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ENHANCEMENT OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR UKRAINIAN CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The integration of Ukraine into the European Union necessitates extensive preparations across various sectors, with language proficiency playing a critical role in facilitating seamless interactions within EU frameworks. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of the specialized English language training programme designed for Ukrainian civil servants by the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, aimed at enhancing their linguistic skills to meet the demands of European integration. The primary focus of this study is to assess how this training programme equips civil servants with necessary English language competencies, which are crucial for negotiating, legislating, and communicating within the EU's multilingual environment.

The paper discusses the structure and content of the current language training programme, highlighting their strengths, such as the emphasis on EU-specific terminology and interactive learning methodologies, and weaknesses, particularly the lack of consistent programme evaluation and limited access to advanced language practice.

Additionally, the study explores the broader implications of language proficiency for policy implementation and administrative efficacy in the context of EU integration. Challenges identified include insufficient training customization to different skill levels and a general underestimation of the role of cultural understanding in language education.

The conclusions drawn from this research contribute to ongoing discussions about the strategic development of language training programmes for civil servants, emphasizing that such initiatives not only support individual career development and enhance institutional readiness for international cooperation. By aligning language training programmes more closely with the practical needs of civil servants engaged in European affairs, Ukraine can more effectively advance its EU integration objectives.

Keywords: *European integration, language training programme, Ukrainian civil servants, English language proficiency, professional development*

Background

Ukraine's aspirations for European integration have driven its political and social developments over the past decade. Since the Euromaidan protests in 2014, which culminated in the Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) signing, Ukraine has been on a path of profound transformation. This journey, marked by significant legal, economic, and institutional reforms, aims to align Ukraine with European standards, bringing it closer to EU membership. Central to this process is the ability of Ukrainian civil servants to effectively engage with their European counterparts, which necessitates an understanding of the EU's complex legal and institutional frameworks and proficiency in English, the EU's primary working language.

For Ukrainian civil servants, mastering English is not just about acquiring a new skill; it is about gaining access to the corridors of European power, where decisions that shape the future of the continent are made.

Proficiency in English enables civil servants to participate fully in EU meetings, negotiations, and committees. It allows them to engage in the nuanced discussions that characterize EU decision-making processes, where every word can carry significant weight. Furthermore, understanding and accurately interpreting EU legal texts, many of which are primarily available in English, is essential for ensuring that Ukraine can effectively implement EU directives and regulations.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recent research on language acquisition for professional purposes, particularly within the context of European integration, has highlighted the increasing importance of specialized language training programmes. These studies underscore how critical language proficiency is for civil servants who must navigate the complexities of European Union law, policies, and institutional interactions. This body of research provides the foundation for understanding the current approaches and methodologies employed in the Ukrainian context.

Several studies have emphasized the role of English as the primary working language of the EU. According to the research by Herbert (Herbert, 2023), English remains the dominant language in EU institutions despite Brexit due to its entrenched use and the lack of an equally widespread alternative. This finding is significant for Ukrainian civil servants, as it underscores the necessity of English proficiency to participate in EU affairs effectively.

Moreover, research by Cogo (2012) on English as a lingua franca within international institutions highlights the need for tailored language programmes that go beyond basic language skills. Their work suggests that civil servants must be trained in the specific terminologies and discourse strategies prevalent in EU communications, supporting the rationale behind Ukraine's specialized language training programmes.

Studies like those by Seidlhofer (Seidlhofer et al, 2006) and Mishchenko (2016) have shown that language proficiency significantly impacts the effectiveness of policy implementation within multilingual environments like the EU. Their research indicates that civil servants who are proficient in the dominant language are better able to interpret and apply EU directives and regulations accurately. This directly correlates with the goals of the Ukrainian language training programmes, which aim to enhance the ability of civil servants to engage with EU legal texts and procedures.

Recent publications have also addressed the challenges associated with language acquisition for professional purposes, particularly in adult learners. For instance, the work of Borghetti and Qin (2022) on intercultural communication training for professionals highlights the difficulties faced by non-native speakers in mastering the cultural nuances of a foreign language. This is particularly relevant for Ukrainian civil servants who must not only learn the technical language of EU law but also understand the cultural contexts in which this language is used.

In addition, a study by Graddol (1997) discusses the issue of linguistic inequality within international organizations, where

non-native speakers often face disadvantages despite having formal language training. This research suggests that language training programmes should include components that address these inequalities, such as intercultural communication skills and strategies for dealing with linguistic power dynamics. Such insights are crucial for improving the effectiveness of Ukraine's language training programmes.

