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Authors:

Barbashova I. (1), Ignatyshyn V.V. (2), Snitovska O.I. (3), Levchenko N. (4),
Blyzniuk M.M. (5), Havryliuk R.B. (5), Mykhaylenko V.P. (5), Shestopalova I. (6),
Dorosh V. (7), Shostak U.V. (8), Diuh D. (9), Maistrenko O. (10), Markuliak L.V. (11),
Antofiichuk A.M. (12), Bitkivska H.W. (13), Bebykh V.V. (14), Artemenko A.I. (15)

Reviewers:

Lebid Olha, Doctor of Science in Pedagogy, Professor, Alfred Nodel University (1)
Shumilova Iryna, Doctor of Science in Pedagogy, Professor, National University of Life and
Environmental Sciences of Ukraine (1)

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ÜBER DIE AUTOREN / ABOUT THE AUTHORS

1. *Barbashova Iryna*, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Bohdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, ORCID 0000-0002-7410-4115 - *Chapter 1*
2. *Ignatyshyn Vasyl Vasylovich*, Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, S.I. Subbotin Institute of Geophysics of the NAS of Ukraine, Department of Seismicity of Carpathian region; Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian University, ORCID 0000-0003-0727-2132 - *Chapter 2*
3. *Snitovska Olha Iosypivna*, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Lviv National Medical University named after Danylo Halytsky, ORCID 0000-0003-2256-0845 - *Chapter 3*
4. *Levchenko Nataliia*, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Uman National University, ORCID 0000-0002-5479-1907 - *Chapter 4*
5. *Blyzniuk Mykola Mykolayovych*, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, V.G. Korolenko Poltava National Pedagogical University, ORCID 0000-0002-8339-4118 - *Chapter 5 (co-authored)*
6. *Havryliuk Ruslan Borysovych*, Candidate of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, Institute of Geological Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, ORCID 0000-0002-6465-9440 - *Chapter 5 (co-authored)*
7. *Mykhaylenko Valeriy Petrovych*, Candidate of Chemical Sciences, Associate Professor, Private higher educational institution "Kyiv Medical University", ORCID 0000-0003-2961-8114 - *Chapter 5 (co-authored)*
8. *Shestopalova Iryna*, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Kyiv Aviation Institute, ORCID 0000-0002-0438-6743 - *Chapter 6*
9. *Dorosh Vitalii*, Senior Lecturer, West Ukrainian National University, ORCID 0000-0002-0199-0478 - *Chapter 7*
10. *Shostak Uliana Victorivna*, Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor, Vinnytsia Institute of Trade and Economics of State University of Trade and Economics, ORCID 0000-0002-3258-2098 - *Chapter 8*
11. *Diuh Dmytro*, Senior Lecturer, West Ukrainian National University - ORCID 0009-0000-4249-6057 - *Chapter 9*
12. *Maistrenko Olga*, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, ORCID 0000-0002-8007-3191 - *Chapter 10*
13. *Markuliak Larysa Vasylivna*, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, ORCID 0000-0003-3329-6509 - *Chapter 11*
14. *Antofiichuk Alla Mykolaivna*, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, ORCID 0000-0001-5570-6260 - *Chapter 12*



15. *Bitkivska Halyna Wolodymyrivna*, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, ORCID 0000-0002-3131-2686 - *Chapter 13*
16. *Bebykh Valentyna Volodymyrivna*, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Bukovyna State Medical University, ORCID 0000-0003-4378-0978 - *Chapter 14*
17. *Artemenko Antonina Ivanivna*, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Kyiv National Economic University named after V. Hetman, ORCID 0000-0003-2426-875X - *Chapter 15*



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**KAPITEL 8 / CHAPTER 8⁹****INTEGRATING THE ETHNOCULTURAL COMPONENT INTO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE****DOI: 10.30890/2709-2313.2026-51-05-035**

This chapter explores the integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education as an innovative pedagogical approach to developing students' intercultural communicative competence. The increasing internationalization of higher education, growing academic mobility, and expanding multicultural learning environments require foreign language instruction to move beyond the development of linguistic proficiency toward fostering cultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and effective communication across diverse sociocultural contexts. Within this framework, ethnocultural psychology provides a valuable theoretical foundation for understanding the interrelationship between language, culture, identity, and communication.

