

UDC 378.147.091.33-027.22:793.7]:811.111

DOI: 10.31652/3041-2439-2025-4-9

Gamification as a mean of developing the speaking skills of prospective english teachers in primary school

Natalia Dmitrenko,  Inna Stakhova,  Nataliia Franchuk 

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsyubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Vinnitsia, Ukraine

Анотація

The article states that the process of developing English speaking skills in prospective English teachers for primary school is based on the ability to express their thoughts orally in various communicative situations. It emphasizes that developing speaking skills is aimed at mastering pronunciation, intonation, expanding vocabulary, using grammatical structures correctly, and constructing statements logically and consistently.

The article presents gamification as an effective means of developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers in primary school, as it integrates cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of learning, contributing to the formation of professional and communicative competencies of prospective English teachers in primary school. It is emphasized that gamification increases motivation to learn, reduces language barriers, and contributes to creating a positive emotional environment. The scientific publication proposes an algorithm for implementing gamification in the teaching of English-language disciplines (motivational stage, communicative-training stage, professional-activity stage, reflective-analytical stage) and provides a list of exercises that can be used at each stage. The researchers present the results of a survey of university teachers and higher education students, confirming the gamified approach's effectiveness in building speech confidence, developing spontaneous speech production, and communication skills in English. A classification of gamification exercises and recommendations for their use at different lesson stages are proposed.

The article presents the experience of university teachers at Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsyubynsky State Pedagogical University in implementing gamification in English language classes and offers methodological recommendations for developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers for primary school through gamification.

Keywords: gamification, speaking skills, prospective English teachers, primary school.

УДК 378.147.091.33-027.22:793.7]:811.111

DOI: 10.31652/3041-2439-2025-4-9

Гейміфікація як засіб розвитку вмінь говоріння майбутніх учителів англійської мови у початковій школі

Наталя Дмітренко,  Інна Стахова,  Наталя Франчук 

Вінницький державний педагогічний університет імені Михайла Коцюбинського, м. Вінниця, Україна

Abstract

У статті визначено, що процес розвитку вмінь говоріння англійською мовою майбутніх учителів початкової школи базується на здатності усно висловлювати свої думки в різних комунікативних ситуаціях. Наголошено на тому, що процес розвитку вмінь говоріння спрямований на опанування вимови, умінні інтонувати, розширювати словниковий запас, правильно користуватися граматичними структурами, логічно і послідовно будувати висловлювання.

У статті представлено гейміфікацію як ефективний засіб розвитку вмінь говоріння майбутніх учителів англійської мови в початковій школі, так як вона інтегрує когнітивні, емоційні та соціальні аспекти навчання, сприяючи формуванню професійно-орієнтованого англомовного спілкування майбутніх учителів англійської мови початкової школи. Наголошено на тому, що гейміфікація дозволяє підвищити мотивацію до навчання, знижує мовленнєвий бар'єр, сприяє створенню позитивного емоційного середовища. У науковій публікації запропоновано алгоритм реалізації гейміфікації у процесі викладання англомовних дисциплін (мотиваційний етап, комунікативно-тренувальний етап, професійно-діяльнісний етап, рефлексивно-аналітичний етап), наведено перелік вправ, які можна використовувати на кожному етапі. Дослідниками представлено результати опитування викладачів і здобувачів вищої освіти, що підтверджують ефективність гейміфікованого підходу у формуванні мовленнєвої впевненості, розвитку спонтанного мовлення та комунікативних навичок та вмінь англійською мовою. Запропоновано класифікацію гейміфікаційних вправ і рекомендації щодо їхнього використання на різних етапах навчального заняття.

У статті представлено досвід викладачів Вінницького державного педагогічного університету імені Михайла Коцюбинського щодо реалізації гейміфікації на заняттях з англомовних дисциплін, запропоновано методичні рекомендації щодо розвитку вмінь говоріння майбутніх учителів англійської мови у початковій школі засобами гейміфікації.

Ключові слова: гейміфікація, вміння говоріння, майбутні вчителі, початкова школа.

