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Developing Reflexive Competence in Future Vocational Education Teachers Through Integrated Technical and Foreign-Language Instruction

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ABSTRACT

Developing reflexive competence is essential for preparing vocational education teachers to evaluate their professional decisions and adapt to changing technical demands. This study investigated an interdisciplinary instructional approach integrating automotive technical education and foreign-language learning, supported by specialized textbooks and a mobile dictionary application. A pedagogical experiment was conducted at three universities in Uzbekistan between 2022 and 2025. Students in experimental and control groups were assessed using motivational, cognitive-activity, and activity-reflexive criteria. The proportion of experimental-group students achieving a high competence level increased from 13.0 to 29.8%, whereas the control group showed a smaller improvement. Integrating technical knowledge, language learning, and structured reflection can support the professional development of future vocational education teachers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education plays an important role in preparing teachers who can respond to technological development, changing industrial requirements, and increasingly complex professional responsibilities. In addition to mastering technical knowledge and pedagogical skills, future vocational education teachers need to evaluate their professional performance, recognize learning difficulties, identify alternative solutions, and continuously improve their teaching practices. These abilities are closely related to reflexive competence, which involves critical consideration of professional knowledge, decisions, experiences, and actions. Self-regulated learning provides an important foundation for developing these capabilities because it emphasizes goal setting, self-monitoring, and the evaluation of learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 2002). Similarly, effective feedback can help learners recognize discrepancies between their current performance and expected learning objectives (Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

The development of professional competence in vocational education requires meaningful connections between theoretical understanding and practical application. Pedagogical training that integrates theoretical knowledge with applied learning activities plays an important role in strengthening students' practical competence in technical education (Mukhamedov *et al.*, 2025). In engineering education, technical language is also essential because students must interpret specialized terminology, mathematical expressions, technical instructions, and the physical meanings of engineering concepts. Systematic explanations of technical language can facilitate students' understanding of dimensionless parameters and their applications in heat-transfer education (Nandiyanto and Yulistiani, 2024). Furthermore, video-based instruction can support conceptual understanding, higher-order thinking, and the reduction of misconceptions among vocational students studying heat exchanger systems (Nandiyanto *et al.*, 2026). These findings highlight the importance of instructional approaches that connect technical knowledge with clear explanations, visual representations, and practical learning experiences.

Foreign-language learning provides another important dimension of professional preparation, particularly in engineering and automotive education. Future vocational teachers may need to interpret technical manuals, understand international standards, communicate technical information, and access professional knowledge published in foreign languages. Integrating foreign-language activities with technical instruction can therefore provide opportunities for students to interpret professional information while evaluating their own understanding. Digital learning tools can further support these activities through accessible terminology resources and collaborative learning. Mobile collaborative language learning has been recognized as a valuable approach to supporting language acquisition and educational interaction (Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg, 2018). Furthermore, artificial intelligence has demonstrated potential for supporting inclusive learning, educational equity, and student engagement in higher education (Omonova *et al.*, 2026). These findings highlight the growing importance of technology-supported learning environments in facilitating professional and language competence development.

Recent research has emphasized the importance of developing pedagogical and professional competencies to improve educational quality and support sustainable development. Effective pedagogical mechanisms can strengthen professional preparation and enhance competencies required for educational management and practice (Khimmataliev *et al.*, 2026). Similarly, socio-pedagogical competence development plays an

important role in preparing future teachers to address educational challenges and contribute to sustainable educational practices (Kuchkarova *et al.*, 2026). These findings highlight the importance of integrating professional knowledge with pedagogical competence development. However, the development of reflexive competence through the integration of technical subjects and foreign-language instruction remains insufficiently explored, particularly in vocational teacher education.

