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## Do web-quest technologies enhance socio-cultural competence in a language learning environment?

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### Abstract

This study examines the didactic potential of digital technologies in fostering socio-cultural competence among students at language universities. The research focuses on the development and application of web-quest projects as an interactive learning tool that enhances linguistic and multicultural education through digital means. The increasing demand for foreign language proficiency, including socio-cultural competence, and the lack of effective computer-based teaching methods justify the relevance of this study. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, incorporating a systematic literature review, observational analysis, and survey-based data collection. Additionally, experimental testing of developed web-quest projects was conducted to assess their effectiveness in improving students' socio-cultural competence. The research investigated how digital and telecommunication technologies contribute to computer-mediated intercultural communication, beyond merely serving as a medium for acquiring new knowledge. The results confirmed that web-quest technologies significantly enhance students' socio-cultural competence by deepening their understanding of cultural realities, traditions, habits, and behavioral patterns of native speakers of the target language. The study also demonstrated that web-quests promote interactive cognitive creativity, enabling students to integrate and process information more effectively. As a result, a digital socio-cultural learning support framework was developed, leveraging modern computer technologies for foreign language education. The integration of web-quests in foreign language education fosters active engagement, knowledge integration, and cognitive creativity. The study highlights the importance of structured digital resources in improving socio-cultural awareness and facilitating immersive language learning experiences. This research provides language educators with a practical digital methodology for implementing web-quest-based learning. The findings suggest that incorporating digital tools into language curricula can enhance students' socio-cultural competence and better prepare them for real-world intercultural interactions. Further research is encouraged to explore the long-term impact of web-quest technologies and their scalability in diverse language-learning environments.

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## 1. Introduction

The relevance of the problem of developing socio-cultural competence in teaching foreign languages is obvious. Full command of a foreign language is possible only with adequate development of the student's socio-cultural competence, which provides for effective intercultural communication and dialogue between cultures [1]. However, the methodology for its development is not sufficiently advanced.

Of course, the best means of forming a foreign-language socio-cultural competence in a student is to stay in the country of the language being studied [2]. However, based on the actual learning conditions, the most effective means of developing the socio-cultural competence of students studying a foreign language outside the language environment is immersion in a virtual space that models the necessary socio-cultural characteristics of society. Such a virtual space is an authentic, interactive virtual language environment—the Internet—along with other modern computer technologies.

The development of new concepts regarding the use of information and communication technologies in the enhancement of socio-cultural competence is an important task within the methodology of teaching foreign languages.

Nevertheless, the methodology of using computer technologies in the development of socio-cultural competence of students is still very poorly developed, while the global Internet is not only an extensive knowledge bank about the culture of a particular people but can also compensate for the lack of communication and interaction with real native speakers outside the language environment, thanks to a variety of telecommunication systems operating both in on-line and off-line modes. The Internet and methodically competent training programs provide enough contextual information when modeling communication situations due to the presence of a real need for communication, and multimedia tools create additional video and audio conditions that help the student better enter the role offered to him [3]. Trainees have the opportunity to get more detailed information and even change the result of interaction using multimedia tools, which are currently, in combination with hypertext technologies, called the term "hypermedia". Hypermedia tools used on the Internet and some training programs should contribute to the successful formation of the components of the socio-cultural competence of the trainees.

The intercultural aspects of foreign language teaching are being explored at a qualitatively new level due to the widespread use of information and communication technologies [4]. The most relevant aspect in the context of training linguist students—future specialists in intercultural communication—is the inclusion of innovative methods based on these technologies in traditional courses.

Thus, the relevance of this study is due to:

- a) Increased interest in finding effective ways to teach foreign language socio-cultural competence outside the linguistic and cultural environment.
- b) The scientific and methodological development of the theoretical foundations for the use of modern information technologies in teaching foreign languages and cultures is insufficient.
- c) The lack of adequate teaching tools based on computer and telecommunication technologies contributes to the successful formation of the socio-cultural competence of students.
- d) Increasing requirements for the level of proficiency in foreign languages, including socio-cultural competence, by linguists.

The hypothesis of the study is formulated as follows: the development of socio-cultural competence of students at a language university is possible and advisable to be carried out with the help of Internet technologies and, in particular, web quest technologies that provide support in the learning process.