The effectiveness of language training programmes has been a subject of ongoing research, particularly in the context of professional and governmental training. Research by Long and Doughty (2017) emphasizes the importance of programme evaluation and the need for continuous improvement based on feedback and performance outcomes. Their findings support the idea that Ukraine's language training programmes should incorporate regular assessments to ensure that they meet the evolving needs of civil servants.

Further, the study by Khalel et al. (2021) on language training for diplomats provides a useful comparison for evaluating Ukraine's programmes. Their research suggests that programmes tailored to the specific needs of governmental officials, with a focus on practical language use in real-world scenarios, are more effective than general language courses. This reinforces the approach taken by Ukraine's Research Service in developing a curriculum that is closely aligned with the demands of EU integration.

Comparative studies, such as those by Helm and Guth (2012), offer valuable insights into how other countries have successfully implemented language training programmes for their civil servants. Their research highlights best practices in curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and technology integration in language learning. By examining these practices, Ukraine can adapt and refine its own programmes to better prepare its civil servants for the linguistic demands of Europe.

The analysis of recent research and publications reveals a consensus on the critical role of specialized language training in the context of EU integration. The studies reviewed emphasize the importance of English proficiency, the challenges of language acquisition for professional purposes, and the need for continuous programme evaluation. These findings provide a robust framework for understanding the development and effectiveness of Ukraine's language training programmes for civil servants. By aligning these programmes with the best practices identified in international research, Ukraine can enhance its ability to successfully integrate into the EU and fully participate in its institutions.

Considering the abovementioned, **this article aims** to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of language training programmes designed for Ukrainian civil servants in the context of Ukraine's ongoing European integration efforts.

Results

Recognizing the critical role of language in the integration process, the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has developed a specialized training programme to enhance the English language skills of civil servants. Launched in 2023, this programme is specifically tailored to meet the needs of civil servants involved in the European integration process.

The programme is designed to provide participants with general language skills and the specific terminology and discourse strategies needed in the context of EU law, policy, and diplomacy. By focusing on these specialized areas, the programme helps civil servants navigate the complex language of EU legal documents, communicate effectively with European counterparts, and confidently and precisely represent Ukraine's interests in the EU.

The training programme is structured around several key modules, each addressing different aspects of language use in the context of European integration. These modules are delivered through a synchronous online format, allowing for interactive learning experiences that include live discussions, role-playing, and collaborative problem-solving.

1. The module on EU Law and Institutions. This module provides participants with a comprehensive overview of the EU's legal framework, including its primary and secondary legislation. It covers the functions and roles of key institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice. The module is designed to equip participants with the knowledge needed to understand the legal texts they will encounter in their work and to engage in discussions about legal matters with their European counterparts.

2. Communication Skills Module. This module focuses on enhancing both written and oral communication skills in English. Participants learn how to draft various EU-related documents, such as policy briefs, reports, and memos. Additionally, the module includes extensive practice in public speaking, particularly on presenting arguments and negotiating positions in English. Through simulated EU meetings and debates, participants gain confidence in their ability to articulate Ukraine's positions clearly and persuasively.

3. Intercultural Communication Module. Given the diverse cultural backgrounds of EU member states, this module addresses the challenges of intercultural communication. Participants learn about the cultural norms and expectations that can influence communication in the EU context. They are trained in strategies for navigating cultural differences, ensuring they can build effective working relationships with colleagues across the EU. This module also emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in international diplomacy.

4. Case Studies and Simulations. The programme includes case studies and simulations based on real-life scenarios that civil servants will likely encounter. These activities allow participants to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired in a practical, hands-on environment. By working through complex problems in a controlled setting, participants develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed for effective decision-making in the EU context.

The language training programme has already significantly impacted the effectiveness of Ukrainian civil servants in the European integration process. Participants report increased confidence in their ability to communicate in English and a greater understanding of the EU's legal and institutional structures. This, in turn, has enhanced their ability to represent Ukraine's interests in EU meetings and negotiations.

For example, civil servants who have completed the programme have been able to engage more effectively in drafting EU-related legislation, ensuring that Ukraine's laws are fully aligned with EU requirements. They have also played a more active role in EU-funded projects, from proposal writing to project implementation, thereby increasing Ukraine's ability to secure and manage EU funds.

Despite the successes of the language training programme, several challenges need to be addressed to ensure its continued effectiveness. One of the primary challenges is the varying levels of English proficiency among civil servants. While some participants enter the programme with a solid foundation in English, others may struggle with even basic language skills. This disparity can make it difficult to design a one-size-fits-all curriculum that meets the needs of all participants.

