

Ukrainian Language Competence of a Higher Military Education Seeker

Larysa Holichenko

National Academy of Security Service of Ukraine

Nataliia Kavera

National Academy of Security Service of Ukraine

Lesia Altytseva

National Academy of Security Service of Ukraine

Olena Vernyhora

National Academy of Security Service of Ukraine

Kateryna Parshak

Drahomanov National Pedagogical University

The purpose of the academic paper is to study the role, significance and features of developing the Ukrainian language competence of a higher military education seeker, as well as to clarify the viewpoint of scientists and teachers of higher educational institutions studying the specifics of the development of military education regarding the motives, components and main success factors of the Ukrainian language competence of future military servants.

Methodology. During the research, the analytical-bibliographic method was used to study the scientific literature on issues related to the formation of Ukrainian-language competence in the process of obtaining higher military education.

Results. Based on the results of the research, the role and significance of the Ukrainian language competence of students of military specialities has been substantiated; the criteria, formation conditions, and means most suitable for the development of military personnel's language skills have been analysed; certain practical aspects of military students' language training have been revealed, and recommendations have been made regarding the effective formation of these skills.

Keywords: Ukrainian language competence, higher military education, language training of military servants, language proficiency, structure of language competence, formation of language skills, higher military education seeker

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the primary task of higher military education is to train a new generation of specialists – qualified, educated, linguistically literate, who would perfectly master the Ukrainian literary language in everyday professional, official and documentary spheres, in particular, the skills of communicatively justified use of language tools.

In the professional activities of military personnel, language is an important part of their competence. Nowadays, the problems of language competence are relevant in view of the current level of development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the realities of the 21st century. They require qualitatively new approaches to the training of military personnel, especially officers, the establishment and introduction of effective modern pedagogical technologies into the educational process of higher military educational institutions, which could contribute to the effective solution of the tasks of their training, in particular, the formation of the Ukrainian language professional competence of a competitive military servant. Developing an effective system of military education has a direct impact on these processes.

In the theoretical part of the present research, the relevance of the acquisition of Ukrainian language competence by specialists in the military sphere is substantiated; the concept and components of the language competence of a military serviceman are considered; and the directions for improving the language competence of military students are highlighted.

The practical part of the research includes the study of the main goals of acquiring the high-quality Ukrainian language competence by future military servants; pedagogical conditions necessary for the formation of their language skills; the most important factors motivating the quality study of the Ukrainian language; obstacles to the effective improvement of the Ukrainian language competence; the best educational platforms and technologies used in classes and the standpoint of survey participants regarding further directions for improving the effectiveness of the process of acquiring the Ukrainian language competence by students of higher military educational institutions.

Based on the results of the research, conclusions were made regarding the issues under study. In particular, the conducted questionnaire has shown that, according to its participants, currently, the main goal of developing a quality system for acquiring the Ukrainian language competence by higher education seekers in military specialties is the formation and development of civic responsibility, a culture of communication, a culture of social interaction and spiritual development. The most important pedagogical conditions for the formation of military students' language skills are the formation of high-quality digital pedagogical competence of teachers and methodical provision of teaching aids. According to the respondents' viewpoints, the motivation for the formation of language skills is determined by the personal features of the students, the subject of study and the professional characteristics of the teachers. The main reasons for the lack of success in the development of this type of competence are the low level of information literacy and insufficiently developed learning skills of the participants of the educational process. The respondents consider that the most effective resources for the development of the Ukrainian language competence of higher military education seekers are Khan Academy, Learnlogy, Google Forms and Kahoot. By the way, the respondents have specified the subsequent directions of activities aimed at acquiring the Ukrainian language competence by higher military education seekers, namely: the development of students' motivation for the process of forming language literacy, the formation of teachers' digital pedagogical competence, optimization of pedagogical and methodical support for using the tools of developing the students' language skills in higher military educational institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of scientific literature on the issue under study allows us to conclude that, taking into account the trends in the development of modern theory and methods of professional military training, the need arises to build a qualitatively new system of cultural education of future military servants. This system will provide for the creation of relevant conditions for the Ukrainian language competence formation, which

is an important feature of the personality - the specialist in military affairs (Uvarkina, 2022), (Holth & Boe, 2019).

