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**THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A MEANS  
OF FORMING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS MAJORING  
IN ENGLISH PHILOLOGY: INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCE**

**ABSTRACT**

*The article examines the role of the academic discipline “The History of the English Language” (HEL) as an effective pedagogical tool for developing intercultural competence (IC) of students majoring in English philology. The relevance of the study is determined by the growing demands of the European educational space and Ukraine’s European integration, which require philological education to move beyond purely linguistic training towards the cultivation of culturally aware, critically reflective, and interculturally adaptive professionals. Drawing on international comparative experience from Ukrainian, Spanish, Polish, British, and global research contexts, the study reveals significant cross-national similarities and differences in how historical linguistic knowledge is conceptualised and operationalised for intercultural education.*

*The study is based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by Byram, Kramersch, Liddicoat, and Hammer and synthesises data from recent empirical studies. The study defines the HEL course as a multi-layered platform that simultaneously develops linguacultural awareness, socio-historical empathy, and cross-cultural communicative competence through the study of etymological strata, language contact phenomena, and the social history of the English language. It is argued that each major period of English history – from the Old English assimilation of Germanic, Scandinavian, and Latin influences, through the profound intercultural encounter of the Norman Conquest and its lasting sociolinguistic consequences, to the globalisation of Modern English and the emergence of World Englishes – constitutes a rich pedagogical resource for IC formation.*

*A comparative analysis of international pedagogical models, including IC development in English philology programs in Spain, the staged intercultural pedagogy model in Ukraine, and globally-inclusive English language instruction informed by Crystal and Jenkins, reveals that integration of the diachronic perspective of language history into IC-oriented instruction significantly enhances students’ ability for intercultural dialogue and identity negotiation. The article proposes a structured four-stage pedagogical framework for implementing the HEL course as an intercultural learning environment in Ukrainian philological education. The findings carry concrete implications for curriculum design, materials development, and teacher professional training.*

**Keywords:** *History of the English Language, intercultural competence, philology students, diachronic linguistics, linguacultural competence, language and culture, comparative pedagogy.*



## ІСТОРІЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ЗАСІБ ФОРМУВАННЯ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ СТУДЕНТІВ-ФІЛОЛОГІВ: МІЖНАРОДНИЙ ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ ДОСВІД

### АНОТАЦІЯ

*У статті досліджується роль навчальної дисципліни «Історія англійської мови» (ІАМ) як ефективного педагогічного інструменту формування міжкультурної компетентності (МК) студентів-філологів. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростаючими вимогами європейського освітнього простору та європейської інтеграції України, які вимагають, щоб філологічна освіта вийшла за межі суто лінгвістичної підготовки та спрямована на формування культурно обізнаних, критично мислячих та міжкультурно адаптованих фахівців. На основі міжнародного порівняльного досвіду (Україна, Іспанія, Польща, Великобританія) виявляються ключові спільні та відмінні концепти у розумінні й застосуванні знань з історії мови в контексті міжкультурної освіти.*

*Теоретичну базу дослідження складають концепції Байрама, Крами, Ліддікоата та Хаммера. У дослідженні курс ІАМ визначається як багаторівнева платформа, що одночасно розвиває лінгвокультурну обізнаність, соціально-історичну емпатію і міжкультурну комунікативну компетенцію через вивчення етимологічних шарів, явищ мовного контакту та соціальної історії англійської мови. Зазначається, що кожен основний період історії англійської мови – від асиміляції давньоанглійською мовою германських, скандинавських та латинських впливів, через глибоке міжкультурне зіткнення під час Нормандського завоювання та його тривалі соціолінгвістичні наслідки, до глобалізації сучасної англійської мови та появи світових варіантів англійської – становить багатий педагогічний ресурс для формування міжкультурної компетентності.*

*Порівняльний аналіз міжнародних педагогічних моделей, зокрема розвитку МК у програмах англійської філології в Іспанії, моделі поетапної міжкультурної педагогіки в Україні та глобально-інклюзивного викладання англійської мови за концепцією Крістала та Дженкінса, показує, що інтеграція діахронічного підходу до історії мови у викладання, орієнтоване на МК, значно покращує здатність студентів до міжкультурного діалогу та переговорів щодо ідентичності. У статті пропонується структурована чотириетапна педагогічна модель впровадження курсу ІАМ як міжкультурного навчального середовища в українській філологічній освіті. Отримані результати мають конкретні наслідки для розробки навчальних програм, матеріалів та професійної підготовки викладачів.*

**Ключові слова:** історія англійської мови, міжкультурна компетентність, студенти-філологи, діахронічна лінгвістика, лінгвокультурна компетентність, мова і культура, порівняльна педагогіка.

