



# Formation of the professional image of a teacher of foreign languages in higher educational institutions

Nataliia Prus<sup>1\*</sup>, Tetiana Bocharnykova<sup>2</sup>, Anna Kotova<sup>3</sup>, Snizhana Lembik<sup>4</sup> and Iryna Kholmohortseva<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication, Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Nauky Ave., 9A, 61166, Kharkiv, Ukraine. <sup>2</sup>Department of Romano-Germanic Philology, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine. <sup>3</sup>Department of English Philology and Foreign Language Teaching Methods, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine. <sup>4</sup>Department of General Linguistics and Romano-Germanic Philology, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Kharkiv, Ukraine. \*Author for correspondence. E-mail: nprus035@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT.** The purpose of this study is to form recommendations for the development of the professional image of a foreign language teacher in higher educational institutions. The methodology includes an analysis of three levels, namely low, medium, and high pedagogical image of a foreign language teacher, a survey, and foreign experience, namely in countries such as China, Finland, and Singapore. As a result of a study conducted among foreign language teachers in Ukraine, the medium level of pedagogical image is determined. The survey covered teachers from three leading universities, namely: V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, and Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, which allows assessing various aspects of the pedagogical image, such as behavioural culture, communication skills, emotional expressiveness, and foreign language competence. According to the results obtained, the average level of pedagogical image is at a fairly moderate level, which indicates the presence of potential for further development and improvement in a number of aspects. This means that although teachers have certain pedagogical skills and experience, there is considerable scope for improving communication skills, cross-cultural competence, and speech culture. The medium level also shows the need to borrow foreign experience to improve the quality of the pedagogical process. Foreign experience in the field of education can provide more effective teaching methods and improve the professional image of teachers. International approaches to education focused on the development of intercultural communication and interactive teaching methods can be useful for Ukrainian teachers, especially given the globalisation and increasing role of foreign languages in the professional development of students. It is also important to introduce the latest technologies in teaching, adapting them to the specifics of Ukrainian education to ensure higher efficiency and attract students.

**Keywords:** educational activities; skills improvement; self-education; academic reputation; cross-cultural competence.

## Formação da imagem profissional de um professor de línguas estrangeiras em instituições de ensino superior

**RESUMO.** O objetivo deste estudo é formular recomendações para o desenvolvimento da imagem profissional de um professor de língua estrangeira em instituições de ensino superior. A metodologia inclui uma análise de três níveis, a saber, imagem pedagógica baixa, média e alta de um professor de língua estrangeira, uma pesquisa e experiência no exterior, a saber, em países como China, Finlândia e Cingapura. Como resultado de um estudo realizado entre professores de idiomas estrangeiros na Ucrânia, foi determinado o nível médio de imagem pedagógica. A pesquisa abrangeu professores de três universidades importantes, a saber: V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University e Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, o que permite avaliar vários aspectos da imagem pedagógica, como cultura comportamental, habilidades de comunicação, expressividade emocional e competência em língua estrangeira. De acordo com os resultados obtidos, o nível médio da imagem pedagógica está em um nível bastante moderado, o que indica a presença de potencial para desenvolvimento e aprimoramento em vários aspectos. Isso significa que, embora os professores tenham certas habilidades e experiências pedagógicas, há uma margem considerável para aprimorar as habilidades de comunicação, a competência intercultural e a cultura da fala. O nível médio também mostra a necessidade de emprestar experiência estrangeira para melhorar a qualidade do processo pedagógico. A experiência estrangeira no campo da educação pode fornecer métodos de ensino mais

eficazes e melhorar a imagem profissional dos professores. As abordagens internacionais de educação voltadas para o desenvolvimento da comunicação intercultural e dos métodos de ensino interativos podem ser úteis para os professores ucranianos, especialmente devido à globalização e ao papel cada vez maior dos idiomas estrangeiros no desenvolvimento profissional dos alunos. Também é importante introduzir as tecnologias mais recentes no ensino, adaptando-as às especificidades da educação ucraniana para garantir maior eficiência e atrair alunos.

**Palavras-chave:** atividades educacionais; aprimoramento de habilidades; autoeducação; reputação acadêmica; competência intercultural.

## Formación de la imagen profesional del profesor de lenguas extranjeras en los centros de enseñanza superior

**RESUMEN.** El objetivo de este estudio es formular recomendaciones para el desarrollo de la imagen profesional de un profesor de lenguas extranjeras en las instituciones de enseñanza superior. La metodología incluye un análisis de tres niveles, a saber, imagen pedagógica baja, media y alta de un profesor de lenguas extranjeras, una encuesta y experiencia en el extranjero, concretamente en países como China, Finlandia y Singapur. Como resultado de un estudio realizado entre profesores de lenguas extranjeras en Ucrania, se determina el nivel medio de imagen pedagógica. La encuesta abarcó a profesores de tres importantes universidades, a saber: V.N. Karazin Universidad Nacional de Kharkiv, H.S. Skovoroda Universidad Pedagógica Nacional de Kharkiv y Simon Kuznets Universidad Nacional de Economía de Kharkiv, lo que permite evaluar diversos aspectos de la imagen pedagógica, como la cultura del comportamiento, las habilidades comunicativas, la expresividad emocional y la competencia en lenguas extranjeras. Según los resultados obtenidos, el nivel medio de la imagen pedagógica se sitúa en un nivel bastante moderado, lo que indica la presencia de potencial de desarrollo y mejora en una serie de aspectos. Esto significa que, aunque los profesores tienen ciertas habilidades y experiencia pedagógicas, hay un margen considerable para mejorar las habilidades comunicativas, la competencia intercultural y la cultura del habla. El nivel medio también muestra la necesidad de recurrir a la experiencia extranjera para mejorar la calidad del proceso pedagógico. La experiencia extranjera en el campo de la educación puede proporcionar métodos de enseñanza más eficaces y mejorar la imagen profesional de los profesores. Los enfoques internacionales de la educación centrados en el desarrollo de la comunicación intercultural y los métodos de enseñanza interactivos pueden ser útiles para los profesores ucranianos, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta la globalización y el creciente papel de las lenguas extranjeras en el desarrollo profesional de los estudiantes. También es importante introducir las últimas tecnologías en la enseñanza, adaptándolas a las especificidades de la educación ucraniana para garantizar una mayor eficacia y atraer a los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** actividades educativas; mejora de las competencias; autoeducação; reputación académica; competencia intercultural.

