LINGUISTIC AND COUNTRY STUDIES APPROACH TO TEACHING UKRAINIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Liudmyla Bereza[1]
Liudmyla Sydorenko[2]

DOI: https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-715-4-22

Abstract. This study examines the linguocultural approach to teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language within the context of contemporary intercultural communication processes and Ukraine's integration into the global cultural space. It substantiates the interconnection between language and culture as a crucial prerequisite for foreign students to effectively master the Ukrainian language. The concepts of "culture," "cultural space," "linguistic-and-country-studies approach," and "linguoculturological approach" are analyzed, and their roles within the language education system are defined. Particular attention is paid to the distinctions between the linguistic-and-country-studies approach and the linguoculturological approach. The potential of employing the linguistic-and-country-studies approach to foster not only linguistic but also sociocultural and communicative competencies in foreign students is demonstrated. Emphasis is placed on the importance of foreigners internalizing cultural values, traditions, behavioral norms, the nuances of the Ukrainian mentality, and culturally marked linguistic units. It is concluded that combining linguistic and cultural components fosters a deeper understanding of the Ukrainian language, facilitates the successful adaptation of students to the Ukrainian sociocultural environment, and ensures effective intercultural dialogue.The *relevance* of this study stems from the urgent need to modernize pedagogical approaches in higher education in response to global socio-communicative changes. Traditional methodology often divorces formal grammar instruction from the sociocultural context, leading to communicative gaps during authentic

[1] Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of Ukrainian Language and General Linguistics,
Cherkasy State Technological University, Ukraine
[2] Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of Ukrainian Language and General Linguistics,
Cherkasy State Technological University, Ukraine

© Liudmyla Bereza, Liudmyla Sydorenko

intercultural discourse. There is now a need to seek new scholarly solutions to bridge this structural divide by developing a holistic, systematically coherent model of linguocultural competence. The *primary aim* of the study is the theoretical substantiation, taxonomization, and empirical assessment of the three-component structure of linguocultural competence, as well as the determination of optimal pedagogical strategies for its systematic integration into university curricula. To achieve this goal, the following *research objectives* were formulated: 1) to outline the theoretical boundaries and conceptual framework of linguocultural competence in modern applied linguistics; 2) to differentiate and characterize the internal mechanisms of the linguistic, speech-related, and country-specific components; 3) to classify the practical implementation of linguocultural material at the phonetic-communicative, grammatical-rhetorical, and lexical-functional levels; and 4) to develop and pilot an integrative methodological model for university-level language instruction. The research *methodology* is based on a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach that combines qualitative theoretical analysis with empirical diagnostic methods. Theoretical methods include systems-structural synthesis, comparative linguistic analysis, and pedagogical modeling, which are employed to establish the conceptual architecture of the competence components. Empirical methods encompass structured pedagogical observation, diagnostic testing of background vocabulary acquisition, rhetorical discourse analysis, and communicative tasks performed by university students. The study demonstrates that, in the process of developing linguo-cultural competence, linguistic knowledge facilitates the operational level of communication, whereas knowledge of the target culture establishes the sociocultural context necessary for the appropriate interpretation and use of linguistic units in intercultural interaction. The proposed methodology involves the gradual enrichment of Ukrainian language course content with linguocultural material that takes into account the cultural backgrounds of international students, thereby facilitating their successful linguistic and sociocultural adaptation. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that the systematic implementation of the proposed model directly enhances argumentative competence and contextual appropriateness in professional and academic interactions. In *conclusion*, this study offers a validated theoretical framework and practical pedagogical recommendations for university instructors seeking

to develop comprehensive communicative competence within the context of modern language education.

INTRODUCTION

Ukraine's integration into the global cultural arena highlights the relevance of the nation's cultural and historical heritage, which bears witness to its millennium-long dialogue with world culture. Today, Ukraine is increasingly opening its doors to foreign nationals seeking to explore and study its culture, history, literature, and language. The adaptation of international students to a new cultural environment is inherently accompanied by difficulties stemmimg from a lack of proficiency in Ukrainian, alongside an unfamiliarity with the culture, traditions, and mindset of the Ukrainian people. The inextricably bound relation between education and culture fosters the acquisition of historical and cultural values, through which foreign students enter the realm of culture and establish a dialogue between two complementary systems: "man within culture" and "culture within man." Contemporary processes of humanisation and humanitarisation in higher education necessitate fundamental shifts in the pedagogical frameworks applied to teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language (UFL). At present, the linguocultural approach stands as a priority and well-developed model in UFL methodology, realized pedagogically by moving from linguistic facts to cultural facts. Conversely, the linguoculturological approach–whose object of study encompasses the psychological nuances, worldview, and mindset of an ethnic group–remains less thoroughly explored, yet highly promising. The implementation of this latter approach proceeds from cultural facts to linguistic facts, constructing a new research paradigm: culture as the ultimate goal, and language as the instructional vehicle. According to scholars in linguistics, a multi-faceted approach to learning Ukrainian ensures its conceptual acquisition and internalisation, facilitating a comprehension of extra-linguistic contexts rather than merely decoding a system of linguistic signs.

