

# Learning A Second Foreign Language As A Tool For The Formation Of Intercultural Competence

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**Abstract:** The article examines current trends in learning a second foreign language, which in recent years have become increasingly popular in educational systems in different countries, including Uzbekistan. The importance of learning a second foreign language as a tool for the formation of intercultural competence and multicultural personality in the context of globalization is emphasized. The key factors determining the relevance of learning a second foreign language (on the example of Korean) are analyzed: economic and geopolitical changes, cultural influence, expansion of academic and professional opportunities, as well as cognitive and social advantages of multilingualism. Special attention is paid to educational reforms in Uzbekistan aimed at improving the quality of language training and the introduction of modern teaching methods. The article substantiates the need to develop effective second language teaching programs, integrate digital resources, and create a language environment conducive to successful socialization and professional growth of students in the modern world.

**Keywords:** Second foreign language, intercultural communication, globalization, educational reforms, multilingualism.

**Introduction:** In the modern educational space, there is a steady trend towards learning several foreign languages, which is due not only to globalization, but also to increased demands on personal competitiveness in a socio-cultural and professional environment. Increasingly, students are trying to learn additional languages besides English, such as German, Spanish, Korean and others.

Consequently, proficiency in several foreign languages is becoming an increasingly important skill. In addition to professional and academic advantages, knowledge of a second foreign language broadens cultural horizons and promotes the development of intercultural competence.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It should be noted that, according to F. Sharifian (2017), language and culture are inextricably linked, since language is not only formed in the cultural environment, but also serves as a means of its expression. Moreover, language can be considered as a kind of instrument for the representation of cultural

values, traditions and national worldview.

This interaction allows us to comprehensively study the relationship between language and culture, analyzing the mechanisms of reflection of cultural codes in the language system, the features of intercultural communication, as well as cognitive processes that influence the formation of the linguistic picture of the world. Experts note that the connection between language and culture is not limited to one point of view. In this context, the importance of research conducted by American and foreign linguists is also recognized. For example, the famous American linguist E. Sapir (1993) notes that "... language was formed before culture, because it is a means of expressing meaning in relation to culture and is a product of social and cultural development. Language is a part of the national culture and acts as its main form of manifestation." In addition to the above explanations, H.A. Sultan (2018) has the following opinion: "...with the disappearance of language, part of culture may disappear, in addition, culture will take a significant place in the language." In turn, R.M. Brown (2021) states that "... language is a

map of the path of culture."

Analyzing various scientific approaches, it seems possible to assert that within this scientific paradigm, it is important to consider the complex system of relationships between language and culture, language and society, and language and national mentality.

In the framework of our research, we draw on the perspective of M. Byram (2021), who emphasizes the importance of language knowledge, cultural understanding, and social influence in the context of developing intercultural competence.

The study of the scientific works of leading researchers (Ned Seelye, 1993; Y.Y. Kim, 2008; C.J. Kramsch, 2013; James A. Banks & C.A. McGee Banks, 2015; Shang Jinyu, 2022; F. Naz & A. Afzal, 2023) dealing with the issues of intercultural competence of students allows us to conclude that the process of teaching a foreign language should be inextricably linked with the acquisition of the cultural characteristics of native speakers of this language. The formation of students' ability to perceive and interpret the culture of the target language, as well as the development of cultural sensitivity, play a key role in mastering intercultural communication. Thus, one of the major objectives of teaching a foreign language is the development of intercultural competence that ensures successful interaction in a multicultural environment.

## METHODOLOGY

The formation and development of intercultural competence in the process of learning a foreign language plays an important role in achieving full proficiency in that language. Intercultural competence encompasses not only knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics of a language, but also an understanding of the cultural characteristics, traditions, customs, mentality, and history of the country where that language is native or official.