The modern system of military training, which primarily requires the acquisition of special knowledge, is designed to form the professional language and communication competence of the future specialist, especially the Ukrainian language competence. This involves perfect mastery of the literary norms of the language system: phonetic, lexical, grammatical, orthographic, stylistic, syntactic, punctuation, and, consequently, the formation of phonological, lexical, grammatical, orthographic, stylistic, syntactic and punctuation skills on this basis (Ekrem & Nordquist, 2020), (Conceição, Basso, Lopes & Dahlman, 2017).

Scientists interpret the definition of the term “language competence” in different ways, depending on the field of knowledge in which this concept is found. For instance, S. Paananen (2021) defines the language competence as the ability of students (on the basis of acquired knowledge, abilities, skills and experience) to clearly express an opinion, to convince, to argue, to analyse statements, to correctly interpret information, especially to hear and understand the interlocutor non-verbally, to carry out interaction in the process of speech activity.

S. Ekrem and R. Nordquist (2020) consider the concept of “linguistic competence” as the ability to use language appropriately and accurately in specific situations (to express one’s thoughts, wishes, intentions, requests, etc.).

A. Khachadorian, S. Steen and L. Mackenzie (2020) in their study define the concept of “language competence” as an integral quality of a student, which includes related competencies (linguistic, communicative, sociocultural, informational, and psycholinguistic), the formation of which is characterized by the presence of motivation and educational need for language competence, acquired knowledge, abilities and skills, which involves creative self-development, self-fulfilment and reflection.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the language competence is characterized by the level of conscious assimilation of language rules; it includes knowledge of all levels (phonetic, lexical, word-forming, morphological and syntactic) of the language. It differs from the communicative competence in form and scope, taking into account speech activity, language practice, verbal behaviour, use of language in communication (Ogle, Rutland, Fedotova, Morrow, Barker & Mason-Coyner, 2019), (Bannan, Dabbagh & Walcutt, 2020).

The review of scientific works on the issue under study makes it possible to single out the contradiction between the rapid changes in the social and cultural spheres of the society and their insufficient consideration of the need to strengthen the language component in the training of future officers in the process of implementing the competency model of cultural training of specialists in military specialties (Freeman & Zachary, 2018), (Denning & Higgins, 2019), (Conceição, Mendes, Teodoro & Dahlman, 2019).

The analysis of scientific literature as well as the study of the acquired experience of teaching cultural disciplines in higher military educational institutions shows that the issue of determining the main factors, ways of optimization and pedagogical conditions in the study of the Ukrainian language by future military servants remain outside the attention of researchers nowadays.

AIMS

The purpose of the research is to study the role, significance and features of developing the Ukrainian language competence of a student of higher military education, as well as to clarify the viewpoint of scientists and teachers of higher educational institutions studying the specifics of the development of military education regarding the motives, components and main success factors of the Ukrainian language competence of future military servants.