1. Cultural Space within the Multidimensional Paradigm of Social Relations

Culture represents a complex phenomenon of human existence spanning both material and spiritual spheres, giving form to social and

psychological phenomena. It determines a society's way of life by shaping its collective mindset, work ethic, everyday customs, and leisure. Human progress is tightly bound to cultural evolution: culture serves as a marker of contemporary cultural space while delineating future prospects for both individual personalities and the global community as a whole. Resolving humanity's global challenges depends heavily on the future trajectories of cultural development, which are themselves partly conditioned by global political trends [8, p. 11]. Every historical epoch is defined by a paradigm of unique cultural phenomena dialectically intertwined with broader transformational processes. In particular, the nature of a culture depends upon a society's system of value orientations, ideals, interests, needs, and social relations. Consequently, the interpretation of "culture" has evolved across distinct historical stages.

The concept of "culture" entered academic discourse within European sociology during the second half of the 18th century. Today, philosophers and culturologists offer no single, unified interpretation. Researchers note that there are approximately 500 (and by some estimates, nearly a thousand) definitions of "culture" [14, p. 6]. This stems both from the polysemy of the term itself and the multi-perspectival approaches used to analyze the phenomenon, as few concepts across the social sciences are as rich, contested, and vital as that of "culture" [4, p. 232]. For philosophers (such as I. Ziaziun, L. Sokhan, among others), culture is associated with humanity's reflection on its global role in the material world–an awareness of an intrinsically human agency independent of natural or divine forces, signaling the birth of a cult of the individual that replaced earlier religious cults. Culturologists (such as B. Havrylyshyn, Yu. Lotman, etc.) interpret the concept as a universal vehicle for creative self-actualisation through comprehending the meaning of existence and striving to affirm the essence of human life. The cultural paradigm encompasses knowledge, norms, behavioural stereotypes, skills, traditions, mechanisms of social interaction, and sign systems, as well as the social institutions that preserve and disseminate them.

The sociological definition of culture (N. Chernysh, Ye. Kozlovets, E. Siryi, etc.) frames it as a aggregate of methods and modes of human material and spiritual activity, objectively embodied in artifacts (tools, signs) passed down to subsequent generations. The scope of "culture" also

includes historically established social norms and rules peculiar to a given social system. In pedagogy, scholars (Sh. Amonashvili, V. Sukhomlynskyi, et al.) view culture as a holistic, harmonious synthesis of knowledge, emotion, thought, communication, and constructive creative activity formed over millennia, transmitted across generations, and acquired through education. According to S. Zhyla, culture as a universal pedagogical category must be understood as everything that forms the individual, enabling them to become socially active, professionally mature, and goal-oriented [23, p. 85].

An analysis of these interpretations justifies isolating five primary substantive aspects of culture:

1. The sum total of material and spiritual values.
2. The domain of society's spiritual life.
3. The level of individual mastery over a given sphere of knowledge or activity.
4. A form of human social behaviour.
5. A mode of creative activity.

Diverse conceptual approaches facilitate a deeper comprehension of "culture" and its links to adjacent academic fields. In our view, politics, law, and ideology act as vehicles of spiritual culture in society, which is further characterized by language, speech, thought, and behavioural norms. Accounting for these markers, spiritual culture can be rationally divided into two domains: the first comprises an individual's spiritual qualities and the activities through which they are realized; the second includes spiritual values existing relatively independently in the form of scientific theories, works of art, legal codes, and related artifacts. Contemporary social philosophy continues to advance the view that culture is not restricted solely to the spiritual realm of human existence, but spans other spheres as well. Rather than the traditional two-part division, contemporary models identify four distinct spheres of human activity:

1. Material, covering production, distribution, exchange, and consumption processes–thus depending on productive forces, relations of production, and technological innovation.

2. Socio-political, incorporating social and political relationships between people–including class, national, group, and international relations.

3. Spiritual, encompassing a broad complex of ideas, views, and beliefs–the entire spectrum through which individual and social consciousness are

formed, transformed via mass communication, and ultimately integrated into a person's inner spiritual world.

4. Socio-domestic, connected with the production and generational transfer of cultural values, family life, domestic concerns, the organization of work and leisure, and formal and informal education [1, p. 150].

Naturally, all spheres of human activity are closely interconnected and cannot be evaluated in isolation. Cultural processes permeate every domain, transforming over time to establish new cultural values and orientations. While acknowledging the multifunctional nature of spiritual culture, researchers emphasize its essential role in awakening the individual personality. Every structural element of spiritual culture–intellectual (science, education), aesthetic (art, literature), ethical (morality), social (language, lifestyle, customs, law, politics), and religious–plays a vital part in this process [8, p. 13].