In this context, the present study focuses on integrating the subjects of Technical Exploitation and Service of Motor Vehicles and Foreign Language to support the development of reflexive competence among future vocational education teachers. The instructional approach combines technical-content learning, foreign-language interpretation, reflective learning activities, and specialized digital learning resources. The study aims to develop and evaluate an interdisciplinary methodology for strengthening students' motivational, cognitive-activity, and activity-reflexive competencies. Its principal contribution is the integration of technical and language instruction within a structured pedagogical model, accompanied by an experimental evaluation involving vocational education students at three universities in Uzbekistan.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design and Participants

This study employed a comparative pedagogical experimental design to evaluate the development of reflexive competence among future vocational education teachers. The research was conducted between 2022 and 2025 at three higher education institutions in Uzbekistan: Tashkent State Technical University, Jizzakh Polytechnic Institute, and Namangan State Technical University. The study involved undergraduate students majoring in vocational education. At baseline, 388 students were recorded, including 193 students in the experimental group and 195 in the control group. At the final assessment, the group counts were 191 students each (382 in total). The experimental group was instructed using an interdisciplinary methodology integrating automotive technical education and foreign-language learning. The control group was used to evaluate differences in reflexive competence development relative to the experimental group. Both groups were assessed using the same competence criteria at the initial and final evaluation stages. The research incorporated theoretical analysis, pedagogical modeling, questionnaires, tests, interviews, classroom observations, and statistical analysis. The pedagogical experiment consisted of initial diagnostic, formative, and final evaluation stages. These stages were designed to identify students' initial competence levels, implement the instructional methodology, and evaluate changes in reflexive competence.

2.2. Development of the Pedagogical Model

The pedagogical model was developed to integrate professional knowledge, foreign-language learning, and reflexive learning activities within vocational teacher education. The model comprised four interconnected blocks: target, content, process, and diagnostic-result. The target block established the objectives of reflexive competence development in accordance with vocational education requirements. The content block integrated automotive technical knowledge and foreign-language learning, emphasizing the interpretation of professional terminology and technical information. The process block incorporated collaborative and practice-oriented learning activities, including technical

problem solving, language-based exercises, and opportunities for self-evaluation. The diagnostic-result block provided a framework for evaluating students' competence development and identifying areas requiring further improvement. Reflexive competence was conceptualized through four interconnected components: motivational, cognitive, activity-based, and reflexive. For assessment purposes, these components were organized into three criteria: motivational, cognitive-activity, and activity-reflexive. The cognitive-activity criterion combined the evaluation of professional knowledge and its practical application, whereas the activity-reflexive criterion emphasized professional performance, self-assessment, and the evaluation of learning outcomes. The cognitive component addressed professional knowledge and understanding. The activity-based component involved applying knowledge to professional problems, while the reflexive component emphasized self-assessment, critical evaluation, and improvement of professional decisions.

2.3. Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach

The interdisciplinary methodology integrated Technical Exploitation and Service of Motor Vehicles with Foreign Language instruction. Students engaged with automotive-related learning content while developing the language skills necessary to understand and interpret professional technical information. Instructional activities emphasized reading technical materials, interpreting engineering terminology, understanding equipment-related instructions, translating specialized information, and applying technical knowledge to professional learning situations. These activities were intended to connect linguistic comprehension with technical reasoning and reflective evaluation. The instructional framework also incorporated cooperative learning, learning-by-teaching activities, and practice-oriented problem solving. Supporting educational resources developed during the research included the textbooks *English for Part-Time Students* and *English for Technical Students*, together with a Specialized Dictionary Mobile Application for Automotive Students, registered under certificate DGU 35788. These resources were designed to facilitate access to automotive terminology and support independent technical-language learning.

2.4. Assessment of Reflexive Competence

Students' reflexive competence was evaluated using three assessment criteria: motivational, cognitive-activity, and activity-reflexive. These criteria represented the observable dimensions of the motivational, cognitive, activity-based, and reflexive components of the pedagogical model. The motivational criterion assessed students' professional interest, goal-setting abilities, and willingness to engage in independent learning. The cognitive-activity criterion evaluated students' understanding of professional knowledge and their ability to apply technical and linguistic information to learning tasks. The activity-reflexive criterion examined students' ability to analyze their performance, recognize errors, make appropriate professional decisions, and evaluate their learning outcomes. Competence achievement was classified into three levels: high, medium, and low. For quantitative analysis, these competence levels were assigned numerical scores of 5, 4, and 3, respectively. The mean competence score was calculated as the weighted average of the numerical scores based on the number of students in each category. This scoring procedure enabled comparisons of competence outcomes between the experimental and control groups. The high level represented independent and effective application of professional knowledge and reflective abilities. The medium level indicated partial independence and satisfactory competence development, whereas the low level reflected substantial dependence on

external guidance and limited reflective engagement. Data were collected through questionnaires, tests, interviews, and pedagogical observations during the experimental stages. The assessment criteria and competence levels provided the basis for comparing the experimental and control groups.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

