BUILDING ENGLISH SPEAKING COMPETENCE OF INTENDING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TEACHERS

CONSTRUINDO COMPETÊNCIA DE FALA INGLESA DE PROFESSORES CANDIDATOS EM INSTITUIÇÕES DE ENSINO SUPERIOR

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Abstract. The modernization of an intended teacher training process involves increasing the requirements for their professional level to implement the New State Education Standard. The process of national education integration into the European educational space takes place nowadays. Considering this, the issue of building English-speaking competence in intending higher education institution teachers is relevant. The article deals with researching the modern process of developing English-speaking competence in the professional training of intending higher education institution teachers. Therefore, the paper aims to study the peculiarities of intending university teachers' English-speaking competence building during their study at higher education institutions in Ukraine. To achieve the aim of the research, a set of methods was used: theoretical: analysis of scientific psychological and pedagogical sources; empirical: questionnaires, interviews; graphics. The results of the research made it possible to define the reasons for building English-speaking competence among intending university teachers at higher education establishments that aimed at increasing the level of English-speaking competence of Ukrainian postgraduate students. Searching the problem provides opportunities to determine the main factors that influence the development of English-speaking competence and the ways to improve university teachers' English-speaking competence.

Keywords: English speaking competence, intending higher education institutions teachers, education process.

Resumo. A modernização de um processo de formação de professores pretendido envolve aumentar as exigências do seu nível profissional para implementar a Nova Norma Estadual de Educação. O processo de integração da educação nacional no espaço educativo europeu decorre hoje. Considerando isto, a questão da construção de competências de língua inglesa nos futuros professores de instituições de ensino superior é relevante. O artigo trata de pesquisar o processo moderno de desenvolvimento da competência da língua inglesa na formação profissional de futuros professores de instituições de ensino superior. Portanto, o artigo tem como objetivo estudar as peculiaridades da construção de competências de língua inglesa em professores universitários durante seus estudos em instituições de ensino superior na Ucrânia. Para atingir o objetivo da pesquisa, utilizou-se um conjunto de métodos: teóricos: análise de fontes científicas psicológicas e pedagógicas; empírico: questionários, entrevistas; gráficos. Os resultados da investigação permitiram definir as razões para a construção da competência de língua inglesa entre os futuros professores universitários em estabelecimentos de ensino superior que visavam aumentar o nível de competência de língua inglesa dos estudantes de pós-graduação ucranianos. A pesquisa do problema oferece oportunidades para determinar os principais fatores que influenciam o desenvolvimento da competência da língua inglesa e as formas de melhorar a competência da língua inglesa dos professores universitários.

Palavras-chave: competência de língua inglesa, professores candidatos de instituições de ensino superior, processo de educação.

INTRODUCTION

European integration supporting common values is important for the promotion of a cohesive European society driving sustainable growth. We should improve Ukrainian education to give future generations a chance to come to the EU community. Such changes are possible with highly competent university teachers and a productive education policy.

The necessity to renovate the educational field of Ukraine is due to its insufficient compliance with the modern demands of society. To reform the educational sector, it is necessary to train highly competent higher education institutions teachers of the new generation, who can act productively and purposefully in modern conditions.

The need to update the educational sector of Ukraine is due to its insufficient compliance with the modern demands of society, requirements of intercultural communication, and challenges of linguistic globalization phenomena. The process of national education integration into the European educational space takes place regardless of the difficult contemporary circumstances in the conditions of a real threat to the sovereignty of our state (armed aggression of the Russian Federation) and the value of the life of every Ukrainian.

Nowadays English has become an essential tool for modern higher education institutions. Higher education institutions can streamline communication, strengthen their brand, and create a dynamic and modern learning environment by embracing it. At the same time, teaching practice at higher education institutions proves that the English level both future university lectures and students is insufficient for teaching professional courses in English. The formation of intending university teachers' English-speaking competence requires the creation of conditions for their positive professional development, psychological comfort, and creative realization. It is important to build and develop the ability to use a foreign language to express a personal view of a professional issue in oral and written speech. Therefore, the question of finding the ways and means of developing professionally oriented English proficiency is one of the most urgent problems.

A large number of scientific works devoted to the problem of developing English-speaking competence in higher education institutions confirm the fact of the necessity of university teachers' English linguistic proficiency. In particular, S. Kustini (2022) studies the problem of ESP learners' self-regulation in online learning environment; J. Štefková and Z. Danihelova (2023) focus on the issue of teachers' and students' perceptions of implementing CLIL in tertiary education; K. Kashiwagi and J. Tomecsek (2015) pay attention to the positive influence on teaching style in student-centered language learning through overseas teacher training in Sweden and Finland; H. Vonkova, etc. (2021) research the motivation of studying English: trends, emerging methodologies, and diversity of researched populations.