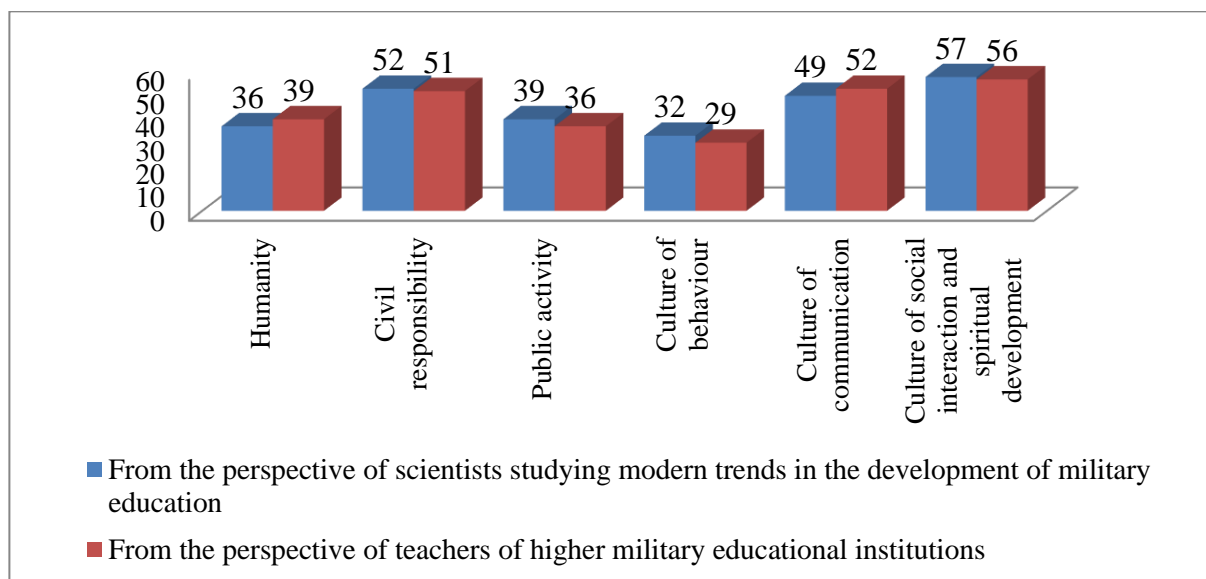
MATERIALS AND METHODS

A practical study of certain aspects of developing the Ukrainian language competence of a higher military education seeker was carried out by interviewing 211 scientists studying modern trends in the development of military education, as well as 73 specialists conducting teaching activities in 10 higher military educational institutions in Kyiv, Chernihiv and Kharkiv regions of Ukraine. The research was conducted using the Simpoll service. The research was approved by the ethics committees of the educational institutions, on the basis of which the survey was organized and conducted. The authors declare that they have received consent to publish the results of the conducted research from all respondents who participated in the survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conducted survey of scientists and teachers of higher military educational institutions made it possible to establish their viewpoint regarding the goal of acquiring the high-quality Ukrainian language competence by future military servants as a prerequisite for the general culture of an officer (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
THE MAIN GOALS OF ACQUIRING THE HIGH-QUALITY UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY FUTURE MILITARY SERVANTS, %



Source: compiled by the authors.

According to the survey participants' viewpoints, currently, in the context of the establishment and protection of statehood in Ukraine, scientists consider the formation and development of civic responsibility, a culture of communication, social interaction and spiritual development to be the main goal of developing a quality system for acquiring the Ukrainian language competence by higher military education seekers.

At the same time, as scientists note, the highest manifestation of the general culture of an officer is a socially mature specialist, a socially active citizen - patriot, a creative personality.

During the survey, the respondents identified the following most important pedagogical conditions for the formation of military servants' language skills (Figure 2):

- formation of teachers' digital pedagogical competence;
- pedagogic and methodological support for the use of tools.

The respondents consider that the motivation for the formation of language skills is determined by a number of the factors (Figure 3).

The respondents note that the degree of motivation in learning the Ukrainian language by military specialists principally depends on the personal features of the student, the specifics of the subject of study, the professional characteristics of the teachers and their attitude towards the students.

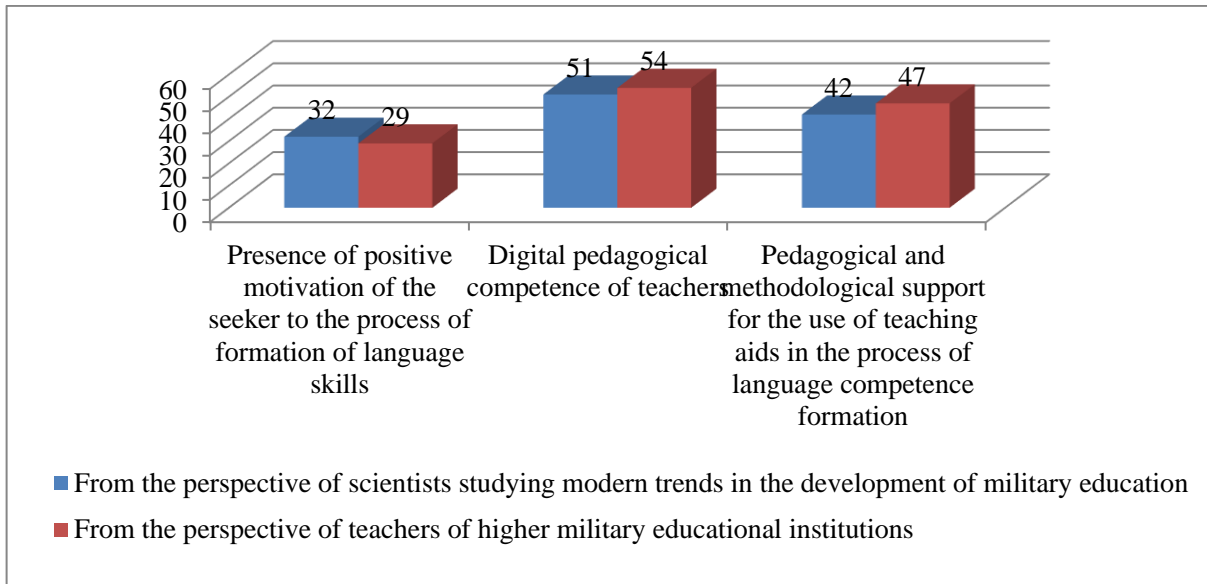
In the course of the research, the respondents were asked to identify the main obstacles to the effective improvement of the Ukrainian language competence by military higher education seekers (Figure 4).

