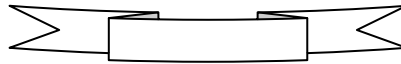


*Освітні, педагогічні науки / Educational, Pedagogical Sciences*DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20535/.2024.14.315725>**Tetiana Anoshkova**

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[taniaanoshkova@gmail.com](mailto:taniaanoshkova@gmail.com)**THE ROLE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN FOSTERING GLOBAL COMPETENCE IN THE US HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

The paper examines the critical role of foreign language education in fostering global competence among undergraduate students in the United States. Despite public recognition of the importance of foreign language skills, the U.S. has historically lagged behind other nations, particularly European countries, in foreign language proficiency. The research contextualizes this issue within the evolution of educational policies and practices, analyzing the relationship between language learning and global competence. Through a synthesis of education documentation, theoretical analysis, and a review of general education requirements from 12 U.S. higher education institutions, the study highlights the integral role of foreign language courses in undergraduate curricula. These institutions, selected for their geographic, institutional, and funding diversity, universally emphasize language learning as a core component of global education. Foreign language courses not only develop linguistic proficiency but also foster intercultural understanding, broaden worldviews, and equip students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The study draws on significant reports to underscore the importance of foreign language education in global competence development. The findings reveal that U.S. higher education institutions include foreign language requirements in their curricula to promote cultural awareness and prepare students for global challenges. In conclusion, the study emphasizes that foreign language education is pivotal for developing globally conscious students capable of engaging as responsible citizens and professionals in a multicultural world. Thus, foreign language skills contribute significantly to developing tolerance, broadening perspectives, and cultivating global citizenship.

**Keywords:** global competence; foreign language course; US higher institutions; general education requirements; undergraduate students; Bachelor's degree.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Definition of the problem. Though the USA was one of the first countries to determine the importance of multicultural education and the study of foreign languages in the 1950s, the biggest concerns of American educators for the last 70 years have been related to the insufficient interest of American students in learning a foreign language, which made American specialists inferior to European ones (Hunter, 2004, p. 8).

According to a survey conducted by the American Council on Education (<https://www.acenet.edu>) in 2000, 85 percent of the population believed that knowing a second language was important, compared to 65 percent in 1965. In addition, 77 percent of respondents agreed that learning a foreign language should be mandatory in higher education institutions. In 2002, 93 percent of respondents said they believed that knowledge of international issues would play an important role in their children's careers. Moreover, in a 2004 youth survey, 76 percent of students said they would like to know more about the world (Reimers, 2009b, p. 23). However, despite this public approval, America has long lagged behind European countries in terms of mastery of second and third foreign languages.

Analysis of recent research and publications. One of the breaking points in the public debate about foreign languages and foreign language education in the US was the release of two major works: “America’s Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century” (2017) and “Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market” (New American Economy, 2017). The former described the contemporary state of languages in the United States and provided recommendations for educational institutions. Thus, the authors highlighted the critical need for foreign languages as a 21st-century skill for an increasingly multilingual society, the cognitive benefits of foreign languages, the United States lagging behind in foreign language education, the shortage of qualified foreign language teachers, the importance of technology in foreign language learning, and the status of Native American languages. Recommendations for overcoming these challenges included increasing the number of foreign language teachers, developing public-private partnerships to support foreign language teaching, supporting education in traditional languages, supporting Native American languages, and promoting global education and study abroad (Commission on Language Learning, 2017). The book “Not Lost in Translation” noted the growing demand for bilingual workers, especially in certain industries and geographic regions, and emphasized the need to improve foreign language education and the connection of those who speak foreign languages in the United States with the labor market (New American Economy, 2017).

The objective of the article. It is higher education institutions in the US that make a significant contribution to promoting the study of foreign languages among the population and overcoming the above-mentioned challenges. Thus, the article aims to study the role of higher education institutions of the United States in foreign language learning to encourage the preparation of a globally competent workforce.