A subsequent review of scientific literature provided in the next section also justified the need to resolve the research gaps and extracted problems by attaining the formulated objectives in this research study. Therefore, it has been observed that there is a need to understand the importance of English-speaking competence in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The article joins a growing body of literature that employs both theoretical and practical frameworks on the issue of building the English-speaking competence of intending teachers. Ukrainian scientific and methodological literature contains a certain amount of research. In particular, A. Pashko and I. Pinchuk (2019, 2020) highlight the methods of estimation of intending primary school teachers' foreign language communicative competence. Y. Lavrysh, I. Lytovchenko, V. Lukianenko, and T. Golub (2022) describe teaching English during wartime in Ukraine. L. Morska, K. Polok, M. Bukowska and I. Ladanivska (2022) research new technologies and their impact on foreign language teacher professional burnout under COVID-19 pandemic conditions. I. Pinchuk (2022) pays attention to the development of English-speaking communicative competence of higher education students as one of the prerequisites for the integration of Ukraine into the European educational space. R. Westerlund, O. Chugai, S. Petrenko, and I. Zuyenok (2023) study the teaching English process at higher educational institutions in Ukraine during pandemics and wartime. Y. Baklazhenko and Z. Kornieva (2023) made a comparative analysis of the Ukrainian online and blended education process in teaching English through the pandemic and the war period. I. Kostikova, et (2023) focus on the Ukrainian experiences of online teaching English in wartime after the pandemic in Ukraine.

Scientific and methodological literature contains a certain amount of research on the English-speaking competence of intending higher education institution teachers in the modern educational process. Among, the main ones are: B. Iyobe and J. Li (2013) examine a trial in English medium education at a Japanese university based on CLIL. E. Arnó-Marcia and G. Mancho-Barés (2015) identify challenges and implications for English for professional purposes based on content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) at university. C. Kelly (2017) investigates using neuroscience in English teacher training provided

with brain studies. N. Taguchi (2017) analyzes interlanguage pragmatics and examines second-language learners' knowledge, use, and development in performing sociocultural functions. The way of speaking is determined by context – to whom we are talking and under what circumstances, so learners need to know which forms are appropriate to use in what situations. Hence, linguistic knowledge and sociocultural knowledge of social conventions, customs, and norms of interaction are two layers of pragmatic competence.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the issue among foreign authors. L. Cinganotto and D. Cuccurullo (2019) suggest a pluriliteracies approach to CLIL as rethinking literacy in the 21st century. A. Dogar, I. Shah, S. Ali, and A. Ijaz (2020) research constraints to online teaching in institutes of higher education during pandemic COVID-19. B. Bai, B. Shen, and J. Wang (2021) pay attention to the impacts of social and emotional learning on English learning achievements in Hong Kong secondary schools. A. Martí, I. Moliner, and F. Alegre (2022) describe the process of improving learner motivation through peer tutoring and CLIL. Y. Wirani, T. Nabarian, and M. Romadhon (2022) evaluate the continued use of Kahoot as a gamification-based learning platform from the perspective of Indonesian students.

AIMS

Despite the attention of scientists to the problem of developing English communicative competence in higher education both Ukrainian and foreign researchers still do not exhaust all aspects of English usage among the educational process participants of higher educational institutions in Ukraine.

Therefore, the article aims to study and substantiate the phenomenon of English-speaking competence as an important component of modern higher education in Ukraine. To achieve the aim we should implement some tasks, the solution of which will ensure the step-by-step realization of the result. The tasks are: 1) to identify the main reasons for the necessity of developing English-speaking competence among intending university teachers; 2) to study the main factors affecting the development of English language competence of future higher education institution teachers; 3) to define the ways to improve university teachers' English speaking competence in higher education in Ukraine.

METHODS

To achieve the purposes of the research, a set of methods of data collection was used: theoretical: analysis of scientific and methodical sources; empirical: observation of the educational process, questionnaires, interviews, conversation and focused group discussion; statistical; graphic.

Primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire and expert surveys. The study found that Ukrainian teachers have positive views toward developing English-speaking competence for professional purposes.