The survey participants mentioned a low level of information literacy and insufficiently developed learning skills as the primary obstacles for the development of this type of competence.

A significant element of the educational process in the current conditions is the rational selection of educational platforms and technologies, which are used in conducting classes on the development of the Ukrainian language competence of military higher education seekers.

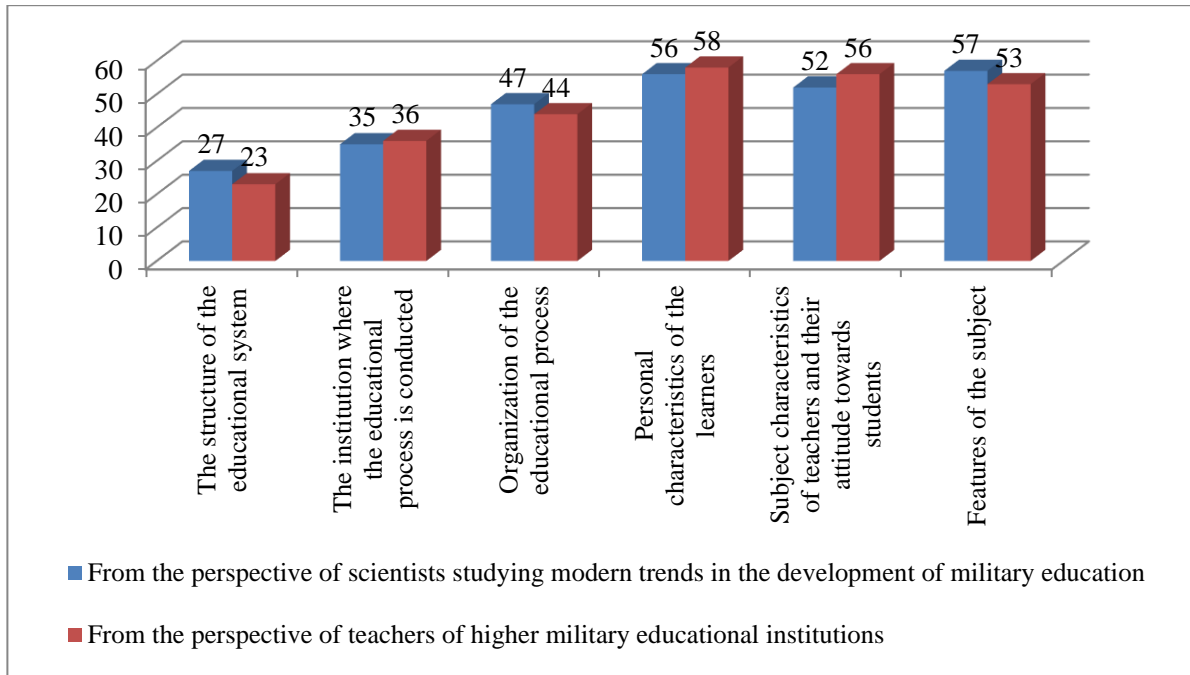
During the survey, the respondents identified the following resources as the most useful for the development of this type of skills (Figure 5):

FIGURE 2
PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF MILITARY SERVANTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS, %



Source: compiled by the authors

FIGURE 3
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR THE FORMATION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS, %