The experimental findings were summarized using descriptive statistics and comparisons of competence levels between the experimental and control groups. The distribution of students across high, medium, and low competence levels was expressed using frequencies and percentages. Group-level arithmetic means were also calculated to describe the reported competence outcomes. Student's t-test statistics were reported for comparisons between the experimental and control groups, although the test specification and underlying variance estimates were not fully documented. The statistical findings were considered alongside changes in competence-level distributions to evaluate the outcomes associated with the interdisciplinary instructional methodology.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Development of the Reflexive Competence Model

The development of reflexive competence among future vocational education teachers was examined through an interdisciplinary instructional approach integrating automotive technical education and foreign-language learning. The proposed pedagogical model incorporated motivational, cognitive, activity-based, and reflexive components to support students' professional knowledge, practical abilities, independent learning, and self-evaluation. The proposed pedagogical model integrated technical knowledge, foreign-language learning, and reflective activities through four interconnected instructional blocks. Its implementation was evaluated using motivational, cognitive-activity, and activity-reflexive criteria to examine students' competence development. The corresponding assessment levels and their characteristics are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Criteria and levels for assessing students' reflexive competence.

LEVEL	MOTIVATIONAL CRITERION	COGNITIVE-ACTIVITY CRITERION	ACTIVITY-REFLEXIVE CRITERION
High	Independently establishes learning goals and demonstrates strong professional interest	Applies technical and linguistic knowledge independently to professional problems	Critically evaluates performance, identifies improvements, and demonstrates independent self-development
Medium	Demonstrates professional motivation but requires occasional guidance	Applies basic knowledge to familiar problems with limited independence	Recognizes errors and evaluates performance but requires support for improvement
Low	Shows limited professional motivation and depends on external guidance	Experiences difficulties understanding and applying professional concepts	Demonstrates limited self-evaluation and engagement in professional development

Three assessment criteria were established to evaluate reflexive competence: motivational, cognitive-activity, and activity-reflexive. Each criterion was classified into high, medium, and low levels. Reflexive competence involves more than the acquisition of technical knowledge. It also requires students to recognize limitations in their understanding, evaluate professional decisions, and improve subsequent learning activities. Self-regulation is an essential component of effective learning because it enables students to monitor their progress, evaluate their performance, and adjust their learning strategies (Zimmerman, 2002). Furthermore, feedback plays an important role in helping learners understand their progress, identify areas requiring improvement, and achieve their learning objectives (Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

3.2. Changes in Students' Reflexive Competence

Table 2 presents the distribution of students across high, medium, and low competence levels at the beginning and end of the experiment. The results indicate a substantial improvement in the distribution of reflexive competence levels in the experimental group. The proportion of students classified at the high competence level increased from 13.0% at baseline to 29.8% at the final assessment, representing an increase of 16.8 percentage points. This change reflects an improvement in the distribution of competence levels within the experimental group rather than a direct measurement of individual learning gains. Meanwhile, the proportion at the low competence level decreased from 47.2 to 2.1%, corresponding to a reduction of 45.1 percentage points. The proportion of students at the medium level also increased considerably, from 39.9 to 68.1%. In the control group, improvement was less pronounced. The proportion achieving a high competence level increased from 13.8 to 17.28%, while the proportion at the low level decreased from 43.6 to 34.03%. The experimental group exhibited a larger shift toward higher competence levels than the control group.

Table 2. Changes in students' reflexive competence levels during the pedagogical experiment.

