PECULIARITIES OF FORMING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS OF NON-PHILOLOGICAL SPECIALTIES

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Abstract: The current reorientation of modern higher education towards European standards necessitates the development of competent specialists who possess the ability for personal and professional growth, as well as active self-realization. A fundamental aspect of this development is the acquisition of foreign language communicative competence. Consequently, it becomes crucial for contemporary professionals to proficiently acquire professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence to enhance their competitiveness within the global labor market. This study aims to examine the present status of foreign language communicative competence among higher education students pursuing non-language majors in domestic higher education institutions. The object of analysis is the process of professional training provided to future specialists within higher education institutions. A comprehensive set of methods was employed to achieve the stated objective. The theoretical aspect involved an analysis of relevant theoretical and methodological sources, psychological and pedagogical literature, as well as educational regulatory documents. The empirical dimension encompassed the observation of the educational process, administration of questionnaires, conducting of interviews, and implementation of a pedagogical experiment. Statistical analysis was utilized to analyze the collected data, while graphical representations aided in visually representing the findings. The current level of development of the investigated competence among higher education students during the process of professional training has been assessed. While there exists a substantial body of theoretical research on this subject, practical implementation reveals the presence of unresolved issues and challenges. The analysis of the survey findings revealed that a significant majority of students acknowledge the importance of learning a foreign language for the enhancement of their personal and professional qualities. However, the results also indicate that a considerable percentage of students possess an average level of foreign language communicative competence. Consequently, to enhance the mastery of this competence, the educational process within the HEI incorporated organizational and methodological conditions for its development, as determined through expert evaluation. Following the implementation of these organizational and methodological conditions, an assessment of students' proficiency levels was conducted, confirming the validity and effectiveness of the proposed measures for fostering the development of foreign language communicative competence among higher education students.

Keywords: Foreign language communicative competence, higher education students, organizational and methodological conditions, professionally oriented English communication.

1 Introduction

In light of Ukraine's integration into the European educational arena, its commitment to European quality standards for professional training, and the increasing emphasis on international collaboration, the development of foreign language communicative competence (hereinafter FLCC) in future graduates becomes a matter of utmost significance. This is because the successful implementation of institutional reforms and the attainment of socio-economic progress in the country depend on the formulation of a robust European strategy within the educational sphere. Therefore, it is imperative to consider and implement the most effective outcomes derived from European practices in the domestic context.

At present, Ukraine is experiencing significant transformations in the fundamental conceptual underpinnings of its national education system. Despite the challenging circumstances, including the real threat to our country's sovereignty due to armed aggression from the Russian Federation and the paramount value placed on every Ukrainian life, the integration of national education into the European educational landscape persists. The imperative to revitalize Ukraine's education sector arises from its inadequate alignment with contemporary societal needs, the demands of intercultural communication, and the

challenges posed by linguistic globalization. Consequently, efforts are ongoing to enhance the conceptual framework of state policy concerning the formation and development of future specialists' FLCC during their higher education studies.

In March 2023, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine presented the "Methodological Recommendations for Ensuring Quality Learning, Teaching, and Use of English in Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine" (2023). This publication offers guidance to both institutional management and English language educators in Ukrainian higher education institutions, aiming to facilitate the achievement of contemporary foreign language education objectives and national goals of enhancing the teaching, learning, and utilization of English in higher education throughout Ukraine. Furthermore, the document acknowledges the importance of collaboration with international partners and emphasizes the necessity of participating in international projects. With a focus on post-war recovery, the document outlines its potential for maximum implementation during this crucial period for the country.

The instruction of the English language in Ukrainian higher education institutions aligns with several key documents, including the "Methodological Recommendations for Ensuring Quality Learning, Teaching, and Use of English in Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine" (2023). Additionally, the draft law "On the Functioning of English as a Language of International Communication in Ukraine" and the European Union Council Recommendations (2008) issued on April 23, 2008, on key competencies for lifelong learning play crucial roles in shaping the English language education framework.

The analysis of scholarly sources reveals that the establishment of FLCC is often examined within the context of intercultural communication, highlighting the necessity of a cosmopolitan approach that expands the foundation of intercultural interaction (Holliday, 2011). Scholars have also explored the development of intercultural competence within the global educational landscape (Chugai, 2017), its role in fostering critical thinking within educational settings (Khatami & Hassankiadeh, 2015), the application of an intercultural approach to English language instruction (Corbett, 2022), the implementation of sociocultural theory in second language learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007), and the utilization of virtual reality for practicing English communication skills (Bonner & Hayo, 2018).

