

THE ROLE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION IN DEVELOPING THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role and possibilities of interdisciplinary integration in the formation of professional competence of future foreign language teachers. Establishing a connection with other subjects in teaching a foreign language not only makes language learning effective, but also develops the teacher's methodological, cultural, and information technology skills. The article also emphasizes the formation of students' skills in independent thinking, analysis, and communication based on integrated learning.

Keywords: professional competence, interdisciplinary integration, foreign language teacher, interdisciplinary approach, pedagogical skills, methodological integration, communicative competence, innovative education, intercultural communication, modern methodology

Introduction

Teaching foreign languages in the modern education system is aimed not only at the formation of communicative skills, but also at the formation of a broad-minded personality, ready for intercultural communication, possessing scientific and analytical views. Therefore, the role of interdisciplinary integration in the formation of professional competence of a future foreign language teacher is increasing. This approach allows not only to teach the language, but also to teach it in close connection with other subjects.

In the contemporary globalized world, foreign language teaching is undergoing a paradigm shift from traditional grammar-based instruction to a broader, interdisciplinary, and communicative approach. Future language teachers are now expected not only to teach vocabulary and grammar but also to integrate real-world content, critical thinking skills, and digital literacy into their teaching. Interdisciplinary integration is emerging as a powerful educational methodology that strengthens these expectations by creating meaningful connections between language learning and other academic disciplines.

One of the most effective models of this integration is **CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)**, which enables learners to acquire language skills while simultaneously learning content from subjects like science, history, or geography. For example, in a CLIL-based English class, students may explore environmental issues, study the life cycle of animals, or analyze historical events—all in English. This dual-focus approach enhances language acquisition by providing a context-rich, engaging learning environment where language is used not as a goal in itself but as a tool for learning.

Interdisciplinary integration enables learners to acquire knowledge from multiple subject areas simultaneously and connect them in real-world problem-solving contexts. For instance, teaching English through history, geography, biology, arts, or technology not only enriches vocabulary and contextual understanding but also makes language learning more meaningful. An English biology lesson, for example, introduces scientific terminology, expanding conceptual thinking and situating language in authentic contexts.

This approach also deepens intercultural competence. Learning about other nations through their language—such as British or American educational systems, historical dates, and notable

writers—broadens students' global perspective and fosters tolerance and cultural awareness. Future teachers must therefore continually enhance not only their language fluency but also their methodological, cultural, and technological expertise.

Interdisciplinary teaching also supports the development of higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Instead of merely memorizing vocabulary, learners are encouraged to compare historical events, interpret data in charts, solve science-based problems, or express opinions on social issues—all in the target language. This transforms the language classroom into a platform for collaborative inquiry and critical dialogue, fostering deeper cognitive engagement and promoting lifelong learning habits.

From the teacher preparation perspective, interdisciplinary integration requires future educators to possess a range of competencies. These include not only strong linguistic skills but also content knowledge in related disciplines, familiarity with various pedagogical methods, and the ability to design lessons that cross disciplinary boundaries. Teachers must also be adept at selecting authentic materials, integrating multimedia resources, and assessing students' progress in both language proficiency and subject understanding.

Digital tools play a key role in facilitating interdisciplinary integration. Platforms such as Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Kahoot can be used to create interactive, content-rich language tasks. For instance, future teachers might use Canva to design posters about climate change, Padlet to build collaborative timelines of historical events, or YouTube to analyze English-language documentaries. These tools encourage creativity and independent learning while reinforcing the integration of language with real-world knowledge.

Moreover, interdisciplinary integration enhances cultural competence, which is essential in today's diverse classrooms. When students learn about global issues, literature, customs, or historical milestones in English, they not only practice the language but also broaden their cultural horizons. A lesson on English literature, for instance, can explore Shakespeare's influence across cultures, while a unit on global holidays can compare traditions around the world. This contributes to students' intercultural awareness and empathy—key attributes of global citizenship.

Digital technologies significantly boost the effectiveness of interdisciplinary teaching. Platforms like Zoom, Quizlet, Canva, Padlet, Wordwall, Kahoot, and Duolingo Classroom allow teachers to create interactive materials that blend language with topics such as history, geography, and science. For example, analyzing a historical video in English, conducting an online quiz, or expanding vocabulary through infographics all reflect an integrated learning approach.

Interdisciplinary teaching methods include CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), where a subject like biology or history is taught through the foreign language; project-based assignments, such as English presentations on scientific or historical topics; multimedia-enhanced lessons featuring maps, virtual field trips, or historical video clips; and literary-cultural integration, such as exploring poetry in the target language, which enriches language skills and aesthetic appreciation.

This model's benefits are clear: teachers broaden and update their pedagogical practice; students develop analytical thinking and reflective skills; lessons become practical and engaging; learners gain independence and curiosity; and language becomes a tool for accessing a wider world of knowledge—not just communication.

However, implementing this integrated approach presents challenges: teachers may lack sufficient subject knowledge outside their main field; teaching materials may be limited;

curriculum schedules are often inflexible; and professional training in integration strategies may be insufficient. These issues can be addressed through teacher retraining programs, methodology workshops, practical interdisciplinary lesson design, and improved resource development.

In conclusion, interdisciplinary integration is a vital strategy in modern foreign language education, offering a clear path to enhancing both teacher competence and student learning. It equips future foreign language teachers to teach holistically, encouraging global thinking and multi-faceted communication. By adopting integrated methods, educational institutions can make language instruction more effective, dynamic, and relevant to real-world needs.

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