

## INTEGRATING CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN BUILDING FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE FOR FUTURE PROFESSIONALS

### INTEGRAÇÃO DE PERSPECTIVAS CULTURAIS NA CONSTRUÇÃO DA COMPETÊNCIA COMUNICATIVA EM LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA PARA FUTUROS PROFISSIONAIS

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**Abstract.** The subject of research interests since communication in a foreign language is becoming increasingly indispensable as a prerequisite for forming future specialists as part of globalisation and integration into the international professional environment. Furthermore, the cultural approach enhances the effectiveness of preparing students for intercultural communication and professional activities. The subject of the research is the effectiveness of the cultural approach in developing students' foreign language communicative competence. The method used to conduct the research is theoretical analysis of the scientific literature, questionnaires among the students, and evaluation by statistical methods. The present research findings suggest that integrating cultural content into foreign language learning materials with ICT enhances students' overall level of practical foreign language communicative proficiency. This makes for better preparation for work in the international professional setting and enhances intercultural communication quality. The practical relevance of the results consists in identifying recommendations for introducing a cultural model in training specialist curricula. The findings can, therefore, inform best practices in teaching and learning and actualising foreign language teaching programmes in higher learning institutions.

**Keywords:** foreign language communicative competence, cultural approach, digital technologies, intercultural communication, professional training, higher education institutions.

**Resumo.** O tema da pesquisa é interessante porque a comunicação em um idioma estrangeiro está se tornando cada vez mais indispensável como pré-requisito para a formação de futuros especialistas como parte da globalização e da integração no ambiente profissional internacional. Além disso, a abordagem cultural aumenta a eficácia da preparação dos alunos para a comunicação intercultural e as atividades



profissionais. O tema da pesquisa é a eficácia da abordagem cultural no desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa em língua estrangeira dos alunos. O método usado para conduzir a pesquisa é a análise teórica da literatura científica, questionários com os alunos e avaliação por métodos estatísticos. Os resultados da presente pesquisa sugerem que a integração de conteúdo cultural em materiais de aprendizagem de língua estrangeira com TIC melhora o nível geral de proficiência comunicativa prática dos alunos em língua estrangeira. Isso contribui para uma melhor preparação para o trabalho em um ambiente profissional internacional e melhora a qualidade da comunicação intercultural. A relevância prática dos resultados consiste em identificar recomendações para a introdução de um modelo cultural nos currículos dos especialistas em treinamento. As descobertas podem, portanto, informar as melhores práticas de ensino e aprendizagem e atualizar os programas de ensino de idiomas estrangeiros em instituições de ensino superior.

**Palavras-chave:** competência comunicativa em língua estrangeira, abordagem cultural, tecnologias digitais, comunicação intercultural, treinamento profissional, instituições de ensino superior.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the current situation of globalisation and the enhancement of intercultural communication, the preparation of training specialists with an upper level of foreign language proficiency is recognised as mandatory for the higher education system. Learning necessary patterns of behaviour during communication with representatives of various cultures is one of the competences necessary for efficient professional performance. This competence is highly valued in such staffing positions as lawyers, military, civil servants, and anyone who has to work with international or multicultural teams since such knowledge is a primary necessity. The research topic is significant due to the search for new and more efficient methods for developing foreign language communicative competence concerning linguistic and cultural aspects. The literature analysis proves that mastering an FLP without considering cultural differences can be outrightly ruled out as impossible. Using IT simultaneously creates new conditions for using authentic materials and students' engagement in real-life communication practices.

This work aims to analyse the cultural perspective on developing the future specialist's foreign language communicative competence in adopting novel digital technologies. This paper seeks to articulate the significant scientific foreign approaches to this problem, outline the features of the cultural approach, and analyse the effects of intercultural communication on the efficiency of foreign language instruction.

