

Kateryna Prada Parvina

*Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
(Kyiv, Ukraine)*

Kseniia Kugai

*Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
(Kyiv, Ukraine)*

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AS A FACTOR

IN PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Foreign languages have become an important part of modern education and professional life. In today's globalized world, knowledge of a foreign language is no longer seen only as an academic requirement or an additional qualification. Foreign language competence is closely connected with professional opportunities, communication, and the ability to work in an international environment.

Modern professional life involves frequent interaction with people from different countries and cultures. Because of this, attention is paid not only to professional knowledge but also to the ability to communicate clearly, adapt to new situations, and cooperate with others. These abilities are usually referred to as soft skills. Learning a foreign language supports their development, as it requires active communication, understanding different viewpoints, and responding to real communicative situations (Malykhin, Aristova, Kugai, Vyshnevskaya, & Makhovych, 2024).

From a philological perspective, learning a foreign language is not limited to grammar and vocabulary. Language reflects culture, experience, and ways of thinking. When learners come into contact with another language, they also encounter another culture. It helps future specialists better understand both others and themselves, as well as their role in a wider professional and intercultural context.

The paper aims to explore how foreign language learning contributes to the formation of a competitive specialist in the conditions of globalization.

In the context of globalization, professional competitiveness increasingly depends on the ability to function in multilingual and multicultural environments. Educational

policy in many countries emphasizes the development of key competences that go beyond subject knowledge and include communication, cooperation, and adaptability (5). Learning a foreign language directly contributes to these competences, as it requires students to interpret meaning, respond to different perspectives, and engage in dialogue.

Intercultural communicative competence is considered an essential component of language education. According to M. Byram, effective communication involves not only linguistic skills but also attitudes, knowledge, and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997, 34–38). This idea is particularly relevant for future specialists who are expected to work in diverse professional contexts. A competitive specialist is not simply someone who speaks a foreign language but someone who understands how cultural values and social norms shape communication.

Language learning is also closely related to identity formation. B. Norton argues that language is connected to how individuals position themselves within social and professional spaces (Norton, 2013, 45–49). Through engagement with another language, learners expand their sense of belonging and begin to see themselves as participants in a broader international community. This experience strengthens professional confidence and motivation.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages highlights that language education supports not only communicative competence but also personal and social development (2). In this sense, foreign language learning becomes part of a wider educational process that prepares students for real-life professional interaction.

Globalization of education policy further reinforces the link between language competence and professional opportunities. As noted by F. Rizvi and B. Lingard, global educational reforms increasingly focus on preparing individuals for participation in international knowledge economies (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, 72–75). In such conditions, foreign language proficiency becomes a factor that enhances mobility and access to global professional networks.

Thus, foreign language learning contributes to the formation of a competitive

specialist not only by improving communication skills but also by shaping intercultural awareness, identity, and adaptability.

Thus, foreign language learning extends beyond mere communication practice. It contributes to the formation of a competitive specialist by developing intercultural competence, professional identity, and key personal qualities that are valued in the global labor market.

In a globalized world, competitiveness is closely connected with the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries, adapt to change, and engage in international cooperation. Foreign language education, therefore, remains an essential component of modern professional training.

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