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## Introduction

The formation of a professional image of a foreign language teacher in higher educational institutions (HEIs) is an important aspect that directly affects the quality of the educational process and the effectiveness of students' training (Mihulka & Chojnacka-Gärtner, 2019). How a teacher is perceived by students and colleagues depends not only on their authority but also on the success of the educational process. The professional image of a teacher includes their pedagogical abilities and also their personal characteristics, social skills, and the ability to constantly improve themselves and use the latest technologies in teaching. One of the main reasons for the importance of image formation is that it affects the motivation of students, which is a critical factor for achieving high results in learning foreign languages. Students are more likely to actively participate in classes if they see their teacher as an authoritative and reliable figure who can inspire and support them on the way to language acquisition. Thereby, the teacher's image also determines their effectiveness in interaction with colleagues, which contributes to creating a favourable atmosphere in the educational team, which is important for the development of creative and innovative educational activities. In addition, image formation is necessary in the context of international integration of higher education, since globalisation requires teachers to know not only foreign languages but also cross-cultural aspects. The ability of the teacher to

communicate at the international level and support modern pedagogical trends allows improving the quality of education and the reputation of the educational institution in general.

In this regard, the formation of a professional image of a foreign language teacher in a university should be a strategic task, which includes professional training development and active work on improving the personal and communicative qualities of the teacher, which contributes to the creation of an effective learning environment. A large number of researchers examine the professional image of foreign language teachers. For example, Tilio and Picanço (2024) review the professional identity and dedication of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language, focusing on the quality of alignment between the ideal of a textbook that is idealised by public policy and the textbook that publishers focus on. The study highlights the role of the author and publisher in developing the final product that will be available to teachers and students. The analysis also considers the specific features of the programme, the characteristics of textbooks as socio-historical and cultural objects, as well as the concept of language. Sadovets and N. Bidyuk (2018) assessed the standards of professional training of foreign language teachers, discussing international best practices and prospects for adapting these standards in Ukraine. Their study highlights the importance of aligning training with international standards to improve learning outcomes.

Isaieva (2024) focuses on the formation of professional qualities in future multicultural mediators, emphasising the importance of cross-cultural communication skills for future educators who will work in a variety of environments. Tkachenko (2017) presents a study on the structure of a foreign language teacher's professional image, offering insight into how teachers can build and improve their professional identity through self-reflection and external feedback. Onischuk et al. (2020) explore the role of foreign internships in the professional development of language teachers, stressing that international experience improves teachers' skills and expands their pedagogical perspectives.

Tytarenko (2023) investigated methods of forming the professional image of future education managers during master's training. The study emphasises the importance of developing leadership qualities and professional behaviour in novice educational leaders. Velandia (2020) concentrates on ensuring the quality of foreign language tutoring programmes for future teachers, underlining the importance of creating robust assessment systems and ensuring the effectiveness of these programmes. Vashak and Martirosyan (2019) focus on the formation of professional and pedagogical images among teachers of higher education, suggesting that the image of a teacher plays a crucial role in their pedagogical effectiveness and relationships with students. Xing (2022) explores the engagement and burnout rates of EFL teachers, linking these factors to their professional identity and providing insight into how teachers can manage stress and maintain engagement in their work. Ibragimovna (2020) explores the professional training of foreign language teachers in a new educational environment, especially focusing on how changing educational contexts require innovative approaches to learning to meet evolving requirements.

The above-mentioned studies contribute to understanding the problems and strategies of development of foreign language teachers, professional identity, and pedagogical practice in the modern educational environment, but do not fully reveal the issues of the latest technologies in the professional training of foreign language teachers, in particular, the impact of these tools on teacher training and the formation of their professional identity. The purpose of this study was to form a recommendation for developing the professional image of a foreign language teacher in higher educational institutions based on foreign experience. The objectives of the study were:

- Describe the concept of a teacher's professional image and the levels of its formation.
- Analyse the state of the pedagogical image of Ukrainian foreign language teachers based on the performance of tasks.
- Submit aspects for improving the process of forming a pedagogical image in Ukraine based on foreign practices.

## Materials and methods

In a study devoted to the formation of a professional image of a foreign language teacher in higher educational institutions, three levels of this image were analysed, namely primary, medium, and high. Each of them is characterised by certain criteria that reflect a different level of development of professional competencies, self-esteem, communication skills, and general attitude to teaching. The initial level included such aspects as the level of culture; communicative behaviour style; speech culture (verbal communication).

The medium level included communicative and organisational competence; cross-cultural competence; professional motivation; pedagogical reflection. The high level contained features of the internal state; self-esteem and the formation of the 'Self-concept', a culture of behaviour.

