

ISSN 2520-2073 (print)  
ISSN 2521-442X (online)

# TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

**Emergent Trends in Language Education:  
Bridging Tradition and Technology**

**Edited by Dr Lazar Stošić**

**Vol. 7  
Issue 4  
2023**

Issue doi: 10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4

Quarterly journal published by

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba

# TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Quarterly journal published by RUDN University

ISSN 2520-2073 (print)  
ISSN 2521-442X (online)

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## COMPUTER DESIGN

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## FOUNDER

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN University)  
6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., 117198 Moscow, Russian Federation <http://eng.rudn.ru>

## PUBLISHER

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN University)  
6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., 117198 Moscow, Russia

## EDITORIAL BOARD ADDRESS

6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., 117198 Moscow, Russia

## EDITORIAL BOARD POSTAL ADDRESS

6 Miklukho-Maklay Str., Office 97, 117198 Moscow, Russia

## PHONE

+7 (925) 585-67-46

## EMAIL

[tlcjournal@rudn.ru](mailto:tlcjournal@rudn.ru)

Training, Language and Culture is accessible online at <https://rudn.tlcjournal.org>  
Publication schedule: four issues per year coming out in March, June, September and December

Printing run 100 copies. Order No 28. Open price.  
Signed to print 22.12.2023. Date of imprint 25.12.2023. Format 60x84/8.  
Offset paper. Offset printing. Typeface "Optima, Impact".  
Printer's sheet 10,02

Printed at RUDN University Publishing House:  
3 Ordzhonikidze str., 115419 Moscow, Russian Federation  
Ph.: +7 (495) 952-04-41; Email: [publishing@rudn.ru](mailto:publishing@rudn.ru)

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# About our contributors

## **Evelyn Vovou**

DSc in German Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. Research interests cover multicultural foreign language teaching, second language acquisition, language ecology, modern technology in education.

## **Tatiana A. Dmitrenko**

DSc in Education, Professor in Foreign Languages Dpt, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia. Academician of the International Teachers' Training Academy of Science. Research interests cover theory and practice of intercultural professional communication and professional-focused technology in intercultural communication teaching.

## **Azat A. Akhmadullin**

PhD fellow, Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia. Research interests mainly cover problem-based learning approach and its implementation in the learning process.

## **Valentina Budinčić**

DSc in Linguistics, Professor at Alpha BK University, Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Serbia. Research interests cover web-based teaching resources for Business English classes, sports terminology, terminological anglicisms in ESP teaching, theoretical and practical aspects of teaching Business English vocabulary in EFL classes.

## **Olga S. Zubkova**

DSc in Linguistics, Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Professional Communication, Kursk State University, Russia. Teaches English for specific purposes, translation studies, functional grammar, and foreign language for academic purposes. Research interests cover foreign language teaching methodology, functional linguistics, pragmatic linguistics, culture studies, and intercultural communication studies.

## **Natalya D. Galskova**

DSc in Education, Professor in the Department of Linguodidactics, Institute of Linguistics and Intercultural Communication, Moscow State Regional University, Russia, and State University of Education, Russia. Specialist in the methodology of language education, language educational policy, theory and methods of teaching foreign languages. Author of over 250 publications, including educational and methodological kits on German as a first and second foreign language for general education institutions, foreign language programmes for different educational stages, textbooks and monographs on the problems of linguodidactics and methods of teaching foreign languages. Research interests include the linguodidactic foundations of language education, intercultural education, innovative technologies for teaching foreign languages, and the methodology of educational research.

## **Nataliia V. Poliakova**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor, State University of Education, Russia. Research interests cover functional linguistics, cognitive system functioning and issues of intercultural communication. Author of over 50 articles and textbooks. Regularly takes part in scientific and practical conferences and workshops.

## **Veronika P. Shabanova**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Romance-Germanic Languages, State University of Education, Russia. Research interests include linguistic-cognitive modelling, lexicography, lexical phraseology, and semantic fields. Has also extensively studied e-learning in the context of foreign language teaching and acquisition.

## **Elena M. Slivnaya**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor in the Department of Intercultural Communication and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, Southern Federal University, Russia. Teaches English as a foreign language, phonetics, speech culture, and foreign language text interpretation. Research interests primarily cover microlearning, andragogy, English for specific purposes teaching methodology, linguistic coaching, comparative linguistics, syntactic phraseology, and digitalisation of educational practices across various platforms and frameworks.

## **Victoria A. Borisenko**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Intercultural Communication and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, Southern Federal University, Russia. Member of the Russian Union of Translators, member of the National Association of English Language Teachers. Research interests cover foreign language teaching methodology, pragmatic linguistics, comparative linguistics.

## **Marina V. Samofalova**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor in the Dpt of Intercultural Communication and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, Southern Federal University, Russia. Teaches English phonetics, translation theory, English lexicology, functional linguistics, and foreign language text interpretation. Research interests cover functional pragmatic linguistics, cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, theory of intercultural communication, functional stylistics, foreign language teaching methodology, and modern educational technology.

## **Sergey A. Volkov**

CSc in Education, Associate Professor at the Dpt of Oriental Languages, Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis, University of Carthage, Tunisia. Received his PhD in Education from Pushkin State Russian Language Institute, Moscow, in 1991. Teaches linguistics, psycholinguistics, and Russian literature. Research interests include cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication, Orientalism in Russian literature, and educational psychology.

**Galina A. Khimich**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages Dpt, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba, Russia. Research interests cover teaching Spanish as a second language, literature theory, international relations, history of Spanish and Russian literature and culture, translation theory.

**Ekaterina D. Terentieva**

CSc in Linguistics, Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba, Russia. Main research areas are media linguistics, teaching Spanish as a second language, citation theory, literature theory, history of Spanish grammatical works.

**Marina M. Bazhutina**

Associate professor at Togliatti State University, Russia. Research interests focus on developing effective modes for implementing integrated teaching and learning of the English

language, various aspects of teaching ESP and creating English textbooks for Engineering students. She reported major outcomes at international conferences and in many papers published in Russian and Serbian leading peer-reviewed journals, including *Higher Education in Russia*, *Vestnik of Moscow State Linguistic University: Education and Teaching*, and *ESP Today*).

**Ekaterina D. Chizhatkina**

Teaching assistant and a student for a master's degree in automobile engineering at Togliatti State University, Russia. Research interests include translation of technical documentation as well as educational videos with automobile engineering content from English. Has co-authored articles in conference proceedings.

**Margarita V. Finko**

DSc in Philosophy, Professor in the Dpt of Philosophy and World Religions, Don State Technical University, Russia. Teaches Sociology, Political Science, and Philosophy. Research interests include philosophy of education, religious philosophy, cultural anthropology, and teaching methodology.

# Introduction to Issue 7(4)

by Guest Editor Dr Lazar Stošić

Welcome to Issue 7(4) of Training, Language and Culture. This year's last special issue is titled *Emergent Trends in Language Education: Bridging Tradition and Technology*. This curated collection of articles serves as a testament to the dynamic intersection where traditional teaching methodologies converge with the transformative impact of technological innovations in the realm of language education.

In *Academic writing as sociolinguistic practice*, Evelyn Vovou explores the challenges faced by students in foreign language studies when navigating the complexities of academic writing. The study is concerned with the sociolinguistic aspects of this practice, investigating the impact of limited sociolinguistic lived experiences within academia, discrepancies between first and foreign languages, and the absence of core grammatical, logical, and rhetorical skills. The results emphasise the need to integrate logical and epistemic thinking training into academic writing courses, or alternatively, introduce a separate course dedicated to these crucial skills. The implications extend beyond writing to encompass spoken communication and reading, broadening the scope of academic preparation.

In Tatiana A. Dmitrenko and Azat A. Akhmadullin's *Current trends in teaching a foreign language in the digital era*, the focus shifts to the evolving landscape of language instruction in the digital age. The study examines the emergence of a new paradigm for teaching foreign languages to emphasise the integration of digital technologies. It underscores the importance of cultivating language proficiency in tandem with digital literacy to prepare future specialists for global standards. The results advocate for the optimal utilisation of digital tools and software, creating a flexible digital language environment that purposefully and consistently cultivates language skills and scales up speech activity among students.

In *Linguistic landscape as a powerful teaching resource in English for Specific Purposes*, Valentina Budinčić and Olga S. Zubkova observe the contemporary Serbia through a study seeks to enrich language awareness, lingua-pragmatic competence, and critical thinking among learners. By integrating linguistic landscapes into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction, the research unveils patterns of anglicisation in the linguistic landscape, particularly in official names of entities. The findings highlight the potential of linguistic landscapes as a valuable resource for language educators, offering a platform for language instruction and contributing to the preservation of language standards in the multilingual world.

In *Methodological vector of professional training development of foreign language teachers*, Natalia D. Galskova, Nataliia V. Poliakova and Veronika P. Shabanova address a previously unexplored dimension: the methodological role in the professional activity of language teachers. The study unfolds in stages to reveal

the connections between teaching methodology and methodology, clarifying the main directions of methodological function implementation, and specifying conditions for successful implementation. This research not only identifies these connections but also outlines prospects for the development of methodological thought in relation to the professional training of foreign language teachers, emphasising the importance of methodological consciousness and culture.

In *Micro-learning principles in teaching EFL in the structure of supplementary and further education: Andragogical aspect*, Elena M. Slivnaya, Victoria A. Borisenko and Marina V. Samofalova shift the focus to innovative educational technology. The study demonstrates how micro-learning serves as an effective strategy for teaching a foreign language to adults in additional education settings. Through the application of micro-learning principles, the research underscores the heightened student activity and increased involvement in the educational process. Importantly, the study suggests that micro-education not only levels up students' productive results but also encourages reflection, integral to skill development. The implications extend beyond language education, advocating for the integration of micro-learning principles as a pedagogical tool to optimise adult language acquisition, fortify confidence, and nurture a positive and reflective learning experience.

In *Applying the cognitive congruence principle to target language training*, Sergey A. Volkov tackles the ongoing challenge of designing technologies for integrating the cognitive congruence principle, particularly in the context of target language training. The study develops a cognitive congruence-performing model, aiming to align learning goals with experience processing, student abilities with instructional design, and tutoring with tutteeing. The research utilises process-oriented methods, accentuating the importance of dynamics, cooperation, and transformation in the learning experience. The study's findings suggest that the cognitive congruence principle can reconfigure the learning experience, facilitate knowledge acquisition and maximise cognitive experiences. The proposed model provides practical guidelines for planning and implementing enriched training and learning systems in intercultural and interdisciplinary communication environments.

In *Classical texts in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language: Investigation of a case study*, Galina A. Khimich and Ekaterina D. Terentieva address a gap in traditional foreign language programmes. The study proposes incorporating classical literary texts into the teaching process to deepen students' knowledge of history, social processes, and cultural development in the target language country. The research, conducted over several years, presents survey data confirming the high effectiveness of this integrated study method. The approach, which combines classical methods with elements of the communicative approach, proves universally applicable to students from different disciplines and levels of study, drawing special attention to the broader impact of integrating cultural and historical content into foreign language instruction.

In *What can a foreign language textbook for Engineering majors be like? A case of developing and evaluating its sociocultural content*, Marina M. Bazhutina and Ekaterina D. Chizhatkina address the need for a modern foreign language textbook tailored to Engineering majors in the Russian context. The study presents and validates a framework for sociocultural representation using learner and expert evaluations. Through surveys and interviews, the research explores types of sociocultural representation, students' ability to identify cross-cultural aspects in foreign language communication, and feedback from experts and master students. The findings highlight the prevalence of communication-based tasks and positive evaluations, affirming the sufficiency of sociocultural representation, and contribute significantly to the development of socioculturally rich foreign language textbooks for specialised academic contexts.

The issue also offers a review of Bob Dignen and Ian McMaster's *Trainingsbuch Business English: Kommunikation und Zusammenarbeit in internationalen Teams* prepared by Margarita V. Finko. As is customary, recent news from RUDN University and TLC finalise the issue.

Collectively, these articles efficiently explore their respective domains and piece together a notable narrative that distinctively reflects the overarching theme of this special issue – how language education navigates the ever-evolving requirements,

harmonising tradition and technology to meet the demands of the future. The articles cover various aspects of language education, highlighting the need to blend logical and epistemic thinking in academic writing courses for fundamental skill enhancement. Additionally, they explore digital tools, advocating for a flexible digital language environment to boost students' language abilities.

These studies go beyond traditional teaching methods, using linguistic landscapes as teaching aids and promoting methodological growth in teacher training. They also demonstrate the effectiveness of micro-learning in adult language education. Moreover, they introduce innovative approaches like the cognitive congruence principle and integrating classical texts into language instruction to enrich cultural and historical awareness.

The issue concludes with a review of a relevant business English resource and updates from RUDN University and TLC, forming a cohesive narrative. Together, these contributions form a compelling discussion on the evolution of language education, blending traditional principles with technological advancements to meet future demands.

Training, Language and Culture welcomes contributions in the form of original research articles, book reviews and correspondence. Details are available at [rudn.tlcjournal.org](http://rudn.tlcjournal.org). If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at [tlcjournal@rudn.ru](mailto:tlcjournal@rudn.ru).





## Original Research

# Academic writing as sociolinguistic practice: The case of academic writing in foreign language studies

by Evelyn Vovou

Evelyn Vovou National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece [evovou@yahoo.com](mailto:evovou@yahoo.com)

Article history Received August 5, 2023 | Revised November 30, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-9-15

For citation Vovou, E. (2023). Academic writing as sociolinguistic practice: The case of academic writing in foreign language studies. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 9-15.

*Academic writing often poses considerable difficulties that have to do with the way academic writing courses are conceived and the skills students are taught within this context. Especially students in foreign language studies deal with additional difficulties that are related to their self-perception as scholars, to their somewhat limited experience within the academic environment and to expressing logical/epistemic thinking in the foreign language. The aim of the study presented in this paper is to explore the nature of academic writing as a sociolinguistic practice. Research questions are: how do (a) the lack of sociolinguistic lived experience within academia, (b) the discrepancies between first and foreign language, (c) the absence of the core skills of grammar, logic and rhetoric influence academic writing? Participants in the study attended an academic writing workshop. Data was gathered using Contextual Inquiry by means of observation grids and semi-structured interviews. Results show that (a) even high-achieving students exhibit feelings of incompetence when it comes to academic writing, (b) the material of academic writing courses should include logical/epistemic thinking tasks, based on the training of core skills, (c) achievement in academic writing correlates with a sense of scholarship, (d) a distinction between social communicative and academic communicative language might be helpful. Academic writing courses should take existential, declarative as well as linguistic knowledge into consideration. The study concludes that it is advisable to integrate logical and epistemic thinking training into academic writing courses, broadening their scope. Alternatively, introducing a separate logical and epistemic thinking course would be more advantageous. This approach is preferable because logical and epistemic thinking extends beyond writing (such as papers and theses) to encompass spoken communication (presentations) and reading (strategies for literature search and synthesis).*

**KEYWORDS:** *academic writing, sociolinguistic practice, lived experience, second/foreign language, imposter syndrome, logical/epistemic thinking*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is a continuous topic of discussion in tertiary education worldwide, especially in humanistic studies at a university level. One could say that humanistic studies are mostly concerned with the quality of academic writing since the field of humanistic studies goes back to the source of all learning, the prerequisite of studying anything else: grammar, logic and rhetoric. Those subjects stand at the core of scholarship reflected in all academic activities, including writing. Hence, out of all other science studies in today's epistemic world, humanistic studies strive the most to foster scholarship. However, with that being said, academic writing courses in universities are often limited to teaching students how to work with different formatting and style guides and reference management software, often overlooking the need to train the logic, grammar and rhetoric skills needed for academic writing and, most importantly, to nurture a scholarly identity through the promotion of such skills.

The effects of this could prove detrimental for the academic and professional life of students, the quality of studies, the status of the humanities and, above all, the development of critical thinking. Acquiring poor academic writing skills acquiring only technical knowledge surrounding academic writing but not being immersed in the foundations of language and language use, namely grammar, logic and rhetoric, leads undergraduates to experience imposter syndrome, which is observed very frequently in academia among students (Thompson et al., 1998; Parkman, 2016; Breeze, 2018; Denese, 2020). In fact, the feeling of incompetence among students that demonstrated above-average knowledge in their (humanities-based) field of study that arose when they engaged with academic writing, gave the author the incentive to research academic writing as a sociolinguistic practice and part of a habitus of scholarship, a way of projecting oneself to gain respect of social and professional colleagues. Imposter syndrome may follow undergraduates in their professional life

or hinder them from pursuing a master's degree, etc. On a collective level imposter syndrome among students and graduates could reflect poorly on the quality of studies. Feelings of incompetence and of poor critical thinking that reach the rest of society in one way or another (e.g., through low professional self-esteem) lead to a lower face validity for the respective university departments. This in turn inevitably damages the status of studies, especially in humanistic fields that in this day and age are on the verge of being regarded as irrelevant. Apart from the above, an even greater risk may exist: a loss of the sense of scholarship among students and graduates paired together with the rise of AI in academia may prove to be a blow to critical thinking and a gateway for fake news, flawed data, violations of ethics, etc.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study presented here was conducted on the basis of qualitative methods in order to gain appropriate insight into the experience of undergraduate students regarding academic writing as a sociolinguistic practice, the skills – or rather competences in the field of applied linguistics – needed for academic writing and the role of scholarship as part of their identity. The focus group consisted of 36 graduate students, female and male, enrolled in the Department of German Language and Literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The parameter that characterises the focus group is that all of their academic activities, including writing, is conducted in German, with German being a foreign language for most (n=32) and Greek being their first language (henceforth L1). A small percentage is bilingual in German and Greek, meaning that those students have a parent who is German, have grown up with that parent and are immersed in the German language, but live in Greece.

The focus group took part in an academic writing workshop (summer semesters 2022 and 2023) that aimed at fostering a scholarly identity. The academic writing workshop (*Schreibretreat*) was offered to students as complementary to their studies and is not part of the curriculum. Participants worked mostly individually on their individual papers and thesis but did so in a collective environment in order to foster scholarship and for them to view collective progress as part of academia. Participants were invited to work on their individual thesis but as a collective, so that they could have a shared experience, recognise the detrimental effects of imposter syndrome in the other person and thus develop a more lenient self-image regarding feelings of incompetence in academic writing as well as recognising that the processes involved in academic writing (e.g., hypothesising, logical reasoning, concluding, etc.) are closely connected to grammar, logic and rhetoric that in turn are translated into competences to be developed, of greater importance than drafting and editing.

The majority of participants (n=34) took the time available in the workshop to write about their thesis as well as participate in timed discussions about the difficulties and joys of academic writing, their participation and self-image within academia, the

importance of scholarship for their further development, their feelings of incompetence regarding academic writing, etc. Data was gathered using Contextual Inquiry (Lazaraton, 2003; Bradley & Harvey, 2019) by means of observation grids and semi-structured interviews. A rationale of Grounded Theory (Hadley, 2017) was implemented, although a bigger and more longitudinal data set would be sufficient to safely theorise about regarding academic writing as sociolinguistic practice.

## 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 3.1. Academic writing as sociolinguistic practice

Academic writing has its place as a subject in preparatory courses included in most university curricula and a passing grade is often a prerequisite for advanced courses, as is the case for the focus group. As discussed above, academic writing as a course – and not as much as the subject of (student companion) books of independent publishers – is often strongly focused on drafting (structuring a paper and/or thesis in an institutionally acceptable way, e.g., including the distinctive features of each university, the declaration of originality, placing the chapters in a correct order) and editing (formatting of references, etc.) (Dorfman & Kalugin, 2023). Logical and epistemic reasoning through mastering the properties of language and language use is often considered a given that is acquired before students enter tertiary education. In the context of this study, where participants are required to write their papers/thesis in a foreign language, this could mean that logical and epistemic reasoning through languaging (Becker, 1991 as cited in Jaworski, 2012) are filtered and restructured to accommodate the properties of another linguistic system that, in itself, creates a different context of usage.

In terms of the context of usage, writing in general was first approached from a sociolinguistic perspective by a pioneer in the field, Jan Blommaert. Blommaert (2013) identifies *'specific sets of resources that are required for writing: from infrastructural ones, over graphic ones, linguistic, semantic, pragmatic and metapragmatic ones, to social and cultural ones. [...]* Thus, we can arrive at vastly more precise diagnostic analyses of 'problems' in writing, and this has a range of important effects' (Blommaert, 2013, p. 441). Blommaert's (2013) suggestion to clarify possible issues regarding the nature of writing as a sociolinguistic object of inquiry also applies to the issues discussed in this paper. Issues in academic writing should be addressed considering the environment they arise in. In this paper it is argued that academic writing possesses in itself symbolic power (Kramsch, 2011, 2020). As far as infrastructure is concerned, academic writing serves – as all courses do – the purposes of assessment, of distinguishing between students that master it fully, at an average level or poorly. Students that master it at an average to level or fully can move on to a master's degree and a PhD. But precisely because academic writing serves as a vehicle for all other courses, the proof of knowledge of the next subject is dependent on the mastery of academic writing. This means that academic writing, or more precisely academic written language, has a greater symbolic value, since it influences how knowledge of other subjects

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is being transferred. That is understood by universities, especially outside the field of humanistic studies. In this case, universities and departments choose to evaluate the knowledge of students using other forms of assessment, such as multiple-choice tests, etc. When this is applied to humanistic studies, it creates a sense of hurried and sometimes sloppy evaluation; a sense of evaluation for the sake of evaluation and not a sense of fostering scholarly identities. While other science studies can afford to produce graduates that will be of market value in the sense that they will have specific knowledge that applies to specific professional tasks, the humanities need to also produce critical thinkers and leaders of social change which is only possible through acquiring grammar, logic and rhetoric. The washback of academic writing is therefore obvious on a social micro-, meso- and macro-level.

In the focus group researched in the study, cultural and linguistic sets of resources (Blommaert, 2013) are present in the academic writing endeavours of the participants. As mentioned above, the focus group comprises of students whose first language is Greek and foreign language is German. All courses offered to them by the Department, including academic writing, are taught and evaluated in German. Linguistic discrepancies between the two language systems as well as semantic ones could create problems regarding academic writing in a foreign language, and not only in relation to quality but also in relation to the attitudes of students towards academic writing, as will be discussed further, and to all other language-based aspects of this and other study programmes such as the curriculum, the content of the academic writing course and the related material, the preferred level of linguistic knowledge upon entering foreign language departments, etc. Regarding macropragmatic (Cap, 2010) and metapragmatic resources discrepancies are not as likely to arise, since the genre (academic papers, thesis, etc.) is more or less universal in the European state of affairs concerning university education: that is, there is a spoken and unspoken consensus between European universities – as well as US tertiary institutions – regarding the acceptable style of the language used in this genre. This could also influence the micropragmatics (Cap, 2010) of the genre, but on this level some discrepancies could arise between different languages, and more specifically German and Greek, and between users of these languages (Βηδενμίαιερ & Βώβου, 2022). Micropragmatic discrepancies in academic writing, in the context of foreign language departments, often

lead to problems which are sociocultural in nature: Greek students whose academic writing in German is negatively influenced by these discrepancies are considered of lower status than their German (e.g., Erasmus students) bilingual peers.

Considering all the above perspectives leads us to view academic writing as a sociolinguistic practice laden with symbolic power and to ponder about the changes needing to be made regarding (a) the content of academic writing courses and their reconnection with the skills that promote critical thinking (grammar, logic, rhetoric), and (b) the implications regarding academic writing in foreign language departments where students have to apply those critical thinking skills in a foreign language as effectively as they would in their L1 in order to be considered competent scholars.

### 3.2. Academic writing as lived experience

Having discussed the hiatus between the three core skills of epistemic thinking and the way academic writing is often taught and used in today’s universities as well as having discussed academic writing as a sociolinguistic practice, it is fairly obvious that academic writing as a competence, that is trained and evaluated, and as a practice is a far more complex construct with a certain washback effect on individuals, groups and institutions. One hypothesis that calls for closer examination in the context of this study is whether academic writing is, as it should be, based on grammar, logic and rhetoric and that an expression of critical thinking can indeed be taught and trained in today’s universities and education markets. And if so, how does the institutional environment influence the outcome of its teaching and training?

Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of habitus, first and foremost individual habitus, we can reframe academic writing, before arguing if it can be taught/trained or not, as lived experience. Cultural capital is for Bourdieu (2016) *‘the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, [...] credentials, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class’* (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 199), while habitus is the embodiment of cultural capital. Students acquire (or not) the specific language skills needed for academic writing, namely grammar, logic and rhetoric, because they belong to a particular social class. Not many decades ago, the people entering humanistic studies in Greece either belonged to the upper class or to a lower class both cherishing the notion of scholarship. They entered the humanities either to retain or gain social respect through building scholarship and through presenting their identity as a scholar in such a way in order to be respected. In short, a scholarly identity granted them respect and their knowledge of grammar, logic and rhetoric granted them respect. Whether or not that respect would be translated into money was subject to many different parameters not discussed here. With that being said, the opposite is often observed today: since academic writing is (for humanities students) primarily a product of drafting and editing and not a product of critical, epistemic thinking, humanistic studies are seen as obsolete and holders of degrees in humanities lack societal respect. Humanities degrees do not symbolise the authority

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they used to and one reason for this could be that they are no longer tied to the notion of scholarship and students are not accepted as having the experience of scholarship with a humanities degree (Stroh & Dayneko, 2023).

Furthermore, when academic writing courses are limited to drafting and editing, as thoroughly discussed above, they don't provide their students with the opportunity to experience those core skills and to experience scholarship. *'In qualitative phenomenological research lived experience refers to the first-hand involvement or direct experiences and choices of a given person, and the knowledge they gain from it'* (Given, 2008, p. 336). The institutional habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), the habitus of a given university or the habitus of humanities, etc. limits the students' experience of scholarships and thus limits them and contributes to imposter syndrome.

When it comes to academic writing in a foreign language, the matter is even more complex. Students in foreign language departments often socialise in the foreign language only in the context of their studies and not in everyday life. This means, they have first-hand involvement in specific sociolinguistic events (lectures, seminars, communication with professors) only in the context and the (physical, virtual, etc.) environment of their studies. So, why don't they experience academic writing in the foreign language as part of scholarship and often suffer from imposter syndrome? One explanation could be that logical reasoning, where epistemic reasoning is rooted, is acquired in the L1 (until a certain age) and transferring that knowledge in the foreign language effectively or not has to do with semantic frames (Fillmore, 1982, 1985), which, in turn, is connected to *lived experience*, since *semantic* knowledge is experience-based (Yee, 2017). Such a hypothesis would need a more detailed cognitive linguistics-based analysis. Another explanation, that many Greek colleagues find related, could be that the pedagogical paradigm in tertiary education has changed in the last decades and logical reasoning and critical thinking are not available to students as teaching subjects anymore, not even in their L1. If this is the case, the results presented in Βηδενμάιερ and Βώβου (2022) that structures in the foreign language are acquired to the same degree as structures in the L1, could also apply here. If complex cognitive and linguistic structures applied in logical/epistemic reasoning are not (fully) acquired in the L1 (e.g., the pupil did not attend higher levels of secondary education), then the same structures in the foreign language will not be acquired as well. Again, further analysis is needed to support this hypothesis.

### 3.3. Foreign language competences in academic writing

Exploring academic writing in a foreign language from a sociolinguistic perspective means that the aspect of competence in the foreign language should be included in the discussion. Although the subject of academic writing, and the respective university courses, do not include the teaching and assessing of the linguistic competences involved, writing is considered a medium of language production. Since this study focuses on researching academic writing in a foreign language, one should first look into the communicative competences, as categorised in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001, 2018), that need to be present in this medium of language production.

Although not much is to be found in the literature regarding the calibration of CEFR-descriptors to academic language and a lot less about academic writing (e.g., Lowie et al., 2010; Shaarawy & Lotfy, 2012; Haines et al., 2013; Lachout & Dominiková, 2014), one can assume that, as the CEFR itself states, descriptors presented are only to be seen as guidelines and that interested parties should apply descriptors according to the context that interests them. Hence, most of the studies that exist are case studies. Long before the CEFR, Cummins (1983) proposed a model of second language acquisition, where he made the distinction between social communicative language and academic communicative language. The distinction was made based on the fact that *'academic communicative competence is acquired through the exposure of academic setting and requires higher order of thinking [...], a learner takes 5-7 years to be proficient in academic communicative language. Therefore, those who speak English fluently in social interactions are not necessarily proficient in academic language'* (Cummins, 1983 as cited in Alqahtani, 2022, p. 2). Cummins (1983) bases his observation more on cognition and less on language, he then proposed that a learner can indeed become proficient in academic language (in 5-7 years when in the appropriate setting). Although no direct connection is being made, the hypothesis stated in this paper is the most plausible: higher order cognition is trained through language and through the teaching of the aforementioned core skills.

The question remains though: since higher order cognition, or, to be more precise, logical/epistemic thinking is acquired through grammar, logic and rhetoric, do we teach those core language skills in foreign language academic writing courses? In a word, yes. But, looking to find direct correlations between the skills of grammar, logic and rhetoric and the communicative competences presented in the CEFR (2001, 2018) should not be the goal. Grammar, logic and rhetoric are included in the *savoir* (CEFR, 2001), that is, in *declarative knowledge* resulting from experience and from formal learning. *'Academic knowledge in a scientific [...] educational field [...] clearly has an important part to play in the reception and understanding of texts in a foreign language relating to those fields'* (CEFR, 2001, p. 11). Academic writing courses should focus on training the intricacies of language, in this case the foreign language, and the way to make logical connections, such as between statement – explanation – example –

*'Academic writing courses should focus on training the intricacies of language, in this case the foreign language, and the way to make logical connections, such as between statement – explanation – example – conclusion, based on the already acquired level of proficiency in the foreign language. The fact that to train core skills in a foreign language a student must already be proficient at a higher level (C1 & C2) is undeniable'*

conclusion, based on the already acquired level of proficiency in the foreign language. The fact that to train core skills in a foreign language a student must already be proficient at a higher level (C1 & C2) is undeniable. This is also suggested by the CEFR (2001, 2018), since descriptors that have to do with complex linguistic tasks are above C1-level, for example, *'Breaking down complicated information can make a complex issue more comprehensible by building up the chain of steps or line of argument, and by recapitulating key points'* (CEFR, 2018, p. 263).

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

As discussed above, the data for this study was gathered using observation grids and semi-structured interviews. Interviews were often followed by open-end discussions, only with those participants that took it upon themselves to further discuss individual considerations regarding academic writing. Because open-end discussions were not part of the research design, the data they provided was only used complementarily.

The first conclusion that can be drawn is, as discussed above, the feeling of incompetence regarding academic writing as well as academic writing in a foreign language. As far as academic writing per se is concerned, the vast majority of participants (bilinguals and participants with German as a foreign language) reported that they faced problems regarding the synthesis of academic texts. More specifically, they reported that they were *baffled, and were anxious about it, they didn't know how to do it, and that they were not taught, no one guided them to do it*. When asked how well they performed on average in the papers or theses they had already handed to the professors for evaluation, their answers varied from 6 to 10, with 10 being excellent. This means, that even students that performed well thought of themselves as incompetent at academic writing.

It can hence be concluded that imposter syndrome was present among the participants. When asked if the preparatory academic writing course that they were obliged to attend in their first year and is a prerequisite for studying further was helpful in providing them with the necessary knowledge regarding the synthesis of academic texts, the vast majority of respondents answered that the course was *somewhat helpful* but they *don't remember a thing*, meaning that the course took place, based on the curriculum, at the beginning of their studies and that the knowledge acquired was forgotten when they got to the third year and had to write papers. One can conclude that more consistent

training, for example, not only one academic writing course taking place in one semester, but courses in every semester up until the third year, could be beneficial and would solve a part of the problem.

Regarding the material of the course, most participants said that they *learned how to write citations and references*. This proves the hypothesis that academic writing courses are often limited to teaching the formalities of today's academic writing (formatting, style guides and reference management software) and not the logic of language behind the formalities.

Concerning academic writing in a foreign language and the difficulties that arise from their level of proficiency, the answers of the participants were inconclusive. All bilingual participants (n=4) think that they possess a high level of proficiency in German (C1-C2), but they all reported difficulties and feelings of incompetence in academic writing, although the latter was not as high as in participants with German as a foreign language. Participants with German as a foreign language (n=32) also reported difficulties regarding the influence of their competence level on their academic writing, and the majority (n=28) also stated that language courses were *not as helpful when it comes to academic writing*. This could point to a preliminary proof that Cummins' (1983) dichotomy between social communicative language and academic communicative language is still valid, but data from a larger number of participants would be needed to back up his argument in practice and propose a change of material accordingly. (Students in the Department are obliged to take language courses at C-level in the first two years of their studies. The courses are considered a prerequisite for continuing to the third year. Language courses are not limited to writing tasks, they include all kinds of production, reception and mediation as described in the CEFR. The content of the material used (texts, etc.) often has to do with current issues in society, education, science, etc.)

As far as their view of scholarship was concerned and whether this trait was part their identity, the majority of participants (n=29) reported that they *don't view themselves as scholars*. The rest of the participants (n=7) replied that they *could view themselves as scholars, perhaps in the future when they work as professionals*. These answers could mean that (a) imposter syndrome regarding academic writing influences their self-view regarding scholarship, (b) because the humanities have lost a degree of face value in today's educational market, students have lost the sense of scholarship, (c) because their academic formal knowledge neglected the teaching and training in core skills, a sense of scholarship has not been formed, (d) their academic environment does not give such an input. Scholarship is perhaps taken for granted and is not discussed and cherished or professors are limited to teaching and providing feedback on their respective subjects and not encouraging scholarship in general.

Although the following feedback came from only one participant, it is worth mentioning for future reference and research. In the open-ended discussion after the interview, one

of the bilingual participants expressed the feeling that she was *reluctant and having (language) difficulties* writing her thesis in German to the same degree as in Greek. This could be one more indication of the hypothesis addressed in Βηδενμάρ and Βώβου (2022), namely that if complex cognitive and linguistic structures applied in logical/epistemic reasoning are not acquired in the L1, then the same structures won't be present in the foreign language.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, core skills should be reintroduced in all science studies, not just in the humanities. A lower than C-level foreign language proficiency does not seem to hinder the teaching and training of core skills and logical/epistemic thinking, as long as both take place. Students and later professionals with a lingering feeling of incompetence could be detrimental to the evolution of science and society. *Knowing thyself*, or, as also described in the CEFR, *existential knowledge* is, together with *savoir*, the knowledge of the core skills discussed in this paper, is essential for acquiring any knowledge, such as a foreign language. In order to allow someone to be a scholar, not just hold a degree for the job market, universities and especially humanistic studies must support *existential knowledge* by forming identities as well as *declarative knowledge* by training logical/epistemic thinking.

In order to do so, a change of stance as well as a change in curricula and material should be considered. It is more than reasonable that academic writing courses are a prerequisite, but departments should consider either a change in description and material of academic writing courses, so that they include the training of logical/epistemic thinking, or the introduction of a logical/epistemic thinking course as a subject independent of academic writing. The later would be more favourable, since logical/epistemic thinking is not only applied in writing (papers, theses,

etc.), but also in speaking and mediating (oral presentations) and reading (strategies for literature search and synthesis).

As far as departments of foreign languages are concerned, language courses should touch upon the material of academic writing courses. In practice, language courses could implement a number of tasks per semester or per course that apply logical/epistemic thinking. Social communicative language should remain the main teaching and learning goal of university language courses but tasks that train academic communicative language should be included.

Also, an important point to stress is the value of precise and, in cases, thorough feedback regarding academic writing. Due to an immense workload, it is often the case that academic writing tasks, such as short papers, oral presentations, etc. are not given enough feedback as far as the internal epistemic logic of a text is concerned. Feedback is always provided for subject-related content but academic language, as it is often limitingly described, has not always been commented upon.

Lastly, universities need to apply creative ideas in order to foster the sense of scholarship, such as the collective academic writing workshop presented here. For example, the Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT®) by the University of Queensland, collective and collaborative working with literature in the Department's library, peer feedback, colloquia that are specific for academic writing and logical/epistemic reasoning, etc. are important ways forward.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Dr Dafni Wiedemayer who encouraged the academic writing workshop as well the former Department President Professor Dr Friederike Batsalia and the current Department President Professor Dr Katerina Karakassi for allowing the workshop to take place.

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## Original Research

# Current trends in teaching a foreign language in the digital era

by Tatiana A. Dmitrenko and Azat A. Akhmadullin

Tatiana A. Dmitrenko Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia [dmit.ta@mail.ru](mailto:dmit.ta@mail.ru)

Azat A. Akhmadullin Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia [azat.ahmadullin.99@mail.ru](mailto:azat.ahmadullin.99@mail.ru)

Article history Received June 28, 2023 | Revised November 27, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-16-23

For citation Dmitrenko, T. A., & Akhmadullin, A. A. (2023). Current trends in teaching a foreign language in the digital era. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 16-23.

*In the digital era, a new concept of teaching foreign languages using digital technologies has been developed. Today's emphasis is on cultivating highly competitive specialists who not only possess fluency in their respective professions to meet global standards but are also prepared to actively leverage digital technologies. The purpose of the article is to reveal current trends in teaching a foreign language in the digital era and to assess the opportunities and main ways to improve foreign language training for future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts, since the digitalisation of education has brought foreign language teaching to a qualitatively new level. The article explores the methodological foundations underpinning the concept of foreign language training for a competitive specialist through the integration of digital technologies. Employing analytical-synthetic methods, the comparative approach, and contrastive analysis of national and foreign educational practices, the study looks into the aspects of language training in the contemporary context. The authors reveal the content of the concepts 'digital educational environment', 'digital technologies' and 'digital educational resources' and identify problematic aspects of modern professional training for a foreign language teacher in the context of digitalisation of education. The identification of the most prominent trends in modern foreign language education was a key focus. The imperative shift towards utilising digital tools in language instruction was underscored, affirming their role in attaining high-quality outcomes in the training of competitive specialists. The article's scientific novelty and theoretical significance stem from the authors' rationale for incorporating digital technologies and establishing a digital learning environment in foreign language instruction. This entails not only an optimal blend of promising technologies but also the utilisation of a comprehensive array of tools and software. These tools enable the development of more advanced educational materials and foster foreign language speech activity among students through immersion in a dynamic digital language environment.*

**KEYWORDS:** foreign language training, intercultural communication, digitalisation of education, digital technologies, modern trends, professional training, competitive specialist



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The digital age has had an impact on the teaching of a foreign language in both schools and universities. In the context of digitalisation of education digital tools have appeared, which marked the emergence of a new didactic tool for teachers to organise the educational process. In this regard, the professional training for linguists and foreign language teachers has changed dramatically. The concept of teaching foreign languages has changed as well. The concept involves the training for a competitive specialist in the field of intercultural contacts using digital educational resources, and for those who are ready to 'use digital technologies that provide unlimited opportunities for self-realisation in future practical activities' (Bartosh et al., 2017). Digitalisation of education envisages the creation of a digital learning environment in the process of teaching students a

foreign language. The environment is a set of digital resources that provide the learning process, aiming at personalised educational activities organised in the digital educational space. Educational materials presented in digital format are significant components of such an environment. The processing of digital data, its exchange and analysis allow each of the students to achieve qualitatively new educational results (Dmitrenko, 2020). At present, the concept of language education involves a revision of its content, the creation of optimal conditions in the educational process for the disclosure of students' personal potential. These conditions aim at revealing individual abilities, at self-education of the student's personality in a multicultural environment and digitalisation of education. This transformative approach seeks to empower students not only linguistically but also personally, fostering self-directed learning and adaptability.



## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The research conducted in the field of foreign language training and the analysis of educational practice indicate that a foreign language teacher purposefully explains the culture of both speech and thinking since a foreign language is one of the main tools for educating people in a multicultural society allowing the formation of a planetary vision. In this regard, a foreign language teacher has to revise the educational material creatively, and rearrange it in view of the contingent of students. Moreover, the teacher has to put the educational material in other forms for presentation and use innovative technologies for teaching foreign language communication.

Today, the foreign language training for a competitive specialist is characterised in higher education by the introduction of advanced learning technologies into the educational process in view of the latest achievements of science and technology, for example, digital learning technologies, etc.

One of the current trends in the education system is the expansion of opportunities for each student to choose their own educational trajectory, the creation of optimal conditions for self-development and self-realisation already in the process of professional training itself. It includes foreign language training, which is a priority task for updating the entire education system. Students' needs, abilities and aspirations come to the forefront in the emerging unified digital educational space nowadays. It reflects the awareness of the justified need for fundamental transformations, changing semantic accents in foreign language training (Calderón, 2018).

The most significant innovative trend in the language education system is the creation of a digital educational environment in the process of teaching a foreign language. The analysis of the survey conducted of teachers on the use of digital technologies in the process of teaching a foreign language to students of a pedagogical university shows that the digitalisation of foreign language education involves, on the one hand, the use of digital resources in education designed to optimise the educational process, and on the other hand, training future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts to work with digital technologies and the formation of appropriate competencies. Thus, future specialists will have access to high-quality educational digital content, allowing them to freely navigate information in a digital environment (Dmitrenko & Kadilina, 2020).

The creation of a unified digital educational environment ensures the operation of large amounts of information, as well as a comprehensive impact on the main channels of perception of students. The foreign language training for a competitive specialist provides for the widespread and consistent use of digital learning technologies (online courses, mobile learning, etc.) and the creation of a digital learning environment. It leads to the creation of optimal conditions for self-development in the process of professional and foreign language training offering the student a personalised trajectory of the educational process (Ballard, 2013).

The process of foreign language training in digital education involves the use of digital technologies. The implementation of these technologies into the educational process can occur at different levels.

At the first level (low), some traditional learning tools are usually replaced with digital ones. For example, students switch from reading texts in a traditional printed textbook to electronic reading, while the teacher's instruction practice does not change.

At the second level (middle), pedagogical practice is already being enriched as a result of replacing the traditional teaching tools with digital ones. For example, the demonstration of educational material using a multimedia projector in a foreign language lesson improves the quality of perception of the material due to its fascinating display and increases the effectiveness of its assimilation by students.