## 2. THE LATEST RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS ANALYSIS

Thus, the literature analysis revealed that the formation of the future specialists' foreign language communicative competence comprises several essential points, such as digital technologies, cultural peculiarities, and professional predisposition. Information and communication technologies are pillars impacting the learning and acquisition of competences (Batsurovska et al., 2021; Mitrofanova & Ebzeeva, 2019; Guffey & Loewy, 2022). The cultural approach means using cultural components for the acquisition of foreign languages (Sitosanova, 2020; Reyes-García & Manovich, 2020; Wolf, 2024). This is why, in translating language training, it is called appropriate to establish a trend that would enable the consideration of multiculturalism in communication based on a communicative-ethnographic approach (Zhygunova, 2021; Shestopalova, 2021). As researchers state, intercultural communication also plays a significant role in the professional context, especially for lawyers, military and civil servants (Lagodyns'kyi, 2019; Soroka & Shchokina, 2021; Bahrii, 2020). Specifically, the psychological factors in the learning process, namely learners' individual-specific factors, should be priorities for FLC construction (Medvedieva et al., 2021; Shvetsova, 2021; Mykytenko, 2020). At the same time, international academic literature underlines the

importance of enhancing intercultural competence for professional practice in the context of globalisation (Cornelissen, 2020; Pavlenko, 2021; Grigoryeva & Zakirova, 2022).

Lipatov and Popova (2023) study features that will help develop future teachers' foreign language perspectives in modern university conditions. The authors mainly concentrate on the educational context that contributes to language development, which is crucial in the preparation of teachers. Bahrii (2020) aims to examine the psychological aspect of forming the communicative competence of future philologists. Finally, her study enables researchers to learn about the inner psychological features that lead to effective language acquisition. Klak and Yatseniuk (2020) discuss how multimedia technologies can be applied to prepare prospective foreign language teachers. Engagement tools are an essential component of the learning process improvement, hence the importance of this study for enhancing educational technologies.

Zhukevych and Spiricheva (2021) consider the formation of military personnel's language competence through distance learning. Their work demonstrates the importance of adapting educational approaches in specific professional environments, such as the military. This study demonstrates that language training can be practical through interactive approaches, even in technical specialities.

The literature review also reveals various studies on cultural mobility, competence and intelligence. O'Brien-Kop, Ren and Rippa (2024) analyse cultural mobility and cultural heritage with a focus on the Asian context, suggesting new approaches to preserving cultural identity in the context of globalisation. Beaulieu and Jimenez-Gomez (2022) emphasise the importance of cultural sensitivity in applied behaviour analysis, offering a self-assessment tool to help professionals adapt their practice to the needs of different cultural groups. The article by Nguyen et al. (2021) discusses the combination of cultural competence and humility as a critical approach to social work that ensures effective service to ethnically diverse groups. Suarez et al. (2022) examine ethical decision-making models across disciplines, highlighting common elements and their application to behavioural analysis. Delgado et al. (2024) offer a practical approach to resolving conflicts arising from differences in cultural values, emphasising the importance of cultural awareness in professional interactions.

Denysiuk and Danilova (2024) investigate the development of foreign language competence in future higher education institutions' managers. This study is vital to preparing trainers who can address the needs of the international business world. Technological practices in educational contexts, for example, digital stories and cultural analytics, enhance the students' communication skills (Hřebačková & Štefl, 2022; Hanukaev, 2022; Delgado et al., 2024). Thus, it may be suggested that the synthesis of cultural and technical factors is the most efficient solution for the creation of Foreign Language communicative competence (Podolyak, 2023; Zemlianska & Lytvyn, 2023; Bondarenko & Symonenko, 2022). Based on the present literature review, the promoted conception of foreign language communicative competence development may be concluded as integrating cultural aspects and digital technologies for learning (Batsurovska et al., 2021; Mitrofanova & Ebzeeva, 2019; Reyes-García & Manovich, 2020). Scientists also pay much attention to the problem of intercultural communication and the orientation of students, future lawyers, and military and civil servants (Lagodyns'kyi, 2019; Soroka & Shchokina, 2021; Shestopalova, 2021). The psychological component and trends in modern teaching methodology are relevant for language training, as described by many scholars (Bahrii, 2020; Shvetsova, 2021; Mykytenko, 2020).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research techniques include an integrated theory and an empirical approach to amalgamation. The main theoretical tools were the analysis of the scientific publications, the comparative analysis and the synthesis of scientific approaches to forming communicative