## 2. METHODS OF RESEARCH

The paper used theoretical research methods, such as analysis and synthesis of educational documentation on the global education of undergraduate students in the USA with the elements of induction and deduction to characterize the state of development of the research problem.

In order to study the role of foreign language learning in the process of global competence development within the training of undergraduate students, we analyzed general education requirements for Bachelor’s degree in 12 institutions of higher education in the USA, namely Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana in New Castle, Elon University in North Carolina, Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Austin College in Sherman, Texas, Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, Chapman University in California, American University in Washington, University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, Columbia College, Columbia University in the City of New York, Barnard College in the City of New York, Pennsylvania State University, Albany State University in the state of Georgia, which were selected according to the following criteria:

- 1) geographic location – territorial coverage of the central, eastern, western, northern and southern parts of the US;
- 2) type of higher education institution – university, liberal arts college or community college;
- 3) source of funding – belonging to the private or public funding sectors;
- 4) the mission and strategic plan for the development of a higher education institution that meets the requirements of a globalized society.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having studied the numerous educational initiatives (Commission on Language Learning, 2017; New American Economy, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2018) within the framework of global education in the US and through the theoretical analysis of American scientific and pedagogical sources on global education (Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006; Parkinson, 2009; Reimers, 2009a; 2009b), it has been revealed that the development of global competence is one of the main concepts in the educational philosophy of the United States. We can state that among

American educators, students, politicians, and citizens, the awareness that education must respond to the constantly changing global paradigm is continuously growing.

Thus, the emergence of an international educational initiative known as global competence was first noted in 1988 in a report published by the Council on International Educational Exchange (<https://www.ciee.org/>). This publication, known in international educational circles as the Magna Carta in the context of global competence, called on US universities to send exchange students to universities abroad where American citizens were not the overwhelming majority and English was not the dominant language. The report also suggested that students go abroad for three months or more, especially to countries where Americans do not normally travel (Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006). This launched the process of reforming American education, introducing a global component into the curricula of higher education institutions.

In 2012, the US Department of Education prepared a report entitled “Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement”. One of the main goals outlined in this document was related to improving the level of global competence of all American students. The role of foreign languages in live communication, the spread of cultural understanding, and the role of direct intercultural interaction became key in this report (Orozco-Domoe, 2015, p. 61). In particular, it was stated that students must be prepared in such a way as to be ready to function effectively in a world where global interconnection and global problems come to the fore. That is why global competence has been an extremely relevant research topic among American scientists for over sixty years.

Although there have appeared numerous definitions of global competence during this period depending on the field of study, we address global competence as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that an individual needs to understand general international issues and urgent problems of the modern world, to be able to learn and work with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, to be fluent in a foreign language and to be an active participant in an interdependent world community through civic engagement (Anoshkova, 2024).

According to American researchers (Cohen, 2010; Parkinson, 2009; Reimers, 2009a), one of the dimensions of global competence is the ability to speak, understand and think in languages other than the dominant language of the native country. They allow individuals and groups who communicate in different languages to interact with each other through various forms of expression. The resources needed to develop this dimension of global competence include qualified foreign language teachers, adequate teaching materials, and educational components in the curriculum dedicated to foreign language teaching. Study abroad, extracurricular and summer programs, with the involvement of representatives of different cultures in the communities surrounding the institution of higher education also contribute to the development of foreign language competence (Reimers, 2009b, p. 23). Therefore, the popularization of studying foreign languages in the United States is promoted even at the legislative level. Thus, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (<https://sde.ok.gov/>) included the study of languages (modern, classical, Native American, American Sign Language) in the core curriculum along with natural sciences, mathematics, social studies, and art. According to the Oklahoma State Education Act of 2001, “students must learn about cultures and environments, their own and those of others with whom they live on earth.” Under this law, all districts had to implement a consistent program of at least one language other than English in the curriculum (Oklahoma Education, 2022).