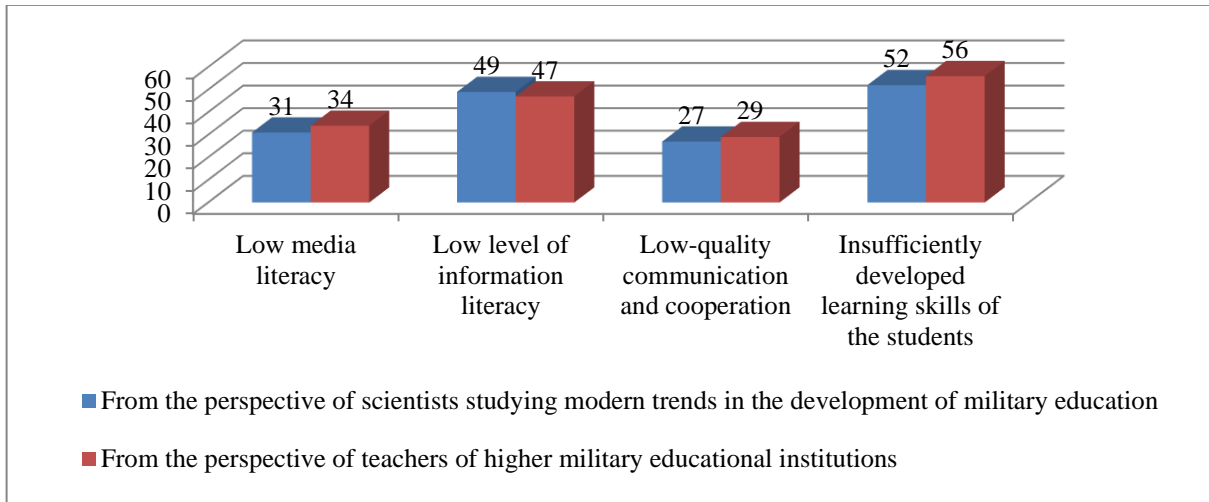


Source: compiled by the authors.

- Khan Academy;
- Learnlogy;
- Google Forms;
- Kahoot.

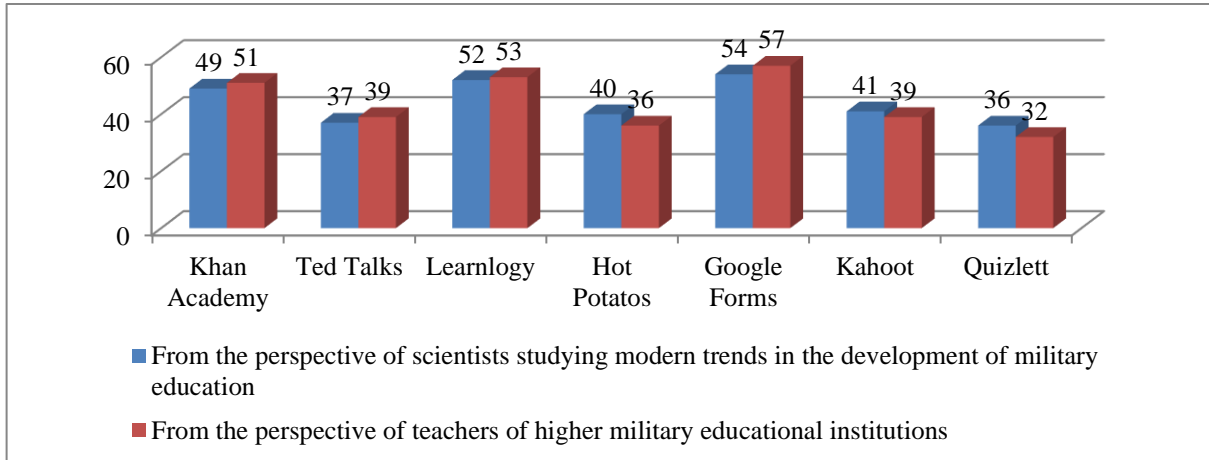
An important block of questions in the survey process concerned clarifying the opinion of the respondents regarding the most important subsequent directions of activities in order to increase the effectiveness of the process of acquiring the Ukrainian language competence of higher military education seekers (Figure 6):

FIGURE 4
THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO THE EFFECTIVE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY MILITARY HIGHER EDUCATION SEEKERS, %



Source: compiled by the authors.