- Virtual sociocultural environment of the country of the studied language.
- Authenticity of the materials used, presented on the web.
- Motivation for students' independent cognitive activity.
- The development of the information culture of students is a necessary component of the general cultural competence of a modern individual.

Currently, more and more attention is being paid to didactics to the socio-cultural orientation of teaching [5, 6]. However, within this general trend, a wide variety of views and opinions can be seen both on the methods of developing the socio-cultural competence of trainees and on the very concept of 'socio-cultural competence' and its structure. Nevertheless, many authors agree that socio-cultural competence is one of the components of communicative competence, the first studies of the essence and structure of which appeared in the works of scientists [7, 8].

An important contribution to the development of the theory of competence was made by T. Leung, who for the first time included culture in the concept of competence. It is in his work, Leung [9], that the relationship between communication and culture is clearly traced.

Today, communicative competence is understood as the ability of a student to adequately communicate in specific communicative situations and his ability to organize speech communication taking into account socio-cultural norms of behavior and communicative expediency of utterance [10]. According to many methodologists, the formation of communicative competence is considered the goal of teaching a foreign language [11-13].

Based on the given classifications of the components of socio-cultural competence by various authors, we identify the following main components, in our opinion, taking as a basis the model of socio-cultural competence of Bataineh [14].

- Linguistic and cultural components (lexical units with national cultural semantics and the ability to apply them in situations of intercultural communication).
- Sociolinguistic component (linguistic features of social strata, representatives of different generations, genders, social groups, dialects).
- Socio-psychological component (possession of socio-culturally conditioned scenarios, national-specific models of behavior using communicative techniques adopted in this culture).
- Cultural component (socio-cultural, historical, cultural, ethno-cultural background).

In connection with the listed features of teaching a foreign language and the difficulties they cause in mastering the culture of the country of the language being studied, the question arises: "How should the socio-cultural competence of students and its individual components be developed?"

Kotubei [15] deduced in his model of the formation of socio-cultural competence the dimensions, tasks, and expected results of this process, subject to a number of necessary conditions: - stimulating interest in another culture and its people; - encouraging respect for foreign cultures and their bearers; - focusing on the comparison of native and foreign cultures.

When forming socio-cultural competence, Kobusingye [16] recommends the use of newspapers, since often examples of cultural differences can be found in newspaper headlines and advertising. A special role is given to TV shows, since in them you can see the language in action.

In our opinion, one of the most effective means of developing socio-cultural competence, combining the advantages of most of the above tools offered by various authors with the correct organization of their application, is computer technologies and, in particular, the worldwide computer network, the Internet.

Today, foreign language teachers face new challenges and new opportunities. Communication is no longer limited to the subject, place, or time. Since telecommunications and information technologies continue to play an increasing role in the daily and professional life of any modern specialist, there is a need to develop new concepts and resources for the use of information and communication technologies in the development of foreign language socio-cultural competence [17-19].

The analysis of works in the field of the application of computer technologies in teaching foreign languages allows us to identify the following roles of the computer in the educational process:

- A teacher (in the narrow sense of the word, since we by no means adhere to the opinion that a computer can completely replace a teacher in a foreign language lesson); multimedia foreign language courses available on CD-ROM and specially designed foreign language lesson sites aimed at the development and training of certain knowledge and skills of trainees.
- This implies the use of test programs and shells for computer testing of knowledge and skills already acquired by trainees.
- Means of communication; as in the previous case, this role of the computer is provided through the Internet and its means, such as email, real-time communication programs working on the IRC protocol, web chats, Internet pagers, and web quests.

A web quest is currently understood in didactics as a web project in which some or all of the information that students work with is located on various websites [20].

The student is given the task of collecting materials on the Internet on a particular topic to solve any problem using these materials. Links to some of the sources are provided to students by the teacher, and they can find some themselves using conventional search engines. Upon completion of the quest, students either submit their own web pages on this topic or some other creative works in electronic, printed, or oral form. Web quests are built on the basis of modern information technologies and utilize the richness and boundlessness of the information space of the global computer network for educational purposes, in order to increase the motivation of students when studying a particular topic, introduce them to modern technologies, and maximize the use of the Internet in acquiring knowledge from authentic sources.

