INTEGRATING EUROPEAN DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO TURKISH AND UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Globalization, digital transformation, and the growing significance of Sustainable Development foster the exchange of different approaches to philologist training to meet linguistic, cultural, and educational challenges. This study aims to identify and analyze efficient practices in philological education through a comparison of Turkish and Ukrainian higher education systems. The research objectives are to examine the conceptual foundations of "philology," compare curricular structures, and evaluate curricular and interdisciplinary strategies contributing to the core professional competence development.

The research combines theoretical and empirical methods, including document analysis, methodology comparisons, and qualification framework and curriculum reviews. An emphasis is specifically put on how internationalization, artificial intelligence, and sustainability-related content are integrated into philologist training in each country.

The research outcomes reveal that Turkish universities focus on multilingualism and curricular flexibility, providing double majors and certificate programs. Ukrainian higher institutions show growing alignment with European educational standards, embedding sustainability, AI tools, and multi-levelled specializations. Both systems integrate digital technologies, providing students with essential analytical and intercultural competencies.

The study proves that a future-oriented philological education necessitates digital literacy and global awareness. The outcomes are relevant to any specialist training in different international environment. They offer the ways to improve philologist training in accordance with the European Higher Education Area and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Keywords: English philologist training, comparative education, sustainable development, artificial intelligence in education, intercultural competence

Introduction

In the globalized world, English language and literature studies are being expanded beyond borders, leading to the sharing of diverse approaches to English philologist training in different countries. In this research, we are looking for the best practices that have proved their effectiveness and are worth to be applied in the English philologist training system in Ukraine. We believe that the study findings will be interesting for any country seeking to improve their philological education.

With the acceleration of globalization and the digitalization of society, language assumes the role of a universal medium for communication and interaction across varied cultures and nationalities. The problem is that there exists a critical imperative for continuous advancement in the professional expertise of philologists to meet the ever-growing demands of the contemporary era.

To better understand the scope of application of philology and, therefore, indicate which disciplines and competencies should be given special attention, we studied different interpretations of the term "philology" (Giannakis, 2023; Boeschoten & Verhoeven, 2023; Muzia et al., 2022; Graziosi et al, 2023; Hart, 2023; Lernout, 2016). Like any other term, the term "philology", which etymological meaning is considered to be "love of words" (Adamson & Ayres-Bennett, 2011), has many definitions. Some of them are quite similar, they define it as "the study of changes over time in a particular language or language family" (Nordquist, 2021), "the study of language, especially its history and development" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus), "the study of the history of language, including the historical study of literary texts" (Crystal, 2009), "the discipline of making sense of texts" (Pollock et al., 2015).

Having studied the definitions of the term "philology" that Altschul gives in his book "What is Philology? Cultural Studies and Ecdotics" (Altschul, 2010), we can identify the aspects that are emphasized. In addition to a love of learning and deeDp study of literature and the study of the structure and development of language, philology is defined as the study of a culture through written, especially literary, texts. Textual criticism and literary theory are mentioned in most definitions. Philology is also called a technique applied to texts to reconstruct, record, and interpret them and is often considered to be a branch of linguistics.

James Turner also compares different definitions of philology and concludes that philology is "the multifaceted study of texts, languages, and the phenomenon of language itself" (Turner, 2014). James Turner states that "the expanding capacity of Homo sapiens to use language in ever more intricate ways partly powered our evolution, gave us an edge over other animals, deepened the interdependence basic to humanity. The earliest schools, in Mesopotamia, taught not augury, astrology, or the art of war, but how to handle written language. When systematic erudition emerged in ancient civilizations, it often made language its subject" (Turner, 2014). James Turner claims that philology is the historical basis for our modern understanding of the humanities (Geert, 2016). We hold the belief that in today's technologically-driven world, philology, "without which there would be no humanities" (Jørgensen, 2015), will continue to fulfil its important role in studying language as a source of spirituality and the main symbol of national identity.

Materials and Methods

In our research, we used theoretical research methods: analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization and comparison to work with the legislative and regulatory documents on philological education, official documents and standards, higher education qualification frameworks, philology programs and curricula structure and content in the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. We also used historical analysis to study the development of philological education. Exploratory analysis helped formulate generalized conclusions. Observations and interviews with instructors and students at Turkish and Ukrainian universities were examples of empirical methods.