Introduction. Developing English speaking skills is one of the priorities in the professional training of prospective English teachers for primary school, as oral communication is the main means of pedagogical interaction, production, motivation, and formation of English language competency in younger schoolchildren. The ability to communicate freely, competently, and expressively in English determines not only the level of language proficiency of higher education seekers, but also their readiness for effective communication in an English-speaking educational environment. Developing the ability to effectively express one's thoughts in English, interpret information, respond to interlocutors' statements, and maintain pedagogical dialogue requires focused work within the educational process.

The use of gamification in the educational process allows students to develop English communication skills, the ability to argue their own opinion, improvise in speech, and prepare for the organization of game-based English language learning for school students.

Speaking, as one of the key components of English language communication skills, is extremely sensitive to motivational factors. For prospective English teachers for primary school, it is not only a language skill but also a professional skill, as the ability to communicate freely, competently, and expressively in English is a prerequisite for successful teaching. That is why gamification, aimed at creating a positive emotional background, forming internal motivation, and reducing the language barrier, is an effective means of developing oral communication skills.

Analysis of research and publications. The importance of developing speaking skills in prospective English teachers for primary school is highlighted in the Law of Ukraine «On Education» (2017), the State Standard for Primary Education (2018), and the Standard for **Higher Education in Ukraine (first (bachelor's)**

level of higher education, degree – bachelor's, field of knowledge – 01 Education/Pedagogy, specialty – 013 Primary Education), Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 1407 (2018), which regulates the procedure for training foreign language teachers and defines the requirements for their qualifications.

The scientific research of J. Richards, M. Canale, D. Nunan, S. Savignon, and M. Swain highlights the development of English speaking skills, with a particular focus on linguistic, sociocultural, and practical aspects. The scientific works of Yu. Budas, N. Dmitrenko, and L. Melnyk present the features of using various innovative pedagogical techniques, in particular elements of gamification, in the process of teaching English-language disciplines. Scientific works by O. Brovkina, R. Kravets, K. Turchyn, and S. Tsymbal demonstrate the peculiarities of using gaming technologies in English language classes as an effective means of developing English-language speaking skills. O. Berezhnyak, A. Koren, O. Krekotien, K. Podufalova, O. Khalabuzar, S. Shevchenko, I. Shimanovich, and others emphasize gamification as a key tool for increasing the motivation of students to learn.

The purpose of the article is to theoretically substantiate gamification as an effective means of developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers for primary school.

Presentation of the main material. The development of English speaking skills in prospective English teachers for primary school is a purposeful process based on the formation of the ability to communicate effectively in English in interpersonal and pedagogical situations, the development of professional speech culture, and ensuring readiness to use English as a means of teaching and educating younger schoolchildren.

I. Mozul's works focus on the fact that speaking English should be viewed as a dynamic process that integrates cognitive thinking operations, speech coding, and social interaction, ensuring the achievement of the primary goal of **communication – the effective transfer of**

information and mutual understanding between developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers is a complex, multi-level phenomenon in which cognitive, linguistic, and communicative mechanisms interact [4, p. 142].

In scientific research, I. Pinchuk identified the stages of planning a statement in English:

at the first stage, the speaker must determine their communicative intent, formulate the main idea, and choose a speech behavior strategy depending on the situation;

at the second stage, the lexical and grammatical structure of the message is formed: selection of words in English, construction of grammatically correct structures, coordination of tense forms and syntactic models;

at the third stage, the thought is realized phonetically, which includes correct articulation of sounds, adherence to the norms of stress, rhythm, and intonation, which are essential for ensuring clarity and expressiveness of speech.

at the fourth stage, the central act of communication takes place, which is realized in a specific socio-linguistic context, where the speaker must adapt their speech to the addressee, taking into account their level of preparation, cultural characteristics, and nonverbal reactions.

at the fifth stage involves receiving feedback from the interlocutor, which allows the speaker to assess the effectiveness of communication and, if necessary, make corrections by rephrasing, clarifying, or changing the expression strategy [5].