The word "quest" (from the English quest - quest; adventure) is very familiar, mainly to that part of modern youth who are fans of computer games. A quest is understood as a game in which a player must achieve a specific goal (complete a task or actually a "quest"), resorting to the help of their own knowledge and experience, as well as communicating with the participants of the quest. The term "WebQuest" was first proposed in the summer of 1995 by Bernie Dodge, a professor of educational technologies at the University of San Diego (USA). The author developed innovative Internet applications for integration into the educational process when teaching various academic subjects at different levels of study [21].

Thus, the project technology in the field of learning foreign languages and cultures is based on the creation of a personal educational product for students in an authentic situation of educational or socio-cultural activity and is aimed at it. Because of this, the project work places the student in a situation of real use of the language being studied, promotes awareness of the

goals and possibilities of learning a foreign language in their own activities, and includes the process of mastering foreign language culture in productive creative activity.

In our opinion, all of the above advantages of the project method, along with the development of socio-cultural competence in students, can be most effectively implemented through the application of web projects, particularly web quests.

### **3. Research Methods**

#### *3.1. Method of research and Data Collection*

In the course of writing this paper, the following research methods were used:

- Study and analysis of scientific literature on the topic of the dissertation.
- Observation of the processes of teaching foreign language culture to linguist students.
- Questionnaires, conversations with teachers and students of control and experimental groups.
- Experimental testing of developed web quest projects.

The stated theoretical and methodological provisions of this study on the formation of socio-cultural competence of students at a language university through the use of web quests were tested during our experiment at the Faculty of Philology of the International Kazakh-Turkish University named after Yassawi.

Before conducting the experiment, we formulated a working hypothesis and based on it, the main objectives of the experiment were determined.

During the experiment, the validity of the following working hypothesis was tested: the formation of socio-cultural competence of students of a language university is possible and advisable to be carried out with the help of Internet technologies and, in particular, web quest technologies.

#### *Analyzing of Data*

The diagnostics and assessment of the level of formation of foreign-language socio-cultural competence of students in the framework of the experiment were carried out using the method of "competent judges" and questionnaires for students in both control and experimental groups. The objects of control included knowledge of linguistically colored vocabulary, socio-cultural stereotypes, regional knowledge, information relevant to the topic of the project, knowledge of behavioral patterns and traditions of native-speaking people, the ability to find, isolate, and organize valuable socio-cultural information when processing a large volume of materials, as well as the motivation of students for socio-culturally oriented learning of a foreign language and the use of computer technologies in the study of foreign languages and cultures.

To conduct the experiment, we selected four groups of students from the Faculty of Philology (a total of 52 people). Of these, two groups of second and third-year students served as control groups (a total of 25 people), and two groups of second and third-year students served as experimental groups (a total of 27 people).

The experimental group of the second year, consisting of 12 people, was divided into two competing microgroups of six people each (4 girls and 2 boys in each group). The group of the third year, consisting of 15 people, was divided into three groups of five people (two groups consisted only of girls, while the third group had 3 girls and 2 boys).

### **4. Research Results**

#### *4.1. Content of Web Quest Projects and Methods of Working with Them*

Our web quest consisted of six main sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Task;
- 3) Description of the process of working on the quest and guidance on the organization of the information received (Process);
- 4) Resources — links to thematic sites selected by the teacher (Resources);
- 5) Scheme of evaluation of students' work results (Evaluation);
- 6) Conclusion.

The HTML format makes it possible to post such quests on the Internet, online, for example, on the university's website. Thus, in order to work with the quest, it was sufficient for students to insert a floppy disk into the drive of any computer connected to the Internet and open the file index.html, the shortcut for which was located in the root directory of the floppy disk.

In the introduction, students were offered a "legend" according to which they were employees of a large financial company, the director of which gathered with his family to visit an important British business partner on New Year's Eve and organized a competition for the best report, accompanied by an electronic presentation telling about the traditions and customs of celebrating New Year and Christmas in the UK to pleasantly surprise your partner's knowledge of the culture of his country.