This chapter proposes and substantiates an innovative pedagogical model for integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education. The proposed model is illustrated through its implementation in the course *Professional Communication in Foreign Language* for Master's students majoring in Psychology. The study is based on the analysis and synthesis of contemporary research in ethnocultural psychology, intercultural communication, and foreign language pedagogy, complemented by the generalization of the author's teaching experience.

The proposed model integrates authentic learning materials, case-based learning, role-play activities, reflective practices, and culturally oriented discussions into professionally oriented English language instruction. Particular attention is devoted to the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology*, which demonstrates how professional language training can be effectively combined with the development of intercultural communicative competence. The findings indicate that the systematic

⁹Authors: Shostak Uliana Victorivna
Author's sheets: 0,89



integration of ethnocultural content enhances critical thinking, promotes cultural awareness, encourages reflection on cultural values and stereotypes, and prepares students for successful professional communication in multicultural environments.

The originality of the chapter lies in the development of a comprehensive pedagogical model that combines the principles of ethnocultural psychology with innovative approaches to English language teaching in higher education. The proposed model offers practical value for higher education institutions seeking to integrate ethnocultural perspectives into professionally oriented foreign language teaching and to prepare future specialists for successful intercultural interaction in global academic and professional environments.

The intensification of globalization, international cooperation, and intercultural interaction characterizes the contemporary stage of social development. Within this context, English has strengthened its position as the principal language of international communication and professional collaboration among representatives of diverse cultural communities. Consequently, proficiency in a foreign language is no longer limited to linguistic knowledge and communicative skills. It also requires the ability to understand the cultural background of interlocutors, interpret culturally embedded meanings, and engage in constructive intercultural dialogue.

Against the backdrop of ongoing modernization in higher education, the development of students' intercultural communicative competence has become an essential component of the professional preparation of future specialists. Today's labour market requires graduates who are capable of working effectively in multicultural environments, interacting with representatives of diverse ethnic and social groups, and using English confidently in professional contexts.

One of the most promising ways to address these challenges is the integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching. The ethnocultural component promotes students' understanding of the world's cultural diversity while fostering cultural awareness, tolerance, empathy, and intercultural communication skills. Its significance has become even more evident in the context of expanding international academic mobility, the digital transformation of higher education, and the



growing need to prepare graduates for professional activity in a globalized society.

Although numerous studies have examined intercultural communication and foreign language education, the practical implementation of the ethnocultural component in English language teaching at higher education institutions remains insufficiently explored. In particular, further research is needed to substantiate effective methodological approaches that integrate ethnocultural content into professionally oriented English language instruction.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching has attracted growing scholarly attention in response to globalization, increasing international academic mobility, and the expansion of intercultural communication. Contemporary foreign language education focuses not only on developing learners' linguistic competence but also on fostering their ability to communicate effectively with representatives of different cultures, interpret culturally embedded meanings, and participate successfully in intercultural communication in both professional and social contexts.

The relationship between language and culture has been extensively explored by both Ukrainian and international scholars, who emphasize the inseparable connection between language education and the processes of cultural socialization. Ivashkevych argues that intercultural communication is a complex psycholinguistic process requiring not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to interpret culturally conditioned meanings and behavioural patterns [1]. Similarly, Matuzkova and Marchenko view intercultural communication as an essential prerequisite for successful participation in today's globalized society and emphasize the importance of developing cultural awareness and tolerance through education [2].

Considerable attention has also been devoted to the development of intercultural communicative competence as an integral component of the professional preparation of future specialists. Bondarchuk and Lysetska define intercultural competence as a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and behavioural patterns necessary for effective interaction in multicultural environments [3]. Likewise, Bondar stresses the importance of systematically integrating the intercultural component into foreign



language teaching in higher education institutions in order to prepare students for productive intercultural communication [4].

