



## Article

# World Culture Aspect in English Language Teaching: Key Methods for Linguists

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## Abstract

*The linguistic and country studies approach is an effective method of developing future philologists' intercultural communicative competence. However, its implementation in Ukrainian higher education institutions' educational process is often fragmentary, reducing its effectiveness. The study is aimed at substantiating the importance of the linguistic and country-specific approach in teaching English to future philologists, defining its role in forming intercultural communicative competence, analyzing modern methods of its implementation, and identifying the main difficulties and ways to overcome them. The study uses a comprehensive approach, including analysis of scientific literature, content analysis of curricula of Ukrainian and foreign universities, surveys of students and teachers, expert interviews, and quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data obtained. It has been found that although the linguistic and country-specific approach is an important component of English language teaching, its integration into the educational process needs to be improved. The main problems are the lack of authentic materials, interactive teaching methods and the limited use of digital technologies. The article offers recommendations for updating curricula, expanding the practical use of linguistic and country studies components, actively involving digital resources and improving teachers' skills in intercultural communication.*

**Keywords:** *linguistic and country studies approach, intercultural communication, teaching English, intercultural competence, teaching methods, authentic materials, digital technologies.*

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## Introduction

In today's globalization and intercultural interaction context, training foreign language specialists requires a thorough command of language skills and an understanding of the cultural context of the country whose language is being studied. The linguistic and country studies approach to teaching English contributes to forming a holistic view of language as a means of intercultural communication and enriches students' knowledge of socio-cultural realities and peculiarities of the language environment. It is essential for future philologists, who must not only master the language at a high level but also deeply understand its speakers' national and cultural characteristics.

Modern foreign language instruction is increasingly focused on the communicative approach, but ignoring the cultural component can render the efficient intercultural communication process problematic. Here, the language and country studies approach is critical, as it not only raises students' awareness of the culture of English-speaking countries but also enables the development of intercultural communication competence, which is crucial for future philologists in the professional sphere. Introducing this approach into the practice of English teaching makes it possible for future specialists not only to convey their ideas competently but also to adequately perceive cultural codes and peculiarities of the communicative behaviour of native speakers (Dong, 2024; Oborska et al., 2025).

Despite the apparent advantages of the linguistic and country studies approach, its implementation in the educational process is often faced with several problems. More specifically, there is the problem of the absence of methodological support, the lack of a unified concept of its implementation in higher education, and the adjustment to the selection of authentic material relevant to the modern cultural realities of English-speaking countries. Additionally, the search for effective ways of assessing students' linguistic and country levels of competence is of great importance. For this purpose, it is significant to explore the theoretical and practical foundations of the linguistic and country approach to teaching English to future philologists (Lungu, 2020).

The key issue of the research problem is the possibility of optimizing English language teaching with linguistic and country-specific components. The study aims to prove the relevance of the linguistic and country-specific approach to teaching English to future philologists, determine its contribution to the formation of intercultural communicative competence, and outline effective pathways of its integration into the educational process. To achieve the goal, the following tasks are required: to study the theoretical foundations of the linguistic and country-specific approach to foreign

language teaching; to determine its place and role in the formation of future philologists' professional competence; to explore modern methods and means of implementation of this approach in the educational process; to disclose the main problems and challenges of its implementation in higher education; to suggest measures for the optimization of English language teaching with a linguistic and country-specific component.

## **Literature review**

The linguistic and country-specific approach to teaching foreign languages, especially in training future philologists, is being actively studied in the scientific literature. Let us consider the key sources related to this topic. An analysis of modern research in foreign language teaching shows that scholars pay special attention to three key aspects: intercultural communication, integrating digital technologies into the educational process, and developing future philologists' socio-cultural and ethnocultural competence.

Many researchers emphasize that effective foreign language learning is impossible without understanding the socio-cultural context (Chung & Long, 2024). Aveling (2002) examines students' reflections on multicultural cases, revealing the importance of intercultural competence in learning. Kramsch (2014) analyses language teaching in a globalized world, drawing attention to the changing role of the teacher, who has to become a mediator between cultures. Byram (2012) focuses on the relationship between linguistic and critical cultural awareness and suggests new approaches to developing intercultural competence. Liddicoat (2014) emphasizes developing pragmatic skills and intercultural mediation.

Much of the research focuses on the impact of cultural content on learning materials. McKay (2018) considers English as an International Language (EIL), emphasizing the need to consider speakers' multilingualism. Seidlhofer (2011) analyses the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca, and Sharifian (2020) proposes the integration of cultural linguistics into the learning process.