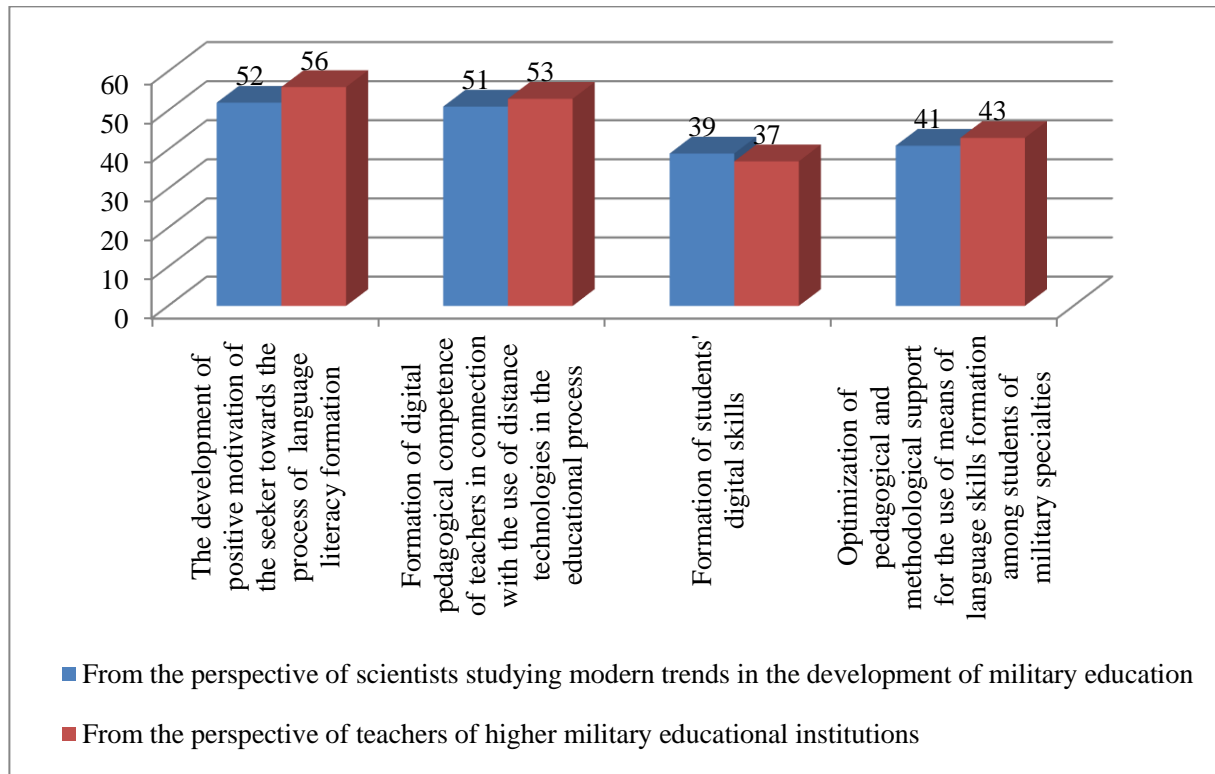
FIGURE 5
EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS AND TECHNOLOGIES USED IN CONDUCTING CLASSES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS OF MILITARY SPECIALTIES, %



Source: compiled by the authors.

The research has revealed that both scientists and teachers of institutions of higher military education consider the most important directions of work in the field of stimulating the improvement of the process of acquiring the Ukrainian language competence of higher military education seekers are the development of positive motivation of listeners to the process of language literacy formation, formation of digital pedagogical competence of teachers, as well as optimization of pedagogical and methodical support in order to use the tools for the formation of language skills of students of military specialties.

FIGURE 6
SUBSEQUENT DIRECTIONS OF ACTIVITIES TOWARDS INCREASING THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING THE UKRAINIAN
LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF HIGHER MILITARY
EDUCATION SEEKERS, %



Source: compiled by the authors.

A component of the professional Ukrainian language competence of a military servant is a lexical competence, which includes the use of words in their own meaning and the correct combination of words according to their meaning in a phrase or a sentence in accordance with the lexical norms of the modern Ukrainian literary language. Established standards of the military terminology include semantic accuracy, purity of language, and correct use of words (Miller & Crowther, 2020), (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron & Osher, 2019).