Teachers of a foreign language were asked to complete tasks to determine the level of their professional image. Participants were selected from three universities in Ukraine, namely V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, and Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics. The study involved 30 (10 specialists from each university) foreign language teachers, including 18 women and 12 men aged 28 to 65 years. The sample covered different levels of experience and specialisations, which allowed obtaining different points of view and contributed to a comprehensive analysis of criteria for evaluating the appearance, communication style, and speech culture of students. The survey was conducted online using the Google Docs application. Teachers performed three blocks of tasks, namely:

Block 1:

- Teachers took tests where they evaluated their approaches to etiquette in the educational process, in particular, the level of respect for students and colleagues, and openness to other cultures and traditions.
- A simulation of a conflict or discussion situation was conducted, where teachers had to demonstrate their communicative style, namely how they resolve conflicts, support discussions, and listen to others.
- Teachers had to give a short lecture at the V.N. Kharkiv National University. Karazin or a presentation on a free subject with their chosen group of students to assess the correctness of speech, the structure of the presentation and emotional colouring.

Block 2:

- Teachers were invited to conduct an interactive lesson that included group discussions and solving problem situations. During the lesson, the teacher had to organise the work of the group, distribute roles, and ensure active interaction between participants.
- Teachers were asked to conduct a lecture or training focused on the subject of cross-cultural interaction. During this task, they had to demonstrate the ability to consider students' cultural differences, discuss cross-cultural barriers, and apply appropriate pedagogical strategies to engage all students.
- Teachers had to write a reflective essay on the subject "How have my pedagogical approaches changed in recent years?". In this essay, they had to look at how their professional motivation and approaches to learning have changed, and how this has affected their teaching style and students.

Block 3:

- Teachers had to conduct an independent analytical lesson, where they had to assess their own emotional state during teaching. After that, they had to formulate their emotions and describe the impact of this state on interaction with students and their teaching activities.
- Teachers were invited to take a training course on self-knowledge and personal development, after which they had to describe how this training changed their attitude to their own pedagogical abilities. They also had to reflect how these changes affected their teaching methods and interactions with colleagues.
- Teachers were invited to hold a group discussion on the subject 'Culture of behaviour in professional activities'. During the discussion, they had to demonstrate their ability to interact with others within the framework of ethical norms and norms of professional behaviour.

The assessment was conducted on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest level, and 5 is the highest level of competence in each of the areas. The assessment was justified by both quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the completed tasks. Teachers were evaluated on three blocks of tasks covering ethical, communicative, pedagogical, cross-cultural, emotional, and personal competencies. The first block evaluated the ability to observe etiquette, communication style when resolving conflicts and conducting presentations, and the quality of speech. The second block focused on pedagogical skills, such as organising interactive classes and being able to consider students' cultural differences, as well as on the level of reflection on their own professional development. The third block assessed the ability of teachers to analyse their emotional state and its impact on the educational process, the ability to self-knowledge, and compliance with ethical standards during professional interaction.

Foreign experience of such countries as China, Finland, and Singapore was analysed on the basis of criteria, namely continuous professional development, integration of digital technologies in the educational process, and an individualised approach to foreign language teachers. The experience of China, Finland, and Singapore was selected for analysis because of their advanced educational approaches that ensure high-quality learning and

innovative development. Each of these countries has unique methods that can be useful for improving educational systems in other countries. In particular, recommendations are given for Ukraine to borrow experience.

## Results

### Interpretation of the concept of the professional image of a foreign language teacher and its definition at three main levels

The formation of a professional image of a foreign language teacher in higher educational institutions is an important element of pedagogical activity, which includes not only the appearance and manner of behaviour but also a deeper understanding of their profession, personal qualities, and competencies (Niikko, 2020). The professional image of a teacher directly affects its effectiveness in the educational process, as well as interaction with students, colleagues, and the administration of the institution. In particular, one of the main aspects of forming a professional image is the teacher's communication skills. The ability to communicate effectively with the audience, use a variety of teaching methods, and individualise approaches to students contribute to creating a positive image and mutual respect. The teacher must have the ability not only to explain the material but also to listen, support discussions, and consider the cultural characteristics of students, which is important in the context of teaching foreign languages. Also important is the professional development of the teacher, which includes constant self-correction and professional development. The use of the latest technologies and participation in seminars, conferences and other educational events allows the teacher to stay up to date with current pedagogical trends and techniques (Ramey et al., 2024; Luzan et al., 2021). This not only improves the quality of teaching but also forms the image of the teacher as a competent specialist who is able to effectively respond to changes in the educational environment. In addition, a foreign language teacher should adhere to high moral standards and be an example for students in terms of responsibility, mutual respect, and justice. This also includes the ability for constructive criticism and objective evaluation, which has a direct impact on building trust and respect on the part of students. The visual aspect of a professional image also matters. However, it is not limited only to the appearance of the teacher but also includes their behaviour, body language, communication style, and presentation of the material. All this forms a first impression, which can have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of the educational process. Building a professional image also includes the teacher's ability to reflect and improve themselves. This means that the teacher must have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, a willingness to work on their shortcomings, and constantly improve their teaching skills. This process of self-improvement is crucial to maintaining a high professional image. The professional image of a foreign language teacher at a university is a complex and multifaceted concept that covers not only personal qualities and professional training but also the ability to effectively interact with students, colleagues, and administration, as well as the ability to constantly develop oneself (Karamyshev et al., 2024; Gangmei & Thomas, 2025). It is important that this image is consistent and sincere because only in this case it will become the basis for successful teaching activities and the formation of a positive atmosphere in the educational institution. The professional image of a foreign language teacher is evaluated on the basis of three levels that reflect their competencies, communication skills, and ability to effectively interact with students and colleagues. These levels, low, medium, and high, are the main criteria for assessing the extent to which a teacher meets the requirements of the profession and the standards of the academic environment.

A high level of professional image indicates a teacher who has a high level of professional training and the ability to create an effective educational atmosphere (Table 1). They have high communication and organisational skills, is able to adapt to the needs of students, use the latest teaching methods and technologies, actively integrating innovations into the educational process. The appearance and behaviour of the teacher meet high standards, which contributes to the formation of a positive image both in the eyes of students and among colleagues. Such a teacher constantly works on self-education, participates in scientific and pedagogical events, and is an example to follow. Their pedagogical and interpersonal skills are at a high level, which allows them to effectively cope with various situations in the classroom and create a positive learning atmosphere.