Researcher A. Bychok argues that speaking is based on phonetic literacy, i.e., the correct pronunciation of sounds, adherence to intonation, rhythm, and stress in the English language. Clear pronunciation helps to avoid

communicators. The researcher emphasizes that repetition and the need to clarify what has been said, which speeds up the communication process and makes it more effective. In addition, the scientist notes that vocabulary plays a key role in organizing the process of speaking English, since words are the building blocks of speech. The broader your vocabulary, the easier it is to choose words to express your thoughts, as this reduces the number of pauses, making your speech more fluent and confident. A teacher with a rich vocabulary can more easily find synonyms and antonyms, change the structure of sentences, and avoid repetition, which helps them sound more natural and expressive. According to the researcher, grammatical flexibility makes it possible to easily change the style of communication, for example, from formal to informal and vice versa, as well as to skillfully use abbreviations. Mastering different tenses helps to convey information accurately. Grammatical flexibility allows to combine sentences to express more complex thoughts [1, p. 23].

The scientific research of N. Dmitrenko and others presents the process of speaking not simply as a skill of reproducing linguistic units, but as a linguistic activity that combines cognitive operations (analysis, planning), linguistic strategy, and context interpretation. According to the researchers, the process of speaking is a process of selecting, constructing, testing, and correcting linguistic expressions in the context of communication, where it is not just linguistic units that are important, but linguistic decisions, strategy, interaction, and reflection [2], [8].

From the perspective of psychological and pedagogical theories (J. Piaget, J. Dewey), a play is a natural form of active cognition of the world, a means of developing thinking, speech, and social interaction. Gamification is based on the ideas of Self-Determination Theory (R. Ryan & E. Deci), according to which individuals learn more actively

when they feel autonomy, competence, and engagement in the activity. For students pursuing higher education in teaching professions, this means the opportunity for free self-expression, experimentation with language forms, and positive reinforcement through a system of points, levels, achievements, and social recognition within the group. For prospective teachers, the game also serves a professionally oriented function – it models the future activities of a primary school teacher, who must be able to organize game-based learning for children. In the context of foreign language education, gamification aims to increase students' interest and emotional involvement in the communication process and create conditions for the practical application of language skills.

In their scientific work K. Podufalova and A. Piddubnyak present gamification as the integration of game elements into the learning process with the aim of increasing the motivation of students by making learning more exciting and meaningful. The researchers emphasize that gamification is not just entertainment, but a component of the educational process that contributes to activating students' cognitive activity, stimulates systematic participation, and develops English speaking skills [6, p. 39].

S. Sheluidenko and A. Koren highlighted the positive and negative aspects of using gamification in the educational process. According to the researchers, a gamified educational environment has a positive effect on the development of English speaking skills in future teachers. Teachers should introduce dynamic teaching materials that not only facilitate the acquisition of knowledge but also stimulate the activity of students. In this context, gamification is seen as an effective approach to learning, reviewing, and assessing

results, which ultimately contributes to improving language competence and developing self-learning skills. Secondly, gamification has a positive effect on students' emotional and motivational spheres, forming a favorable attitude towards the process of learning English. Studies show that using game mechanisms reduces anxiety, increases interest, a sense of achievement, and intrinsic motivation. Thirdly, gamification contributes to creating an authentic language environment that reflects real communication situations. Using gamification allows to create a more comfortable environment in which students actively interact and develop their speech and social skills. However, gamification has certain limitations. Among the disadvantages are technical difficulties, the formulaic nature of some teaching procedures, and **inconsistent** implementation of game elements, which may not **directly impact** the quality of language training. In addition, the focus on quantitative assessment (points, levels, time) can reduce the quality of the educational process [7, p. 44].

In our opinion, gamified learning contributes to forming 21st-century competencies, allows higher education seekers to work at their own pace, independently correct mistakes, and develop learning autonomy without feeling psychological pressure.

In their research, R. Jannah, H. Nor, and R. Asfihana highlight an algorithm for using gamification in English language classes, namely:

The motivational stage (Game Launch) involves stimulating cognitive interest and creating a motivational background for further work. This stage is characterized by the presentation of the game mission, the group motto, and the receipt of avatars or badges.

The communication and training stage (Game Quest) is based on developing speaking skills in simulated situations, which may include language games such as Role Play Challenge, Story Cubes, and Describe & Guess, as well as the use of

interactive platforms (Kahoot, Wordwall, and ClassPoint).

The professional-activity stage (Game Simulation) is based on the application of speech in a pedagogical context and is implemented through conducting lesson fragments and creating gamified speaking tasks for children.

