these resources go to the teaching of this language [19].

Adopted by the EU in 2019, the «Council Recommendations on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages» [6] contributed to a significant increase in the overall level of English language fluency among the EU population in 2023, with a growth rate of approximately

twice that observed in 2019 [33]. In order to support the multilingual and cultural objectives and to enhance the use of various languages across the EU, as well as to strengthen the mastery of foreign languages, particularly English, the EU bodies launched a number of programs and initiatives, among which it is necessary to mention:

Erasmus+ (an EU initiative that provides financial and other forms of support for education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. Its objective is to facilitate educational, vocational, and volunteer opportunities abroad, to foster collaboration between countries, and promote intercultural understanding and European citizenship. The Erasmus is oriented more towards higher and vocational education [12];

eTwinning platform (an education space that promotes innovative teaching and learning, creating projects and developing ideas; supports collaboration among teachers and students on different subject matters across the EU; offers professional development courses and opportunities for life-long learning). Since 2024, eTwinning platform is available for Ukrainian educators through eTwinning National Support Office in Ukraine. The platform currently lists over 4 thousand projects in different subjects and languages. Although it is mainly a platform for schools, vocational and higher education students seek cooperation on certain projects as well [15];

the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (an international organization which aims at establishing collaboration with member states, educational institutions, and language professionals to develop innovative approaches to language teaching, learning, and assessment [13].

Unlike the EU member states, where more than 65% of citizens claim to be able to speak at least one foreign language [33], the statistics on language proficiency in Ukraine show that knowledge of a foreign language is still quite low – the survey conducted by the Razumkov Centre in the summer 2023 indicates that only 1 % of respondents are fluent in English, while 7.5 % have a

basic proficiency in reading, writing and speaking the language, 46 % can read, write but lack the communicative skills, and 44 % do not know English at all [4]. Therefore, it is necessary to implement state measures aimed at overcoming the language barrier and attain the level of linguistic proficiency observed in the EU.

To provide regulatory support for the draft law, the Ministry of Education and Science issued the Order on «Methodological Recommendations for Ensuring Quality Learning, Teaching and Use of English in Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine», which recommends ensuring quality teaching and learning of a foreign language for professional purposes in HEIs, with an emphasis on English, and the introduction of teaching of professional disciplines in English in the Ukrainian-language curriculum. According to the recommendations, a student should reach the B2 level of CEFR by the graduation [26]. The implementation of this vision should give impetus to the further development of language competence among public servants.

Since the draft law claims to provide for «favorable conditions for the acquisition of a foreign language by citizens of Ukraine» [29], the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine launched the Future Perfect initiative, which aims to promote English among the population of Ukraine. This initiative informs the public about the opportunities and prospects for learning English, and provides resources that help to master a foreign language [18]. As part of the Future Perfect initiative, language training is offered on the Promova and Empower Cambridge platforms.

Promova is a digital platform designed to facilitate language learning with over a million downloads on Google play. Previously known as WordBooster, Promova provides learners with self-paced learning opportunities as well as tutor-led classes and a free weekly conversation club for B1 learners. Although, the basic features are free for Ukrainians through a subscription via Diia, teacher-led classes are unavailable [25]. The opinions on the functionality,

accessibility of the program and motivation to learn a foreign language vary among the Public Administration master's students surveyed on its use: 38 % of respondents were satisfied with their learning experience on the platform, while 33 % found the platform uninteresting, difficult, or too similar to Duolingo.

As for Empower Cambridge, it is an online educational platform based on the Cambridge language course «Empower». As stated by the Ministry, it is not available to all citizens, but only to HEIs and private language schools as it is not designed for independent study and requires guidance of a teacher or instructor. This platform could help universities to introduce optional courses or electives for students who have not yet reached B1 level, in line with the guidelines for the implementation of the «Methodological Recommendations» [26]. However, despite the claims of free accessibility for Ukrainian universities and language providers and assistance in joining the services, it is difficult to find the persons from the ministry responsible for registration and granting access to the platform. Furthermore, neither access to the provider's website with registration forms, nor the related mobile application is available.

Civil servants worldwide also have an opportunity to enroll into specialized English language courses for government employees under the *English for Civil Servants project* offered by the British Council. As indicated on the British Council's website, since its launch in 2012, they have provided language training to approximately 2,000 Ukrainian civil servants, who are engaged in governmental activities on the global stage, including those from the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament), the Cabinet of Ministers, the Administration (Office) of the President, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Diplomatic Academy, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, State Fiscal Service, the Ministry of Culture, State Financial Monitoring Service, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, National Academy of the Ukrainian Administration [10].

Besides above mentioned initiatives, civil servants are offered language training courses from the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service in cooperation with the EF Language Learning Solutions (the *Eng4PublicService2.0* and *SpeakingClub4PS*) [11]; professional development courses in English from the Dia.Education Series (*Digitalization in Public Sector, Digital Civil Servants, A state without barriers*) [9]; various English workshops and online courses on Prometheus, EdEra, Coursera, Udemy (free and behind a paywall); the language program «Professional English in Public Administration» for students majoring in Public Administration.

Undoubtedly, the Ukrainian public administration needs measures to be taken to cultivate English and encourage its use among the workers. Although the civil servants are provided with ample opportunities and resources to learn the language, they often lack time and motivation as there are still not enough English-language spaces to practice their communicative competence. Moreover, day-to-day work activities of civil servants of category B and C mainly require them to use the official language while providing services to citizens. The provisions of [29] regarding English language services by educational establishments are rather declarative as the draft law does not specify what conditions will be provided, and who should be responsible for (not) providing services, and it is not defined who should pay for their provision, which may give way to various readings of the law and infringement. It would also be beneficial if the declared provisions in the draft law were realized in the state activities.

Conclusions. In general, EU member-countries do not issue any requirements regarding foreign language proficiency for working in civil service or local government bodies. Usually the only requirement is proficiency in the official (state, national) language. This is mostly connected to the EU countries' aspirations to preserve their national identity and culture through language, and efforts to diminish the dominance of the English language in the EU space

through the policy of multiculturalism and multilingualism and the fact that the foreign languages are part of the curriculum from the first year of schooling and learners should acquire a sufficient level of mastery in foreign languages by the time they finish upper secondary school. The exception is Poland, where the knowledge of a foreign language is an official prerequisite to hiring. Civil servants in Asian countries (China, South Korea, Indonesia) are more often prove their fluency to be hired for a position in civil service.

Due to the prevalence of the English language in international business communication and in the EU documentation, it became the focal point in the draft law № 9432. Additionally, it is one more opportunity to sever connections with the Russian Federation and its Soviet legacy in the media and mentality of the population. It is essential that the relevant ministries provide an environment conducive to the continuous improvement of English language skills among civil servants in Ukraine if the country is to become a truly 21st century nation where English is the language of communication and business practice.

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