**Table 1.** High level and indicators of forming a professional image of a foreign language teacher.

| Level | Indicators   |
|-------|--|
| High  | The external criterion includes the usual cultural norms, which are manifested through such qualities as elegance, style, originality, restraint, neatness in choosing clothes, the ability to harmoniously combine accessories and colours, as well as taste in choosing outfits in accordance with specific situations. A communicative style of behaviour involves the ability to clearly navigate social situations, expressing this through a charming smile, expressive facial expressions, correct posture, and appropriate use of gestures. Speech culture is manifested in high literacy, accuracy, logical presentation of thoughts, correct use of speech elements, expressiveness of tone, clear pronunciation, and matching intonation to the situation.  |
|       | The professional criterion includes several important aspects. Communicative and organisational competence implies the ability to clearly formulate one's own thoughts, effectively conduct a dialogue and monologue, and choose and apply appropriate language tools to achieve a communicative goal. Foreign competence consists in fluency in another language and the ability to communicate without prior training, regardless of the subject and situation, using a variety of lexical units and grammatical constructions. Professional motivation is characterised by the student's desire to acquire professional knowledge, constantly develop their skills, and set goals for improving professional results. Pedagogical reflection includes the ability of Masters to see pedagogical problems, analyse the situation, and find ways to solve these problems, which contributes to the effectiveness of their educational activities. |
|       | The intrapersonal criterion includes several important aspects. The first is the features of the inner state, which are characterised by self-confidence, harmony of desires and aspirations, and inner peace. This allows a person to effectively cope with difficulties and maintain emotional balance in various situations. The second aspect is a culture of behaviour that implies compliance with generally accepted norms and rules, a high level of intelligence and the ability to control emotions. This is important for maintaining healthy team interactions and creating a positive impression. The last important criterion is the level of self-esteem and the formation of the self-concept, which consists in the student's ability to correctly evaluate themselves, actively work on self-improvement and realise the importance of their own professional image for career development and personal growth.                  |

Source: Created by the authors based on Prus et al. (2020).

A medium level of professional image means that the teacher has a basic level of communication and organisational skills (Table 2). They can effectively conduct classes, apply standard teaching methods, and adhere to basic pedagogical principles. However, their approach may be less innovative, and they do not always actively interact with the audience or look for new opportunities for professional development. The appearance of a teacher may be acceptable, but a lack of special attention to detail or insufficient preparation for each lesson can reduce their image among students and colleagues. However, in general, such a teacher can be recognised as sufficiently qualified to perform their duties.

**Table 2.** Medium level and indicators of professional image formation of a foreign language teacher.

| Level  | Indicators  |
|--------|---|
| Medium | External criteria: culture of appearance (neat appearance, elegance, ability to choose clothes according to the situation, sense of style and taste); communicative style of behaviour (restraint of gestures, sincere smile, moderate expressiveness of facial expressions, correct posture); speech culture (characterised by literacy, accuracy and logic of presentation of material, although sometimes there may be errors in the use of language units, but in general, the expressiveness and relevance of intonation colouring, such as pauses, meet the requirements of the situation).   |
|        | Professional criteria: communicative and organisational skills (undergraduates are able to clearly formulate their thoughts, correctly choose and use language tools for effective communication); foreign language competence (medium-level Masters speak a foreign language, are capable of spontaneous communication on certain subjects, their speech is marked by a wealth of vocabulary and grammatical constructions); professional motivation (undergraduates have a sufficient level of motivation to acquire professional knowledge, develop skills, and strive for self-improvement to achieve better professional results); pedagogical reflection (masters can identify problems in the pedagogical process and look for ways to solve them, analyse pedagogical situations, and make reasonable conclusions). |
|        | Intrapersonal criteria: aspects of the internal state (teachers generally have self-confidence, although their desires and aspirations are sometimes not always balanced, which can lead to a loss of inner peace and emotional balance); culture of behaviour (students usually adhere to socially accepted norms and rules of behaviour, have intelligence and are able to effectively control the emotional state); level of self-esteem and development of the self-concept (Masters have adequate self-esteem and developed self-improvement skills, but not everyone understands the importance of forming a positive professional image during training).  |

Source: Created by the authors based on Prus et al. (2020).

The low level of professional image is characterised by a low level of communicative competence, limited pedagogical skills, and insufficient experience in using innovative teaching methods (Table 3). A teacher with such an image may have problems maintaining discipline in the classroom, often do not consider the individual characteristics of students, and do not provide effective feedback. Their appearance and demeanour may be sloppy or inadequate to the academic environment, which negatively affects the atmosphere in the group. Such teachers often do not pay enough attention to self-education and improving their skills.

**Table 3.** Low level and indicators of professional image formation of a foreign language teacher.

| Level | Indicators  |
|-------|---|
| Low   | External criteria: habitual culture (untidy appearance, non-compliance with business style, excessive use of makeup and accessories without a sense of proportion, lack of harmony in the combination of colours); communicative style of behaviour (excessive gestures, sad facial expression, insincere smile, uncertainty in movements); speech culture (imperfect literacy, lack of accuracy and logic in the presentation of material, incorrect use of language units, intonation accents and pauses may be present, but they are not always appropriate in the pedagogical process).   |
|       | Professional criteria: communicative and organisational competence (masters have difficulties with the formulation of their thoughts, do not always choose and apply language tools correctly, have the skills to organise teamwork, or show a desire to develop them); foreign language competence (masters have a low level of knowledge of a foreign language, are not capable of spontaneous communication in a foreign language, their language is often primitive, with a limited number of grammatical constructions); professional motivation (lack of interest in acquiring professional knowledge and developing professional skills); pedagogical reflection (masters are not able to find solutions to pedagogical problems or situations, do not analyse pedagogical situations, or have no desire to draw conclusions). |
|       | Intrapersonal criterion: features of the internal state (undergraduates may show excessive confidence or, conversely, complete self-doubt, their desires and aspirations are often not balanced, which sometimes leads to a loss of inner peace and emotional balance); culture of behaviour (do not always adhere to accepted social norms and rules, sometimes have difficulties in controlling their negative emotions); the level of self-esteem and the formation of the self-concept (masters have inadequate self-esteem – too high or low, they often do not strive for self-improvement, not understand the importance of creating a professional image).  |

Source: Created by the authors based on Prus et al. (2020).