competence in foreign languages. In the empirical study within the questionnaire survey, the level of intercultural and linguistic competence of university students was evaluated. Some of the questions included in the questionnaire related to the use of digital technologies and intercultural tools within education. To collect empirical data, we used a survey of students from different faculties of three leading Ukrainian higher education institutions: Open University of Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University, Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University, Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University. The survey was done in March and April 2024. It comprised 542 respondents, and they were from different areas of specialisation, including philological, economic, and engineering areas. The survey was dedicated to more specific aspects of students' FLA and ways for its improvement, along with accounting for technologies and intercultural tools. The same questionnaire presented questions regarding the problems students face when learning alien languages. Following the proposed global statistical methods, conclusions were drawn regarding the factors determining foreign language communicative competence. The data collected were analysed using statistical tools. The results were analysed to define the factors affecting foreign language communicative competence formation. The statistical analysis of survey data included reliability tests and comparative measures to evaluate the levels of intercultural competence among respondents. These methods provided a structured basis for assessing trends and differences in language skills across different academic fields. This approach enhances the study's validity, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the impact of cultural and digital integration on communicative competence.

#### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The study of scientific approaches to forming foreign language communicative competence in HSIs reveals that several significant concepts relate to languages, psychology, culture, and communication. The first is the communicative method, which is based on integrative language discussion in the communication process. There is research emphasis on the types of this method where elements of intercultural communication should be integrated into the learning process (Mitrofanova & Ebzeeva, 2019; Sitosanova, 2020). The cultural approach is also helpful in acquiring language used in communication in a foreign language. This best prepares students for international conditions since nettle cultural idiosyncrasies and worldviews differ significantly. First, this approach contributes to creating intercultural tolerance and does not allow communication breakdown with representatives of other cultures during communication (Reyes-García & Manovich, 2020; Shvetsova, 2021).

One of the most critical areas is avatar-based communicative competence arising within the framework of foreign language learning supported by digital technologies. The use of modern media and digital platforms has been found to enhance the quality of learning foreign languages, as students can access real-life resources and connect with confirmed speakers of the language in question (Batsurovska et al., 2021; Shestopalova, 2021).

Thus, modern approaches to teaching foreign languages integrate several essential components: communicative action, interculturality, and digitality. Together, these make it possible to secure a high level of foreign language communicative competence among university learners.

It is high time we scrutinised the influence of cultural elements in foreign language instruction in terms of resulting in communicative competences. Table 1 looks at this in the global context.

**Table 1.** Role of Cultural Aspects in the Process of Teaching Foreign Languages and Their Impact on Communication Competences Worldwide

Country/Region	Cultural aspects in education	Specific examples	Impact on communication competences
USA	Using intercultural approaches in foreign language teaching with a focus on multiculturalism and socio-cultural differences	Teachers include discussions of social issues (race, gender), analyse Christmas traditions, and use different English accents to discuss social stereotypes	It improves students' ability to communicate with people from different cultures and reduces the risk of communication barriers
Norway	Integration of intercultural elements through the study of national peculiarities of other countries	Teachers use actual business negotiations between representatives of different cultures and discuss communication etiquette	Helps students to avoid cultural conflicts and adapt their behaviour during intercultural interaction
Ukraine	Using a cultural approach through authentic materials that reflect cultural characteristics	Use of video materials and role-playing games to model professional communication between representatives of different cultures	Develops students' linguistic flexibility and increases their ability to communicate in a professional context
Poland	Teaching foreign languages with the use of cultural scenarios and analysis of the language features of other cultures	Students compare texts by Polish authors with British/American works on family values	It increases students' understanding of cultural contexts and improves their translation skills
Germany	Teaching a language with a focus on cultural specificities through the analysis of texts reflecting national traditions	Discussing the translation of German literature into English and the influence of culture on translation	Develops critical thinking and understanding of cultural influences on language
United Kingdom	Integration of socio-cultural aspects through media and digital platforms	Using video conferencing with native speakers to discuss global cultural issues (climate change)	Increases students' adaptability to different cultural contexts and prepares them for intercultural communication
China	Focus on language learning with the inclusion of Chinese cultural heritage and comparison with Western cultural models	In English classes, teachers compare Chinese cultural practices (e.g., Lunar New Year celebrations) with Western holidays (Christmas) by having students write essays or engage in debates about the difference in social norms	It helps students to understand cultural contexts better and integrate Chinese cultural elements into foreign language communication
Spain	An approach with a focus on exploring cultural differences through textual and visual representation	Teachers organise cultural workshops where students analyse works of fiction by Spanish and English authors, comparing their views on social issues (e.g. family values or social inequality)	Improves cultural understanding and the ability to adapt language strategies to specific cultural contexts