Secondary data was collected from leading research databases, articles and other secondary sources. So, to complete a detailed understanding of the issue, we analysed scientific sources on building the English-speaking competence of intending university teachers. Therefore, our search resulted in the identification of critical elements of English-speaking competence in education today. Furthermore, we implemented a survey to understand the view of the educational community regarding English usage in professional activity. Before conducting the survey, we advised experienced specialists to ensure that the examination is sufficient, satisfactory, and appropriate. We adapted the study survey according to their expert views, including proper variables for the investigation and excluding some traditional or irrelevant elements.

The methodology of expert assessment was implemented to rate key factors affecting the quality of English-speaking competence in Ukraine. To ensure the reliability of the obtained data, independent competent experts of the same qualification (everybody has a PhD and teaching experience of more than 5 years) were involved. Compliance with the requirement of probability was aimed at equalizing the basic conditions for conducting a pedagogical experiment in the real conditions of the educational process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Currently, our country is undergoing great changes in the national educational system. This is due to the transition to distance learning because of the war in Ukraine. It will take time for both the students and the teachers to adapt to distance learning. One of the tasks of modern higher education is to reveal the potential of all participants in the educational process, providing them with opportunities to display their English-speaking communicative abilities.

The reorientation of modern higher education to European standards involves the training of a competent specialist capable of personal and professional growth, and active self-realization, the foundation of which is foreign language communicative competence. Therefore, today it is especially important for modern specialists to acquire professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence for competitiveness in the global labor market.

Taking into account the current situation in Ukraine, there is a need to renew approaches to the formation of competent specialists in our country, in particular, qualified competitive educators who will prepare the young generation for today's challenges.

The development and promotion of modern society are influenced by the huge role of English-speaking proficiency in all areas of professional development, ensuring the distribution and transmission of information around the world.

Teaching English to intending university teachers faces many different problems. These problems are both technical and educational. Based on the analysis of scientific literature and the educational process of English at higher education institutions, we determined the main reasons for the necessity of building English-speaking competence among intending higher education institution teachers (Table 1).

Developing English-speaking competence among intending higher education institution teachers is crucial because it not only improves their career prospects but also enhances the quality of education, facilitates global collaboration, and supports the internationalization efforts of higher education institutions.

Table 1. The reasons for building English-speaking competence among intending university teachers.

Reason	Manifestation features
Globalization of Education	In an increasingly globalized world, English has become the primary language of international communication, including in the field of higher education. Many academic conferences, research collaborations, and educational resources are in English. Therefore, teachers who can communicate effectively in English are better equipped to engage with the global academic community.
Access to International Resources	English-speaking teachers have better access to a wide range of international educational resources, including academic journals, research papers, and online courses. This allows them to stay updated with the latest developments in their fields and integrate international perspectives into their teaching.
Enhanced Career Opportunities	Teachers with strong English-speaking skills may have access to more job opportunities, both within their home country and abroad. They can participate in exchange programs, teach in international universities, or collaborate on research projects with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. (Enhanced Professional Development: Many professional development opportunities, conferences, and workshops are conducted in English. Teachers with English-speaking competence can fully engage in these activities, share their research findings, and network with peers).
Improved Quality of Education	English-speaking competence enables teachers to offer courses and lectures in English, which can attract a more diverse group of students. This diversity enriches the educational experience by fostering cross-cultural exchanges and diverse viewpoints.
Competitive Advantage	As the demand for English-medium education grows, institutions often seek teachers who can teach in English. Having English-speaking competence gives intending higher education teachers a competitive advantage in the job market.
Effective Communication	English proficiency is essential for effective communication, both in the classroom and when interacting with students and colleagues from different linguistic backgrounds. It ensures that ideas are conveyed clearly and accurately.
Research Collaboration	English is the primary language of academic research. Teachers who are proficient in English can collaborate more effectively with researchers and academics worldwide, leading to opportunities for joint publications and projects.
Mobility	As universities promote student mobility and exchange programs, English-speaking teachers can provide better support and guidance to international students who come to study in their institutions.
Internationalization of Higher Education	Higher education institutions worldwide are striving to internationalize their campuses. English-speaking teachers play a vital role in this process by facilitating the integration of international students and faculty.

Source: compiled by the authors.

The process of developing English language communicative competence requires a certain foundation that enables the achievement of the B2 level of foreign language proficiency. Based on the analysis of the research results, it was concluded that successful mastery of all the language skills in English on professional vocabulary contributes to better English communication.

The results of the questionnaire and expert surveys made it possible to select the most important reasons that influence the development of English proficiency by intending university teachers in Ukraine.