Scholars Marian & Shook (2012) are among those who have demonstrated that foreign language skills have both cognitive benefits, including problem-solving and decision-making skills, as well as cultural benefits, namely the ability to understand and appreciate other cultures at home, through films, literature, the media, and direct contact with foreign people at home or while traveling. Thus, foreign language courses form the basis for successful intercultural dialogue and exchange of experience gained in the socio-cultural environment and contribute to global competence development.

Having analyzed the Baccalaureate Degree general education requirements of 12 US higher education institutions, we found out that regardless of the geographical location, type, or funding source, all US higher education institutions include foreign language courses in the core curriculum

for undergraduate students (See Table 1). US educators as well as stakeholders share the opinion that foreign language courses ensure the development of intercultural competence, contribute to the formation of successful intercultural dialogue, broaden perspectives, promote understanding of other points of view, and overcoming cultural barriers and stereotypes.

The list of higher education institutions in the US that include foreign language courses in the general education requirements for Bachelor's degree.

Table 1.

#	University/college	Area/ Category	Courses
1	Ivy Tech Community College) ( <a href="https://www.ivytech.edu/">https://www.ivytech.edu/</a> )	Humanistic ways of knowledge	French, Spanish, Chinese
2	Elon University ( <a href="https://www.elon.edu/">https://www.elon.edu/</a> )	World Languages and Cultures	Arabic, Chinese, French, German, ancient Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, and Spanish
3	Austin College ( <a href="https://www.austincollege.edu/">https://www.austincollege.edu/</a> )	Language, Philosophy, and Culture	Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, American Sign Language
4	Drake University ( <a href="https://www.drake.edu/">https://www.drake.edu/</a> )	Global and Cultural Understanding	Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, German, Italian
5	Carnegie Mellon University ( <a href="https://www.cmu.edu/">https://www.cmu.edu/</a> )	Global, Cultural, and Diverse Perspectives	Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hispanic, Italian, Japanese, Korean
6	American University ( <a href="https://www.american.edu/">https://www.american.edu/</a> )	Arts & Humanities	Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Spanish
7	Columbia College ( <a href="https://www.college.columbia.edu/">https://www.college.columbia.edu/</a> )	Foreign Language Requirement	Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Catalan, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek (Classical and Modern), Hebrew, Hindi-Urdu, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Persian, Pulaar, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Sanskrit, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil, Tibetan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
8	Pennsylvania State University ( <a href="http://www.psu.edu/">http://www.psu.edu/</a> )	World Language	Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Latin, Turkish, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Ukrainian
9	Chapman University ( <a href="https://www.chapman.edu/">https://www.chapman.edu/</a> )	Global Focus: Language Inquiry	Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Classical Greek, Italian, Japanese, Spanish
10	University of St. Thomas ( <a href="https://www.stthomas.edu/">https://www.stthomas.edu/</a> )	Language and culture	French, German, Spanish, Classics (Latin and Greek)
11	Barnard College ( <a href="https://barnard.edu/">https://barnard.edu/</a> )	Languages	Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Bengali, Cantonese, Catalan. Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French
12	Albany State University ( <a href="https://www.asurams.edu/">https://www.asurams.edu/</a> )	Languages Other Than English	Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish

According to educators at Elon University (Elon University, 2024), learning a foreign language encourages interaction with other cultures and improves the ability to actively participate in local,

national, and international events. Proficiency in a foreign language also develops an understanding of multiple worldviews and historical perspectives. And the educational components offered by the university's Department of World Languages and Cultures (<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/arts-and-sciences/world-languages-cultures/>) help students understand and interact with other cultures, both modern and ancient; understand the connection between language and culture; develop critical, analytical, and writing skills; and develop proficiency in a foreign language sufficient for professional communication with native speakers.