The domain of spiritual culture constitutes a pivotal component of the cultural world. From a philosophical perspective, it represents the culture of self-actualisation, creative growth, and cognitive exploration of the world [7, p. 178]. Art, religion, and philosophy fall directly within its scope. These cultural forms are characterized by the actualisation of knowledge and values, standing as the ultimate purpose of creative activity within spiritual culture. Regulatory mechanisms within this domain are distinct, yet fulfill an auxiliary role as instruments and methods for generating spiritual values. Overall, the forms within this branch of culture are oriented toward a cognitive-evaluative plane, justifying the classification of spiritual culture as the "cognitive-evaluative dimension" of cultural space [20, pp. 38–39].

Even though the underlying content of spiritual culture remains hidden from view and cannot be fully articulated through pure rationality alone (e.g., concepts such as truth, honour, courage, genius, or self-sacrifice), its manifestations routinely acquire material expressions, becoming observable facts of social life. To accomplish this, the intangible structural elements of spiritual culture require a material mediator or carrier. The level of a society's spiritual development depends directly on these cultural carriers, which balance its constituent parts. Crucially, spiritual culture awakens the human personality.

To understand the structure of cultural space, another essential group of cultural forms must be considered: those that determine social relations

and interpersonal interactions, creating the domain of *social culture*. This paradigm includes moral, legal, and political culture. The specific nature of social culture is reflected in the system of regulations, values, and ideals that define its content. The name itself represents the synthesis of the social–a unique human form of the movement of matter–and culture, a humanly created phenomenon distinct from the natural world. In terms of scope, these terms denote the exact same domain of phenomena. In this regard, V. Shynkaruk and O. Yatsenko observe that culture is inherently a social phenomenon, while the social, unlike natural existence, is cultural in its specific character. This perspective does not exclude nature from culture or deny their historical connection; rather, it highlights their immanent, inseparable relationship. On one hand, culture is distinct from nature and even stands in contrast to it; on the other hand, it is organically bound to nature and incorporates it in diverse ways. Human activity serves as the connecting bridge between these two worlds [10, p. 18].

2. Culturological Aspects of Teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language

At present, scholarly literature offers various definitions for the "cultural" dimension within foreign language communicative competence: country-specific, linguocultural, linguoculturological, and intercultural [13]. Culture is the outward expression of a group's collective experience, alongside its material and spiritual achievements. Language, as a core element of culture, ensures continuity across generations by transmitting encoded information regarding values and cultural development. Those directly involved in this ongoing process face the critical task of translating and conveying this heritage accurately without distorting its original meaning.

When interlocutors from different cultures seek common ground, attempt to understand cultural realities, and show genuine interest in one another's backgrounds, communicative friction and "culture shock" can be mitigated, as speakers will actively account for cultural nuances in future interactions. For a foreign national entering a Ukrainian-speaking environment, adopting this mindset is both desirable and necessary, as it significantly smoothes their adaptation to a new linguistic environment. Furthermore, the imperative for effective communication is heightened because international students in a foreign-language environment risk

falling victim to linguistic misunderstandings. For instance, a student might misinterpret a well-intentioned or subtle joke made by a native Ukrainian speaker, given that the Ukrainian language is rich in phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings frequently used across everyday life.

Consequently, a dialogue between a Ukrainian speaker and a foreign student will succeed when both parties prioritize mutual understanding and enrich their communicative strategies. Each culture possesses its own ethnocultural artifacts and worldviews; thus, effective cross-cultural dialogue requires understanding both one's own culture and that of one's interlocutor. In intercultural exchanges, sharing information regarding one's heritage, traditions, and local customs plays a vital role.

The rapid pace of globalization over recent decades has fostered a hybrid global culture that frequently blends national traditions. Consequently, every nation faces the task of preserving its unique identity and defending its cultural values. Language possesses the capacity to preserve these values in both written and spoken forms, serving as a repository and transmitter of culture. Through language, we maintain an awareness of our history and pass down ethnic heritage from generation to generation without severing ties to our roots. The fruits of cognitive reflection and self-knowledge are passed down through codes–signs, symbols, images, and metaphors–transmitting life wisdom from generation to generation and across nations [9]. This informative function of culture ensures that each successive generation is enriched by the experiences of its predecessors.

Certain linguistic units have become symbolic for the Ukrainian people. An individual's awareness of these semantics and their ability to use them effectively in speech serves as an indicator of their overall linguistic culture. Numerous specialists emphasize the necessity of developing linguocultural competence as a foundational component of communicative competence. Accordingly, we consider linguocultural material an essential element in teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language.

Foreign students encounter the realities and culture of the target country primarily through country-specific background information. In learning a foreign language, students face facts that extend beyond vocabulary, grammar, and stylistics to touch upon social, domestic, and historical domains. Correctly understanding and using specific words or expressions often demands knowledge of their origin, appropriate contexts of use,

or basic insights into the history, literature, and political realities of the country whose language is being studied.