Source: compiled by the author based on Guffey & Loewy (2022), Hanukaev (2022), Zhygunova (2021), Shestopalova (2021), Głaz (2024), Hřebačková & Štefl (2022), Mitrofanova & Ebzeeva (2019),

Batsurovska et al. (2021), Delgado et al. (2024), Reyes-García & Manovich (2020), Mangla (2021), Robinson et al. (2024)

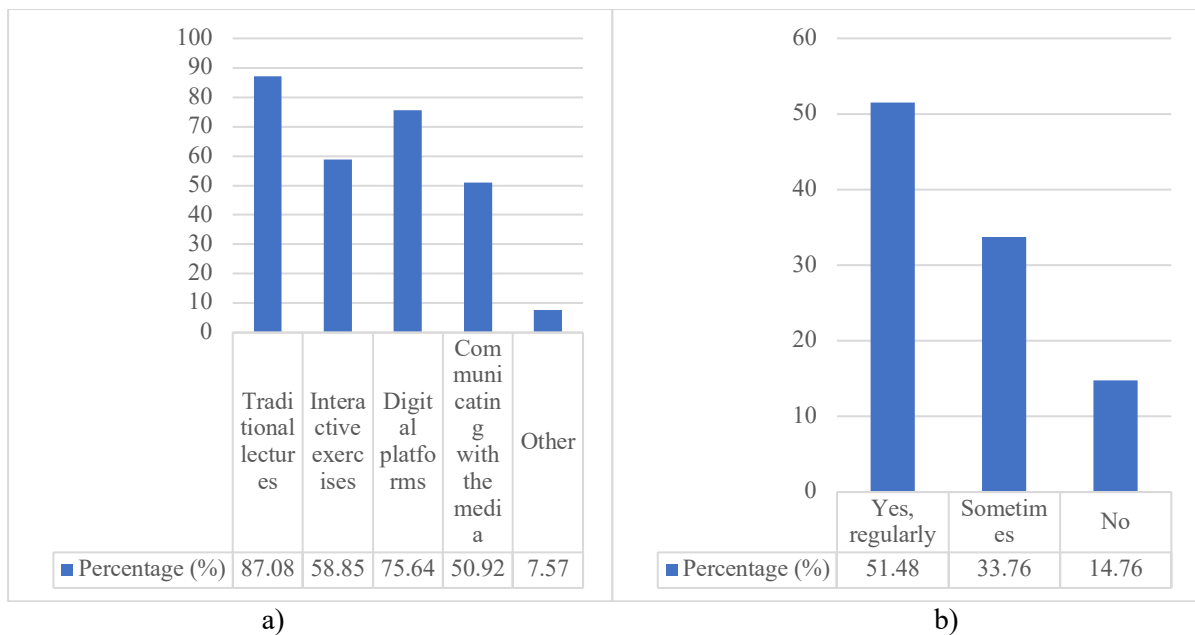
The use of cultural elements in the learning of foreign languages enables the students to get to know some contexts of the language and prevent cultural mistakes. It also promotes intercultural competence, which is essential in a globalised world Mangla & Singh (2024).

To identify effective methods and tools that contribute to the formation of foreign language communicative competence, a survey was conducted (Appendix A) in 2024 at three leading higher education institutions in Ukraine: Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National university, Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway university, Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi state pedagogical university. The survey included 542 students of higher education in different specialities. The questionnaire included eight questions related to the participants' general characteristics and their opinions about foreign language proficiency and instruction. The questions also included how the pro-class digital technologies and inter-culturally articulate learning, as well as the challenges students face while learning a foreign language. The answers provided a possibility to assess the efficacy of various strategies in constructing FLCF.