Developing intercultural competence requires using a variety of teaching methods and techniques. Let's consider the most effective ones:

1. Studying cultural materials: This may include reading books, watching films, listening to music, and studying the history and art of the country that speaks the target language (Park Young Soon, 2011);

2. Using authentic materials: Students should have the opportunity to work with authentic texts, audio, and video materials in the language of the target culture (Kyeong Kim, 2015);

3. Cultural exchanges: organizing student or teaching staff exchanges between educational institutions in different countries promotes immersion in the culture of the language (Kwon Young, 2013);

4. Role-playing and simulations: conducting lessons in the form of role-playing or simulations allows students to immerse themselves in the realities of the culture by using the language in practice (T. Ravshanova, R. Karshieva, M. Kuvvatov, 2022);

5. Discussing cultural differences: it is important to discuss with students the cultural differences and similarities between their own culture and the culture of the target language (Jin Wang, 2011);

6. Multimedia resources: The use of interactive multimedia resources such as websites, applications and games helps make the learning process more interesting and memorable (I.V. Panferova, L.M. Nabiulina, 2025);

7. Intercultural communication: Organizing student interaction with native speakers and representatives of the culture of the target language through various communication tools (e.g., online chats, forums, social media) promotes the development of intercultural competence (Koo Min Jee, 2022).

Thus, intercultural competence becomes an integral element of personal growth, ensuring conscious foreign language acquisition and enhancing the effectiveness of communicative potential, which is the ultimate goal of language education. Of particular interest is the phenomenon of cultural divergences and convergences that arise during foreign language interaction, demonstrating the dynamism and multifaceted nature of intercultural communication.

## RESULTS

The Head of the State Shavkat Mirziyoyev has repeatedly emphasized the need for a radical transformation of the foreign language education system, accentuating that the creation of an effective and modern educational model in this area will form a solid foundation for the country's future development. In this context, the legal framework and social mechanisms for implementing this initiative are particularly important, as reflected in a number of strategic decisions by the President and the government. In particular, an important step in this direction was the adoption of the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to elevate the activities aimed at promoting the study of foreign languages in the Republic of Uzbekistan to a qualitatively new level" on May 19, 2021. This document lays the institutional foundations for improving the educational process, aimed at creating a multilingual environment and increasing the competitiveness of citizens in the global space. Also, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On additional measures for teaching foreign languages and modern professions to students

of general secondary educational institutions" dated February 2, 2024, No. RP-53 defines the phased implementation of the procedure for teaching foreign languages, starting from the 2024 academic year and sets priority goals for improving curricula and programs on foreign languages, that served as the basis for promotion.

It's worth noting that significant changes have occurred in recent years, affecting both the organization of foreign language teaching and raising the qualification requirements for future specialists. Since the 2022/2023 academic year new requirements have been introduced, according to which candidates for positions as foreign language teachers in state educational institutions must have a national certificate confirming language proficiency at a level of at least B2, or an equivalent international certificate. This step is aimed at strengthening the quality of teaching and ensuring that teaching staff meet international standards in language education.

On May 6, 2021, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired an important video conference dedicated to measures to improve the country's foreign language education system. During the meeting, a detailed analysis of existing challenges in this area was conducted and priorities for further development were identified. The President emphasized the need for graduates of educational institutions at all levels, including schools, lyceums, colleges, and universities, to be fluent in at least two foreign languages. This requirement should become a key criterion for every educational institution's director that reflects the importance of high-level language training for qualified specialists and active participants in the global community.

The Cabinet of Ministers plans to establish an Agency for the Promotion of Foreign Language Learning, which will focus on improving language education in the country. Its responsibilities will include the implementation of advanced global teaching methods, the development of effective programs and teaching aids, and their adaptation for various educational institutions – from kindergartens and schools to lyceums, universities, and specialized educational centers.

The Agency is supposed to promote in-depth acquisition of foreign languages, focusing on the current needs of the country's educational system, economic sectors, and regions. Its activities include teaching at least 10 foreign languages, including English, Russian, German, Japanese, Korean, Turkish, French, Chinese, Arabic, and Farsi.

Particular attention is being paid to the development of mass educational content aimed at the early

acquisition of foreign languages. This initiative plans to create animated materials, educational videos, mobile apps, and interactive programs that will help children develop language skills and an interest in learning foreign languages through playful interactions from an early age.

Furthermore, the Agency is expected to develop a methodology for professional translation between the state and foreign languages, which can improve the quality of translation services in various fields. Another important objective is to rank educational institutions, including schools and universities, as well as individual regions, cities, and areas, based on foreign language proficiency.

## DISCUSSION

It should be noted that multilingualism opens broad prospects for students, especially in the areas of academic mobility, professional growth, and cultural enrichment. Knowledge of foreign languages is particularly crucial while applying to foreign educational institutions, as it facilitates successful integration into a new linguistic and cultural environment and helps to adapt to a foreign education system.