Researchers also emphasize the need to develop socio-cultural competence in future philologists. Sali (2021) investigates the levels of its formation in students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, and Cummings and Janicki (2020) identify intercultural communication as a key skill for successful employment. Dauvrin and Lorant (2017) analyse social connections in forming cultural competence, and Weinstein et al. (2004) propose the concept of culturally responsive classroom management.

A separate area of research concerns the integration of digital technologies into the educational process. Krajka (2012) considers a systematic approach to digital

teacher training, emphasizing the role of technology in developing students' intercultural communicative competence. Horbatiuk et al. (2019) studied the impact of mobile applications on the development of foreign language lexical competence.

The research also covers adapting teaching materials to the modern digital environment. Pak et al. (2022) analyse European teaching methods combining traditional and digital technologies. Yang and Chen (2016) identify the main barriers to teaching culture in language teaching, including the lack of appropriate digital resources.

Several studies focus on training future philologists through the prism of an ethnocultural approach. Honcharuk et al. (2022) examine the formation of ethnocultural competence in higher education, while Shevchenko (2019) analyses its impact on students' national consciousness. Savenko (2023) points to the importance of ethnocultural education in teacher preparation for teaching Ukrainian language and literature.

Professional philologists' education also includes the development of linguistic and communicative competence. Chala et al. (2021) focus on pedagogical approaches that can provide effective intercultural communication. Huz (2022) addresses the details of developing future English teachers' speaking competence, emphasizing the contribution of practice training. Chernysh et al. (2020) address modern teacher training approaches and interactive technologies.

Some research studies the influence of general education requirements on language teaching. Barski and Wilkerson-Barker (2019) propose solutions to facilitate students' ability to engage better in the context of the language with authentic material. The historical and folklore methodology also plays a significant role in building language capabilities. Vovk (2014) looks at the development of folklore science at classical universities in Ukraine, emphasizing the role of folk culture in teaching languages. Hilgendorf (2020) addresses the history of foreign language teaching methodology, highlighting its evolution and efficiency.

The main gaps in the coverage of this topic that can be identified in the scientific literature under review are caused by the lack of in-depth studies of the linguistic and cultural approach to teaching English to future philologists. The theoretical foundations of the linguistic and country-specific approach to foreign language teaching and its place and role in shaping the professional competence of future philologists require further research. In addition, the main problems and difficulties of implementing the linguistic and country-specific approach in higher education remain understudied. These aspects form the basis for the research objectives.

The research reviewed confirms that efficient foreign language teaching is based on three main elements: intercultural communication, digital technologies, and ethnocultural competence. The researchers highlight that teaching methodologies have to be adjusted according to modern challenges, incorporating real materials, developing critical language awareness, and implementing innovative pedagogical approaches.

## **Methodology**

The research materials were based on primary sources of information, recent publications indexed in leading scientific databases, Web of Science, and Scopus, as well as statistics from official sources.

The research approach is based on an integrated approach that combines theoretical and empirical analysis methods to arrive at reasonable conclusions about the efficacy of the country and linguistic studies method of teaching English to future philologists. The theoretical foundations were analysed by reading scientific literature, i.e., monographs, articles, textbooks, and dissertations on linguistic and country studies, foreign language teaching methods, and intercultural communication. Publications from various regions of the world were analyzed, with priority given to works published in the last five years. The search was conducted using the following keywords: "linguistic and country studies approach," "intercultural communication," "teaching English," "intercultural competence," "teaching methods," "authentic materials," and "digital technologies."

The criteria for exclusion and inclusion of scientific works and publications were spatial and temporal indicators, as well as the information's reliability level. Considering practical realities, the sample size of sources was considered appropriate, ensuring sufficient scientific and statistical power. The comparative approach was used to identify the similarities and differences between classical and modern methods of teaching languages in different countries.

The position and role of the linguistic and country studies approach in forming the professional competence of future philologists were determined by a content analysis of the curricula of higher education institutions of Ukraine and foreign universities. The study of modern methods and tools of using the country and linguistic studies method in education was carried out through the study of educational courses, methodological recommendations, and scientific publications on teaching a foreign language. The key issues and challenges of using the linguistic and country studies approach in higher education were determined by empirical research involving a survey of students and teachers and expert interviews with foreign

language teaching methods specialists. The data were analysed using qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (frequency) data analysis, enabling us to determine teachers' key challenges in implementing this approach.

Based on theoretical and empirical data, we developed proposals for optimizing teaching the English language with a linguistic and country studies component. We used synthesis and generalization of the research findings, which allowed us to develop effective recommendations for improving methodology in the educational process.