The examination of the pedagogical image of foreign language teachers in Ukraine allowed obtaining important conclusions about the level of their professional training and communication skills. When completing tasks in three blocks of tasks that covered various aspects of teaching activities, elements that have a direct impact on the teacher's image were evaluated. This integrated approach allowed collecting data on the ability of teachers to effectively organise the educational process, interact with students and colleagues, and consider socio-cultural differences.

### Analysis of the state of the pedagogical image of Ukrainian foreign language teachers

The assessment of the pedagogical image of foreign language teachers in accordance with the blocks revealed strengths in interaction with students, organisation of the educational process, and emotional self-regulation. Therewith, areas that need further improvement to improve the effectiveness of teaching and create a more integrated educational environment (Table 4) were identified.

**Table 4.** Analysis results of the pedagogical image of foreign language teachers' examination.

| Task block | Block name                | Key results  |
|------------|---------------------------|--|
| Block 1    | Social interaction        | - 70% of teachers scored a score of 4 or 5 for respect for students and colleagues, conflict resolution, active listening;<br>- high level of friendly atmosphere. |
| Block 2    | Interactive learning      | - 65% received high marks for organising group work and considering cultural differences;<br>- improving teaching practice through reflection.                     |
| Block 3    | Emotional self-regulation | - 75% show a high level of emotional intelligence;<br>- ability to adapt in professional activities.   |

Source: Created by the authors.

The first block of tasks showed that most teachers demonstrate high respect for students and colleagues, the ability to constructively resolve conflicts, support discussion, and actively listen. More than half of the teachers scored the highest score for these criteria. This indicates their high ability to maintain a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, which is an important factor for developing a positive pedagogical image. The second block of tasks, which included conducting interactive classes and training, showed the ability of teachers to consider students' cultural differences, organise group discussions, and use methods to involve all participants. The tasks also required evaluating changes in teaching approaches that allow for improved teaching practice through reflection. According to the results of this block, a substantial number of teachers received high marks for organising group work and effective interaction. The third block of tasks was aimed at assessing the emotional self-regulation of teachers and their ability to adapt to changes in professional activities. The evaluation of this block confirmed that most teachers have a high level of emotional intelligence, which enables them to successfully maintain professional behaviour and interact effectively with students and colleagues. The pedagogical image of foreign language teachers in Ukraine is defined as medium

based on the conducted experiment. However, there are certain aspects where further improvement is needed, especially in terms of developing emotional resilience and a deeper understanding of the cross-cultural aspects of the learning process. These conclusions are useful for further research and improvement of pedagogical standards in the educational institutions of Ukraine.

The medium level of the pedagogical image, established during the assessment of foreign language teachers in Ukraine, indicates that teachers generally have basic and sufficient skills, but there is still room for further professional development. This means that although most teachers are able to provide effective interaction with students, apply communication strategies, and demonstrate a high level of emotional self-regulation, some aspects of teaching activities need to be improved. In this case, it is important to focus on specific areas where improvements can be made.

Research has shown that while most teachers successfully adapt to students' cultural diversity, it is important to deepen their knowledge of other cultures and traditions. Considering cultural aspects during training is of great importance, as students may have different approaches to learning and perception of information, depending on their cultural background. Foreign language teachers should pay more attention to researching cultural contexts, which will enable them to organise classes better, consider the specifics of communication styles, and promote deeper assimilation of the material (Luzan et al., 2022; Dubovyk, 2024). Special courses or trainings on cross-cultural communication can be introduced to do this, where teachers will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of cultural differences and learn how to effectively apply them in the educational process. Although higher levels of emotional intelligence were demonstrated in most participants, there are still moments when teachers can improve their ability to manage their emotions while teaching. For example, in situations of stress or conflict, it is important to maintain emotional stability and be able to maintain control over one's emotions so as not to affect the atmosphere in the classroom. Increased emotional resilience can be achieved through stress and emotion management training, where teachers can practice self-regulation techniques and strategies to overcome stressful situations. This will allow teachers to interact more effectively with students and maintain a positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Teachers, even if they are able to resolve conflicts, should be able to adapt their approaches to different types of situations (Karabalaeva et al., 2024; Chung, 2023). It is important that they have a clear understanding of how best to maintain a constructive tone and achieve the desired results in each situation. Training sessions and seminars that will focus on developing effective communication skills in conflict situations and negotiation techniques and emotion management can be organised to do this. In addition, it is important to develop practical skills of interactive learning, in particular, organising group work, involving students in active discussion and solving problem situations. Although teachers have mostly successfully completed tasks related to interactive teaching methods, in particular, group discussions, it is worth continuing to improve these skills so that classes become even more exciting and effective. Training where teachers will gain skills in flexible management of group processes, encouraging each student to participate in discussions and developing critical thinking.

Deep self-knowledge allows teachers to better understand their strengths and weaknesses, which is the basis for further professional development (Titova et al., 2024; Bliznyuk & Radko, 2025). Creating conditions for systematic reflection and exchange of experience between teachers can help identify new approaches and teaching strategies that meet modern requirements and contribute to the formation of a positive image of the teacher.