In addition, mastering several languages has a positive impact on the cognitive development of an individual, contributing to the formation of analytical thinking, flexibility of consciousness and the ability to interact interculturally. Thus, learning foreign languages should be viewed not only as a communication tool but also as an important element in developing a multicultural personality capable of interacting effectively in a globalized world (S. Bragaw, 1992).

In today's globalized and internationalized education environment, proficiency in foreign languages is becoming an integral component of professional and academic mobility. It should be emphasized that students with language skills often have opportunities to participate in various scientific conferences, symposia and international forums. This, in turn, not only contributes to the expansion of their scientific horizons, but also enhances their personal and professional status, and strengthens the reputation of the educational institution they represent.

Furthermore, mastering foreign languages opens up opportunities for students to pursue internships at leading global companies and research centers. Such programs not only deepen their knowledge of economics, business, and innovative technologies but also provide insight into the specifics of work organization and business ethics in various countries. Moreover, they provide the opportunity for direct immersion in the cultural environment of the target

language, which helps to improve communication skills and develop intercultural competence.

It should be mentioned that in the modern labor market, knowledge of one or more foreign languages is considered by employers as a significant competitive advantage. Companies focused on international cooperation strive to attract highly qualified specialists with developed language skills, as such employees are capable of working effectively in a multicultural environment and contributing to successful international business. Moreover, the level of requirements for language training directly correlates with job responsibilities and the degree of professional responsibility, which necessitates continuous improvement of language skills in the process of professional activity (I.V. Panferova, 2022).

The relevance of learning the Korean language is also determined by many factors, including economic and professional opportunities, cultural influence, educational prospects, cognitive advantages, and personal benefits. In the context of globalization and growing interest in Korean culture, knowledge of Korean language is becoming an essential skill that opens many doors and contributes to comprehensive personal development.

Let's consider the relevance of learning Korean in the context of current trends:

### 1. Economic and geopolitical factors

South Korea is one of the world's leading economies and an important trading partner for many countries. Knowledge of Korean opens doors to career opportunities in international companies engaged in trade, technology, automotive, and electronics. Many large corporations, such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG, actively seek employees with language skills and cultural understanding.

### 2. Cultural Influence and Soft Power

Korean culture, known as "Hallyu" (the Korean Wave), is actively spreading worldwide through music (K-pop), cinema, dramas, and cuisine. For example, fans of Korean music and cinema strive to learn the language to better understand song lyrics and films and connect with a community of like-minded people. Thus, interest in Korean culture drives a desire to learn the language for a deeper understanding and enjoyment of cultural products (S. Kim, 2020).

### 3. Educational and Academic Opportunities

Many universities and educational institutions offer programs in Korean language and culture. Scholarships and exchange programs provide students with the opportunity to study in South Korea, facilitating intercultural exchange and in-depth language learning

in a natural environment. Furthermore, studying Korean can be an important addition to those who specialize in Oriental studies, international relations, and other related disciplines.

### 4. Linguistic and Cognitive Value

Learning Korean, which differs significantly from Indo-European languages in structure and grammar, stimulates cognitive development and improves analytical skills. This promotes flexible thinking and improves problem-solving skills, which are beneficial not only in academic and professional settings but also in everyday life.

### 5. Social and Personal Benefits

Knowledge of Korean language allows to establish deeper personal and professional connections with native speakers. This opens opportunities for travel, volunteering, and participation in cultural events. Moreover, knowledge of a second foreign language, especially one as rare and specific as Korean, makes a person more competitive in the labor market.

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, learning a second foreign language is particularly important in the modern world. In the context of globalization and the development of information technology, proficiency in multiple languages is becoming an essential tool for international communication, cultural exchange, and professional growth.

Learning a second foreign language broadens students' horizons, promotes their familiarity with the traditions, values, and lifestyles of different peoples, fosters tolerance and respect for cultural diversity, and develops intercultural competence.

Beyond the cultural aspect, knowledge of an additional foreign language increases competitiveness in the labor market, opening more opportunities for employment and career advancement. Companies increasingly prefer specialists who speak several languages, as this significantly expands their professional prospects and ability to collaborate internationally.

Thus, studying Korean as a second foreign language confirms current trends focused on innovative methods and a variety of resources. Given the growing interest in Korean culture and economy, further development and adaptation of educational programs can be expected, that will contribute to the wider dissemination of Korean language in the global linguistic practice.

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