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for research of this category.

## **Results**

The results of the content analysis of the curricula of higher education institutions of Ukraine and foreign universities have shown that the linguistic and country studies approach plays an important role in the formation of professional competence of future philologists. However, the level of its integration into the educational process varies significantly depending on the country and the specifics of the educational programme.

The linguistic and country studies component in Ukrainian universities is mainly represented in theoretical and practical grammar, lexicology, stylistics, and language history courses. Some disciplines devoted to country studies and intercultural communication have limited hours and primarily present material in a traditional informational form without an interactive or project-based approach. At the same time, there is a tendency in some educational institutions to introduce courses on intercultural communication and practical language use in the context of the socio-cultural environment.

The analysis of foreign universities' curricula shows that the linguistic and country studies approach is more integrated into foreign language teaching. In the leading educational institutions of Western Europe and North America, intercultural communication is a mandatory component of the curriculum, which is manifested in the inclusion of unique disciplines, the use of authentic materials, and the involvement of students in project work aimed at exploring the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the country of study.

One key difference between the Ukrainian and foreign experience is the level of practical learning orientation. Universities in Europe and the United States pay considerable attention to simulations of real-life communication situations, cultural studies, and discussions of social phenomena, which contribute to a deeper

understanding of the language through the prism of its cultural context. In Ukrainian higher education institutions, such methods are less common, and country studies are often left to theoretical studies.

Thus, the analysis results confirm that the linguistic and country studies approach is important to philology training. However, its integration in domestic universities needs to be improved. In particular, there is a need to expand course disciplines that involve the active use of intercultural communication, integration of project-based learning, work with authentic sources, and the introduction of interactive methods that help immerse students in an authentic linguistic and cultural context.

The results of the analysis of curricula, methodological recommendations, and scientific publications on foreign language teaching methods show a growing interest in the approach of linguistic and country studies. However, the level of its implementation varies significantly depending on specific educational institutions and methodological traditions.

In modern educational programmes at Ukrainian universities, the linguistic and country studies component is usually integrated into general foreign language courses and disciplines of country studies and intercultural communication. However, their methodological basis often remains insufficiently developed, which leads to the dominance of the theoretical presentation of the material over its practical application. The study of methodological recommendations showed that a significant part of teaching materials is focused on traditional approaches, such as introducing students to the cultural characteristics of English-speaking countries through lectures and text materials. At the same time, interactive methods involving active intercultural interaction are used less often.

In international practice, much more attention is paid to integrating intercultural communication into the educational process. Foreign educational programmes actively use authentic materials, multimedia resources, and digital platforms to develop students' socio-cultural competence. It is also common to involve native speakers in teaching and use simulations of real-life communication situations, discussions, project-based learning, and intercultural exchanges.

The empirical study was conducted among philology students and foreign language teachers at Ukrainian higher education institutions. One hundred twenty undergraduate students (3–4 years of bachelor's and 1–2 years of master's degree) and 35 teachers specializing in teaching English, country studies, and intercultural communication took part in the study.



The students' survey consisted of 5 questions covering the level of use of the linguistic and country studies approach in their teaching, the forms of presentation of cultural material, and the assessment of its effectiveness in developing professional skills. The results of the survey are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. The results of a student survey on the linguistic and country studies approach*

Question	Results
What teaching methods of English-speaking countries' cultural aspects are used in your curriculum?	68% of students said that the cultural component is presented as lectures without interactive practical tasks.
Is there enough time devoted to country studies when learning English?	90% of students believe that insufficient attention is paid to country studies.
How often are authentic materials used in learning (films, articles, social media, podcasts, communication with native speakers)?	32% of students said that authentic materials are actively used.
Do you experience difficulties understanding the socio-cultural peculiarities of English-speaking countries when communicating?	75% of students stated that they have difficulty communicating with native speakers because they lack an understanding of cultural peculiarities.
What learning activities (discussions, project work, role-playing) are most conducive to understanding cultural differences?	95% believe that discussions, project work, and role-playing games contribute most to understanding the culture.

*Source: developed by the authors*

The teachers' survey contained four questions to determine their experience of using the linguistic and country studies approach, the problems they face, and the methodological resources available for its implementation. The results are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. The results of a survey of teachers on the linguistic and country studies approach*

Question	Results
Does the current curriculum sufficiently integrate a linguistic and country-specific approach into English language teaching?	60% of teachers said that the cultural aspect of the courses is presented in fragments and depends on the teacher's initiative.
What methods and resources do you use to introduce students to the cultural characteristics of English-speaking countries?	Teachers use lectures, presentations, and authentic texts (90%), but interactive methods (role-playing, case studies) are rarely used (30%).