The investigation of FLCC among future specialists encompasses various aspects. These include enhancing regional competitiveness in the labor market (Koval, Polyezhayev & Bezkhlibna, 2018), improving professional communication within a global business context (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2011), employing subject and language-integrated teaching as an educational approach to foreign language learning (Marsh, 2012; Coyle, 2008), fostering intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity among foreign students (Vu, 2021), and exploring language acquisition through art (Fleming, 2021).

Within the domestic research context, scholars such as Zadorozhna and Datskiv (2022), Pinchuk (2022), and others have examined the issue of developing FLCC among higher education students.

The development of foreign language communicative competence among higher education students necessitates the establishment of an environment conducive to positive professional growth, psychological well-being, and creative expression. A crucial aspect involves nurturing the capacity to effectively articulate personal perspectives on professional situations through oral and written communication in a foreign language. Consequently, the search for methods and approaches

to cultivate foreign language communicative competence in higher education students across diverse fields of study emerges as one of the most pressing challenges.

This article delineates the distinct characteristics of the training of foreign language communicative skills among prospective specialists pursuing non-philological disciplines within higher education institutions. It considers contemporary approaches and methodologies in English language instruction.

To enhance the competitiveness of future Ukrainian specialists in non-linguistic fields within the global labor market, they must attain a foreign language proficiency level of no less than B2. Hence, we deem it necessary to foster the development of FLCC among higher education students throughout their academic journey. Consequently, the purpose of this article is to investigate the issue of FLCC among higher education students specializing in non-linguistic disciplines within modern Ukrainian HEIs and delineate the distinctive aspects of its formation and development.

The achievement of this objective can be realized through the implementation of intermediate tasks, the resolution of which will ensure the gradual attainment of the desired outcome. These tasks encompass the following: 1) examining the current state of FLCC development among Ukrainian higher education applicants in non-linguistic fields; 2) establishing criteria and levels of FLCC proficiency; 3) identifying organizational and methodological prerequisites for cultivating and advancing this targeted competency; and 4) evaluating the effectiveness of their implementation to foster the development of the specified competence.

2 Literature review

The matter of developing and cultivating FLCC among future specialists holds considerable significance in the present era. To comprehensively investigate this issue, an analysis of the scientific advancements of the subject will be conducted, both within Ukraine and abroad. We believe that valuable insights into the particularities of foreign language communicative training for higher education students can be derived from the extensive body of work produced by foreign researchers.

In the methodological study, Konishi (2016) examines the efficacy of a Japanese language program implemented by a governmental institute based in northern California in fostering communicative competence among higher education students. The researcher emphasizes several key dimensions of communicative competence, including linguistic, sociocultural, discursive, and strategic aspects. Furthermore, she identifies five challenges associated with the development of communicative competence observed within higher education institutions in the United States. The study's objectives encompass assessing the level of students' FLCC necessary for living and working in Japan, as well as evaluating teachers' confidence in adequately preparing their students for such scenarios.

Flores (2012) conducts a comprehensive investigation of English-language communicative competence within educational institutions in Chile, to enhance and optimize the developmental process. Among the proposed strategies for teaching English as a foreign language, the author emphasizes the significance of planning, goal setting, idea generation, and design, with a particular focus on writing skills. To assess the level of communicative competence under scrutiny, the researcher employs essays and interviews, which, in their perspective, positively contribute to the enhancement of English language proficiency. Additionally, the author suggests the implementation of self-assessment questionnaires as a valuable tool for students to engage in critical reflection on their learning progress. The researcher advocates for theatricalization as one of the most effective approaches to fostering FLCC. The utilization of plays provides students with opportunities to not only practice English speaking, but also to simulate authentic communication scenarios, expand and apply grammatical structures and

vocabulary, refine pronunciation accuracy, and encourage collaborative group work, which serves as a motivating factor for foreign language acquisition.