International research likewise identifies intercultural communicative competence as one of the principal outcomes of foreign language education. Heggernes highlights the educational value of authentic texts in introducing students to cultural values and sociocultural characteristics of English-speaking communities [5]. Salih and Omar demonstrate that the development of intercultural awareness has become an essential prerequisite for preparing students to participate successfully in international academic and professional environments [6].

Another important line of research concerns the application of innovative educational technologies to the development of intercultural competence. Gutiérrez-Santiuste and Ritacco-Real demonstrate the effectiveness of telecollaborative projects and virtual intercultural interaction in fostering students' intercultural communicative competence [9]. Similar conclusions are presented by Villegas-Paredes and colleagues, who confirm the positive impact of telecollaboration on the development of intercultural communication skills among higher education students [7]. These findings are further supported by Hackett et al., who demonstrate that Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) significantly enhances students' intercultural competence by promoting meaningful international collaboration and authentic intercultural learning experiences in higher education [11].

Reflective and critical pedagogical approaches also make a substantial contribution to the integration of the ethnocultural component into foreign language education. Sierra-Huedo and Nevado-Llopis emphasize that intercultural learning should promote awareness of one's own cultural identity, critical reflection on stereotypes, and readiness for intercultural dialogue [8]. Comparable conclusions are drawn by Tatzali and Beazidou, who underline the importance of reflective practices and communicative tasks in developing intercultural competence [10].

Despite the growing body of research devoted to intercultural communication and foreign language education, the integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education institutions remains insufficiently



investigated. In particular, further attention should be devoted to developing practical mechanisms for combining ethnocultural content with English language instruction through role-play activities, authentic learning materials, reflective practices, and the case study method.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the specific features of integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education institutions, to substantiate its role in developing students' intercultural communicative competence, and to identify effective methods of implementing ethnocultural content in the educational process.

To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives were formulated: to analyse theoretical approaches to the interrelationship between language, culture, and ethnocultural psychology; to define the essence and significance of the ethnocultural component in foreign language education; to characterize the role of intercultural communicative competence in the professional training of university students; to examine the potential of role-play activities, the case study method, authentic learning materials, and reflective practices in English language teaching; and to demonstrate the implementation of the ethnocultural component through the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology* within the course *Professional Communication in Foreign Language*.

Main Body of the Study. Contemporary trends in higher education necessitate a reconsideration of traditional approaches to foreign language teaching. In the context of globalization, the rapid development of international cooperation, and increasing academic mobility, proficiency in a foreign language is no longer limited to mastering lexical and grammatical structures. Instead, there is a growing need to educate individuals who are capable of functioning effectively in multicultural environments, understanding the cultural characteristics of representatives of other nations, and establishing constructive intercultural interaction. In this regard, the integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education institutions has become particularly important.

The concept of the ethnocultural component encompasses a body of knowledge



about culture, traditions, values, behavioural norms, worldviews, and the communicative characteristics of representatives of different ethnic communities. Within the context of foreign language education, it serves as an essential means of developing students' holistic understanding of the world's cultural diversity and promotes awareness of the close relationship between language and culture. As Matuzkova and Marchenko point out, intercultural communication is a complex sociocultural phenomenon that involves interaction between representatives of different cultural systems and requires the ability to interpret culturally determined meanings and behavioural patterns [2].

The theoretical foundation for integrating the ethnocultural component is provided by ethnocultural psychology, which examines the influence of culture on personality development, thinking, perception, communication, and the social behaviour of representatives of different ethnic groups. Within this theoretical framework, culture is regarded not merely as a collection of the material and spiritual achievements of society, but also as a system of values and behavioural patterns that shapes the ways individuals perceive and interpret the surrounding world. According to Ivashkevych, effective intercultural communication is based on an individual's ability to understand the psychological characteristics of representatives of other cultures and to take these characteristics into account during interpersonal interaction [1].