### INTRODUCTION

The accelerating dynamics of globalisation, international academic mobility, and cross-cultural professional interaction have collectively elevated intercultural competence to a central objective of contemporary higher education – particularly in the training of future philologists and language teachers. Within the European educational space, shaped by the Bologna Process and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), institutions are increasingly expected not merely to develop students'



grammatical and communicative skills but to equip them with the capacity to navigate culturally diverse communicative contexts with sensitivity, adaptability, and critical awareness (Byram et al., 2002; Council of Europe, 2020).

Ukraine, in the context of its ongoing Euro-Atlantic integration and post-war reconstruction of its educational landscape, faces a particularly pressing need to align its philological curricula with internationally recognised frameworks for intercultural education. While Ukrainian higher education institutions have made significant strides in incorporating intercultural dimensions into English language instruction – as evidenced by the work of Maloivan and Dyrda (2025) on pedagogical models for intercultural competence formation in philology students – the specific potential of the History of the English Language (HEL) course as a vehicle for intercultural learning remains underexplored.

This gap is notable, as HEL is a compulsory discipline in English philology programmes across most Ukrainian universities and constitutes a rich repository of cross-cultural encounters encoded in language: Norman French loanwords reflecting post-conquest power dynamics; Scandinavian-influenced grammar reflecting peaceful coexistence; Greek and Latin strata reflecting scholarly and ecclesiastical contact; and the globalisation of Modern English reflecting contemporary intercultural realities. The diachronic perspective embedded in HEL naturally foregrounds the inseparability of language and culture, making it a uniquely suitable platform for intercultural education.

The present article examines pedagogical potential within a comparative international framework, drawing on theoretical and empirical contributions from Ukrainian, Spanish, Polish, British, and global scholarship. It argues that a purposefully structured HEL course can constitute a powerful instrument for forming the intercultural competence of philology students, and proposes concrete pedagogical recommendations grounded in comparative analysis.

#### **THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this article is to examine and comparatively analyse the pedagogical potential of the academic discipline “The History of the English Language” as a means of forming intercultural competence in students of English philology, drawing on international experience; to identify theoretical foundations and practical models applicable within Ukrainian higher philological education; and to propose a structured pedagogical framework for the implementation of HEL as an intercultural learning environment.

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS**

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on three interrelated areas of research: models of intercultural competence in foreign language education; the linguacultural and socio-historical dimensions of English language history; and comparative pedagogy in the context of European and Ukrainian higher education.

The foundational model of intercultural communicative competence proposed by Byram (1997; 2021) identifies five interdependent components: attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*) (Byram, 1997; Byram, 2021). This framework has been widely operationalised across European and global contexts and serves as a key theoretical anchor for the present study, particularly its emphasis on the historicity of cultural knowledge and the need for critical engagement with cultural phenomena as reflected in language.



Complementing Byram's model, Kramersch's (1993) concept of a "third space" – a conceptual arena where learners mediate between their own cultural identity and that of the target language community – is particularly relevant to HEL pedagogy. The study of Old English kennings, Middle English French-influenced lexis, or Early Modern English as used by Shakespeare creates precisely such a third space, inviting students to explore cultural alterity through temporal distance while simultaneously connecting it to contemporary sociocultural realities. Similarly, Kramersch (2002) underscores that dynamic cultural understanding necessitates self-reflection on one's own culturally framed behaviours, which the historical study of English naturally provokes (Kramersch, 1993; Kramersch, 2002).

Liddicoat's (2004) dynamic, process-oriented approach to intercultural language teaching foregrounds active cultural exploration over passive reception of cultural facts. This principle aligns naturally with the study of English language history, where language change is understood as a response to social, political, and intercultural contact across centuries (Liddicoat, 2004). Stier's (2006) bifurcation of intercultural competence into content-oriented ("knowing what") and process-oriented ("knowing how") dimensions further supports the HEL-as-IC-instrument argument: HEL provides both the declarative cultural knowledge (knowing what) and the analytical frameworks for situational interpretation and self-reflection (knowing how) (Stier, 2006).