At the third level (high), pedagogical practice expands significantly when replacing the traditional learning tool with a digital one. This stage provides an opportunity for a foreign language teacher to improve the quality of teaching through solving a wide range of tasks including the use of slide and streaming digital presentations, as they are an effective way of presenting information to a wide audience in a clear and concise form, for example, in the form of an instructional video clip within the framework of the study topic.

At the fourth level (advanced), a radical transformation of pedagogical practice through the functionality of digital tools is implied. It significantly expands pedagogical practice, which becomes qualitatively different. Digital technologies already give us opportunities that were impossible before, allowing us to solve tasks that cannot be resolved without their application. For example, the Internet is used to communicate with colleagues from other countries to share an experience on professional or non-professional issues in the process of intercultural interaction. At this stage, interactive learning resources or simulations, virtual classrooms, etc. have been widely used.

The analysis of the questionnaire and the survey of foreign language teachers on the use of digital tools, that is, future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts, convincingly showed that the use of digital educational resources in teaching not only contributes to the optimisation of the educational process, but also gives students access to high-quality educational digital content, allowing them to freely navigate in a digital environment (Dmitrenko, 2021).

Today, several groups of digital tools can be distinguished. The first group includes instruments that help students organise joint activities (e.g., Padlet, Google Docs, Google Spreadsheets, Google Slides, etc.). The second group includes digital tools that allow feedback (e.g., Google Form, Kahoot, Quizizz, etc.). The third group includes tools that can be used not only to model the cultural space in foreign language classes, but also to design a digital learning space (e.g., Google Classroom, Learning Apps, etc.). The fourth group includes tools that help a teacher to organise online classes in a digital environment (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype (Panyukova, 2020)).

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The digital learning space modelled by the teacher permits the operation of large amounts of information as a comprehensive impact on the main channels of information perception by students. The use of digital learning technologies such as online courses, mobile learning, cloud computing, webquest, etc., as well as the design of a digital educational space, leads to the optimal psychological and pedagogical conditions for self-development and self-realisation of the student in the process of foreign language training, offering the student a personalised trajectory of the educational process.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research employed a comprehensive and analytical approach to investigate the influence of digital technologies on foreign language training. The study explored current educational practices, identified trends, and discussed the impact of innovative teaching methodologies. The data collection process included a detailed analysis of contemporary educational practices, focusing on the integration of digital technologies in foreign language instruction. This examination encompassed teaching methodologies, materials, and the utilisation of digital tools across diverse educational settings.

A thorough literature review was conducted to identify key trends, emerging technologies, and pedagogical approaches in language education. This review provided a foundation for understanding the landscape of digital learning technologies in the context of foreign language training. The study looked into the strategic design of a digital learning environment by educators, incorporating electronic means of communication, multimedia, and interactive tools. The integration of mobile learning, cloud technology, gamification, web quests, virtual reality and innovative teaching strategies was explored based on the analysis of educational practices. An interdisciplinary approach was employed to explore the intersection of language education and digital technologies, considering data from pedagogy, technology, and cognitive science.

### 3. STUDY AND RESULTS

The results of recent studies show that achieving high quality training for a competitive specialist is ensured largely by the use of digital tools, mobile technologies, and the Internet by students. It significantly expands the horizons of knowledge and involves students' skilful use of digital technologies providing unlimited opportunities for self-realisation.

In the context of digitalisation of education, the construction of foreign language teaching on a modular basis dictates a high-quality selection of educational material, which facilitates its assimilation by students. Nonlinear, modular multidimensional presentation of information ensures a transition from a reproductive, verbal form of presentation of material to a visual-logical one, ensuring coordinated synchronous work of the two hemispheres of the student's brain, influencing the main channels of perception.

Digital learning technologies are an innovative way of organising the educational process, based on the use of electronic systems that provide visibility and the possibility of interactive interaction created by electronic means of communication.

Teaching a foreign language using digital technologies involves the use of a whole set of tools and software, among which are simulators, test programmes, graphic editors, multimedia presentations, online diagrams, graphs, tables, modelling programs, digital textbooks, etc. Naturally, this set of tools and software allows one to prepare more advanced educational materials using electronic means and organise a digital educational environment that stimulates foreign language speech activity of students (Ennis & Riley, 2018).

Nowadays, the presentation of the educational content to students using digital educational resources is a specific professional interest, involving both visualisation and interactive communication through the teacher's design of a digital educational environment created by electronic means of communication. The practice of the introduction of digital technologies into the educational process indicates the feasibility of their use. The use of these technologies allows one to diversify the lesson, make it more interesting and meaningful for students, and teach the culture of speech inherent in the people of the country of the language studied. The use of digital technologies involves a transition to interactive methods and styles of learning, activating cognitive activity of students and their independence. It promotes creative comprehension of educational material, as well as gaining experience in the result of the practical application of educational material in intercultural communication (Berrett et al., 2014).

Digital technologies play a significant role in foreign language training in a multicultural environment. They allow one to better assimilate cultural knowledge and develop the ability to understand the mentality of native speakers, as well as the national features of their behavioural communication, since knowledge of such features or ignorance of them play a decisive role in achieving mutual understanding in intercultural communication. Digital educational technologies make it possible to immerse students in an authentic virtual environment, where they have the opportunity to 'visit' the country of the studied language. This environment gives new opportunities in teaching and learning a foreign language, making a transition from mechanical assimilation of information to mastering the ability to independently acquire new knowledge (Vetrinskaya & Dmitrenko, 2017).

The results of the survey and the testing of students confirm that a teacher must skilfully master digital learning technologies, which have higher pedagogical characteristics compared to traditional ones, for effective foreign language training. Replacing ineffective teaching methods and techniques with more productive ones and creating comfortable conditions for learning promote the possibility of learning an individual learning trajectory that fully takes into account the cognitive abilities, motives, inclinations and other personal qualities of the student (Dmitrenko, 2021). At the same time, there is an improvement in the practical mastery of a foreign language by students and the development of a creative personality by the means of learning a foreign language.

Improving the professional training for a future specialist in the field of intercultural contacts involves intensifying the educational and independent activities of students through the use of advanced teaching technologies, in close connection with the professional and educational objectives of training. Digital educational technologies are considered as an innovative way to organise the educational process, ensuring visibility and effectiveness of learning.

One of the key trends in the language education system is that nowadays priority is given to the authenticity of communication and the co-study of language and culture with an emphasis on culture in the process of teaching a foreign language. Authenticity of communication plays a significant role in the process of students mastering a foreign language. The high educational significance of authentic communication, in turn, determines communicativeness, interactivity, and the development of educational materials that contribute to the development of students' ability to adequately respond to certain challenges in professional and non-professional foreign language communication, and also help free orientation in a foreign language and digital environment. Improving the quality of foreign language training meets the requirements for the development of professional communicative competence, flexibility, and creative thinking of future specialists in the context of digitalisation of education.

Another important modern trend in the system of higher language education at the present stage is that foreign language training begins to be conducted in the context of personal orientation and dialogue of cultures. Its main goal is the foreign language training for a competitive specialist in his field, ready for professional and business communication within the framework of international cooperation. Training competitive specialists involves not only modelling situations typical for the professional activities of future specialists in the field of intercultural contacts, but also requires communication in a foreign language in view of the sociocultural context, implying the creation of a cultural space using digital technologies (simulations, virtual classes) (Freeman, 2016).

Digital technologies in this way allow one to gain experience in intercultural communication in the process of mastering speech activity in foreign language lessons. The

didactic potential of digital learning technologies is unusually wide. It involves adaptability and personalisation of the educational process, high speed of information processing, across-the-board transparency of activities and a comfortable learning environment that considers aspects such as pace, content, psychological comfort, etc.

The formation of foreign language communicative competence using digital learning technologies allows one to recreate the sociocultural context that manifests in different visions of the world, different mindsets, customs, and lifestyles of representatives of foreign language cultures. Digital technologies, practised by the teacher in the classroom, facilitate the modelling of situations of intercultural interaction in which speech behaviour is not identical for representatives of different cultures that helps students develop intercultural sensitivity, which is so necessary for mutual understanding and the establishment of fruitful relationships between communicants (Bennet, 1998).

Today, the focus is on the sociocultural orientation of learning that reflects in the formation and development of students' cultural communication with the help of more advanced educational materials using electronic means that contribute to the practical mastery of a foreign language at the world standards. The learning of educational material occurs in a creative way, significantly increasing the effectiveness of the formation of communicative and professional competence of students.

Currently, new generation digital technologies are becoming widespread. Web 3.0 is a new generation Internet technology that relies heavily on machine learning, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology allowing the saving and transfer of data in the form of a sequence of linked blocks. Each block contains information and a link to the previous one forming together a chain. This way, the data in the blockchain is protected from changes and falsification.

Web 4.0, also known as the 'Intelligent Web', is the next evolutionary stage in the development of the Internet. It is characterised by a shift from traditional static web pages to more intelligent, dynamic and interactive web applications. Web 4.0 represents a significant step forward in the evolution of the Internet and the way we interact with it (Sysoev & Filatov, 2023).

Not only stationary and portable personal computers, tablets, smartphones, but also 3D glasses for learning in augmented reality have been used from 2015 to the present. The leading methodological approach for teaching a foreign language is becoming a communicative and activity-based approach. A digital device as a tool for communication and interaction is used in real and virtual digital environments. In addition to digital technologies, smart technologies, artificial intelligence technologies, blockchain technologies, VR and AR have begun to be used in teaching a foreign language. The teacher is considered as an advisor and facilitator in the process of teaching a foreign language.

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Due to the fact that the distinctive features of modern higher education are flexibility, efficiency and practice-oriented learning, the transition to smart technologies is natural. Smart technologies based on multimedia are adaptive and flexible, they facilitate the organisation of personalised learning in accordance with the personal characteristics of students. Such technologies, according to Spector (2018), also take into account the context, respond to the interests and characteristics of individual students. These technologies have all the characteristics necessary to solve new problems.

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The key element in using smart technology is the smart environment. It is an educational environment supported by various technologies that enable students to use digital resources and interact with learning systems in any place and at any time, as well as actively provide them with the necessary learning guidance, supportive tools and learning suggestions to them in the right place, at the right time and in the right form (Zhu, 2016).

As for artificial intelligence technology, 'artificial intelligence implies a number of modern technologies that allow, based on the collection and analysis of large amounts of data and algorithms for building patterns of speech behaviour, to develop and implement language teaching methods for an individual path, simulate foreign language speech activity to solve communicative tasks, to carry out automated control of foreign language skills of students, provide them with feedback and carry out analytical work' (Sysoev, 2023).

Based on artificial intelligence, various types of chatbots, websites and applications with support for artificial intelligence technologies (AI), smart tutors, translation systems, written text

assessment systems, nonlinear neuro-linguistic testing systems, etc. are used today in teaching a foreign language. The most popular among chatbots is ChatGPT, which is capable of accurately modelling natural language and generating high-quality informative responses and can also be used for data analysis. ChatGPT is a natural language generation system developed and released by OpenAI. It is based on a deep learning model for real-time text processing and generation.

Today, the field of artificial intelligence has begun to actively develop, and in this regard, the demand for qualified AI specialists is also growing. There is great potential for the application of AI in education. The most famous of AI tool libraries are Futurepedia, Featured GPTs, GPT-4 Demo, GPT-3 Demo, and Aicyclopedia.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The ways of transmitting educational information have primarily changed due to the teacher's design of a digital learning environment using electronic means of communication. In the digital educational space, the creation of a visual and sound environment affects the real space, because of the possibility to make a record and control it, reproduce images and sound, while having access to them. It is also of professional interest to foreign language teachers that when designing a learning space through digital educational resources, one should not only focus on immersing students in a virtual environment as close as possible to an authentic language environment, but also pay special attention to the very presentation of educational material, which becomes fascinating and dynamic in the eyes of students that contributes to the formation of voluminous and vivid representations, creating the illusion of co-presence in a foreign language environment. In this regard, in the digital environment, such a phenomenon as education and entertainment has gained popularity and has become completely different. Teaching using gaming technologies, as well as using short instructional videos, is becoming a modern trend in the educational process.

Designing a digital learning environment by a teacher in the process of teaching a foreign language significantly increased the motivation of students, as well as providing students with large amounts of information. The learning process using digital educational resources and Internet capabilities, so-called e-learning, focuses primarily on the technological component, expanding opportunities for self-learning. Today, huge arrays of educational materials are publicly available on various educational platforms, which are available on a single click. In this regard, the teaching process has become much easier and more accessible than it was before.

The digitalisation of education, including foreign language education, has led to the use of all kinds of digital technologies for teaching students of different ages. Currently, among the main types of digital technologies are mobile learning, cloud technology, online courses, gamification and webquest. These innovative tools not only enhance language learning experiences but also cater to diverse learning styles.

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Currently, mobile learning technology is most in demand in the field of education. Thanks to its application, there is an opportunity for the most 'convenient' and productive collaboration of students, that is, knowledge exchange. Participants in the educational process can exchange educational material within the student group remotely via mobile devices.

Cloud technologies have convenient network access, allowing the storage of a large amount of information making it possible to use it with minimal managerial effort, i.e. the cloud allows the distribution, process and storage of data.

Today, gamification has become very popular in the learning process, that involves the integration of game elements and game design into the non-gaming learning process, which contributes to a qualitative change in the way the educational process is organised and leads to an increase of motivation and involvement of students in the educational process, allowing them to maintain the efficiency during the lesson without getting tired. The main goal of application of gamification into the educational process is to involve all students in the learning process, causing excitement and engagement without putting pressure on them.

The main reason for the increased attention to gamification is related to the new promised opportunities in the educational process. In this regard, gamification becomes not an addition to a foreign language lesson, but an integral part of it. Any game contains a very important emotional component that affects the player's focus over time. One of the reasons for using gamification in foreign language education is to adopt this psychological feature associated with holding attention for a long time (De-Marcos et al., 2016).

Gamification using mobile devices implements following didactic principles: (1) the principle of visibility is implemented through a multimedia form of presentation of the material; (2) the principles of consciousness and activity are realised through instant feedback and evaluation, as well as self-assessment; (3) the principle of accessibility and feasibility is realised through the ability to access via a mobile device and the ability to choose any level of complexity; (4) the principle of consistency is implemented through the gradual complication of the game level; (5) the principle of individualisation is realised through the possibility of choosing the application or site of interest.

As a gamification tool, modern mobile applications provide opportunities to achieve high results in learning a foreign language, because they harmoniously integrate game elements into the learning process. The ability of a teacher to use this content in teaching a foreign language and its accessibility for students to encourage them to be interested in it, seek additional information, develop, and think.

Gamification in foreign language classes helps foreign language teachers cope with solving a number of tasks related to mastering foreign language speech activity and aimed at: (1) developing motivation to learn a foreign language; (2) modelling of speech and non-speech behaviour typical of native speakers; (3) developing cognitive activity of students; (4) stimulating foreign language communication on the subject of the language studied; (5) removing insecurity and feelings of fear of speaking a foreign language; (6) activating students' reserve capabilities; (7) educating a creatively thinking person who is able to make optimal decisions in difficult situations concerning foreign language communication. Digital educational resources used by a teacher in a foreign language lesson optimise the process of mastering foreign language speech activity. Digital educational resources are modern learning tools presented in electronic form, the use of which aims at improving the effectiveness of the educational process. A digital educational resource is an information source containing graph, text, digital, speech, music, video, photo and other types of information. Digital educational resources focus on realising the goals and objectives of modern education. Naturally, serious requirements are imposed today on the formation of competencies for the use of digital educational resources and digital technologies, i.e. the ability to use the tools of the digital environment.

Webquests occupy a special place today in the context of digitalisation of foreign language education. A webquest is a problematic task with game elements that uses Internet information resources to complete. The design of the webquest involves rational planning of students' time, focused not on finding information, but on using it. The webquest helps to effectively master specific didactic goals and objectives, such as: (1) to form the necessary level of competence for the student to solve certain cognitive tasks along the path of his movement which leads from ignorance to knowledge; (2) to independently and systematically replenish their knowledge and skills to navigate the flow of information in solving new cognitive tasks; (3) to develop not only critical thinking, but also creative thinking, which helps to quickly respond to any problem and find non-standard ways out of difficult situations, while creative thinking can be successfully applied to solve a variety of everyday tasks. Students not only collect information, but also transform it, as they perceive the task as necessary and very useful, leading to an increased productivity.

The structure of the webquest includes the following.

1. The Introduction stage involves the formulation of the topic, the scenario of the quest, and the work plan. The goal is to prepare and motivate students.

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2. The task stage includes a clear and interesting description of the problematic task and the form of presentation of the final result, highlighting the problem to be solved, the position to be formulated and defended, the product to be created, for example, a report, creative work, presentation, poster. The main requirements for the task are its problematic character, clear formulation, and cognitive value.

3. The process stage involves an accurate description of the main stages of the work or a guide to action, useful tips for collecting information. From a methodological point of view, the material should differ in relevance, variety and originality of resources, the availability of methodological support, a variety of tasks, and their focus on the development of high-level mental operations.

4. The Evaluation stage assumes the description of the criteria and parameters for evaluating the performance of a webquest. The evaluation criteria depend on the type of learning tasks that are to be solved in the webquest lesson.

5. The Conclusion stage involves a short and accurate description of what students can learn by completing this webquest. Requires a connection with the introduction.

6. The Credits stage implies the links to resources used to create a webquest. This stage is often combined with the Process stage.

7. The Teacher Page stage assumes the methodological recommendations for teachers who will use the webquest, considering its goals and objectives, the age category of students, planned results based on learning standards (personal, regulatory, communicative, cognitive), the process of organising work on a webquest, necessary resources, and the value and dignity of the webquest.

Nevertheless, this structure can be changed as it is used only as a basis. For example, some stages can be omitted at the discretion of the teacher.

An equally significant trend in the language education system is that currently creative and productive tasks take a leading role in the educational process at all stages of learning. This is reflected in the teaching of a foreign language as well. An important condition for improving the quality of foreign language training is the use of innovative learning technologies involving the use of variability of methods that engage students in the activities, including methods such as problematic issues, trainings, business games, performance of project tasks,

conducting a dialogue of cultures, analysis of business situations, conducting discussions and debates, etc. The strategy of innovative learning involves the mobilisation of all social, communicative reserves of the organisation and the self-organisation of learning.

An important innovative trend in the system of higher language education is the knowledge that serves as the basis for the formation and development of value orientations and the practical and personality skills of the student which acquires special importance in the process of teaching a foreign language (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). In terms of teaching a foreign language of business communication, this is, first of all, knowledge about the values of the culture of business communication, which always presuppose a certain attitude of the student towards the values. This essential moment affects the development of the axiological potential of the student's personality as a whole. The fusion of knowledge with emotions and feelings forms value orientations that require an appropriate lifestyle, as well as a social behaviour.

As evidenced in international educational practice, the behaviour of people belonging to other cultures is not something unpredictable, it can be studied and predicted, but this requires special training in intercultural communication. It involves familiarising students with intercultural differences in relationships through exploring situations that occur in different cultures, as well as the transfer of acquired knowledge to other communication situations.

Thus, students become aware of the differences in mindset, customs, and national traditions inherent in different peoples and develop the ability to see what is common and different between diverse cultures and look at the culture of their own society through the eyes of other communities. In the process of foreign language communication between cultures, as a rule, two aspects are affected: differences in culture in terms of the value system and differences in the national character of communicants.

Designing a digital learning space in foreign language classes allows students to immerse themselves in virtual reality by providing students with an authentic educational environment in which they can acquire foreign language communication skills inherent in native speakers. Virtual reality being a set of ordered and hierarchically structured components of the educational process is focused on creating conditions for expanding the communicative experience of foreign language learners. It provides students with an artificially foreign-language and an educationally developing environment through the use of digital learning technologies, which are also a source of undisclosed reserves of the educational process organisation, i.e. high-speed learning.

Currently, the learning process provides for the introduction of small portions of information for better assimilation of educational material using digital technologies, creating such an important emotional environment and communicative comfort in foreign language classes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Educational practices demonstrate that instructing foreign language communication through digital resources offers more effective avenues for students to process and comprehend information. The involvement of each student in the educational process allows them to pass the information through their own consciousness, screening out only what is necessary and significant for them, leading to readiness to apply the acquired knowledge and skills.

Stimulating communicative activity in a foreign language by immersing students in a virtual interactive foreign language environment creates the illusion of staying in the country of the language being studied. This helps foreign language teachers to prepare competitive specialists with the help of simulations, virtual classes, i.e. models of the cultural space in foreign language classes. Digital technologies thus help students to gain experience in intercultural communication in the process of mastering foreign language speech activity in foreign language lessons.

The didactic potential of digital technologies seems to be quite wide, considering their adaptability and personalisation of the educational process, as well as the high speed of information processing, transparency of activities, and a comfortable learning environment. In this regard, teachers should be ready for the

skilful use of a new didactic means of organising the educational process through digital technologies that provides unlimited opportunities for human self-realisation.

It should be especially noted that with the help of digital learning technologies, it is possible to recreate the socio-cultural context. The design of a digital learning environment in a foreign language lesson has an emotional impact on students, increasing their motivation, and affects the quality of acquisition of knowledge, significant skills and abilities that help to remedy the absence of a foreign language environment in the classroom.

In summarising the analytical review of the most significant contemporary trends in foreign language education within the digital era, we emphasise that acknowledging these trends not only enhances students' ability to communicate effectively with native speakers but also contributes to the cultivation of competitive professionals proficient in both their field and language. This proficiency aligns with global standards, implying a well-developed capacity and readiness to engage in a digital environment, participate in constructive conversations, and establish meaningful relationships with diverse cultures. By embracing the current trends in the professional training of foreign language teachers, there is an assurance of training highly qualified specialists endowed with a heightened level of intercultural competence.

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## Original Research

# Linguistic landscape as a powerful teaching resource in English for Specific Purposes

by Valentina Budinčić and Olga S. Zubkova

Valentina Budinčić Alfa BK University, Serbia [vvalentinab@yahoo.com](mailto:vvalentinab@yahoo.com)

Olga S. Zubkova Kursk State University, Russia [olgaz4@rambler.ru](mailto:olgaz4@rambler.ru)

Article history Received August 12, 2023 | Revised October 15, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi [10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-24-32](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-24-32)

For citation Budinčić, V., & Zubkova, O. S. (2023). Linguistic landscape as a powerful teaching resource in English for Specific Purposes. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 24-32.

*The study explores the integration of linguistic landscapes into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction within the context of contemporary Serbia, aiming to expand language awareness, lingua-pragmatic competence, and critical thinking among learners. Against the backdrop of Anglo-globalisation, the study seeks to establish a model applicable to foreign language teaching, with a focus on language contacts and their impact on the linguistic landscape. The research employs a comprehensive sociolinguistic analysis of the linguistic landscape in Serbia, investigating the anglicisation of official names of entities such as companies, shops, and agencies. The study scrutinises the corpus of linguistic landscapes to identify patterns and socio-linguistic phenomena, developing a model for integrating these landscapes into ESP instruction. The methodology encompasses qualitative and quantitative analyses, drawing on language data and sociolinguistic observations. The key research questions concern the identification of distinctive features within the sociolinguistic landscape of contemporary Serbia, particularly in relation to English language influences, the effective utilisation of linguistic landscapes as a teaching resource in ESP courses to cultivate language awareness and lingua-pragmatic competence, and the implications that the incorporation of linguistic landscapes has on cultivating critical thinking regarding language contacts in the broader sociolinguistic context. The research has identified significant instances of anglicisation in the linguistic landscape of Serbia, having highlighted the pervasive influence of English in specialised fields and popular language culture. The model proposed for ESP instruction has demonstrated the potential of linguistic landscapes in enhancing language competencies, language awareness, and creative thinking among learners. The findings suggest that linguistic landscapes serve as a valuable resource for language educators, particularly in ESP contexts as they provide a dynamic platform for language instruction. Incorporating linguistic landscapes can contribute to preserving language standards, addressing the challenges posed by language contacts, and nurturing critical thinking skills among learners. The study's model offers a paradigm applicable to teaching various foreign languages, promoting a better understanding of language influences in the contemporary multilingual world.*

**KEYWORDS:** linguistic landscape, Anglo-globalisation, language culture, language contacts, ESP



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of Anglo-globalisation occupies every facet of our daily lives, with language experiencing particularly pronounced effects. In contemporary Serbia, English finds its place not only in the terminology of specialised fields and the slang employed by the younger generation but also in the linguistic landscapes that surround us. This is vividly exemplified by the anglicisation of official names of companies, shops, and agencies. The widespread adoption of English has become an integral part of Serbian popular language culture, with diverse implications for the standard of the Serbian language and the broader sociolinguistic landscape. In such a milieu, effective language education emerges as a crucial instrument to protect the integrity of

the language standard. Language courses, in particular, assume a crucial role in cultivating language awareness and critical thinking within the realm of contemporary sociolinguistics.

This article aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the sociolinguistic landscape in Serbia, outlining the distinctive features of the linguistic situation. Additionally, it will explore the corpus of linguistic landscapes, scrutinising its potential as a valuable teaching resource for enhancing language competencies and fostering better language awareness and creative thinking. The central research inquiries revolve around discerning unique characteristics in the sociolinguistic milieu of present-day Serbia, especially in connection with English language influences; employing linguistic landscapes effectively as instructional tools in



ESP courses to foster language awareness and lingua-pragmatic competence; and examining the consequences of integrating linguistic landscapes for cultivating critical thinking about language contacts within the broader sociolinguistic context.

The methodology employed in this study involves a comprehensive approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative analyses. This multifaceted methodology draws upon a diverse range of language data, including written and spoken expressions, and incorporates sociolinguistic observations to ensure a holistic understanding of the linguistic landscape.

The key research questions are:

1. What are the distinctive features of the sociolinguistic landscape in contemporary Serbia, particularly in relation to English language influences?

2. How can linguistic landscapes be effectively utilised as a teaching resource in ESP courses to cultivate language awareness and lingua-pragmatic competence?

3. What implications does the incorporation of linguistic landscapes have on cultivating critical thinking regarding language contacts in the broader sociolinguistic context?

## 2. ANGLO-GLOBALISATION AND CONTACT LANGUAGE CULTURE IN SERBIAN

The imperative for a universal language gained prominence in the mid-twentieth century, coinciding with the establishment of international organisations like the World Bank, the United Nations, and the World Health Organization (Crystal, 2003, p. 12). This era witnessed the onset of English imperialism, a phenomenon that, supported by the rise of the Internet and media, exerted a profound influence on languages globally. As these dynamic sociolinguistic changes unfolded, English began to significantly impact languages in contact, the native speakers of these languages, and their respective cultures (Prčić, 2005; Mišić-Ilić, 2011; Cogo, 2010, 2012; Philipson, 2018; Spolsky, 2009). The consequence of this influence, termed *language anglocholism*, gave rise to a distinctive urban sociolect known as the *Anglo-Serbian language* or *hybrid Serbian language* (Prčić, 2005). Distinct in its global presence and accessibility, the English language in the Serbian-speaking space assumed the status of a 'domestic foreign language' (Prčić, 2005). A noticeable trend emerged, wherein English and English-like forms were employed without due consideration for orthographic, phonetic, or semantic aspects, raising questions about accessibility for people unfamiliar with English. Furthermore, the use of English words in Serbian, even when equivalent Serbian terms exist, can be perceived as an expression of cultural status. When such linguistic choices lack a linguistic justification, they are relevant for examination within a broader pragmatic context. These circumstances paved the way for the emergence of a new socio-linguistic discipline – contact language culture. This discipline incorporates elements from contact and contrastive linguistics, as well as language planning, placing a significant emphasis on language as a vital cultural component. According to Prčić (2005), contact language culture can be segmented into three modules.

1. Contact-Contrastive Module addresses the justification of borrowing specific words from English. Prčić (2005) formulated a scale of justified use of Anglicisms based on semantic and pragmatic criteria.

2. Contact Module addresses the incorporation of English elements into Serbian and outlines the guidelines for their adaptation according to Serbian orthography. Notably, it is crucial to emphasise that, in adherence to Serbian orthographic standards, English word forms are deemed unacceptable. Consequently, any English word forms used must undergo adaptation to align with Serbian linguistic norms.

3. Contrastive Module focuses on language elements borrowed from English and aims to forestall the undue influence of English on Serbian across various linguistic dimensions, including orthography, pronunciation, grammar, semantics, and pragmatics. The objective is to protect Serbian from unintentional shifts towards English at multiple levels of linguistic analysis.

## 3. LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN SERBIAN-SPEAKING SPACE

The study of linguistic landscapes represents a relatively recent addition to the field of sociolinguistics. Landry and Bourhis (1997) succinctly defined it as encompassing 'the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25), creating the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban area. Research within this discipline includes a diverse array of topics and research perspectives. Some researchers in this field focused on material culture and multilingualism (Aronin & Laoire, 2012; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017), minority languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006), language vitality (Barni & Barna, 2010; Landry & Bourhis, 1997), online landscapes (Yao, 2023; Dovchin & Pennycook, 2017; Kallen et al., 2020), multiple globalisations (Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2015) and metrolingualism (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). Others investigated written English in the landscapes in Macedonia (Dimova, 2007), Rome (Griffin, 2004), Tokyo (McGregor, 2003) and Brazil (Thonus, 1991).

In the context of linguistic consequences arising from Anglo-globalisation, the impact on the Serbian language is both extensive and evident. The linguistic landscape within the Serbian-speaking space emerges as a colourful mosaic, vividly reflecting a spectrum of global influences. This is evident in various domains such as the names of clothing, toys, games, food, beverages, and more. Research on the linguistic landscape in the Serbian context represents an evolving field of study, providing observations on the complex connections between language, culture, and globalisation (Filipović & Vučo, 2019).

Simultaneously, addressing the growing challenge of multilingualism calls for didactic approaches for effective resolution and integration within the university's educational framework. Our findings affirm that fostering the linguistic evolution of the Serbian language under conditions of educational bilingualism can be effectively achieved through immersive learning. This

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approach diverges from conventional foreign language contexts typically presented in classrooms, offering a means to counteract excessive lexicalisation of the foreign language system. The model provides tailored didactics for bilingual learning with an immersive impact, aiming not to enhance an existing foreign language repertoire but to teach the language from a non-reproductive standpoint – one not practiced in the student's family or social circles.

However, immersion in the English language and authentic communicative scenarios alone does not guarantee optimal learning conditions. It is crucial to systematically establish a clear connection between the pedagogy of the Serbian language (in academic interactions) and the pedagogy of foreign languages, customised to the linguistic landscape of the Serbian language. Therefore, we contend that effective ESP teaching relies on integrating elements of foreign language pedagogy into the established pedagogical tradition of Serbian linguistics. This integration transforms the teacher into a cultural mediator, requiring thoughtful utilisation of methods and strategies unique to instructing English within a specific Serbian-speaking student group.

Certainly, it is not a matter of assuming that prevailing pedagogical methods can seamlessly transition to an academic setting solely based on their prevalence in educational practices. Instead, a careful consideration of the differentiation of communicative goals and learning objectives at each learning stage is imperative. The 'immersion' strategy, which we find to be particularly effective, facilitates both high-quality acquisition of the English language and the preservation of the linguistic framework of the Serbian language. This strategy allows students to acquaint themselves with a foreign language in the initial stages of their education, enabling them to structure knowledge about their native language.

It is essential to note that there are fundamental elements of didactic approaches involved in formalising the content of the English language. These approaches predominantly focus on basic skills such as self-introduction, characterisation, or description at the introductory level. Moreover, there is a demand for incorporating a block on expressing personal assessments when characterising a given phenomenon. Additionally, quick adaptation

to understanding communicative situations, such as a telephone interview, airport announcements, or other scenarios unrelated to the academic context, is emphasised.

Importantly, the communicative goals inherent in the initial stages of learning English should be aligned with pedagogical principles focused on translation and the preservation of the linguistic integrity of the Serbian language. As English is studied, the impact of cultural stereotypes infiltrating the Serbian linguistic and cultural tradition becomes more evident across various phases of academic interaction. It becomes the responsibility of the teacher to strike a balance by structuring the content of subject modules throughout the educational process.

Most pedagogical methods advocate, from the early stages of teaching ESP, a primary focus on syntactic units and components of speech (definite and indefinite adjectives, verbs, gender of nouns, simple and complex sentence structures, verb conjugation). The introduction of complete sentence schemes typically occurs from the middle of the initial stage. From our perspective, these didactic aspects should be interconnected with the memorisation of small blocks of spoken formulas, clichés, communicative exercises, and individual words forming the foundation of a hierarchically structured language system. It is crucial to understand the equivalence of the material being studied in the native language. Consequently, there is a need for a step-by-step structuring of academic content, considering the student's social experience. The adoption of a subject-subject approach to mastering ESP, recognising the student as an active subject in the learning process, appears highly productive. At the same time, pedagogical strategies should extend beyond merely conveying concepts of the English language in a few hours per week. This implies a broader role for the teacher, encompassing the socialisation of students, preparation for reading and writing, and the differentiation of individual psychological resources. We deem it necessary to consider the adaptation of students to traditional norms, values, customs, and behavioural patterns, alongside academic oversight in the modelling and transformation of linguistic content (vocabulary, syntax, phonemes, and intonations). This approach lends an innovative focus to the development of both the individual's inner world and their social environment.

It is crucial to underscore that the significance of pedagogical strategies extends beyond the teacher's in-class techniques aimed at facilitating understanding and production. Equally important is the thoughtful formulation and implementation of strategies that compel students to actively engage in understanding, involving the analysis of speech techniques and non-verbal communication. This requires adopting a perspective that involves managing such interactions.

Students employ various strategies for comprehension, relying on contextual cues such as gestures, illustrations, and facial expressions. They make assumptions and, through logical inference, anticipate verbal messages based on their existing understanding. In this context, mentors play a central role in intelligently providing linguistic tools to support such active participation. This involves guiding students on how to think in terms of

target structures, and structuring or promoting academic knowledge and skills within linguistic content. This model contributes to cultivating a positive attitude towards the foreign language, creating an environment conducive for students to independently apply academic content in interpersonal interactions. The emphasis is not only on imparting knowledge but also on adopting a proactive approach to language acquisition through strategic thinking and effective communication analysis.

#### 4. BUSINESS NAMES IN LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES

Business names in the Serbian speaking space are frequently created in English, reflecting a pursuit of prestige and fashion rather than stemming from a lack of suitable language forms in Serbian. The thought that English names carry a sense of modernity, respectability, and desirability, coupled with the belief that English is more fitting for business names in our era, contributes to this trend (Danaci, 2005). As the business name serves as a paramount advertisement, the inclination toward English aligns with the prevailing perception that it provides a contemporary and appealing image compared to Serbian. Creating business names constitutes a dynamic intersection of numerous linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The corpus of business names which will be presented below indicates a preference for the English language over Serbian. This preference is not only a consequence of English's international language status and global lingua franca role but also stems from the widespread belief that English is better suited for marketing. It imparts a sense of modernity, desirability, and value, as previously explained. Official business names in Serbian-speaking space overtly show the dominance of English, both linguistically and in the realm of marketing and business. To illustrate specificities within the linguistic landscape, we examined over 400 business names from shopping malls, fitness centres, and travel agencies. Some of the perceptions will be illustrated below.

1. General perceptions regarding business names in shopping malls include: (1) recognition of the dominance of international brand names from anglophone countries and others in English, such as *Converse*, *Nike*, *Champion*, *Pandora* (Denmark), *Parfois* (Portugal), *Lindex* (Sweden); (2) presence of Serbian brands adopting English names, including *Serbia Art*, *Office Shoes*, *Shop & Service*, *Coffee & Love*, and *Codex*; (3) utilisation of brand names in Serbian, such as *Zlatara Stefanović*, *Zlatara Andrejević*, and *Đak*; (4) occurrence of brand names combining English and Serbian words, illustrated by *Beba Kids*; (5) predominance of the Latin script, while the use of the Cyrillic script is notably neglected.

2. General perceptions regarding business names of travel agencies include: (1) frequent use of words like travel and agency, such as *Inter Holidays Agency*, *Discovery Travel Agency*, *Party Travel Agency*, *Fanny Travel Agency*; (2) regular incorporation of the word tours, as seen in *BG Tours Plus*; (3) combination of the word *agencija* with English words, illustrated by *Agencija Fox Travel*, *Agencija Panda*; (4) fusion of English and Serbian words, evident in names like *Travel Agency Svet*

*Krstarenja* and *Duga Travel*; (5) incorporation of numbers in names, as exemplified by *4 Seasons Travel*, *1A Travel*, and *747 Travel*; (6) adoption of English compounds, such as *Aircorridor*, *Fly Fly Travel*, and *Anency Travel Land*; (7) use of personal names like *Filip Travel*, *Amadeus*, and *Rea Travel*; (8) playful use of the phrase '*I travel!*'; (8) absence of names in Cyrillic script.

3. General observations regarding business names of fitness centres include: (1) frequent use of words like fitness (*Fitness zažene Element*, *Happy Fitness Studio*), gym (*Spider Gym*, *Garden Gym*), and fit (*Just Fit*, *Buda Fit*, *Absolute Fit*); (2) combination of the word *teretana* (engl. 'gym') with English words, exemplified by *Teretana Champion* and *Teretana Evolution*; (3) incorporation of proper names in Serbian, as seen in *Fitness Klub Vladica*, *Fitness Studio Lola*, and *Andela Fitness Klub*; (4) adoption of English compounds like *Funfit*, *Fitmania*, and *Wellness Land*; (5) inclusion of two names in Cyrillic script (*Лесандар фитнес*, *Боду билдинг клуб*, *Фитнесс World*).

These examples, excerpted from the rich corpus, demonstrate that the linguistic landscape serves as a platform where the influence of linguistic trends is markedly evident. The compilation of business names, or brand names, in Serbian vividly illustrates the linguistic repercussions of Anglo-globalisation. This phenomenon not only provides insights into our prevailing attitudes toward language but also offers glimpses into potential future paths languages and culture may take. The incorporation of original English words as business names stands as exemplars of an approach that embraces linguistic fluidity.

Marketing language, with its distinctive characteristics, operates under less strict linguistic rules compared to specialized terminology (which should undergo standardization procedures) and consequently this flexibility has given rise to a lively and diverse linguistic landscape within the marketing domain, presenting an intriguing sphere for scientific research, and valuable language teaching resource.

#### 5. LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES IN ESP TEACHING

Generally speaking, ESP courses are tailor-made courses which have to provide foreign language instruction in some specific domain. It is not a kind of language or methodology, but a specific approach to language learning based on specific learners' needs. ESP traces its beginnings to the 1960s. Since then, it has undergone various phases of development. At the beginning, in the 1960s and early 1970s, the highest priority in language instruction was given to the register, i.e. to the grammatical and lexical features which students would meet in their jobs. After that the focus was moved to rhetorical or discourse analysis and target situation analysis. Finally, it came to the phase when it was argued that '*a truly valid approach to ESP must be based on an understanding of the processes of language learning*' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1998, p. 14). At present, ESP is defined as an approach to language learning, in which '*the relevance to the learners' needs and interests is paramount*' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1998, p. 8). Therefore, the ESP teaching materials should be created accordingly.

In the last decades there has been an increasing interest in exploring the potential application of linguistic landscapes as a pedagogical resource in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Recent inquiries focus on reconsidering position of the ESP within a cosmopolitan understanding in the modern era (Hyland, 2022; Janssens & Steyaert, 2014; Ehrenreich, 2011) and deal with the feasibility of integrating linguistic landscapes into the teaching curriculum, recognising their value as an innovative tool for language instruction (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Dagenais et al., 2009; Gorter & Cenoz, 2022; Melo-Pfeifer, 2023).

The main purpose of teaching materials is to provide stimulus to learning and therefore good teaching materials will contain *'interesting texts, enjoyable activities which will engage learners' thinking capacities, opportunities to learners to use their existing knowledge and skills and content which both learner and teacher can cope with'* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1998, p. 107).

We emphasise the importance of research and educational endeavours focused on instilling a professionally oriented foundation in students. These initiatives are a part of the linguistic landscape of a given language, calling for a careful consideration of the role of the specific competence being cultivated. Furthermore, we acknowledge the complex nature of information perception across various educational activities, especially when engaging with professional texts and other resources. This underscores the didactically appropriate integration of contemporary pedagogical tools into the educational process, particularly within the realm of ESP. Moreover, looking into the analysis of differentiated multi-level elements within the English language provides educators with the opportunity to employ an inductive methodology. This approach encompasses the effective utilisation of practices voluntarily adopted as a foundation for previously acquired languages. In essence, our emphasis lies in seamlessly incorporating modern pedagogical tools and methodologies to enhance the learning experience within the framework of ESP (Dolzhenkov, 2023).

While there is considerable flexibility in selecting a pedagogical model for crafting a learning situation, the methodologies employed in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) exhibit a degree of stability. This stability arises from their consistent alignment with the essential technical objectives inherent in teaching any foreign language. These objectives encompass facilitating access to meaning, comprehending language development patterns, incorporating repetition, imitation, repeated use, reproduction, and production techniques.

The overarching objectives of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) can vary depending on educational stages and modules, with a potential emphasis on practical goals or, conversely, on cultural and general educational objectives. In navigating the extensive array of methods and methodologies available, teachers exercise autonomy in making choices, establishing a hierarchy of pertinent pedagogical goals and objectives directly aligned with foreign language acquisition. The didactic integration of linguistic and cultural content in pedagogical activities involves the teacher's independent decisions, such as prioritising spoken or

written language at specific stages or focusing on the culture of an individual or the broader anthropological context. This approach shapes the psychology of learning, catering to the needs and motivations of students. Regardless of the chosen didactic trajectory, these teaching formats share a common goal – facilitating the progressive development of emerging specialists and their subsequent integration into the professional community (Galyavieva et al., 2023).

Developing instructional materials on appropriate language use and fostering awareness of language culture grounded on the linguistic landscapes can be very motivating as rewarding. For example, tasks in ESP courses with the linguistic landscapes in its focus can be organised around the concepts of language of marketing in general, creativity and marketing power of business names in the linguistic landscape, such as the following ones.