Felemban (2012) provides insights into the process of developing Foreign Language Communicative Competence (FLCC) in Saudi Arabia, highlighting that while second language learners excel in acquiring linguistic competence, the speech aspect assumes greater significance for social interaction with native speakers. In light of this, the researcher delineates several principles aimed at enhancing the formation of FLCC, including cooperative learning, the principle of polite communication, and the principle of irony. Notably, the author delves further into the principle of polite communication, recognizing its crucial role in real-life situations and interpersonal interactions among communicators.

Kiessling and Fabry (2021), German researchers, delve into the development of FLCC within the realm of medical education. Specifically, they explore the extent to which findings on motor and social skills can be applied to the domain of communication, as well as how communication competence can be effectively taught and acquired based on a skills model. Recognizing the inherent limitations of individual cognitive resources, the authors propose learning tasks that are tailored to students' existing knowledge levels. The article provides examples of simulations frequently employed to enhance communication skills. For instance, to construct a patient's medical history in a patient-centered manner, a student must possess an understanding of the relevant content, actively listen to the patient, and regulate their communication behaviors, such as employing open-ended questions. Simultaneously, future physicians are encouraged to be attentive to the patient's non-verbal cues, allowing them to discern and empathetically respond to emotional signals. The authors advocate for the development of FLCC through the application of communication skills in authentic scenarios. By engaging in such practice, students have the opportunity to employ their acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities within the communication domain, thereby facilitating systematic training in the targeted competency.

Järvenpää and Karrbom Gustavsson (2021), Swedish researchers, tackle the development of FLCC as a crucial element contributing to the success of multinational and inter-organizational infrastructure projects. In such projects, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds are required to communicate in a shared language and collaborate in decision-making processes. Drawing upon empirical data derived from contemporary infrastructure projects, the researchers examine the communication dynamics within multinational infrastructure initiatives. The analysis centers on the linguistic framework of communicative competence, with particular emphasis on the formulation of cooperation models in construction project management. In this regard, the authors propose the concept of contextual communication competence, which underscores the significance of adapting communication approaches to specific project contexts.

Corbett (2022) examines the distinctive aspects of intercultural education for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. The author delineates the intellectual and pedagogical traditions that have influenced intercultural language education, encompassing ethnography, critical pedagogy, and cultural studies. By highlighting the practical implications of these traditions, Corbett explores their influence on curriculum design, classroom communication strategies, and assessment methods. Furthermore, the author discusses the impact of digital resources on English language learning and presents compelling arguments in favor of fostering intercultural communicative competence.

In addition to the aforementioned foreign scholars, the formation of FLCC has been examined from various perspectives. For instance, Rizakhojayeva et al. (2017) investigate the development of this competence among tourism professionals. Kakoulli-Constantinou (2018) examines the process of learning English for specific and academic purposes through the

utilization of cloud technologies. Plutino (2017) compares different approaches employed by language teachers in language learning and social media integration. Furthermore, Rosell-Aguilar (2018) demonstrates the impact of social media, specifically highlighting Twitter as a tool for both formal and informal language learning.

The issue of foreign language training for future specialists in non-philological fields has been the subject of scientific investigation by several domestic researchers. Liubashenko and Kornieva (2019) examine the development of English dialogic interactive speech skills among students in technical disciplines. Luchaninova et al. (2019) explore the formation of communicative competence in future specialists through group work. Lytovchenko et al. (2018) describe methods for teaching English for Specific Purposes to university students. Mykytenko et al. (2022) focus on the development of intercultural communicative competence among future journalists. Nykyporets and Ibrahimova (2021) highlight the specificities of forming communicative competence in students from non-linguistic higher education institutions using Mind Maps and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in foreign language classes. Lastly, Romanenko (2016) investigates the role of communicative competence in the field of public policy. Therefore, the issue of forming FLCC has garnered significant attention from numerous foreign and domestic researchers. However, the current circumstances, such as the need for distance and blended learning due to the neighboring country's aggression, compel us to explore novel approaches and conditions for enhancing this crucial competency among future specialists in non-philological fields within higher education institutions.

3 Method

To assess the efficacy of the strategies employed to foster FLCC, an anonymous survey was administered to higher education students from eight non-philological disciplines at three prominent institutions: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ternopil Ivan Puluj National Technical University, and the National University "Odesa Maritime Academy." The survey was conducted utilizing the Google Form service and encompassed a series of key inquiries, which can be found in Appendix A.