The questionnaire's content and the survey results are presented in Appendix B. The study shows that most respondents represent philology (28.01 %) and engineering (26.76 %), emphasising the importance of a cultural approach to developing foreign language communicative competence in these fields. Philologists are more motivated to develop language competence due to their direct interaction with language and cultural contexts. At the same time, engineers may need more structured integration of language skills into their professional training, emphasising understanding the cultural specificities of international technical standards and communications (Yasnohurs'ka, 2019).

The respondents mostly rated their foreign language competence at an average level (28.23 % rated their level at 3), which indicates the need for further development of language skills through a cultural approach. At the same time, a significant proportion (21.77 %) rated their level as 5, indicating that a group of well-prepared students probably had more opportunities to immerse themselves in an intercultural environment. Only 9.96 % of respondents rated their level as 1, which indicates the need for increased support for such students through additional cultural and linguistic resources.

Figure 1 presents the study's results on the use of teaching methods and intercultural communication tools. It shows the importance of the cultural approach for developing students' foreign language competences through interaction with authentic cultural materials and immersion in intercultural contexts.



**Figure 1.** Results of the Study of Using Teaching Methods (a) and Intercultural Communication Tools (b)

The most common teaching methods are traditional lectures (87.08 %) and digital platforms (75.64 %), confirming digital technologies' relevance in modern education. It also shows that students actively interact with digital tools to improve their language skills. However, communication with native speakers, which can significantly improve language competence, is used only in 50.92 % of cases, which is an opportunity for improvement. About 51.48 % of respondents reported using intercultural communication tools regularly, and another 33.76 % used them sometimes. This indicates that intercultural aspects play an essential role in the learning process, but there is potential for more frequent implementation in the learning process (Afsar et al., 2020).

Figure 2 shows the study's results on the effectiveness of digital technologies and the importance of the cultural approach in education.

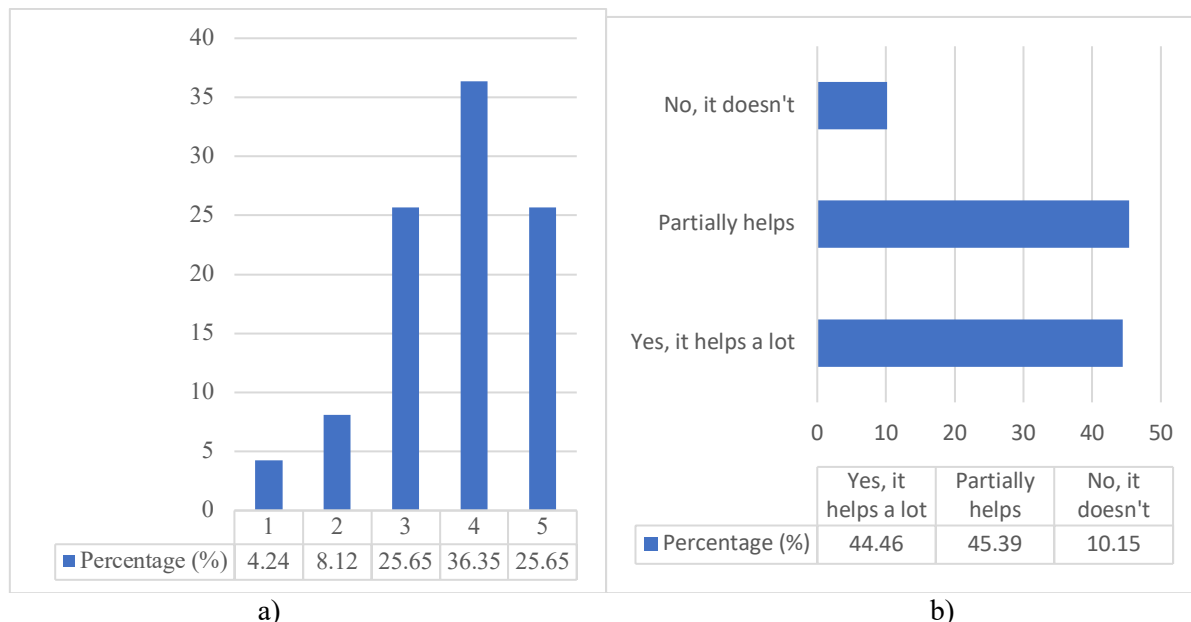
The majority of respondents (36.35 %) consider using digital technologies to be very effective (score 4), which confirms the positive impact of such tools on foreign language learning. However, a certain proportion (4.24 %) still do not see the benefit of these technologies, which may indicate the need to improve digital literacy. 44.46 % of respondents believe that a cultural approach significantly helps learning, and another 45.39 % say it is partially useful. This means integrating cultural aspects into the learning process is an effective strategy for developing foreign language competence.