An important theoretical direction in contemporary foreign language teaching methodology is the concept of intercultural communicative competence. Unlike the traditional communicative approach, which primarily focuses on developing learners' linguistic knowledge and communicative skills, intercultural communicative competence emphasizes the ability to use language effectively while taking into account the cultural context of communication. It encompasses knowledge of other cultures, intercultural interaction skills, tolerance towards cultural differences, readiness for dialogue, and the ability to critically reflect on one's own cultural assumptions [3].

Contemporary scholarship identifies intercultural communicative competence as



one of the principal outcomes of foreign language education. Salih and Omar emphasize that, with the growing role of English as a global language of communication, particular attention should be paid to developing students' intercultural awareness, which enables them to overcome communication barriers and contributes to the formation of global citizenship [6]. Likewise, Tatzali and Beazidou argue that intercultural competence should be developed systematically through the integration of cultural content into all types of language learning activities [10].

English plays a particularly significant role in fostering intercultural communicative competence as the primary language of international communication. Today, it functions not only as the native language of English-speaking countries but also as a means of interaction among representatives of different cultures. Consequently, the objectives of English language teaching have evolved considerably. Alongside the development of linguistic competence, one of its primary aims is to prepare students for authentic intercultural communication. In this context, authentic learning materials are especially valuable because they reflect the diversity of cultural practices and communication patterns. As Heggernes points out, authentic texts help students analyse the cultural characteristics of communicative behaviour and broaden their understanding of other cultural environments [5].

At the same time, recent studies emphasize the need to move beyond the transmission of cultural knowledge towards creating opportunities for students to gain authentic intercultural experience. One of the most promising approaches involves telecollaborative projects and virtual forms of international interaction. The study conducted by Gutiérrez-Santiuste and Ritacco-Real demonstrates that participation in international online collaborative projects enhances students' intercultural sensitivity, collaborative skills, and their ability to adapt communicative behaviour to the cultural context of their interlocutors [9].

The reviewed studies provide sufficient evidence to conclude that integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching is an essential prerequisite for preparing future professionals to work effectively in a globalized world. The combination of the principles of ethnocultural psychology, the concept of intercultural



communicative competence, and contemporary methodological approaches contributes not only to the development of students' linguistic competence but also to their ability to engage consciously in intercultural interaction. Consequently, identifying effective practical mechanisms for implementing the ethnocultural component in English language teaching becomes particularly important and justifies further consideration of appropriate teaching methods and educational technologies.

Within this perspective, the ethnocultural component serves as an effective means of fostering cultural awareness, tolerance, empathy, and the ability to engage in constructive intercultural dialogue. Its integration into the educational process contributes to students' comprehensive understanding of the world's cultural diversity, strengthens awareness of their own cultural identity, and promotes the development of critical reflection on cultural phenomena [1].

The successful implementation of the ethnocultural component, however, largely depends on the teaching methods and educational technologies employed by instructors. Contemporary research demonstrates that interactive teaching approaches are particularly effective because they actively engage students in intercultural interaction, create opportunities for analysing cultural differences, and facilitate the acquisition of authentic intercultural communication experience [7].

Among the most effective instructional methods are role-play activities, the case study method, authentic learning materials, reflective practices, and elements of the critical pedagogical approach. These methods combine language learning with the development of intercultural communicative competence, enabling students to move beyond the reproductive acquisition of knowledge towards its conscious and meaningful application in authentic communicative situations [10].

In view of the above, it is appropriate to consider practical mechanisms for integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education institutions and to identify the pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of students' intercultural communicative competence.

The effectiveness of integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching largely depends on the selection of appropriate pedagogical



approaches and teaching methods. Contemporary higher education increasingly focuses on actively engaging students in intercultural interaction, creating opportunities for acquiring authentic communicative experience, and developing their ability to analyse culturally conditioned phenomena. Consequently, interactive teaching methods have become particularly relevant, as they combine language learning with the development of intercultural communicative competence [4].

One of the most effective ways of implementing the ethnocultural component is to create learning situations that closely simulate authentic intercultural communication. This approach enables students not only to acquire linguistic knowledge but also to apply it in simulated professional and social interactions with representatives of different cultural backgrounds.

Role-play activities are among the most widely used interactive methods in foreign language teaching. Their pedagogical value lies in providing students with opportunities to simulate authentic communicative situations, analyse the behaviour of representatives of different cultures, and practise strategies for intercultural interaction. Researchers emphasize that students' active involvement in communicative activities significantly contributes to the development of cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication skills [8].

In English language teaching, role-play activities related to education, professional practice, academic mobility, and international cooperation are particularly appropriate.

The practical implementation of the ethnocultural component was carried out within the course *Professional Communication in Foreign Language* designed for Master's students majoring in Psychology. Particular opportunities for developing students' intercultural communicative competence are provided by the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology*, which addresses issues of cultural identity, intercultural interaction, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, cultural values, and the specific features of psychologists' professional communication in multicultural environments.

During the study of this topic, students participated in role-play activities designed to simulate professional communication in psychological counselling. One of the



proposed activities, "*Psychologist and Client from Different Cultural Backgrounds*," required one student to assume the role of a psychologist and another to act as a client representing a different cultural community. While performing the task, students were expected to consider cultural norms, communication styles, attitudes towards family values, gender roles, and culturally determined patterns of behaviour.

Following each role-play activity, a group discussion was conducted in which students analysed potential challenges of intercultural communication, identified the causes of misunderstandings, and proposed possible strategies for overcoming them. This format promoted the development of cultural sensitivity, empathy, and professional communication skills, which is consistent with contemporary approaches to fostering intercultural communicative competence [6].

Particular attention was also paid to analysing cultural stereotypes and their influence on psychologists' professional practice. Students discussed typical situations in which cultural prejudice might affect the counselling process, the interpretation of clients' behaviour, and professional decision-making. Such activities correspond to the principles of critical pedagogy, which aims to develop critical thinking and encourage students to reflect on their own cultural assumptions [9].

Observations of students' learning activities indicated that the integration of ethnocultural content into English language teaching enhanced students' motivation, increased their communicative engagement, and strengthened their readiness for professional interaction in multicultural environments. Students also demonstrated a higher level of awareness of the role of cultural factors in psychological counselling and interpersonal communication.

Another highly effective method of implementing the ethnocultural component in English language teaching is the case study method. Its application creates favourable conditions for integrating language learning, professional knowledge, and students' intercultural experience. Unlike traditional reproductive teaching approaches, the case study method actively involves students in analysing problematic situations, making professional decisions, and providing reasoned arguments for possible solutions.

Within the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology*, students were



presented with the case "*A Ukrainian Psychologist Working with a Refugee Client from Another Cultural Background.*" The case simulated a professional interaction between a Ukrainian psychologist and a client who had been forced to leave their country as a result of war and belonged to a different cultural community.

While working with the case, students analysed potential communication challenges related to differences in cultural values, behavioural patterns, perceptions of psychological counselling, and ways of expressing emotions. Particular attention was paid to the influence of the cultural context on establishing a trusting relationship between the psychologist and the client.

To facilitate discussion, students were asked the following questions:

- *What cultural factors may influence the effectiveness of communication between a psychologist and a client?*
- *What challenges may arise during psychological counselling with clients from different cultural backgrounds?*
- *Which communication strategies can facilitate the establishment of effective psychological rapport?*
- *How can psychologists avoid ethnocentrism and cultural bias in their professional practice?*

The discussion was conducted in English in small groups, followed by the presentation of the results. This format encouraged students to use professional vocabulary, justify their opinions, and actively participate in intercultural dialogue.

The use of professionally oriented case studies contributes to the development of critical thinking, enhances students' ability to analyse complex socio-psychological situations, and increases their level of intercultural sensitivity. The case study method facilitates the transfer of acquired knowledge into practical contexts and creates favourable conditions for preparing future psychologists for professional practice in multicultural environments [12].

An equally important component of integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching is the organisation of students' reflective activities. Contemporary research emphasizes that the development of intercultural competence



is impossible without awareness of one's own cultural identity and critical reflection on personal cultural assumptions [10].

Upon completing the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology*, students were asked to keep a short reflective journal in English. The purpose of this activity was to encourage reflection on their own intercultural experiences and to develop self-analysis skills.

The following guiding questions were suggested:

- *What have I learned about cultural differences in communication?*
- *Which stereotypes did I reconsider during this unit?*
- *How can cultural awareness improve psychological practice?*
- *What challenges may arise when communicating with clients from different cultural backgrounds?*

The analysis of students' reflective journals demonstrated that the majority of participants developed a deeper awareness of the influence of culture on interpersonal interaction and professional communication. Students emphasized the importance of empathy, tolerance, and the ability to consider the cultural background of interlocutors in their future professional practice.

The combination of role-play activities, the case study method, and reflective practices creates favourable conditions for integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching and contributes to the development of intercultural communicative competence among future psychologists.

The experience of teaching the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology* within the course *Professional Communication in Foreign Language* confirmed the considerable potential of the ethnocultural component for developing intercultural communicative competence among future psychologists. The combination of role-play activities, professionally oriented case studies, authentic learning materials, and reflective practices provides a comprehensive impact on the development of students' linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural competences.

Particularly effective proved to be the activities based on modelling authentic professional situations of intercultural interaction. While working with case studies and



role-play activities, students not only improved their English communication skills but also gained practical experience in analysing culturally conditioned patterns of behaviour, considering the influence of sociocultural factors on communication, and making informed professional decisions.

Another significant outcome was the increased awareness of the role of culture in psychologists' professional practice. The analysis of students' reflective journals revealed that most participants became more critical in evaluating their own cultural assumptions, demonstrated greater readiness for intercultural dialogue, and showed increased tolerance towards cultural differences. Students also reported greater confidence when discussing complex sociocultural issues in English and recognized the importance of cultural competence for their future professional careers.

The obtained results confirm the relevance of systematically integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education institutions and demonstrate its considerable potential for preparing competitive professionals capable of working effectively in multicultural societies.

Conclusions.

This chapter has examined the integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching in higher education institutions. The analysis of contemporary scholarly literature has demonstrated that modern foreign language education is focused not only on the development of linguistic competence but also on fostering intercultural communicative competence, which has become an essential prerequisite for effective professional activity in the context of globalization and intercultural interaction.

The study has established that the theoretical foundation for integrating the ethnocultural component is based on the principles of ethnocultural psychology, the concept of intercultural communicative competence, and contemporary approaches to intercultural education. The ethnocultural component enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the world's cultural diversity while fostering cultural awareness, tolerance, empathy, and the ability to engage in constructive intercultural



dialogue.

The practical implementation of the proposed approach was demonstrated through the topic *Cross-Cultural Communication in Psychology* within the course *Professional Communication in Foreign Language* designed for Master's students majoring in Psychology. The findings indicate that the use of role-play activities, the case study method, authentic learning materials, and reflective practices creates favourable conditions for developing intercultural communicative competence, enhancing critical thinking, and preparing students for professional practice in multicultural environments.

The findings of the study confirm that the systematic integration of the ethnocultural component into English language teaching facilitates the transition from the reproductive acquisition of language knowledge to its conscious and meaningful application in authentic intercultural communication. Such an approach contributes to the comprehensive development of intercultural communicative competence and enhances the quality of the professional training of future specialists.

Future research should focus on the development and empirical validation of comprehensive methodological models for integrating the ethnocultural component into English language teaching across different academic disciplines. Further studies may also explore the impact of digital technologies and international virtual collaboration projects on the development of intercultural communicative competence among higher education students.



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