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Results and Discussion

For our research, the definitions given by the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics of University of Oxford, are fundamental. "Linguistics is the study of language in all its aspects. Linguists are interested in the structure and history of languages; the meaning underlying instances of language use (semantics); how languages are related; how children learn language; what goes on when people are speaking; how people understand, mentally represent and generate language; what features are shared by all languages; why languages differ; how language is used in literature, the media and by various social groups; what happens to language abilities when the brain is damaged by stroke or injury; whether computers will ever be able to understand language; how we can model human language use. In British English, Philology is often used to mean the historical study of language. Philologists study the development of individual languages but also want to know how languages evolve, whether there are rules of language change, how far change is determined by social and historical circumstances, etc. Comparative philology has developed methods which allow us to group languages in families, to reconstruct their prehistory and to determine the features of the parent language of each family, even if this is not attested. Philology is the study of the systematic behaviour of and developments within a language or language family over time. As such, it deals with a great number of fields within linguistics, including (but not limited to) phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, etc." (Philology, n.d.).

The above quotes clarify which tasks the philology graduates will have to fulfil in their future jobs. Textual criticism, the history of the English language and its evolution, the development of its structure, literary theory, the history of literary texts, and the study of a culture through written texts are among the tasks. Since philology and linguistics are closely interrelated, philologists also need knowledge of linguistics that provides them with the analytical tools and methodologies for a deep study of the language, textual analysis, and its cultural interpretation.

Having insight into the definitions, we better understand the scope of application of philology and, therefore, can identify which disciplines and competencies should be given special attention in the English philologist professional training.

Through the comparative analysis of the English philologist professional training systems in Turkey and Ukraine, we aim to uncover the core principles, teaching approaches, and cultural factors that influence the philologist's professional competence development (Baranovska et al., 2023). By assessing the strengths and challenges of each system, we aspire to enrich our comprehension of the worldwide dynamics in English philologists training and set the stage for further advancements in this domain.

English philology, as an interdisciplinary field, covers the study of English language, literature, linguistics, and translation. In different countries, these aspects received different emphasis. However, the training of English philologists necessarily involves a multifaceted approach that combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills of language acquisition, literary analysis, and cultural interpretation. This analysis of how different educational systems combine these aspects can help us understand which practices are best to train highly qualified experts with a deep understanding of the social and cultural features of the language in Ukraine.

In the Republic of Turkey, curricula, including those related to English philology, are developed by individual universities that operate under their own specific set of regulations, which are approved by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), the central regulatory body overseeing higher education in Turkey that plays a crucial role in the development and implementation of policies

related to universities and higher education institutions. These regulations determine the structure of academic programs and curriculum requirements. Within universities, individual faculties have their own specific regulations and guidelines that outline the requirements and standards for the programs they offer. The curriculum for philologist training is typically outlined in official documents, including course catalogues, program guides, and curriculum frameworks. They are approved by relevant university authorities and educational bodies.

In different countries, the English philology programs are called differently. Some universities like Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), University of Ostrava (Czech Republic), University of Warsaw (Poland) offer "English Philology programmes", the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) calls it "English Language and Literature", the University of León (Spain) offers a "Degree in Modern Philology – English" programme. "English" program at the University of St. Andrews (Scotland) covers all chronological areas from Old and Middle English to modern poetry, prose, screenwriting, drama, and performance, which is becoming rare in British universities. University of Oxford offers a Joint Degree course that include Linguistics: "Modern Languages & Linguistics". If you apply for "English" degree at University of Oxford and will study all periods of English Literature, from 650 AD to the present day.

In the Republic of Turkey, the universities offer Philology programs across different specializations: English Language and Literature (Istanbul Aydin University, TED University, Hacettepe University), English Language Teaching (Istanbul 29 Mayis University, Hacettepe University), Classical Philology (Istanbul University, Ankara University), English Linguistics (Hacettepe University), Translation and Interpreting Studies (KTO Karatay University, Adana Alparslan Turkes Science and Technology University, Hacettepe University), etc.

In Ukraine, at the Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv any specialty is accompanied by the English language learning:
- Literary Translation from English, Literary Editing and Translation Project Management
- Applied (computer) Linguistics and English language
- Classical Philology and English language
- English Studies and Translation and Two Western European Languages
- Translation from English and a Second Western European Language
- Ukrainian and English language. Translation and Editing
- Interpreting and Translation from English and a Second Western European Language
- English Communication Studies and Two Western European Languages
- Foreign Literature and the English Language: Theory and Methodology of Teaching
- General and Domain-Specific Translation and Interpreting from French and English
- Ethnoculturology with advanced study of foreign language
- Applied Linguistics (Translation Editing and Expert Linguistic Analysis)
- Classical Studies and West-European Language
- Theory of Education and Teaching Languages and Literatures Methodology

Having studied the structure of philologist's professional training at Turkish universities, we revealed that the Bachelor's Degree undergraduate program typically spans four years and the curriculum includes:
- core courses in language and literature studies;
- electives based on students' specific interests within philology (literature, linguistics, cultural studies, etc.);

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- general education courses in humanities and social sciences.