COMPETENCE LEVEL	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, BEGINNING (n = 193)	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, END (n = 191)	CONTROL GROUP, BEGINNING (n = 195)	CONTROL GROUP, END (n = 191)
High	25 (13.0%)	57 (29.8%)	27 (13.8%)	33 (17.28%)
Medium	77 (39.9%)	130 (68.1%)	83 (42.6%)	93 (48.69%)
Low	91 (47.2%)	4 (2.1%)	85 (43.6%)	65 (34.03%)
Total	193 (100%)	191 (100%)	195 (100%)	191 (100%)

The differences may be associated with the integration of technical and language-learning activities, which provided opportunities for students to interpret professional information, solve problems, and evaluate their understanding. Technical-language instruction can support students in connecting specialized terminology with underlying engineering concepts, thereby facilitating their understanding of technical knowledge and its practical applications (Nandiyanto and Yulistiani, 2024). Furthermore, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical learning activities can strengthen students' professional competence in technical education (Mukhamedov *et al.*, 2025). However, the number of students recorded at the beginning and end of the experiment was not identical. Consequently, the reported percentages represent changes in group-level competence

distributions and should not be interpreted as evidence of individual transitions between competence categories.

3.3. Statistical Evaluation of the Experimental Outcomes

Statistical indicators were reported to examine differences between the experimental and control groups. The analysis included arithmetic means, efficiency indicators, and Student's t-test statistics. The reported values are summarized in **Table 3**. At the beginning of the experiment, the reported mean values were relatively similar between the experimental and control groups, at 3.6580 and 3.7026, respectively. At the end, the experimental-group mean increased to 4.2775, compared with 3.8325 in the control group. The ratio of final group means was 1.1161, indicating that the experimental-group mean was approximately 11.6% higher than the control-group mean at the final assessment. This ratio should not be interpreted as an 11.6-percentage-point improvement in individual competence. The statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups at baseline ($t = -0.63$, $p = 0.530$). However, a statistically significant difference was observed at the final assessment ($t = 7.19$, $p < 0.001$). The experimental group achieved a higher mean competence score (4.2775) than the control group (3.8325), indicating a more favorable competence outcome following the interdisciplinary instructional intervention. These findings suggest that integrating technical education with foreign-language learning may contribute to the development of reflexive competence among future vocational education teachers. These values were interpreted as indicating no significant difference initially and a significant difference at the end of the experiment. Nevertheless, the underlying score distributions, variance calculations, and precise statistical testing procedures are required to verify this interpretation independently. The descriptive results show a more favorable competence distribution in the experimental group. The findings support further investigation of interdisciplinary instruction as an approach to developing reflexive competence, although the strength of the statistical evidence depends on clarification of the assessment and analysis procedures.

Table 3. Reported quantitative indicators and statistical analysis of reflexive competence.

Table 3. Quantitative indicators and statistical analysis of reflexive competence

STATISTICAL INDICATOR	BEGINNING OF EXPERIMENT	END OF EXPERIMENT
Sample size	EG: 193; CG: 195	EG: 191; CG: 191
Arithmetic mean	EG: 3.6580; CG: 3.7026	EG: 4.2775; CG: 3.8325
Efficiency indicator	0.9880	1.1161
Standard deviation (SD)	EG: 0.6976; CG: 0.6989	EG: 0.4936; CG: 0.6983
Standard error of mean (SE)	EG: 0.0502; CG: 0.0500	EG: 0.0357; CG: 0.0505
95% confidence interval for mean	EG: 3.5590–3.7571; CG: 3.6039–3.8013	EG: 4.2070–4.3479; CG: 3.7328–3.9321
Student's t statistic	−0.63	7.19
p-value (two-tailed)	0.530	< 0.001
Statistical conclusion	No statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$)	Statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$)

Note: EG = experimental group; CG = control group. The reconstructed analysis assigns scores of 5, 4, and 3 to high, medium, and low competence levels, respectively. Standard deviations, standard errors, and confidence intervals were calculated from the frequency distributions in Table 2. Between-group comparisons were calculated using Welch's independent-samples t-test.