An important communicative feature of the language of a military servant is semantic accuracy, the correct choice of words and their relevant use in accordance with the meaning closest to the expressed content. Common lexis, which is used to refer to the realities of a restricted professional sphere and has entered into a special terminological system, acquires separate features, forming concepts characterized by ambiguity, a relevant certainty and limitation to a specific area of use, the absence of emotionally expressive and stylistic colouring (Sabine, Mendzheritskaya & Stehle, (2021).

One of the most urgent problems of the moral and psychological support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the conditions of a threat to the national security of the country is the cultural education of future officers, which involves the creation of relevant conditions for the development of spirituality in higher military educational institutions, the formation of a comprehensively developed, educated, socially active personality who takes steps toward improving himself. At the same time, scientists believe that the language competence is a system-forming component of a military servant's professional competence (Wingo, Ivankova & Moss, 2017).

One of the main components of ensuring the proper quality of language training of future servicemen is the purposeful educational activity of scientific and pedagogical staff, the effectiveness of which depends on numerous factors. These include the level of technical and methodical training of the institution, taking into account the personal features of future military servants, flexibility and variability in language learning, developing a mode of students' creative activity, providing the relevant motivational context for learning, etc. (Tømte, Fosslund, Aamodt & Degn, 2019).

The results of research on the development of methodological approaches to teaching higher military education seekers the Ukrainian language and a comparative assessment of their effectiveness show that it is impossible to build an effective language learning system for future servicemen based on one standardized approach to learning using the methodological fundamentals of a one-way system. The authors of scientific publications substantiate the need to abandon unified models of training, confirming the importance of combining various modern technologies for organizing the educational process of learning the Ukrainian language and use creative forms of educational activity (Sitthiworachart, 2018).

Thus, the Ukrainian language competence of a military servant lies in mastering the lexical means of the modern Ukrainian literary language and using them in the professional sphere. The professional linguistic and communicative competence of an officer is an indicator of developing a system of professional knowledge, communicative abilities and skills, value orientations, general humanitarian culture, integral indicators of language culture, necessary for the high-quality professional activity of a serviceman (Jolicoeur, 2018).

Based on the results of the analysis of scientific sources, we have come to the conclusion that the language competence of a military servant is an integrative professional skill, which is characterized by a set of language knowledge and abilities, experience of their application in a professional language environment, and contains professionally important qualities of an officer that reflect the ability to communicate in various professional situations (Daigle & Stuvland, 2020).

Currently, improving the areas of future servicemen's language competence, increasing their fluency in the Ukrainian language is a very important issue that requires:

- subsequent improvement of pedagogic - methodical and material - technical support of institutions of higher education, in particular, organization of intensive targeted use of language classrooms, creation of specialized classes;
- development of language courses within and outside classrooms using various forms of distance learning based on the latest information and computer tools;
- creation and implementation of a system of centralized information support of the educational process using information technologies, etc. (Crowther, Trofimovich, Saito & Isaacs, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, the analysis of the scientific literature on the topic under study and the results of the questionnaire have revealed that one of the primary tasks of modern military education is not only the provision of high-quality professional training, but also the development of a high level of the Ukrainian language competence of military servants.

Modernity creates new conditions, putting forward new requirements and tasks, the fulfilment of which requires systemic changes in the training of military personnel on security and defence.

The formation of the Ukrainian language competence of future servants is an urgent goal of the educational process of modern military higher educational institutions, forasmuch as a military serviceman's highly professional command of language tools is an important prerequisite for the high-quality performance of professional duties.