Despite the fact that the results of the study indicate that there is substantial potential among foreign language teachers in Ukraine, there are many areas for improvement that can substantially improve their pedagogical image. The development of cross-cultural competence, emotional stability, communication skills, and the ability to self-evaluate will become the basis for further improvement of teachers' activities and improving the quality of training. In accordance with these tasks, it is possible to create a holistic development programme that will include courses, trainings, and active implementation of practices that will contribute to the development of the professional image of teachers and their adaptation to changes in the modern educational system.

### **Integration of the latest educational technologies in professional activity**

The integration of technology has affected several key aspects of teachers' professional image. First, communication has been improved through the use of online discussion mechanisms and instant feedback tools. Teachers noted that the digital environment requires clearer thinking, more concise explanations, and

more structured interaction. These changes were reflected in higher scores in the first assessment block, where teachers who regularly used interactive tools demonstrated more confident communication styles, stronger conflict resolution strategies, and greater attentiveness to student feedback. Such practices contributed to a more authoritative and well-organized professional presence in both physical and virtual classrooms.

Second, the use of digital technologies contributed to the development of intercultural competence, which is essential for modern foreign language teaching. Teachers who had access to international digital platforms and authentic online materials, such as BBC Learning English, Deutsche Welle, and publicly available MOOCs, demonstrated a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and greater awareness of their students' diverse backgrounds. This allowed them to contextualize lesson content more effectively and present themselves as culturally aware and globally oriented professionals. Integrating authentic materials into lessons not only improved the quality of teaching but also strengthened teachers' professional identity as mediators between languages and cultures.

The third area where the integration of technology had a noticeable impact was the reflective and self-developmental dimension of professional identity. In their reflective essays, many teachers emphasized that participation in online courses, webinars, and virtual conferences significantly expanded their methodological repertoire and familiarized them with contemporary international pedagogical standards. More than half of the respondents noted that digital formats prompted them to critically reevaluate their teaching methods and inspired them to participate more actively in continuous professional development. Teachers often noted that online communities provided valuable opportunities for sharing experiences, supporting colleagues, and collectively solving problems, which strengthened their self-esteem and enhanced their sense of belonging to a broader professional network.

Another impact of technology use was observed in the area of emotional regulation and adaptability. Data from the third block show that teachers who frequently conducted online or blended classes developed a higher level of emotional resilience. Managing unpredictable technical issues, moderating virtual discussions, and maintaining engagement in a digital environment required constant concentration and self-control. Teachers reported that these experiences improved their ability to remain calm and professional under pressure. As a result, they demonstrated more stable emotional resilience, which students perceived as a sign of confidence and reliability – qualities directly associated with a strong professional image.

Taken together, the results show that active integration of technological tools correlates positively with higher overall scores across all assessed parameters of professional image. Teachers who regularly used innovative technologies tended to develop more interactive lessons, use a wider range of teaching strategies, and demonstrate greater adaptability in communication and classroom management. These teachers also used multimodal resources more often, which strengthened their authority and contributed to the formation of a modern, student-centered pedagogical image. Increased access to authentic digital content and international methodological practices reinforced their globally oriented identity, making technology not just a teaching aid, but an important part of their constantly evolving professional self-presentation.

In summary, the analysis demonstrates that the use of the latest educational technologies plays a significant role in shaping the professional identity of foreign language teachers in Ukraine. Technologies serve as a catalyst for improving pedagogical competence, enhancing communication skills, supporting cultural awareness, and strengthening emotional resilience. These findings underscore the need to integrate digital literacy and technology-rich methodologies into professional development programs, which will ensure the full adaptation of foreign language teachers to modern educational requirements and the further formation of a positive and authoritative professional image.

### **Recommendations for improving the process of forming a pedagogical image in Ukraine based on foreign practices**

The process of training foreign language teachers is an important element of educational systems in different countries. The professional image of a teacher depends not only on their knowledge but also on their ability to effectively interact with students, apply modern pedagogical technologies, and support continuous professional development. In particular, in China, the system of training foreign language teachers is based on a combination of traditional teaching methods with the latest technologies. An important aspect is the continuous professional development of teachers. In China, there are active programmes for the professional development of teachers, which include both short-term courses and long-term certification programmes.

These programmes focus on improving the methodological skills of teachers, in particular, in the use of modern information technologies and innovative approaches to teaching foreign languages. As for the integration of digital technologies, China is actively implementing online language learning platforms, which allows teachers to conveniently and efficiently use multimedia resources and other digital tools during their studies. Interactive platforms, such as online language courses and mobile applications, allow improving the level of foreign language proficiency not only for students but also for teachers themselves. This helps improve professional skills through interactive training and feedback.

Finland is an example of a country where the professional development of foreign language teachers is conducted based on continuous training throughout their careers. In Finland, the emphasis is on an individualised approach to learning, where each teacher has the opportunity to choose courses and programmes that suit their interests and professional goals. Finnish programmes for foreign language teachers include methods aimed at improving pedagogical skills and developing cross-cultural competence, which allows teachers to work in a multicultural environment. Finland is also actively integrating digital technologies into the teacher training process (Mäkipää et al., 2024). Foreign language teachers use modern online resources and interactive platforms to create educational materials, which allows conducting classes in a flexible and adaptive format. The use of digital tools for communication and learning adapts the programme to the individual needs of each student.

Singapore has one of the most modern training systems for foreign language teachers in the world, where great importance is attached to the professional image of the teacher. The country pays great attention to the formation of a personal brand of a teacher, which includes not only qualifications and pedagogical skills but also the ability to effectively use technology for teaching. Foreign language teachers in Singapore receive specialised training on developing pedagogical reflection and professional motivation, which are important components of their image (Yip et al., 2019). The integration of digital technologies into the educational process is an important area in the teachers training. In Singapore, online courses, online language learning platforms, and mobile applications are widely used, which allow teachers to apply innovative teaching methods that increase the effectiveness of learning foreign languages. Moreover, the system of continuous professional development in Singapore includes not only advanced training courses but also the active participation of teachers in international conferences and seminars, which allows them to constantly improve their skills and knowledge.