*Creativity in Business Names.* The individuals responsible for marketing in any business should adopt a more creative approach to business names, considering both linguistic and cultural aspects. With the shift in names following processes like transition and privatisation, the use of Serbian as an official name has become uncommon. The linguistic landscape, particularly in shopping malls and urban spaces, vividly illustrates this trend. The lack of standardisation in language use within this domain allows for the prevalent use of English, perceived as more suitable for marketing due to its modern and popular connotations, resulting in a colourful linguistic landscape in our country. The role of business names as a crucial advertisement in the marketing world raises the question of whether this linguistic segment should be treated differently due to its marketing function. The current trend, where Serbian linguistic resources are often neglected in favour of English for perceived attractiveness, prompts consideration of standardisation measures within this linguistic domain.

*Marketing Power of Names.* The efficacy of names in English, once deemed powerful, is now challenged by their overuse. The frequent use of English names, while potentially less impactful, raises questions about their true marketing effectiveness. It is conceivable that people may shift towards using more Serbian names in the future, as English loses its perceived marketing prowess. However, relying on chance is risky, prompting the need for interim measures.

Simultaneously, a combination of pedagogical measures, such as arranging lectures that involve both foreign and Serbian students in interactive discussions, or facilitating collaborative scientific and educational events, plays a pivotal role in efficiently harnessing the cognitive potential of upcoming professionals. These individuals seamlessly integrate the accomplishments of diverse realms of philological knowledge into their future endeavours, making them not only valuable in the domestic labour market but also sought-after internationally.

Moreover, establishing the criteria, levels, and indicators for shaping the process of students' professional socialisation within the educational framework necessitates a proficient command of a foreign language. This entails implementing a didactic model in

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the educational process that fosters the graduate's subsequent professional socialisation. Acting as a mediator in multicultural dialogue, this model aids in optimising interlingual contacts. This encapsulates the core competencies expected of a contemporary specialist and a citizen of a modern democratic society.

In implementing ESP, we prioritise the following principles that encapsulate the specifics of the modern professionally oriented paradigm.

1. The principle of continuity and coherence in the educational trajectory of the future specialist, aligning the content aspect of the professional cluster with the utilisation of the linguistic landscape.

2. The principle of developing communication skills with a pronounced and consistent focus on the linguistic landscape and intercultural interaction.

3. The principle of fostering academic mobility in individuals amid dynamically changing professional conditions, ensuring linguistic interactions are appropriate with representatives of diverse linguistic and cultural communities.

4. The principle of upholding international standardisation in the functional use of language for specific purposes. This is achieved through content and technology tailored to specific objectives, employing internationally recognised and widely and universally applied methods of assessment, including proficiency level descriptors.

The principle of social partnership, enabling the adept integration of educational modelling of professional scenarios within a given context. This considers the value-axiological foundation of native speakers and the normative parameters of professional interaction (Klimova & Kozlovtseva, 2023).

At the same time, in ESP instruction it becomes crucial to incorporate the competency-based approach utilised in the contemporary higher professional education system. This approach, with its clear emphasis on enhancing the quality of professional training and fostering the requisite competencies, including language skills, proves to be a more effective model compared to the earlier methodological focus on the qualification indicators of specialists. This shift represents an evolutionary change within the realm of continuous professional growth. Incorporating the competency-based approach involves considering the integration of interconnected knowledge areas, ultimately contributing

to the cultivation of professional foreign language communication. This communication is anchored in problem-oriented, person-oriented, and activity-based approaches, utilising a communicative method grounded in the linguistic landscape.

To enhance the effectiveness of foreign language instruction for specific purposes, particular emphasis should be placed on developing the sociocultural component. The professional advancement of future specialists frequently stems from informal educational activities, where language skills are honed through conversations with colleagues, fellow students, and self-directed study (Kupriyanov et al., 2023). Within these activities, the interplay between individual axiological patterns and cultural phenomena from the foreign language humanitarian paradigm, conveyed in both oral and written communication, is inevitable. This interaction fosters a positive integration of knowledge and cultural stereotypes into practical activities, shaping personal and professional development, and cultivating language-learning skills within a foreign language communicative environment. Behavioural manifestations, including speech, characteristic of specific age groups, professions, or cultural strata, contribute to the formation of distinctive behaviour and thought patterns within particular social groups. Actively transmitting these manifestations in the educational process establishes a mechanism of social assessment, stimulating foreign language learning. Consequently, this mechanism plays a crucial role in the formation of individuality and social self-identification, allowing individuals to understand their social and professional affiliations and shape their self-esteem.

In this evolutionary pedagogical system, the educational objective, alongside the linguistic task of enhancing foreign language proficiency, is to equip students with a competitive professional future. Consequently, traditional methods of imitation and intuition are diminishing in prevalence. Instead of presenting students with a pre-packaged communicative product that simulates real-life English scenarios, the focus is on methodically guiding them to master English by differentiating various components of communication (Shilina & Zarifian, 2023).

ESP opens avenues for reaching elevated levels of proficiency, substantially enhancing the likelihood of accomplishing personal and professional aspirations. A proficient English speaker within a professional community establishes a 'privileged network' of social interactions, characterised by shared organisational goals, objectives, and strategies. This network evolves organically, driven by voluntary choices aligned with common interests or professional roles, showcasing a collective pursuit of objectives or the provision of role models. An important element in this dynamic is the translation of sociocultural norms within a specific linguistic landscape, ensuring the inherent and progressive development of a specialist (Eslami et al., 2023). This evolution becomes feasible only through a robust foundation in the language continuum, speech stereotypes, and usage – the key and integral components of foreign language education. Familiarity with these aspects not only facilitates linguistic competence but also lays the groundwork for navigating the nuanced socio-

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cultural dimensions embedded in the professional landscape. Utilising authentic linguistic landscape in which the socio-linguistic situation in the Serbian-speaking space reflects as an authentic material in ESP has the potential to develop language competence, language awareness, and critical thinking among learners.

The success of intercultural interaction, free from unwanted social, professional, or interpersonal disruptions and communication 'failures', hinges on the incorporation of the linguistic landscape of a native speaker into the foreign language being studied. It is essential to recognise that mastering a foreign language serves as an indirect introduction to the axiological aspects of another culture, thereby influencing the communicator. It is evident that the linguistic landscape of the Serbian language undergoes transformations when confronted with English, particularly as English lexemes with a latinised written basis 'invade' the Cyrillic space. This clash results in the emergence of new designations, such as compound nouns or adjectives, occasional neologisms, and slang terms. Despite these linguistic conflicts, the positive implementation of the sociocultural component allows for the construction of language contact by absorbing the linguistic patterns of one language under the influence of a second natural language. This dynamic is clearly illustrated in the aforementioned examples.

The preservation of language and cultural identity of each population is very important in the era of cosmopolitanism. With that in mind, our selection of a specific language segment aimed to demonstrate prevalent language culture trends in Serbian and point to the possible paths for ameliorating the current state through the use of linguistic landscapes as a teaching resource in ESP courses.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In the pursuit of crafting an exemplary language course, the exploration of diverse materials and the adoption of effective teaching methodologies are paramount. This paper investigated the utilisation of linguistic landscapes within the Serbian-speaking context as valuable authentic teaching resources in English

for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. These landscapes serve as a rich linguistic corpus, offering myriad opportunities for the enhancement of language competence, language awareness, and critical thinking – skills imperative in the 21st century. Given the contemporary prevalence of English as a global language, a noteworthy linguistic phenomenon is the widespread use of English over Serbian in various domains. The uncontrolled incorporation of English has seamlessly integrated into the popular language culture of the Serbian-speaking community. This linguistic trend is vividly portrayed in linguistic landscapes, establishing them as invaluable resources for language instruction. This paper specifically focused on business names as prominent elements within linguistic landscapes. The current scenario in the Serbian-speaking space unequivocally reflects the pervasive impact of Anglo-globalisation. The repercussions of this phenomenon may manifest in various ways, and one plausible method to manage these effects lies in the realm of language courses. ESP can serve as a proactive measure to increase awareness of the language usage in the multilingual world, thereby fostering a balanced linguistic landscape within the Serbian-speaking community.

Pedagogical observation of the foreign language teaching process at a university highlights ESP as a potent tool with a positive impact on a comprehensive set of skills crucial for a successful career. These skills include a deep understanding of the traditions and values inherent in English-speaking culture, familiarity with implicit corporate rules, effective navigation of an academic career, and the establishment and maintenance of a methodological network for exchanging experience and knowledge. ESP serves as a facilitator, enhancing adaptability to specific communicative contexts, making the educational process more effective, and offering productivity benefits in research and development, as well as success in career advancement.

Furthermore, it's essential to underscore that the new methodological approach in ESP involves a reorientation of tasks and goals in foreign language learning. An intermediate yet significant objective is not merely limited to acquiring pragmatic knowledge, skills, and abilities within the foreign language system. Rather, it extends to the holistic development of an individual's personality through the medium of a foreign language, fostering a joint exploration of language and culture. In this context, the intercultural paradigm emerges as the ontology of modern language education. It primarily addresses the principles of cultivating a multicultural personality within a diverse linguistic space during the collaborative study of foreign languages and cultures.

Emerging pedagogical approaches in ESP empower educators to adopt models directly tailored to foster students' independence, initiative, critical thinking, and reflective practice. This approach not only positively influences mentoring but also accelerates students' socialisation, instils a sense of belonging to the educational institution, provides advantages in future professional interactions, enhances self-confidence, and promotes personal maturity.

In these modern ESP methodological formats, the focus is on stimulating students' enthusiasm, motivation, and active participation in the learning process. The primary goal is to develop and support the individual nature of interaction, moving away from a narrow 'training and development' approach that tends to be more institutional. Additionally, educators allow students to autonomously navigate and solve emerging problems, striking a fair balance between the challenges presented and the support provided within the chosen methodological model.

Programmes fostering this equilibrium between vision, challenge, and support contribute significantly to students' socialisation within the professional community. The freedom for teachers to choose their ESP teaching methodological model not only enhances pedagogical skills but also facilitates ongoing professional development. Serving as organisers in the educational process, mentors coordinate various stages of programme mastery, assess students' speech quality through pedagogical influence, and define goals based on individual student needs. They specify ways to achieve these goals by analysing reliable data on educational progress and results.

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## Original Research

# Methodological vector of professional training development of foreign language teachers

by Natalia D. Galskova, Nataliia V. Poliakova and Veronika P. Shabanova

Natalia D. Galskova State University of Education, Russia [galskova@mail.ru](mailto:galskova@mail.ru)

Nataliia V. Poliakova State University of Education, Russia [nv.polyakova@guppros.ru](mailto:nv.polyakova@guppros.ru)

Veronika P. Shabanova State University of Education, Russia [vp.shabanova@guppros.ru](mailto:vp.shabanova@guppros.ru)

Article history Received July 22, 2023 | Revised October 3, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi [10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-33-45](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-33-45)

For citation Galskova, N. D., Poliakova, N. V., & Shabanova, V. P. (2023). Methodological vector of professional training development of foreign language teachers. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 33-45.

*Until recently, the question of the methodological role in the professional activity of a teacher, depending on the peculiarities of the performed functions, has remained unexplored. Also, a number of urgent problems have not been fully studied. What is the actual connection between teaching methodology and methodology? What is the influence of methodology on teaching methodology? How can methodology help teachers while implementing their multifunctional professional tasks? This study can be divided into several stages: identification of the connection between the general methodology of teaching foreign languages and methodology (the first stage of the research); clarification of the main directions of the methodological function implementation of the theory of teaching foreign languages (second stage of the research); specifying the conditions of the successful implementation of the methodological function of teaching foreign languages theory (third stage of the research). The study not only reveals the connections between teaching methodology with methodology, but also identifies the prospects for the development of methodological thought in relation to the professional training of foreign language teachers. This prospect is closely related to the methodological function of teaching methodology. The implementation of the present function is aimed at the research, reconstruction and description of certain methods and value-based objects of language education as well as methodological reflection of scientific research conducted within the framework of the given study and the educational activity. The consideration of the teaching methodology from the point of view of methodology allows us to reveal the content and direction of the methodological function realisation within the given science as well as to provide arguments for the significance of its inclusion into the scientific vocabulary of such categories as 'methodological consciousness' and 'methodological culture'.*

**KEYWORDS:** professional training, foreign language teacher, teaching methodology, methodological consciousness, methodological culture



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern methods of teaching foreign languages at universities demonstrate a wide variety of theoretical and empirical knowledge about the processes and phenomena observed in the language education field, as well as about methodological science itself and all its components (Galskova, 2022). The core knowledge usually includes a science-based conceptual and categorical framework, theoretical models that reveal the mechanisms of mastering foreign languages by students and assessing the level of their respective abilities and competencies formation, methodological concepts aimed at further development by means of the language studied and diverse personal culture of a student as a subject of communication, educational and professional activities, educational and computer-mediated methods of forming their ability to successfully realise interpersonal and intercultural communicative behaviour in the language studied in various socially determined contexts, etc.

The teaching methodology is not limited by its own boundaries providing arguments for its theoretical provisions; it is always based on the findings of the basic sciences, among which philosophy occupies a special place. Furthermore, nowadays the teaching methodology is purposefully addressing a philosophical branch such as methodology, designed to create a supportive environment for the development of any activity, including scientific, methodological, and teaching operations.

The trend of methodological research strengthening within the general methodology of teaching foreign languages was expressed in the dichotomy of its structure, consisting of two inter-related scientific areas: the theory of teaching foreign languages or language education (in the Russian tradition) and learning technology (or methodology). The given structure demonstrates various levels of scientific and methodological cognition and confirms the theoretical and applied nature of the methodology as a science at the same time: (1) the theoretical level underpinning

*'In terms of the modern sociocultural environment of education, which is characterised by the rapid nature of social and technological advances, on the one hand, and on the other, by the diversity of teaching methodology theories and approaches, digital tools and technologies, a special role, by a foreign language teacher, is given to the understanding of the value-based meanings and consequences of using these theories, approaches and technologies in their professional activity, the values of teaching and scientific research in the linguistic education area, knowledge of methods for designing theoretical and practical activities, principles of research of methodological knowledge and its practical use, etc.'*

the methodological foundations of methodological research and educational practice, and (2) the empirical or organisational and technological level associated with the development, testing and assessment of methods, techniques, and ways of 'teaching' a person a non-native language. Each of these levels imply that the methodology is aimed at contributing to the learning and transformation of pedagogical processes by means of methodological changes in the methodological scientific field.

In terms of the modern sociocultural environment of education, characterised by the rapid nature of social and technological advances, on the one hand, and on the other, by the diversity of teaching methodology theories and approaches, digital tools and technologies, a special role, by a foreign language teacher, is given to the understanding of the value-based meanings and consequences of using these theories, approaches and technologies in their professional activity, the values of teaching and scientific research in the linguistic education area, knowledge of methods for designing theoretical and practical activities, principles of research of methodological knowledge and its practical use, etc. The methodology is focused on the formation of these professionally significant skills and competencies, to master which means to master the ability to properly design, organise, implement, and respond to one's teaching activity together with scientific and methodological research at the language education and methodological (organisational and technological) levels.

While the pedagogical community in general recognises the significance of the given statement, the issues of the interrelations between teaching methodology as a science and methodology itself have not yet received sufficient reasoning in relation to the specific character of teaching activity and linguistic educational scientific research. It is a common fact that a foreign language teacher is a specialist who, due to the specific connection between the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages, is forced to combine two types of activities and implement at least two crucial functions: teaching (most often) and cognitive, and research activity. They do not only teach language, but also speak at conferences, write research articles, participate in

projects, examine various hypotheses, and even work on their PhD dissertations. However, the issue of the methodological role in the professional activity of a teacher, depending on the peculiarities of the performed functions, remains unstudied to date. There are other high-priority problems beyond scientists' visions, for example which solution can create a supportive environment for the development of the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages. These, among others, include the following issues. What is the actual connection between teaching methodology and methodology? What is the influence of methodology on teaching methodology? How can methodology play the role of 'a facilitator' for teachers while implementing their multifunctional professional tasks? The present article is aimed at comprehensively addressing these questions and several other issues related to the topic.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study uses the following methods of analysis.

1. The critical analysis of modern scientific research in the field of the general methodology of teaching foreign languages, the methodology of science, the methodology of psychological and pedagogical research, and the methodology of teaching methods.

2. The analysis of the subject-applied and the research activity of a foreign language teacher and the generalisation of the results obtained in the form of methodological tasks and skills, identification of the similarities and differences between them by means of comparison in relation to their professional function.

3. The historical approach that allows us to reveal the logic of the movement of the methodology of teaching foreign languages as a science in philosophy and methodology.

4. The systemic-structural approach that allows us to accurately and justifiably identify the key determinants of the linguistic educational field, the general methodology of teaching foreign languages as a science, the system of teaching foreign languages and the establishment of their connections and interaction with the methodology.

## 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background of the given research includes the following provisions.

1. The general methodology of teaching foreign languages with its pronounced need for a theoretically meaningful view of a person's mastery of a non-native language in educational settings and for increasing the theoretical level of their research and interpretation by means of specific language education activities aimed at producing a theoretical systematisation of a system of scientific, theoretical and applied knowledge about teaching foreign languages and linguistic education as a complex social phenomenon.

2. The concept of methodological complexity of teaching methodology science (Hellmich, 1980), according to which the given science consists of two relatively autonomous, but at the

same time, methodologically interrelated scientific branches: (1) the theory of teaching foreign languages or language education, which, based on scientific experience and scientific knowledge obtained at the theoretical and empirical levels of scientific and methodological cognition, integrates the results of theoretical reflection and educational practice and, on this basis, provides arguments for the scientific worldview of the linguistic and educational context, and (2) learning technology underpinning specific methodological and technological solutions that are expressed in a certain range of forms, methods and techniques ‘... *the work of the teacher and students, ensuring the achievement of the goals of language teaching and language acquisition*’ (Shchukin, 2008, p. 181) at various educational stages and in diverse segments of linguistic education, including university level.

3. The methodology of science (Balakhovsky & Timoshev, 2012; Lebedev, 2021), the main task of which is to classify the entire set of various methods of obtaining scientific knowledge, its description and research, structure and underpinning, dynamics and development, i.e. ‘*identifying the content, capabilities, boundaries and interaction of scientific methods*’ (Ushakov, 2008, p. 25), the development of general (methodological) principles and methods of obtaining knowledge (research activity) and their transfer to private or branch scientific disciplines.

4. The Branch methodology of psychological and pedagogical research (Borytko, 2008; Krayevsky & Berezhnova, 2006; Novikov & Novikov, 2007), that is leading methodological research in the pedagogical scientific field, and the dialectics of pedagogical research (Bordovskaya, 2020), the result of which is knowledge about the specific character of pedagogy, its links with other sciences, pedagogical fact, the conditions for pedagogical theory formation, the subject and object of pedagogy in general and individual pedagogical research, the patterns and trends in the development of pedagogical science in its connection with practice, as well as the principles behind increasing the efficiency and quality of pedagogical research, conceptual framework and methods of cognition in pedagogy.

5. Teaching methods methodology (Passov, 2011) as a special methodology that studies theoretical and empirical research methods in relation to the field of methodological science and is able to perform as a facilitator to the researcher in the linguistic educational area while selecting the topical direction of scientific and methodological search and in its structuring, defining the conceptual and categorical framework of methodological research, ensuring its methodological integrity, as well as understanding one’s personal position as a scientist and teacher.

The methodological background of the research includes:

1. System-structural analysis/system approach, which also acts as an approach to the study of complex systems (Blauberg & Yudin, 1973), including methodological systems, and involves the decomposition of complex phenomena of linguistic educational context (systems) into their constituent elements, consideration of the interrelations of these elements, their functions and interactions with each other and their subordination, that is, to the overall structure of the system (Bim, 1976, p. 10).

2. The historical approach to the analysis of the evolution of the relationship between methodology and teaching methodology, which makes it possible to judge that the formation of the teaching methodology is a clear demonstration of its commitment to the general scientific patterns of scientific development, which is demonstrated in the determination of its cognitive background and the process of its formation at a specific point in time with all the previously accumulated volume of empirical experience and theory including methodology, knowledge, the existence of its own scientific vocabulary (conceptual-categorical framework), often distinguished by a certain philosophical ‘load’, progressive movement from empirical knowledge to the understanding of the complex processes of developing a person’s ability to communicate in a foreign language outside the natural context of the existence of the language under study, the complication of experiments conducted in the field of teaching foreign languages in order to increase the level of evidentiality of methodological knowledge, etc.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

##### 4.1. Identification of the connection between the general methodology of teaching foreign languages and methodology as the first stage of the research

A diachronic analysis of the problems that the general methodology of teaching foreign languages has been dealing with allows us to establish its sustainable connections with philosophy as a basic science. For instance, initially, during Russian scientific practice, these connections affected exclusively the areas of goal setting and were related to the content, principles, and methods of teaching. It is known that throughout the second half of the last century, knowledge of the laws of dialectics was important for the methodology of teaching foreign languages as a science, which made it possible to interpret the essence of teaching a subject from the correct perspectives, to present the educational process as a system of interrelated and interdependent teaching factors (Gez et al., 1982, p. 10). Methodology actually only started to occupy a special place in the general system of scientific and methodological knowledge towards the end of the 20th century.

A significant step in the interaction of methodology with philosophy was the underpinning in the early 1980s of a system of approaches to methodological research (Shtulman, 1982) aimed at, as it is known in philosophy, fulfilling ‘*the role of a compass along which the knowing subject and actor paves his way*’ (Kokhanovsky, 2007, p. 308), organising and regulating the processes of scientific and methodological knowledge and changing the teaching foreign languages field. This step was of particular value for teaching methodology because, firstly, it marked a new stage in the interaction of science and philosophy, when, instead of episodic inclusions of philosophical ideas into methodological issues, there was a transition to a systematic and purposeful use of methodology for the development of a teaching methodology theory, and, secondly, the developed system of methods for the first time included an experiment as a ‘*scientific*

*experiment based on a thorough study of the variability of the phenomenon under study with the possible equalisation of all other significant factors'* (Gez et al., 1982, p. 14). Its underpinning significantly increased the degree of evidentiality of methodological knowledge and raised the theoretical level of methodological research, representing the fact of recognition of a new, linguistic educational level of scientific and methodological cognition.

Since the end of the last century, pedagogical science has begun to pay special attention to the analysis of the systemic foundations of the educational philosophy as an interdisciplinary scientific field aimed at identifying the *'scientific and ideological level, strategies and tactics for the development of educational systems'* (Gershunsky, 1997, p. 93). As a result, the educational philosophy, along with the philosophy of language, are recognised by the teaching methodology as the methodological basis of its scientific and methodological research.

It has been established that only in recent decades teachers and methodologists have begun to use the methodology of scientific activity related to the cognition and transformation of the educational context as a whole and to the teaching methodology, which is designed to develop theoretical research methods in the methodological field. We have reasons to believe that at present the teaching methodology has made its transition from the episodic inclusion of philosophical ideas in the methodological range of issues to the targeted use of methodology to build a methodological theory, to increase the degree of evidentiality of methodological knowledge and methodological research and, as a consequence, educational practice.

The analysis of scientific literature has also shown that it is the theory of teaching foreign languages that can provide a reliable foundation for the philosophical and methodological understanding of scientific and methodological problems in the level-based dichotomic structure of methodological science. The given statement is explained by the basic functions of this science, which consist not only in identification of the *'content-related components of education, training, teaching in their linkage with the language and communication nature as a social phenomenon that determines the activity essence of speech products, which are based on the mechanisms of social interaction of individuals'* (Khaleeva, 1989, p. 199), but also in methodological changes in research settings in the field of linguistic education and teaching foreign languages.

Within the methodological diversity, language education has a special purpose as it acts both as a result of a methodological shift in the teaching methodology as a science, which was expressed, as it was mentioned earlier, in the recognition of the structural dichotomy of this science, and as a product of a complex process of scientific and methodological cognition, which is *'aimed at, on the one hand, the production, generalisation and systematisation of scientific (theoretical) knowledge within the science itself, and, on the other hand, on the implementation of this knowledge into concepts, approaches, technologies for teaching foreign languages, as well as into the real educational process'* (Galskova et al., 2021, p. 58).

However, the main purpose of the theory of teaching foreign languages as part of teaching methodology as a science is to be a 'metatheory' of linguistic education and foreign language teaching and to function as a specific cognitive activity. The acceptance of such diversity, which is a consequence of the polysemy of the concept of 'science', is especially significant when considering the issues raised in the present article.

As a metatheory, language education is a complex, comprehensive integral system of scientific, theoretical, and applied knowledge of various types and operating at various levels in the linguistic educational context (in the broad sense). Stated differently, metatheory is the so-called cognitive background of methodological science, 'emerging' at a certain historical stage of its development, or a wide range of areas of systemic, scientific and methodological knowledge that form the general scientific picture of the complex 'methodological world' with its at least three 'components': social, cognitive, and personal. If the first of the given aspects is determined by the social order in relation to the system of language (foreign language) education, then the second is based on the synthesis of current methodological knowledge and knowledge accumulated by the entire previous history of teaching methodology and related scientific fields. At another point, the third component consists of research priorities and scientific needs of methodologists, on the one hand, and the system of relations within the scientific and methodological community as well as the assessment system of the scientific contribution of each scientist by their colleagues and society, on the other hand.

Given that the 'methodological world' is distinguished not only by a large volume of knowledge, but also by disciplinary diversity, which is expressed in the existence of numerous methodological theories, directions, and approaches, as well as a complex linguistic educational process, the knowledge that is generated by the foreign languages teaching theory is significant both for all methodological scientific branches and theories, together with the practice of teaching foreign languages. Knowledge acts both for theory and for educational practice as a kind of norm, standard, established and accepted by all systems for conducting research and teaching foreign languages activity.

As for language education as a specific cognitive activity, the analysis showed that it is characterised by a system of cognitive actions. First, there is the production and systematisation of new scientific and methodological knowledge, including knowledge of its history, structure, principles, and the forms and methods of obtaining it. Second is the analysis, classification and systematisation of methodological concepts and categories, underpinning the scientific vocabulary, and third, interpretation, explanation and understanding of the facts of educational practice and the testing of working hypotheses introduced during theoretical research.

The purpose of language education is to represent a metatheory and a specific cognitive activity, as well as the fact that the given scientific branch, being an integral part of culture and acting as a kind of mediator between culture as a 'sphere of

values' and linguistic education as a social phenomenon, as one of the subsystems of culture, obliges this science to formulate, first of all, methodological terms of any research in the methodological field, i.e. to build that scientific, theoretical foundation on which any research, and later the practical process of teaching foreign languages, will stand up to examination.

Given that the concept of 'methodology' can be used in different meanings both in the philosophy of science (Lebedev, 2021, p. 64) and in pedagogical methodology (Kraevsky & Berezhnova, 2006, p. 60), in relation to the linguistic educational field it is necessary to mention the methodology of scientific and methodological cognition and the methodology of language education. Each of them has its own specifics. If the methodology of scientific and methodological cognition emphasises research methods, cognitive techniques, and operations for obtaining scientific and methodological knowledge, then the focus of the language education methodology is the scientific and methodological knowledge itself and the conceptual and categorical framework of the teaching methodology as a science in general and language education theory in particular.

By defining the methodological reasons for methodological research and language education, teaching theory performs its methodological function, affecting the scientific and methodological research and cognitive activity as a process (this expresses its activity aspect) and a result, i.e. the cognitive background of knowledge by this metatheory), which establishes the knowledge aspect of the present function.

#### 4.2. Clarification of the main directions of the methodological function implementation of the theory of teaching foreign languages (second stage of the research)

The methodological function content has been identified as the solution to a range of professional issues of a methodological nature. For example, this includes identifying patterns and trends in the historical, current, and future development of teaching foreign languages methods as a science in its connection with other sciences and educational practice within the scientific and methodological research field. Here it is possible to mention the analysis of the conceptual and categorical framework of the given science, as well as the underpinning of the specific character of the process of scientific and methodological cognition, methods, and patterns of scientific research around teaching foreign languages and language education, etc. These tasks are primarily related to identifying patterns and trends in the development of foreign language teaching methods as a science in its connection with other sciences and linguistic educational practice, underpinning the specific character of the scientific subject area of the present science, the relationships and models of its interaction with culture, society, and individuals, scientific and methodological knowledge, its structure, history and evolution, as well as the analysis of the conceptual and categorical framework of methodological science. Along with this, certain methodological tasks include underpinning the specific character of the process of scientific and methodological cognition, its types and

levels, methods, and patterns of scientific research in the field of teaching foreign languages and linguistic education, principles of increasing the efficiency and assessment of the language education process and methodological research quality.

It has been discovered that the implementation of the methodological function can occur in two directions. This corresponds to the understanding of language education as a metatheory and specific cognitive activity and is consonant with the interpretation of this function as the unity of scientific and methodological cognition and the scientific and methodological cognition obtained because of this knowledge.

The first direction relates to the methodological research realisation, the second, the inclusion of so-called methodological knowledge in the cultural objectiveness of language education.

Methodological research is research that is aimed not at the immediate linguistic educational context, but at the process of scientific reflection of previous contexts. Consequently, methodological research can be divided into three groups in language education. The first group is related to the underpinning of the scientific status and the specific scientific character of methodological science and language education as its component, the history and development trends of this science with reference to other sciences and educational practice, its object-subject area. The second group consists of research that studies the specific character of scientific and methodological cognition in its current and historical aspects, as well as the specific character of the scientific and methodological knowledge obtained, its structure, functions, and evolution. And finally, the third group is research within which research methods are underpinned in relation to the field of linguistic education, principles, and conditions for increasing the efficiency and level of scientific research itself in the field of theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages, the quality of the conceptual framework and cognition methods in this area in its historical and current aspects.

It is obvious that there are not enough studies of a methodological nature in the methodological field (however, there cannot be many of them, just as there probably cannot be many methodologists in this field). But these studies are necessary at least to maintain the 'purity' of the conceptual framework of language education and the basic methodology of teaching foreign languages in general.

The second direction in which the methodological function of language education is realised or is to be realised, as it was stated before, is associated with the inclusion of methodological knowledge as a result of methodological research into the cultural objectiveness of language education.

It should be noted that the cultural objectiveness of language education, as an immanent part of culture, results from the process of scientific and methodological cognition. Cultural objectiveness is, first of all, the cognitive background of a given science. It is the cultural objectiveness of language education that expresses its (the science's) 'scientific meanings', which form its methodological basis and determine patterns of both an applied nature (how to teach a language, how to act in a specific educa-

tional situation, etc.) and the fundamental essence of the teaching methodology as a science, the main trends and prospects for its development, its categorical and conceptual framework, methods of systematisation and clarification of scientific and methodological knowledge and the conduct of methodological research.

Consequently, it is possible to distinguish three groups of knowledge within the scope of methodological knowledge. The first one includes knowledge about language education and methods (techniques) of teaching foreign languages. It covers the connections and information flows between them, the patterns of their formation and evolution, the reference of each of them to educational practice, traditions and innovations in the teaching foreign languages field. The second group consists of knowledge about the content-related essence of language education and methodological categories, features of scientific and methodological cognition and the production of scientific and methodological knowledge both in their historical aspect and in the current environment, knowledge about the ideals, norms and values of scientific, cognitive, and educational activities, methods of their implementation and assessments, etc. Finally, the third group is knowledge about language education and methods (techniques) of teaching foreign languages, but in relation to the practice of developing and conducting specific scientific and methodological research. For instance, a researcher's knowledge of the boundaries of one's own research 'field' correlates with knowledge of the boundaries of the research space of modern language education.

The study demonstrated that the methodological function of language education acts as an important basis for obtaining, as a result of methodological research, new knowledge about the specific character and prospects for the development of both methodological science and the process of scientific and methodological cognition, and about scientific and methodological knowledge itself. Thus, the implementation of the methodological function is aimed not only at research, reorganisation, and description of the specific methods of the teaching foreign languages theory, but also at the methodological reflection of its scientific research, value-based objects and patterns of its development as well as value-based essence of teaching, learning and education in the sphere of foreign languages.

#### **4.3. The conditions of the successful implementation of the methodological function of teaching foreign languages theory (third stage of the research)**

Condition 1. The teacher's knowledge of the advanced methodological consciousness, i.e. a combination of intellectual, strong-willed, emotional, cognitive, etc. processes which are actively engaged in the understanding of the peculiarities of the linguistic education field in their historical and current aspects and the understanding of their role and position within the modern language education context that is concerned with controversial and innovative processes and phenomena. In other words, teachers' knowledge of methodological consciousness

makes them able to analyse, assess and creatively transfer the given context of language education with reference to their own experience and the requirements of methodological science. This enables them to properly design, organise, implement, and reflect on their professional activity, correlate the results obtained and methods implemented with the results and methods of other scientists, thus identifying the perspective of their pedagogical work together with scientific research.

The foundation of the present level of consciousness is the teacher's mastery of a system of principles and methods of organisation and development of theoretical (cognitive, research) and practical (pedagogical) activity, i.e. the methodology of cognition and the transformation of all language education processes. The knowledge of the present methodology means that the modern foreign language teacher is able to function successfully within the complex and controversial world referred to as language education as well as improve this world and be aware of how and why this is to be implemented.

Conducting multivariate analysis of the language education world demonstrates that it represents an elaborate phenomenon, a social organism created by an individual for the individual that is sensitive to all the external and internal factors affecting it. The main determinants include the realities of social development and the results of the teaching methodology and related scientific disciplines. They change sociocultural (in the broad sense: political, economic, social, etc.) and scientific contexts of the education in general and linguistic contexts in particular and require the foreign language teacher to update and even reinterpret previously accumulated knowledge together with the understanding of how and, most important, why it is necessary to study the process of scientific and methodological cognition. The current technologies and techniques learned by the teacher today will, as a rule, lose their novelty and significance tomorrow.

Thus, for example, at the turn of the Millennium and in the 2000s the teacher's attention was focused on the process of teaching a foreign language (construction of knowledge, skills and abilities in a student). Today one has to recognise the significance of complying with the axiologically marked requirements of language education according to which language education is considered as a value and the activity of mastering this value by an individual is considered as part of the process of developing one's personality, expanding one's individual picture of the world and forming a value-semantic structure. Not so long ago there was general acceptance and relevance of the scientific and methodological postulate about the strategic focus of teaching a foreign language on familiarising students with the language being learned as a cultural phenomenon and on familiarising them with cultural artefacts and the value-semantic system of the native speakers of this language. Nowadays this idea has acquired a new meaning, that led the teacher to solve a new and rather difficult task: to use the resources of the academic subject 'Foreign Language' not only to reveal to students the meanings of 'diverse' beliefs and concepts of other linguistic, cultural and social reality, but also for deeper understanding of the peculiarities

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of the culture and language of their people, their identity, their own universal essence as a cultural and historical subject, their thinking, and a nationally specific system of values (Galskova et al., 2022). In addition, if we include the rapid speed of technological changes that are happening today in the system of linguistic education, then it can be considered as an insufficiently strong structure. In a very short period, from a historical point of view, one might say that teachers who cannot be classified as digital natives by age faced the fact that this system managed to move from electronification to computerisation, then to informatisation and, finally, to digitalisation. And there are no reasons to believe that this process will be stopped. It involves both supporters of digital teaching of foreign languages and the so-called digital dissidents in education; they are forced to think not only about the content, organisational and technological aspects of learning from the point of view of their compliance with the digital reality and the technogenic future, but also about the fate of a foreign language as an educational subject and the role of the teacher in the segment of its mass study with the rapidly developing mobile Google translator programmes and artificial intelligence.

Thus, dynamically changing methodological rhetoric makes the teacher choose between the old and new, the familiar and unfamiliar and the result of this choice is determined by the teacher’s degree of understanding. In these circumstances, only knowledge of methodological consciousness can allow a teacher to qualitatively design, organise, implement and reflect on one’s professional activities in the field of language education and teaching foreign languages. They will also have to correlate the results obtained and the methods and means used to obtain them with the results and methods of others, thus determining the prospects of one’s teaching work and scientific research.

As has been justifiably established, the processes of understanding and awareness require a specialist to have a high level of professional competencies and personal qualities, which must also include one’s developed methodological awareness. It is based on knowledge of, firstly, systematic scientific and methodological knowledge, i.e. cultural objectiveness in teaching methodology, secondly, high motivation and ability for scientific and methodological research, linguistic educational research, and teaching activities, and thirdly, the technology and methodology of scientific and methodological research and the methodology of language education. Within the framework of the given study, methodological consciousness is referred to as methodological culture.

Condition 2. Foreign language teacher’s knowledge of methodological culture as one’s single-option professional quality due to the fact that the cultural objectiveness of a teaching methodology theory is not only its cognitive background, but also a set of specific historical ideals, norms and values of scientific, cognitive and educational activities, methods of implementation and assessments in the methodological field.

Methodological culture is a constituent part of the general scientific culture of a teacher. This fact needs to identify with the framework of the present research considering the meaning of the following concepts: ‘scientific culture’ and ‘methodological culture’.

Thus, scientific culture is a universal characteristic of a teacher and researcher. Its generality means that regardless of a teacher or scientist’s scientific field of interest, one has to have high motivation and ability for scientific research, cognitive activity, certain values, norms of research activity, a set of personal attitudes, principles and work methods developed and based on research experience. Moreover, it is important for one to master general methods of research, cognition, systematisation and structuring, as well as a wide range of knowledge and special skills, without which achieving high-quality results of research activities seems impossible.

Thus, for instance, knowledge of the basics of bibliography as a special applied branch of knowledge gives any researcher the opportunity to successfully find the necessary bibliographic sources and competently use them both in the research process and in the text of their work at the level of formatting references, quotations, and a list of references.

The ability to read and write (in native and foreign languages) is also of particular importance. If the first of these skills is associated with the researcher’s ability to extract meanings from the texts of other authors and critically evaluate them from the point of view of relevance and significance for their own scientific research, then the second is the ability to format their own written texts in accordance with the norms of scientific writing.

The culture of spoken and written scientific speech is an important component of the scientific culture of the researcher. It is the text in social and humanitarian knowledge that is the main source of information about the modern world. Furthermore, the mastery of scientific language not only enhances a researcher’s ability to communicate effectively but also facilitates the critical analysis and interpretation of historical events. *‘An important part of a scientist’s activity is textual work, the creation of one’s own texts. It is the publication which is at the core of modern scientific activity. Today the increase and the functioning of the scientific knowledge is held in place by publications. Scientist’s ideas are introduced to the scientific community only when they have been published, verified, confirmed, and accepted in cycles of other research and publications reflecting them. Modern scientific knowledge, especially with reference to the reality of the Internet, is often called a giant hypertext, which connects individual publications into a single information space’* (Ushakov, 2008, p. 411).

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The text is also a method aimed at self-expression for the person who created it, and in this capacity, it acts as *'the most significant subject of humanitarian cognition'* (Buchilo & Isaev, 2012, p. 364). The above statement is relevant for any text, as well as for professional pedagogical discourse, the text of which can say a lot of about its creator-teacher. Convincing, reasoned, accurate speech of the teacher, one's ability to use expressive means of the native and foreign languages in professional communication, competent use of scientific vocabulary help one to promote scientific ideas and share ideas with the scientific and methodological community and, if necessary, defend them, not to mention the fact that knowledge of the norms of scientific speech culture contributes to one's (scientist's) image as a competent and educated specialist.

Science also states other important qualitative features of the scientist's expertise that are determined by the level of proficiency of the scientific culture as a sign of research work of general-purpose. Thus, Ushakov (2008) refers, for example, to knowledge of the basics of patent science displaying such characteristics. The scientist's knowledge of the issues of legal support for intellectual property and management theory is intended to help them fulfil their functions as an organiser of scientific research, involvement in scientific projects, and working with their supervisor. According to Ushakov (2008), the former is also significant due to another condition: *'Several scientists combine their own research work with the teaching activity which, in fact, is a separate profession that requires certain skills as well as continuous professional development. In addition to working within the formal education system, the scientist usually has an opportunity (especially at a mature age) to influence the younger generation in an informal way that is possible to name as a supervision'* (Ushakov, 2008, p. 412). These skills are extremely relevant for a foreign language teacher, whose research activity is always associated with the teaching profession.

One's opportunity to combine research work with teaching activity is explained by the specific character of scientific and cognitive activity in the field of linguistic education. The target theoretical results are addressed exclusively to educational training, they are confirmed or refuted by it, they require a deep generalisation of empirical data obtained during the observation of the process of teaching a foreign language, and personal experience in teaching the subject, including in the conditions of experimental testing of working hypotheses and testing of developed

theoretical postulates. According to Kraevsky and Berezhnova (2006), this reveals the specific connection between the teaching methodology and practice. *'Different aspects of the relationship between science and practice are associated with such methodological questions as the interrelation between the empirical and theoretical levels of scientific underpinning of specific areas of practical pedagogical activity, the place in such underpinning of the results obtained by other sciences and the degree of mediation of these results on the path from theory to practice'* (Kraevsky & Berezhnova, 2006, p. 75). The quality of these relationships' implementation between science and practice largely determines the management of the teaching methodology development, determines the level of research work efficiency in the field of linguistic education and the efficiency of the influence of the teaching of foreign languages theory on the actual educational process. As is known, learning theory develops to meet the practical needs of educational context, and reality itself is transformed and improved based on scientifically based theories of language education and innovative organisational and technological solutions.

In contrast to scientific culture, methodological culture inclusively covers only the area of language education methodology and the methodology of scientific and methodological research and is associated with the teacher's ability to solve a certain set of methodological problems.

Considering the dual nature of the professional activity of a foreign language teacher, we believe that it is possible to draw a distinguishing line between such notions as 'a methodological culture of an educator/teacher' and 'a methodological culture of a teacher-researcher'. However, this division is of a formal nature, therefore, regardless of whether a teacher performs his/her teaching and research functions, he/she is to solve a certain set of methodological tasks. Thus, the methodological tasks of a teacher include: construction and development of the linguistic educational process; identification of the 'concept/style' of one's teaching activity; analysis and assessment of the actual educational process within the framework of the social, general pedagogical and methodological requirements and from the perspective of one's own work experience, search for 'personal meaning' of the methodological concepts and phenomena that are necessary for the foreign language teaching, education and development of a student by means of the language and culture being studied, etc.