REFERENCES

- Bannan, B., Dabbagh, N., & Walcutt, J.J. (2020). Instructional strategies for the future. *Journal of Military Learning*, 4(1), 68–80. Retrieved from <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/PDF-UA-docs/Walcutt-Instruct-Strategy-UA.pdf>
- Conceição, V.P., Basso, J.C., Lopes, F.C., & Dahlman, J. (2017). Development of a behavioural marker system for rating cadet's non-technical skills. *TRANSNAV*, 11(2), 255–262. <https://doi.org/10.12716/1001.11.02.07>
- Conceição, V.P., Mendes, J.C., Teodoro, M.F., & Dahlman, J. (2019). Validation of a behavioural marker system for rating cadet's non-technical skills. *TRANSNAV*, 13(1), 89–96. <https://doi.org/10.12716/1001.13.01.08>
- Crowther, D., Trofimovich, P., Saito, K., & Isaacs, T. (2017). Linguistic dimensions of L2 accentedness and comprehensibility vary across speaking tasks. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 40(2), 443–457. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S027226311700016X>
- Daigle, D.T., & Stuvland, A. (2020). Teaching political science research methods across delivery modalities: Comparing outcomes between face-to-face and distance-hybrid courses. *Journal of Political Science Education*, pp. 1–23. doi: 10.1080/15512169.2020.1760105
- Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2019). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24, 97–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>
- Denning, P.J., & Higgins, S.L. (2019). Being in uncertainty. Cultivating a new sensibility in military education. *Journal of Military Learning*, 3(1), 87–105. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/44037599/Military_higher_education_teaching_and_learning_methodologies_An_approach_to_the_introduction_of_technologies_in_the_classroom
- Ekrem, S., & Nordquist, R. (2020). Linguistic Competence: Definition and Examples. *ThoughtCo*. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-linguistic-competence-1691123>
- Freeman, J., & Zachary, W. (2018). Intelligent tutoring for team training: Lessons learned from US Military Research. In J. Johnston, R. Sollitare, A.M. Sinatra, & C.S. Burke (Eds.), *Building intelligent tutoring systems for teams* (vol. 19, pp. 215–245). Emerald Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1534-085620180000019013>
- Holth, T., & Boe, O. (2019). Lost in Transition: The Dissemination of Digitization and the Challenges of Leading in the Military Educational Organization. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2049. DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02049
- Jolicoeur, P. (2018). Defense Education Enhancement Program in Ukraine: The Limits of NATO's Education Program. *The Quarterly Journal*, 17(3), 109–119. <https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.17.3.08>
- Khachadorian, A.A., Steen, S.L., & Mackenzie, L.B. (2020). Metacognition and the military student: Pedagogical considerations for teaching senior officers in professional military education. *Journal of Military Learning*, 4(1), 3–18. Retrieved from <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/PDF-UA-docs/Khachadorian-Military-Student-1-UA.pdf>
- Miller, Z.F., & Crowther, D. (2020). Foreign language learning motivation in a U.S. military academy: A comparative case study on the effects from the learning environment. *Applied Language Learning*, 30(1&2), 41–59. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339887540_Foreign_language_learning_motivation_in_a_US_military_academy_A_comparative_case_study_on_the_effects_from_the_learning_environment
- Ogle, A.D., Rutland, J.B., Fedotova, A., Morrow, C., Barker, R., & Mason-Coyner, L. (2019). Initial job analysis of military embedded behavioral health services: Task and essential competencies. *Military Psychology*, 31(4), 267–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2019.1598227>

- Paananen, S. (2021). The Education and Training of Military Leaders for Crisis Management Environments: Perceptions of Its Suitability for Adaptive Expertise. In M. Nuciari, & E. Olivetta (Eds.), *Leaders for Tomorrow: Challenges for Military Leadership in the Age of Asymmetric Warfare (Book Series: Advanced Sciences and Technologies for Security Applications)* (pp. 63–81). Berlin: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-71714-8_4
- Sabine, F., Mendzheritskaya, J., & Stehle, S. (2021). Impact of Synchronous and Asynchronous Settings of Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education on Students' Learning Experience During COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.733554>
- Sitthiworachart, J. (2018). Challenges in teaching large classes on a fundamentals of information technology course with a blended learning environment. *Journal of Industrial Education, 17*(1), 192–201. <https://ph01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JIE/article/view/140096>
- Tømte, C.E., Fosslund, T., Aamodt, P.O., & Degn, L. (2019). Digitalisation in higher education: Mapping institutional approaches for teaching and learning. *Quality in Higher Education, 25*(1), 98–114. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2019.1603611>
- Uvarkina, O. (2022). Military education: A reflection of the modern mainstream. *Continuing Professional Education: Theory and Practice, 1*, 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.28925/1609-8595.2022.1.1>
- Wingo, N.P., Ivankova, N.V., & Moss, J.A. (2017). Faculty perceptions about teaching online: Exploring the literature using the technology acceptance model as an organizing framework. *Online Learning, 21*(1), 15–35. doi: 10.10.24059/olj.v21i1.761