During the language learning process, communication barriers often emerge that reduce instructional effectiveness. We refer here to obstacles arising during interaction that lead to ineffective cross-cultural dialogue. These barriers may be psychological or rooted in a lack of familiarity with a foreign culture. For example, a single reality may carry vastly different connotations across cultures. In Slavic cultures, the word "dog" (*собака*) can carry either positive or negative connotations depending on the situation and tone of voice. In Arab countries, however, the term is perceived almost exclusively as an insult. Thus, telling an Arab student that he is "as loyal as a dog" may be interpreted as personal disrespect. This exemplifies a breakdown in communication caused by differing cultural interpretations of a single concept – what V. Moskalenko terms a semantic barrier [17].

Acquiring cultural background knowledge about the target country is a vital prerequisite for cross-cultural understanding. This applies not only to verbal comprehension, but also to recognizing the contextual meaning of utterances within intercultural discourse. The process of learning Ukrainian as a Foreign Language occurs alongside socialization and adaptation to a Ukrainian-speaking environment. Students build intellectual and speech capabilities, refine their language skills, and form a clearer picture of the native speakers' culture.

Language serves as a carrier of culture. Embedded within a nation's vocabulary and idioms are reflections of its worldview, lifestyle, and moral values. Foreign students often interpret Ukrainian idioms literally– for example, the phrase "to be born in a shirt" (*народитися в сорочці*). The French convey this idea with "a hat of luck" (*coiffé d'un chapeau*), while the English use "born with a silver spoon in one's mouth." Although these expressions share a common meaning, their origins differ, rooted in distinct historical circumstances, folk beliefs, and localized life experiences.

Considering the unique challenges foreign students face when learning Ukrainian, selecting and studying linguistic units that clearly reflect national cultural identity is essential. However, materials used to teach these national-cultural components should immerse students in the target culture as directly as possible. Intercultural communication skills are developed through [13]:

– Identifying and accounting for universal cultural values;

– Empathetic interaction between participants in intercultural communication;

– Culturally contextualized comparative study of Ukrainian alongside the student's native language.

Thus, possessing country-specific knowledge enables participants in intercultural communication to make interactions effective and productive. The necessity of developing linguocultural competence in non-native speakers is clear. The primary remaining questions concern selecting the appropriate volume of cultural information and designing effective instructional frameworks for multicultural communication. Country-specific material forms an indispensable part of language instruction, as mastering a language inherently connects foreign students to the culture of its native speakers.

Language is a cultural phenomenon through which a nation's experiences are accumulated, preserved, and transmitted through customs and traditions. These traditions embody the beliefs, moral values, folk wisdom, behavioural patterns, and cognitive stereotypes of a people, reflecting their linguistic picture of the world. As V. Kononenko notes, language serves as a storehouse of national culture, while culture acts as "a factor shaping linguistic phenomena and processes" [12, p. 4]. "Language and culture–these two sign codes at their intersection–determined the emergence of a new linguistic discipline: linguoculturology" [13].

As an integrative discipline, linguoculturology synthesizes adjacent fields to study a nation's cultural heritage as embedded in its language. The object of linguoculturology is national culture, defined by a group's shared history and moral-ethical values. The subject matter of linguoculturology comprises culturally marked linguistic units, which are conceptualized variously across the field's theoretical framework as: "linguistic signs of culture," "ethnocultural signs," "ethnocultural concepts," "linguo-aesthetic signs of national culture," "linguistic signs of national culture," "linguocultural concepts," "culturally marked units," "words with a national-cultural semantic component," "national-cultural units," "culturemes," "linguoculturemes," "ethno-lexemes," and "concepts" [16].

Language mastery requires more than knowing isolated words; it demands an understanding of word meanings, senses, and underlying

concepts. Concepts function as clusters of national-cultural meaning that reveal how a nation perceives the world [16, p. 67]. In our view, concepts encapsulate information about the world as reflected in attitudes toward linguistic expressions. A concept is a mental representation of a segment of reality. This representation (an image, idea, or symbol) is shaped by shared national features, which may be further enriched by individual experience.

V. Zhaivoronok emphasizes that concepts are rich in ethnocultural content, marked by imagery and ethnic symbolism, and function primarily within cultural contexts [22]. Cultural context illuminates a concept's cognitive attributes–the features and properties most significant to the Ukrainian collective consciousness. The linguoculturological approach entails teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language through national concepts that are fully transparent only to native members of that culture.

This raises the question of how to select vocabulary that represents the system of cultural codes and symbols within Ukrainian culture. One effective strategy for compiling such a reference dictionary is organizing lexemes into thematic lists, such as the framework proposed by N. Dziubyshyna-Melnyk, which includes terms for clothing, traditional dishes, flora, fauna, musical instruments, household utensils, and historical-cultural vocabulary [24]. Although grouping national concepts into thematic categories is somewhat arbitrary, it offers a practical way to present the linguistic units of Ukrainian ethnoculture. Ethnocultural associations help shape these lexical concepts.

Neither a word nor its meaning exists independently of personal cultural experience. In our view, whether a word carries a rich set of meanings or a single specific definition depends on an individual's background knowledge and accumulated experience. Therefore, the goal of the linguoculturological approach should be to cultivate each foreign student's individual cognitive domain while simultaneously establishing a lexical repertoire that helps them engage directly with Ukrainian culture.