These tasks are not directly connected with the process of teaching students a foreign language but are a scientific reflection of this process. This happens when a teacher, for example, develops a specific lesson, makes a lesson plan, designs a curriculum, conducts methodological reflection, analyses, and assesses the actual educational process considering the theory of teaching foreign languages requirements from the perspective of one's work experience. The given analytical and assessment activities require mental concentration and gives the acquired knowledge and experience a methodological character, especially when the teacher masters new methodological directions as well as new methods and means of teaching, including digital ones. They form one's methodological culture that allows them to think



based on an understanding of the essence of the methodology of cognition and the transformation of pedagogical processes, to absorb the principles of the unity of education and social policy, a holistic approach, expansion of the total subject of education and the priority of educational goals in the holistic educational process. In this regard, the methodological culture of a teacher-researcher is aimed at providing one with success in professional and, above all, teaching activity due to the new or updated methodological, mainly organisational, and technological knowledge they acquire. Consequently, the result of such a work is aimed at the increase in the quality and level of the actual process of teaching foreign languages and the level of the teacher's expertise.

As for the teacher who studies the processes and phenomena peculiar to language education, then one's major methodological tasks include the development, organisation, implementation and reflection of scientific and cognitive activity within the framework of the educational sphere; assessment of one's research activity (in a historical context, from the point of view of the main terms of the scientific school within which they conduct their research); correlation of the results obtained and the methods and means used to obtain them with the results and methods of others; identification of the prospects of one's scientific research; selection of research procedures and their practical implementation in one's research and cognitive activity, etc.

As it may be noted, these tasks are directly related to research activities in the methodological field. Their solution can provide a researcher in this area with success in the search and formation of new theoretical and empirical scientific and methodological knowledge about various objects in the linguistic educational context, knowledge that can make a significant contribution to the theory of teaching foreign languages as a science and thereby enrich the practice of teaching languages.

The comparison of two lists of methodological tasks made it possible to identify the similarity and differences between these tasks.

The similarity is in (1) their analytical and evaluative nature (it is possible to state that reflection and assessment are the core of methodological culture and methodological consciousness); (2) their focus on solving the problem of interaction and 'compatibility' of scientific and 'practically oriented knowledge'; (3) focus on educational training; (4) demonstration or lack of a certain level of methodological culture, which allows the subject who solves these tasks to think and act, based on an understanding of the essence of the methodology of cognition and the transformation of linguistic educational processes and phenomena.

The differences are expressed in the fact that, for instance, for a teacher, in one's methodological culture as one of the major specialised forms of culture, one's teaching function is realised, and for a teacher-researcher, one's cognitive or research function is realised. Moreover, if the teacher predominantly uses ready-made scientific and methodological knowledge, which allows them to construct, design and assess the educational process, re-

alise methodological reflection, and creatively solve pedagogical problems, then the teacher-researcher obtains new scientific and methodological knowledge about various objects which are part of the linguistic educational context. If a teacher/educator needs knowledge on methodology, then the teacher-researcher while performing a cognitive/research function, needs knowledge about language education and methods of teaching foreign languages, about the patterns of their functioning and development, the object-subject area of each of them, methods of implementing scientific-methodological search at different levels of knowledge, etc., as well as knowledge that allows us to effectively design and conduct scientific and methodological research (for example, knowledge of the general principles of scientific knowledge and the principles of knowledge in the scientific and methodological field, logic and features of scientific research in the field of linguistic education, etc.). In addition to the systemic scientific and methodological knowledge, motivation plays an important role for both the teacher and the researcher. For the teacher strong motivation and ability in pedagogical activity, more precisely, for its quality of reflection and assessment are of more significant value, than for the researcher who values high motivation and ability for scientific and methodological research. At the same time, if a teacher is to know the ethics of pedagogical communication in the educational space, then the researcher is to master the ethics of professional communication, primarily in the scientific and methodological community.

An attempt to outline the circle of methodological knowledge in the field of linguistic education made it possible to establish that it can be distributed within at least two concentric circles. The first one is the entire body of knowledge about the teaching methodology, its constituent scientific disciplines, the characteristics of scientific and methodological cognition and the scientific and methodological knowledge it produces. The first concentric circle includes knowledge of: (1) the specific character of teaching methodology as a science in the unity of all its constituent aspects and structural components, the specific character of its research function and capabilities, its role in the system of sciences and in education, its relation to the culture of the modern world, education, basic and related sciences; (2) patterns of general teaching methodology development (theory and techniques of teaching foreign languages) and the content-related essence of its categories; (3) structures of scientific and methodological knowledge, methods of its systematisation and clarification; (4) the categorical framework of language education and methodology (techniques) for teaching foreign languages and ways and means of enriching the vocabulary of the teaching methodology; (5) the evolution of methods of teaching foreign languages as methodological directions, the history of the development of methodological ideas, approaches, theories and concepts, as well as scientific schools developing the scientific direction under study; (6) the basic concepts of language education, theories and their foundations, methodological approaches, learning technologies in historical and current dimensions; (7) the key scientific schools and their leading representatives, both

historically and in the present; the conceptual framework of a particular scientific school; (8) the ways of constructing and underpinning theories and methodological concepts, approaches and methods.

The second concentric circle of methodological knowledge in the field of linguistic education is the knowledge that allows the teacher-researcher to design and conduct one's scientific and methodological research efficiently. This concentric circle includes the knowledge of: (1) boundaries of the teaching methodology research space; (2) boundaries of one's own research 'field'; (3) methodological requirements for the research process in general and in the field of linguistic education in particular and the rules for their implementation; (4) general principles of scientific cognition and principles of cognition in the scientific and methodological field; (5) the logic and features of scientific research in the field of linguistic education; (6) methods of pedagogical/methodological research and ways of selecting them for one's research; (7) features of design, organisation and the implementation of scientific and methodological research; (8) norms of research and educational activities in the field of linguistic education; (9) methods for designing practical activities in the field of linguistic education; (10) methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis of research results.

Thus, the content base of methodological culture is methodological knowledge, however, it is not enough for a teacher just to know it. The observation of professional activity of a foreign language teacher demonstrated that it is necessary to be able to react immediately to specific methodological issues.

The scope of methodological skills is diverse. Provided that language education methodology and the methodology of scientific and methodological search have their own set of skills. Thus, the first one includes such skills as (a) realise the 'scientific context' of language education as a personal socially significant

value, demonstrate the social, scientific, theoretical and practical significance and implementation of new knowledge obtained during the research process; and (b) implement the scientific vocabulary of teaching methodology together with the scientific vocabulary of a certain scientific school where the subject performs one's own work in a proper way.

In the context of the methodology of scientific and methodological cognition, this is the ability to implement the basic mechanisms of personal mental processing of the language education methodology and the methodology of scientific cognition within the linguistic and methodological field into the form of methodological requirements for one's research activity (for instance, the ability to distinguish the object, subject, goals and objectives, the logic of scientific and methodological activity, clear organisation of the scientific framework of one's research, the selection of adequate research methods for these purposes, reflection on the results obtained and selection of adequate methods and ways of accumulating empirical experience, etc.). The methodological culture of the researcher allows them to solve a complex range of problems that require knowledge not only of the cognitive background of science, methods, and skills of research work, but also the ability to analyse the process of scientific and methodological research and generalise the results obtained. Thus, it is about the ability to reflect on scientific and cognitive activity.

In addition to reflection, important features of methodological culture are the researcher's proficiency in professionally significant competencies that are of a social nature. The first one that is to be mentioned in this regard is the ability to interact with other people, including scientific supervisors in the context of the implementation of certain scientific tasks of a methodological nature. The second is to demonstrate tolerance and respect in relation to other points of view on a particular study, without violating basic principles of scientific ethos, etc. The first one is of

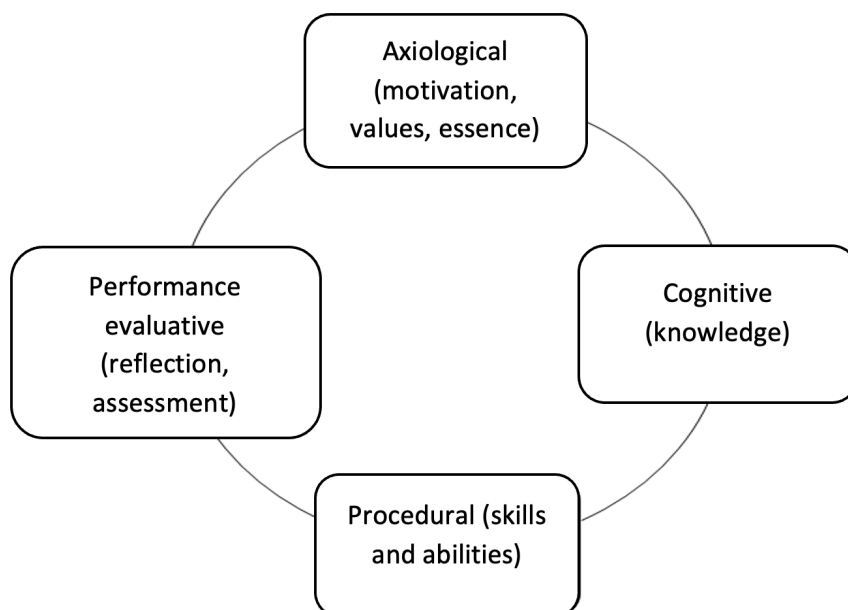


Figure 1. The structure of methodological culture

Table 1  
*Component-by-component analysis of the levels of methodological culture development*

LEVEL OF METHODOLOGICAL CULTURE DEVELOPMENT	AXIOLOGICAL COMPONENT	COGNITIVE COMPONENT	PROCEDURAL COMPONENT	PERFORMANCE-EVALUATIVE COMPONENT
High	A clearly expressed sustainable need for research activities; active, attitude and increased interest in the development of personal methodological culture; understanding of the possibilities and significance of methodology for the high-quality implementation of scientific research	Methodological knowledge is systematised and conscious; high level of proficiency in methodological knowledge of various levels (concentric circle); a pronounced desire to process new methodological knowledge	Knowledge of a wide range of methodological skills, own personally, significant system of scientific knowledge actions	Focus on self-assessment and reflective analysis of one's own research activity and the research activity of other scientists
Medium	Episodic understanding of the significance of methodological culture and the situational demonstration of interest and desire in its development	Lack of commitment to the processing of new methodological knowledge; methodological knowledge is not systematised and is not always clearly recognised	Based on ideas about the main actions of research activities, the ability to implement them independently	The ability to a certain extent for reflexive actions: to differentiate known knowledge from new knowledge; describe at an elementary level the methods, means, and forms of research activity; establish cause-and-effect relationships between certain factors, conditions, and the result of scientific and methodological knowledge; assess their thoughts and actions, but mainly under the guidance of a supervisor
Low	Lack of necessity to conduct scientific research; indifferent attitude towards scientific research; lack of interest in the formation of one's own methodological culture	The desire to process and use only known methodological knowledge; methodological knowledge is superficial, unsystematic, fragmented	Knowledge of certain methodological skills	Lack of the ability to conduct a reflexive analysis of the target and obtained results

great importance as scientific achievements are the result, to a greater extent, of cognitive consensus and dialogue, especially since no science is limited to knowledge in our social and humanitarian scientific and pedagogical area. It is important to establish and recognise the cognitive and social communication between scientists, the relationship and interaction between them, and social activity.

Methodological culture, which can be recognised as the culture of mature methodological consciousness, as an important factor and condition for the implementation of the methodological function of the teaching foreign languages theory, is a complex structured phenomenon (Figure 1). It can be structured as a set of four interrelated and interdependent components – axiological, cognitive, procedural, and performance evaluative.

The level of methodological culture development can be diverse (Table 1) which is explained by several objective and subjective circumstances. These circumstances include both the content of methodological knowledge which the researcher uses but which does not depend on them and the ability to transform this knowledge into personal socially significant values and into the form of methodological requirements for their own research activities, and to show a high level of consciousness in the use of mechanisms for personal mental processing of this knowledge and the formation of methodological requirements for research and teaching work. According to the given table, the levels of expression by scientists of their personal methodological culture reflect all aspects of the former one. Their combination can ensure the quality of the teaching of a foreign language as well as

*'The level of methodological culture development can be diverse which is explained by several objective and subjective circumstances. These circumstances include both the content of methodological knowledge which the researcher uses but which does not depend on them and the ability to transform this knowledge into personal socially significant values and into the form of methodological requirements for their own research activities, and to show a high level of consciousness in the use of mechanisms for personal mental processing of this knowledge and the formation of methodological requirements for research and teaching work. The levels of expression by scientists of their personal methodological culture reflect all aspects of the former one. Their combination can ensure the quality of the teaching of a foreign language as well as design and implementation of research and educational activities to their full extent'*

design and implementation of research and educational activities to their full extent and, therefore, contribute to the acquisition and improvement of research experience, the conduct of analytical and assessment activity in the teaching and scientific and methodological cognition by scientists. Due to the fact that the formation of any experience in a person occurs only within and through specific activities, as well as when one realises the personal meaning of this activity for their personal and professional growth, then the formation of experience in the practical use of methodological knowledge, skills and abilities is to be implemented on the basis of purposefully organised scientific activities within the framework of the university's holistic training system. It should be noted that the methodological culture in relation to pedagogical activity has been described in several methodological publications (Yashina et al., 2017), but the methodological culture of the researcher of linguistic educational context (in the broad sense) remains to this day of no concern to scientists.

Therefore, students of language and pedagogical universities face numerous difficulties in designing their research work, especially in terms of formulating a scientific research framework. An analysis of their works (the total number is 50) shows that they do not know how to practically use the knowledge of the methodology of teaching methodology and do not know how to transform this knowledge into the form of methodological requirements for their own research activities; they also cannot choose the strategic direction of their scientific and methodological search, competently execute the conceptual and categorical framework of their research, establish and comprehend connections between theoretical postulates and theoretical constructs, on the one hand, and empirical knowledge and practical experience, on the other. Many of them do not understand the relationship between methodological traditions and innovative solutions

in the field of teaching a foreign language and language education and are not able to conduct a comparative and systematic analysis of approaches and directions in solving the problem under study, etc. This proves that students do not have a sufficient level of knowledge of the methodological culture necessary for the successful implementation of professional activity.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The research conducted not only revealed the connections between teaching methodology and methodology, but also identified the prospects for the development of methodological thought in relation to the professional training of foreign language teachers. This prospect is closely related to the methodological function of teaching methodology. The implementation of the present function is aimed at the research, reconstruction and description of certain methods and value-based objects of language education as well as methodological reflection of scientific research conducted within the framework of the given study and the educational activity. This function is responsible for the development and implementation of research activity in the field of language education and, in addition, the contribution to the increase in the quality of the practice of teaching foreign languages. The reference to the methodological function of the language education area expands the variety of the objects under study. The process and methods of cognition have become the objectives of language education except for the methodology of goal setting, design, and the evaluation of theoretical and practical activities in the field of linguistic education.

The consideration of the teaching methodology from the point of view of methodology allowed us to reveal the content and direction of the methodological function of realisation within the given science as well as to provide arguments for the significance of its inclusion in the scientific vocabulary of such categories as 'methodological consciousness' and 'methodological culture'. They represent integral features of the personality of a foreign language teacher, allowing them to obtain scientific knowledge, conduct the cognition process of the foreign language teaching practice based on one's personal knowledge and beliefs, and select and implement certain methods and means of solving a range of educational and scientific and research tasks in the field of language education.

Due to this fact, methodological cognition and methodological culture are to be considered as key factors and, simultaneously, conditions of the implementation of the methodological function of language education aimed at the development and implementation of scientific and cognitive activity within the linguistic education area, and, consequently, contribute to the increase in scientific and methodological cognition and in the quality of the scientific and methodological knowledge that is produced within the cognition process. This forms the key essence of the methodological vector of the foreign languages teaching methodology which demonstrates the topicality of the development of the methodological perspective of the professional training of the foreign language teacher.

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## Original Research

# Micro-learning principles in teaching EFL in the structure of supplementary and further education: Andragogical aspect

by Elena M. Slivnaya, Victoria A. Borisenko and Marina V. Samofalova

Elena M. Slivnaya Southern Federal University, Russia [emslivnaya@sfedu.ru](mailto:emslivnaya@sfedu.ru)

Victoria A. Borisenko Southern Federal University, Russia [vaborisenko@sfedu.ru](mailto:vaborisenko@sfedu.ru)

Marina V. Samofalova Southern Federal University, Russia [mvsamofalova@sfedu.ru](mailto:mvsamofalova@sfedu.ru)

Article history Received August 19, 2023 | Revised November 13, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi [10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-46-53](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-46-53)

For citation Slivnaya, E. M., Borisenko, V. A., & Samofalova, M. V. (2023). Micro-learning principles in teaching EFL in the structure of supplementary and further education: Andragogical aspect. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 46-53.

*The study considers the innovative educational technology of micro-learning to demonstrate how micro-learning can be used as an effective strategy for teaching a foreign language to adults in the system of additional education, at language courses of various types, in view of modern conditions and realities. The scientific novelty of the study is an example of modelling an English lesson according to the basic principles of micro-learning technology: brevity, conciseness, repeatability. The study has shown that micro-education contributes to increasing student activity and their involvement in the educational process. The study concludes that thanks to micro-education, it is easier for students to see the productive result of their actions, which in turn increases their confidence in further success. Moreover, it facilitates reflection, which is an integral part of any skill development. 'Difficult' tasks, on the contrary, may be inadequate to the level of language competence and make learning goals unattainable, which can become a serious factor in demotivating adult learners. The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate context of language education, pointing to the broader potential of micro-learning as a pedagogical tool for enhancing engagement and confidence in adult learners. As educational institutions seek effective strategies in adapting to modern learning environments, the study suggests that integrating micro-learning principles could offer a beneficial approach for optimising adult language acquisition and fortifying a positive and reflective learning experience.*

**KEYWORDS:** *micro-education, andragogy, informatisation, digitalisation, microcontent, adult neurophysiology, cognitive overload*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is witnessing the emergence of new forms of social communication, lifestyle, mentality and way of thinking. The current society at large can be characterised as a digital generation, since almost all spheres of human life and activity take place both in real and virtual environments. The growing informatisation of all spheres of human activity and the complication of socio-economic realities form a new social order and impose new requirements on education.

In recent years, the world pedagogical community has been widely discussing the phenomenon of microlearning. In a general sense, microlearning is learning with the help of micro-content or micro-tasks covering one idea or goal (Souza, 2014, p. 57). Researchers look at microlearning differently: it is often associated

with digital didactics or a new stage in the development of mobile learning (Avramenko, 2020; Bruk et al., 2012; Souza, 2014). A microlearning strategy can be implemented through small text or multimedia content, infographics, learning management systems designed to meet the requirements for micro-content of learning applications, mobile testing systems, social networks and instant messengers.

As stated by psychologists, psycholinguists, educators and andragogy experts, a partial transition of human activity into the virtual space leads to changes in both the axiological and psychological spheres of life (Nikou & Economides, 2018). The characteristics of a digital-generation student include (1) simultaneous perception of heterogeneous elements and multitasking, (2) fragmentary perception and clip-like thinking, and (3) attention

deficit and priority of visual perception (Akrim, 2018). Modern students of all ages demonstrate a special attitude to the method, volume and speed of obtaining and processing information. They expect that their epistemological needs will be satisfied immediately, so modern education should be sufficient, but not redundant, practice-oriented, and also significantly personalised (Gallardo-Echenique et al., 2015; Efremova et al., 2023).

Considering the aforementioned psychological characteristics of the digital generation, teachers of various subjects and disciplines are implementing methodological strategies that include micro-content, frequent repetition and visualisation. We posit that the incorporation of microlearning methodologies has the potential to significantly enhance and enrich the field of linguodidactics, particularly in non-linguistic universities where the instruction of foreign languages encounters numerous challenges. These challenges often manifest in constraints such as limited time dedicated to language instruction, lower language proficiency levels among students, and a pervasive lack of motivation. By embracing microlearning, educators in these non-linguistic contexts can overcome these obstacles by delivering concise, targeted language lessons that fit seamlessly into busy academic schedules. Thus, microlearning's emphasis on brevity and focused content aligns with the time constraints faced in non-linguistic academic settings, allowing for the integration of language learning without disrupting the primary academic curriculum. Additionally, its adaptability enables educators to tailor content to the specific needs and proficiency levels of individual students, addressing the challenge of varying language competencies within a diverse student body. Furthermore, in the face of motivational hurdles commonly experienced in non-linguistic disciplines, microlearning provides bite-sized, achievable language goals that can instil a sense of accomplishment. By breaking down language learning into manageable segments, microlearning can boost motivation and interest, creating a positive attitude toward language acquisition even among students who might otherwise find traditional language instruction daunting. That being said, we contend that microlearning, with its tailored, time-efficient, and motivational features, stands as a promising solution to enhance linguodidactics in non-linguistic universities, contributing to more effective foreign language education in challenging academic environments.

This paper will describe the main principles of building a lesson in a foreign language from the point of view of the concept of microlearning within the framework of the andragogical aspect for students studying English in the system of additional, non-core education as an additional tool to the main profession, as well as for career opportunities, for using the language for personal purposes, and even just for fun. As a rule, these students are very overloaded with daily information content, various work or personal matters, and due to their employment, the 'little but regular' format is perfect for them.

The microcontent under study are words containing the semantic component SELF. This focus on microlearning, encapsulated in the semantic theme of SELF, aligns with the broader goal

of streamlining language acquisition. The investigation into these microcontents with a specific semantic component aims to uncover the ways in which the incorporation of such linguistic elements can enhance the overall language learning experience within the specified educational context.

The decision to centre our focus on the semantic component SELF within the concept of microlearning stems from a deliberate effort to articulate the main principles of constructing foreign language lessons within the framework of andragogy. Specifically, we aim to address the unique needs of students studying English in the context of additional, non-core education – individuals who pursue language learning not only as a supplementary tool for their main profession but also for career advancement, personal enrichment, and recreational purposes. Given the considerable demands on these learners, who often contend with information overload, professional commitments, and personal responsibilities, the 'little but regular' format inherent in microlearning proves to be an ideal fit for their hectic lifestyles.

The semantic theme of SELF serves as a focal point for our investigation into microcontent. By looking into words containing the semantic component SELF, we intend to explore the ways in which this specific linguistic element can be harnessed to optimise the language learning process. This strategic focus aligns with our broader objective of streamlining language acquisition, taking into account the specific needs and preferences of the target audience.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study comprised thirty first-year students enrolled in a university-based additional education programme, demonstrating language proficiency at the A2-B1 level. The instructional approach involved 60-minute classes held three times a week, with a specific format organised into internally segmented 20-minute periods. This segmentation is deliberate, aligning with adult neurophysiology principles, where the average maximum attention span for adults is around 18 minutes. Beyond this timeframe, activities are relegated to preparatory or concluding backgrounds. This design is informed by the understanding that smaller information chunks are more effectively absorbed, whereas excessive data results in cognitive overload (Grishchko, 2023), diminishing interaction and hindering the learning process (Mohammed et al., 2018; Malyuga & McCarthy, 2021). Furthermore, considering the increasing challenges of managing attention in an age of heightened digitalisation, microlearning serves not only as an effective educational strategy but also as a therapeutic technique, consistently refreshing attention throughout the lesson.

Moreover, the choice of this approach considers not only the cognitive aspects of learning but also acknowledges the evolving challenges of attention management in a digitally saturated environment. In recognising attention as a valuable and scarce resource, the microlearning strategy serves dual roles, not only as an effective educational tool but also as a therapeutic

technique, offering regular attention-refreshing intervals to aid in maintaining focus and engagement during the learning sessions. This holistic approach underscores the intentionality and adaptability of the methodology, catering to the unique needs of adult learners in the context of additional language education.

### 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There are many disparate definitions around 'microlearning' as a term, and researchers do not always manage to come to a consensus. Most often, opinions differ in two aspects – lesson duration and material volume. Scholars concur on one thing: microlearning is a short learning session with a clear goal and a small portion of practical content, organised on a regular basis (Dolasinski & Reynolds, 2020; Sibul et al., 2020). The basic principle of microlearning requires brevity, frequent regularity, and conciseness. Brevity and conciseness make it possible to be in full attention, and the regularity – purely physiologically – makes it the new habitual. With this approach, the entire nervous system is launched in a natural way (Akopova, 2023).

The Internet media space offers many resources on the style of micro or mini: mini-lessons, mini-videos, mini-texts and mini-tests. Most of them, however, do not fit the principles of microlearning. The main criterion of the microformat is a clear educational mini-content – the most important thing that the student must remember and work out in class. Just a short lesson without a clear highlight of the main thing, or a short video (6 minutes) but with 25 words, or a short text without a clear micro-task is just reduced time or reduced volume.

The main question of microlearning and the main methodological decision of a teacher working based on this approach will always be related to the 'compression' of language content: how little, and how little will be enough for a particular lesson with its time limit.

Compression occurs in the following areas: reducing the list of lexical units (micro-list up to +/-5 words), reducing the length of text content (micro-texts up to +/- 200 words), reducing the length of the exercise (micro-exercises +/- 6 sentences or questions), reducing grammar rules (down to 1-2), and reducing the duration of audio and video content (recording up to +/- 3 minutes). These compression strategies not only facilitate a more digestible and learner-friendly experience but also emphasise the strategic selection and prioritisation of linguistic elements to enhance comprehension and retention (Karasik, 2023).

This 'briefness' is due to the 'briefness' of the focus of attention of modern students: regardless of age, it is increasingly difficult for a person to keep a long focus. While struggling with this appears practically useless, a much more effective perspective would be to learn how to work within this 'brevity'. For example, in one of the lessons (60 minutes) with a group of students of five people (45+), we study one word *reason* from different angles: as a countable and uncountable noun; with the preposition *for* and in the construction with the infinitive, as well as in idiomatic expressions. An illustrative educational material is something like this: There is a reason for every important thing

that happens. Who would have a reason to make her cry? He had every reason to be upset. He doesn't trust me. With good reason. for some reason (or other); no rhyme or reason.

As a result, students easily memorise two main meanings of a new unit, two grammatical categories and two sentence forms, two idioms. Such micro-content helps to (1) dispense educational material in the style of short and sweet, (2) avoid overloading students with material that they will not work through due to natural neurophysiology, (3) manage attention, (4) gradually develop the skill, and (5) hone in on the core semantic structures, allowing students to discern and internalise the semantic components of two main meanings per new unit, comprehend the semantic distinctions within two grammatical categories and sentence forms, and appreciate the semantic richness encapsulated in two idioms (Voevoda, 2020; Hřebačková, 2019; Gribanova & Gaidukova, 2019).

The concern among educators about the potential fragmentation and lack of systematicity in microlearning is a valid consideration. Traditionally, teaching methods, such as communicative techniques based on comprehensive learning kits, often emphasise establishing connections between thematic blocks, integrating various lexical and grammatical sections to create a cohesive learning experience. In contrast, microlearning operates on a different principle where consistency is derived from the deliberate development of a specific skill. This consistency is nurtured through regular, frequent engagements and a carefully structured learning process.

Contrary to initial impressions, the fragmentation inherent in microlearning does not equate to a simplification of methodological strategies; rather, it introduces a layer of complexity. This complexity arises from the intentional integration of diverse methods, approaches, and techniques to ensure a holistic and interconnected educational experience. Scholars like Lee et al. (2021) highlight that the micro-content, or 'micronutrients', students consume are intricately woven into the macrostructure, forming a carefully planned instructional framework designed by the teacher.

In essence, while traditional teaching methods often rely on thematic coherence and broad connectivity between linguistic elements, microlearning thrives on the intentional compartmentalisation of content to deliver precise, targeted learning experiences. This deliberate fragmentation aims to address specific skills or language components systematically, allowing students to build proficiency in a more focused manner (Burrini, 2022). This shift from a macro-level interconnectedness to micro-level granularity requires a shift in pedagogical mindset, emphasising the synergies within the carefully orchestrated microlearning structure. The teacher's role becomes central in planning and executing the integration of these micronutrients into the broader macrostructure, ensuring a comprehensive and effective learning trajectory for the students.

Microlearning draws from diverse sources to create engaging and relevant educational content tailored to the dynamic needs of modern learners. Traditional teaching materials serve as



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foundational resources, providing structured content aligned with curriculum goals. Complementing these materials, a rich array of online resources, including platforms like *YouTube*, *TED Talks*, *Breaking News English*, and *Engvid*, caters to students' preferences. Leveraging such platforms not only aligns with contemporary learning styles but also exposes students to authentic language use in real-world contexts, enhancing their language acquisition experience.

Authentic resources, such as blogs, online magazines, newspapers, films, and songs, further enrich microlearning content by offering a glimpse into the cultural contexts and current linguistic trends of the target language. This exposure goes beyond textbook scenarios, immersing learners in the evolving and authentic language landscape. Additionally, incorporating timely and contextually relevant buzzwords, such as 'social-distancing', 'self-isolation', 'lockdown', 'telework', and 'predator-free', ensures that students engage with vocabulary and grammatical structures reflecting the contemporary linguistic realities of the language area. This intentional inclusion not only substantially aids in natural memorisation but also effectively activates these linguistic elements within the broader language framework (Al-sharhani et al., 2023).

A noteworthy aspect of microlearning content formation is the consideration of words from the student's personal discourse in their native language. Recognising that students often use certain expressions automatically in their daily conversations, instructors can strategically incorporate these familiar phrases into microlearning lessons (Lebedeva & Novikova, 2023). For instance, if a student frequently uses the phrase 'not bad, it can get worse', the inclusion of 2-3 expressions with similar semantics becomes a valuable pedagogical strategy. This personalised approach accentuates vocabulary that is closer to the student's linguistic comfort zone, significantly increasing the likelihood of successful memorisation.

Crucially, microlearning empowers students by granting them the autonomy to choose content that aligns with their interests and preferences. This element of choice not only enhances student involvement but also contributes to more effective memorisation as learners are more likely to engage with content that resonates with their individual learning styles and interests. In essence, microlearning's flexibility and adaptability, coupled with a diverse array of content sources, create a dynamic and student-centred language learning experience.

The next step in lesson planning is to establish the competency or skill to be trained in class. Microlearning works great with mono-lessons that focus on practising a specific skill, or lessons that train a maximum of two skills, such as reading and speaking, speaking and listening, listening and writing. Then there is a selection of language units, grammatical material, and a determination of what will be the main thing in the lesson and what will be background, for example, the word *reason* is the main one, and its synonym *objective* is background. The main word goes to the active vocabulary, and the background – to the passive vocabulary. This is the natural process of in human neurophysiology.

#### 4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

##### 4.1. How are exercises and various forms of activity organised in the classroom?

Within the proposed instructional approach, we integrate standard exercise types rooted in the communicative methodology framework. The distinguishing feature lies in our deliberate focus on tailoring these exercises to specific skills designated for each lesson, incorporating carefully chosen educational micromaterial into the practice. This adaptation aligns with the principles of microlearning, aiming to avoid overwhelming lessons with a multitude of exercise formats and activities. For adult students, maintaining a connection with the core learning objectives is crucial, as excessive variety may lead and most often does lead to a loss of focus on the essential elements, significantly diminishing the educational impact while potentially heightening the entertainment aspect.

This section looks into the structure of a microlearning-oriented lesson designed for our target audience, considering individuals aged 35 and above from diverse professional backgrounds. The lesson spans 60 minutes and occurs three times a week, accommodating the schedules and preferences of adult learners. The programme is specifically tailored to levels A2-B1, focusing on refining basic communication skills in everyday situations of interpersonal interaction.

The microcontent chosen for this lesson revolves around words containing the semantic component SELF, providing a thematic coherence that enhances contextual understanding. The following microtasks are crafted to scaffold the learning process.

1. Update and repeat the vocabulary of previous lessons. Commencing with a review of prior lessons, this task ensures that learners revisit and reinforce previously acquired vocabulary, fuelling retention and continuity.

2. Get acquainted with the semantic component SELF and its range of use. Learners study the semantic implications of the chosen component, expanding their understanding of its usage across various contexts.

3. Create a joint list of words containing the semantic component SELF. Students collectively generate a list of words incorporating the semantic component SELF, encouraging collaborative learning and shared exploration of the language.

4. Conduct a conscious (focused) work with a mistake. Each student is assigned a 'yellow card' with a specific 'favourite mistake' to address during the lesson autonomously. This approach promotes a heightened awareness of individual errors to support self-correction without direct teacher intervention.

The primary skill targeted in this microlearning lesson is speaking, emphasising the development of the ability to consciously control one's mistakes. This strategic focus aligns with the overarching goal of boosting communication skills in practical, everyday scenarios. Importantly, the type of homework assigned is tailored to the time constraints of adult learners, centring on the repetition of entries in a language diary. This diary serves as a personalised tool for reinforcement and reflection and enables students to consolidate their learning in a manageable and sustainable manner.

The proposed microlearning approach carefully balances content, tasks, and skill development to cater to the specific needs and preferences of adult learners while maintaining a focus on effective language acquisition and application in real-world contexts.

#### 4.2. Lesson procedure

##### 1. Short talk (about 20 minutes).

In the initial phase of the lesson, a purposeful greeting sets the stage for a structured exploration of the semantic component SELF. The teacher initiates the interaction by prompting each participant to introduce themselves, emphasising the incorporation of words enriched with the semantic component SELF. Examples such as *self-employed*, *self-confident*, *self-driven*, and *self-motivated* are employed to encourage a thematic coherence in self-presentations. This intentional linguistic choice serves to break the ice and instil a focused awareness of the targeted semantic element.

As the students engage in self-introductions, the teacher assumes the role of an observer, monitoring their reactions to one another's speeches. This observant stance allows the instructor to gauge the assimilation of the semantic component within the conversational context.

Following the individual introductions, the teacher transitions the interaction to a dynamic phase by encouraging students to pose questions based on the information gleaned from their peers. This interactive exchange substantially reinforces effective communication skills and further prompts students to engage with the targeted semantic component in the context of real-time conversation.

Simultaneously, the teacher participates in the dialogue by formulating questions that extend the thematic exploration. Questions revolving around terms like self-help industry, self-presentation, self-training, self-esteem, self-evaluation, and self-control are incorporated to add depth to the conversation. In cases where a term's meaning is not entirely clear, the teacher provides explanatory comments to ensure a comprehensive understanding among the students and build an environment of collaborative learning.

Having facilitated this conversation, the teacher transitions to the instructional phase by informing the students that the focus of the lesson is the semantic component SELF. This deliberate revelation serves as a contextual bridge that aligns the preceding conversational exploration with the structured thematic work planned for the rest of the lesson.

2. Acquaintance with the semantic component SELF and its range of use (about 20 minutes).

Building upon the foundation laid in the initial phase, the lesson progresses with the exploration of the semantic component SELF, spanning approximately 20 minutes. The teacher elucidates that English boasts an array of words containing the semantic essence of SELF, aligning with the Russian term *сам*. This linguistic correspondence emphasises the importance of comprehension over direct translation.

To exemplify the expansive reach of SELF, the teacher presents a selection of English words resonating with the semantic component, juxtaposing them with their Russian equivalent, *сам*. This analysis exposes the subtleties of language and the varied contextual aspects encapsulated in each term. Examples such as *selfie*, *self-made*, *self-help*, *self-drive*, *self-care*, *self-control*, and *self-checking* are highlighted, infusing the lesson with practical, real-world applications.

Following this introduction, the lesson takes a reflective turn as the teacher engages students in identifying English words with the semantic component SELF that may have counterparts in their native language. This exercise reinforces linguistic connections and encourages students to recognise the semantic richness embedded in their linguistic repertoire. The teacher, further enhancing linguistic engagement, demonstrates a curated collection of words containing SELF from previous lessons. This approach breathes new life into familiar vocabulary creating a sense of continuity and familiarity.

The exploration continues with an associative exercise prompting students to conjure English words linked to both positive ('+') and negative ('-') contexts when SELF is invoked. This exercise serves as a catalyst for the revival of past micro-contents and stimulates the retrieval of learned vocabulary in varied contextual dimensions. Words such as *autonomy*, *motivation*, *independence*, *responsibility* (in the positive context), and *selfishness*, *narcissism* (in the negative context) prompt a dual exploration of the semantic spectrum.

In a personalised twist, students are encouraged to select a favourite and an unloved word containing SELF. This deliberate choice not only taps into individual preferences but also serves as a means of updating and personalising the discussed vocabulary for spontaneous conversation in subsequent lessons.

To fortify understanding, the teacher culminates this phase by presenting a series of sentences (4-6 pieces) crafted to highlight fluency in comprehending words with SELF in context. These sentences, ranging from the *self-taught amateur psychologist* to the *self-centred individual*, offer glimpses into the applications of the semantic component SELF, further anchoring its use within the linguistic landscape of the lesson.

3. Final practice of the semantic component SELF in speech (about 20 minutes).

In the culminating phase of the lesson, lasting around 20 minutes, students engage in a final practice session, solidifying their understanding of the semantic component SELF through active speech. The teacher orchestrates this segment by posing a series of questions, integrating words embodying the semantic essence of SELF, with a particular emphasis on the term *self-taught*. This interactive dialogue encompasses various contexts, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the semantics associated with the chosen words. The focal point on *self-taught* prompts a range of thought-provoking questions that invite students to reflect on individual opinions. Sample questions include: 'Can we effectively learn languages through self-study?' 'What criticisms or challenges do self-help books pose?' 'Have you ever grappled with self-doubt?' 'How do self-driving cars ensure safety?' and 'Do you consider yourself a self-driven person?' These questions are designed to elicit diverse responses, encouraging

students to articulate their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives. The inclusion of the word *self-taught* not only refines linguistic proficiency but also lays the foundation for a deeper exploration of the broader implications associated with autonomy and individual-driven learning. Through this conversational exercise, students actively apply the semantic component SELF in context, honing their ability to integrate these terms into coherent and meaningful speech. The teacher's role in this phase transcends that of an instructor, evolving into a facilitator of meaningful discourse that empowers students to navigate linguistic complexities with confidence. As the lesson concludes with this final practice session, students leave with a heightened awareness of the semantic component SELF and its applications in real-world language usage. This engagement serves as a capstone to the lesson that reinforces the thematic focus on SELF and provides students with a practical foundation for continued language exploration and mastery. As a result, the outline of the lesson is built from and around one semantic component (Table 1).

Table 1  
Outline of lesson procedure

STAGE	ACTIVITIES	DURATION	DESCRIPTION
Short Talk	Greeting and introduction, self-introductions with words containing SELF	Approx. 20 min	Teacher observes reactions, prompts questions, and participates in the dynamic conversation focusing on SELF
Acquaintance with SELF	Expanding semantic understanding, identifying words with SELF, associative exercise, selection of favourite and unloved words, fluency sentences	Approx. 20 min	Teacher emphasises English words with SELF, explores positive/negative contexts, and encourages student selection of words. Sentences demonstrate fluency with SELF in context.
Final Practice	Active speech engagement, answering questions with SELF	Approx. 20 min	Students engage in final practice, answering questions with words embodying SELF, focusing on <i>self-taught</i> . Teacher facilitates meaningful discourse, empowering students in linguistic complexities.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the efficacy of integrating microlearning principles into the andragogical framework for teaching English as a foreign language in supplementary education. The study specifically focused on adult learners enrolled in a university-based additional education programme, with language proficiency at the A2-B1 level. The instructional approach centred around 60-minute classes held three times a week, employing internally segmented 20-minute periods to align with adult neurophysiology principles.

The integration of microlearning principles in the instructional approach was grounded in the recognition of the digital generation's cognitive characteristics, emphasising simultaneous

perception, clip-like thinking, and attention deficit. By adopting a deliberate segmentation of the lesson, the study sought to address the limited attention span of adults, aiming to enhance information absorption while preventing cognitive overload.

The practical application of microlearning principles involved a carefully structured lesson plan. The microcontent chosen for the lesson focused on words containing the semantic component SELF, providing thematic coherence and contextual understanding. Microtasks, such as updating and repeating vocabulary, acquainting learners with the semantic component SELF, creating a joint list of relevant words, and conducting conscious work with mistakes, were designed to align with microlearning principles.

The lesson structure was designed to cater to the unique needs of adult learners, aged 35 and above, from diverse professional backgrounds. The incorporation of microtasks facilitated a balance between content, tasks, and skill development to ensure that the educational impact was not compromised by excessive variety. This deliberate choice acknowledged the importance of maintaining a connection with core learning objectives, preventing a potential loss of focus on essential elements, and, crucially, avoiding a disproportionate emphasis on entertainment over educational outcomes.

The lesson procedure followed a coherent progression, starting with a short talk that incorporated self-introductions enriched with the semantic component SELF. This introductory phase not only broke the ice but also set the thematic tone for the lesson. The subsequent phases involved a detailed exploration of the semantic component SELF, including an examination of its range of use, collaborative word generation, and conscious work with individual mistakes. The chosen semantic theme, SELF, served as the central thread integrated throughout the lesson to afford a unified focus for the microlearning experience.

The study embraced andragogical principles by acknowledging the diverse professional backgrounds and preferences of adult learners. The lesson's flexibility, accommodating the schedules of busy adults, was evident in its three-times-a-week frequency. The tailored approach to levels A2-B1 ensured relevance to the participants' language proficiency, focusing on refining basic communication skills in everyday situations.

Furthermore, the choice of microcontent with the semantic component SELF was strategic in catering to the linguistic needs and preferences of the target audience. The thematic coherence facilitated contextual understanding and linguistic engagement, aligning with andragogical tenets that emphasise relevance and immediate applicability.

The study's findings have several implications for language education in supplementary settings. The successful application of microlearning principles suggests that this approach can ameliorate the language learning experience for adults, especially in non-linguistic universities. The deliberate focus on brevity, repetition, and thematic coherence addresses the challenges posed by limited time, lower language proficiency levels, and potential demotivation commonly encountered in non-linguistic disciplines.

The results also highlight the adaptability of microlearning in managing attention effectively, making it not only an educational strategy but also a therapeutic technique. This dual role positions microlearning as a valuable tool for adult learners navigating a digitally saturated environment.

However, further research is warranted to explore the long-term effects of microlearning in language acquisition and its applicability across different proficiency levels. Additionally, investigating the transferability of microlearning principles to other language components and exploring variations in thematic coherence could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the approach's potential.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to address the contemporary challenges posed by the digital generation's cognitive characteristics, seeking to enhance the language learning experience for adult learners enrolled in a university-based additional education programme. The study's primary findings pointed to the unambiguous effectiveness of microlearning principles in catering to the unique needs and characteristics of adult learners. The deliberate segmentation of lessons, focusing expressly on brevity, repetition, and thematic coherence, aligned with the universally defined cognitive characteristics of the digital generation. The chosen semantic theme of SELF provided a vectored unified focus, fostering contextual understanding and linguistic engagement among participants involved.