Another challenge is the time constraints faced by civil servants. Many of them are already burdened with heavy workloads and may find it difficult to commit the necessary time and energy to language training. The online format of the programme helps to mitigate this issue by allowing for flexible participation, but it cannot completely eliminate the time pressures faced by busy professionals.

There is a clear need to expand the language training programme to reach more civil servants. Currently, the programme is limited in scope, and many civil servants who would benefit from the training are unable to participate due to capacity constraints. Expanding the programme will require additional resources, but it is necessary to ensure that all civil servants involved in the European integration process have the language skills they need.

There is also potential to expand the programme to include training in other EU languages, such as French and German. While English is the primary working language of the EU, proficiency in other languages can be an asset in bilateral relations with individual EU member states. Expanding the programme to include additional languages could further enhance the effectiveness of Ukrainian civil servants in their interactions with European counterparts.

Discussion and conclusions

Ukraine's path to European integration is a complex and multifaceted process requiring significant reforms across various sectors. Ukraine's path to European integration is a complex and multifaceted journey requiring comprehensive reforms and alignment with EU standards across various sectors. This process's effectiveness depends significantly on Ukrainian civil servants' ability to engage in EU frameworks, where English proficiency is essential. The specialized language training programme developed by the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine is a substantial step toward enhancing the linguistic competencies of civil servants. By equipping them with the necessary skills for communication, negotiation, and understanding of EU-specific terminology and cultural nuances, the programme supports individual career development. It contributes to Ukraine's institutional readiness for international cooperation within the EU.

However, this study suggests that to fully realize the programme's potential, ongoing refinement is essential. Expanding the programme's scope to address varying levels of English proficiency, incorporating continuous assessments, and integrating training in additional EU languages like French and German would make the programme more comprehensive. Addressing these areas

would enable a more tailored approach to training, catering to the diverse linguistic needs of civil servants involved in European affairs.

Furthermore, including intercultural communication training and exposure to real-world EU scenarios through simulations and case studies enhances practical understanding, which is critical for meaningful engagement within EU institutions. By refining these aspects, Ukraine can further enhance the capacity of its civil servants to meet the linguistic and intercultural demands of EU integration.

Ultimately, aligning the programme more closely with the tasks and challenges faced by Ukrainian civil servants in European contexts would improve Ukraine's effectiveness in advancing its EU integration objectives. This programme, if continuously adapted and expanded, can play a pivotal role in Ukraine's transition to a more integrated European future, ensuring that Ukrainian civil servants are equipped to represent the country's interests competently and confidently on the EU stage.

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УДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ АНГЛОМОВНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ДЕРЖАВНИХ СЛУЖБОВЦІВ УКРАЇНИ В КОНТЕКСТІ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ

Наголошено, що інтеграція України до Європейського Союзу вимагає всебічної підготовки в різних секторах, де володіння мовою відіграє ключову роль у забезпеченні безперешкодної взаємодії в межах структур Європейського Союзу. Досліджено особливості англomовної підготовки державних службовців України в контексті євроінтеграційних процесів. Особливу увагу приділено питанню ефективності спеціалізованої програми навчання англійської мови, розробленої для державних службовців України Дослідницькою службою Верховної Ради України, що спрямована на підвищення їхніх мовних навичок в умовах європейської інтеграції України. Основний акцент цього дослідження зроблено на оцінюванні того, як ця програма навчання здатна допомогти державним службовцям оволодіти іншомовною компетентністю, яка є критично важливою для ведення переговорів, законодавчої діяльності та комунікації в багатомовному середовищі Європейського Союзу.

Досліджено структуру та зміст поточної програми навчання англійської мови, підкреслюючи її сильні боки, такі як акцент на термінології Європейського Союзу та інтерактивних методиках навчання, а також зазначено ті виклики, які варто врахувати під час реалізації цієї програми, зокрема недостатня адаптація навчання до різних рівнів володіння мовою її учасників.

Висновки, зроблені на основі цього дослідження, роблять внесок у тривалі дискусії щодо стратегічного розвитку мовних програм навчання для державних службовців, підкреслюючи, що такі ініціативи не лише підтримують індивідуальний кар'єрний розвиток державних службовців України, але й підвищують інституційну готовність до міжнародної співпраці. Зближення програм навчання мови з практичними потребами державних службовців, які залучені до європейських справ, дозволяє Україні більш ефективно просувати свої цілі щодо інтеграції до Європейського Союзу.

Ключові слова: європейська інтеграція; програма навчання англійської мови; державні службовці України; англійська мова; професійний розвиток

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