Some programs include internships, especially for students majoring in applied linguistics or language teaching. Master's Degree graduate program typically lasts two years and provide students with option to decide between a thesis and a non-thesis track, enabling a more research-intensive or coursework-focused involvement. Literature, linguistics, translation studies, and cultural studies are the most popular specializations. Doctoral Degree Ph.D. programs usually take four or five years and culminate in a doctoral dissertation. The universities collaborate with foreign educational establishments to give the students the opportunity to participate in exchange programs and joint research projects. Professional development requires participation in conferences and workshops.

Language training at universities in the Republic of Turkey has a history that dates back centuries and is famous for its achievements. Boğaziçi University, Istanbul University, Middle East Technical University, Koç University, Sabanci University, Bilkent University, and Hacettepe University are the ones that are well-known for their English philology, English language and literature, and translation programs. The initial objective of philologist training, which primarily focused on language acquisition, has progressed to encompass a broader understanding and appreciation of social and cultural traditions. Since Boğaziçi University is famous for its English language and literature program, we examine it to find its best practices.

At Boğaziçi University, the Department of Linguistics offers double major programs (Figure 1) with the following three departments: Translation and Interpreting Studies, Turkish Language and Literature, and Western Languages and Literatures. To apply for a double major, students have to be the second- or third-year undergraduates. They also have to pass all their classes with a passing grade and obtain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. The second major program consists of three compulsory courses (9 credits/18 ECTS) and four elective courses (12 credits/24 ECTS). Learning a second language as a second major increases the students' employability, particularly if their first major is related to international activities.

Boğaziçi University students have also the opportunity to participate in the certificate program in American Studies (Boğaziçi, n.d.), which offers an interdisciplinary introduction to American culture, from the third semester and complete it with 21 credits by the time of graduation (Figure 2). The program consists of a required introductory course (AS 250), five elective courses from the departments of History, Political Science and International Relations and Western Languages and Literatures, and the AS 412, a research and writing course culminating in a dissertation defence in front of three different disciplines teachers.

In today's globalized and digital educational landscape, the role of philologists is more than traditional language instruction and literary analysis. Philologists address wider global challenges outlined in the European Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both Ukrainian and Turkish universities are increasingly integrating the European dimensions of sustainable development into their training programs. It demonstrates a commitment to aligning higher education with international frameworks, implementing sustainability both as a social goal and an educational imperative (Rieckmann & Singer-Brodowski, 2024; Rieckmann & Barth, 2022).

Ukrainian institutions such as the Ukrainian State Mykhailo Drahomanov University, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine are increasingly reflecting this shift. Through multidisciplinary courses, critical discourse analysis of literary environmental and social issues, and a focus on cultural resilience and

crisis communication, they integrate sustainability-related competences into education (Ridei & Tytova, 2023; Marhasova et al., 2023; Rašficová, 2024).

LING-WLL DOUBLE MAJOR PROGRAM

FIRST SEMESTER

LING 101 Introduction to Language and Linguistics I
PSY 101 Introduction to Psychology I
PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy
HUM 101/HIST 105 Cultural Encounters I / Making of the Modern World I
AE 111/2XX Critical Skills in English

SECOND SEMESTER

LING 102 Introduction to Language and Linguistics II
LING 104 Phonetics
ENGL 105 Introduction to Literary Forms I
HUM 102/HIST 106 Cultural Encounters II / Making of the Modern World II
AE 112/2XX Critical Skills in English

THIRD SEMESTER

LING 201 Phonology
LING 203 Syntax
PHIL 131 Logic I
Math/Sci. Elective
TK 221 Turkish I
EL 101 Survey of English Literature from Old English Period to Restoration
EL 201 Medieval English Literature

FOURTH SEMESTER

LING 202 Morphology
LING 206 Language Typology
Math/Sci. Elective
TK 222 Turkish II
EL 102 Survey of English Literature from Restoration to Present
EL 202 The English Renaissance

FIFTH SEMESTER

LING 313 Phonology and Morphology of Modern Turkish
LING Dept. El.
LING Dept. El.
HTR 311 History of the Turkish Republic I
Foreign Lang.
CL 205 Literary Theory and Criticism I
EL 303 Restoration and Augustan Literature
LL Elective