Notably, the research distinctively demonstrated that the incorporation of microlearning principles palpably contributed to increased student activity and engagement in the language learning process. The emphasis on conscious error analysis sessions, collaborative word generation, and contextual exploration of the semantic component SELF facilitated a holistic language learning experience. The study's results suggested that microlearning, with its tailored, time-efficient, and motivational features, stands as a promising solution for enhancing linguodidactics in non-linguistic universities, addressing widely persistent constraints such as limited time, lower language proficiency levels, and motivational hurdles.

The successful application of microlearning principles suggests that this pedagogical approach holds promise in adapting to modern learning environments. The findings imply that microlearning can be a beneficial tool for optimising adult language acquisition, offering a flexible and effective strategy for addressing the challenges faced in supplementary and further education. The adaptability of microlearning to diverse professional backgrounds and schedules positions it as a valuable asset for adult learners navigating the complexities of modern life.

The research outcomes also have broader implications for educational institutions seeking out innovative strategies. Integrating microlearning principles into language instruction can potentially transform the learning experience, making it more engaging, relevant, timely, and aligned with the expectations of the digital generation. The emphasis on short, focused, and repetitive activities addresses the widely and universally recognised needs of adult learners in non-linguistic disciplines, ensuring that language acquisition remains achievable, motivating, and coherently integrated into their busy academic, professional and personal schedules.

Further research is warranted to investigate the long-term effects of microlearning on language acquisition and its applicability across different proficiency levels. Exploring variations in thematic coherence and transferability to other language components could provide a better understanding of the approach's versatility. Additionally, considering the evolving framework of digital education, further studies could examine the integration of technology and microlearning in language instruction.

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## Original Research

# Applying the cognitive congruence principle to target language training

by Sergey A. Volkov

Sergey A. Volkov University of Carthage, Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis, Tunisia [serguei.volkov@isl.t.ucar.tn](mailto:serguei.volkov@isl.t.ucar.tn)

Article history Received September 30, 2023 | Revised December 1, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-54-67

For citation Volkov, S. A. (2023). Applying the cognitive congruence principle to target language training, *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 54-67.

*Though the cognitive congruence principle has been studied and used in education, the problem of designing technologies for its integration and functioning, particularly in target language training, remains open. In training within the learning process, i.e., exploring learned material rather than introducing it, educators may think congruence tutoring will fit as a tool for applying this principle. By developing a cognitive congruence-performing model, the study aims to objectivise cognitive congruence, i.e., involve aligning learning goals with learning experience processing, student abilities or learning styles with instructional design, and tutoring with tutoring and delivering to the educational cluster. Here, the question arises of why and how the cognitive congruence principle can reconfigure the learning experience. The process-oriented method establishes the importance of dynamics, cooperation, and transformation as well as teaching, tutoring, and tutoring processes to produce the cognitive congruence model performance. It refers to methodological triangulation within the method that covers the exploratory data analysis: process tracing, process screening, and process evaluation. The model and instructions as congruence research application results in facilitating knowledge, imparting and enhancing the cognitive experience in students' chosen field; ensuring alignment with the educational milieu, procedure, content, and outcomes and integrating teaching and learning strategies; giving new momentum to decision-making skills via increasing collective thinking and streamline complex problem-solving, cultural acceptance, social responsibility, and self-assessment. The frame-alignment entity establishes a workable and eligible integral pattern for discussion and creative use. Education congruence is adaptable to practical guidelines for planning and implementing enrichment training and learning systems in intercultural and interdisciplinary communication teach-in environments.*

KEYWORDS: cognitive congruence principle, cognitive interview, cognitive thinking, instructional design, learning style, process-oriented approach



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of students in authentic, practical activities in the chosen profile remains a priority direction of university education, corresponding to professional standard. It presumes various forms and can be embodied in practice-oriented initiatives depending on target settings, materials and technical resources, and possibly the contractual business solutions of an educational institution. Thus, in the 1970s and later years, the training of future teachers of Russian as a foreign language provided for the assignment of the local students starting from the first year of studies to groups of international students of the preparatory faculty and their active engagement in the curricular and extracurricular activities of the sponsored division under the guidance of the instructor of the anchored group and monitoring of the educationalist. Their mission statement was as follows: (1) passive practice (systematic attendance, transcription, and class analysis); (2) pre-planned joint homework completion; (3) assistance with planning for various events; (4) arranging

co-curricular field trips; and (5) immersing foreign students in the native language environment and further still, for students in their senior year, (6) lesson planning and delivery; and (7) substitute teaching (in exceptional cases). This action increased the language learners' communicative competence level, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, encouraged Russian students to perceive university education as the first stage in entering the profession of language teaching, to recognise their social significance, and, respectively, to be motivated to study. Thus, a Russian student could become an acting teacher, to be more exact, a tutor or mentor for a foreigner starting to learn a new language and culture. Because all parties are working toward a shared goal, we can now describe that form of cooperation in the referred learning environment as congruent.

This paper argues that, by underpinning the cognitive approach, building congruence among teacher candidates in actual cross-disciplinary courses proves highly efficient within the framework of an educational programme that excludes fields

like pedagogy and educational psychology as well as the teaching practicum. It is about a curriculum approved by one of the international educational institutions for professional training in *language, literature, and civilisation* in the target language, in our case, Russian, out of the linguo-cultural environment.

According to the article's intent, target language learning is learning another language that a person studies and practises to use in more freely pursued activities for professional purposes. The positive effect of such learning is achieved to a greater extent when facilitating the emergence of student learning goals in classes of related disciplines and, correspondingly, intersubject communications, with careful attention to pedagogical praxis through communication and contextualisation. It helps promote a dynamic and adaptive environment for training learned material by identifying and coordinating conceptual areas for improvement and aligning them congruently.

Due to these perspectives, vectoring mindfulness as a professional skill shows better adjustments through process-oriented methodologies for learning, where instruction comes from *'teaching thinking strategies and domain-specific knowledge in coherence'* (Vermunt & Verloop, 1995, p. 325). The methodology originates with goals, matches practical circumstances, delivers the prospect for self-reflection, and sets priorities for supporting psychological health and positive thinking integrally. The design of one such instruction fits into developing an associated, process-oriented model for the congruent tutorial. Indeed, this is the purpose of the present article.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The process-oriented method objectifies some considerations for pragmatic teaching and learning, making them feasible strategies for instructors to utilise in their classrooms. It also meets the current research objectives by establishing a predictive modelling procedure for cognitive congruence tutoring.

In the first instance, it directs the choice of an appropriate presentation of instructions and enables learning upon the congruence principle, allowing for links between the process relations in the *teacher-tutor* and *tutor-tutee* systems that underlie these instructional actions. Here, the congruence principle may help explain how to involve a teacher in coaching tutors. By instructing the tutor on, for example, how to ask the tutee a question or outline a concept and give a problem to solve, the teacher ensures that the tutor provides prompt and positive feedback when the tutee answers correctly and gives corrective feedback when the answer is incorrect.

Since this study points to dynamics, cooperation, and changes and examines how and why things happen via congruent target language learning, we can use the process-oriented method as a research approach to address our application and adaptation concerns. It refers to accomplishing the exploratory problem through the use of a particular methodological triangulation *within the method*, covering qualitative data: (1) process tracing: collecting and controlling facts that support or contradict cause-and-effect relationships (between activities and out-

comes); (2) process screening: revealing the actual behaviour and performance of processes, as well as identifying bias, constraints, or invalidities; (3) process evaluating: stipulating feedback on the quality, apprehensibility, and persuasion of course design and delivery or course intervention.

Importantly, the method, as applied, is centred on the individuals and their unfolding experiences rather than attending to their process as a group. It solely enhances its impact on cooperative decisive processing skills. This position, we argue, becomes an alternative but comparable response to Cohen's (2004) study that used a process-oriented method to describe the teaching of counselling skills in a group. Both approaches explore diverse perspectives that value personal and professional growth and integrative learning theory and practice.

Incidentally, the latter translates into the fact that process-oriented research encompasses, proportionately to the process-oriented learning method, prototyping and adjusting the instructional design, i.e., the conception and transfiguration of a tutorial structure that will sustain congruent learning. For our academic pursuits, instructional design compensates a particular educational system or process by emphasising interdisciplinary learning and helping students understand how different academic areas and topics overlap. By exploring the connections across disciplines like linguistics, literature, philosophy, and history, students can attain a more meaningful sense of how different fields of study contribute to our collective knowledge and see the relevance of seemingly unrelated topics to their lives, future goals, and societal issues. In a teach-in situation, complex problem-solving, for example, enriching cultural knowledge, having social responsibility, and using self-assessments, will have a facilitatory effect if a literature session on, say, *Hadji Murat* by Leo Tolstoy is aligned with the learning objectives of a unit on actual Russian civilisation at the time and morality in different contexts.

So, the process-oriented approach permits practical guidelines for planning and implementing learning systems to proceed in parallel with research.

Analogously to the process-oriented method, the congruence principle displays research value alongside its educative or cognitive value. This principle fixes the rules of the process-oriented instruction theory that *'is derived from psychological research on the way students learn and on the interplay between self-regulation and external regulation of learning'* (Vermunt & Verloop, 1995, p. 325). Due to this, the instructional design retains a systematicity that expresses its equivalence relation to the set of learning process components, which, in their part, stand in a consistent position with each other. It means that instructional design reveals its congruence with (1) educational structure, educatory procedure, educative content, and (2) educator and educatees. In this regard, it makes possible the integration of the following: (1) teaching/tutoring and learning strategies that build on goal-driven question-and-answer patterns; (2) instructing/acquiring mechanisms and topical subject-matter competency; and (3) experiencing cognitive thinking and curriculum-based language learning.

When the educator launches an instructional design, the congruence principle ensures the alignment of (a) the student's self-concept manifesting with the issue under discussion and verbal or nonverbal behaviour and (b) the student's cognitive learning style compared with the learning style of others'. What needs to be understood is that applying the principle of cognitive congruence for developing the instructional design in learning the target language focuses, sectionally, on the collective self (social congruence), relational self (peer congruence), and individual self, or self-concept (ego congruence).

Thus, the process-oriented method and the principle of congruence in sectional learning create a mutually beneficial relationship where tutors and tutees get leverage from their interaction (two-way feedback or cogent communication) and cooperation (consciously refraining from different mindset obstructions). Mentors gain pedagogical experience and a broadened awareness of their chosen field through tutoring. In contrast, the learners receive guidance, support, and exposure to constructive linguistic and cultural contexts (including arts, civilisation, and religion).

### 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1. Psychological basis of cognitive congruence

Cognitive congruence refers to the alignment of mental frameworks and knowledge bases, which facilitates effective communication and comprehension. Applying the cognitive congruence principle to the target language training process involves the concept of shared knowledge and understanding between language learners and their tutors or peers. In this light, the theoretical background for studying this phenomenon or construct of learning theory derives from psychological, linguistic, and organisational foundations since cognitive congruence characterises personal enhancement as well as social interactions through consistency between the cognitive structures of one or more individuals, whilst language provides various means to induce and maintain this consistency.

Osgood and Tannenbaum's study (1955) discusses the magnitude and distribution of pressure toward congruity, the principle of congruity (or congruence) in human thinking, and the direction of attitude change. They stated the principle of congruity as changes in evaluation that regularly move '*in the direction of increased congruity with the existing frame of reference*' (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955, p. 43). In our research, this finding is meaningful insofar as an individual, although tending to change thinking toward the instructional side, can nevertheless endeavour to adjust their attitudes in such a way as to align with their current beliefs and values when faced with a message '*which relates two or more objects of judgment via an assertion*' (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955, p. 43).

In educational psychology, Vygotsky (1979) reflected '*central tenets of his cognitive theory: the transformation of an interpersonal (social) process to an intrapersonal one; the stages of internalization; and the role of experienced learners*' (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 131) through the conception of interaction between learning

and development known as the zone of proximal development since 1932–1934. '*It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*' (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 86).

#### 3.2. Psychotherapeutic foundations

With his theory of congruence in the psychotherapeutic relationship, also called authenticity, Rogers (1961) grounded rules that qualify as infallible across fields of adjacency for this element of inner orientation. According to him, the term *congruence* describes these conditions.

*Integration.* When a therapist '*is what he is*', i.e., if, in the relationship with the client, a therapist is '*more genuine and congruent*', '*the more probability there is that change in personality in the client will occur*' (Rogers, 1961, p. 62). It means '*that the feelings the therapist is experiencing are available to him, available to his awareness, and he is able to live these feelings, be them, and able to communicate them if appropriate*' (Rogers, 1961, p. 61).

Unconditional positive regard: '*When the therapist is experiencing a warm, positive and acceptant attitude toward what is in the client, this facilitates change*' (Rogers, 1961, p. 62).

Empathic understanding: '*When the therapist is sensing the feelings and personal meanings which the client is experiencing in each moment, when he can perceive these from inside, as they seem to the client, and when he can successfully communicate something of that understanding to his client*' (Rogers, 1961, p. 62).

Essentially, Rogers sees congruence as the consistency of emotional experiences with awareness and verbal or non-verbal expression. Incongruence, at that rate, is a discrepancy between feelings and awareness of them, between awareness and expression of those feelings.

#### 3.3. Linguistic factor of cognitive congruence

The question area limits the linguistic rationale of the cognitive congruence principle with its significant generalisation, which resolves itself in (1) the role of language in forming cognition and (2) the usage-based nature of language, allowing for pragmatics and context dependence. In this regard, we draw on the ideas postulated in cognitive linguistics about the relationship between language and thought (e.g., Vygotsky, 1986) and the interconnectedness of grammar, semantics, and lexicon (in their conjunction) with cognitive abilities (Langacker, 2008). As language is not only an integral part of our cognitions but also of our dominant way of relating to the world, it is vital to remember that linguistic competence must be a system continually shaped, from inception, by linguistic usage events (Barlow & Kemmer, 2000) and '*humans deploy (or learn to deploy) language in order to create shared meaning*' (Ortego et al., 2016, p. 1). Meanings, therefore, are conveyed through real-life usage, and when attaching them to words, we can interpret changes they undergo, making language metaphorical or conceptualised. It is important to note that metaphors and concepts help establish



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connections between different domains of knowledge and experience. In this sense, the principle of cognitive congruence gains force for context co-collection in information exchange, including interdisciplinary communication.

Linguistic value also covers the problem of what language teachers think, know, believe, and do in the classroom and how these mental constructs relate to their teaching practices and influence instructional decisions for tutors and tutees. Borg (2003) provides a comprehensive overview of teacher cognition in language teaching that can be useful for levelling trainees' and teachers' beliefs, particularly regarding vocabulary, grammar, and intelligence (precisely, metalanguage and grammatical terminology circulated).

#### 3.4. Corporate theories and practices of congruence achievement

In this study, reliance on the value settings of corporate theories (e.g., Nadler & Tushman, 1980; Pasmore, 2021) and allowance for practical input of experts (e.g., García-Mas et al., 2019) are not random.

Nadler and Tushman (1980) developed (a) the conception of *congruence* or *fit* between different components within an organisation, such as the task and the individuals (people), organisational arrangements and the informal organisation, and the culture of the organisation; and (b) Congruence Model as a diagnostic tool that helps organisations assess whether their strategy straightens up their tasks, people, structure, and culture.

Contributors explaining the concepts of congruence and fit in accordance with the level of congruence in the beliefs within a working team environment *'revealed that the greatest amount of asymmetry was observed in Global Cooperation and Emotional Cooperation, while less asymmetry was found in Personal Growth, and good congruence–fit in Conditioned Cooperation'* (García-Mas et al., 2019).

Other researchers investigating this issue highlight the dependence of problem areas in organisational development on the management of change (Szabla, 2021). These practical implications of cognitive congruence for manager–coach and team-member cooperation and for person–organisation model improvement are useful for us because they can indicate congruence intensity between the value of learning and individual and group success, too.

The educational environment is a pre-professional socialisation platform. Nowadays, it is common knowledge that employers primarily test their applicants for the availability of soft skills such as active listening, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management, critical thinking, decision-making, organisational skills, stress management, adaptability, conflict management, empathy, leadership, creativity, resourcefulness, persuasion, and openness to criticism (Coursera, 2023). In favouring education as the basis for forming those skills, without which it is impossible to become in-demand in a modern technology-driven society, a compelling need for teaching them to the young generation apart from their purposes emerges. Undoubtedly, one of them is cognitive congruence because, like soft skills, its dimension prefigures a set of personality traits that determine how effectively individuals can interact in groups and resolve conflicts and how they can approve themselves in any industry or profession. In a way, congruence encompasses the two hypostases of persuasion – conviction (belief of rightness) and persuasiveness (linguistic manipulation). Using both in the training course affects the students' behaviour and accustoms them to empathy. By inference, when crafting tutorial guidance, teachers should keep in mind the idea of combining learning and action.

#### 3.5. Implementing the cognitive congruence principle within the educational cluster

In contemporary research on educational learning, cognitive congruence appears to be interpreted in connection with a problem-based learning environment (Schmidt & Moust, 1995; Williams et al., 2011), with cognitive and social congruence differentiation (Loda et al., 2022) and contextualised in peer-assisted learning (Lockspeiser et al., 2008; Loda et al., 2020), or regarding the compatibility or alignment between student-regulation and teacher-regulation of the learning activities (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998; Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). The authors of such studies conclude that cognitive congruence refers to the alignment or similarity in knowledge, understanding, and thinking between student tutors and tutees in a peer tutoring context. It involves student tutors having a shared knowledge framework with tutees and using familiar language and comprehensible explanations of their learning needs and difficulties. Cognitive congruence is viewed as a key factor in an efficient and effective peer-assisted learning experience, as it fosters knowledge transfer and improves outcomes. Social congruence is another prominent factor that refers to the similarity in social roles, expectations, and interactions between student tutors and tutees. It involves creating a non-judgmental, informal, and supportive learning atmosphere that enhances motivation, confidence, and satisfaction among learners. Furthermore, in instructional design, cognitive congruence rests on Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956) since it offers a framework for classifying and categorising goals and objectives by the skill level needed to achieve desired learning outcomes (Asunda & Ware, 2015). They address the challenges and opportunities in integrating technology education with engineering design.

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The cognitive congruence principle facilitated knowledge acquisition among students with a few subject specialisms. The congruent learning systems survey spread to students of integrated STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) (Asunda & Ware, 2015), students of medical, health science, polytechnic, law, and paramedic education (Loda et al., 2019), students of medicine and dentistry (Loda et al., 2020), and students of psychology (Loda et al., 2022).

In the first instance, the novelty of studying the usability potential of the cognitive congruence principle lies in the choice of the sphere of its application, namely teaching a foreign language as the language for a future career. The premise is that when educating specialities like linguistics and literature in our situation, we are first and foremost training communication in the language specific to the field. Secondly, the cognitive congruence concept represents an intellectualised form of communicating in a linguo-cultural context. Thirdly, cognitive congruence as a learning factor connotes the tutor's cognitive interview with the tutee. Fourthly, the instructional design of a subject course (linguistic or literary) with a focal point on cognitive congruence as a formative assignment for prospective professionals becomes an integral part of the learning process.

#### 4. STUDY AND RESULTS

Theoretically, the cognitive congruence conception is an intelligent compatibility modelling of activities with instructional decisions in the *student tutor–student tutee–student group* system in a real academic session pre-planned by the teacher. In practice, the cognitive congruence conception serves as a powerful tool for enhancing learning experiences in a classroom setting. Applying the cognitive congruence principle to targeted language learning resulted in generating contingent learning content and creating a maximised engagement and comprehension environment. This effect succeeded by strategically aligning guidelines and activities to the individual student's cognitive abilities and learning styles.

In keeping with the latter, it is logical to assume that animating the inner core of the learning congruence model involves proficiency in a certain amount of knowledge of the answers to the questions, how the students are processing experiences and

information and how they are structuring and retaining information contents. Cognitive styles are at issue here, and these are some examples featuring different styles: Do students need to visualise the task before starting? Do they adequately comprehend information by listening? Do they need to write down and analyse what they have heard or read a text for thorough understanding? Do they approach learning and teaching sequentially or randomly? Do they work quickly or deliberately? Identifying the types of learners is naturally unpredictable when an instructor begins working with a group. According to our experience, pre-designing assignments for students concerning the *wholist-analytical, verbaliser-imager* dimensions of their cognitive styles (in Sadler-Smith and Riding's (1999) terminology) becomes a prerequisite for implementing this factor. For assignments to be appropriately challenging, the teacher relies on the student's cognitive abilities.

By presenting assignments specific to the student's *zone of proximal development*, the teacher creates a stimulating classroom environment for engaging students in meaningful discussions on relevant topics. The tutor's role under such conditions grows more complex, as it is no longer limited to activation of the operating process with trainees who have low motivational and goal-oriented attitudes and conservative learning strategies. It extends to striving to align the tutees' actual knowledge with the level set by the curriculum, i.e., as far as feasible, to make students' knowledge congruent with the tutor's own. Through student tutoring, tutees, in return, start thinking critically about their knowledge and subject matter and, thus, gain a deeper level of language comprehension and attainment. By inference, such an intake can be productive if students are ready to stabilise, lesson by lesson, their consciousness level in being congruent with the learning environment.

Moreover, assignments help the teacher discern someone's cognitive type of thinking. For example, by having students analyse a literary work, the teacher will automatically discover creative, goal-setting, logical, rational, or problem-solving thinkers.

A student can be creative in being busy with the task by exploring different perspectives and interpretations (such as the author's intention, historical context, cultural background, the genre conventions), comparing and contrasting the text with other texts and applying creative writing techniques to it (rewriting, adapting, or transforming it).

A goal-setting thinker is someone who employs goal-setting strategies to accomplish intended results. For example, they can set the objective to explore the woman's destiny in *The Blizzard* by A. S. Pushkin, key points to identify and compare the main female characters in other novels, and initiatives to write summaries on Russian women's destiny concept in Pushkin's perception.

As logical thinkers, they need to follow some steps for their thoughts and arguments to be systematised (to identify literary devices, come up with the main idea and facts, provide some background information on the text and the author, structure the body of the analysis, make a synthesis of the arguments, and

show how they contribute to their overall interpretation of the text). So, a pragmatist will find a cause-and-effect link in the events narrated by the author in the very *Blizzard* and the actions of the central characters to substantiate the non-randomness of the intersection, years later, of the destinies of young people married under unusual circumstances.

A rational thinker uses facts, logic, and data to analyse a literary work rather than relying on emotions and personal bias. They might ascertain the writer's principal idea and theme and then estimate the powers with which he reinforces the narrative, characters, actions, style, and symbolism. In illustration of the latter, the analyst delves into how Dostoyevsky shadows the presence of Jesus Christ in *Crime and Punishment*. As to Pushkin's *Blizzard*, thinkers of this type would attribute everything that was to happen in this novel to the natural force and explain a sudden outbreak of a snowstorm at a character's most crucial moment as an omen.

A problem-solving thinker combines the creative and critical skills of identifying the main problem or conflict the author presents in the work, inquiring into its causes, effects, and possible resolutions or generating alternative solutions or scenarios that could address the problem or conflict, and evaluate their feasibility, desirability, and consequences. For example, a problem-solver justifies the unfavourable turn of the fate of the protagonist of Pushkin's novel if the blizzard had not hindered her beloved from reaching the church, and they would have been married.

All these observations frame the instructional design process for the cognitive congruence development course.

The instructional design process starts by identifying the overarching learning goals that each participant in the learning process seeks to accomplish. Because their goals can coincide and diverge, the next step is to analyse the target audience. After clarifying their range of demands and performance abilities, the instructional designer moves on to a course plan that incites congruent communication (as a primary learning objective) through exchanging ideas and, just as likely, cooperation. Those procedures occur to lay out students' roles and responsibilities while assigning each communicator a distinctive contribution to share.

In creating content and screening it using learning tools, including online ones, the educator considers cognitive accessibility, topical variability, decision alternatives, cultural compatibility, disciplinary cross-over of learning units activated during tutor-tutee communication, and relevance to real-life and professional situations.

Developing intercultural awareness and sensitivity among learners requires incorporating cultural aspects of the target language and social sphere into the curriculum. In Pushkin's novel *The Blizzard*, the protagonist's behaviour provides meaningful insight. On the one hand, she rejects the social conventions of the day, which require her to get married for convenience and to please her parents. She remains loyal to her family and social class traditions and values, adhering to moral principles that govern male-female relationships. Transferring the discussion on

this topic to the native culture of students makes it more meaningful. Plus, content presentation in a format usable for uploading to an educational platform – for instance, creating digital resources such as videos, animations, podcasts, and simulations (role play) further to the textual narratives with lexical-grammatic support – would be advantageous. It allows tutors to stand ready to manage content while adapting it to their learning style and manipulating the tutoring process for their individual needs. Since tutors are more engaged in reflective and metacognitive activities, they gather the most relevant and challenging information or choose provocative behaviour (for example, using the Socratic method and asking a question like *Were there any precedents of Raskolnikov's thinking in your cultural evolution?*) that early on results in a counteractive effect but can finally lead the tutee to an undivided opinion. The content, for the second time, should be easily transferable to other educational media. After the initial content creation, the instructional designer conducts formative evaluations, gathering participant feedback. Moreover, iterative feedback loops ensure that content and instructional media are continually improved and adjusted to close the gaps.

The stage of instructional design implementation in the learning environment seems to be developing the realm of valuable learning in a congruent communicative format. Once the content and materials are delivered, they get regenerated throughout the learning process dialogised.

Question-and-answer modes of communication help foster a sense of community because they provide opportunities for individuals – tutors and tutees – to convey their thoughts, obtain reactions, criticise, or appreciate opinions, and brainstorm solutions cooperatively, making discourse actions more heartfelt, outspoken, and convergent or consensual. In other words, students acquire the essential skills for functional cooperation and group work when taking on active roles in their learning.

To sum up, the process of instructional design presupposes the identification of learning goals and the analysis of the target audience. It comes with the development of learning objectives, the revision of instructional materials, the design of content, and the subsequent review and refinement of both instructions and materials after implementation. We should add that this process work sequence is in current use in the vocational training industry ADDIE model, striving to identify on-the-job performance, originally *Interservice Procedures for Instructional Systems Development* that form one unit from five phases: analyse, design, develop, implement, and control (Branson et al., 1975, p. 2), or evaluate.

For initiating academic activities, the teacher starts by pre-planning the session, considering the students' diverse competencies, what drives them, and their interests. All instructional materials get carefully examined and designed so that the offering might be acceptable and thus fully effective (a) to provide learners with an opportunity to choose topics and tasks and (b) to accord with different learning preferences, such as visual, auditory, read/write, or kinaesthetic.

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For example, the teacher may incorporate some aids that can introduce visual and auditory input such as images, videos, or podcasts and cultural experiences and reflecting information sources to make the content more accessible and engaging. Students are incentivised to concentrate either on the concrete item of the topic or on the broad idea. The same is true for assignments. So, if the topic for the students in the third year of their bachelor's degree, say, in literature is the biography of Nikolai Gogol, the teacher can set a task based on reading a textbook text or watching the video film *Gogol the Bird*: 1) Write an essay or 2) Prepare a *PowerPoint* presentation about Gogol's career as a writer or his worldview, etc. The teacher also keeps in mind kinaesthetic learning styles and gives an appropriate task to those students who, for example, draw (sketch scenes from what they have read or watched and write comments on them). Depending on the assignment selected, the students then decide on the training applications for preparing their class topic.

Focusing on the design of free-choice assignments helps the teacher at that stage as well when working on creating an engaging and motivating learning environment. In other words, the instructor thinks of ways to create an atmosphere of freedom that poses no penalty for making errors and encourages cooperation and risk-taking while leveraging the *student tutor-student tutee-student group* model. Within the model proposed, cooperative communication is integral to cognitive congruence training. Students are encouraged to work together in a group, with more knowledgeable peers acting as tutors and less experienced peers as tutees. The teacher maintains that the responsibilities within the group get the right balance with an appreciation of students' strengths and weaknesses. In this way, each student can benefit from the collective knowledge and skills of the group members, inciting a sense of shared learning and collaboration. This setup allows for peer learning, where tutors explain concepts, provide guidance, and facilitate communication. By engaging in cooperative activities, i.e., discussions and debates, students begin to distinguish misinterpretations of the subject matter.

At the same time, the teacher thinks over clear instructions to give to tutors and orients them toward the communicative activation of the potentialities of the mentees. For example, they (1) outline the problems of the lesson (such as the analysis of a literary work to write an essay), (2) suggest trying for a learning environment where mentees can take risks without fear of failure and giving hints, explanations, or demonstrations, (3) advise

being patient and understanding, tipping mentees off about reaching their goals without being overly directive, (4) stress raising a growth mindset and getting mentees to learn the skills needed to succeed in their chosen field and develop problem-solving skills, (5) remind about the importance of providing constructive feedback, (6) specify that they need to take care to ensure that their mentees stay focused, and, in consideration of the premises, (7) prompt a question-and-answer character of speech behaviour, also welcoming the regular questions along the lines of these: Who agrees? Who disagrees? What other opinion on this matter? Who does not understand? What is unclear? – to attract all group members into communication so that they could reflect on their learning process.

The question appears as a sense-giving trigger for self-expression in intellectual and communicative practice. The answer, in turn, will be the recognition of the intentional (purposeful, conscious) attitudes of the questioner, the ideational evocation of the intentional (sense-bearing, thinkable, conceptual) definitions of the word capacity, and the verbal or non-verbal reacting of the answerer in conformity with their cognitive attitude. In our view, questions and answers are the sort of learning system that fulfils a task for the proliferation of collective thinking in a congruent approach to language learning. They enhance experiences and develop constructive feedback and previously specified skills, mostly active listening, empathy, and group processing in general.

The propensity for congruence manifests itself in the form of intellectualising the communication, or communicative adaptation, of any ideas, whether fiction or realities, so that expressing a certain degree of adequacy of moods and beliefs of the students to the object under study occurs. Against this background, intellectualisation objectifies the commuting of an event-consequential picture of the world in an imaginative, authorial representation into an experimental-creative one and actualises one of its gamified ways, namely the interview.

This form will be acceptable to graduate students because of its inherent complexity: solving challenging problems; inconsistencies in understanding; cognitive demands on both the interviewer and interviewee in active listening, critical thinking, and effective communication that are higher than those for undergraduates.

In the course of literature in the master's programme in intercultural communication, the student tutor gets an opportunity to work out interview questions autonomously and preliminarily for the student tutee who would act as one of the characters of the studied novels. For example, an interview with hypothetical interlocutor Raskolnikov proved practical in the permutation of *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoyevsky according to students' cultural and social assumptions. Such an interview elicits associations with the cognitive one primarily because the term *cognitive* within this concept reflects its foundation in cognitive psychology, which focuses on how people perceive, think, and remember information. The arguments for believing that such interviewing is cognitive are then as follows.

1. Use of cognitive strategies. The cognitive interview incorporates asking open-ended questions, encouraging the interviewee to provide a detailed narrative, employing mental transformation in learning situations, and perceiving or associating oneself in the hero's shoes.

2. Emphasis on memory processes. Cognitive interviewing concentrates on attention, encoding, and retrieval.

3. Retrieval of stored information. The cognitive interview organises the multiple retrieved pieces of information to create a coherent structure by encouraging the interviewee to mentally restore the story episode and recollect desired contextual details before making a final judgment.

Throughout the academic session, the teacher continuously assesses the student tutors' and student tutees' performance, providing timely feedback and recommendations, not forgetting the learning objectives. This feedback loop is crucial for promoting metacognition as students reflect on their learning processes, making adjustments accordingly. When combining curriculum-based language learning with cognitive thinking, students enhance their metacognitive abilities involving self-reflection, self-regulation, and monitoring learning progress. Therefore, they start to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in language training and programming (i.e., learning through the instructional programme), which allows them to make positive developments and empowers them to take ownership of their learning pathway.

Lastly, the teacher reflects on their practice to identify areas for repositioning target capabilities to optimise their instructional operations.

The practices of harmonising mental or cognitive processes outlined above constitute, as it were, a vector combination of training subjects' reflections and metacognitive strategies for replicating knowledge, cognition patterns, and activities. So, attaining the perfection of cognitive congruence requires the vectorial combination of teacher, student tutor, and student tutee metacognitions, especially as they relate to a cooperative and supportive environment between teachers and students, on the one hand, and student mindfulness and outcomes, on the other.

According to the methodological grounds for the cognitive congruence principle application in education and its participants' constructive actions, there is a topical question about the ideation of a model that can accommodate all components of the learning process and move it closer to student readiness to be flexible and, if possible, congruent to perceiving, experiencing, and communicating conceptual information.

In keeping with our stance and subsequently adhering to the instructional design, the teacher will meet this challenging task and line up the educational curriculum (including subject matter ideas, i.e., topics or themes, and learning goals) and training material, correlating all of them with guidelines and long-term learning results. That is the path the teacher takes to get a methodological apparatus squared away, intending to deploy the *student tutor–student tutee–student group* model according to the cognitive congruence principle and form the outer boundary

of its functioning. The model turns behavioural when the teacher, so to speak, plugs in the human factor assessment criteria, namely the level of cognitive experience of individual learners. The human factor assessment criterion stems from the *Human Factors Analysis and Classification System* developed for investigating human aviation-related accident or incident causation (Shappell & Wiegmann, 2001). For our purposes, it allows us to identify, assess, and reduce the hazards of incongruent behaviour during learning activities in whole or in part, for one thing, in academic discourse. Thereupon, we must heed the argued construal meaning of the term *cognitive experience*, which 'is a psychological basis of intellectual giftedness and a type of representation (i.e., how an individual sees, understands, and interprets what is going on in the surrounding reality) and is a proto-phenomenon of the intellectual life of a person' (Shavinina & Kholodnaja, 1996), but with some salient complement.

Under most circumstances, students are supposed to have similar experiences through combining in the same educational cluster. Nevertheless, it is common to see average and higher levels due to their innate abilities, as indicated above, and previous local educational conditioning. Regardless of the position of equal social congruence, students with diverging levels of cognitive experience will invariably be incongruent with each other in the knowledge dimension and storage means. It follows that students with unconventional study habits and aptitudes account for a potential pool of student tutor candidates, as do others who are student tutees.

In general terms, cognitive experiences are foremost experiences of knowing, and, as part of the model *student tutor–student tutee–student group*, they undergo a series of transformations through subliminal or supraliminal adaptation, causing a partial reorientation toward the telic state and new channels for data entry. When coupled, the telic state and revised input information yield another cognitive experience that is explicitly neurally anchored. The last-mentioned aspect is not the subject to discuss now (for details, see Arlt et al., 2022). The issue of congruence flexibility, in some sense, looms here. It is fitting that this term is common in organisational theory and describes the degree to which an organisation is deft in balancing the need for consistency and stability with the need for change and adaptation (Wright & Snell, 1998). The cognitive flexibility in this setting becomes a motive power for interactive learning activities. The learning process acts as a conduit for shaping the congruent experience, which, in contrast, functions as an outlet, evolving into one of the results of a congruent learning circuit. In this perspective, cognitive congruence over time will be a tool for transitioning from hardline views to tolerance, criticism, and cooperativeness and from cooperativeness (plus meta-criticism) to creativity. This conclusion is because cooperativeness implies joint decision-making. And since the decision-making process predetermines hypothesising and giving a prioritised and, at the same time, odd idea, cooperativeness within the outlined model makes it an optimal environment for stimulating self-critiquing and creative thinking.

For the cases considered, the congruence learning model discussed in the study represents functional consistency between instructional and learning units such as the following (Figure 1).

1. Subject-to-subject training relationships: *student tutor–student tutee–student group* activities.
2. Concurrent factors that influence lineup membership: instructor’s activities (directive counselling) and students’ cognitive experiences.
3. Teaching resources, i.e., what constitutes the object of controlled cognition and what determines the substantial characteristics of subject–subject cooperation: educational curriculum and instructional materials.
4. End effect: outcomes plus congruent experiences.

In interaction, all these components establish a so-called frame-alignment system. While remaining discussion-based, it has shown itself in practice to be workable and eligible for creative use. In addition, as a result of individual errors, fatigue, stress, cultural thought patterns, stigmas, maladaptive thoughts, characterological constitution, temperament incompatibility, mindlessness, mindfulness, and other factors, incongruence can affect students learning performance and performance learning systems muddling through performance objectives and performance levels. If so, the model components should command reserves to balance intense situations and relaxation, for example, during game training. Role-playing scenarios, cognitive interviewing, creative assignments for videos and podcasts, – all neutralise conflict and discordant behaviours.

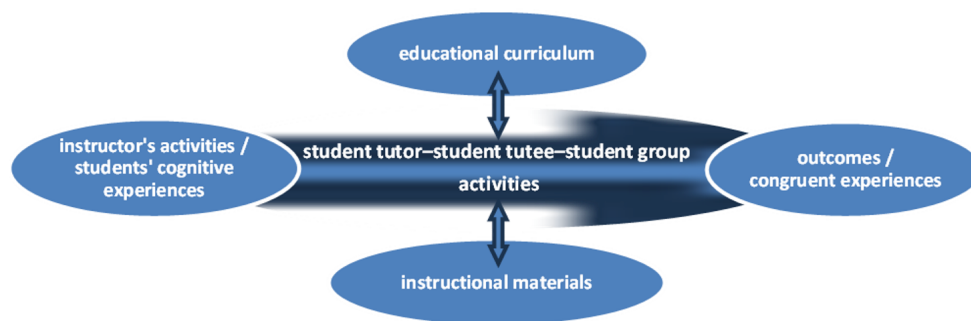


Figure 1. Congruence learning model

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this article, the cognitive congruence principle merges with the idea that learning is more effective when the instructional method matches the learner’s cognitive styles and abilities. In processing and systematising information, it is advisable to equip them with different options and supports to engage in cooperative communication. In pursuance of the instructor’s conceived strategies, the class strategies of the students set the training process scenarios under which problems of subject-oriented model building and subject-object relations find congruent solutions. Through interactions between students with discrepant goals, peer tutoring, and self-regulation, they can specifically develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and generally foster educational capabilities (e.g., loyalty and recognition, cognitive thinking and reconfiguring alternative decisions).

The congruence between experiencing cognitive thinking and using instructional patterns has representative results along the lines of (1) enhancing cognitive skills for training language: analytical extrapolation, logical reasoning, critical thinking, and decision-making; (2) improving language acquisition, i.e., grammar and vocabulary when communicating ideas; (3) harnessing focused mindset, i.e., the facility to concentrate for long periods on task performance; (4) developing problem-solving skills transferable to other areas of life: identifying regularities, break-

ing down complex problems, and finding practical solutions; and (5) exercising in metacognition: self-reflection, self-regulation, monitoring tutoring progress.

In general terms, analysing congruence allows us to access the potency of the learning environment. So, the main points discussed in the article revolve around instructional design, effective communication, metacognitive skills, and the role of assessment and feedback in promoting learning. Specifically, these include (1) the importance of preplanning academic activities, considering students’ competencies, interests, and learning preferences; (2) the introduction of instructional materials that cater to different learning styles, incorporating visual and auditory aids; (3) the provision of choice in assignments that allows students to choose topics and tasks that interest them; (4) the consideration of kinaesthetic learning styles and the inclusion of appropriate tasks for those students; (5) the prominence of feedback loops and formative evaluations to improve instructional content and materials; (6) the role of instructional design in creating an engaging and motivating learning environment; (7) the tailoring of question-and-answer modes of communication to foster a sense of community and encourage cooperative learning; (8) the process-oriented approach to instructional design that focuses on individual experiences and interdisciplinary learning; (9) the selection of digital resources and adaptive tutoring processes to

cater to individual learning needs; (10) the integration of cognitive strategies and memory processes in cognitive interviewing; (11) the continuous assessment of student performance and the importance of feedback in promoting metacognition and self-regulated learning.

The relevance of these main points to the overall discussion is that they reveal effective instructional design practices and strategies that can enhance student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. They emphasise the importance of considering individual differences and preferences, promoting active learning and cooperation, and fostering metacognitive skills. Additionally, the article discusses the role of instructional design in creating a meaningful and interdisciplinary learning experience for students.

Nevertheless, some potential counterarguments or limitations to the cognitive congruence principle must be acknowledged, in particular the following.

1. Individual differences. One limitation could be that individuals have cognitive structures, learning styles, and preferences which do not match their individual needs, abilities, or goals. These may lead to frustration, confusion, or resistance from the learners and reduce their motivation and engagement. It may not be possible to achieve complete congruence among all learners. According to Dunn et al. (2015), cognitive congruence between teachers and students is not always desirable or beneficial, and cognitive diversity may scarcely enhance learning outcomes. There can be no unambiguous embodiment of the cognitive congruence principle. Some learners may struggle to align their cognitive frameworks with the instructional design or the goals of the learning experience.

2. Cultural and linguistic diversity. The cognitive congruence principle may face challenges in culturally and linguistically diverse learning environments. Different cultural backgrounds and languages can influence the interpretation of concepts, making it difficult to achieve complete congruence.

3. Subjectivity and interpretation. Cognitive congruence relies on shared information and understanding. However, individuals may interpret and understand concepts differently based on prior knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. This subjectivity can hinder the attainment of complete congruence.

4. Time and resource constraints. Implementing the cognitive congruence principle may require significant time and resources. It may vary depending on their prior knowledge, skills, and interests. If the cognitive load is too high or too low, the students may experience cognitive overload or underload, which impairs their learning performance and satisfaction. It looks as though the curriculum settings normalise the influence of the cognitive congruence principle adoption that is allegedly not proportional to learning opportunities for students, more so as students experience it when training the taught material.

5. Ethical considerations. Applying cognitive congruence to language training raises ethical issues. It is necessary to remember that the model respects the learners' autonomy and does not infringe upon their individual needs, abilities, or goals.

To mitigate or address these possible limitations, the following strategies respectively can be considered.

1. Differentiated instruction. Recognise and accommodate individual differences by providing flexible learning opportunities and adapting comprehensive measures to meet diverse learner needs. It could involve offering various learning pathways, providing additional resources, and incorporating different modalities of instruction.

2. Culturally responsive teaching. Foster an inclusive learning environment that values and incorporates diverse cultural perspectives. Encourage open discussions and promote cultural sensitivity to enhance understanding and reduce cultural barriers to cognitive congruence.