The importance of using a linguoculturological approach in teaching UFL lies in connecting foreign students to Ukrainian ethnic culture by presenting cultural constants through their rich semantic variations. To illustrate this, we can examine the cognitive features of the concept *periwinkle* (*барвінок*) based on field research by O. Babakova and O. Khomchak [2]. This concept was selected because the periwinkle represents a central cultural constant in

Ukrainian ethnocultural identity with a highly developed semantic network. Using cognitive interpretation, the researchers identified 41 cognitive features structuring the conceptual field of *periwinkle* (*барвінок*), associating it with:

a plant, 2) a symbol, 3) a colour, 4) beauty, 5) Ukraine, 6) feelings, 7) its growing environment, 8) a season, 9) the sun, 10) the title of a periodical, 11) nature, 12) the state of the flower, 13) a person, 14) marriage, 15) childhood and schooling, 16) art, 17) plant components, 18) the home, 19) the active state of the flower, 20) scent, 21) rest, 22) nationality, 23) wonder/magic, 24) television, 25) a circle, 26) a fence, 27) a Ukrainian folk song, 28) insects, 29) youth, 30) ritual thinking, 31) dance, 32) size, 33) education, 34) natural science, 35) time of day, 36) sweets, 37) cosmetics, 38) an amulet (*оберіг*), and 39) curiosity.

Because these cognitive features are ordered by frequency of occurrence, instruction for foreign students should focus on the associations most prominent among native speakers: the plant itself, Ukrainian symbolism, colour palette, expressions of emotion, beauty, and national identity. The field research revealed a wide range of individual interpretations of the symbolic meanings attached to *periwinkle*. Exposing foreign students to this data helps foster cultural associations, demonstrating that a single word in a target language can carry multiple layers of meaning.

To reinforce the conceptual meaning of *periwinkle* and highlight variations in its linguocultural connotations, targeted exercises can be used, such as: "Identify the symbolic plant of Ukrainian ethnoculture based on the provided description," "What associations do the following expressions evoke?", or "Construct an associative field of words and phrases for the lexeme *periwinkle*."

Ultimately, the linguoculturological approach to teaching UFL offers significant advantages for understanding Ukrainian cultural phenomena as reflected through language. This approach examines language phenomena alongside spiritual values, national specifics, and collective knowledge preserved within the language as concepts. Learning Ukrainian through a cultural lens accelerates a foreign student's adaptation to their new cultural environment.

3. Content and Structure of Linguocultural Competence in Foreign Students

In the *New State Standard for Basic and Complete General Secondary Education* (No. 1392, dated 23 November 2011), "key competence" is defined as a synthesis of personal qualities that enables effective activity across various spheres of life. The document identifies essential competencies to be developed through education: civic, general cultural, health-preserving, information-communicative, communicative, interdisciplinary, and social [18]. Developing communicative competence is the ultimate goal of non-native language instruction, achieved progressively throughout the learning process. Given that our research focuses on methodologies for building linguocultural competence in international engineering students learning Ukrainian, clarifying and focusing on the concept of communicative competence is essential. In pedagogical science, "communicative competence" is defined as:

– An individual's ability to appropriately use linguistic and speech resources to construct and execute oral or written speech strategies, adhering to a society's social and cultural norms;

– Mastery of a system of linguistic, speech, compensatory, learning-cognitive, and socio-cultural knowledge and skills that enable an individual to engage in speech activity aligned with the purpose, means, and context of communication [13];

– An essential component of professional competence [13];

– An individual's capacity to communicate across one, several, or all types of speech activity–representing a specialized property of a speech personality acquired through natural communication or structured instruction [13].

In analyzing "communicative competence," D. Izarenkov identifies its defining characteristics [13]:

1. Communicative competence belongs to the category of individual abilities.

2. Exercising these abilities is an activity-driven process in which the linguistic component plays the central role.

I. Bim defines foreign-language communicative competence as a system of knowledge and skills that enables interpersonal and intercultural communication in a foreign language [3]. However, drawing on research by

D. Davidson, we conclude that knowledge alone is insufficient for effective communication and mutual understanding. Students must also know how to construct and interpret texts to convey and receive information effectively. Thus, communicative competence encompasses speech competence– the ability to utilize a finite set of language units, structural patterns, and operational rules to construct diverse utterances.

The concept of communicative competence is also addressed within psychology, where it is viewed as a developed capacity to function as an active participant in communication. Researchers structure the components of communicative competence in various ways. For instance, some propose including: 1) linguistic, 2) speech, 3) discursive, 4) socio-cultural, 5) linguocultural, 6) compensatory, 7) learning-cognitive, and 8) cognitive competencies [21].