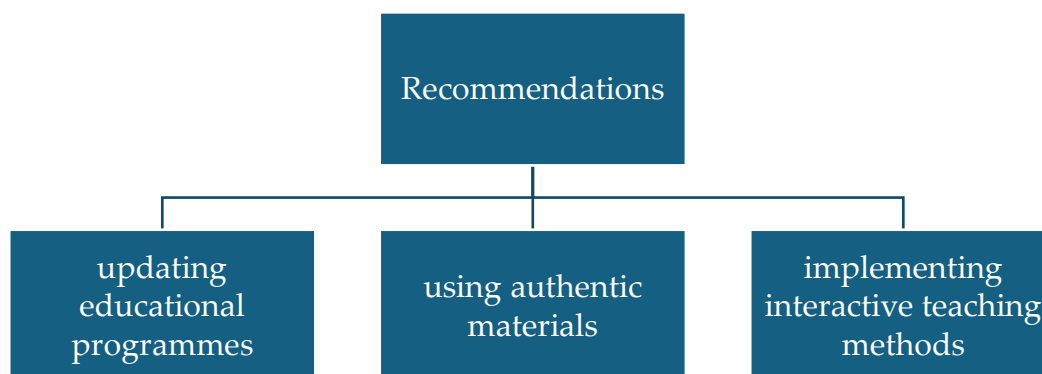
Are there enough teaching materials to effectively implement the linguistic and country studies component in teaching?	80% of respondents indicated an insufficient number of methodological materials containing authentic cultural content.
What are your main difficulties when integrating an intercultural component into the educational process?	The main difficulties are the lack of a unified methodology, lack of resources, and insufficient preparation of students for intercultural communication.

*Source: developed by the authors*

In addition, 10 unstructured interviews were conducted with experts in foreign language teaching methods. They confirmed that one of the main challenges is the lack of a unified methodology for implementing the linguistic and country-specific approach. Experts underlined that though many teachers are aware of the importance of this approach, they do not necessarily have access to the resources or the opportunity to undergo professional development in intercultural communication. For example, one of the significant challenges is the limited use of digital technologies in teaching, which could genuinely enhance the use of authentic materials and student contact with native speakers. Even though there are many online resources, teachers and learners are not necessarily exposed to quality materials relevant to the modern socio-cultural facts of English-speaking countries.

Thus, the research findings point to the need for developing a curriculum and methodological support, namely through expanding the use of authentic materials, introducing interactive teaching forms, and providing teachers with the relevant tools for effective teaching of the cultural component in the educational process.

The study's results allowed us to develop a series of recommendations for optimising English language teaching in the linguistic and country studies module, which are reflected in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Recommendations for optimising English language teaching with a linguistic and country studies component*

Theoretical analysis of sources and empirical data proves the need for an organized strategy for implementing the intercultural element in the education process. This strategy should consist of methodological extension, the active implementation of native materials, the introduction of interactive educational methods, and enhancing the level of teachers' training in applying the linguistic and country studies methodology.

The main area of optimization is to correct the curricula, i.e., broadening the intercultural aspect of English language classes, introducing autonomous subjects of intercultural communication, and implementing cultural features into grammar, lexicology, stylistics, and practice of spoken and written language courses. It is important not only to present information about the culture of English-speaking countries but also to develop students' skills in interpreting socio-cultural features, critical analysis of intercultural differences, and adaptation to a foreign language environment (Bakai et al., 2023; Smolinska et al., 2024). Cao (2022) describes a successful experience of integrating cultural aspects into foreign language teaching, for example, teaching Vietnamese to foreigners in Vietnam. The author emphasizes that in addition to the class schedule, the Thai Nguyen University of Education's language teaching and learning plan for international students also includes a schedule for cultural experiences. In each course, international students are introduced to some of the famous cultural relics of Vietnam and Tay Nguyen Province, including an ethnic culture village in Hanoi, Halong Bay – a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, Tan Cuong Tea Village – Tay Nguyen, and the Museum of Ethnic Group Cultures in Vietnam. This approach aims for students to expand their vocabulary and gain a deeper understanding of Vietnamese culture and the identity of its people. International students have significantly improved their cultural knowledge, vocabulary, language, communication, and social skills through this experiential activity.

The survey results of teachers and students confirmed the need for active use of authentic materials in the learning process. Regularly using video and audio materials, fiction and non-fiction, official documents, social media, podcasts, and other sources reflecting English-speaking countries' current linguistic and cultural context is advisable. It is also recommended that digital technologies be made greater use of, including interactive platforms for intercultural communication, online courses, simulations of real-life communication situations, and international student projects.