The study of communication difficulties is presented in Figure 3.

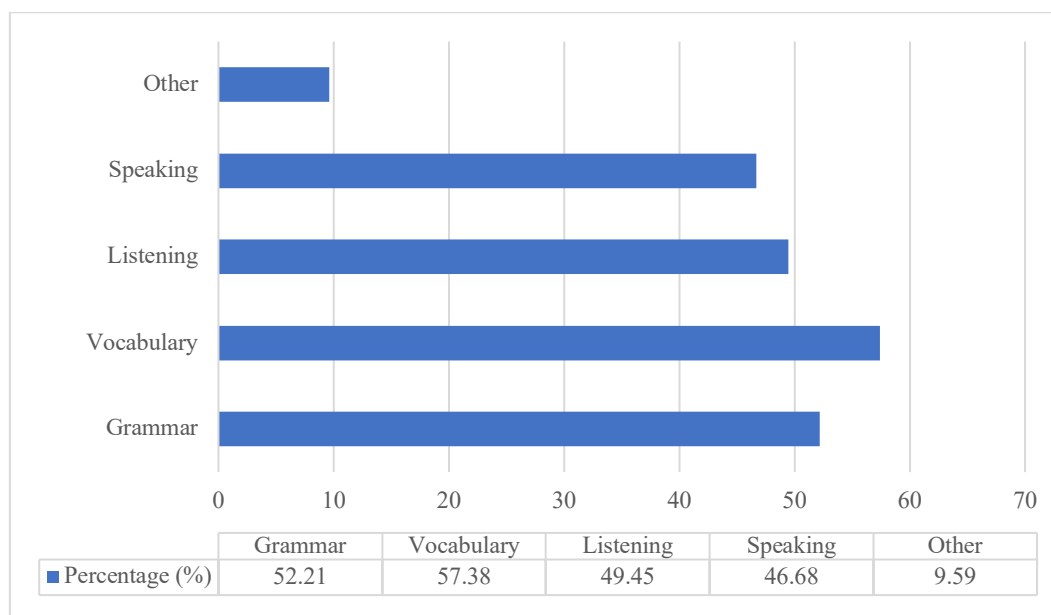
The most significant difficulties for students arise with vocabulary (57.38 %) and grammar (52.21 %), which indicates the need to strengthen these aspects of learning. Listening and speaking are challenges for many respondents, which underlines the importance of oral language practice and audio exercises.

The analysis of the survey results by higher education institutions showed that the most significant difficulties were identified among students of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, where the percentage of respondents with a low level of foreign language competence (score 1 or 2) is the highest. Although Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University students demonstrate average language proficiency, they do not use intercultural communication tools enough during their studies. At Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University, although the level of foreign language competence of students is generally

high, there are difficulties with the practical use of language skills, mainly due to limited opportunities to communicate with native speakers. Students at all three universities noted insufficient integration of digital platforms and intercultural tools. These problems indicate the need for a comprehensive approach to improving curricula, focusing on a cultural approach and active use of digital technologies.



**Figure 2.** Results of the Study of the Effectiveness of Digital Technologies (a) and the Importance of the Cultural Approach in Education (b)



**Figure 3.** Research on Communication Difficulties

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are offered for the integration of the cultural approach into the educational process for the training of future specialists:

1. Increase the use of intercultural communication tools. Students should have more opportunities to communicate with native speakers through video conferencing, exchange programmes or joint international projects. This will allow students to improve their communication skills in real intercultural situations.



2. Integrate authentic cultural materials into the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to extensively use literary and media resources representing different cultural contexts, such as analyses of texts, films or podcasts from different countries. This will help students develop an understanding of cultural differences and intercultural competence.
3. Strengthening the practical use of language skills: The number of practical classes where students can apply their foreign language skills in professional situations should be increased, mainly through role-playing and simulations of international meetings or negotiations, which will help them adapt more effectively to the global environment.
4. Use digital platforms to develop intercultural competence. It is recommended that more digital learning platforms be introduced that allow students to engage in intercultural discussions, forums, and projects. This will increase their adaptability to work globally and provide practical interaction with different cultures.