While some scholars subsume linguocultural knowledge under socio-cultural competence [21], we emphasize the necessity of isolating it as a distinct competency, as knowledge of a country inherently encompasses knowledge of its culture. To engage in successful practical communication, international students require extra-linguistic information. Country-specific knowledge broadens the scope of intercultural dialogue and prepares students for international professional collaboration. To achieve adequate communicative competence and avoid culture shock, foreign students must acquire country-specific knowledge while developing the skills to apply it effectively.

Building on these perspectives and existing literature, we define linguoculturology as a branch of linguistics oriented toward country studies, focusing on language units with marked national-cultural semantics that serve as repositories of a people's collective knowledge and perception of reality. The central task of linguoculturology is to ensure communicative competence in intercultural exchanges, primarily through the accurate interpretation of an interlocutor's speech and authentic texts.

Fostering linguocultural competence in language learners is an essential requirement, as it forms an integral component of overall communicative competence. In our view, the foundation for developing this competence lies in background knowledge–the shared cultural awareness possessed by a typical native speaker. The linguocultural approach to foreign language instruction increasingly attracts the attention of scholars, methodologists,

and educators, as preparing competitive professionals requires building a rich cultural-linguistic knowledge base.

When examined alongside foreign language instruction in higher education, linguoculturology provides its own distinct analytical material. This material delivers information about linguistic facts while helping learners grasp the national and historical characteristics embedded within another socio-cultural system. Achieving an accurate understanding of a text remains a central challenge in philology–one that, from our perspective, linguoculturology is uniquely equipped to address.

Incorporating linguocultural material into Ukrainian language instruction aims to build a solid level of linguocultural competence as a key asset for foreign students. We define the linguocultural competence of international engineering students as an integrated construct and essential component of foreign-language competence. It comprises a structured system of knowledge, skills, and abilities that enables students to ground their learning activities within a broad linguocultural perspective and communicate effectively in intercultural contexts.

We identify three core structural components within linguocultural competence: linguistic, speech, and country-specific knowledge. Drawing on the work of S. Omelchuk [19], the *linguistic component* encompasses phonetic, lexical, semantic, orthoepic, orthographic, phonological, grammatical, and stylistic knowledge. Thus, the language component of linguocultural competence covers both linguistic knowledge–with special emphasis on linguocultural material (realia, background vocabulary)–and thematic knowledge focused on country-specific topics:

a) Ethnography (ethnographic data: everyday life, traditions, holidays, flora and fauna, recreational zones); b) Socio-political life; c) The educational system; d) Culture (literature, cinema, theatre, visual and musical arts, sports, etc.) [11].

The *speech component* exists in an inseparable bond with the language component and relies on developed speech skills. Speaking proficiency depends directly on a working knowledge of the target language's phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar. Similarly, writing skills are developed through the application of corresponding phonetic, lexical, and grammatical knowledge. Reading and listening comprehension require the ability to recognize graphic and auditory forms of words and phrases, as well as

an understanding of grammatical structures. Thus, the speech component governs the development of productive skills (speaking, writing) alongside receptive skills (listening, reading) [5, p. 144].

The *country-specific component* of foreign students' linguocultural competence is realized through an understanding of the national-cultural norms governing speech behaviour among native speakers. It involves selecting and applying relevant country-specific context within communicative acts, while adhering to the behavioural and conversational norms expected of native speakers in social settings.

The effectiveness of developing a foreign student's linguocultural competence depends on establishing clear performance levels. Based on the structural components and substantive framework of linguocultural competence, we outline three primary levels for implementing linguocultural material:

Phonetic-communicative level: Fosters oral speech skills, orthoepic abilities, and general communication grounded in linguocultural content;

Grammar-rhetorical level: Focuses on the conscious, context-appropriate use of correct grammatical structures, alongside refining rhetorical skills–enabling students to express themselves, their culture, and their ethics accurately while selecting the appropriate style and tone based on linguocultural texts;

Lexical level: Develops lexical accuracy and systematically expands vocabulary using targeted linguocultural material.

According to I. Dychkivska, a criterion represents an indicator used to measure the quality of a specific object, evaluated through standardized measurement or expert assessment [6, p. 344]. Ye. Dolynskyi notes that criteria serve as indicators applied to rapidly assess validity within control and experimental groups [5, p. 7]. Grounded in the structural components of linguocultural competence for international students, we establish evaluation criteria for each component identified above.

4. Methodology for Developing Linguocultural Competence in Foreign Students

Numerous methodologies exist for presenting linguocultural material to foreign students. One approach is theatrical/dramatised learning, which involves staging Ukrainian customs, rituals, and holidays rooted in folk

traditions. Scholars widely consider dramatised learning an effective tool for building linguocultural competence during Ukrainian language instruction.

Intercultural communication examines the relationship between language and culture, incorporating linguoculturology, ethnolinguistics, and linguoculturology. Advances in these fields help students build background knowledge regarding a country's traditions and realia, encouraging participation in cross-cultural dialogue while introducing them to national contributions to global culture. Analyzing how instructional methods intersect with student engagement (such as increased cognitive activity, creativity, and autonomy) highlights specific techniques that enhance learning efficiency.