3. Active learning and formative assessment. Engage learners in active learning activities that pertain to critical thinking, problem-solving, and reflection. Regularly assess and provide feedback on learners' progress to address misconceptions and adjust instructional strategies accordingly. Promote an individualised or personalised approach with the attributes, activities, and task complexity opted for progress (decided between alternatives) or self-chosen by students. On a case-by-case basis, it is preferable to do it accurately, especially without tendentious interpretations.

4. Balancing cognitive demands and the support provided in the tutor-tutee relationship. Align the instructional design, learning goals, and individual learner needs in a time-efficient manner, especially in large classrooms or online learning environments. A limited solution for this may come from cognitive load theory. Sweller (1988), who developed it out of a study of problem-solving, argued that instructional design can cope with the cognitive load in learners. More recent studies on instructional methods (Van Merriënboer & Sweller, 2005) and *'the measurement techniques and measures used for cognitive load types'* (Orru & Longo, 2019, p. 23) might also be instrumental in discussing load misallocation prevention and, on the back of it, learning outcomes enumeration. So, at the start of the course, creating a learning outcomes enumeration proves to be a qualifying condition for guidance structure and content commensurability to students' cognitive resources. For example, such inputs are experience, intellectual and emotional influences on learning, mindfulness, sociability, communicative competence, and task-relevant knowledge. Teachers can calculate a quantitative comparison between the out-of-class workload rate upon target language learning with an emphasis on cognitive congruence and the amount of total effort devoted to academic mental activity for a student. A helpful tool to assist them in this endeavour is the Course Workload Estimator designed for the Rice University Center for Teaching Excellence (Barre & Esarey, 2023). From this perspective, narrowing or widening the scope of the material and tasks for classroom training will level out different types of speech and optimise retention. At each session, teachers carefully monitor the psychological mood of the students and make appropriate adjustments to the training process accordingly.

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5. Assessing cognitive processes. Control the effects of cognitive congruence on learning outcomes. This problem entails studying it with other factors, such as affective, attitudinal, social, cultural, or contextual influences. Such a case is especially true about decision-making, say, in abstraction from a purely linguistic aspect but in the light of a moral one. In this situation, we can refer to the model of decision-making suggested in business ethics as 'a process that involves being present in the moment and mindful, having a holistic view of the situation through the inclusion of passion and emotion, and engaging in the habit of practice can enhance our decision-making about ethical issues' (Elm, 2019, p. 167). Still, due to the factors mentioned, students are often reluctant to be prompted to express their opinions on moral issues. The latency of ethics under such circumstances has the potential to be offenceless by the role-playing of training situations. The cognitive congruence, thus taking a veiled form, results only from the tutoring function.

It is important to note that these strategies are suggestions. When speaking of the restrictions in using the cognitive congruence model, one should be aware that it is a tool for analysing student group or training problems and a manageable starting point for transforming performance. It does recommend neither the best educational culture, the best course structure, nor any one-box solution in choosing methodological techniques. The model focuses principally on the internal learning environment and fractionally helps consider what happens outside the group and individuals. It is the instructional approach for aligning the learning process, structure, and culture.

The cognitive congruence model has practical implications in target language training. These are especially true for cooperation and peer learning.

Tutors identify the areas of congruence and incongruence by evaluating their cognitive structures, styles, and techniques and those of their tutees. Tutees assess and expand their cognitive structures, styles, and activities while comparing them with their teachers or peers. Tutees then seek to enhance their cognitive congruence with their teachers or peers by learning from them, asking questions, sharing opinions, or seeking feedback. Exposing themselves to various sources of input, output, and interaction in the target language and culture aids learners in generating new views and challenging their way of thinking.

Teachers and learners can use various tools and techniques to measure and improve their cognitive congruence, such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, reflections, portfolios, or peer-assisted learning. Educators and students can monitor their cognitive congruence, analyse their target language learning objectives, and grow in self-awareness due to the implementation of these resources and methodologies.

Real-world applications of the cognitive congruence model in target language training have discussion perspectives, too. In this case, the first assumption is that the model provides a basis for explaining how individuals process information and make decisions based on their mental models and the degree of fit between them and the external reality. This model can be applied to understand how learners acquire and use a new language in different contexts and situations.

One possible application is to design and evaluate learning activities that promote cognitive and social congruence between learners and native speakers. For example, learners can engage in authentic tasks that require them to communicate with native speakers using the target language, such as conducting interviews. This task can help learners develop and update their mental models of the target language and culture as it also receives feedback and guidance from native speakers. The cognitive congruence model can also help assess the effectiveness of similar assignments by measuring the degree of congruence between the student mental models and the external reality of the target language and culture.

Another possible application of the cognitive congruence model in target language training is to facilitate cross-cultural language learning, which involves interpreting and understanding the meanings and values of different cultures through the target language. For example, learners can explore and compare the similarities and differences between their culture of origin and the target culture, such as the norms, beliefs, values, and practices. These activities can help learners expand and refine their mental models of the target language and culture and develop intercultural competence and awareness. The cognitive congruence model can also help monitor and support the cross-cultural language learning process by identifying and resolving the potential sources of cognitive dissonance. This discomfort can be caused by holding conflicting beliefs or encountering inconsistent information.

In general, the model encourages participants to engage in open and respectful dialogue, allowing for the exploration of different viewpoints and the opportunity to learn from one another. The model aims to bring creativity, individual expression, cooperation, and intercultural sensitivity to the external reality.

Educators can align their instructional practices with students' cognitive processes and metacognitive strategies when incorporating the principles of cognitive congruence in their teaching methodologies. Educators then adjust their methods, materials, and feedback to suit the cognitive characteristics of the students or help them develop new or different cognitive structures, styles, and strategies that are more congruent with



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the target language and culture. They can use various methods and materials that match personal cognitive preferences and tendencies, such as concrete props and visual aids, short and action-oriented instructions, multimedia learning, dual coding, interleaved practice, retrieval practice, managing cognitive load, working with schemas, etc. In this way, educators help the learners expand their cognitive structures, styles, and strategies by exposing them to different sources of input, output, and interaction in the target language and culture, such as authentic texts, audio-visual materials, cultural artefacts, native speakers, etc.

In fact, it requires providing ongoing professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of cognitive congruence and develop effective instructional practices. They can include training on cultural competence, differentiated instruction, and formative assessment techniques.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The cognitive congruence conception fulfils the function of a guiding principle for teachers to create a supportive and engaging learning environment. The congruence learning mechanism, here, refers to the intellectual process of reinforcing or transferring knowledge and persuasion.

The original aim of the study is to develop a cognitive congruence-performing model for target language training. The paper seeks to objectivise the cognitive congruence principle of model building by aligning learning goals with learning experience processing, student abilities or learning styles with instructional design, and tutoring with tuteeing and delivering to the educational cluster. A process-oriented tactics featuring dynamics, cooperation, and transformation in the teaching, tutoring, and tuteeing processes serve to address this aim. The method involves exploratory data analysis, including process tracing, process screening, and process evaluation. The study seeks to facilitate knowledge, upgrade the cognitive experience, confirm

alignment with the educational surroundings, and integrate approaches to instruction and learning with the implementation of this methodology.

The key results of the study on applying the cognitive congruence principle to target language training are as follows.

1. The model establishes a frame-alignment system that promotes functional consistency between instructional and learning units.

2. The model considers subject-to-subject training relationships, concurrent factors influencing line-up membership, teaching resources, and end effects.

3. Incongruence can negatively affect students' learning performance, but the model components can help balance intense situations and promote cooperation.

4. The cognitive congruence principle suggests that learning is more effective when the instructional method matches the learners' cognitive styles and abilities.

5. The cognitive interview, which incorporates cognitive strategies and emphasises memory processes, can enhance information processing and systematising.

6. Continuous assessment, feedback, and metacognition are crucial for promoting students' reflection, self-regulation, and monitoring of learning progress.

7. The process-oriented approach and the congruence principle offer practical guidelines for planning and implementing learning systems.

8. The congruence principle aligns learning goals with learning experience processing, instructional design with student abilities or learning styles, and tutoring with tuteeing.

9. The cognitive congruence model enhances knowledge acquisition, decision-making skills, and complex problem-solving.

10. The model facilitates cultural acceptance, social responsibility, and self-assessment in students' chosen fields.

These results highlight the importance of aligning instructional methods with learners' cognitive styles and abilities to enhance learning outcomes and promote metacognitive abilities. Modelling the behaviours and skills – the teacher wants their learners to adopt – while demonstrating how they relate to real-world scenarios will help them acquire the know-how to be or feel congruent. The cognitive congruence model is an aligning tool for formative assignments in the learning process. When the learning process integrates communication in linguo-cultural and interdisciplinary contexts, the model contributes to intercultural awareness, the meaningfulness effect in handling concepts, and sensitivity among students. Learning under these modalities requires a qualitative change toward congruence.

Prospects for further research in this field should continue to expand our understanding of the principle of cognitive congruence and its implications for language training and encompass the ethical issues of its application in specified linguo-cultural spaces and recommendations for online adaptation. Even more, experimentation may be needed to fully understand and address the limitations and counterarguments to the cognitive congruence principle.

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## Original Research

# Classical texts in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language: Investigation of a case study of 2018–2023 curriculum

by Galina A. Khimich and Ekaterina D. Terentieva

Galina A. Khimich RUDN University, Russia [khimich-ga@rudn.ru](mailto:khimich-ga@rudn.ru)

Ekaterina D. Terentieva RUDN University, Russia [terentyeva-ed@rudn.ru](mailto:terentyeva-ed@rudn.ru)

Article history Received July 14, 2023 | Revised November 4, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding This paper has been supported by the RUDN University Strategic Academic Leadership Program

doi [10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-68-80](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-68-80)

For citation Khimich, G. A., & Terentieva, E. D. (2023). Classical texts in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language: Investigation of a case study of 2018-2023 curriculum. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 68-80.

*Traditional foreign language programmes for students in humanities and technical faculties, excluding philological ones, do not include in-depth study of the history and culture of the corresponding region, which limits the overall language proficiency level of future specialists. This paper describes the theoretical and practical foundations of the proposed methodology for incorporating classical literary texts into the process of teaching foreign languages to non-philology students, aiming to deepen their knowledge of history, social processes, and stages of cultural development in the target language country. The authors provide justification for utilising both classical methods such as reading, translation, and retelling of literary texts, as well as elements of the communicative approach, such as group work, presentations, the use of audio-visual materials, and so on. The aim of the research was to determine the effectiveness of the proposed course for students based on the manual created by the authors using the proposed methodology. This article analyses the results of a survey conducted between 2018 and 2023, among students learning Spanish as a foreign language at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN University). The study employed a quantitative analysis using a mixed-method approach with statistical calculations and analysis. The survey data confirms the authors' idea of the high effectiveness of the integrated study method of historical and social processes, as well as literature from the country of the target language. Specifically, 90 percent of the students noted an enhancement of their knowledge of the culture and history of the country, and 67 percent of the students indicated significant benefits of the course for developing competencies relevant to their future professional careers. Due to its universality, the approach can be extrapolated to other foreign languages for students from different disciplines and levels of study.*

KEYWORDS: teaching Spanish, literature, ELE, language learning, cultural competence, communicative competence



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the current challenges for a university professor in the 21st century is the development of a new methodology for introducing literary texts into the process of teaching foreign languages. The main difficulty lies in the fact that, unlike the generation of the 20th and early 21st centuries, young people of the 2020s read significantly less and in non-philological classrooms we have repeatedly encountered a lack of understanding among students regarding the essence of literary texts and their differences from business, news, or scientific texts. Students do not always know the genre laws of its construction, do not see the correlation with the ideas of the era. Therefore, working with literary texts in the process of teaching foreign languages should also

involve immersing students in the world of literature. However, students in non-philological disciplines of study usually pay special attention to the language of their specialty and professional communication, and due to the shortage of class hours, their exposure to the culture and literature of the target language country is often overlooked, leading to a problem with the overall cultural proficiency of professionally trained translators with university education.

The awareness of the aforementioned problem prompted the Spanish language section of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at RUDN University to develop a unique methodology for introducing literary texts into the context of foreign language teaching for non-philological disciplines. Over

the course of five years, a textbook was prepared and published in electronic format in 2020 titled *Spain: History, Society, Literature*, along with the corresponding textbook (Khimich & Palacios González, 2020). In 2022, a printed version of this manual was released, based on materials from the course that had been taught for over 15 years.

As an integral part of a country's culture and a manifestation of language use, the literary text is an excellent resource for Spanish as a Foreign Language, especially in ELE (Español como lengua extranjera – Spanish as a foreign language) classes. By reading classical literary texts from different eras, guided by their teachers, students can gain insights into the evolution and history of the society that uses the language, while also analysing the influence of social development factors and changes in the language itself. Particularly, Spanish literature is incredibly rich and serves as a gateway for students to explore the Hispanic world.

We believe that one of the most crucial criteria in developing a methodology for working with literary texts in foreign languages in the 21st century, specifically for students in non-philological disciplines, is contextualisation of the work. A literary text is not just a linguistic model of the highest quality, but also a complex of the author's ideas, values, and perspectives of the era, reflecting the essence of the people's mentality at a particular historical stage, often framed by descriptions of everyday life and traditions. Working with a literary text outside its context, that is, without prior discussion with students about the historical, geopolitical, economic, social, and cultural context of the era, deprives students of the opportunity to delve deeper into the text and see it as more than just a linguistic model to imitate. In our course, structured chronologically, we explore all aspects of society in a given period: historical and political events, economy, philosophical ideas of the era, cultural movements, and social development issues. The introduction to the period culminates with the reading of a literary work which, when perceived by the students in the context of the events, ideas, and problems of the era, serves as an author's personalised illustration of historical events.

In this paper, the authors are committed to investigating various aspects of student progress after completing this course, its effectiveness through the results extracted from a survey conducted with several groups of students who were exposed to the material.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Currently, the debate about the role of literary texts in Spanish as a Foreign Language class remains open. In recent decades, various studies have emerged that examine the role of literature in second language learning programmes, and there is an extensive list of authors who strongly advocate the use of literary texts in ELE classes. Examples include the works of Sitman and Lerner (1996, 1999); Acquaroni Muñoz (1997, 2006, 2007, 2008); Martínez Sallés (1999, 2004); Naranjo (1999); Martín Peris (2000); Sanz Pastor (2000); San Mateo Valdehita (2001);

Sanz Pastor and Higuera García (2005); Núñez Sabarís (2005); Mendoza Fillola (2007); Albaladejo García (2007, 2017); Ubach Medina (2008); Carrillo García et al. (2008); González Cobas and Herrero Sanz (2009); Iriarte Vañó (2009); Garrido and Montesa (2010); Alonso Cortés (2010); Sanmartín Vélez (2011); Sáez (2011); González Cobas (2014, 2019); Nevado Fuentes (2015); Gómez Sacristán and Madrigal López (2017); Granero Navarro (2017); Palacios González (2015, 2017a); Serradilla Castaño and González Cobas (2017); García Aguilar (2018); Lanseros Sánchez and Sánchez García (2018); Reyes-Torres (2019); Díez Mediavilla (2019). Works such as those by Martín Peris (2000), Acquaroni Muñoz (2006, 2007, 2008), Sanz Pastor (2006), Mendoza Fillola (2007), Millares and Binns (2002), Benetti et al. (2003), and Khimich and Palacios González (2011) demonstrate a trend towards the recovery of the didactic value of literary texts in the language learning process. In spite of this, many current textbooks offer few literary texts among their language samples, and those that are included appear in a decontextualised form and sometimes only serve as examples of the linguistic and grammatical structures studied in the unit. Indeed, one of the conclusions of the comparative study of textbooks carried out by Professor Martín Peris found that although *'in the 1980s literary texts made a full entry into textbooks published in Spain'* (Martín Peris, 2000, p. 122), at present *'literature is considered to be invested with a special difficulty, or a special respect, which prevents it from being made accessible to beginners'* (Martín Peris, 2000, p. 123). He highlights the predominance of activities oriented towards oral comprehension, and that the tasks to be carried out by students are isolated from each other and that there is no common reading goal. Also, literary texts are inserted in many textbooks at the end of the lesson, which shows that they are not a priority as didactic material, as if they served as *'gratification reserved for those who have managed to learn'* (Martín Peris, 2000, p. 123). Following in these footsteps, Acquaroni (2006), in his study of textbooks published between 1995 and 2005, shows that the percentage of literary texts decreased even further compared to Martín Peris' data (Acquaroni, 2006, p. 52). In this line, after analysing a selection of ELE communicative textbooks published between 2002 and 2015, Palacios González (2017a) perceives a certain improvement in the didactic exploitation of literary texts, since the predominance of linguistic practice favours the integration of skills and considers literary aspects. In contrast, the analysis of textbooks by Palacios González (2017b) reveals that the distribution of literary texts is very irregular depending on the textbook and that students are offered a biased image of the literary heritage in Spanish, with hardly any attention paid to non-contemporary classical literary texts. Moreover, as González Cobas (2021) has recently pointed out, if we look at the didactic exploitation, the activities with literary texts do not work or do little work on sociocultural competence and interculturality.

Given that the authors of the textbook on reading classical literary texts which is the subject of this article belong to two different methodological traditions (i.e., Spanish and Russian),

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before continuing with our presentation, it seems pertinent to briefly yet descriptively review the use of literary texts as a resource for language teaching in the Russian tradition, particularly in the case of Spanish.

In the Russian linguistic school, classical literature is maintained as the basis for structuring second/foreign language textbooks (Nuzhdin et al., 2004; Larionova & Chibisova, 2005; Kienja, 2005; Soler et al., 2005; Kondrashova & Kostyleva, 2014; Gorohova & Tsareva, 2021). Although it seems that all Russian researchers and methodologists agree on the issue of the importance of literary texts in foreign language learning, in the last few decades there has been an open scientific debate about the techniques and, above all, the objectives that teachers should consider when using artistic texts in their foreign language classes (Khimich, 2008; Kuznetsova, 2011; Bahtiozina, 2015; Eremina, 2015; Gilmanova et al., 2016; Minakova et al., 2017; Nikonova & Chelikova, 2017; Knyagicheva, 2021; Sanginova & Shalyukhina, 2021). To take one example, Kuznetsova (2011, p. 120) mentions the following objectives: (1) linguistic (enrichment of vocabulary, demonstration of the possibilities of the grammatical system, etc.); (2) communicative (the literary text as a starting point for discussion); (3) knowledge of culture (realities, processes, events and facts of the nation's culture); and (4) competences for the aesthetic perception of the artistic text.

Despite considering the cultural knowledge associated with literary texts, these studies do not place enough emphasis on the importance of contextualising literary works and their connection to the learning process of history, ideas from each era, and the social, cultural, and political development of the country or countries where the language studied is spoken.

Particularly, in the ELE class in Russia, although literature holds significant importance and is acknowledged by both teachers and students, it is primarily used as an illustration of linguistic, lexical, and grammatical content, disregarding its literary character. Therefore, while Russian students of Spanish have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with excerpts from the most prominent Hispanic literary heritage texts, in most cases, they receive them solely as a language model that exemplifies a grammatical phenomenon studied in the unit and/or as a means to enrich their vocabulary. Without diminishing all the positive aspects of this approach, we would like to point out

that it has certain drawbacks. The main one is that works or fragments of works are not chosen for their literary value or the ideas they contain but rather for the linguistic content that will serve to work on grammatical usage in class (e.g., the use of the subjunctive mood in a particular type of sentence, differences between the Indefinite and Imperfect tenses, etc.). Thus, in grammar classes, the historical-cultural value of the works, their contextualisation, and the relationship of the ideas they contain with the reality of the time in which they were written are typically left out of the study. This results in a superficial approach to literary texts that, deprived of their content and its cultural and historical value, do not have the effect on student perception that they could have had if it had been presented from another methodological perspective.

Taking into account this issue, and since it is very important for us that, in addition to the aforementioned use in grammar and vocabulary classes, artistic texts are studied with a broader and deeper focus, contextualised in the era to which they belong and their ideas, we have dedicated our efforts to adding contextualised readings with communicative and critical analysis activities of literary works to the traditional use that the Russian school makes of classic texts in the ELE classroom. Thus, we highlight the potential of literary texts for the development of linguistic competencies, as well as for the development of other competencies aimed at training future specialists with deeper knowledge of the country's culture.

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Authors' methodology

The manual created based on our methodology is entitled *Spain: History, Society, Literature*. The material was designed to be used with Russian-speaking students at advanced levels in Spanish (B2-C1), although we believe that the method is universal and suitable for any student at this level. Our approach was to organise and present the course materials with not only philology students in mind but also other students from different humanities disciplines and even technical careers who may not necessarily have a consolidated reading habit or deep knowledge of Spanish history and culture. Certainly, both the organisation of the material and the simple structure of the manual allow it to be used both at university level and in bilingual schools or other ELE courses.

For the elaboration of our manual, we have combined aspects that we consider most effective from the Russian methodology (such as reading and translation of lengthy texts, report writing, memorisation, etc.) with other elements of the communicative approach (such as speaking practice, personal involvement, student engagement, group interaction and cooperation in the learning process, etc.). In this way, we have effectively achieved a didactic approach that allows us to integrate skills through a wide range of tasks that coherently combine reading, translation, storytelling (oral summary of the plot with the exposition of main ideas), analytical and hypothetical commentary, group dynamics, presentation of papers and reports, written

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composition, memorisation, recitation, and analysis of and commentary on audio-visual materials (films, songs, etc.) as well as other historical and cultural texts related to each period. Our objective is to achieve linguistic improvement alongside comprehensive education and personal enrichment of the individual, resulting in the development of their interpretative and critical abilities.

In our proposal, we understand literature not as a model to follow, but as a manifestation of language, an artistic expression that is distinct from others. Therefore, we emphasise the fact that literature should be studied in the ELE class as literature, making it clear to students that literary texts may not always serve as imitable examples in everyday speech or in scientific or professional language. Thus, while our objectives include teaching linguistic aspects of Spanish through the course, we do not approach the study of literature from a grammatical or lexical perspective. Instead, we aim to expand the knowledge that students acquire in other courses focused exclusively on grammar, paying more attention to the development of other competencies. We advocate the idea that careful examination of history, social processes, and cultural development through literature is highly beneficial at advanced levels of foreign language learning as it enables learners to better understand the mentality and character of the people who speak it. As aptly highlighted by Sáez (2011), the cultural decoding of literary texts is necessary in the ELE class because *'the difficulty that renders a classic work unreadable for both native and foreign readers lies not only in the language but also in the context and content'* (Sáez, 2011, p. 63).

In line with the Russian tradition, the units in the manual follow a chronological order, in which literary texts that serve as the basis for the course are grouped by historical periods. In the selection of texts (mostly excerpts from longer texts), we aimed to provide variety in order to present a wide range of text types, including prose, poetry, and drama. The texts are presented in a diachronic translation. Another criterion for our selection of texts was their representativeness, either due to their dissemination or their importance for understanding Spanish culture. We also considered the universal and timeless nature of the themes and ideas present in the literary texts, which is highly relevant for successfully organising debates and activities that engage students personally.

In all units, the literary texts in the manual are presented in a contextualised manner to activate students' critical thinking abilities. They are encouraged to compare their own perspectives with the diverse viewpoints and sensitivities of the actors from each historical period. The contextualisation of the texts is achieved through activities that require student participation, both individually and in groups, connecting their new knowledge about Spain with their existing understanding of universal history and culture, as well as their knowledge of Russia.

The tasks accompanying the reading of the texts are varied, just like the structure of the units. We have chosen to diversify the activities with the aim of energising the units so that students do not encounter a predictable pattern, believing that this diversity and unpredictability provoke student interest and creativity. However, the exercises in each unit are traditionally organised into three phases: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading.

In accordance with everything stated above, our manual aims to develop the learners' integrated competencies: communicative competence in (ELE) along with lexical-grammatical competence, reading competence, literary competence, artistic-aesthetic competence, and pluricultural competence. Our intention is to convey to students, through contextualised classic literary texts, that throughout history, there have been different value systems, political and administrative systems, and varying relationships between individuals and power. Understanding this fact critically and reflectively can help them better comprehend the social conflicts of other eras and many of those in the present.

### 3.2. Participants

The materials in our manual have been put into practice for 12 years in classes at the RUDN University in Moscow with groups of third-year Spanish students from different humanities courses (International Relations, Public Administration, History, Philosophy, Art, Political Science and Sociology). The course *Spain: History, Society, Literature* is taught to students over the course of one academic year (2 academic hours per week). Since 2018, we have been offering students the opportunity to participate in a post-course self-evaluation survey, which allows us to analyse the effectiveness of the teaching methodology employed in this course.

A total of 147 students from 2 groups of third-year Spanish students participated in the course evaluation survey each academic year, with an average age of 20 years. All of them were studying at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, pursuing dual degrees combining their major discipline with studies in Russian-Spanish interpretation/translation. To avoid biasing the responses, students were given the option to complete the questionnaire anonymously if they preferred.

### 3.3. Methods

The method of the research is conducting a survey which makes inferences from data collected by means of the questionnaire specially designed for research purposes. At the end of the

classes taught during the academic years 2018-2023 (September to May, 5 years), we invited students to fill out a questionnaire regarding their assessment of the course and the level of interest it had sparked in them, in order to determine the effectiveness of the materials and which activities had captured their attention the most. The survey questions were formulated in the Spanish language, as indicated below.

The personal evaluation questionnaire consisted of five questions (A, B, C, D, and E). It began with an initial closed-ended question (A): *Was the course Spain: History, Society, Literature useful for you?* This question aimed to determine the overall assessment of the teaching methodology, course materials, and integration of various activities in the process of improving language skills.

For the second (B), third (C), fourth (D), and fifth (E) questions, we provided students with multiple-choice options, where they could select one or several options. For the second question (B) *Evaluate which knowledge, skills, and abilities were acquired during the course*, students could choose any number of answers from the seven options provided: I gained knowledge about the culture and history of Spain; I learned to easily read long texts of various content; I improved my reading skills; I developed speaking skills and expressing my own point of view; I improved my writing skills, learned to write long texts; I familiarised myself with Spanish literature (I developed literary competence); I developed translation skills into the Russian language; I developed listening skills. These questions aimed to assess the students' evaluation of the various language competencies they acquired.

The third question (C) *Do you think this course will be beneficial for your professional career after graduation?* implied choosing from three answer options: yes, definitely, it will be beneficial for my professional career because it is important to have a lot of knowledge about the history and culture of the country; yes, because my knowledge of the Spanish language has greatly improved during this course (plus I developed many language competencies); no, I don't think this course will be beneficial for my career. This question aimed to show us whether students

consider the acquired knowledge about the culture, history, and literature of the studied language's country to be useful for their professional growth or if they only see the benefit of the course in terms of progress in learning the Spanish language.

The fourth question (D) *Which topics and aspects of the course did you find most interesting?* aimed to analyse students' interest in studying the substantive aspects of the course. Students could choose any number of the eight answers: history topics; reading literary texts; cultural aspect; social processes; country's economy; I liked the idea of studying everything as a whole, connecting philosophical ideas of the era with history and culture; I found it intriguing to trace the protagonist's perspective in the literary work within the historical and social context of the era we studied before reading the texts; I didn't enjoy studying the history and culture of Spain, I have other interests.

The fifth question (E) *Which tasks did you like the most?* involved choosing from eight possible answers: reading and translating historical texts; translating literary texts, including poetry; retelling; commenting and analysing; memorising and reciting poems; group work: collaborative analysis and commentary; watching movies; preparing and presenting reports. The textbook combines a large amount of non-repetitive tasks aimed at developing various skills and competencies. This question aimed to identify students' interest in different types of tasks.

After collecting the survey data, the responses were processed using a mixed-method approach with statistical calculations and quantitative analysis of students' answers. To illustrate these results, we have prepared graphs, which have allowed us to determine conclusions about the outcomes of the course.

#### 4. STUDY RESULTS

##### 4.1. General evaluation of the course

In response to the first question (A), which had a simple and closed response format, out of the 147 participants, 100% answered 'yes', which initially indicates the effectiveness of the course from the perspective of personal evaluation by the students (Figure 1):

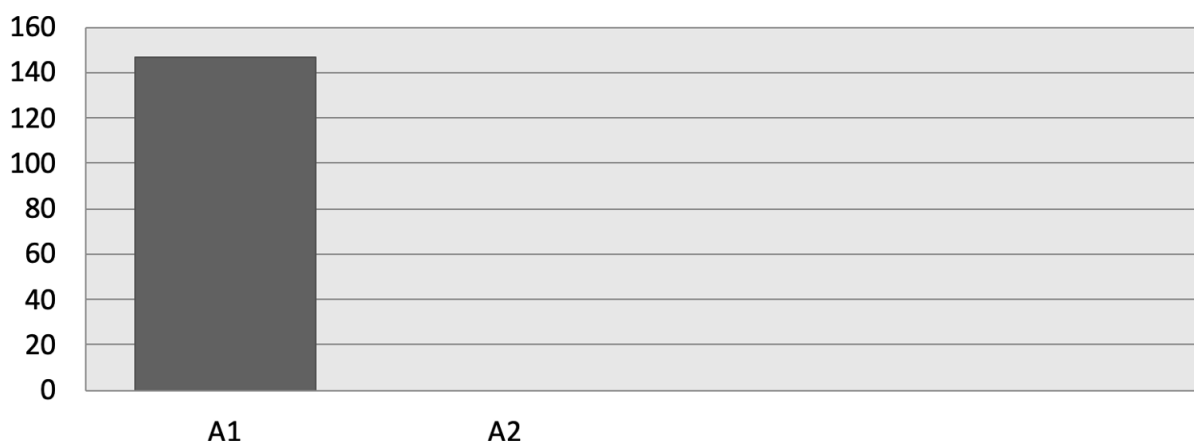


Figure 1. Visualisation of Question A responses (Has the course been useful for you?), by number of answers marked



**4.2. Evaluation of language competences**

The second question (B) was dedicated to the self-assessment of acquired knowledge and competencies. We were particularly interested in knowing the students' evaluation in this re-

gard, as we believe that self-assessment is of great importance as it allows the learner to engage with the course methodology, assess their progress, and understand which aspects of language learning they still need to improve (Table 1, Figure 2).

Table 1  
Responses to Question B: Evaluate the knowledge, skills, and competencies that you think you have developed during this course

TASK	RESPONSE	'YES' RESPONSES (%)
B1	I have improved my knowledge of culture and history	90
B2	I have learned to read longer texts of difficult content more easily, improving my reading comprehension skills	71
B3	I have improved my speaking skills to express my point of view	67
B4	I have improved my writing skills, to write complicated texts	65
B5	I have developed my literary competence	85
B6	I have improved my Russian translation skills	42
B7	I have developed my listening comprehension skills	22

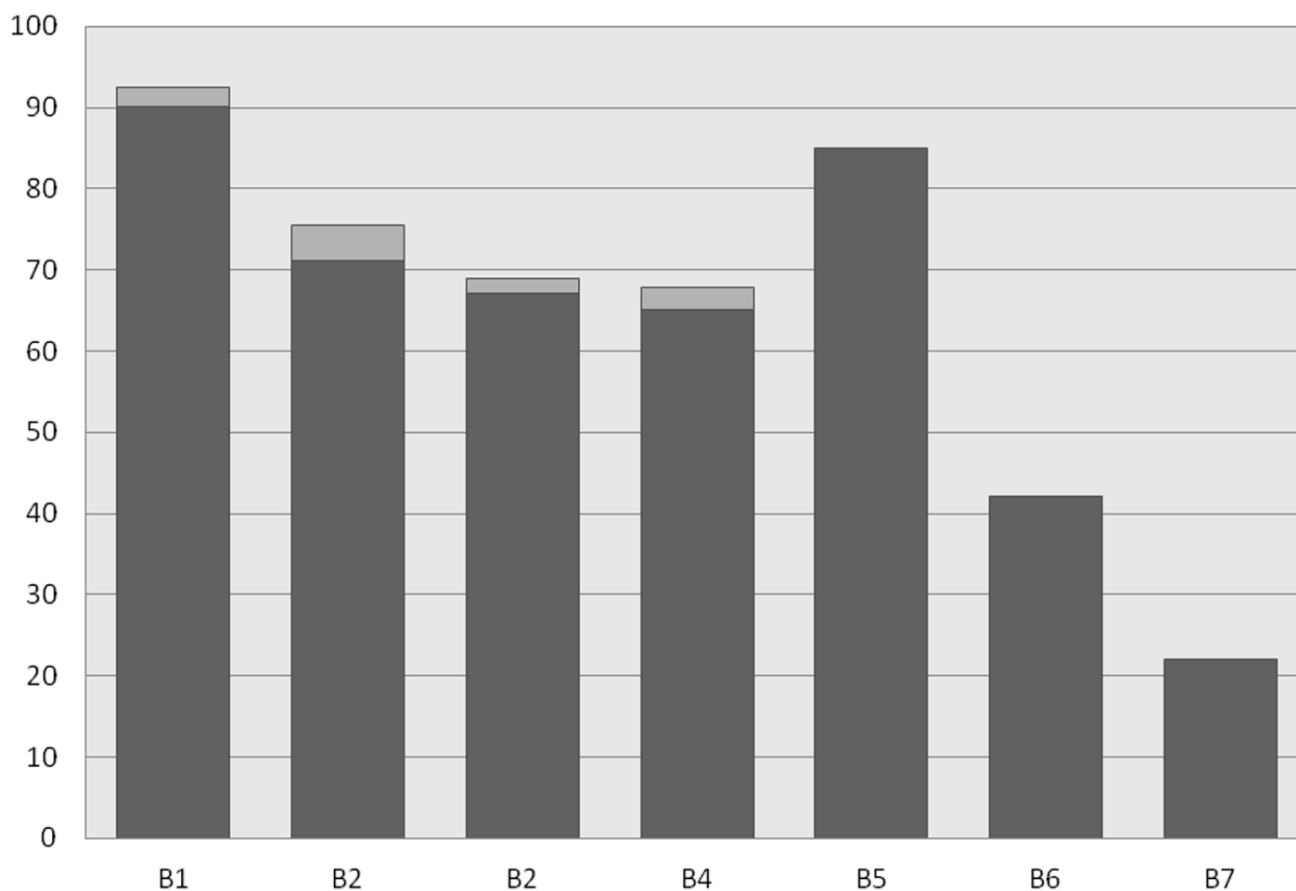


Figure 2. Visualisation of Question B responses (Evaluate the knowledge, skills, and competencies that you think you have developed during this course), by number of answers marked

Given the characteristics of the course and the emphasis placed on these aspects, it was predictable to have a high percentage (90%) of participants who claimed to have improved their cultural competence and knowledge of history after receiving the classes. We consider the percentages obtained for responses B2 and B6 to be very positive, as we have achieved one of the course objectives, namely, to teach students to read complex texts more easily in order to develop the habit of reading in Spanish. It is also very encouraging that 85% of the students believed they had improved their literary competence, especially

considering that these students were not philologists. Additionally, the result regarding the improvement of their ability to express their point of view orally is also good, particularly considering the difficulty presented in some texts and the complex analytical tasks proposed.

#### 4.3. Professional usefulness evaluation

In the third question (C), we asked the students to reflect on their future career and link the course they had taken to their potential professional growth (Table 2, Figure 3):

Table 2  
 Responses to Question C: Do you believe that this course will be useful for your professional career after completing university?

TASK	RESPONSE	'YES' RESPONSES (%)
C1	Yes, I will certainly become more competent, because it is important to know a lot about the history and culture of the country	65
C2	Yes, because I have made a lot of progress in my Spanish during this course, and I have developed a lot of skills	67
C7	No, I don't think this course will be useful for my career	1

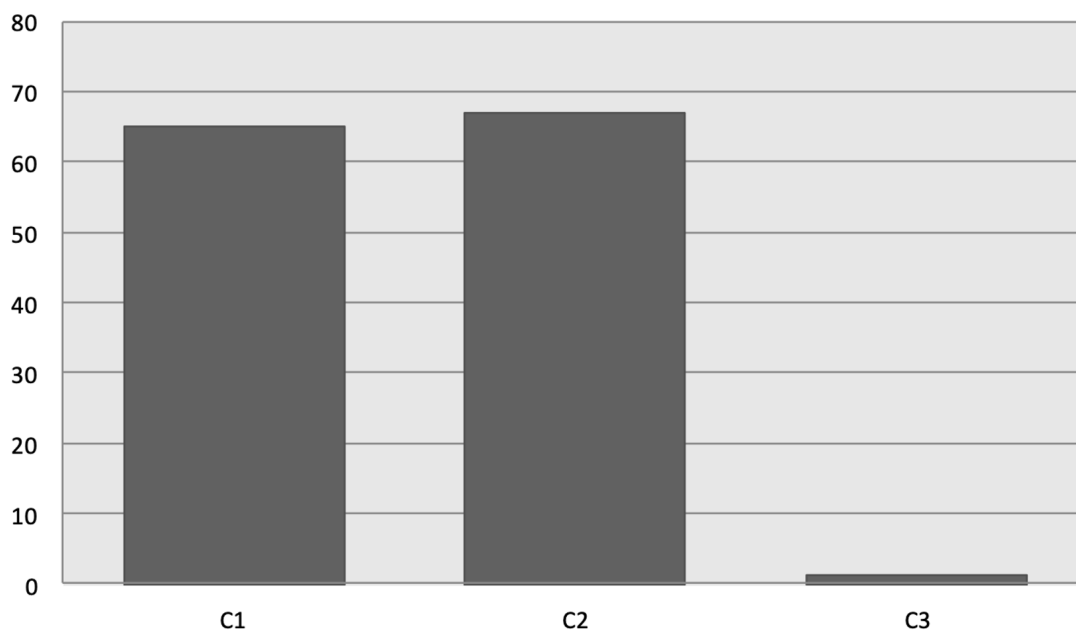


Figure 3. Visualisation of Question C responses (Do you believe that this course will be useful for your professional career after completing university?), by number of answers marked

As we can see, participants were offered the option (with answers C1 and C2) to indicate either the importance of history and culture knowledge or other competences for their future career, among which we understand linguistic competence to be included, as it is a foreign language course. Only one student stated that they believed the course would not be useful for their future. The majority of the remaining students perceived this question as a choice, selecting one or the other answer, while a

few participants marked both answers. This result demonstrates that for approximately half of the students, the development of their cultural competence is as important as having a good command of the language. From our perspective, focusing on second language teaching in a university context, this is a highly positive aspect, as one of our goals is to train professionals who have a strong cultural background and possess critical thinking skills for reflection and analysis.

#### 4.4. Evaluation of the content aspects of the course

Given the diversity in the group composition, with participants having varied interests and knowledge, we decided to focus the fourth question of the questionnaire (D) on determining which topics and aspects covered during the course had aroused the most interest among them. In formulating the answers, we provided the respondents with the option to specify each of the topics (history, literary texts, cultural themes, social issues, economy) and the opportunity to evaluate their opinion on the integrated work of all these aspects and the connections between the texts and the ideas of the era, culture, and history (answer

D6). Additionally, we wanted to gauge their opinion on one of the essential aspects of the method: the curiosity generated by seeing the historical and social context of their time through the eyes of the literary characters.

We emphasise that for us, this curiosity generated in the classes is one of the most important elements for student motivation when undertaking challenging tasks that require personal involvement, as well as for approaching the perspective of the protagonists, which will help students contextualise the literary text as a manifestation of the personal viewpoint of a specific era (Table 3, Figure 4):

Table 3

Responses to Question D: Which topics and aspects of the course did you find most interesting?

TASK	RESPONSE	'YES' RESPONSES (%)
D1	History topics	65
D2	Reading literary texts	44
D3	Everything that was linked to culture	39
D4	Studying social processes	61
D5	Studying the country's economic processes	41
D6	I liked the idea of studying everything together, to see how the ideas of the time were related to history and culture	70
D7	I found it curious to see through the eyes of the protagonists of the literary works the historical and social context that we studied before reading the texts	44
D8	I did not enjoy studying the history and culture of Spain, as I am interested in other things	2

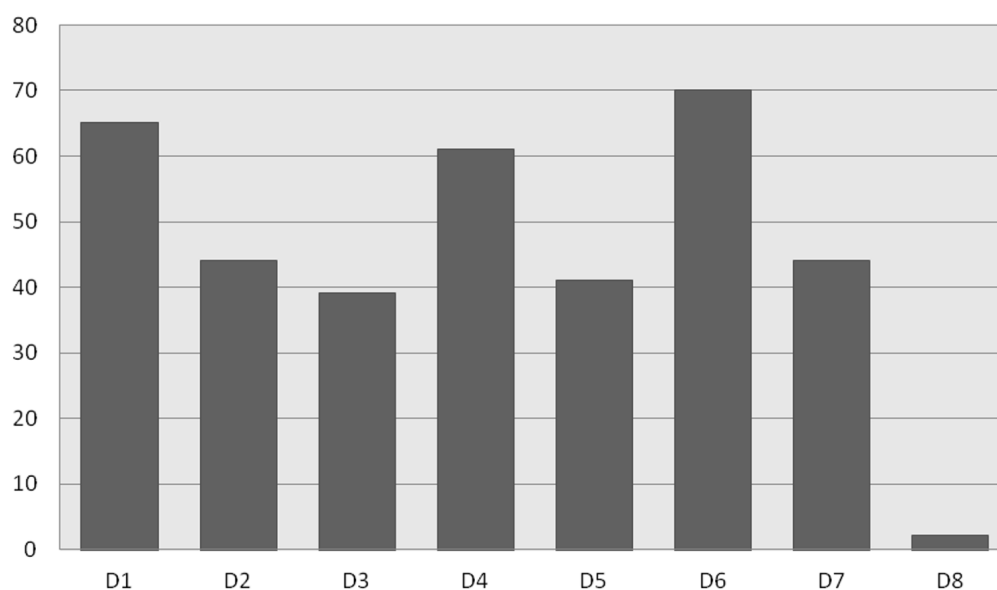


Figure 4. Visualisation of Question D responses (Which topics and aspects of the course did you find most interesting?), by number of answers marked

The results of the responses to this question appear to be very illustrative. According to these results, the aspects that interested the participants the most in the course were: topics on history (65%), social processes (61%), economic processes (41%), and culture (39%). Only 3 out of 147 students did not find the course content interesting. Meanwhile, 44% of students found reading classic literary works to be the most interesting aspect of the course, which we can positively evaluate as an indicator of the effectiveness of the method in engaging students in reading classics in Spanish. This is especially noteworthy considering that these students are not philologists and the texts we

read were classics and ancient, some of them even in their original versions, which can be quite challenging for a third-year foreign Spanish student. Similarly encouraging are the percentages obtained in responses D6 and D7, especially the 70% for the first of these, in which students responded that they truly enjoyed working with the texts in a contextualised manner.