According to the results of the study, the reasons defined above were divided into 5 main groups of reasons, which are shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2. The most important reasons that influence the development of English-speaking competence of intending university teachers.

№	The reasons	Percentages (%)
1	Enhanced career opportunities, professional development and competitive advantage	36,2
2	Research collaboration and effective communication	25,7
3	Student and teacher mobility	16,1
4	Access to international resources	13,4
5	Globalization of education, improved quality of education, internationalization of higher education	8,6

Source: compiled by the authors.
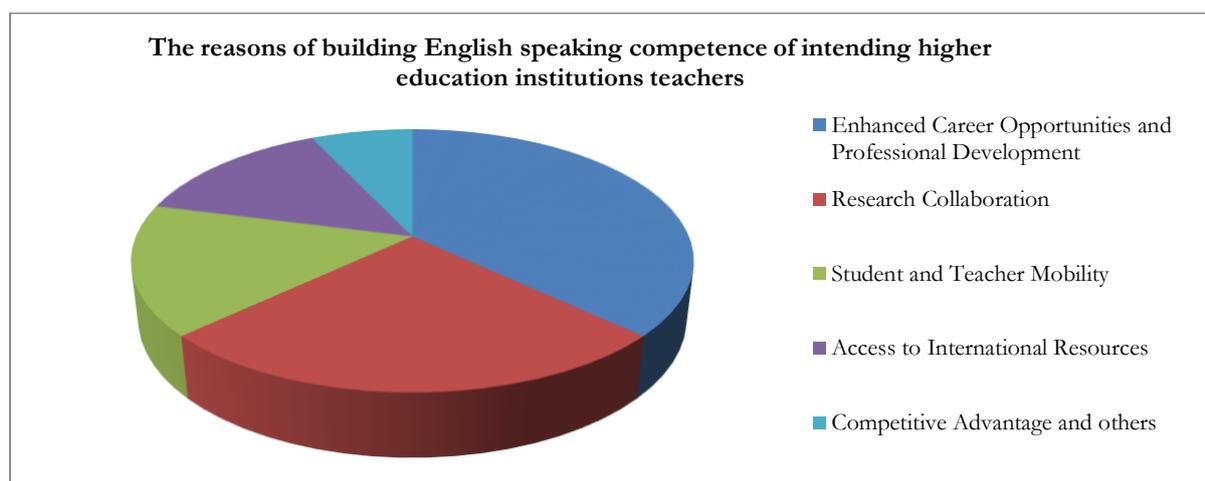
Figure 1. The reasons for building English speaking competence of intending higher education institution teachers.
Source: compiled by the authors.

English communication skills not only foster better relationships and understanding among future university teachers but also contribute to professional success by improving teamwork, leadership, and the ability to influence and persuade others.

The next stage of the research was aimed at determining the factors affecting the development of English language competence of future higher education institution teachers. Peculiarities of developing English language competence of intending higher education institution teachers in Ukraine come with its own set of challenges and specific characteristics.

The methodology of expert assessment was implemented to define the main factors that influence building English-speaking competence.

1. Diverse Language Backgrounds: Ukrainian teachers come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and many of them have Ukrainian or Russian as their first language. This diversity affected the pace and approach to English language development for a long time. Though today the situation is changing, most of the teachers don't use Russian any more.
2. Limited Exposure: unlike native English-speaking countries, Ukraine has limited exposure to English in everyday life. This lack of immersion can make it challenging for intending teachers to practice their English skills regularly.

3. Teacher Training Programs: Ukraine's teacher training programs do not always prioritize English language development. Today there is a need for curriculum adjustments to place a stronger emphasis on English proficiency.
4. Access to Resources: access to high-quality English language resources, including textbooks, online courses, and language learning materials, can vary across regions in Ukraine.
5. Language Policy: some Ukrainian higher education institutions do not have a consistent language policy regarding the use of English in teaching. Some institutions may prioritize Ukrainian, while others promote English as the medium of instruction. This inconsistency can affect teacher training programs.
6. Cultural Factors: Ukrainian culture places a strong emphasis on traditional education and may not prioritize English language skills to the same extent as some Western countries.

Table 3. The ways to improve university teachers' English-speaking competence.