On the Ukrainian side, the work of Maloivan and Dyrda (2025) provides a state-of-the-art overview of the structural and pedagogical determinants of IC formation in Ukrainian university contexts, proposing a four-stage developmental model moving from awareness to autonomous intercultural action. Their study underscores the importance of authentic materials, experiential tasks, and dialogic pedagogy – all of which can be richly instantiated in HEL teaching (Maloivan & Dyrda, 2025). The research of Ahangari and Zamanian (2014) on intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language classroom also informs the present study, particularly their finding that language history knowledge significantly supports learners' ability to interpret culturally-marked communicative acts (Ahangari & Zamanian, 2014).

In the Spanish educational context, Méndez García (2005) and colleagues have investigated how the historical approach to English language studies contributes to future philologists' intercultural awareness, noting that etymological and sociolinguistic work stimulates students' capacity to recognise cultural alterity encoded in language (Méndez García, 2005). This finding resonates with the broader European tradition of using language history as a cultural education tool. In Poland, the integration of diachronic linguistics with cultural studies in philological programmes has been documented as contributing to more nuanced intercultural competence outcomes among graduating students (Hiller and Woźniak, 2009).

In the global context, Hunt (2014) articulates the shift from Western-centric to globally-inclusive English language instruction, arguing that cultural teaching must extend beyond American and British norms to encompass the full diversity of English's global trajectory (Hunt, 2014). Crystal's (2012) seminal work on English as a global language provides the macro-level extralinguistic framework within which HEL can be situated: understanding why English has become the world's primary medium of intercultural communication is itself an intercultural education (Crystal's, 2012). Jenkins (2019) further develops this perspective through the lens of English as a lingua franca, arguing that communicative efficiency should take precedence over adherence to native-speaker norms



– a principle directly relevant to how contemporary HEL courses frame the relationship between historical standards and current global usage (Jenkins, 2019).

The research methodology is multidisciplinary and includes a systematic review and synthesis of theoretical literature across pedagogy, linguistics, cultural studies, and comparative education; comparative analysis of pedagogical models and curricula from Ukrainian, Spanish, Polish, British, and global contexts; and content analysis of course descriptions and learning outcomes for HEL in selected universities. Systematisation and generalisation of findings are employed to arrive at the proposed pedagogical framework.

### **RESULTS**

The History of the English Language is, at its core, an inherently intercultural subject. Its content documents in extraordinary detail the consequences of cultural contact – conquest, trade, religion, migration, colonisation, and globalisation – as encoded in the linguistic system. Each major period of English history corresponds to a distinct episode of intercultural encounter that offers rich pedagogical material for IC formation. The Old English period (450 – 1100) records the cultural synthesis of Germanic tribal traditions, Roman-Christian learning, and Scandinavian influence through the Viking Age. Linguistic evidence preserved in place names, personal names, and the Danelaw vocabulary reflects power relations, cohabitation, and gradual acculturation between communities.

The Middle English period (1100 – 1500), shaped decisively by the Norman Conquest of 1066, documents one of the most profound intercultural encounters in the history of any language. The French-English sociolinguistic diglossia that emerged produced enduring lexical stratification: Anglo-Saxon animal terms (cow, sheep, pig) versus French culinary terms (beef, mutton, pork), reflecting the asymmetric power relations between conquered and conqueror. This lexical archaeology is not a linguistic curiosity but a pedagogical gateway to understanding how cultural hierarchies, identity conflicts, and social accommodation are encoded in everyday vocabulary – precisely the kind of critical cultural awareness that Byram (2021) identifies as the highest dimension of intercultural competence.

The Early Modern English period (1500 – 1700) reveals the cultural breadth of the Renaissance: massive borrowing from Latin and Greek for scholarly discourse; contact with Italian (sonnet, balcony, violin), Spanish (armada, tobacco, chocolate), and Portuguese vocabulary; and the beginnings of colonial contact with indigenous languages. The Modern and Late Modern English periods (1700 – present) document the globalisation of English and directly connect historical linguistics to contemporary intercultural communication, enabling students to engage with questions of linguistic identity and the politics of Standard English as analysed by Hunt (2014) and Crystal (2012). This diachronic panorama, properly taught, constitutes a rich intercultural curriculum in itself, requiring students to engage with the Other across time, to interpret cultural phenomena through their linguistic traces, and to reflect critically on the relationship between power, identity, and language (Crystal, 2012; Hunt, 2014).