SIXTH SEMESTER

LING 314 Syntax and Semantics of Modern Turkish
LING Dept. El.
LING Dept. El
HTR 312 History of the Turkish Republic II
Foreign Lang.
CL 206 Literary Theory and Criticism II
EL 305 Studies in Shakespeare
EL 306 The English Romantics

SEVENTH SEMESTER

LING 411 Linguistic Methodology
LING Elective
LING El./Comp. El.
Comp. El.
DRA 403 Modern Drama
CL 307 Literary Theory and Criticism III
EL 405 Victorian Poetry and Prose

EIGHTH SEMESTER

LING 412 Research and Writing
LING Elective
LING El./Comp. El.
Comp. El.
EL 408 Modern Poetry
EL 402 Modern Novel
LL Elective

Total Credits: 162/158

Figure 1. LING-WLL Double Major Program *(Boğaziçi, n.d.)*

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AS 250 — Introduction to American Studies

AS 412 — Research and Writing in American Studies

The Elective Pool

AL 301 — American Poetry

AL 302 — Twentieth Century American Poetry

AL 304 — The American Novel

AL 305 — The Modern American Novel

AL 311 — Survey of American Literature from 17th to 19th Century

AL 312 — Survey of American Literature from the Late 19th Century to Present

AL 480-499 — Special Topics in American Literature

HIST 310 — History of the Americas, 1750 to the Present

POLS 313 — American Politics and Society Through Literature
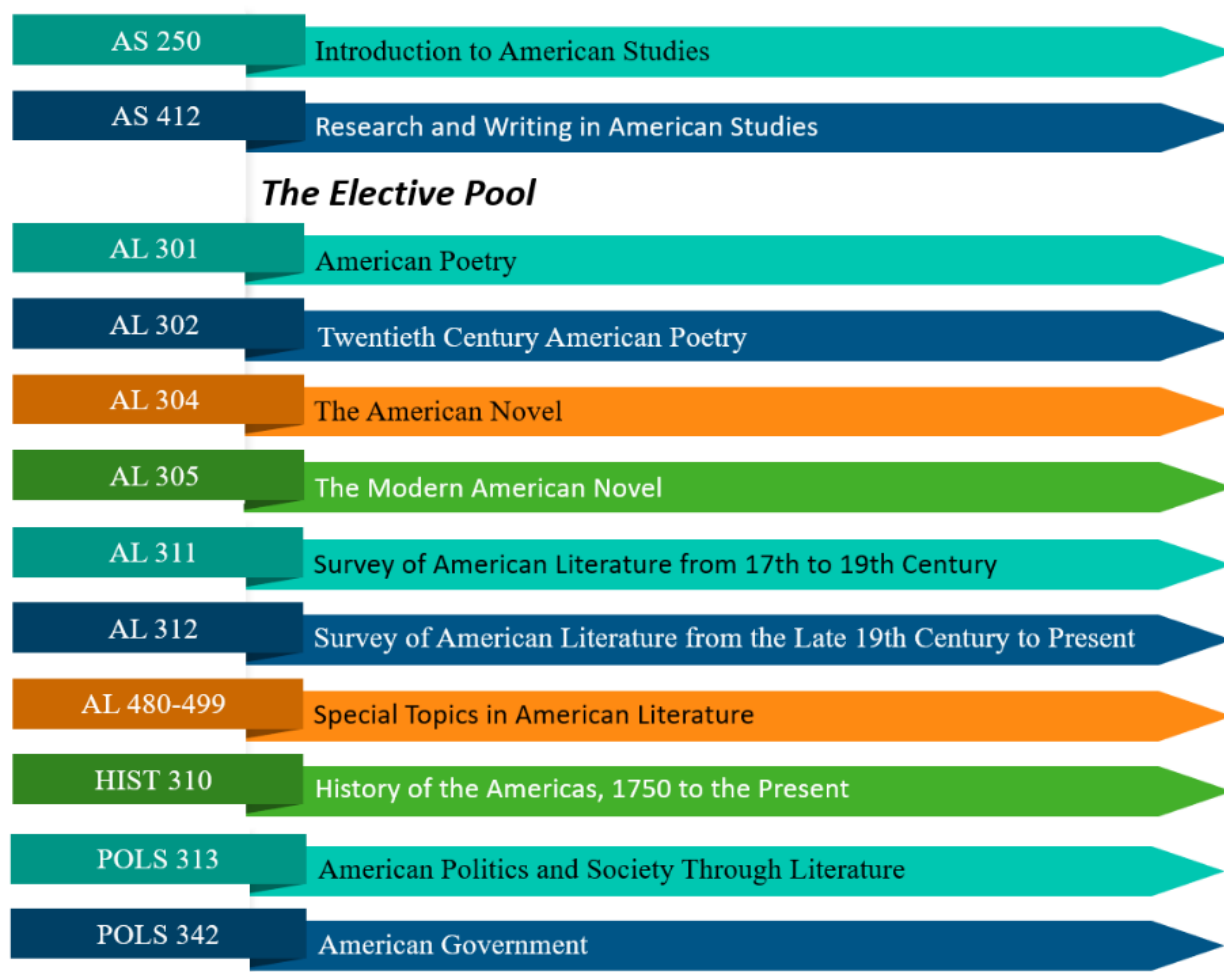
POLS 342 — American Government