The survey revealed the students' strong motivation and dedication to enhancing their FLCC proficiency. Subsequently, the next phase involved assessing the students' initial level of knowledge. To achieve this, a standardized test was employed, specifically designed following the European language education guidelines and made available on the website of the British Council in Ukraine (https://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/english/learn-online/test).

Considering the analysis of scientific and educational sources, it is deemed appropriate to consider the following levels of foreign language communicative competence formation when assessing future specialists: high, sufficient, intermediate, and low (Table 1).

Table 1. Levels of FLCC formation of higher education students

Authors' title	British title	Title per European language education guidelines
High	Upper-Intermediate / Advanced	B2 / C1
Sufficient	Intermediate	B1
Intermediate	Pre-Intermediate	A2
Low	Basic / Elementary	A1

Concurrently with determining the levels of students' FLCC, the study employed an expert evaluation methodology to identify significant coefficients of organizational and methodological conditions that contribute to the formation of FLCC among future specialists. To accomplish this, an expert group of foreign language teachers from the aforementioned HEIs was assembled. Through the process of expert ranking, three predominant organizational and methodological conditions for fostering FLCC among students were identified. The first condition entailed the establishment of a remote foreign-language interactive platform focused on professional-oriented discussions, which operated through a Telegram channel. The second condition involved the interdisciplinary integration of foreign language education content with professional training, including the instruction of professional training disciplines in a foreign language and interactions with foreign individuals in related fields. The third condition encompassed the utilization of technology to enhance critical thinking in foreign language classes. These aforementioned conditions were implemented within the educational frameworks of the domestic higher education institutions mentioned earlier.

Through the utilization of various research methods, including observation, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and an analysis of the effectiveness of organizational and methodological conditions for fostering students' FLCC, several problematic aspects related to the proposed conditions were identified. These findings led to adjustments being made in their implementation.

4 Result

During the research, the formation of FLCC was identified as the dependent variable, while the organizational and methodological conditions for FLCC development in higher education institutions of Ukraine during professional training served as the independent variable. To ensure the validity, reliability, and credibility of the study, specific measures were taken. Validity was ensured by maintaining consistent factors of influence such as the student cohort, their level of training, and the experimental and control group conditions while varying the organizational and methodological conditions for FLCC development. To enhance the reliability of the obtained data, independent experts from the teaching staff of higher education institutions were planned to be involved. Ensuring reliability aimed to establish comparable conditions for conducting the pedagogical experiment within the real educational environment of higher education institutions.

Consequently, the establishment and enhancement of FLCC necessitate a solid foundation to attain a B2 level of proficiency in a foreign language, which serves as a prerequisite for admission to a master's program. Upon analyzing the results of the FLCC assessment conducted on students, it was determined that proficiently mastering all forms of speech activities in a foreign language, incorporating specialized vocabulary, contributes to improved foreign language communication. Each industry-specific term holds functional significance, representing a distinct phenomenon or process that students have acquired through the study of specialized subjects, enabling them to comprehend the appropriate context for using such lexemes.

Aligned with the objectives and rationale of the experimental study, distinct stages were identified and substantiated for its implementation: the theoretical and introductory stage, the formative stage, and the analytical stage. Each stage was characterized by specific tasks, suitable forms, and organizational methods (see Figure 1).