A comparison of how the History of the English Language is taught and conceptualised across different national educational traditions reveals important convergences and instructive divergences that enrich the understanding of its IC-forming potential. In Spanish universities, the relationship between HEL pedagogy and IC development has been explored in the context of English philology teacher training. Research conducted at universities in Andalusia demonstrates that, in the absence of explicitly intercultural HEL curricula, students' IC development tends to be uneven and



dependent on individual initiative. This finding underlines the importance of intentional pedagogical design: the intercultural potential of HEL does not materialise automatically but requires deliberate curricular framing and task design. The Spanish experience also highlights the role of comparative linguistic analysis – contrasting Spanish and English etymological strata, for instance – as a particularly effective entry point for raising students’ awareness of culturally-coded meaning and developing their “savoir comprendre” skills (Méndez García, 2005).

In the Polish philological tradition, the integration of diachronic linguistic content with cultural reflection has been documented as producing measurable gains in students’ intercultural sensitivity (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009). Polish programmes in English philology frequently embed HEL content within broader “Language and Culture” modules, enabling students to trace the social history of English alongside its structural development. This integrative approach aligns with Kramsch’s (1993) concept of the “third space” and supports the development of what Stier (2006) describes as process-oriented intercultural competence – the capacity for situational adaptability and cross-cultural self-reflection that distinguishes genuinely interculturally competent professionals from those who merely possess declarative cultural knowledge (Stier, 2006). The Polish case is particularly relevant for Ukraine given the shared post-Soviet philological educational tradition and the comparable challenge of reorienting towards European IC-centred frameworks.

The Ukrainian scholarly contribution, represented most recently by Maloivan and Dyrda (2025), provides a directly applicable four-stage pedagogical architecture: Stage 1 involves the selection of authentic intercultural materials; Stage 2 focuses on the acquisition of culture-specific knowledge through comparative analysis; Stage 3 develops intercultural communicative skills through task-based activities; and Stage 4 promotes learner autonomy in complex intercultural scenario management. The History of the English Language, with its rich primary texts, etymological data, sociolinguistic evidence, and relevance to students’ professional philological work, provides ideal materials for implementing each stage of this model. The integration of authentic historical texts – from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to Shakespeare’s First Folio to contemporary global English news corpora – creates a naturally graduated progression from structured cultural discovery to autonomous intercultural interpretation (Maloivan & Dyrda, 2025).

In European and global contexts, Hunt (2014) articulates the need for a shift from Western-centric to globally-inclusive English language instruction, arguing that cultural pedagogy must recognise the validity of nativized varieties and the diversity of English’s global trajectory. This perspective enriches HEL pedagogy by repositioning the course not as a narrative of Anglo-Saxon and Norman achievement, but as a story of ongoing global hybridisation: Indian English preserving archaic features of 17th-century British colonial usage; Caribbean creoles reflecting the trauma and creativity of the Atlantic slave trade; Australian English encoding the encounter with indigenous geography; Filipino English developing its own pragmatic norms within postcolonial educational settings (Hunt, 2014). Crystal (2012) and Jenkins (2019) complement this perspective by situating the contemporary dominance of English in a long historical arc, enabling students to understand the geopolitical and cultural conditions that made English a global lingua franca. Such meta-analytical awareness is itself a dimension of IC: understanding why one’s communicative medium carries the cultural weight it does is essential for principled intercultural engagement (Crystal, 2012; Jenkins, 2019). The student who understands that “barbarian” derives from the Greek onomatopoeia for foreign speech, or that the word



“slave” originates in the medieval Latin *Sclavus* (Slav), or that “algebra” preserves the name of the 9th-century Arab mathematician al-Khwarizmi, is not only a more informed linguist but a more culturally aware communicator.

Across all the traditions surveyed, a significant methodological convergence emerges: project-based, discovery-oriented learning tasks that connect linguistic data to cultural and historical narratives consistently produce the strongest IC outcomes. Etymological analysis projects, sociolinguistic role-play scenarios based on historical contact situations, comparative analysis of English and mother-tongue lexical stratification, and reflective tasks connecting historical language data to contemporary intercultural challenges – these activity types appear across Spanish, Polish, Ukrainian, and global pedagogical models as particularly effective instruments for developing the attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of IC simultaneously (Hiller & Wozniak, 2009; Crystal, 2012; Jenkins, 2019; Maloivan & Dyrda, 2025). The final insight from the comparative analysis is that HEL teaching is most effective for IC formation when it explicitly positions students as cultural researchers rather than passive recipients of linguistic facts. When learners are guided to investigate why the vocabulary of English law is predominantly French, why its agricultural vocabulary is predominantly Anglo-Saxon, and why its academic vocabulary is predominantly Latin and Greek, they engage in the kind of critical cultural inquiry that develops Byram’s *savoir s’engager* – the capacity for principled, evidence-based engagement with cultural difference. This is the disposition that distinguishes intercultural competent philologists who can operate as genuine mediators between cultures from those who merely possess surface-level cultural knowledge (Byram, 1997; Byram, 2021).