To help students grasp the nature of humanistic values alongside culturological knowledge and skills, educators should employ specialized pedagogical methods. These include techniques well-suited to the humanities, such as problem-based learning, facilitation, narrative approaches, metaphorical analysis, and comparative studies. The main function of these methods is to unleash student creative potential and direct it toward productive learning activities. In this environment, the instructor guides learning within a supportive psychological climate: instruction proceeds through dialogue focused on active, independent cognitive activity rather than the passive absorption and repetition of facts.

Scholars advocate for interactive learning methods when teaching Ukrainian to foreign students, as these strategies help learners absorb instructional content more easily while becoming active participants in the educational process [13]. In UFL instruction, interactive learning is oriented toward developing communicative competence. As researchers note, this competence involves mastering linguistic material, selecting appropriate language resources for specific contexts, and organizing communication in accordance with social norms and situational appropriateness.

Because language serves as a tool for intercultural communication, foreign learners must develop linguocultural competence as an integral part of their overall communicative ability [13]. In modern education, modernizing instructional technology plays a critical role in improving educational quality. Incorporating media tools–such as projectors, audio/video systems, and digital databases–stimulates cognitive activity and increases the effectiveness of lectures and seminars. Consequently,

educators are focusing on finding optimal combinations of traditional and digital instructional methods.

In this context, blending classroom instruction with digital learning formats offers promising results. Each format optimizes specific parameters of the learning process. For example, digital tools allow instructors to update learning content efficiently while using dynamic visual aids to present complex ideas at higher levels of abstraction–facilitating a smooth transition between conceptual theories and visual representations. Meanwhile, classroom instruction provides an interactive environment for real-time social interaction between the instructor and students. Transitioning to dialogue-based teaching creates space for students to express personal viewpoints, adapt flexibly to problem situations, and ensure a clear understanding of core lesson concepts.

CONCLUSIONS

1. An analysis of academic literature by domestic and foreign scholars reveals that developing linguocultural competence in international students remains a highly relevant yet under-researched topic within UFL methodology. Specifically, building linguocultural competence among foreign engineering students has not been systematically addressed within domestic vocational education theory, highlighting the unique nature of this field of study. Linguocultural material forms the core subject matter of linguoculturology. While the scope of this material has been discussed in UFL methodology, it requires further theoretical refinement.

The competency-based approach serves as the foundation for training international engineering students during their primary stage of study. It directs instructional content toward developing specific competencies that enable future professionals to perform targeted activities responsibly and effectively according to established standards. This framework relies on a graduate's knowledge and practical ability to solve problems–whether navigating modern information technologies, fulfilling social roles, or resolving real-world challenges in industrial, social, or professional environments. Focused on the student's individual development, this approach is realized and evaluated through practical action, reflecting a close alignment with student-centered learning. Priority is given not only to applying acquired knowledge, but also to a student's readiness to act

decisively, adapt to shifting labour market demands, make prompt decisions, and utilize information accurately. Thus, competency-oriented education combines knowledge acquisition with practical application, enabling learners to succeed across diverse fields and emphasizing the applied nature of modern education.

Linguocultural competence is defined as an integrated construct and essential component of foreign-language competence. It comprises a system of knowledge, skills, and abilities that enables foreign students to structure their learning activities around a linguocultural worldview and communicate effectively in intercultural settings. We identify three core components within its structure: linguistic, speech, and country-specific knowledge.

We have established evaluation criteria for these structural components–measuring the development of linguistic, speech, and country-specific knowledge–which serve as the basis for classifying foreign students' linguocultural competence into low, intermediate, and high levels. To adapt their speech behaviour appropriately, foreign students require background cultural knowledge. Our study indicates that UFL instruction utilizes a philological presentation of cultural information to build background knowledge, while applying linguocultural knowledge and skills during communication fosters true linguocultural competence. This competence requires mastering vocabulary with national-cultural semantic components, including realia, connotative vocabulary, background vocabulary, proper nouns, socio-cultural lexical complexes, phraseological units, and idioms. Achieving linguocultural competence ensures sufficient language mastery for natural communication, expands general cultural knowledge, fosters tolerance toward the target culture, and refines oral and written communication skills.

The methodology for developing linguocultural competence involves the phased implementation of a structured pedagogical model supported by tailored learning conditions. It aims to expand foreign engineering students' linguocultural knowledge, practical skills, and learning motivation during their primary stage of study–enabling effective intercultural communication while enriching UFL instructional content with authentic linguocultural material. In selecting this material, we concluded that realia must be widely recognized by native speakers; selected elements must possess high artistic

and representative cultural value; content should spark student interest and sustain learning motivation; and information must be educational, respecting the students' native backgrounds while cultivating respect for Ukrainian culture. Future research perspectives include developing supplementary tools for building linguocultural competence among foreign students during their main course of study, alongside creating a digital repository of authentic linguocultural materials.

References:

1. Andrushchenko, V. P. and Mykhalchenko, M. I. (1993) *Modern Social Philosophy: A Course of Lectures*. In 2 vols. Kyiv: Heneza, vol. 1. [in Ukrainian].