The reflective-analytical (Game Feedback) involves reflecting on one's own experience and self-assessment through exercises such as the reflective circle «My speaking progress», award ceremonies, or performance ratings [9, p. 122].

Using gamification in the educational process involves a comprehensive system of actions aimed at stimulating students' cognitive activity, increasing their motivation, and forming a positive emotional attitude toward learning. Game elements can be introduced at different stages of the lesson, ensuring the comprehensive development of speaking skills.

Scientists O. Yaroshenko, L. Kokorina, I. Shymanovych, N. Naumovska, N. Shchaslyva and N. Serdiuk proposed their own stages for using gamification in the educational process. At the first stage of the lesson, it is advisable to use gamified tasks to create a positive learning atmosphere, engage students in active participation, and build internal motivation. At the second stage, when introducing new language units, it is advisable to combine testing comprehension of the material with gamification elements. In particular, flashcards, interactive applications, or competitive games on platforms such as «Quizlet», «Wordwall», «Kahoot» can be effective tools for introducing vocabulary. At the third stage, in the process of developing grammatical and communicative skills, it is effective to use gamified forms of work, which compensate for the routine nature of traditional exercises. Using role-playing games, quests, interactive dialogues, speech

battles, or situational simulations contributes to the development of spontaneous speech, maintains interest, and forms lasting learning motivation. At the fourth stage, students can be offered gamified homework assignments. Completing interactive exercises using elements of ranking, accumulating points, or virtual rewards motivates students to continue practicing without feeling overwhelmed. In particular, online platforms such as Duolingo, Classcraft, and Quizizz allow students to combine self-study with a sense of play and achievement. According to researchers, gamification in learning English speaking ensures emotional engagement, increases the effectiveness of learning new material, and creates a favorable environment for the formation of professional and communicative competence [10, p. 437].

In the course of researching the use of gamification in the educational process of prospective English teachers for primary school, we surveyed 10 university teachers at the Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University who teach students in the educational program «Primary Education. English Language». When asked, «Do you prefer gamification to traditional teaching methods? Why?», all respondents answered positively, specifying their answers. Victoria I. (18 years of teaching experience) states: «Gamification allows to create a special atmosphere of cooperation and interest in the classroom and motivates students to learn English. Even those who usually participate passively in traditional exercises actively engage in game tasks». Another teacher, Olesia Zh. (15 years of teaching experience), noted: «The use of game elements helps to develop not only language skills, but also social skills – the ability to work in a team, maintain partner communication, and express opinions in English in a natural context». According to Yulia B. (5 years of teaching experience), gamification is «particularly effective at the stage of developing speaking skills, when it is

necessary to encourage students to speak spontaneously. Role-playing games, speech quests, interactive debates, and virtual missions help students overcome language barriers and develop confidence in their communication skills». Teachers also emphasized that gamification is an effective tool for differentiating learning. As Nadiya K. (28 years of teaching experience) notes, «thanks to level-based tasks and a scoring system, it is possible to maintain the individual pace of each student without slowing down the overall dynamics of the group».

Summarizing the results of the teacher survey, it can be said that most educators consider gamification to be an effective means of stimulating cognitive activity, motivating students to learn English, and developing the professional and communication skills of prospective English teachers for primary school. At the same time, university teachers emphasized the need for methodological training in the competent planning of gamified lessons and combining of game elements with traditional forms of teaching to achieve the optimal pedagogical effect. We also surveyed fourth-year students (36 respondents) majoring in 013 Primary Education, educational program «Primary Education. English Language». When asked, «What are the best ways to learn English?» 28 (77.7%) students said that they learn most effectively during interactive classes that use gamification; 8 (16.7%) respondents preferred a mixed approach combining traditional methods with game elements, and only two (5.6%) future teachers said they preferred classic forms of teaching without game elements. As student Veronika C. explained, «during the game, we forget that this is learning – we want to win either in competition or complete the game task on time, so I try to speak English more actively, choose words and grammatical constructions

accurately; in general, I try to think like a real Englishwoman».