These recommendations will comprehensively develop future specialists' foreign language communication competence, preparing them for practical work in a globalised world.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The study's results confirm the hypothesis that the cultural approach is essential for developing future specialists' foreign language communicative competence. Most students believe that integrating cultural aspects into the learning process contributes to better foreign language acquisition, consistent with Reyes-García and Manovich (2020), who emphasise the importance of cultural analysis for improving language competence. However, some authors, such as Hanukaev (2022), Mangla & Singh (2022) point out that using cultural approaches alone without digital technologies may not be sufficient to achieve a high level of foreign language competence. Our results confirm that digital tools also play an essential role, which aligns with Batsurovska et al. (2021).

Contradictions arise in approaches to intercultural communication. For example, Lagodyns'kyi's (2019) study focuses on the specificity of professional language training for the military, which should consider strict standards of intercultural communication. In contrast, Bahrii (2020) believes intercultural competence should be developed through tolerance and openness to different cultures, without rigid standardisation. Our data show that flexibility in the approach to intercultural communication is more effective, which supports Bahrii's (2020) view.

While our findings confirm the importance of integrating a cultural approach and digital technologies, further research is still needed. This applies especially to aspects related to the impact of cultural differences on professional performance in specific fields, such as law and military, where the results of different studies may contradict each other.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The research proved the use of cultural approaches in training future specialists in forming their foreign language communicative competence and increasing learning efficiency within the framework of integrating cultural elements and information and communication technologies. The results demonstrate the novelty of combining an intercultural approach with modern technologies, which contributes to developing specialists more adapted to global conditions. At the same time, using these approaches requires additional methodological research, particularly in highly specialised fields such as law and military, where the specifics of intercultural communication should consider professional contexts. The main limitation of this study was the small sample of respondents from limited educational institutions, which

may affect the overall generalisability of the results. Nevertheless, the results show significant potential for developing digital and cultural curricula.

Further research should focus on an in-depth study of the impact of cultural and digital factors on professional training in various specialities, which will allow the development of effective strategies for training specialists to work in multicultural environments.

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**APPENDIX A. Questionnaire**

## 1. Educational institution:

- Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University
- Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University
- Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University

## 2. Speciality:

- Philology
- Economy
- Engineering
- Other

## 3. Level of foreign language competence (1–5):

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

## 4. Teaching methods used:

- Traditional lectures
- Interactive exercises
- Digital platforms
- Communicating with the media
- Other

## 5. Tools of intercultural communication:

- Yes, regularly
- Sometimes
- No

## 6. Efficiency of digital technologies (1-5):

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

## 7. Cultural approach to education:

- Yes, it helps a lot
- Partially helps
- No, it doesn't

## 8. Difficulties in communication:

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Listening
- Speaking
- Other

**APPENDIX B.** Results of the survey

Question	Answers	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
1. Educational institution	Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University	182	33.58
	Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University	189	34.87
	Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University	171	31.55
2. Speciality	Philology	152	28.01
	Economy	131	24.17
	Engineering	145	26.76
	Other	114	21.06
3. Level of foreign language competence (1-5)	1	54	9.96
	2	78	14.39
	3	153	28.23
	4	139	25.65
	5	118	21.77
4. Teaching methods used	Traditional lectures	472	87.08
	Interactive exercises	319	58.85
	Digital platforms	410	75.64
	Communicating with the media	276	50.92
	Other	41	7.57
5. Tools of intercultural communication	Yes, regularly	279	51.48
	Sometimes	183	33.76
	No	80	14.76
6. Efficiency of digital technologies (1-5)	1	23	4.24
	2	44	8.12
	3	139	25.65
	4	197	36.35
	5	139	25.65
7. Cultural approach to education	Yes, it helps a lot	241	44.46
	Partially helps	246	45.39
	No, it doesn't	55	10.15
8. Difficulties in communication	Grammar	283	52.21
	Vocabulary	311	57.38
	Listening	268	49.45
	Speaking	253	46.68
	Other	52	9.59