Based on the analysis of the experience of China, Finland, and Singapore, several important recommendations for improving the system of training foreign language teachers in Ukraine can be offered. The first thing one can borrow is continuous professional development. Ukrainian foreign language teachers should actively use online resources, multimedia platforms, and mobile applications to improve their learning. These technologies can substantially improve the efficiency of teaching and make the learning process more accessible and flexible for students. In Ukraine, it is important to create conditions for the development of each teacher's personal brand, including supporting their pedagogical reflection, motivation, and active use of new technologies. Teachers should receive support in developing cross-cultural competence, which will allow them to work with different groups of students and form a more positive image in the professional environment (Park et al., 2025; Yurtseven et al., 2025).

It is important to pay attention to several key aspects to create a positive image of foreign language teachers. Firstly, teachers should demonstrate a high level of language proficiency and language culture, which increases students' trust and emphasises professionalism. The second important element is pedagogical excellence, which includes the ability to motivate students, create an interactive and friendly learning environment where everyone feels supported. In addition, teachers should be aware of the latest techniques and digital technologies, because the integration of modern teaching tools (including multimedia materials and online tools) emphasises their professional adaptability. It has a positive effect on the image and constant professional growth of the teacher: participation in seminars and conferences, passing advanced training courses, demonstrating dedication and a desire to improve. Ethical behaviour and openness to cultural diversity are also important, which increases the authority of the teacher among students from different cultural backgrounds and creates an atmosphere of respect and mutual understanding. In general, Ukraine can use international experience to improve the system of training foreign language teachers, in particular, through the integration of continuous professional development, digital technologies and an individualised approach to the development of professional image. This will create a more efficient and modern education system in Ukraine that will meet the requirements of the time and the needs of students.

## Discussion

The pedagogical image of a foreign language teacher is of great importance, as it builds students' trust and motivation, creating an effective learning atmosphere. Research shows that a teacher's image, which includes not only professional competence but also emotional stability, sociability, and cultural sensitivity, can substantially influence students' perception of learning and their academic performance (Kurok & Tkachenko, 2020; Bardel et al., 2023). In this context, Jirásek and Majerčíková (2022) explore how pre-service teachers' images of the profession are depicted in their drawings, which can influence their perceptions of what it means to be a teacher. In addition, the teacher's ability to be open to new technologies and innovative teaching methods also contributes to the formation of a positive professional image, which increases their authority among students and colleagues (Komar et al., 2021). Therefore, the pedagogical image of a teacher is important for interaction with students and also for their own professional development and career growth.

Researchers Zhi and Wang (2023) focused on using images in proverbs and sayings to improve foreign language teaching. Their study focuses on how cultural images can become a powerful tool for foreign language teachers, forming a certain image of the teacher as someone who conveys not only language knowledge but also cultural aspects. In this regard, Lőrincz (2022) emphasizes the importance of a foreign language teacher's knowledge base and how teaching experience influences their effectiveness in both language instruction and cultural education. This also identifies the importance of the cultural component in shaping the professional image of a foreign language teacher. The role of the teacher is formed not only as a transmitter of lexical knowledge but also as cultural values that are part of their image. In particular, the studies of Dinoc-Ignacio and Lydio (2021), and Duan et al. (2022) concentrate on the development of teaching and assessment methods in the Swedish context. The authors stress the importance of innovative methods and technologies in shaping the teaching image and professional competence of foreign language teachers. This study recognises the importance of personal qualities that can be evaluated independently using modern technologies. Emotional stability and readiness for self-development are important components of an effective pedagogical image (Mazhitovna et al., 2022; Yaremenko, 2019).

Erarslan and Yavuz (2023) focus on examining the professional image of teachers, particularly through assessments given by teachers themselves. This study allows identifying important aspects that shape the perception of the teaching profession, in particular, the priority on professional competence, ethical norms, and personal traits such as sociability and empathy. The results of this study are important for understanding how teachers can contribute to the formation of a positive image and how this image affects their interaction with students. This correlates with the results of a study on the formation of the professional image of foreign language teachers in higher education institutions, which also examines the characteristics that determine the perception of teachers by students, such as cultural competence, language skills, and the ability to support students' motivation. Feng and Kim (2023) explore the role of teachers' knowledge and practice in shaping their 'glocal' identity. This study highlights how foreign language teachers can combine global approaches to learning with local cultural characteristics, thereby creating their own unique professional image. They emphasise the importance of adapting teachers to the needs of their students and the impact of this process on building mutual understanding and trust between students and teachers. This is consistent with the results of a study that focuses on how a teacher's adaptation to the cultural and educational contexts in which they work affects their image and learning effectiveness.

In addition, Guo et al. (2022) insisted on the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication between teachers for students learning foreign languages. They explore how these factors can improve students' learning satisfaction and success in language acquisition. In particular, in the results of the study, verbal and nonverbal closeness of teachers are important elements of creating a positive learning experience. Hrytsak (2021) explores the professional image of future teachers of foreign literature, especially in the context of the transition from training to practice. Her work focuses on the formation of students' professional identities during their studies and their interaction with teachers. This is due to an ongoing study that explores how foreign language teachers shape their image through interaction with future teachers and students. This correlates with the importance of practical skills, teaching skills, and professional confidence in building a positive image, which is highlighted in this study. Huang et al. (2024) and Dimitrova et al. (2023) investigate the impact of teacher support on students' language learning progress, academic sustainability, and learning satisfaction. They emphasise how teacher support creates an image that positively affects students' academic performance.