Figure 2. The courses of the certificate program in American Studies *(Tekinay, n.d.)*

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University is aligning its philologist training programs with the EU's sustainable development goals. It provides multilingual education as a means of fostering cultural awareness and social inclusion via courses that critically analyze literature from the viewpoints of ethical translation and ecological consciousness (Ergün et al., 2023).

In an increasingly globalized and ecologically challenged world, this integration strengthens students' capacity to serve as cultural mediators. Additionally, it places philologists in a position to actively contribute to the development of sustainable futures by using their linguistic expertise and cultural awareness. Future philologists are armed with the academic knowledge and attitudes necessary to promote intercultural communication, peace, and inclusive development by approaching literary and linguistic content through a green lens.

These changes align with educational frameworks like the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which promote cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, and the development of lifelong learning skills necessary for sustainable societies (Council of Europe, 2001; Engin, 2024; Wächter, 2004).

In these changes, Artificial Intelligence (AI) contributes to the improvement of language analysis, facilitates cross-cultural communication, and creates adaptive learning experiences. Natural language processing (NLP), machine translation, and intelligent tutoring systems enhance

simultaneous translation, text mining, and discourse analysis. These innovations enable philology students to engage more thoroughly with linguistic and cultural resources and investigate language trends within extensive corpora. Additionally, AI-powered platforms enhance pronunciation, speech generation, and writing proficiency while allowing for predictive modelling of language development and providing tailored feedback in language learning. Philology students both strengthen their academic and research skills and cultivate digital and intercultural competencies to foster sustainable communities.

In Turkish and Ukrainian higher education systems, artificial intelligence is gaining traction, mirroring the movement toward digital transformation in philology training. At Boğaziçi University, students take advantage of AI-driven corpus analysis tools, like Sketch and Engine AntConc, to carry out research in historical linguistics, acquiring computational skills. Middle East Technical University and Istanbul University integrate neural machine translation technologies, such as Google NMT and DeepL, into their translation and interpreting programs. It helps students perform post-editing and assess ethically AI-generated content. Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv implements AI-driven Textalyser and Voyant Tools for the analysis of literary texts, promoting skills in digital textual criticism. The Ukrainian State Mykhailo Drahomanov University and the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine have incorporated AI-enhanced learning settings into their philological programs. They include adaptive assessments, critical discourse analysis of environmental narratives, and automatic evaluation. These initiatives update language education and enhance students' digital and cross-cultural competences, fundamental for creating sustainable knowledge societies that align with the objectives of the European Higher Education Area and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Conclusions

This research highlights the importance of modernizing education in response to the increasing pressures of globalization, digital advancements, and the global sustainability agenda. The comparison of the Turkish and Ukrainian higher education frameworks highlights effective strategies that incorporate technological and ethical aspects into philological training.

Turkey's approach, shaped by its cross-cultural legacy and institutional independence, shows the benefits of flexible curricula, multilingual education, and interdisciplinary options, including double major programs and certificate offerings. Conversely, Ukraine's continuous alignment with European standards reflects a deliberate move towards integrating sustainability concepts, artificial intelligence tools, and multilevel academic specializations within its philology curricula.

Such rethinking of philology, as an academic discipline, demonstrates its sustained significance in the humanities and its ability to tackle modern societal challenges. By thoroughly evaluating program accreditation, curricula development, faculty qualifications, research involvement, and practical learning experiences, this study provides actionable recommendations for updating Ukraine's philology education system.

The results support a progressive, globally aware model of philological training that harmonizes traditional and innovative education, and equips graduates to be culturally competent, digitally savvy, and ethically accountable professionals. This model aligns with the aspirations of the European Higher Education Area and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also plays a significant role in promoting critical thinking, fostering intercultural dialogue, and encouraging sustainable citizenship in a diverse, multilingual environment.

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Conflict of interest

The authors state no conflict of interest.

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