**4.5. Evaluation of the methodological design**

The last question of our survey (E) was focused on the students' assessment of the tasks proposed during the course (Table 4, Figure 5):

Table 4  
Responses to Question E: What kind of assignments did you like the most?

TASK	RESPONSE	'YES' RESPONSES (%)
E1	Read and translate historical texts	69
E2	Translate literary works and poetry	48
E3	Relating the texts	28
E4	Comment and analyse	65
E5	Learn poetry	38
E6	Working in groups, comparing and commenting together	54
E7	Watch films	37
E8	Make reports and presentations and share them with the group	17

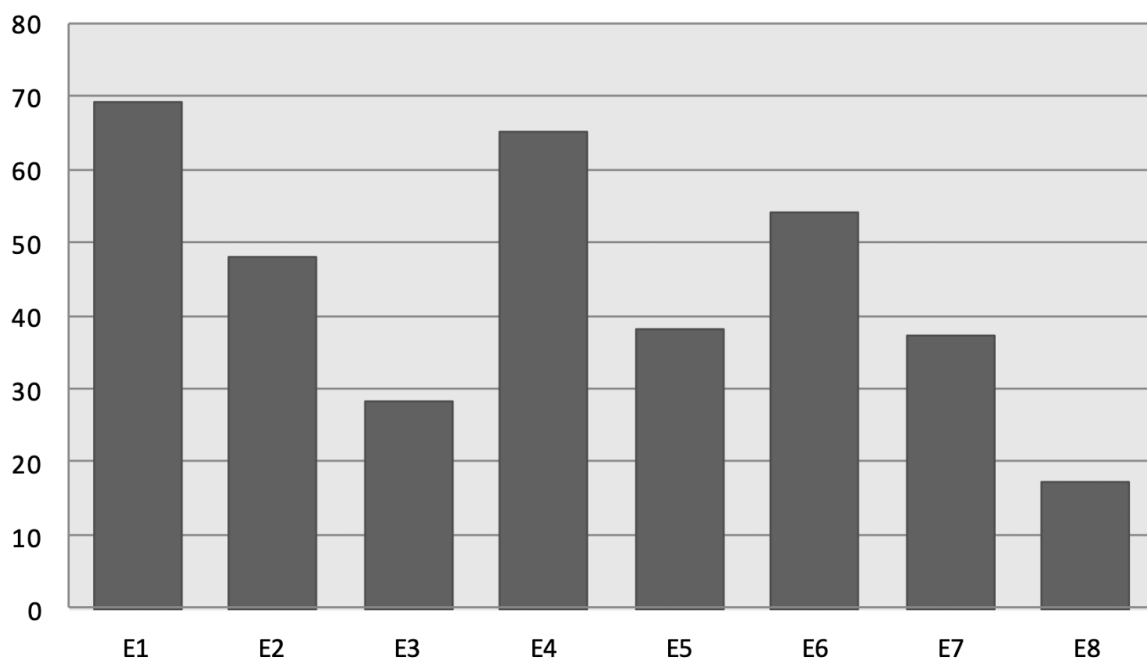


Figure 5. Visualisation of Question E responses (What kind of assignments did you like the most?), by number of answers marked

*'The results of the conducted research clearly demonstrate the high evaluation given by students to the integrated method of studying the history, social processes, and literature of the target language country. The idea of including literary texts in the process of teaching Spanish as a foreign language is also supported by leading methodologists in Spain'*

The percentages obtained demonstrate the primary interest of students in reading and translating historical texts (69%) and in oral exercises dedicated to commenting and analysing texts (65%). Equally important is the number of students (48%) who preferred reading activities over others, as indicated by survey results.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results of the conducted research clearly demonstrate the high evaluation given by students to the integrated method of studying the history, social processes, and literature of the target language country. The idea of including literary texts in the process of teaching Spanish as a foreign language is also supported by leading methodologists in Spain. González Cobas (2021) concludes his research in the following words: *'The steps taken are significant, but literary texts are still often perceived as appropriate resources to be introduced in complementary sections. The decision to integrate them or not within the teaching units represents a specific methodological choice, which is as important as many other decisions made that influence class development, teaching, and learning. Being aware of these factors undoubtedly contributes to a better understanding of the journey embarked upon by language learners and makes it more accessible to them'* (González Cobas, 2021, p. 172).

In line with González Cobas (2021), we believe that in the process of language teaching, our role as educators in the classroom should not be seen as a finite process. Language learning is a journey, a path that begins in the classroom but extends far beyond it. It is the path that will shape students' lives, and it is the teacher's responsibility to guide them, imparting the skills, competencies, and tools necessary for independent learning beyond the classroom. Therefore, our methodology aims to equip students with the ability to read literary texts in Spanish, to contextualise them, and to see them not only as models of grammar and vocabulary (which, of course, are essential), but also as sources of enjoyment and understanding, encompassing literary, social, and at times, political or philosophical dimensions.

The findings of our analysis also corroborate the perspective put forth by Pozo Díez (2018), who asserts that a properly guided reading of classical texts in ELE classes *'can serve as a driving force through which students not only acquire new knowledge, but also develop emotional learning strategies, practice all language skills, and imbue themselves with humanistic competence, which underlies the essence of any language'* (Pozo Díez, 2018, p. 349).

A comprehensive theoretical study conducted by Spanish methodologist Palacios González (2017a) in his doctoral dissertation, *Classical Literary Texts in the Teaching of Spanish as a Foreign Language*, also highlights the benefits of incorporating literary texts into the teaching process. Evaluating the survey results of students conducted after an experimental course on classical literary works within the framework of the teaching methodology of the Cervantes Institute, the researcher writes: *'The students surveyed perceive literature in general and classical literature in particular as a useful way to improve their level in Spanish and to access cultural elements that they see as important and significant for their learning'* (Palacios González, 2017a, p. 824). This conclusion aligns completely with the findings of our research.

However, it is important to recognize that, despite the generally favorable reception of the proposed course by students, practical experience reveals its ineffectiveness in groups with a Spanish language proficiency level below B1+. Successful mastery of the discipline demands more than just students' interest and commitment to self-development; it also necessitates a sufficiently high level of language proficiency. The proposed course proves ineffective for groups grappling with challenges in reading, grammar, and text comprehension, and it may be more suitable for recommendation at later stages of education.

Despite the mentioned constraints, the proposed methodology can be applied to develop similar programmes and educational materials for contextualisation systems in various regions, with a particular emphasis on Latin American countries. Additionally, it can be adapted for teaching foreign languages beyond the scope of the current programme. Considering the positive results of the method presented and analysed in this research, and given its universal nature, as a projection of this investigation, we propose the application of the method in other countries and teaching contexts of Spanish as a second language or as a foreign language, through collaboration with teachers from different nationalities and educational settings.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Setting out to determine the effectiveness of incorporating classical literary texts into the process of teaching Spanish to non-philology students, the authors analysed the results of a survey conducted among students learning Spanish as a foreign language at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN University), from 2018 to 2023. A quantitative analysis using a mixed-method approach with statistical calculations and analysis was employed in the development of the study. The contextualisation method of literary works allows students to gain an understanding of the evolution and history of society, analyse the impact of factors in social development, and changes in the language itself.

In summary, in the light of the questionnaire results regarding the interest generated by the course among the students, we can conclude that all of them considered working with classical literary texts in Spanish to be useful in general, and almost all of

them also perceived it as beneficial for their career development. Similarly, the majority of students (90%) reported an improvement in their knowledge of culture and history, and many of them also mentioned enhancements in their language skills. A significant proportion of the participants (70%) particularly enjoyed working with contextualised literary texts and exploring their connection to the ideas of the era, history, and culture.

Extrapolating our experience with Russian university students of ELE to a broader context, we can conclude that working with classical literary texts in Spanish as a Foreign Language (ELE) classes proves fruitful when it goes beyond purely linguistic exercises and includes communicative activities that contextualise and interpret the works, providing meaning and generating personal engagement from the students.

The research outlined in this article will be extended into the academic year 2023-2024. Our forthcoming plans involve a more comprehensive analysis, not only dealing with the impact of the method on foreign language acquisition and personal development in a non-language environment but also exploring specific themes that capture students' attention. To pursue this objective, we have augmented the questionnaire with two additional inquiries: F. Identify the century or historical/prehistoric period of Spain that you found most intriguing. Justify your perspective (minimum 5 lines, maximum 10); G. Select and enumerate three themes that held greater interest for you than others and that you anticipate will leave a lasting impression (choices may encompass historical, cultural, architectural, literary, social processes, etc.).

Additionally, students currently participate in two surveys as part of our assessment approach. The initial survey, administered before the course commences, aims to discern learners' ex-

pectations – eliciting observations on what they aspire to learn, the types of activities crucial for individual development, favoured topics, and preferred tasks. Following the completion of the course, students revisit the same survey, which enables a comparative analysis between their initial expectations and post-course perspectives. This process allows learners to gauge the skills acquired throughout the academic year. The outcomes of this comprehensive survey will be incorporated into our forthcoming research. Additionally, we are exploring the prospect of conducting a survey involving former course participants whose career advancements were contingent on Spanish language proficiency.

Work experience shows that, unquestionably, the conducted research and analysis of survey results contribute to the improvement of the methodology, allowing its adaptation to each specific group of learners depending on their specialty and proficiency level in the Spanish language. This working method, which we exemplify in our approach, is applicable to students with diverse backgrounds and educational contexts, and it is the task of the teacher to effectively and considerably adapt exercises and tasks to the needs of each student group. To achieve this, it is sufficient to focus on the proposed texts by highlighting aspects that capture the students' attention (artistic, historical, cultural, etc.) and/or exploring universal and timeless themes in classical works.

In this way, it is possible to conclude that, through the implementation of suitable communicative tasks and activities, classical literary texts generate interest and curiosity in ELE learners, foster a reading habit, and facilitate the development of competences that contribute to their personal and professional enrichment.

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## Original Research

# What can a foreign language textbook for Engineering majors be like? A case of developing and evaluating its sociocultural content

by Marina M. Bazhutina and Ekaterina D. Chizhatkina

Marina M. Bazhutina Togliatti State University, Russia [kurs-veka21@yandex.ru](mailto:kurs-veka21@yandex.ru)

Ekaterina D. Chizhatkina Togliatti State University, Russia [chizhatkina@mail.ru](mailto:chizhatkina@mail.ru)

Article history Received September 16, 2023 | Revised November 23, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi [10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-81-93](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-81-93)

For citation Bazhutina, M. M., & Chizhatkina, E. D. (2023). What can a foreign language textbook for Engineering majors be like? A case of developing and evaluating its sociocultural content. *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 81-93.

*The paper addresses the issue of a tertiary foreign language textbook for Engineering majors in the Russian context. The motivation for the research comes from the fact that despite numerous academic publications about the need for developing a modern foreign language textbook for technical universities, the problem still remains unsolved, especially, in relation to the development of the textbook's sociocultural content that would meet the communicative needs in the professional setting. The present study aimed at presenting and validating the framework for the sociocultural representation using the learners' and experts' evaluations. The research questions explored types of sociocultural representation in two piloted English textbooks. Then the authors focused on students' ability to identify the cross-cultural aspect of foreign language communication and sociocultural content in the textbooks. Finally, the research examined the feedback from experts and master students with some cross-cultural communication experience in their workplaces, which helped to evaluate the sociocultural representation in both textbooks. A total of 31 university students participated in the online survey. Data at the qualitative stage of the study were obtained from interviews. The findings show the prevalence of communication-based tasks and materials over knowledge-based ones. Besides, the learners' and experts' positive evaluations confirmed the sufficiency of the sociocultural representation. Being limited by the context of automotive Engineering majors, the study suggests a possible approach for designing sociocultural content of a foreign language textbook for Engineering students.*

KEYWORDS: *foreign language textbook, automotive Engineering majors, sociocultural content, cross-cultural communication*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

To start with, we would like to address the question of choosing the appropriate notion in the context of the present study: *Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) textbook, foreign language (FL) textbook, or profession-oriented textbook* which are used in the academic discourse. Of all the three, the notion of *FL textbook* seems to be versatile for FL teaching at any education level. For this reason, with regard to the scope of the present paper we would rather employ this one with the meaning of being *profession-oriented*, because dwelling upon backgrounds and possible differences of all these notions is beyond the scope of our study.

Various aspects of designing sociocultural content of a FL textbook have been over decades in the focus of both academics and practitioners. Risager and Chapelle (2012) drew special attention to the key position of textbooks in FL teaching, as they

are the foremost provider of knowledge on the target culture. Chapelle (2010) explores the potential intercultural competence-building content in beginner level French textbooks for developing Canadian college students' intercultural competence and points to some missed opportunities.

Some recent studies concentrate on interpreting cultural values and the ways of its improvement in the university textbook (Xiong & Peng, 2020). Multimodal infusion of moral and cultural values in textbooks for language and other subjects has also become a topic of considerable interest (Liu et al., 2022; Xiong & Hu, 2022). Forman (2014) and Tareva et al. (2017) describe the experience of the implementation of cross-cultural and sociocultural aspects into teaching materials. Cunningsworth (1984) raises the issue of evaluation of FL textbooks' sociocultural component. More specific problems such as realisation of language learning strategies from the sociocultural perspective

*'In the meantime, the development of a tertiary level FL textbook still lags behind the textbook development for secondary school because practical issues of creating profession-oriented teaching materials still face a number of problems, for instance, a contradiction between the need to create such materials and limited educational means, lack of methodological experience and skills for writing learning materials'*

were also explored by Donato and McCormick (1994). Pankratova (2019) points out to the potential of using a regional component in FL textbooks at tertiary level. Selection of cultural content of language textbooks (Risager, 2021), representation of multicultural values in textbooks (Setyono & Widodo, 2019), various aspects of analysis of cultural representation in textbooks (Risager, 2018; Risager & Chapelle, 2012), and issues of balance in representing British and American culture in university EFL textbooks (Laborda & Robles, 2022) are fruitfully discussed.

As for a FL textbook for non-language majors in Russian universities, academic discussions about what it should be like started decades ago, and since then various issues have been touched upon. First and foremost, it is the methodology issues, namely: theoretical approaches to its creation (Bogatryyova, 1998; Igna, 2021; Popova et al., 2020), textbook structure, and principles of content selection (Borisova, 2017; Tsimerman & Almazova, 2017). Safonova (2018) gives some recommendations on the principles and practices of designing tertiary level FL teaching materials based on the European professional education strategy and Russian national educational priorities. In the meantime, the development of a tertiary level FL textbook still lags behind the textbook development for secondary school (Vitlin, 2007) because practical issues of creating profession-oriented teaching materials still face a number of problems, for instance, a contradiction between the need to create such materials and limited educational means (Kirillovykh, 2022), lack of methodological experience and skills for writing learning materials (Kravtsova & Yastrebova, 2019).

Some more important questions include the discussion of the professional aspect in the content of learning materials (Igna, 2019, 2021) and the implementation of the concept of a FL textbook for Engineering (Bazhutina, 2023; Kirillovykh, 2022) and other non-language majors (Bogatryyova, 1998). In the context of training future automotive engineers, the major challenge is that in Russian automobile companies English is used as a medium of communication with foreign partners. In the meantime, English is taught at non-language universities where at a large scale there is no English-speaking environment, and the issue of appropriate textbooks has still not been resolved (Bazhutina, 2021). Additionally, Igna (2021) demonstrates sociocultural limitations in the content of textbooks for technical universities published both in Russia and by foreign publishers pointing out

to the necessity for developing textbooks of a new generation to meet demands for FL competences. Igna (2021) also argues that the sociocultural component of FL textbooks is underestimated, and the regional component of learners' culture is the most vulnerable one. In this regard, we see the need for a more thorough and discerning investigation into the sociocultural content of FL textbooks both quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, the aim of this article is to take part in the academic discussion about this issue using the example of Engineering majors in the context of Russian higher education by presenting some findings of the authors' research based on analysing, testing and assessing two piloted textbooks: English for Students of Mechanical Engineering (ESME) and English in Automobile Engineering (EAE) for automotive Engineering majors.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Modelling textbook sociocultural content

Previous studies strongly suggest that FL teaching at tertiary level should combine professional content with its language form (Inozemtseva, 2017; Popova et al., 2020; Sorokovykh et al., 2022; Sysoyev & Potapova, 2022; Tsimerman & Almazova, 2017; Yang, 2020). In this regard, to devise appropriate FL courses and learning materials employing both components, communicative needs analysis has always been essential (Basturkmen, 2021; Sysoyev & Potapova, 2022; Tomalin & Tverdokhlebova, 2021; Upton, 2012; Yang & Wang, 2016). Its extreme importance is emphasised in designing a sociocultural aspect (Weninger & Kiss, 2013), and the role of authentic teaching materials in realising this aspect was detailed by researchers (Igna, 2019; Skiada, 2021).

Igna (2021) suggests a number of essential features of the sociocultural component of FL textbooks for technical universities: *'professional and cultural orientation of topics; a variety of authentic materials; emphasis on sociocultural content of texts; sociocultural and lingocultural commentary; value orientations of text materials; exposure to the native language and culture including a regional component; positive presentation of the learners' country and culture; taking into account students' communicative needs, interests, and sociocultural experience; diverse presentation and its equal ratio of the sociocultural information about foreign countries if possible'* (Igna, 2021, p. 122). Bogatryyova (1998) suggested requirements for the sociocultural component of a FL profession-oriented textbook: (a) promoting the development of empathy among students; (b) informative value and relevance; (c) possibility of providing conditions for authentic communication on cross-cultural level; (d) taking into account communicants' native language and culture, communication and sociocultural experience; and (e) taking into account stylistic differentiation of learning materials; (f) linguacultural comparison.

Another relevant issue for discussing sociocultural content of tertiary FL textbooks for technical universities is forms and content of cross-cultural engineering communication. A number of pedagogical studies have sought to establish them. For example, Serova and Maletina (2010) singled out a business meeting,

*'The analysis of the sources in this section has brought us to the conclusion about the crucial role of the sociocultural aspect in designing a FL textbook for Engineering majors. What engineers read, write and talk about at work and what genres of all this discourse and what communication situations are part of cross-cultural communication, should become central when selecting and writing learning materials under consideration'*

a workshop, a training seminar, a presentation of an engineering design/report, an interview, negotiations, and a conference. Polyakova (2010) proposes 'engineering dialogue' as the essential genre of cross-cultural communication in any engineering area and being able to participate in this communication genre as the one of the target oral skills. Later, the ability for an engineering dialogue was included into the notion of integrative ESP competence as part of its communicative language activities.

As for approaches for representing cross-cultural communication in learning materials, Andarab (2019) argues that developing coursebooks helps both native and non-native speakers of English familiarise themselves with different linguistic and cultural norms that they are likely to encounter in communication situations with speakers from different cultural backgrounds. Byram (1997) and Menard-Warwick (2009) insist that learners should be given means for developing responsive action. Murayama (2000) used the terms *aspects of culture* and *levels of cultural understanding* to evaluate cultural content of textbooks. Having analysed Murayama's (2000) findings, Shin et al. (2011) introduced the modified term *levels of cultural presentation* instead of *levels of cultural understanding* and distinguished *knowledge-oriented* and *communication-oriented* materials and tasks to describe levels of cultural presentation. Their approach sounds appropriate for the objectives of the present study; therefore, we followed the analysis pattern of the sociocultural content elaborated by Shin et al. (2011) in the corresponding section.

## 2.2. Critical analysis

Following Byram (1997) and Igna (2021), we distinguish cross-cultural (intercultural) competence and learning materials that possess some sociocultural content to develop this competence. One more Igna's (2021) statement is important for our research and relates to specifying cross-cultural competence as being professional and cross-cultural. Thus, we specify the sociocultural content of a FL tertiary textbook as being *profession-oriented*.

Attempts to explore the sociocultural content in foreign language textbooks have been made by many authors. Shin et al. (2011) conclude that most of the ELT textbooks they examined reflected a knowledge-based level of cultural presentation. Shin et al. (2011) remark that *future textbooks should: (a) focus not only on cultural facts but also on deeper beliefs and values; (b) incorporate a variety of 'Englishes' in teaching materials; (c) en-*

*courage non-native, English-speaking educators to write textbooks; (d) promote both native and target cultures' specific norms* (Shin et al., 2011, p. 265). A thorough analysis of sociocultural content in FL textbooks for technical universities written by Russian scholars was carried out by Igna (2021) who listed their most typical features: '(a) high informative value and relevance of texts; (b) absence or lack of a sociocultural component any sociocultural commentary; (c) lack of texts that address common human problems and values; (d) absence or lack of authentic materials for visualization of educational information; (e) the content of textbooks is mostly out-of-date; (f) authentic materials include texts while authentic audio and video materials are scarce; (g) encyclopaedic character of country-related and sociocultural information; (h) a range of cultural values is not wide; (i) a positive image of Russia' (Igna, 2021, p. 123-124). At the same time, Igna (2021) suggests that some of these features are drawbacks of the textbooks under consideration.

According to Igna (2021), the sociocultural content of textbooks for technical universities published by foreign publishers has a number of features: '(a) high informative value and relevance of original materials; (b) specific profession-oriented topics; (c) scarcity of texts with country-related and sociocultural information and sociocultural commentary; (d) lack of texts that address common human problems and values, their topics are identical; (e) lack of consideration of the recipient's communicative needs, native language, and culture; (f) a positive image of their country; (g) difficulty to assess the correlation of sociocultural information about the country / countries of the language being studied and about other countries; (h) textbooks are developed for a large number of countries, and the specificity of each is impossible to take into account, therefore, a range of cultural values is not wide' (Igna, 2021, p. 124-125). All these textbook features were described on the basis of the criteria elaborated by Igna (2021), which enabled her to conclude that the range of the textbooks being analysed is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards for Higher Education in Russia for the development of FL communicative competence.

The analysis of the sources in this section has brought us to the conclusion about the crucial role of the sociocultural aspect in designing a FL textbook for Engineering majors. What engineers read, write and talk about at work and what genres of all this discourse and what communication situations are part of cross-cultural communication, should become central when selecting and writing learning materials under consideration. The framework for developing the sociocultural content was determined by the following: (a) the learner's communicative needs and experience; (b) a strong tendency of being profession-oriented; (c) necessity for using authentic culture and country-related texts and other media materials; (d) competence-based approach, i.e. cultural representation should be aimed at forming cross-cultural communication skills that are relevant for a particular professional area. Accordingly, in this study, the authors use the following research questions to organise and guide their exploration.

RQ1: Which type of sociocultural representation dominates in the two textbooks: knowledge-oriented or communication-oriented?

RQ2: Can students identify the cross-cultural aspect of foreign language communication and sociocultural content in the textbooks?

RQ3: Is the sociocultural content sufficient to get ready for cross-cultural communication in a particular engineering area from the learners' and practitioners' perspectives?

### 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Research methods and objectives

This quantitative and qualitative research adopted a number of combined methods. The use of qualitative methods includes content analysis of textbook units, interviews, and interpretation of the results obtained. The authors also administered an anonymous online survey prepared in Russian to avoid any misunderstandings. The results of the questionnaire were analysed employing methods of descriptive statistics (IBM SPSS Statistics 23). All these methods were aimed at: (a) performing assessment and self-assessment of the representation of the sociocultural aspect of communication in ESME and EAE; (b) eliciting whether these textbooks can present a framework of the sociocultural content appropriate for a FL textbook at tertiary level in the context of automotive Engineering majors in Russian universities; and (c) specifying a list of features of the sociocultural representation in a FL textbook for students of automotive Engineering majors.

#### 3.2. Study context and participants

The research was conducted in the period between 2021 and 2023. The participants were 31 volunteering 1st-4th year undergraduate students and master students from Togliatti State University (TSU). All of them had from 1 to 4 semesters of English courses in which ESME and EAE were used for instruction. All the students were made aware that their responses would be anonymous and would not have any influence on their course grade. Since the survey was anonymous, no consent from them was required. The authors also interviewed six master students who worked as automotive engineers for transnational companies or enterprises with constant international connections according to the degree of intensity of cross-cultural communication. This classification was previously elaborated by Polyakova (2010) and further detailed for automotive companies by Bazhutina and Tsepilova (2021). The participants' verbal consent to present their responses in a generalised form was obtained. All volunteering participants were clearly instructed about the purpose and possible outcomes of the research. Among the participants, there were also two EFL practitioners who were interviewed, and their consent to use their answers, credentials and a brief description of work experience relevant to the research was also obtained. Expert 1 was a master's degree student in automobile engineering at TSU and a holder of the bachelor's degree in linguistics, a content and language

teacher with expertise in cross-cultural engineering communication in the automotive industry. This expert had experience teaching English courses to Engineering students using ESME and EAE during two semesters. Expert 2 was a pre-service teacher with expertise in linguistics and translation and cross-cultural studies. They had experience of teaching English courses to Engineering students using ESME during four semesters.

#### 3.3. Data collection

Data collection took place in four stages.

Stage I. At this stage, a procedure of content analysis (Chapelle, 2010) of ESME and EAE was employed. Its aim was to find out which type of tasks and learning materials according to Shin et al. (2011) prevails in both textbooks.

Stage II. To answer RQ2, an anonymous online survey was conducted among 33 volunteering TSU students of automotive Engineering and aimed to elicit whether they can identify the sociocultural content and its sufficiency in the piloted textbooks. Among the participants were those who had already completed their English courses at Togliatti State University: a few master students and 4th-year students. There were also 11 students whose first major was military training, and they trained to join the army. The questionnaire is composed of three main sections with a total of 13 questions: the participants' general information (3 items), their perceptions and evaluation of the sociocultural aspect of the textbook materials (9 items), and one open-ended question to give any extra comments about the aspect under consideration or just their impressions of the textbook(s) the respondents would like to add (see Appendix for the complete questionnaire). The part about the participants' general information contains 3 close-ended questions. A 5-point Likert scale was used for 9 items, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The questionnaire was provided in an online format and took approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. Two students did not send their responses. A total of 31 valid questionnaires were received, giving a response rate of 94%. The reliability of the questionnaire reached Cronbach's alpha .86.

Stage III. At this stage, interviews with six master students were conducted to elicit whether the sociocultural content is sufficient to get ready for cross-cultural communication in a particular engineering area from the learners' perspective. The master students, experienced in cross-cultural communication in spoken and written forms, were asked questions about typical FL communication situations in their workplaces and whether ESME and EAE tasks and materials correlate with real engineering communication in the cross-cultural context. The purpose of this stage was also to find out whether the sociocultural content is sufficient from the two EFL practitioners' perspective who were interviewed to obtain their evaluation of the sociocultural content representation in ESME and EAE. Both experts were teaching English to automotive Engineering students during 2021-2023. Both interviews lasted for about 7-10 minutes and were shorthanded by one of the researchers. These procedures helped us answer RQ3.

### 3.4. Data analysis and validity of the research

The data from the questionnaire was analysed using the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics 23. In addition to the essential descriptive analysis, the Pearson correlation test was used to determine any significant relationships between various variables. The value for significant correlations for this research was set at 0.05.

The validity of the present research can be proved by the following facts.

1. Duration of the experiment. It was conducted during a period of over 2 years.
2. Ninety-four percent responsiveness in the online survey.
3. Sample representativeness. Study participants represented different academic groups, academic years, and courses of study.
4. Researchers' involvement. The authors used the technique proposed by Yang (2020). At the stage of designing both textbooks and teaching, they worked as insiders, but were physically absent while the students were completing the survey.
5. Interviews with master students were held by one of the co-authors of the article who is not a co-author of the piloted textbooks.
6. Sufficient qualification of the experts interviewed within the research.
7. Homogeneity of measuring instruments. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions formulated in a similar way and had a limited number of identical response options.

In the following sections, we present the major results and discuss the most significant findings.

## 4. STUDY RESULTS

### 4.1. Content analysis

#### 4.1.1. Analysis criteria

At Stage I, the sociocultural content in each unit was classified into knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented ones (Shin et al., 2011). All the materials and tasks based upon them were analysed according to the following criteria: (1) presence of information related to the engineering occupation in the automotive industry and devised for getting acquainted with various social and cultural aspects; e.g., facts about English and non-English speaking countries, job functions in the automobile industry, automotive engineering notions and terminology, career prospects, engineering education in Europe and India, achievements of Russian and European Formula Student teams, local car brands designed by an English car designer and their Russian team of engineers, etc.; (2) communicative activities aimed at developing the cross-cultural component of learners' integrative ESP competence that was previously described (Bazhutina & Tsepilova, 2022, 2024); e.g., role-plays, presentations, small talk, making up dialogues and reports, describing technical possesses, reading and translating specialist literature, writing business letters, etc.

According to these criteria, the amount of knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented tasks and materials was identified (Table 1).

Below a number of detailed examples of both types of ESME and EAE materials and tasks are presented. These lengthy lists are given to sufficiently illustrate various facets of the sociocultural content.

Table 1

*Knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented tasks and materials based on sociocultural content*

TOTAL NUMBER OF MATERIALS AND TASKS	KNOWLEDGE-ORIENTED MATERIALS AND TASKS BASED ON SOCIOCULTURAL CONTENT	COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED MATERIALS AND TASKS BASED ON SOCIOCULTURAL
ESME 248	43 (17%)	50 (20%)
EAE 209	49 (23%)	76 (36%)

#### 4.1.2. Examples of knowledge-oriented tasks and materials in ESME

Unit 1. WE ARE STUDENTS OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

1.12. (a) Here is Alex's weekly timetable. Some of the information is missing. Before you listen, try to answer these questions about the timetable. What time do classes start each day? When does Alex finish? How long is a class? How many classes does he have each week? What room is Maths in? What do students do on Tuesdays and Thursdays? (b) Listen to Recording 1.2 and answer the questions. What is Alex's major? Which stage of the course is Alex at? What subject did he like at school? (c) Listen to Recording 1.3 and fill in gaps 1-8.

Unit 3. FASTER AND BIGGER?

3.21. Watch Video 3.1 with a song about LADA Niva. Does the singer enjoy driving Niva? Why does he like his car? Read the lyrics and find the words which describe (a) weather in Saskatchewan; (b) how a car works, (c) LADA Niva design. *Notes for the teacher. Before watching the video draw your students' attention to some social and historical realia that are mentioned in the song. Eg., KGB, Garbor and some stereotypes about Russian people.*

Unit 6. WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

6.1. (a) Watch Video 6.1 about the car interior (from 3:15 up to 6:15). (b) Translate the terms for parts of the car interior into Russian from the video. (c) Split into teams to label all parts

*'The research was conducted in the period between 2021 and 2023. The participants were 31 volunteering 1st-4th year undergraduate students and master students from Togliatti State University (TSU). All of them had from 1 to 4 semesters of English courses in which ESME and EAE were used for instruction. All the students were made aware that their responses would be anonymous and would not have any influence on their course grade. Since the survey was anonymous, no consent from them was required. The authors also interviewed six master students who worked as automotive engineers for transnational companies or enterprises with constant international connections according to the degree of intensity of cross-cultural communication'*

of the dashboard. Divide the terms into some portions for each team. Use your English list of words and this source (see a list of interior terms).

#### **4.1.3. Examples of communication-oriented tasks and materials in ESME**

##### Unit 7. AVTOVAZ: PEOPLE AND CARS

7.21. (a) Watch Video 7.7 with Steve Mattin's presentation of the design of LADA models he made in 2019 at Togliatti State University. (b) Steve Mattin says that it takes four years to build a new car: from its concept to production. Write down the names of LADA concepts and produced cars under the right date. (c) Work in pairs and ask your groupmate questions about these concepts.

7.27. Make up questions to ask Steve Mattin about his work for AVTOVAZ. Role-play your own interview with the designer. Student A: ask Steve Mattin (a) how long he has been in the automobile industry; (b) when he started working for AVTOVAZ; (c) how long he worked on the X concept; (d) when his team of designers introduced Vesta; (e) when they refreshed Granta. Student B: use the information from 7.17 and 7.28 to answer Student A's questions. Example: How long have you been ...? When did you start working for AVTOVAZ?

7.28. You work for a big car manufacturing company in Russia in the logistics department. You have received the email below from a French manufacturer of car components. (a) Complete the email with words from the box. (b) Now write a reply to the email. Use the phrases in your email (followed by a list of clichés). Student A: choose one option and write a business letter of complaint about the wrong quantity of the batches of (a) stalks, (b) accessories, (c) sockets, (d) armrests and headrests, (e) fuel gauges, (f) tachometers, (g) electric central locking switches. Student B: write your reply to this complaint.

7.32. Role-play a follow-up telephone conversation. Student A makes a call from a Russian company. The task is to apologise for the wrong delivery in person. Swap your roles.

#### **4.1.4. Examples of knowledge-oriented tasks and materials in EAE**

##### Unit 2. FORMULA STUDENT: COMBUSTION, ELECTRIC, DRIVERLESS

Introduction. Do you know what Formula Student is? Watch these videos from Formula Student competitions in Video 2.1 and Video 2.2. Who participates in this project? Is it only a sports event?

2.6. (a) To learn more about Formula Student competitions read the text below. (b) Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false ones. (c) Find in the text some engineering and soft skills. Can you add any more? (d) Fill in the gaps in the sentences from the text.

2.7. Engineering skills and soft skills are tested in Formula Student events. (a) Write these events into the checkered flag, which is used to show each Formula Student driver that the session has been completed, and the driver must leave the track at the first opportunity. (b) Match Formula Student events and their definitions. (c) Check your answers watching Video 2.3.

2.17. Watch Video 2.4 about Black Scorpion G2, a racing car built by Togliatti Racing Team in 2019. What technical features of Black Scorpion G2 are presented in the video? What type of engine is used in this car? Make up a list of technical features and provide Russian terms for them.

2.18. Read the story of success of Togliatti Racing Team and make up a list of achievements of this team or your university team.

#### **4.1.5. Examples of communication-oriented tasks and materials in EAE**

##### Unit 2. FORMULA STUDENT: COMBUSTION, ELECTRIC, DRIVERLESS

2.19. (a) Watch a review of Togliatti State University racing cars 'From Sprint to Black Scorpion' in Video 2.5. (b) Answer the questions. Which car is the fastest? the lightest? Which one has the shortest acceleration time? How long does it normally take to build a Formula Student racing car? (c) Discussion. Why do you think Formula Student competitions have strict rules? Speak about your university team. If you know the latest news of Togliatti Racing Team or your university team, share them with your class.

2.27. Role-play. Student A: You are on the Formula Student campsite. You need to find out something according to your role card. Keep asking groupmates (Students B) your question until you find out what you need.

##### Unit 6. CAR SUSPENSIONS

6.20. Pat Clarke, a Formula Student judge from Australia, did a lecture at TSU. Watch a fragment from this lecture in Video 6.2 and answer the questions. What terms for suspension geometry are mentioned? What advice does Pat Clarke give to make 'tyres happy'?

6.22. (a) Imagine yourself at the Formula Student Autumn School which was held in November 2020 at Togliatti State University. Pat Clarke answers students' questions about the sus-

pension design. Prepare your questions taking into account business etiquette of cross-cultural engineering communication. (b) Consider these questions. You may ask Pat Clarke your own similar questions and 'get' his answers while watching Video 6.3. Introduce yourself, ask your questions and make some comments during silent fragments.

**4.1.6. Content analysis takeaways**

The results of the content analysis show that the majority of sociocultural materials and tasks in ESME and EAE is communication-oriented, and the selected examples provide some glimpses of their content. All the communication-oriented tasks are based on authentic materials used in the automotive industry (technical documents, business letters) or on video footage of situations cross-cultural communication or borrowed from real situations and verified by master students. In the meantime, the

shares of knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented tasks and materials are not equal in both textbooks. The percentage of communication-oriented materials and tasks in EAE is bigger than in ESME by 16%. This is due to the fact that EAE is used for teaching 3rd and 4th year students and even master students who normally have a broader outlook on their future profession or may have some working experience unlike 1st and 2nd year students. Thus, a larger share of sociocultural materials and tasks appeals to the learners' professional knowledge and experience and simulates possible communication situations in the cross-cultural context. It should be noted that simulating such communication situations is characteristic of all the communication-oriented tasks in ESME and EAE.

The findings of this stage enabled us to create a framework which reflects the design of the sociocultural content in ESME and EAE (Figure 1).

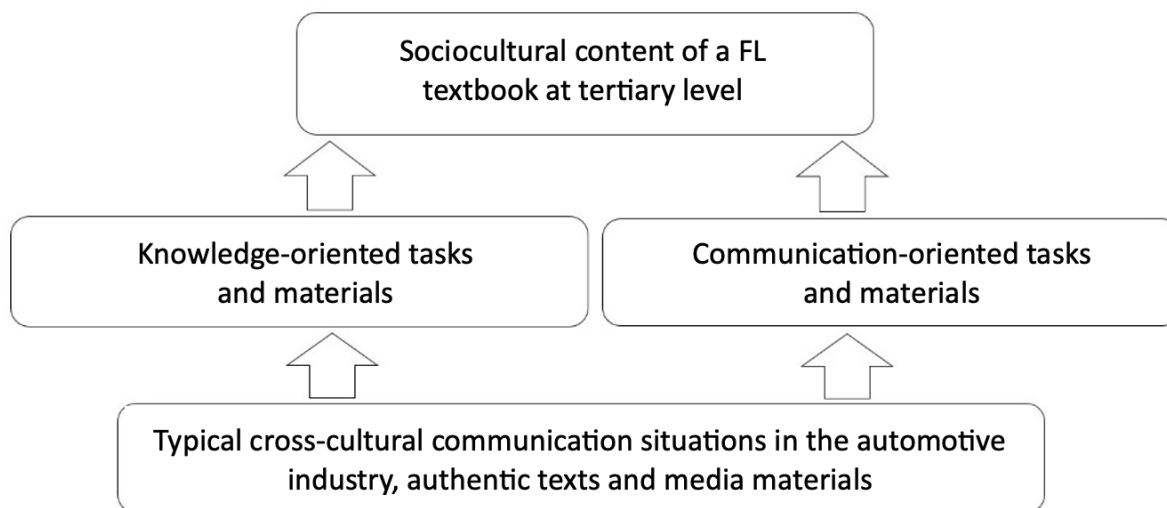


Figure 1. Framework for representing sociocultural content of a FL textbook for automotive Engineering majors

**4.2. Online survey**

At Stage II, we analysed 31 valid questionnaires that were received from TSU students of automotive Engineering majors after their English courses. The results of the students' evalua-

tion of the sociocultural content are summarised in Table 2 and are discussed in detail below. (Agreement percentage was calculated by adding up points 1 and 2 in the Likert scale of the questionnaire.)

Table 2  
Descriptive results of evaluating the sociocultural content of ESME and EAE

ITEM	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9
Mean	3.61	3.87	3.97	4.00	4.19	3.90	3.84	4.19	4.10
SD	0.882	0.806	0.752	0.775	0.833	0.870	0.934	0.601	0.831
Agree	48.4%	64.5%	71%	83.9%	80.6%	71%	74.2%	90.3%	83.9%

*The results of the content analysis show that the majority of sociocultural materials and tasks in ESME and EAE is communication-oriented, and the selected examples provide some glimpses of their content. All the communication-oriented tasks are based on authentic materials used in the automotive industry (technical documents, business letters) or on video footage of situations cross-cultural communication or borrowed from real situations and verified by master students. In the meantime, the shares of knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented tasks and materials are not equal in both textbooks'*

The results revealed that the students showed low agreement (48.4%) with the statement that the textbook(s) contain(s) tasks giving an idea of the vocational training of students in other countries (item 2.1). A greater degree of agreement (64.5%) relates to the statement that the textbook(s) contain(s) tasks enabling learners 'to practise' communicating with students and future colleagues at work (item 2.2). The major reason for this result may be the fact that the task giving an idea of the vocational training of students in other countries is offered only in one unit of ESME, and there is much more exposure to getting ready for possible cross-cultural communication in the workplace in most units of both textbooks.

For items related to the presence of tasks for giving an idea of how to act in cross-cultural communication situations (item 2.3), to the presence of sociocultural information about automobile engineering, military issues (item 2.4), information about local professional culture and its history (item 2.5), information about other countries and their automotive productions (item 2.6), related to sufficiency of tasks for acquiring cross-cultural in the professional context (items 2.7 and 2.8) and considering learners' native language (items 2.9), the agreement reached between 71% and 90.3%. Such high agreement could be explained by the fact that all the respondents had previously only courses of general English and were aware of the content changes of their English courses during the testing of ESME and EAE. One more evident reason for the 71%–90.3% agreement is that all the participants assessed their achievements during the testing period with the help of self-assessment grids supplied with clear skills objectives.

Nevertheless, some negative and mostly neutral answers for items 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6 and 2.7 were received from all the respondents planning to join the army (N=10) and from those who had not decided yet upon their future career (N=3). This result may suggest that some respondents hesitate to identify the type of information or may lack knowledge about target discourse communities which was observed by Ananyeva (2014). Although career preference (item 1.3) did not appear among variables of our exploration, a big share of neutral survey answers ranges from 20% to 35%, which is relevant for describing the research findings.

It can be assumed that the respondents whose first major was military training are not motivated to giving detailed feedback about the sociocultural context of their second major (automotive engineering) due to the lack of interest in it. We believe that their expectations from the sociocultural component of the textbooks were different from those who had only an automotive major. Thus, this group of respondents would have been more likely to specify their opinions if the sociocultural content of the textbooks had been designed to address their future needs.

Interestingly, those who had some working experience in the industry, experience in participating in the international engineering project Formula Student or considered a job in the automotive industry in the future had higher agreement with items 2.1, 2.2, 2.3., 2.6 and 2.7 than those who had two majors and planned to join the army. This may be because the former group were much more interested in the automotive engineering and had real experience of cross-cultural communication.