Student Irina Z. adds: «I like it when tasks have points or levels – then I want to improve my results, and learning becomes an internally motivated process». Most respondents also noted that gamification helps reduce the language barrier, creates a relaxed communication atmosphere, and promotes self-confidence. Some students emphasized the importance of teamwork because it is precisely when performing tasks together that a natural exchange of dialogue in English takes place, imitating real communication. The survey also showed that the most popular gamification techniques among prospective English teachers for primary school are: «Mission: English Teacher», «English Escape Room», «SpeakUp Tournament», «Grammar Battle / Vocabulary Arena», «Drama Quest», «Classroom Simulator», and «English Speaking Marathon».

Based on our own experience of using gamification in the educational process, we present the leading exercises for developing English speaking skills, which are popular among prospective English teachers for primary school (Table 1).

In our practical experience in the courses «Integrated English Language Course», «Children's Literature in English», «Author's Methods of Learning English», and «Modern Technologies for Learning English», we use the following game-based tasks: Speaking Quests, role plays, interactive quizzes (*Quiz Battles*), thematic projects in the form of games (*Project-Based Challenges*), linguistic relays, and simulations of real-life communication situations. For example, during classes in the discipline «Integrated English Language Course», the «*Mystery Box*» task is actively used – students in groups receive a «mystery box» with objects or images that they must describe in English, using

target vocabulary and grammatical structures. This format develops spontaneity of speech, the ability to construct statements logically, and communicate in a group. Within the «Children’s Literature in English» course, the «*Story Dice*» task is effective – creating a short story based on images that randomly appear on dice. This stimulates creative thinking, develops monologue speaking skills, and at the same time models a process that future teachers will be able to use in lessons with younger students. In the «Author’s Methods of Teaching English» class, students participate in the «*Methodology Battle*» game, where teams present their own mini-lessons or

teaching ideas, and other groups act as a jury, evaluating them according to criteria of creativity, effectiveness, and verbal interaction. Such activities develop pedagogical reflection and the ability to justify one’s own didactic decisions. During the course «Modern Technologies for Learning English», digital gamification tools such as «Kahoot!», «Quizizz», «Wordwall», «Genially», etc. are actively used. They are used to practice language structures, vocabulary, and develop listening and speaking skills through interactive tasks that include a system

Table 1.

Gamification exercises in the process of developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers for primary school

№	Name of gamified activity	Goal	Tools / Platforms	Expected result
1.	Mission: English Teacher (role mission)	Formation of spontaneous pedagogical speech, development of professional communication	Classroom game, role cards	Confident speech in pedagogical situations, development of professional English language competence in speaking
2.	English Escape Room (speech quest)	Activating vocabulary, developing quick responses in spoken language	«Genially», «Nearpod», «Google Forms»	Development of linguistic flexibility, creativity, and improvisational skills
3.	SpeakUp Tournament (speakers' tournament)	Improvement of monologue speech, development of public speaking skills	«Mentimeter», «Padlet», «Classcraft»	Building confidence in public speaking, developing critical thinking and argumentation skills
4.	Grammar Battle / Vocabulary Arena	Consolidation of grammatical and lexical structures through speech	«Kahoot!», «Quizizz», «Wordwall»	Automation of speech skills, increasing speed and accuracy of speech
5.	Drama Quest (theatrical gamification)	Development of emotionality, intonational expressiveness, and artistic speech	«Flipgrid»	Improving intonation and nonverbal expressiveness, developing creativity
6.	Classroom Simulator (digital simulation of a lesson)	Preparation for pedagogical communication in English	«Classcraft», «Blooket», «Metaverse»	Ability to plan lessons and adapt speech to the level of younger schoolchildren
7.	English Speaking Marathon	Forming regular speech practice, overcoming barriers	«Flip», «Google Classroom»	Development of speech endurance, stability in speaking, self-reflection

1. *Combine gamification with a communicative approach.* Gaming techniques should be integrated into learning situations that simulate real pedagogical scenarios: communication with students, colleagues, and parents. This practice helps develop linguistic flexibility and the ability to respond spontaneously and naturally.

2. *Use role-playing games to develop language skills.* Role-playing situations such as «Teacher–Pupil Dialogue», «Parent–Teacher Meeting», and «Storytelling Time» promote the development of both dialogic and monologic speech and teach how to adapt speech to the age and level of students.