Zhunussova et al. (2024), confirm the importance of a teacher's professional image for creating an effective learning environment. Common to all these publications is the emphasis on the need to combine professional competence, interpersonal skills, and adaptation to the cultural and individual needs of students to form a positive image of the teacher and ensure the success of training. The teacher's image consists not only of their knowledge and experience but also of such aspects as the ability to establish interpersonal contacts, emotional support for students, and adaptation to cultural characteristics. All these factors create an atmosphere of trust and comfort, which is necessary to achieve high results in teaching foreign languages.

Research also confirms that teacher support and motivation are critical for students' successful progress in language learning, which correlates with increased learning satisfaction and academic sustainability (Huang et al., 2024). Thereby, not only professional qualities are important but also the ability of the teacher to combine global and local cultural contexts, which allows forming a glocal identity and creating mutual understanding between the teacher and students.

In general, an effective image of a foreign language teacher is a complex and multifaceted concept that includes knowledge, interpersonal skills, emotional support, and cultural adaptation. These aspects complement each other, providing a positive learning experience for students and increasing their motivation to learn foreign languages. Foreign experience is important for the development of teaching practice, providing for the borrowing of advanced methods, innovative technologies, and approaches that are successfully applied in other countries. This contributes to improving the professional image of the teacher and the quality of education, adapting to global changes in the learning process. Foreign experience allows enriching national pedagogical systems with new ideas, which contributes to the development of the cultural competence of teachers and students. In addition, international collaboration allows teachers to better understand the needs of their students in a globalised world, which is an important factor in increasing their motivation and academic success. Therefore, foreign experience is necessary for the formation of competitive teachers who are able to work effectively in a changing educational environment.

## Conclusion

The professional image of a foreign language teacher is an important aspect of their activity since it determines their perception by students and the effectiveness of the educational process in general. The teacher's image is the result of the interaction of their appearance, communication skills, professional competence, and personal qualities. It directly affects the motivation of students, forming a positive or negative attitude to learning. An established teacher image can be a powerful tool for engaging students in learning and developing their professional skills.

There are three levels of forming a teacher's professional image: external, professional, and internal. The external level includes a neat appearance, style in clothing choices, and behaviours that promote the teacher's trust and authority. The professional level is determined through communicative and organisational competencies, foreign language proficiency, as well as the ability to reflect on one's own pedagogical practice. The internal personal level includes self-confidence, emotional stability, and the ability to develop oneself. The results of the experiment of foreign language teachers in Ukraine demonstrated that the majority of participants are at a moderate level of professional image formation. The results of the study showed several key problems in the professional image of foreign language teachers in Ukraine. One of the main problems was the lack of development of communication skills and the ability to express oneself effectively in the educational process. This is due to a lack of emphasis on practical aspects of communication in teacher training, which can lead to poor teaching efficiency and insufficient student engagement. In addition, problems arose due to the limited development of pedagogical reflection, when teachers are not always able to critically evaluate their working methods and adapt them to the needs of students. These problems can be caused by a number of factors, in particular, insufficient support from educational institutions for the professional development of teachers and limited opportunities to participate in international internships or exchange of experience. The lack of a systematic approach to the formation of a professional image of teachers can also be the result of a lack of clear standards and practices in the teaching environment, which hinders the development of appropriate skills. This indicated that teachers in general have the foundations to build a positive image, but there is still substantial potential for improvement. Mastering communication skills, developing self-reflection, and finding a balance between personal and professional image are necessary.

Teachers should actively use foreign experience to improve their image since other countries often have a more developed system of teacher training. Borrowing foreign practices, such as improving communication methods, expanding opportunities for professional development, and developing a more flexible approach to learning, will help improve the quality of teaching. Foreign experience is important not only for improving the teaching methodology but also for forming the professional image of teachers since the international context contributes to the integration of modern pedagogical trends and increases the level of teacher competence. Further prospects for researching the professional image of foreign language teachers in Ukraine can cover the development of integration of the latest educational technologies into the educational process and explore how this affects the image of the teacher and its effectiveness in interaction with students.

## Data availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article

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**INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Nataliia Prus:** is an Associate Professor and PhD holder in the Department of Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication at Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics. Her research interests are centered on foreign languages and intercultural communication.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8278-7939>

E-mail: [nprus035@gmail.com](mailto:nprus035@gmail.com)

**Tetiana Bocharnykova:** an Associate Professor and PhD, works in the Department of Romano-Germanic Philology at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. She specializes in Romance and Germanic languages within the field of philology.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3526-9400>

E-mail: [t.bocharnykova@outlook.com](mailto:t.bocharnykova@outlook.com)

**Anna Kotova:** is an PhD, Associate Professor and the Deputy Dean at the Department of English Philology and Foreign Language Teaching Methods at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Her academic focus lies in English philology and foreign language teaching methodologies.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6104-2824>

E-mail: [a\\_kotova12@hotmail.com](mailto:a_kotova12@hotmail.com)

**Snizhana Lembik:** an Associate Professor and PhD, is part of the Department of General Linguistics and Romano-Germanic Philology at H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University. Her research explores general linguistics and the study of Romance and Germanic languages.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3441-7432>

E-mail: [s\\_lembik@outlook.com](mailto:s_lembik@outlook.com)

**Iryna Kholmohortseva:** is the PhD, and Head of the Department of Romano-Germanic Philology and holds a PhD at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Her research focuses on Romano-Germanic languages and philology.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2935-5190>

E-mail: [kholmohortsevairyna@hotmail.com](mailto:kholmohortsevairyna@hotmail.com)

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ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9841-7378>

E-mail: [teleoliv@gmail.com](mailto:teleoliv@gmail.com)

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Adriana Curti Cantadori de Camargo