A means of improving English-speaking competence	Description and the way to improve teachers' English-speaking competence
Raising the motivation	Motivating teachers to invest time and effort in improving their English language competence is a challenge. Demonstrating the practical benefits and career advantages of English proficiency can help increase motivation.
Professional Development	Intending higher education teachers may require specific professional development programs that cater to their unique needs. These programs should focus on academic English, research writing, and teaching methodologies in an English-speaking environment.
International Collaboration	Encouraging international collaboration and exchange programs can be an effective way to develop English language skills. Therefore, these opportunities should be accessible and well-promoted.
Institutional Support	Higher education institutions should provide support for teachers' language development, including funding for language courses, workshops, and access to language resources.
Incorporation of English into the Curriculum	English language learning should be integrated into the teacher training curriculum, allowing teachers to simultaneously develop their English skills while studying pedagogical subjects.

Source: compiled by the authors.

In the next paragraphs of the article we'll dwell on each of the ways in more detail. Professional development of intending higher education institution teachers is very important for building English speaking competence and involves a comprehensive approach that addresses various aspects of language learning. English language training programs is one of the strategies that could be implemented during teachers' training. Such programs should be specifically designed for teachers who intend to work in higher education institutions and offer courses that focus on speaking and listening skills, incorporating real-life scenarios and academic contexts.

Moreover, language immersion programs could help encouraging the participation and engaging in authentic English-speaking environments. Such kinds of programs facilitate immersion experiences through partnerships with English-speaking institutions or through study abroad opportunities.

Conducting professional development workshops and seminars is very effective means of communication in English, including public speaking, academic presentation skills, and classroom discourse. In addition, it is useful to provide training on using English in academic settings, such as conducting research, writing academic papers, and participating in international conferences.

Online resources and courses are helpful whereas they focus on English language proficiency, including platforms that offer interactive speaking exercises and language exchange programs and encourage teachers to use educational apps and online language learning tools to enhance their English skills. We believe the language labs equipped with audio-visual materials and language learning software are important to provide teachers with a dedicated space for improving their speaking skills. Incorporating language lab sessions into the curriculum allow teachers to practice and receive feedback.

Peer learning and mentoring programs facilitate teachers to practice speaking English with colleagues, to receive constructive feedback and to create a supportive environment where teachers feel comfortable communicating in English without fear of judgment.

Incorporating English into curriculum could integrate English into the regular curriculum, ensuring that subjects related to language development are part of the teacher education program and encourage the use of English in instructional materials, assignments, and assessments.

Regular language assessment encourage to track the progress of teachers in developing their English speaking competence and to provide feedback and guidance based on assessments to help teachers identify areas for improvement.

Moreover, establishing the system of continuous support and motivation, acknowledging and celebrating improvements in English proficiency can recognize the efforts of teachers in enhancing their language skills and provide incentives for ongoing professional development.

Using multimedia means to enhance the motivation of intending teachers to learn English can make the process more engaging and effective. Next step of the research is studying them in detail. Interactive language apps leverage multimedia for this purpose. Introducing language learning apps offer interactive lessons, games, and quizzes that make learning more engaging and enjoyable.

Providing access to online video lessons cover various aspects of language learning, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Platforms like YouTube, TED-Ed, or language learning websites offer a wide range of video content. Exploring virtual reality (VR) experiences can simulate English-speaking environments. VR can immerse intending teachers in scenarios where they need to use English, enhancing both language skills and cultural understanding.

Encouraging the English-language podcasts and audiobooks usage expose learners to authentic spoken English and help improve listening comprehension. Teachers can listen to educational content or stories related to their field of interest. Utilizing comprehensive online language learning platforms incorporate multimedia elements. These platforms often offer a mix of lessons, quizzes, and interactive exercises to cater to different learning styles. Organizing webinars and online workshops on language learning can feature guest speakers, interactive activities, and discussions, providing a multimedia-rich environment for learning.

Providing interactive e-books with multimedia features can include audio pronunciation guides, embedded videos, and interactive exercises. Multimedia e-books make the learning experience more dynamic and engaging. Creating and curating educational videos and animations that explain English grammar rules, language usage, and cultural nuances can significantly enhance understanding and retention.

Introducing language learning games incorporate multimedia elements. Gamified learning experiences can make the process enjoyable, motivating learners to spend more time practicing. Engagement of intending teachers in collaborative online projects requires communication in English that could include joint research projects, discussions in online forums, or participation in global educational initiatives.

Creating language challenges on social media platforms where intending teachers can share their progress, participate in language-related discussions, and learn from each other can be a motivating and interactive space for language learning. Encouraging future teachers to maintain multimedia language journals can document their learning journey using a combination of text, images, audio recordings, and videos, providing a personal and reflective approach to language learning.