Particular attention should be paid to introducing interactive teaching methods that promote the practical acquisition of cultural characteristics through active student interaction. The most effective methods are role-playing games, debates, discussions,

case studies, project-based learning, and intercultural workshops (Ceave, 2012). Using these approaches will allow students to gain knowledge about culture and how to apply it in real-life communication (Bakhov et al., 2021; Galang-Pereña, 2024).

Another important area of improvement is the professional development of teachers in the field of intercultural communication. The data obtained indicate that many teachers are aware of the importance of the linguistic and country-specific approach but face a lack of methodological materials and recommendations for its effective use. It is recommended that training, seminars, and in-service training programmes be conducted on methods of integrating the linguistic and country studies component into foreign language teaching.

Thus, implementing the proposed changes will contribute to improving the level of training of future philologists, forming their intercultural competence, and enabling the effective use of the linguistic and country studies approach in the educational process.

## **Discussions**

The research findings align with previous studies that confirm the effectiveness of linguistic and country-specific methods of foreign language instruction. The scientific literature on teaching methods confirms that communicative and integrated approaches, which combine linguistic and country-specific aspects with the development of language skills, result in more effective learning (Chala et al., 2021). In particular, studies show that students who learn in the context of an actual cultural environment have far greater levels of language proficiency and adapt much better to intercultural communication (Barski & Wilkerson-Barker, 2019; Koval et al., 2024).

Digital technologies are an important factor in effectively implementing the linguistic and country studies approach. This is corroborated by current research that emphasizes how digital platforms facilitate access to authentic materials allow students to interact with native speakers and create virtual intercultural learning environments, e.g., Horbatiuk et al. (2019) show how the use of mobile apps and online platforms can be used to build students' lexical competence, and McKay (2018) emphasizes the necessity of taking into account the multilingualism and cultural diversity of English speakers in curriculum development.

Our study also confirmed the problem of the absence of integration of cultural elements into teaching English in Ukrainian schools, which supports the evidence presented by Chernysh et al. (2020). The authors note that although there are certain aspects of the linguistic and country studies approach in the foreign language teaching methodology in Ukraine, they are implemented fragmentarily and at the will of

individual instructors. The same conclusions are drawn in the study by Kramsch (2014), who emphasizes that the role of the teacher has to go beyond the traditional transmission of knowledge and include the creation of conditions for intercultural communication.

Our findings also confirmed the need for systematic intercultural competence development in students, which is supported by the work of Byram (2012), who reveals the need for critical cultural awareness as one of the indispensable components of foreign language acquisition. At the same time, Dauvrin and Lorant (2017) prove that the social aspect of cultural competence is no less important than language training, and incorporating socio-cultural elements into the learning process substantially increases the degree of intercultural awareness.

Our study, thus, verifies the general trends in modern foreign language teaching methodology and reveals the need to extend the use of interactive methods to teaching English. They include the active use of actual materials, information technologies, and communicative methods with the application of intercultural analysis, discussions, and project and case-study-based education. For the successful implementation of the concept of linguistic and country studies in Ukrainian educational establishments, it is necessary to transfer the best international practices, update curricula, extend the methodological basis, and increase the teaching staff's qualifications in intercultural communication.

## **Conclusions**

The study aimed to substantiate the importance of the linguistic and cultural approach in teaching English to future philologists, to determine its role in the formation of intercultural communicative competence, to analyze modern methods of its implementation, and to identify the main difficulties and ways to overcome them.

Theoretical sources and empirical data analysis have confirmed that the linguistic-country studies method is effective for foreign language teaching, especially in future philologists' training. However, in Ukrainian higher educational institutions, its implementation is sometimes fragmented, limiting the potential of students' intercultural communication competence development.

The most crucial issues in applying this approach are insufficient methodological support, the absence of a unified concept of its implementation into the learning process, the lack of authentic material, and the insufficient use of information technologies to study cultural aspects of the language. Students' and teachers' questionnaires showed an urgent need to enhance the intercultural aspect within English language lessons, to include more practice lessons through the

implementation of interactive approaches, and to increase the assessment of linguistic and country studies competence.

Suggestions include updating curricula, introducing authentic materials, actively using digital technologies, expanding intercultural contacts, and developing teachers' competences in intercultural communication.

The study is limited by the complexity and resource intensity of experimental verification of the theoretical results obtained.

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## **Conflicts of Interests**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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