2. Babakova, O. V. and Khomchak, O. H. (2012) 'Word-Formative Cognitive Model of the Concept "Periwinkle" in the Ukrainian Linguistic Worldview', *Bulletin of Zaporizhzhia National University. Philological Sciences*, 1, pp. 23–28. Available at: http://nbuv.gov.ua [in Ukrainian].

3. Bim, I. L. (1996) 'Content of German Language Teaching in the Basic Course', *Foreign Languages at School*, 2, pp. 22–26. [in Ukrainian].

4. Bohm-Bawerk, E. (1891). The theory of capital. MacMillan.

5. Dolynskyi, Ye. V. (2011) 'Components, Criteria, and Levels of Communicative Competence Development in Future Translators', *Problems of Modern Teacher Training*, 3, pp. 142–148. Available at: http://nbuv.gov.ua/j-pdf/ppsv_2011_3_23.pdf [in Ukrainian].

6. Dychkivska, I. M. (2004) *Innovative Pedagogical Technologies: A Study Guide*. Kyiv: Akademvydav. [in Ukrainian].

7. Shynkaruk, V. I. (ed.) (1973) *Philosophical Dictionary*. Kyiv: Main Editorial Office of the Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia. [in Ukrainian].

8. Hrechenko, V. A. and Chornyi, I. V. (2009) *History of World and Ukrainian Culture: A Reference Book for Schoolchildren and Students*. Kyiv: Litera. [in Ukrainian].

9. Hrechenko, V. A., Chornyi, I. V., Kushneruk, V. A. and Rezhko, V. (2000) *History of World and Ukrainian Culture: A Textbook for Higher Educational Institutions*. Kyiv: Litera. [in Ukrainian].

10. Huberskyi, L., Andrushchenko, V. and Mykhalchenko, M. (2002) *Culture. Ideology. Personality: Methodological and Worldview Analysis*. Kyiv: Znannia Ukrainy. [in Ukrainian].

11. Trostynska, O. M. and Ushakova, N. I. (eds.) (2009) *Unified Model Syllabus in the Ukrainian Language for Foreign Students of Non-Philological Faculties of Higher Educational Institutions of Ukraine III–IV Accreditation Levels*. Kyiv: NTUU "KPI", part 3. [in Ukrainian].

12. Kononenko, V. I. (2008) *Ukrainian Linguoculturology*. Kyiv: VyshchaShkola. [in Ukrainian].

13. Kostrytsia, N., & Bereza, L. (2018). Linhvokrainoznavchyi pidkhid do navchannia ukrainskoi movy yak inozemnoi [*Linguocountry studies approach to teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language*]. [in Ukrainian].

14. Yartys, A. V., Shendryk, S. M. and Cherepanova, S. O. (eds.) (1994) *Lectures on the History of World and Domestic Culture: Educational Publication*. Lviv: Svit. [in Ukrainian].

15. Matsko, L. I. (2009) *Ukrainian Language in the Educational Space: A Study Guide for Master's Philology Students*. Kyiv: Dragomanov National Pedagogical University Press. [in Ukrainian].

16. Medvid, N. S. (2009) *Linguoculturemes in Ukrainian Socio-Psychological Prose of the First Half of the 20th Century*. Abstract of PhD dissertation. Kyiv. [in Ukrainian].

17. Moskalenko, V. V. (2008) *Social Psychology: A Textbook*. 2nd edn. Kyiv: Center for Educational Literature. [in Ukrainian].

18. Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2011) *New State Standard of Basic and Complete General Secondary Education, Approved by Decree No. 1392 of November 23, 2011*. Available at: http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1392-2011 [in Ukrainian].

19. Omelchuk, S. (2006) 'Formation of Speech and Communicative Skills in the Process of Studying Syntax', *Dyvoslovo*, 9, pp. 2–5. [in Ukrainian].

20. Podolska, Ye. A., Lykhvar, V. D. and Pohorilyi, D. Ye. (2006) *Credit-Module Course of Culturology: A Study Guide*. Kyiv: Inkos. [in Ukrainian].

21. Vovk, O. I. (2013) *Communicative-Cognitive Competence of Future Philologists: A New Paradigm of Modern Education*. Cherkasy. [in Ukrainian].

22. Zhaivoronok, V. V. *The Problem of the Conceptual Worldview and Its Linguistic Reflection*. Available at: http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/75134/17-Jayvoronyuk.pdf?sequence=1 [in Ukrainian].

23. Zhyla, S. O. (2012) 'Development of Communicative Culture in Law Students during the Study of the Course "Ethics and Aesthetics"', *Tavria Bulletin of Education*, 2(38), pp. 84–89. [in Ukrainian].

24. Dziubyshyna-Melnyk, N. Ya. (comp.) (1994) *Golden Ear of Grain. Collection of Folklore and Literary Works for Work with Children in Preschool Institutions under the "Child" Program*. Kyiv: Osvita. [in Ukrainian].