Implementing a system of recognition for language learning achievements can be shared digitally, providing a tangible acknowledgment of progress and accomplishments. By integrating these multimedia strategies, prospective teachers can experience a more dynamic and engaging language learning process, leading to increased motivation and proficiency in English.

Cultural exchange programs are very important strategy to promote cultural exchange programs that involve collaboration with English-speaking institutions. This could include joint projects, exchange visits, or collaborative research opportunities.

The incorporation of English into the curriculum for intending teachers offers several opportunities that can enhance their overall education and professional preparation. Here are key opportunities associated with integrating English into the curriculum.

Learning English equips intending teachers with global communication skills. In an interconnected world, proficiency in English facilitates effective communication with educators, researchers, and students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

English is the dominant language in academic publications, research journals, and educational resources. Proficient English skills enable intending teachers to access a vast array of educational materials, stay updated on the latest research, and contribute to the global educational discourse.

Integrating English into the curriculum allows intending teachers to explore diverse teaching methodologies. They can incorporate language learning strategies into their teaching practices, fostering an inclusive and communicative approach in the classroom.

Learning English involves exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. Future teachers gain a deeper understanding of cultural nuances, which is essential for effective communication in a globalized educational environment.

Many educational resources, courses, and professional development opportunities are available online in English. Integrating English into the curriculum provides intending teachers with the skills to navigate and benefit from these online platforms.

Multilingual classrooms is one more chellenge of prospective teachers. As educational settings become more diverse, intending teachers may find themselves in classrooms with students from various language backgrounds. English proficiency equips them to effectively communicate and support students with diverse linguistic abilities.

English language proficiency is crucial for academic writing. Intending teachers who are proficient in English can produce high-quality lesson plans, research papers, and other academic documents, contributing to their success in the academic and professional domains.

English is often the language used in educational technology tools and platforms. Intending teachers with English proficiency can seamlessly integrate technology into their teaching methods, enhancing the learning experience for their students.

Professional networking is one of key advantages. Proficiency in English facilitates professional networking. Intending teachers can connect with educators, researchers, and educational organizations globally, leading to potential collaborations, partnerships, and opportunities for professional growth.

English proficiency is often a prerequisite for leadership roles in education. Intending teachers with advanced English skills may be better positioned to take on leadership roles, contribute to curriculum development, and engage in educational policy discussions.

Cross-curricular integration is very important for developing professional competence of teachers. Integrating English across various subjects allows intending teachers to make connections between language skills and other disciplines. This cross-curricular approach promotes a holistic understanding of the role of language in education.

In summary, incorporating English into the curriculum for intending teachers creates a pathway for them to acquire valuable skills that extend beyond language proficiency, contributing to their success in the dynamic and interconnected field of education.

By implementing a combination of these strategies, higher education institutions in Ukraine can contribute to the development of English speaking competence among intending teachers, preparing them for effective communication in academic and international contexts.

It's important to note that many academics believe English speaking proficiency is a valuable means for improving the quality of professional education. Over time, their benefits become more apparent and educators' attitudes evolve. Therefore, our research deals with new findings regarding the necessity of English usage. The issue of developing English-speaking competence became especially important after the start of the war in Ukraine. The works of I. Zadorozhna & O. Datskiv (2022) and T. Yeremenko, I. Lukyanchenko, & A. Demchuk (2022) revealed that developing English communicative competence in education has a positive impact on the quality of future professional growth. Our research confirms the previous results (Liubashenko & Kornieva, 2019; Nykyporets & Ibrahimova, 2021) and proves that developing English speaking skills has positive impacts on educational and professional growth processes. However, the process of developing English speaking proficiency requires a lot of time and effort which is proved by practice of teaching English. Therefore, a balanced approach is recommended (Mykytenko et al., 2022) for a productive educational process on English that is in good agreement with our research.

CONCLUSION

In summary, developing the English language competence of intending higher education institution teachers in Ukraine involves addressing professional-specific challenges and tailoring language programs to

their needs. A comprehensive approach that considers linguistic diversity, historical context, and access to resources is essential for successful language development in this context.

In conclusion, in the article, the phenomenon of English-speaking competence was studied as an important component of modern higher education in Ukraine. To achieve the aim we implemented some tasks: 1) the main reasons for the necessity of developing English-speaking proficiency of intending university teachers were identified; 2) the main factors affecting the development of English language competence of future higher education institutions teachers were studied; 3) the ways to improve university teachers' English speaking competence in higher education in Ukraine were defined.

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