Drawing on the comparative analysis above, a structured pedagogical framework can be proposed for implementing the History of the English Language as an intercultural learning environment in Ukrainian philological education. At the first stage, each period of English history should be introduced with explicit attention to the intercultural encounters it reflects. The Norman Conquest should be framed not merely as a political event but as a case study in language contact, power, and cultural negotiation, developing students’ skills of interpreting cultural phenomena and critical cultural awareness. At the second stage, etymological analysis serves as a particularly powerful tool for IC formation. When students trace the word “salary” to Latin *sal*, “candidate” to *candidus* (white-robed), or “boycott” to the Irish land agent Captain Boycott, they encounter the cultural memory encoded in everyday language – what Ahangari and Zamanian (2014) describe as the culturally-marked communicative knowledge essential for genuine intercultural competence. Project-based etymology tasks tracing French, Scandinavian, Celtic, Latin, and Greek strata in Modern English develop both content-oriented and process-oriented IC dimensions (Ahangari & Zamanian, 2014).

At the third stage, historical scenarios involving language contact can be mobilised for sociolinguistic role-play: a Norman administrator interacting with a Saxon craftsman; a Renaissance humanist debating the merits of Latin versus the vernacular; a 19th-century colonial officer encountering the emerging norms of Indian English. Such tasks align with the Stage 3 and Stage 4 activities in Maloivan and Dyrda’s (2025) model and develop the behavioural flexibility and autonomous intercultural agency that contemporary professional contexts demand. At the fourth and final stage, the module addressing the globalisation of English and the emergence of World Englishes should explicitly engage students with the reflective questions raised by Hunt (2014) and Crystal (2012): whose English is legitimate?



What is the relationship between language, power, and cultural identity? How should Ukrainian philologists position themselves in relation to global English norms? These questions engage Byram's attitudinal openness and critical cultural awareness, fostering the personal and professional IC growth that Ukrainian philological education urgently requires in the context of European integration (Crystal, 2012; Hunt, 2014; Maloivan & Dyrda, 2025).

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

The present study has demonstrated that the History of the English Language course holds substantial and largely underrealized potential as a platform for forming intercultural competence in philology students. Through a comparative analysis of Ukrainian, Spanish, Polish, British, and global pedagogical frameworks, the following conclusions have been formulated.

The diachronic content of HEL – encompassing episodes of cultural contact, linguistic hybridisation, social stratification, colonisation, and globalisation – is inherently intercultural and can be purposefully mobilised for IC formation across all five dimensions of Byram's model (Byram, 2021). International pedagogical traditions converge in recognising that language history, properly taught, constitutes a rich resource for developing cultural awareness, historical empathy, and critical communicative competence. The comparative experience of Spain and Poland (Méndez García, 2005; Hiller & Wozniak, 2009) demonstrates that the IC-forming potential of HEL does not materialise automatically but requires deliberate curricular framing, task design, and the explicit positioning of students as cultural researchers rather than passive recipients of linguistic facts. The four-stage pedagogical framework proposed in this article – combining intercultural framing, etymology-based cultural discovery, sociolinguistic role-play, and Global English identity reflection – provides a concrete and research-based roadmap for Ukrainian philological curricula that is both internationally grounded and contextually appropriate for Ukraine's current educational needs.

These findings carry implications for curriculum design, suggesting that HEL syllabi should be explicitly redesigned to include IC-oriented learning outcomes; for materials development, pointing to the need for HEL textbooks and task collections foregrounding intercultural content; and for teacher training, indicating that HEL instructors require professional development in intercultural pedagogy alongside their historical-linguistic expertise.

Future research should focus on the empirical validation of the proposed framework through experimental curricula and pre-post competence assessment; on the digital affordances of HEL teaching for IC development, including the use of digital humanities tools, historical corpora, and online telecollaboration with international partner universities; and on the specific challenges of implementing IC-oriented HEL pedagogy in Ukrainian wartime and post-war educational contexts, where questions of language, identity, and cultural belonging have acquired heightened urgency and profound professional significance for the next generation of Ukrainian philologists.

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