During the implementation of the experimental study, careful consideration was given to the intricate, diverse, and multifaceted nature of developing FLCC among higher education students. To ensure a comprehensive approach, the types of speech activities were selected as the foundation for the FLCC formation process. Through an examination of these activities, the proficiency levels of higher education students in FLCC were determined (Table 2).
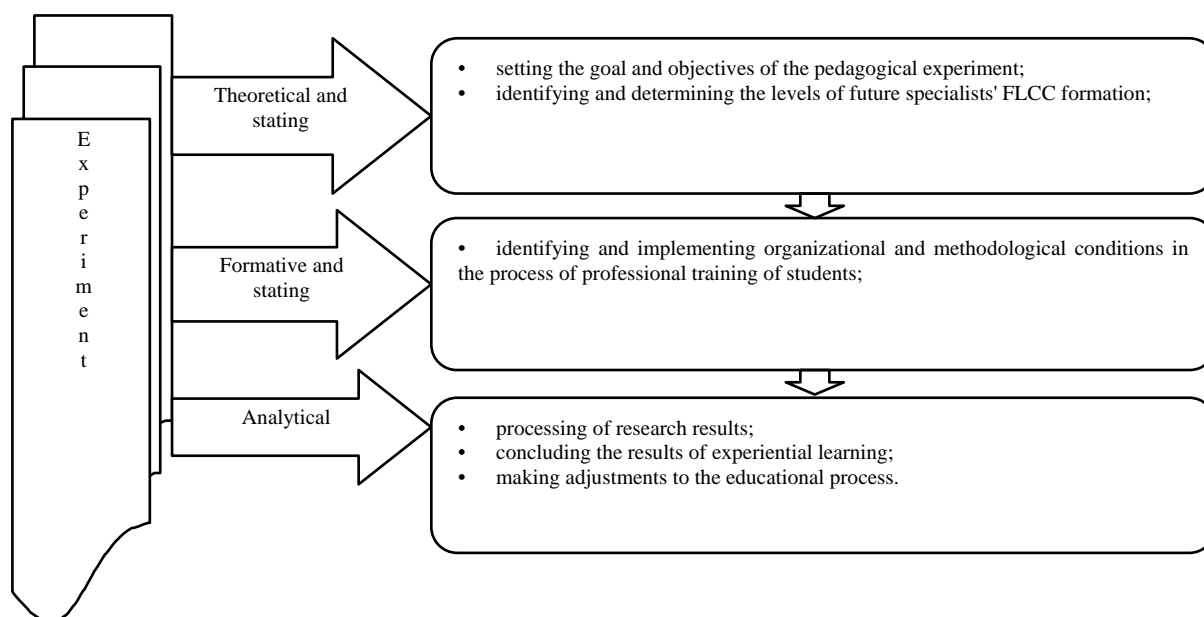
Figure. 1. Stages of the pedagogical experiment on the formation of higher education students' FLCC

Table 2. Levels of FLCC formation by types of higher education students' foreign language activity at the beginning of the study

Levels	High		Sufficient		Intermediate		Low	
Types of foreign language activities	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%
Reading	11	7,97	67	48,55	52	37,68	8	5,80
Listening	23	16,67	57	41,30	54	39,13	4	2,90
Speaking	18	13,04	43	31,16	76	55,07	1	0,73
Writing	9	6,52	46	33,33	71	51,45	12	8,70
Mean value		11,05		38,59		45,83		4,53

During the theoretical and fact-finding stage of the experiment, it was observed that contemporary students excel in foreign language listening skills, whereas they encounter challenges when it comes to written tasks in a foreign language. On average, the majority of higher education students (over 80%) demonstrate sufficient (Intermediate, B1) or intermediate (Pre-Intermediate, A2) levels of foreign language proficiency.

Following the implementation of organizational and methodological conditions for the development of higher education students' FLCC during the formative stage of the experiment, the proficiency levels of higher education students in FLCC were assessed and recorded (refer to Table 3).

Table 3. Levels of FLCC formation by types of higher education students' foreign language activity at the end of the study

Levels	High		Sufficient		Intermediate		Low	
Types of foreign language activities	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%
Reading	13	9,42	68	49,28	53	38,40	4	2,90
Listening	26	18,84	60	43,48	50	36,23	2	1,45
Speaking	21	15,22	45	32,61	71	51,45	1	0,72
Writing	12	8,70	48	34,78	70	50,72	8	5,80
Mean value		13,05		40,04		44,20		2,72

As depicted in the table, it can be observed that, after the experiment, there was an increase of approximately 2% in the number of participants who attained high and sufficient levels, respectively. Notably, positive changes were also observed in the low-level category, as there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents categorized as having low and intermediate levels of FLCC.

The findings from the study lead to the conclusion that the implementation of specific organizational and methodological conditions serves as a motivation for students to engage in communication in a foreign language. Additionally, it fosters an awareness of the significance of self-improvement at FLCC levels for the successful execution of professional activities and the necessity of enhancing professional competence. Consequently, the proposed conditions for the development of FLCC among future specialists, as suggested by the authors, have been subjected to testing and are suitable for further adaptation and implementation.