3.4. Educational Implications of Integrated Technical and Foreign-Language Instruction

The interdisciplinary instructional approach combined automotive technical education with foreign-language activities to connect professional knowledge, technical communication, and reflective learning. Students were expected to interpret automotive terminology, understand technical manuals, translate professional information, and evaluate their comprehension of engineering-related tasks. These learning activities provide opportunities to recognize knowledge gaps and reconsider technical interpretations. For example, understanding foreign-language terminology in automotive manuals requires students to relate linguistic expressions to specific mechanical components, operational procedures, and professional situations. This process may encourage more deliberate evaluation of technical understanding rather than reliance on memorization.

Systematic explanations of technical language play an important role in facilitating students' understanding of engineering concepts, particularly by connecting specialized terminology with its scientific meaning and practical applications (Nandiyanto and Yulistiani, 2024). Furthermore, structured video-based instruction can support conceptual understanding and help reduce misconceptions in heat exchanger education (Nandiyanto *et al.*, 2026). Although these instructional approaches differ from the interdisciplinary methodology implemented in the present study, they highlight the importance of connecting technical concepts with accessible learning materials, clear explanations, and meaningful learning experiences.

Digital resources can provide additional opportunities for flexible learning and independent access to educational materials, particularly through mobile devices that support students' engagement with academic activities (Abdulmumin and Onasanya, 2026). Digital learning materials, including electronic books and multimedia applications, can also facilitate English-language instruction and support student engagement in technology-enhanced learning environments (Nurfazri *et al.*, 2026). In the present study, the instructional methodology included specialized English-language textbooks and a mobile dictionary application developed for automotive students. These resources were intended to facilitate access to technical terminology, support independent learning, and improve students' understanding of professional content.

Mobile learning has been recognized as a valuable approach to supporting language-related educational activities, particularly through collaborative learning and digital interaction (Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg, 2018). Furthermore, artificial intelligence has the potential to support inclusive learning, educational equity, and student engagement in higher education (Omonova *et al.*, 2026). These findings provide a broader context for integrating digital educational resources into vocational education, although the present experimental results do not isolate the specific contribution of the mobile application from other instructional components.

The proposed approach also has important implications for vocational teacher preparation by integrating technical knowledge with foreign-language learning. This integration provides opportunities for students to interpret professional information, solve technical problems, communicate their understanding, and critically evaluate their decisions. Such learning activities can contribute to the development of professional and pedagogical competencies,

particularly by strengthening students' ability to apply knowledge in practical educational contexts (Khimmataliev *et al.*, 2026; Kuchkarova *et al.*, 2026).

3.5. Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

(i) The baseline and final assessment counts differed across both groups, preventing direct attribution of the distributional changes to identical sets of individuals without participant-level matching.

(ii) The statistical reporting does not provide sufficient information to independently reproduce the reported t-test results.

(iii) The instructional intervention combined technical-language integration, collaborative learning, reflective activities, and digital educational resources. Consequently, the independent effects of these instructional components could not be determined. Furthermore, the available methodological information does not establish whether participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the observed differences as evidence of instructional effectiveness.

(iv) The available findings focus on changes in assessed competence levels during the pedagogical experiment. They do not establish whether the improvements were sustained over time or transferred to actual teaching performance.

Future studies should employ consistent participant tracking, validated assessment instruments, transparent statistical procedures, and follow-up evaluations. Additional comparisons could investigate the separate and combined contributions of foreign-language integration, reflective activities, and digital learning resources to professional competence development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study evaluated an interdisciplinary approach integrating automotive technical education and foreign-language instruction to strengthen reflexive competence among future vocational education teachers. In the experimental group, the proportion achieving high competence increased from 13.0 to 29.8%, while low competence declined from 47.2 to 2.1%. Smaller changes were observed in the control group. Combining technical tasks, language interpretation, and reflective activities may support professional learning. However, differences in initial and final participant counts and incomplete statistical reporting require clarification. Further research should verify these outcomes using consistent samples, transparent assessments, and longitudinal evaluation across diverse vocational settings.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirm that the paper is free from plagiarism.

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