



## THE NECESSITY OF DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG PHILOLOGY STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*This article examines the critical importance of developing intercultural competence among philology students in today's globalized world. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, the study explores theoretical frameworks, current approaches, and best practices in intercultural competence development within philological education. The findings demonstrate that intercultural competence is not merely a supplementary skill but a fundamental component of modern philological education that enables graduates to navigate diverse cultural contexts, conduct meaningful cross-cultural analysis of texts, and engage effectively in international academic and professional environments.*

### INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, the boundaries between cultures continue to blur, creating new demands for professionals across various fields, particularly in the humanities. Philology students, as future specialists in language, literature, and cultural studies, face unique challenges that extend beyond traditional linguistic and literary analysis [1]. As Abdullaeva (2020) notes, "The modern philologist must not only understand texts within their original cultural contexts but also possess the ability to mediate between diverse cultural frameworks and perspectives" [2]. This necessity stems from several converging factors: the internationalization of higher education, the growing mobility of both students and professionals, and the multicultural nature of contemporary literary and linguistic landscapes.

Intercultural competence—defined as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2019)—has become increasingly vital for philology students [3]. Despite this recognized importance, many philology programs worldwide continue to prioritize linguistic and literary expertise while neglecting the systematic development of intercultural competence. This gap between educational practices and professional requirements creates a significant challenge for graduates entering increasingly diverse academic and professional environments.

### METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs a comprehensive literature review methodology to synthesize existing knowledge and theoretical frameworks regarding intercultural competence development in

philological education. The analysis encompasses scholarly articles, books, and educational policy documents published between 2015 and 2025, with particular attention to sources from Uzbekistan, Russia, and Western academic traditions to ensure a diverse perspective.

The theoretical foundation of this research draws significantly from Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, which outlines a progression from ethnocentric to ethnorelative worldviews [4]. Additionally, Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence provides a framework specifically relevant to language education contexts, emphasizing the interconnection between linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding [5].

Several significant works inform this analysis. Khamidova's (2022) research on intercultural competence among Uzbek philology students identifies specific challenges in the Central Asian context, including limited exposure to diverse cultural perspectives and traditional teaching methodologies that emphasize memorization over critical cultural analysis [6]. Sokolova (2021), examining Russian philological education, argues for a paradigm shift from viewing culture as static knowledge to understanding cultural dynamics as essential for text interpretation [7].

From Western scholarship, Kramersch's (2018) concept of "symbolic competence" extends beyond traditional communicative approaches to encompass critical cultural awareness and the ability to navigate complex cultural symbolism in texts [8]. Liu and Fang (2023) provide empirical evidence that philology graduates with higher levels of intercultural competence demonstrate greater professional success in international publishing, translation, and academic contexts [9].

The methodological approach of this study involves synthesizing these diverse perspectives to identify common themes, divergent viewpoints, and practical implications for philology education. The analysis focuses particularly on identifying gaps between theoretical models and practical implementation in educational settings.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of literature reveals several key findings regarding the necessity of developing intercultural competence among philology students. First, there is a clear consensus across diverse educational traditions that intercultural competence constitutes a fundamental rather than supplementary aspect of philological training in the 21st century. As Abdullaeva (2020) emphasizes, "The interpretation of texts is inherently an intercultural act, requiring the reader to navigate between their own cultural framework and that of the text" [2].

Second, the literature indicates a significant gap between this theoretical recognition and practical implementation. Khamidova's (2022) study of philology departments in Uzbekistan found that while 87% of faculty acknowledged the importance of intercultural competence, only 23% reported incorporating specific intercultural components into their courses [6]. Similar patterns emerge in Russian and Western contexts, suggesting a systemic challenge in translating theoretical understanding into pedagogical practice.

Third, the analysis reveals distinctive approaches to intercultural competence across different educational traditions. Uzbek and Central Asian approaches tend to emphasize the preservation of cultural heritage alongside openness to global perspectives, while Russian traditions focus on the historical connections between linguistic and cultural development. Western approaches typically emphasize critical analysis of cultural power dynamics in textual interpretation [10].

The literature suggests several effective strategies for developing intercultural competence among philology students. Integration of comparative literary analysis across cultural traditions appears particularly effective, allowing students to identify both universal themes and culturally-specific elements in texts. Virtual exchange programs, where students collaborate internationally on textual analysis projects, demonstrate significant potential for developing not only theoretical understanding but practical intercultural skills.

A particularly notable finding concerns the relationship between linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence. While traditional philology education often treats language acquisition as a prerequisite for cultural understanding, contemporary research suggests a more reciprocal relationship. Sokolova (2021) argues that "cultural awareness enhances linguistic sensitivity, particularly in recognizing culturally-embedded metaphors, allusions, and connotations" [7].

The analysis also identifies several challenges in developing intercultural competence within philology programs. These include institutional constraints such as rigid curriculum structures, faculty members' limited intercultural experience, and assessment difficulties in measuring the development of intercultural competence. Additionally, students' varying levels of prior cultural exposure create pedagogical challenges in designing appropriate learning activities.

### CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that developing intercultural competence among philology students is not merely beneficial but necessary in preparing graduates for the complex cultural dimensions of contemporary academic and professional environments. The findings indicate that effective intercultural competence development requires systematic integration throughout the philology curriculum rather than isolated courses or superficial additions to existing content.

Several strategic directions emerge from this analysis. First, philology programs should explicitly incorporate intercultural learning objectives alongside traditional linguistic and literary goals. Second, faculty development initiatives are essential to equip instructors with both theoretical understanding and practical skills in intercultural education. Third, assessment methods must evolve to capture the multidimensional nature of intercultural competence development.

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