5 Discussion

Communication competence is a crucial component of human capital that contributes to enhanced productivity and competitiveness at various levels, consequently bolstering the effectiveness of a specialist's work and augmenting their socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the enhancement of an individual's FLCC provides them with the opportunity to enhance the market value of their labor, leading to improved employment prospects and additional benefits in the workplace. These benefits can manifest as higher salaries, opportunities for intellectual growth and the enhancement of personal and professional skills, the ability to hold multiple positions concurrently, and accelerated career advancement.

Students in higher education institutions are acutely aware of the importance of FLCC, as evident from the findings of their survey and questionnaire. However, the study reveals that the proficiency level of future specialists in non-philological fields mostly falls within the average range and necessitates

improvement. To address this, students must dedicate themselves to enhancing their foreign language vocabulary, mastering grammatical rules, and actively engaging in communication. However, not all students are prepared to undertake these endeavors. Consequently, the main factors contributing to the low level of FLCC among students have been identified, including a low initial proficiency in the foreign language upon university admission, a reluctance to demonstrate language skills among peers, a strong focus on professional disciplines at the expense of foreign language learning, and insufficient time allocated to regular study and discussion of foreign language materials.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the prevailing conditions in Ukraine, namely distance and blended learning, which often pose challenges for teachers in assessing students' independent thinking, expression of ideas, and completion of all assigned tasks. The subjective element of teachers who were involved in the development of FLCC and the implementation of organizational and methodological conditions during the educational process should also be taken into account.

6 Conclusion

The findings of the study underscore the undeniable significance of developing the FLCC of higher education students. The abundance of theoretical and practical contributions from scholars, the emergence of relevant courses, and the growing awareness among future specialists about the importance of FLCC for successful professional performance all validate the relevance of this work.

Possessing FLCC is a crucial attribute for modern professionals. However, the majority of Ukrainian higher education students in non-linguistic disciplines exhibit an average level of FLCC, which somewhat hampers their professional growth and prospects in the global labor market.

The study was conducted to accomplish a series of tasks. The first task involved analyzing the perspectives of domestic and foreign scholars regarding the development of FLCC among higher education students in non-linguistic disciplines. The analysis revealed the continued relevance of the research topic, despite the extensive attention it has received from scholars both domestically and internationally. The second task focused on selecting speech activities (listening, speaking, reading, writing) as criteria for assessing FLCC and evaluating students based on four proficiency levels (high, sufficient, intermediate, low). Additionally, a ranking of expert evaluations was conducted to identify the organizational and methodological conditions conducive to the development of the targeted competence. This ranking comprised 20 proposed conditions, ultimately highlighting three dominant factors that served as instrumental means for fostering students' FLCC during the formative phase of the study. Lastly, the effectiveness of implementing these conditions was tested, and the results are detailed in this research paper.

Further research prospects involve the development of an electronic manual aimed at enhancing the professionally-oriented English-language communicative competence of higher education students. This manual would serve as a valuable resource for English language instructors in Ukrainian higher education institutions to support their teaching practices.

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AM

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire for higher education applicants on the need to develop the FLCC

№	*Dear students, we are asking you to help us study the problem of developing foreign language communicative competence (FLCC). Please answer the questions below. Thank you!* **Tell us about yourself:** Course of study – _____. Specialty – _____. Educational institution – _____.	
1.	Please rate the importance of foreign language communicative competence for your future professional activity on a scale of 1 to 5. In this scale, 5 represents a high level of importance, while 1 indicates low importance.	5 4 3 2 1
2.	Do you believe that there is a necessity for the deliberate cultivation of professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence among future specialists during their academic tenure at the university?	1) Yes; 2) No; 3) Maybe; d) I am not sure.
3.	Please indicate the methods employed for the development of foreign language communicative competence among higher education students at your institution: a) Instruction in a foreign language (specifically for professional purposes) b) Instruction of professional subjects in a foreign language c) Conducting extracurricular activities in a foreign language at the university d) Engagement in foreign language discussion platforms for students e) Participation in external academic mobility programs f) Other (please specify): _____.	a) b) c) d) e) f)
4.	Do you have a need to master foreign language communicative competence for your future professional activity?	4) Yes; 5) No; 6) Maybe; d) I am not sure.
5.	Does learning a foreign language lead to an increase in professional competence?	7) Yes; 8) No; 9) Maybe; d) I am not sure.