The foreign language requirement is also part of Columbia College's mission statement, which is "to prepare students for conscious and informed citizenship of the future." The college's faculty believes that foreign language study contributes to students' understanding of world cultures while helping them to learn about their own culture through communicative context; introduces students to the differences in structure, grammar, and syntax that distinguish two languages, as well as to the close connections between language and cultural meaning; and contributes to the development of students' critical, analytical, and writing skills (Columbia College, 2023). At Chapman University (Chapman University, 2023) and Austin College (Austin College, 2021), foreign language study is a part of the general education program in the context of a globally oriented education. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in one modern foreign language other than their own by the third semester of study. Therefore, foreign language courses promote the development of global competence through learning about cultural differences, and historical events that sharpened the language, comparing its structure with the native language, as well as addressing the global issues while learning another language.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Thus, we can argue that foreign language communication skills and cultural knowledge enable those who learn and speak foreign languages to appreciate and understand other cultures and to apply different perspectives to global issues. They bring us personal and professional benefits and can contribute to the development of global citizenship thinking and values. Learning the language of another country is a key to developing a deep understanding of a culture and an impressive gesture of goodwill to overcome cultural boundaries. Moreover, learning a non-native language by Americans can serve as a manifestation of tolerance towards those who have learned English as a foreign language.

Therefore, it is through such a comprehensive approach to the formation of global competence in the process of general training of undergraduate students that it is possible to educate globally aware students who are inclined to project their immediate experience onto a wider matrix of events, to form their identities as members of world societies and, at least in some cases, to act in accordance with a global purpose that correlates with their own values. Ultimately, developing this type of consciousness will strengthen students' ability to act as social, cultural, political, and economic agents who are confident in their own local perspectives but also open to ongoing critical analysis, taking into account different worldviews. Achieving global consciousness will help students become effective as well as responsible workers and citizens in an interdependent world.

Since it is clear that globally oriented education plays a vital role in fostering new generations of students, this study can be used to upgrade the Ukrainian higher education system and make our future graduates valuable members of the global market. The further research on the methods used to develop global competence, curricular and extracurricular activities which are developed and applied in the US universities and colleges will make it possible to identify the progressive achievements of American pedagogical experience and work out the strategies for improving the process of fostering global competence of Ukrainian students at the state, institutional and individual levels.

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**Аношкова Тетяна. Роль іноземної мови у процесі формування глобальної компетентності студентів закладів вищої освіти США.** Стаття досліджує роль навчання іноземним мовам у процесі розвитку глобальної компетентності серед студентів бакалаврату в Сполучених Штатах. Незважаючи на суспільне визнання важливості знання іноземних мов, США історично відставали від інших, особливо європейських країн, у володінні іноземними мовами. Дослідження вивчає це питання в рамках еволюції освітньої політики та практики, аналізуючи зв'язок між вивченням мови та глобальною компетентністю. Завдяки вивченню навчальної документації, теоретичному аналізу та огляду загальноосвітніх вимог у 12 вищих навчальних закладах США, підкреслюється невід'ємна роль освітніх компонентів з іншомовної підготовки у навчальних програмах бакалаврату. Обрані навчальні заклади, що відрізняються за географічним розташуванням, типом та джерелом фінансування, у власних навчальних програмах підкреслюють важливість вивчення іноземних мов як ключового компоненту глобальної освіти. Освітні компоненти з іншомовної підготовки не тільки розвивають знання мови, але й сприяють міжкультурному взаєморозумінню, розширюють світогляд і розвивають у студентів навички критичного мислення та вирішення проблем. Отримані дані показують, що вищі навчальні заклади США включають освітні компоненти з іншомовної підготовки в перелік обов'язкових вимог для підготовки студентів бакалаврату, щоб сприяти культурній обізнаності та готувати студентів до глобальних викликів. На завершення дослідження підкреслює, що іношомовна освіта має ключове значення для розвитку глобально свідомих студентів, здатних бути відповідальними громадянами та професіоналами в мультикультурному світі. Таким чином, навички іноземних мов роблять значний внесок у розвиток толерантності, розширення світогляду і виховання глобальної громадянськості.

**Ключові слова:** глобальна компетентність; курс іноземної мови; вищі заклади США; загальноосвітні вимоги; студенти бакалаврату; диплом бакалавра.

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