Of all the respondents, eight left their comments expressing their complete satisfaction with the textbooks which helped them to master vocational English. Three respondents expressed a wish for more speaking and listening practice related to automotive engineering. Hence, one of the positive findings is that the survey shows the learners' awareness of the cross-cultural aspect of FL communication and the sociocultural content representation in the textbooks' tasks and materials.

#### 4.3. Significant differences by variables

In order to answer the second research question of the study, the researchers also performed a correlational analysis of students' awareness of sociocultural content of both textbooks and acquiring skills for cross-cultural communication. When comparing the students' replies according to various variables, we discovered some significant variances, for instance, a positive correlation between the learners' ability to identify country-related and professional information (item 2.6) and their agreement with the sufficient representation of professional context for acquiring basic skills for communicating with people from other cultures on job-related topics (item 2.8). There is also a positive correlation between the availability of tasks and materials giving an idea of how to act in cross-cultural communication situations (item 2.3) and the respondents' agreement with the sufficient representation of cross-cultural communication situations for acquiring basic skills for communicating with people from other cultures (item 2.7). We also discovered that those learners who agreed with the sufficient representation of professional context for acquiring basic skills for communicating with people from other cultures on job-related topics (item 2.8) also exhibited agreement taking into account their native language (item 2.9). Following Igna's (2021) list of essential sociocultural features of a tertiary FL textbook for technical universities, we distinguish professional and cultural orientation of topics which was reflected in items 2.7 and 2.8. Tables 3-5 reflect these positive correlations.



Table 3  
Correlation between items 2.6 and 2.8

SUFFICIENT REPRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT FOR ACQUIRING BASIC SKILLS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES ON JOB-RELATED TOPICS		
	Pearson Correlation	0.42
Learners' ability to identify country-related and professional information	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00*
	N	31

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4  
Correlation between items 2.3 and 2.7

SUFFICIENT REPRESENTATION OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION SITUATIONS FOR ACQUIRING BASIC SKILLS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES		
	Pearson Correlation	0.37
Availability of tasks and materials giving an idea of how to act in cross-cultural communication situations	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	31

Table 5  
Correlation between items 2.8 and 2.9

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT LEARNERS' NATIVE LANGUAGE		
	Pearson Correlation	0.43
Availability of tasks and materials providing sufficient representation of the professional context for acquiring basic skills for communicating with people from other cultures on job-related topics	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	31

#### 4.4. Evaluation of the sociocultural component of the textbooks

Findings at Stage III helped us answer RQ3. During the interviews with the master students of automotive engineering, we were focused on several questions.

1. Are there any international contacts in your organisation?
2. If yes, have you been involved in cross-cultural communication situations?
3. Were there any difficulties in communicating with representatives of a different culture?

4. Do the exercises and assignments of the textbooks somehow correlate with what happens in cross-cultural engineering communication in your company?

5. Did these textbooks help you to acquire basic cross-cultural communication skills?

All the interviewed master students were involved in various forms of cross-cultural communication at work and thus were able to identify typical situations of cross-cultural communication including small talk, business meetings, negotiations, reporting project outcomes, everyday communication of engineers on job-related topics, writing business letters of various genres.

*'Having answered the research questions, the current findings can be summarised in the following way. 1. Prevalence of communication-oriented materials and tasks over knowledge-oriented ones was supported by the survey results and interview responses. 2. Sociocultural content is multi-faceted so both textbooks attempt at specifying it in accordance with the students' future vocational field and FL communicative needs in the industry. 3. Students are quite aware of cross-cultural communication situations and are able to identify sociocultural content in both textbooks. 4. Those respondents who have some working experience are able to give the adequate feedback about the compliance of the textbook tasks and materials with real cross-cultural communication situations. The results of the survey among student participants as well as the interviews with master students present positive evaluations of both piloted textbooks'*

Their foreign colleagues came mostly from France, Poland, Iran, China, and very seldom or never from the UK and the USA. They did not mention any culture-specific difficulties, and most of them reported that the textbooks provided them with basic skills to participate effectively in cross-cultural communication situations.

Finally, two EFL practitioners were asked the following questions.

1. In your opinion, is the sociocultural content sufficient or episodic in each of the textbooks?
2. Does each textbook unit contain enough authentic learning materials with sociocultural information to provide learners with some sociocultural knowledge?
3. Are the tasks adequate for modelling and simulating situations of cross-cultural communication?
4. Are learners exposed enough to the regional context of cross-cultural communication?
5. Is there a technology of mastering cross-cultural competence: sequence of tasks, exercises, topical relevance of materials, their variety and relevance for students' development of professional and cultural outlook?
6. Is there any account of the native language, culture and needs of the recipient?
7. Should there be more information with advice on cross-cultural interaction?

The answers are presented below in the generalised mode.

*Expert 1.* Their opinion is that the sociocultural content is sufficiently represented in all units, especially the regional aspect in unit 7 with its text, listening and video materials that appeal to the learners' interests. According to this expert, there is integration with the subject content of engineering disciplines. ESME provides simulation of cross-cultural communication situations with a clear professional context, and thus the formation of

cross-cultural competence is consistent. There is a strong appeal to the Russian language and comparison of native and foreign cultures. Besides, the sociocultural content is sufficiently represented in sequences of diverse exercises and tasks based on authentic media materials, their topical relevance to the students' major is obvious, and they promote the development of professional and cultural outlook. At the same time, this informant proposed some recommendations on teaching cross-cultural interaction, namely providing commentary/advice on cross-cultural interaction in simulating tasks.

*Expert 2.* They noted true-to-life content reflecting professional communication in tasks for productive speech that take into account students' communicative needs since the tasks imitate real situations of professional communication well enough. Language material is thoroughly practised in various types of tasks to develop communicative skills, i.e. there is a system of sociocultural representation and training language material. This interviewee also noted continuity of levels, appropriate modelling of situations that simulate cross-cultural communication, sufficient representation of the regional component, and authenticity of materials.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted in the context of FL teaching to students of automotive engineering at tertiary level and had a focus on the representation of the sociocultural content in FL textbooks for automotive Engineering students. It is worthwhile mentioning that its outcomes supplement those that were previously obtained by one of the authors and related to the assessment of the overall content and design of the same textbooks by means of student surveys and experts' reviews (Bazhutina & Tsepilova, 2024). Having answered the research questions, the current findings can be summarised in the following way.

1. Prevalence of communication-oriented materials and tasks over knowledge-oriented ones was supported by the survey results and interview responses.
2. Sociocultural content is multi-faceted so both textbooks attempt at specifying it in accordance with the students' future vocational field and FL communicative needs in the industry.
3. Students are quite aware of cross-cultural communication situations and are able to identify sociocultural content in both textbooks.
4. Those respondents who have some working experience are able to give the adequate feedback about the compliance of the textbook tasks and materials with real cross-cultural communication situations.

The results of the survey among student participants as well as the interviews with master students present positive evaluations of both piloted textbooks. This fact allowed us to conclude that a FL textbook at tertiary level should be profession-oriented to meet FL communicative needs and equip learners with basic skills for cross-cultural communication in the professional context, too.

*'The sociocultural content of ESME and EAE reveals the attempt to find the balance between tasks and learning materials about culture and the ones based on real 'slices of life' in a cross-cultural engineering environment taking into account 2-4 hours of foreign language instruction a week during normally 2-3 academic years in most Russian technical universities. Therefore, the suggested framework for sociocultural representation supported by the obtained outcomes may enable foreign language practitioners to devise a sociocultural component of learning materials and textbooks for students of Engineering majors'*

The findings complement and specify Igna's (2021) list of essential features of the sociocultural representation criteria for the FL textbook for technical universities. At the same time, the devised framework for sociocultural representation demonstrates the tendency for being communication-oriented rather than knowledge-oriented. Furthermore, this framework provides a comprehensive answer to the question: what should sociocultural content be like in FL textbooks for Engineering students? Additionally, to achieve all the objectives of the research we managed to formulate specific features of the sociocultural representation in a FL textbook for automotive Engineering majors. They are as follows: (a) selecting materials and designing communication situations in the job-related context; (b) designing knowledge-oriented and communication-oriented tasks with the latter preferably prevailing over the former ones; (c) simulating cross-cultural communication situations as close as possible to real ones.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Yang (2020), Yang and Wang (2016) who had a similar purpose and methods while evaluating ESP and CLIL textbooks from the learners' perspective, and this feedback proved to be valid and useful for the textbook writers. Besides, the findings are similar to those of Chappelle (2010) in terms of discovering the potential of the developed textbook content for building cross-cultural competence. Furthermore, our study accords with *'the dual strategy design for EIL curriculum development that includes both a localising and a globalising perspective'* proposed by Shin et al. (2011, p. 254). The obtained outcomes also support Ananyeva (2014) who claims that many university students lack knowledge about target discourse communities and forming this awareness is one of the main objectives of both content and language teachers.

The elaborated framework for the representation of sociocultural content accords with Sorokovykh et al.'s (2022) findings which suggest effective tasks for developing cross-cultural competence in the context of implementing CLIL-based materials at technical universities. The implementation of this framework in the design of the sociocultural content was positively estimated by both experts.

One of the issues that emerges from these findings is motivation. Although the learners' motivation for mastering cross-cultural competence was beyond the scope of our investigation, questionnaire responses from those students who were supposed to join the army as officers showed that the sociocultural content of both textbooks did not meet properly their motives for their future military careers. Therefore, their responses emphasised the necessity to meet FL communicative needs in a particular vocational area. From this perspective, it might be interesting to explore the correlation between the motivation for acquiring skills for the future job and the motivation for acquiring cross-cultural communication skills in a foreign language.

The findings of the research have brought us to the conclusion that sociocultural content of a FL textbook at tertiary level should not just 'tell about' the learner's future profession, vocational field, English and non-English cultures, but rather 'place' them in the cross-cultural communication context closely simulating real on-the-job communication.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The sociocultural content of ESME and EAE reveals the attempt to find the balance between tasks and learning materials *about* culture and the ones *based on* real 'slices of life' in a cross-cultural engineering environment taking into account 2-4 hours of FL instruction a week during normally 2-3 academic years in most Russian technical universities. Therefore, the suggested framework for sociocultural representation supported by the obtained outcomes may enable FL practitioners to devise a sociocultural component of learning materials and textbooks for students of Engineering majors.

However, this exploration has several limitations that should be considered. First, it was carried out within the scope of only automotive majors, therefore, the initiated research should be helpful to address other Engineering majors. Second, the sociocultural content of the textbooks was not specified according to language skills acquisition. Thus, additional research would provide an insight into this matter.

From the present study, the following questions might arise: what is 'sufficient' sociocultural content of a tertiary FL textbook? How should such textbooks be designed to support the development of learners' cross-cultural competence in the Russian context? Keeping these issues in mind, the authors feel that more studies should be carried out in order to be able to discuss the matter any further.

## APPENDIX

**Questionnaire: Identifying and evaluating the sociocultural content of two textbooks (English for Students of Mechanical Engineering and English in Automobile Engineering)**

- 1.1. You are a bachelor student / a degree student / a master student.
- 1.2. You have used the textbook(s) for 1-2 semesters / 3 semesters / 4 semesters.

1.3. Your job preference after graduation. I plan to seek a job in the automotive industry / I have not decided yet / I already work in the automotive industry / I am planning to join the army as an officer / I already work but not in the automotive industry / I am not planning to work in the automotive industry.

2.1. The textbook(s) contain(s) tasks giving an idea of the vocational training of students in other countries.

2.2. The textbook(s) contain(s) tasks enabling learners 'to practise' communicating with students and future colleagues at work.

2.3. The textbook(s) contain(s) tasks for giving an idea of how to act in cross-cultural communication situations.

2.4. The textbook(s) contain(s) sociocultural information about automobile engineering, military issues.

2.5. The textbook(s) contain(s) information about local professional culture and its history.

2.6. The textbook(s) contain(s) information about other countries and their automotive productions.

2.7. Overall, cross-cultural communication (in texts, multimedia materials, in wordings of tasks) is sufficiently represented for acquiring basic skills for communicating with people from other cultures.

2.8. Overall, the professional context (in texts, multimedia materials, in the wordings of tasks, especially in the content of projects) is sufficiently represented for acquiring basic skills for communicating with people from other cultures on job-related topics.

2.9. The textbook(s) take(s) into learners' native language (e.g., Russian-English translation, comparing Russian and English terms).

3. Please write down any comments or suggestions for the current textbook(s).

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## Book Reviews

# Trainingsbuch Business English: Kommunikation und Zusammenarbeit in internationalen Teams (a review)

Original work by Bob Dignen and Ian McMaster published by Haufe Group Freiburg, 2023

Reviewed by Margarita V. Finko

Margarita V. Finko Don State Technical University, Russia [mvfinko@mail.ru](mailto:mvfinko@mail.ru)

Article history Received October 30, 2023 | Revised November 14, 2023 | Accepted December 4, 2023

Conflicts of interest The author declared no conflicts of interest

Research funding No funding was reported for this research

doi 10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4-94-96

For citation Finko, M. V. (2023). Trainingsbuch Business English: Kommunikation und Zusammenarbeit in internationalen Teams (a review). *Training, Language and Culture*, 7(4), 94-96.



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Don't worry about the 'buch', German for book, in the title or the fact that the information on the front and back cover of the book is in German. The interior of the book is entirely in English and is full of excellent ideas and activities for teachers of business English and intercultural understanding.

*Trainingsbuch Business English* is written by two of the leading business English teachers and intercultural trainers. Bob Dignen is CEO of York Associates and ILP (International Leadership Performance) and the author of several books on intercultural training. Ian McMaster is a business English teacher and intercultural trainer and was Editor of Business Spotlight, a magazine on Business English, published in Germany. The book is aimed at non-native speakers using business English in an international environment but is also very useful as a guide for teachers of English in business and also trainers in a corporate environment. The book assumes a reasonable knowledge of English including grammar and professional vocabulary but goes on to offer tips and phrases which gives confidence to users and improves communication. The result is better relations with business partners, building trust and getting better results in business dealings. Included in the book are ways of getting your message across in meetings, how to manage meetings, influence discussions and the decisions that are taken, managing conflict and giving and receiving feedback both face-to-face and online.

The book offers activities that teachers and trainers can use in class and in the seminar room and discusses business management issues as well as practising the language commonly used in particular situations.

The book is organised into three main sections. Part 1 deals with the fundamentals of communication, including how to get your message across, how to listen effectively and how to work with different communication styles. Part 2 looks at 20 areas of teamwork, grouped into five sections – forming relationships, teambuilding, leadership, building cooperation and dealing with disagreements, and resolving challenges. Part 3 focuses on useful basic phrases in managing communication, professional socialising and networking, meetings, presentations, negotiations and writing.

In the introduction to the book the authors make the point that international communication isn't just about language. Business environments can be very varied with people from different organisations having different ways of doing things. We must also consider differences in cultures. Cultural diversity is a key factor in global business and differences can lead to language and behaviour misunderstandings both within and between companies. At the same time, it is important for the business English user working in international environments to assess their own communication style and see how they need to adapt to the situation they are in.

Two tips in Part 1 which addresses communication fundamentals are the D.I.E. model that helps users select the most appropriate phrase for what they want to convey. D stands for Describe, I stands for Interpret and E stands for Evaluate. This is about developing the right mindset for dealing with communication issues that might arise and your response to them. The second tip is P.R.O.D.U.C.E., a way of deciding how to set priorities.

P stands for Purpose (decide what you want). R stands for Relations (be aware that the need for quick decisions may lead to ignoring relationships). O stands for Organisations (what are the priorities and aims of the organisation?) D stands for Decision (how to ensure good decision making). U stands for Upshot (the results of our decisions). C stands for continuous learning (self-development), and E stands for Energy (pay attention to health and well-being). Examples like this draw attention to the authors' immense experience, not just in teaching Business English but also in their familiarity with working with leading international organisations and how to improve students' communication style.

Focusing on the English language phrases taught in each chapter, Parts 1 and 2 contain a simple and quick test to check understanding of the key phrases taught. Answers are listed at the end of the book. One exciting feature of Parts 1 and 2 is the use of critical incidents, real-life situations that have occurred in international business which the teacher and students can analyse and suggest ways of resolving the problems that arise. One real-life example concerns a team manager who wants to nominate two members of her project team to make a presentation of their excellent results to the board of senior managers. The problem is can they speak English fluently enough to make a good presentation? She knows that some of the managers can be very critical of presenters who make mistakes when using English in a meeting. So, the question is should she make the presentation herself or should she nominate her project team members to make the presentation and risk possible negative feedback from the audience? The difficulty in reaching a decision is making relations between the team leader and her team colleagues quite difficult as they are enthusiastic about having the opportunity to present their results to the senior managers' board.

Dignen and McMaster suggest relevant and thought-provoking questions the students can discuss under the title of 'What do you think?'

1. Why should the team leader let her project team members make the presentation to the board?
2. Would be better if the team leader makes the presentation herself?
3. What do think the team leader should do?

Setting up the work in this direction, the class is invited to exchange their views on the questions and offer answers which may be based on their own experiences.

The chapter goes on to discuss different management aspects of the situation including thinking about decisions, leadership and decision making and exploring strategies to make better decisions. Then the authors provide a number of possible answers to solve the problem, the team make the presentation, the team leader makes the presentation herself and leaves her colleagues out and finally, the whole team appears in front of the board. The team leader leads the presentation but gets her team members to make parts of the presentation which they will feel competent to do. The chapter continues by teaching key phrases that can be used in a presentation and concludes with a short sec-

tion of exercises to test what has been learned about the language used in making decisions. A perfect lesson plan for upper intermediate and advanced users of English as an international business language which can be spread over one or two sessions as required.

All the critical incidents featured in the book are very much true to life and focus on difficult decisions or poor relations within the company or between different businesses, positively engaging the participants in the class by asking what they think of the problem and what they would do to resolve it. They will certainly have experienced similar issues in their own careers at some point.

Part 3 of the book presents phrases which are typically used in business communication exchanges, including social phrases and ways of explaining what you want. Chapter 30 on writing, for example, contains phrases to explain the reason why you are writing as well as listing common greetings and phrases to establish good relations and how to sign off and choose from a range of closing remarks. It also offers 'crucial phrases' used in giving good news and bad news, making a request, offering help, confirming, offering and giving opinions, complaining, apologising and thanking. Although students will certainly know some the expressions listed, others will be new to them and each 'crucial phrase' category contains three to five examples. An excellent strategy for teachers and trainers is to take a category and introduce it into the class alongside the critical incident discussion. For example, if you have chosen the critical incident story about the team leader making the right choice of team members for the presentation to senior managers, you might want to look at Chapter 28, Presentations, which lists phrases the students can use to improve their presentation style.

In addition to its emphasis on language proficiency, *Trainingsbuch Business English* uniquely addresses the importance of cultural diversity in global business. The authors highlight how varying cultural backgrounds within organisations can lead to misunderstandings in both language and behaviour. Recognising and navigating these differences becomes crucial for effective communication. The book guides business English users in assessing their own communication styles, encouraging adaptability to diverse situations. This cultural awareness aspect adds a layer of depth to the language learning process, preparing users to navigate the complexities of international business environments successfully.

*Trainingsbuch Business English* not only equips users with language skills but also efficiently explores decision-making processes within a professional context. The authors introduce practical models such as the D.I.E. model and P.R.O.D.U.C.E., offering users frameworks to approach communication challenges and set priorities. These tools go beyond language instruction, building a holistic approach to effective communication that considers both mindset and decision-making strategies. This integrated approach undoubtedly reflects the authors' comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of successful business communication.

The inclusion of critical incidents in Parts 1 and 2 adds an interactive dimension to the learning experience. By presenting real-life scenarios, the book encourages students to think critically, apply language skills in context, and propose viable solutions. This pedagogical approach does a great job levelling up language proficiency and developing problem-solving and analytical skills, valuable assets in the professional world. The book's practicality extends beyond language learning, making it a valuable resource for educators seeking to cultivate critical thinking skills in their students.

*Trainingsbuch Business English* recognises the evolving nature of international business communication, particularly in the era of online interactions. The inclusion of guidance on giving and receiving feedback both face-to-face and online reflects the authors' awareness of the contemporary business landscape. As virtual communication becomes increasingly prevalent, the book prepares users for effective digital interactions, ensuring they can face the challenges of remote collaboration with confidence.

The book's structure, divided into three main sections, caters to diverse learning needs. Whether focusing on communication fundamentals, teamwork dynamics, or specific language phrases, users can tailor their learning experience. This modular design accommodates various teaching styles and thus allows educators to adapt the material to the specific needs and proficiency levels of their students. Such flexibility is what ensures the book's usability in a range of educational settings, from traditional classrooms to online learning environments.

Summing up, *Trainingsbuch Business English* is an excellent book for training students and business executives in international business communication as it offers practical situations to engage students and involve them in expressing their views through the critical incidents and presents phrases commonly used by native speakers of English grouped by function that students can learn and practise to improve their communication skills. An excellent resource for your personal or institutional library.





## News & Events

### RUDN University News

#### RUDN University Rector Receives Prestigious Themis Legal Award

On October 14, the esteemed Themis Legal Award ceremony unfolded, presenting the oldest legal accolade to distinguished individuals. Among the honoured recipients was Oleg Yastrebov, the rector of RUDN University, acknowledged as a laureate in the Traditions and Education category. The selection of nominees is conducted by the award's expert council, considering their eminence in the field of law and notable contributions to society and the state. This year, individuals whose endeavours align closely with the international agenda were recognised in the Traditions and Education category. Heartfelt congratulations to Rector Oleg Yastrebov on this well-deserved recognition!

#### RUDN University Rector Extends Heartfelt Gratitude to Educators on Teacher's Day

In a heartfelt message, RUDN University Rector, Oleg Yastrebov, expressed gratitude to educators on the occasion of Teacher's Day. He conveyed appreciation for every teacher he has encountered throughout his journey, including his own teachers, his son's mentors, and colleagues at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba.

Dr Yastrebov acknowledged the demanding nature of the teaching profession, emphasising the daily commitment of giving knowledge, strength, and time. He extended his wishes for tranquil changes, restful holidays, and a supportive environment for teachers. The rector hoped for grateful students, wise parents, interesting colleagues, and understanding administrators.

Wrapping up his statement, Dr Yastrebov conveyed his hope for favourable circumstances, allowing teachers to fully savour the depth and significance of their multifaceted work. The Rector's message encapsulated the true spirit of Teacher's Day, offering heartfelt regards to all outstanding educators.

#### RUDN International Scholarship

The outcomes of the RUDN International Scholarship at RUDN University have been announced, revealing 13 successful candidates who will each be awarded 55,000 rubles. This scholarship, a one-time cash grant, is bestowed upon RUDN University students selected through a competitive process. It specifically supports undergraduate, specialist, and graduate students planning to pursue studies at partner universities during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. Noteworthy is the diverse representation among the winners, spanning the Law Institute, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Philology, and the Academy of Engineering.

#### Education in Russia: Your Key to Success

Belarusian students aspire to pursue diverse career paths, with ambitions ranging from becoming doctors, linguists, economists, to international specialists. On November 22, a delegation from RUDN University actively participated in the initiative *Education in Russia: Your Key to Success*, which brought together 47 leading universities in Russia. This collaborative project was orchestrated by the Representative Office of Rossotrudnichestvo in the Republic of Belarus.

The online presentation witnessed the engagement of over 100 schoolchildren, displaying a keen interest in the programmes offered by RUDN University, notably in the Medical Institute, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as the Philological and Economic faculties. The students exhibited a pronounced curiosity about fields such as General Medicine, International Relations, Linguistics, and Economics.

During the event, RUDN University representatives shared insights into the admission procedures for foreign students, highlighted opportunities such as the RUDN University Open Olympiad, and provided information on international competitions.

At present, RUDN University hosts 173 Belarusian students, with 40% benefiting from budgetary allocations. The academic preferences of Belarusian students at RUDN University include General Medicine, Advertising and Public Relations, Law, Dentistry, and International Relations. Notably, the influx of Belarusian students to RUDN University has nearly tripled since 2019.

#### Africa's Path to 17 SDGs: An Integrated Approach

RUDN University has convened a gathering of 1,500 experts from 70 countries, uniting them in a collective effort to devise solutions for the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that shape the future of our world.

The conference, titled *For the Sustainable Development of Civilisation: Cooperation, Science, Education, Technology (Africa's Path to 17 SDGs: An Integrated Approach)*, was inaugurated at RUDN University. Among its distinguished attendees are ministers from Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, alongside eminent scientists hailing from Algeria, Brazil, Germany, Zambia, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa, and other nations.

This monumental assembly of 1,500 experts spans across 13 sections, each dedicated to one of the 17 SDGs. Within these sections, scientists, ministers, business leaders, and heads of public organisations will share research findings and best practices, addressing contemporary challenges in ecology, agriculture, urban planning, and healthcare.

The focal point of the conference revolves around the seventeen United Nations SDGs, with a specific emphasis on how African countries are progressing towards achieving them.

RUDN University's scholars in fields such as ecology, agriculture, medicine, law, engineering, and economics will collaborate to propose innovative ideas to benefit African nations and contribute to global betterment. The event, attended by representatives from 70 countries, serves as an exceptional platform for participants to identify optimal development directions and establish partnerships across borders.

Minister Ramatoulaye Vuri of Sierra Leone emphasised the importance of developing both professional skills and communication competencies, citing RUDN University's interdisciplinary approach and ongoing intercultural communication as key contributors to students' holistic development.

Addressing the influence of universities on sustainable development goals, Riri Fitri Sari, President of the UI GreenMetric WUR international university ranking, highlighted the active participation of 29 African universities out of 1,050 worldwide in the GreenMetric ranking. This engagement allows tracking the progress of these universities towards achieving sustainable development goals.

Professor Mengistu Kifle Gelan, Advisor to the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia, underscored the impact of the pandemic on accelerating digitalisation and the urgent need for professionals in telemedicine technologies. This development, he noted, would extend essential medical services to remote areas, encompassing tele-dermatology, telecardiology, tele-oncology, and telepsychiatry. Simultaneously, he pointed to the imperative to train technical support staff to manage and advance these digital resources.

The conference's comprehensive exploration of the challenges facing the African continent unfolded through strategic and framework sessions, categorised under 'Biosphere', 'Society', and 'Economy, Politics, Law, and Partnerships' on November 22, 23, and 24. The experiences of Morocco and Jordan illuminated the potential of drinking water purification systems, while Brazil shared observations concerning sustainable fishing practices. Additionally, Tunisia addressed the issue of microparticle pollution in rubber. Throughout these sessions, experts proffered solutions to critical challenges, including soil desertification, antibiotic resistance in viruses, suburban sprawl in megacities, soaring vegetable prices, and the pervasive illiteracy epidemic.

*Biosphere.* Distinguished experts from countries such as Algeria, Brazil, Burundi, Gambia, Egypt, Zambia, Morocco, Indonesia, Jordan, Tunisia, Uganda, South Africa, and others engaged in discussions centred around wastewater treatment, strategies to prevent famine in Africa, combating global warming, and identifying barriers impeding the adoption of green energy in the region. An alarming 10% of the African population still relies on untreated land-based water for consumption, with women and children covering a daily distance of 3.7 kilometres to access springs. Drought and desertification pose significant challenges to agricultural development, affecting 52% of global areas deemed unsuitable for crop cultivation.

*Society.* Renowned scientists from Algeria, Angola, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Zambia, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and

other nations shared insights on preventing discrimination, achieving a balance of interests, attracting investment to meet key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and addressing the healthcare needs of countries grappling with challenging climatic conditions. The issue of 'multidimensional poverty' adversely impacts education levels, with sub-Saharan Africa bearing the highest concentrations of poverty. Over the past two decades, the number of illiterate adult women in low-income countries has surged by 20 million. Sub-Saharan Africa faces 35% of early marriages, contributing to a gender inequality rate of 48.6% on the continent.

*Economics, Politics, Law, Partnerships.* Researchers hailing from Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iran, Yemen, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and other countries deliberated on the potential niches African nations can occupy in global production, the role of collaboration with Asia in addressing sustainable development challenges, and the integration of alternative energy into the continent's infrastructure. A stark reality emerges, as most individuals without access to electricity reside in Africa and Asia, with 2.8 billion people relying on wood, coal, and manure for heating and cooking. This reliance results in 4 million deaths annually due to air pollution. Furthermore, by 2050, the African continent is projected to house 20 to 25% of the world's population, solidifying the region's status as one of the primary global markets.

#### **Enlightening Presentations on Ibero-American Culture and Internet Communications at Two Prominent Conferences in St. Petersburg**

In October, Saint Petersburg hosted the forum *Russia and Iberoamerica in a Turbulent World: History and Modernity*, attracting a diverse array of participants, including scientists, politicians, diplomats, and writers from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Chile, as well as representatives from Asian and European countries.

Elena Kargovskaya, a senior lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at RUDN University, shared her conclusive and thought-provoking research titled *Preservation of the Material and Spiritual Heritage of the Guna Indians*.

*'The Guna Indians stand out as one of the few indigenous peoples in the Americas who, through persistent and at times arduous resistance, have maintained the integrity of their territory along with their authenticity, traditions, culture, and beliefs. The Guna people's enduring struggle for independence on various fronts has resulted in the existence of a society where every member actively participates in political life and decision-making crucial to the entire community. Here, ancient chants echo, narrating both distant and recent events. Mothers weave the greatness of their people into lullabies, and children take pride in their roots. The Huns can be considered a fortunate people who, unlike many disappeared indigenous cultures, have safeguarded their language, traditions, and territorial resources,'* emphasised Elena Kargovskaya.

At the conference *Synergy of Languages and Cultures: Interdisciplinary Research*, Olga Maksimova, an Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages in the Federal State University of Social Sciences at RUDN University, presented her report titled *The Functioning of English and Russian Languages in Internet Communications: General Trends and National-Cultural Specifics*.

*'Language transformations are intricately linked to the emergence of new global communication means, reflecting social, cultural, and technological shifts. The impact of the Internet as a communication medium extends across all levels of the language system, influencing vocabulary, word-formation models, punctuation and spelling norms, syntactic structures, and communicative strategies. The findings of this study hold practical significance for foreign language teaching,'* noted Olga Maksimova.

### **Unlocking Success: RUDN University Translator Programme Graduates Discover a Competitive Edge with Chinese Proficiency**

In a recent master class attended by RUDN University environmental students enrolled in the 'Translator' programme, the importance of learning the Chinese language was emphasised. The session shed light on the growing demand for professionals with Chinese language skills, spanning various fields such as management, logistics, marketing, and analytics. Proficiency in Chinese has become a valuable asset in practical application, providing individuals with a distinct edge in employment opportunities. On average, industry specialists with Chinese language proficiency enjoy salaries that are 50–60% higher than their counterparts without this linguistic skill.

Maxim Fedotov, senior lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication at the Financial University under the Government of Russia, highlighted the reasons behind the surge in demand. China stands as the world's largest consumer market and a pivotal region for e-commerce development. In 2021, China contributed to approximately 18% of Russia's foreign trade turnover, with a 28.7% increase in trade turnover between the two countries in the first quarter of 2022. As this trend continues, the demand for specialists proficient in Chinese is expected to rise. Additionally, the prevalence of Chinese in engineering documentation is projected to reach 46% within the next decade.

Large Russian companies are specifically seeking professionals with Chinese language expertise in various roles, including technological engineers capable of interpreting drawings and explaining technical details to Chinese partners, purchasing managers and project managers experienced in acquiring technologically complex goods, analysts and product managers adept at conducting marketing analysis of the Chinese market, and marketers skilled in navigating Chinese marketplaces and social networks.

Anastasia Kim, a first-year student, shared her motivation for studying Chinese, expressing an interest in China's culture, traditions, architecture, and people. While acknowledging the

language's complexity, she emphasised its importance in accessing, clarifying, and verifying information from diverse sources. Language proficiency, according to Anastasia, broadens the scope of available literature – an invaluable asset in any professional endeavour.

### **RUDN University to Keep on Strengthening Ties with Cuban Universities**

In September, the V Forum of University Rectors of Russia and Cuba provided the backdrop for an enriched collaboration between RUDN University and Cuban institutions. A delegation from Cuba, comprising leaders from 13 Cuban universities, visited Russia, culminating in their visit to RUDN University on September 22.

During discussions, representatives from RUDN University and the Cuban delegation reached agreements to establish a Russian Language and Pre-University Training Centre, along with a specialised class at the Technological University of Havana (CUJAE). Plans were also set in motion to develop collaborative educational programmes in engineering and implement joint master's programmes. Furthermore, a formal cooperation agreement was signed between RUDN University and the Medical University of Havana.

Presently, RUDN University hosts 23 students from the Republic of Cuba, with five newcomers joining this academic year. The collaborative efforts date back to 2009 when a community of RUDN University students from Cuba was established, with Vitarte Anton serving as its inaugural president in the field of Law.

The university's connection with Cuba has historical roots, including a 1970 internship of students from RUDN University's Faculty of Agriculture in Cuba, where they delved into agrochemistry, soil science, and animal science in tropical conditions. Moreover, students from the Faculty of History and Philology participated in mobility projects related to translator programmes. The inception of Soviet-Cuban interstate cooperation dates back to 1960, leading to joint research endeavours between scientists from RUDN University and the Central University of Las Villas (Santa Clara) on the characteristics of mineral nutrition and the effectiveness of different densities of rice sowing in Cuba.

Earlier interactions included a RUDN University delegation's visit to Cuba for the XX Meeting of the intergovernmental Russian-Cuban commission on trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation. During this visit, university representatives actively engaged in meetings of the Russian-Cuban working group on education and science, resulting in the signing of several cooperation agreements.

### **Unlocking UN Opportunities: Career Consultant Guides RUDN University Students in a Master Class**

Navigating the intricacies of securing a job at the United Nations was the focus of a master class led by Yanturina Darles, a career consultant specialising in internships and employment

within the UN system. Aisylyu hosted the session, where 100 students from 29 countries explored the selection process for international internships, crafting effective applications, and discovering avenues for involvement in large-scale projects.

Darles emphasised the importance of understanding the branched and multi-level management structure of large international organisations, including the UN, before embarking on a career path. Exploring internship opportunities is a crucial initial step, with both offline and online programmes available. Darles cautioned against relying solely on job aggregator sites, pointing out the potential for outdated or unverified job offers. She underscored that the UN does not require payment for application consideration, emphasising the need to remain vigilant against scammers.

Opportunities for employment or internships within the UN system include avenues such as the Young Professionals Programme, Junior Professional Officers, volunteer programmes, consultant roles (international consultants and contractors), and full-time positions.

Darles shared key advice on preparing for an internship in an international organisation: thoroughly research the organisation or project to understand its mission and activities; tailor your application, placing emphasis on volunteer work and involvement in student organisations if lacking professional experience; craft a compelling motivation letter, highlighting skills gained through volunteering or student activism; prepare for the interview, typically an informal conversation with the team overseeing the internship; express gratitude to the team for their time during the interview; maintain enthusiasm, recognising that youth brings energy and a positive contribution to global social, environmental, and economic issues.

Students reflected on what they had learned during the master class. Nadezhda Slivko, a student of the Faculty of Economics, found inspiration in a collaboration between fashion houses and African tribes, underscoring the importance of learning about the organisational process, logistics, and communication specifics in international projects. Yasmina Mamadrizakhonova, another student of the Faculty of Economics, expressed gratitude for learning about the stages of UN employment and effective resume presentation, enhancing her understanding of how to pursue a career in her dream company.

### **Building Bridges: RUDN University and Samarkand State University Strengthen Educational Collaboration**

In August, experts from the RUDN Institute of Foreign Languages embarked on a collaboration journey with Samarkand State University named after Sharof Rashidov. During their visit, they delivered lectures and conducted master classes for colleagues, undergraduates, and graduate students. The representatives from the Institute of Foreign Languages immersed themselves in understanding the intricacies of organising the educational process and explored the methods employed in teaching foreign languages within master's and postgraduate courses. The discussions paved the way for outlining future pro-

ductive plans for collaboration, focusing primarily on intercultural communication, linguistics, education, and modern languages as key areas of cooperation.

Akmal Akhatov, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation at Samarkand State University, expressed enthusiasm about modernising educational programmes in the theory and practice of foreign languages for master's and postgraduate studies. He emphasised the importance of continuing professional and creative contacts with RUDN University.

Natalya Sokolova, Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages at RUDN University, echoed the sentiment, highlighting the extremely promising nature of their cooperation in science and education. She outlined plans to elevate academic interaction to new heights, including the implementation of inclusive learning programmes, double diplomas, double scientific supervision in master's and postgraduate studies, and the organisation of joint international congress events. Sokolova conveyed RUDN University's readiness to share innovative developments and forward-looking ideas with their esteemed partner, Samarkand State University named after Sharof Rashidov.

### **Deputy Minister Andrei Omelchuk Visits RUDN University: Inspiring Initiations, Engaging Student Fair, and Unveiling of Modern Student Spaces**

On September 1, RUDN University welcomed Andrei Omelchuk, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. The day's agenda featured the initiation of medical school students, the student activity fair 'Open the World of RUDN!', and the inauguration of a new student space. The deputy minister's schedule for the day was packed with meetings. In just over an hour, he engaged with first-year medical students, interacted with young scientists at the student activity fair, and inaugurated a new co-working space and canteen, accomplishing each task seamlessly.

The initiation of first-year medical students drew a full audience, with 885 individuals embarking on their journeys to become doctors, dentists, pharmacists, biologists, and nurses. The programmes in General Medicine and Dentistry ranked among the top five most popular choices, with General Medicine and Pharmacy being particularly favoured by Olympiad winners.

Andrey Omelchuk commended RUDN University for its rich history, traditions, and the presence of a diverse international student body. He expressed confidence in the students receiving a quality education and developing invaluable international communication skills, emphasising the multinational nature of the medical field.

The 'Open the World of RUDN University!' fair, spanning two days, showcased the vibrant student activity landscape. Mr Omelchuk engaged with the Connect community leaders assisting students with disabilities, explored the offerings of the career centre, attended a 'Digital Philologist in Action' master class, participated in Science talk with young scientists, and connected with students from Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Various activities, including a crime investigation quiz, Formula 1-

style driving lessons, and a meeting with environmental journalists, awaited the deputy minister for the following day. The programme also included a visit to the recently renovated dining room and co-working space on Miklouho-Maklaya Street. Spanning 1,700 square meters, the space offers comfort, with seating for 214 people and a diverse menu. The focus of the reconstruction is the co-working area, featuring 157 comfortable seats, strategically designed for both project discussions and individual work. The overall concept incorporates a meeting room and an amphitheatre for public speaking.

Before concluding the day, Mr Omelchuk surpassed the programme's expectations by visiting the clinical diagnostic centre of RUDN University. Despite ongoing construction until August, doctors continued to see patients, with essential repairs completed on the entrance lobby and medical offices on two floors before the new academic year.

## TLC News

### The Fate of Book Reviews

In the era of digitalisation, the once-thriving genre of book reviews appears to be on the decline. Despite its potential benefits, such as providing valuable feedback to authors and enhancing the visibility of reviewed works, book reviewing often receives scant attention as an independent practice. Compounding the issue, book reviews currently lack a distinct category in major databases like Scopus and OpenAlex. While Web of Science stands out in this regard, the absence of book reviews in these databases, or their challenging identification among journal articles, raises concerns about their visibility and significance.

A recent post from The Scholarly Kitchen looks into the unfair devaluation of book reviews, prompted by an article titled 'In Defense of the Beleaguered Academic Book Review'. The article expresses concerns about the inadequate recognition of the time and effort invested in writing reviews, with some universities even discouraging faculty from engaging in this practice due to its limited impact on formal indicators. The plea urges university administrations to reconsider their stance and acknowledge the value of book reviews in academia.

Jill O'Neill, the author of The Scholarly Kitchen post, argues that book reviewing should not be dismissed as a mere by-product of academia. Instead, it serves a crucial role in shaping public opinion and evaluating market trends. Beyond supporting dialogue among scholars, book reviews are a crucial part of publishing and library science, aiding in the dissemination of new products. The absence of timely and insightful commentary on new books creates challenges for authors, publishers, and platforms alike.

The future of book reviews faces a potential threat from generative neural networks. While some may view this as a looming danger, the note's author maintains a level of optimism, emphasising that AI has yet to fully master the complex task of crafting nuanced book reviews. Nonetheless, the author acknowledges the possibility that AI may soon catch up, particularly among aspiring young scientists for whom writing book reviews serves as an entry point into the realm of academic publishing.

Amidst the evolving landscape of book reviews, it is imperative to underscore TLC's commitment to this invaluable genre. Recognising the enduring significance of book reviews in promoting scholarly discourse, shaping public opinion, and contributing to the evaluation of academic works, we remain dedicated to providing a platform for this critical form of academic engagement. Book reviews, with their ability to offer critical evaluations, serve as essential guides for readers, scholars, and institutions navigating the vast realm of literature. As a journal committed to the dissemination of knowledge and the facilitation of meaningful academic discussions, we understand the role that book reviews play in this endeavour. By continuing to publish book reviews, we aim to contribute to the vitality of academic dialogue, promote informed decision-making in literature acquisition, and support the growth of both seasoned and emerging authors.

### 2022 Science Index Ranking

The RISC website has recently disclosed the Science Index (SI) ranking for Russian journals in 2022. This revised ranking adheres to the principles announced in March of this year, with a focus on normalising citations at the individual article level and omitting the use of thematic rubricators. This unveiling describes the positioning and performance of journals within the Russian academic sphere.

TLC has been ranked at 750 in the Science Index for 2022, determined through a specialised methodology. The percentile ranking places it at the 19th position, indicating its relative standing within the ranked list of journals. Percentiles are determined by dividing the ranked list of journals into 100 equally sized groups. A lower percentile indicates a closer proximity to the top of the Science Index ranking.

In specific subject areas, TLC secured the 13th position in the Science Index for 2022 under Public Education and Pedagogy. Additionally, the journal attained the 26th position in the broader subject of Linguistics. These rankings reflect the journal's standing within its academic domains, as assessed by the specialised methodology applied in the ranking process.

These results underscore TLC's place in the SI framework, reflecting its position and impact across diverse subject areas.





December 2023

ISSN 2520-2073 (Print)

ISSN 2521-442X (Online)

Volume 7 Issue 4

doi: [10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4](https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-4)

Quarterly journal published by

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba