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ТЕОРИЯ И ПРАКТИКА ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ ПОДГОТОВКИ
СПЕЦИАЛИСТОВ В ВЫСШЕЙ ШКОЛЕ
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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN THE
CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION:
AN INTEGRATIVE DIGITAL MODEL

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Abstract. This article examines contemporary foreign language teaching methodology as an integrative system in which language education is combined with the development of intercultural communicative competence, digital literacy, reflective skills, and the ability to mediate meanings. It substantiates the transition from a model of “language as a set of structures” to a model of “language as a means of action in a culturally heterogeneous environment.” An original digital-intercultural methodological architecture is proposed, integrating communicative tasks, virtual exchange, analysis of critical intercultural incidents, project-based learning, digital storytelling, and guided use of generative artificial intelligence. To demonstrate the logic of model evaluation, an illustrative quasi-experimental analysis based on a synthetic dataset (N=120) is presented. These numerical results are not claimed as findings of a real empirical study and are intended to be replaced with actual author data. The model analysis demonstrates how language progress, intercultural competence, digital interaction, reflection, and engagement can be assessed within a unified research design.

Keywords: foreign language, intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, digital pedagogy, virtual exchange, mediation, generative artificial intelligence, reflective learning

Introduction

Global mobility, transnational professional networks, and digital communication have transformed the very object of foreign language teaching. Whereas traditional methodology often described learning outcomes through mastery of phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and the four language skills, contemporary learners must also interpret culturally marked meanings, recognize pragmatic differences, explain their own position to representatives of other cultural environments, and adjust communicative strategies under conditions of uncertainty. Foreign language methodology is therefore increasingly becoming a methodology for developing the ability to act socially through language [1–4].

Intercultural communication in this context cannot be reduced to the transmission of country-specific facts. It requires openness, knowledge of cultural variability, skills of interpreting and relating, the ability to discover new knowledge during communication, and the capacity to evaluate cultural practices critically. Byram's model systematized these components through interconnected *savoirs*, while Deardorff's process model emphasized the dynamic movement from attitudes and knowledge toward internal and external outcomes of intercultural behavior [2, 5, 6].

The problem becomes particularly significant in digital learning environments. Virtual exchange, international project teams, videoconferencing, social platforms, automated feedback, and generative language models provide unprecedented access to authentic interaction. At the same time, they introduce new risks: cultural stereotyping, uncritical acceptance of algorithmically generated content, pragmatic errors, and weakening of learner reflection. The digital component should therefore be embedded in methodology not as a collection of tools but as a managed environment for intercultural action [7–10].

The purpose of this article is to develop and analytically substantiate an integrative methodology for foreign language teaching aimed at the simultaneous development of language competence and intercultural communicative competence in a digital environment. The objectives are to systematize the theoretical foundations, define methodological principles, design a set of instructional technologies, describe an assessment system, and demonstrate a possible scheme for quantitative analysis of outcomes.

The theoretical evolution of foreign language methodology demonstrates a gradual expansion of the concept of learning outcomes. Hymes's concept of communicative competence and the subsequent model developed by Canale and Swain showed that grammatical correctness is insufficient without sociolinguistic and strategic appropriateness [1, 3]. The communicative approach shifted attention toward meaning, intention, and interaction; however, globalization later revealed the limitations of using the idealized native speaker as the primary normative reference.

The intercultural turn is closely associated with the work of Michael Byram. His model of intercultural communicative competence conceptualizes the learner as an intercultural speaker who does not merely imitate a native speaker

but mediates between perspectives and critically interprets cultural norms [2, 4]. The revised framework strengthens attention to ethical responsibility, mediation, citizenship, and critical cultural awareness [2]. Deardorff, in turn, describes intercultural competence as a developmental process in which respect, openness, and curiosity support movement toward adaptability, empathy, and effective behavior [5].

Recent reviews confirm the continuing influence of Byram's and Deardorff's frameworks in EFL research while identifying persistent methodological challenges: insufficient teacher preparation, fragmented cultural content, overreliance on self-report instruments, and a shortage of longitudinal intervention studies [11–13]. Bibliometric research further indicates that intercultural communication has developed from a peripheral topic into a distinct field of language education connected with identity, mobility, digital communication, and global citizenship [14].

Technology-mediated learning has also broadened the concept of authenticity. In teletandem, virtual exchange, and COIL projects, authenticity is generated not only by instructional materials but also by the need to negotiate meaning with a real interlocutor. Research on virtual exchange associates it with language autonomy, pragmatic flexibility, intercultural awareness, and digital collaboration [8, 15]. Nevertheless, contact alone does not guarantee reflection; interaction must be accompanied by pre-communication preparation, observation, debriefing, and metacognitive analysis.

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has created another methodological layer. Studies of ChatGPT and related tools in language education highlight the potential for personalized dialogue, scenario generation, linguistic scaffolding, and immediate feedback, while also pointing to factual errors, cultural simplification, and learner overdependence [9, 10]. A productive model must therefore incorporate AI literacy: the ability to formulate prompts, verify cultural and linguistic assumptions, compare alternative formulations, document AI use, and preserve authorial responsibility.

The literature thus supports four interconnected methodological vectors: communicative-action-oriented, intercultural-reflective, digital-collaborative, and critical-ethical. Their integration, rather than their parallel coexistence, is treated in this study as a condition for preparing learners for real multilingual and multicultural communication.

Materials and methods

The methodological framework combines communicative-action, competence-based, sociocultural, reflective, and digital-pedagogical approaches. The proposed unit of instructional design is not an isolated exercise but an intercultural communicative cycle: problematic situation → language scaffolding → contact or simulation → identification of communicative difficulty → reflection → mediation → repeated action in a modified context.

An important principle is dual goal-setting: every task has both a linguistic and an intercultural objective. For example, a negotiation role-play assesses not only the correct use of conditional structures and argumentation but also the learner’s ability to clarify hidden assumptions, reformulate a potentially conflict-provoking statement, and express respectful disagreement.

Table 1. Integrated intercultural teaching cycle

Stage	Method	Learning activity	Target outcome
1	Language scaffolding	L e x i c a l - p r a g m a t i c preparation, discourse patterns, repair strategies	Linguistic accuracy + strategic competence
2	Critical cultural incident	Ambiguous behavior, value conflict, stereotype detection	Interpretation + critical cultural awareness
3	Virtual exchange / COIL	Joint task with culturally diverse partners	Interaction + mediation + adaptability
4	AI dialogue laboratory	Prompted simulations, response comparison, bias checking	Digital literacy + pragmatic flexibility
5	Reflective debriefing	Learning diary, peer feedback, evidence-based reflection	Metacognition + empathy + self-awareness
6	Transfer task	New scenario with changed roles and constraints	Transfer + autonomous intercultural action

Table 2. Multicomponent assessment framework

Domain	Indicators	Assessment instrument	Weight
Language competence	Accuracy, fluency, lexical range, discourse organization	Analytic rubric + performance task	30%
Intercultural competence	Interpretation, relating, adaptability, critical awareness	Scenario rubric + reflection	30%
Mediation	Reframing, clarification, perspective bridging	Triadic role task	15%
Digital interaction	Netiquette, multimodal clarity, source verification	Digital portfolio	15%
Reflective autonomy	Evidence-based self-assessment, strategy revision	Reflective journal	10%

To demonstrate the analytical logic, a synthetic quasi-experimental dataset was generated for 120 hypothetical learners: 60 in an experimental group and 60 in a control group. The model course lasts 12 weeks. The experimental pathway includes virtual exchange, critical incidents, digital storytelling, role-based negotiation, reflective journals, and an AI dialogue laboratory; the control pathway relies mainly on communicative exercises without systematic intercultural and digital-reflective integration. Indicators are expressed on a 0–100 scale. The numerical data below are explicitly synthetic and serve as a template for future analysis of real empirical results.

Table 3. Model research design

Parameter	Specification	Operationalization
Design	Quasi-experimental pre/post model	Two parallel learning trajectories
Sample	N = 120 (model data)	Experimental n=60; Control n=60
Duration	12 weeks	3 instructional hours per week
Primary outcomes	Language + ICC	0–100 analytic scales
Secondary outcomes	Digital interaction, reflection, engagement	Portfolio and rubric scores
Analysis	Descriptive statistics, gain scores, correlations, effect-size logic	Illustrative analytical workflow

Results

The first redesigned visualization represents development as a continuous twelve-week trajectory rather than a conventional pre/post comparison. The shaded ribbons emphasize variability around the model trend and make the simultaneous development of linguistic and intercultural outcomes visible.

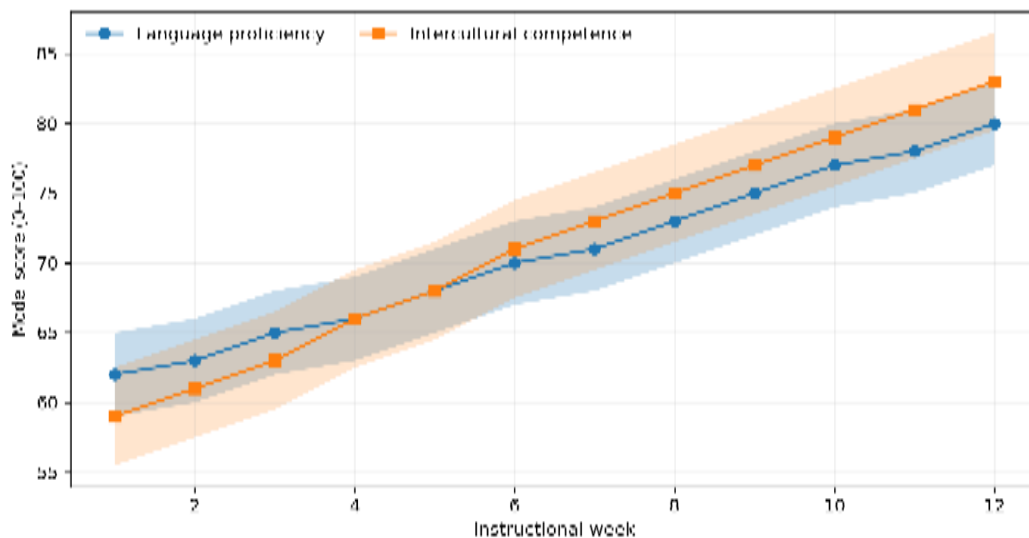


Figure 1. Dual-competence learning trajectory with uncertainty ribbons

The trajectory suggests that language proficiency and ICC develop in parallel but not identically. ICC accelerates particularly after the middle phase of the course, when learners have accumulated enough interactional experience for reflective and mediation tasks to become more productive. The figure therefore supports a staged methodology rather than an assumption of uniform weekly growth.

The second visualization conceptualizes intercultural learning as an expanding spiral. Each turn moves the learner from an initial encounter with difference toward noticing, interpretation, comparison, mediation, reflection, transfer, and renewed interaction at a more advanced level.

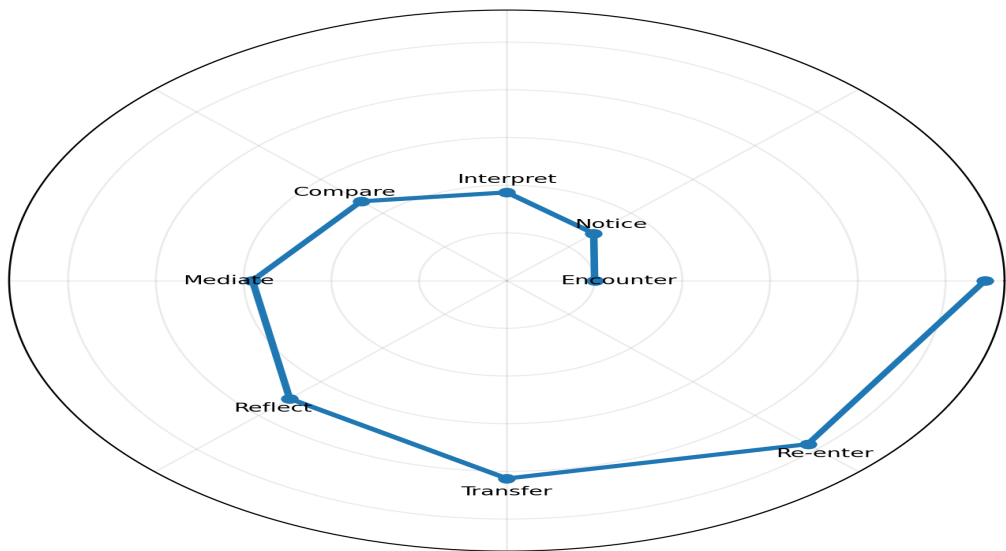


Figure 2. Spiral architecture of intercultural learning

The spiral model highlights recursive development: reflection does not close the learning process but prepares a learner for a new encounter. This is methodologically important because intercultural competence cannot be treated as a linear checklist; the same communicative challenge may be revisited with greater interpretive depth and strategic flexibility.

The third visualization presents the methodology as a flow architecture. Instructional resources are transformed through cognitive and communicative mechanisms into three major outcomes, allowing the reader to see the model as a connected system rather than a set of independent methods.

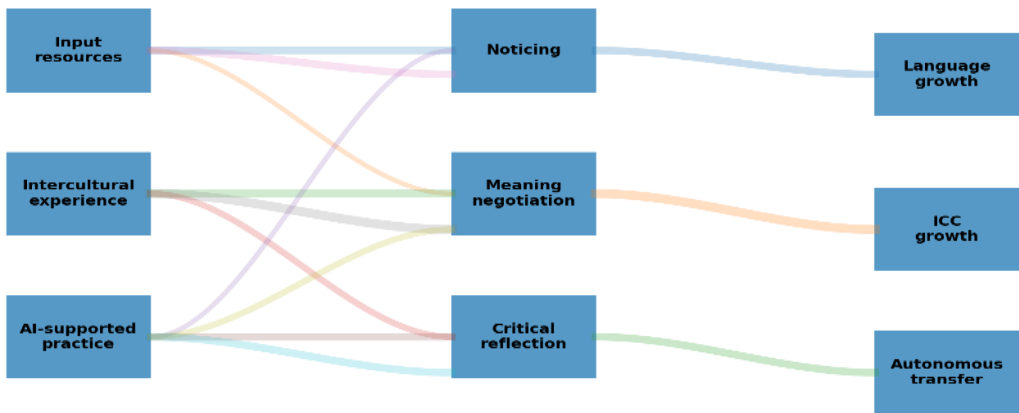


Figure 3. Alluvial map of instructional mechanisms and outcomes

The alluvial structure emphasizes that the strongest outcomes arise from combinations of mechanisms. AI-supported practice, for example, has limited

value if it bypasses critical reflection, while intercultural experience becomes more pedagogically productive when it is processed through meaning negotiation and reflective interpretation.

The fourth visualization uses parallel coordinates to show heterogeneous learner profiles. Instead of reducing performance to a single average, it demonstrates how different learners may reach similar overall success through different combinations of accuracy, pragmatics, cultural awareness, mediation, reflection, and digital competence.

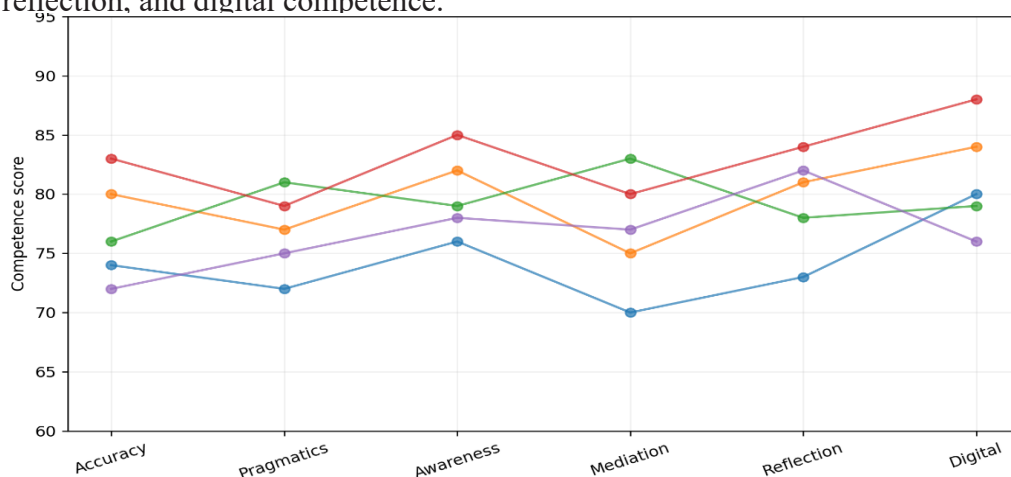


Figure 4. Parallel-coordinate learner profiles after intervention

The learner profiles demonstrate why multidimensional assessment is necessary. A student may display strong digital interaction but weaker mediation, whereas another may show advanced cultural awareness but only moderate linguistic accuracy. Such profiles enable differentiated feedback and more precise instructional decisions.

The fifth visualization replaces the previous correlation matrix with a hexagonal density field. It displays the concentration of model observations across reflective-practice and ICC scores and therefore makes the relationship visible without relying on a conventional heatmap.

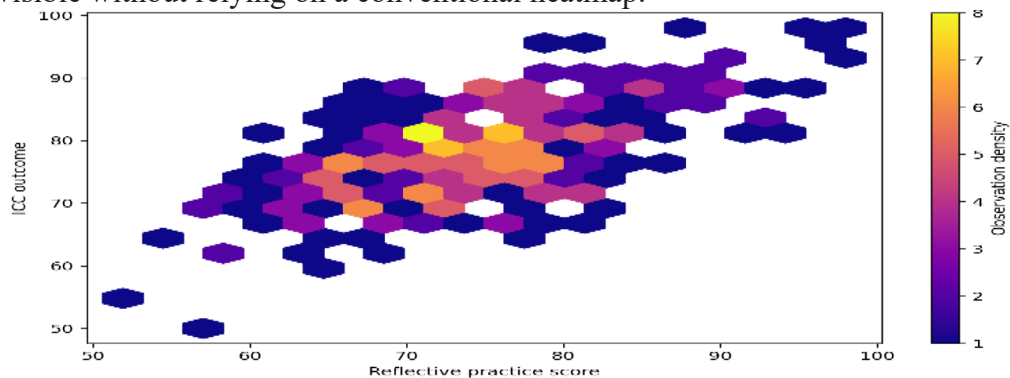


Figure 5. Hexagonal density field: reflection and ICC

The densest region moves toward higher ICC values as reflective-practice scores increase. The visualization does not establish causality, but it clearly represents the theoretical expectation that reflection functions as a mechanism that converts intercultural encounters into more stable interpretive and behavioral competence.

The sixth visualization compares method-linked outcome distributions using a ridgeline structure. This format makes it possible to compare both the central tendency and the expected spread of performance associated with different instructional formats.

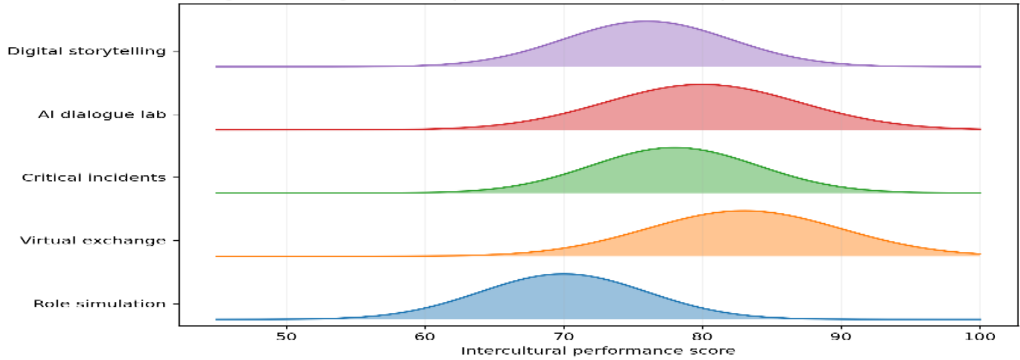


Figure 6. Ridgeline comparison of method-linked performance distributions

The distributions suggest that virtual exchange and AI dialogue laboratory can generate relatively high performance when they are pedagogically structured, while role simulation provides a somewhat broader range of outcomes. The figure also underscores that method effectiveness should be interpreted through distributions rather than a single mean value.

The seventh visualization summarizes the integrated learning outcome as a polar competency rose. Unlike a radar chart, the radial sectors encode the strength of each competence independently and create a compact multidimensional profile.

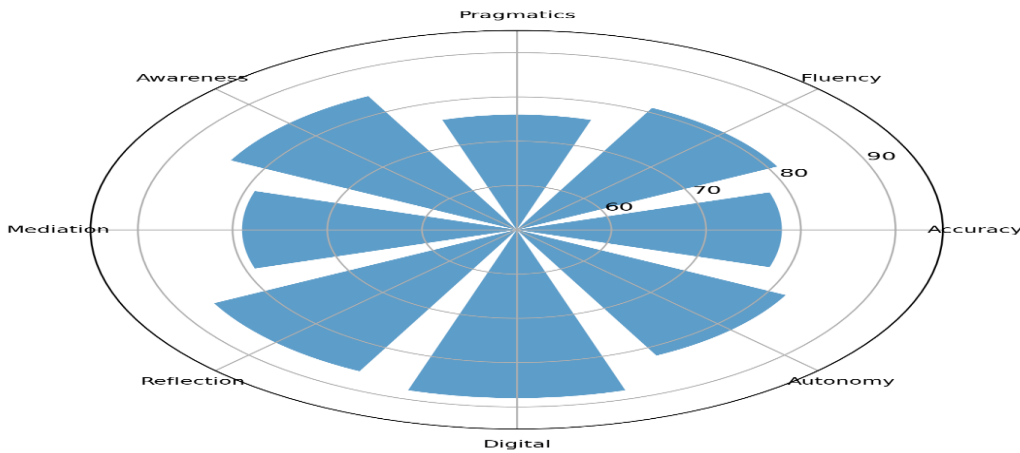


Figure 7. Polar competency rose of the integrated learning outcome

The competency rose shows a relatively balanced final profile, with particularly strong values in reflection, digital interaction, and cultural awareness. This supports the central premise of the article: contemporary foreign-language methodology should integrate linguistic, intercultural, reflective, and digital dimensions rather than optimize one dimension in isolation.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of model data

Group	Pre Language	Post Language	Pre ICC	Post ICC	Digital	Reflection	Engagement
Control	62.0	67.2	56.7	62.4	66.2	68.2	70.4
Experimental	62.1	76.1	58.3	76.6	79.0	80.6	82.1

Discussion

The proposed model supports a methodological shift from merely adding culture to a language course toward designing complete intercultural actions. In a traditional logic, the cultural component may be represented by a text about a target-language country followed by discussion. In the integrative logic, culture becomes a variable of communication: learners encounter differences in perspective, recognize them, request clarification, relate interpretations, and choose language strategies that preserve both meaning and interpersonal relationships.

The configuration observed in the model analysis is consistent with Byram's theoretical proposition concerning the interrelationship among knowledge, attitudes, interpretation, interaction, and critical cultural awareness [2, 4]. It also corresponds to Deardorff's process-oriented understanding, in which externally observable communicative effectiveness emerges through internal changes such as flexibility, empathy, and relativization of one's own perspective [5].

The digital layer of the model has an independent didactic function. Virtual exchange creates genuine responsibility for mutual understanding; digital storytelling requires learners to translate cultural meaning across modalities; and the AI dialogue laboratory enables rapid generation of variable scenarios and comparison of pragmatic solutions. Generative AI, however, should not function as a hidden author of the correct answer. Its productive role is to become an object of verification, contrastive analysis, and critical editing [9, 10].

For teachers, this implies a transformation of professional roles. The teacher becomes not only a source of linguistic norms but also a designer of intercultural situations, a moderator of reflection, an organizer of safe discussion of differences, and an expert in the quality of digital interaction. Systematic reviews indicate that teacher preparation remains one of the major bottlenecks in the implementation of ICC in EFL classrooms [11–13].

Assessment requires triangulation. A vocabulary and grammar test does not measure the ability to mediate a conflict of interpretations, while a self-report measure of tolerance does not guarantee effective behavior. Performance tasks, analytic rubrics, portfolios, reflective writing, observation, and language indicators should therefore be combined. In a real empirical study, reliability

should be strengthened through inter-rater agreement, prior validation of scales, and statistical control of baseline differences.

At the curriculum level, paired learning outcomes should be formulated for each module: one linguistic and one intercultural. For example, “argue a position in an academic discussion” should be accompanied by “adapt argumentation to different communicative norms and explain the cultural foundations of disagreement.”

At the lesson level, a three-phase scenario is recommended: preparation for difference, action in a situation of difference, and reflection after interaction. This structure prevents intercultural learning from becoming a collection of declarative facts.

In digital environments, tasks should include source verification, comparison of multiple AI-generated responses, identification of cultural stereotypes, editing of pragmatically inappropriate utterances, and documentation of the learner’s own authorship.

Assessment should include a cumulative digital portfolio containing not only final products but also evidence of revision: the initial version, feedback, reflection, and an improved version. The dynamics of revision make it possible to evaluate the development of intercultural awareness.

Conclusion

Contemporary foreign language teaching methodology should treat intercultural communication not as an additional thematic unit but as a system-forming principle. The proposed integrative digital-intercultural model combines linguistic accuracy, pragmatic flexibility, cultural interpretation, mediation, critical reflection, and digital responsibility. Its methodological novelty lies in organizing learning through repeated cycles of intercultural action and reflection and in incorporating generative AI as a critically examined tool rather than a substitute for independent communication. The numerical results presented in the article constitute a synthetic demonstration of the analytical design; for an empirical publication they must be replaced with real data collected in accordance with appropriate ethical procedures.

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МӘДЕНИЕТАРАЛЫҚ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ КОНТЕКСТІНДЕГІ ШЕТЕЛ ТІЛДЕРІН ОҚЫТУ ӘДІСТЕМЕСІ: ИНТЕГРАТИВТІ ЦИФРЛЫҚ МОДЕЛЬ

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада шетел тілдерін оқытудың заманауи әдістемесі тілдік даярлықты мәдениетаралық коммуникативтік құзыреттілікпен, цифрлық сауаттылықпен, рефлексиялық дағдылармен және мағыналарды

медиативті түрде жеткізу қабілетімен ұштастыратын интегративті жүйе ретінде қарастырылады. Тілді құрылымдар жиынтығы ретінде қабылдаудан оны мәдени тұрғыдан әртекті ортада әрекет ету құралы ретінде түсінуге көшу негізделеді. Коммуникативтік тапсырмаларды, виртуалды алмасуды, сыни мәдениетаралық жағдаяттарды талдауды, жобалық оқытуды, цифрлық сторителлингті және генеративті жасанды интеллектіні басқарылатын түрде пайдалануды біріктіретін авторлық цифрлық-мәдениетаралық әдістемелік модель ұсынылады. Модельді бағалау логикасын көрсету үшін синтетикалық деректер жиынтығына (N=120) негізделген оқу-модельдік квазиэксперименттік талдау берілген. Біртұтас зерттеу дизайнында тілдік ілгерілеуді, мәдениетаралық құзыреттілікті, цифрлық өзара әрекеттесуді, рефлексияны және білім алушылардың белсенділігін бағалау жолдары көрсетіледі.

Тірек сөздер: шетел тілі, мәдениетаралық коммуникация, мәдениетаралық коммуникативтік құзыреттілік, цифрлық педагогика, виртуалды алмасу, медиативтік әрекет, генеративті жасанды интеллект, рефлексивті оқыту

МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ В КОНТЕКСТЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ: ИНТЕГРАТИВНАЯ ЦИФРОВАЯ МОДЕЛЬ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается современная методика преподавания иностранных языков как интегративная система, в которой языковая подготовка объединяется с развитием межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции, цифровой грамотности, рефлексивных умений и способности к медиированию смыслов. Обосновывается переход от понимания языка как совокупности структур к пониманию языка как средства действия в культурно неоднородной среде. Предложена авторская цифрово-интеркультурная методическая модель, объединяющая коммуникативные задания, виртуальный обмен, анализ критических межкультурных ситуаций, проектное обучение, цифровой сторителлинг и управляемое применение генеративного искусственного интеллекта. Для демонстрации логики проверки модели представлен учебно-модельный квазиэкспериментальный анализ на синтетическом наборе данных (N=120). Показано, каким образом в едином исследовательском дизайне могут оцениваться языковой прогресс, межкультурная компетентность, цифровое взаимодействие, рефлексия и вовлеченность.

Ключевые слова: иностранный язык, межкультурная коммуникация, межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, цифровая педагогика, виртуальный обмен, медиирование, генеративный искусственный интеллект, рефлексивное обучение

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