3. *Use digital gamification platforms.* Tools such as «Kahoot», «Quizizz», «Wordwall», «ClassDojo», or «Blooket» effectively stimulate students' speech activity through a system of competitions, points, and instant feedback. It is important that tasks focus not only on reproductive but also on productive types of speech activity (creating statements, arguing, describing, discussing).

4. *Create situations of cooperation instead of competition.* Avoiding excessive competition helps reduce students' anxiety and create an atmosphere of mutual support.

5. *Integrate gamification into all stages of the lesson.* For example, at the stage of reviewing background knowledge, you can use short game tasks («Warm-up Quiz», «Word Race»); at the stage of practical activities, you can use quests or simulations that require active speaking; at the reflection stage, we suggest using the Lingua Badges technique for achievements (most active speaker, most creative answer, etc.).

6. *Use narrative gamification.* Introducing a shared story context («journey to the language city», «challenge for the future teacher», «knowledge expedition») helps create

emotional engagement and maintain interest in speaking throughout the lesson.

7. *Adapt game elements to the age and professional needs of students.* Future teachers should not only participate in gamified activities, but also analyze them from a methodological point of view, planning possible applications in their own future practice with younger students.

8. *Combine offline and online gamification formats.* Hybrid game scenarios are effective when some tasks are performed in the classroom and others in a digital environment, which expands communication opportunities and allows for continued speech activity outside the classroom.

9. *Develop reflective skills through gamification.* After each game, it is worth organizing a short discussion with questions such as: «What helped you to be an effective speaker?», «What language tools were most appropriate?», «How can the game be adapted for primary school students?» etc.

Thus, we can conclude that the development of English speaking skills in prospective English teachers for primary school is a purposeful process of forming the ability to express their thoughts orally in English in various communicative situations. The process of developing speaking skills is aimed at mastering pronunciation, intonation, expanding vocabulary, mastering correct grammatical structures, and the ability to construct statements logically and consistently. Gamification is an effective innovative tool for developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers for primary school, as it combines learning with elements of play, motivation, and creative interaction. Its use contributes to creating a positive emotional environment, reduces language barriers, forms internal motivation, and develops students' communicative confidence. In gamified learning, future teachers not only improve their phonetic, lexical-grammatical, and pragmatic aspects of speech, but also develop the professionally oriented

speech skills necessary for effective teaching. The results of a survey of teachers and students confirmed that gamification increases motivation to communicate in English. At the same time, the effectiveness of gamified learning depends on a pedagogically balanced combination of game elements with traditional methods, methodological preparation of the teacher, and a clear

definition of learning objectives.

Our research does not exhaust the relevance of the topic, so we will reinforce our scientific findings by studying the following topics: «Theatrical activity as a means of developing the speaking skills of prospective English teachers for primary school» and «The development of English-language speaking skills in future primary school teachers based on European experience».

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*Статтю надіслано до редколегії 05.11.2025 р.
Статтю рекомендовано до друку 12.11.2025 р.
Статтю опубліковано 01.12.2026 р.*

Про авторів

Natalia Dmitrenko,

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor,
Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages,
Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State
Pedagogical University,
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3556-0003>
e-mail: nataliadmitrenko0302@gmail.com

Inna Stakhova,

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Primary
Education,
Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State
Pedagogical University,
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8942-6248>
e-mail: kachayloinna@gmail.com

Nataliia Franchuk

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate
Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of
Primary Education,
Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State
Pedagogical University,
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8084-3793>
e-mail: klochko.nata@ukr.net

About the Authors

Наталія Дмитренко ,

докторка педагогічних наук, професорка,
професорка кафедри іноземних мов,
Вінницький державний педагогічний університет
імені Михайла Коцюбинського,
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3556-0003>
e-mail: nataliadmitrenko0302@gmail.com

Інна Стахова,

докторка філософії (PhD), доцентка,
доцентка кафедри початкової освіти,
Вінницький державний педагогічний університет
імені Михайла Коцюбинського,
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8942-6248>
e-mail: kachayloinna@gmail.com

Наталія Франчук,

кандидатка педагогічних наук, доцентка,
доцентка кафедри початкової освіти,
Вінницький державний педагогічний університет
імені Михайла Коцюбинського,
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8084-3793>
e-mail: klochko.nata@ukr.net