The text of the introduction is provided below:

#### *4.2. Introduction*

Are you competent in the cultural aspects of the country whose language you are learning? Do you know all of its customs and traditions? Are you sure you won't be shocked or at least surprised by something you might encounter while visiting Britain? You are going to answer all these questions by checking yourself and completing the tasks of this Web Quest. See what you know about how the British celebrate New Year's Day and Christmas, learn something new about it, become an expert in this area, and tell others about it. It's going to be fun! So, you are an employee in a large financial

company. Yesterday, your boss called all of you and told you that in a few weeks he is going to visit one of his most important British partners with his wife and kids to spend some time in London on business and have a good rest. However, it will also be Christmas and New Year's Day during his stay there. Your boss wants to demonstrate good knowledge and competence in this area; he is convinced it will definitely impress the man that his foreign partners respect the culture of his country and is sure to be favorable for the business.

In the "task" section, each microgroup was given a strategic task over two weeks to learn as much as possible about the traditions of celebrating New Year and Christmas in Britain and to present their findings in a report and an electronic multimedia presentation created using Microsoft PowerPoint. The director of the company (the teacher) was responsible for identifying the winning group and awarding each of its participants a valuable prize.

#### 4.3. Task

So you and your strategy group have to find out how British people celebrate New Year's Day and Christmas, what the customs and traditions are, what special food is served, what songs are sung, and whether there are any special activities during that time—everything you can. You have two weeks to make a complete PowerPoint presentation on the topic. The task is given to several strategy groups, and a competition is declared. Every member of the group whose presentation is recognized as the best will receive a \$1,000 prize from the boss (in the case of students, the teacher will have to treat the winners to some great and joyful surprise).

This is followed by a step-by-step description of the microgroup operation process.

1) Each participant of the microgroup was assigned a role by the teacher in the implementation of the project from the following:

- a) Collect information about special British New Year and Christmas dishes.
- b) About songs, music, stories and jokes.
- c) About clothing and holiday costumes.
- d) About decorations (Christmas tree, street, home, and so on).

e) About holiday games, crafts and entertainment. Depending on the number of participants in each microgroup, these roles could be combined into broader ones or, conversely, divided into more specific ones. All the materials found by the students had to be supported by multimedia in the presentation (illustrations, photographs, sound) and, preferably, real samples prepared by the students themselves (dishes, costumes, crafts, and so on).

2) Use links from the Resources page to get materials on the project. The pages were intentionally not classified by content, which made it necessary for each member of the group, regardless of the role assigned to him, to view and process all the information related to the topic of the web quest, and not be limited only to his narrow task. In addition to the pages pre-selected by the teacher, students could use any information search engines (Altavista, Yahoo, Google, etc.) and other materials on the topic of the project available on the global network. Russian Russian students could also use electronic English-Russian and Russian-English online dictionaries (for example, [www.lingvo.ru](http://www.lingvo.ru)), as well as dictionaries, reference books and multimedia encyclopedias from the virtual media library operating in the local educational network of the university (Encyclopedia Britannica 2004, Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2004, ABBYY Lingvo, Polyglossum, Prompt XT, XTranslator Platinum, Multiplex).

3) After collecting their share of the materials by each participant of the microgroup, the students had to analyze them and combine them into one whole.

4) Then the microgroup had to prepare the text of an oral report on the New Year holidays in the UK.

5) The next step was to illustrate the report with a multimedia Power Point presentation and other visual or "tangible" means prepared during the work on the project.

6) And finally, the students had to present a report (each participant of the group had his part, according to the roles) and a presentation at the final lesson dedicated to summing up the project and identifying the winners, as part of the oral speech practice classes. The text of the manual is presented below.

Process First, you will be researching many aspects of the New Year and Christmas celebrations in British way, including the background of the holiday, its history, cooking matters, special clothes, crafts, if any, etc.

The steps to completing this project are as follows:

1. Your group will be divided into three competing strategy groups. The teacher will determine your role in the group. Each person will be responsible for researching a specific task for the British New Year study. One person is going to collect and record data about special food that is cooked and eaten on this holiday; recipes and samples are greatly welcomed. Another group member will research all British songs, music, and stories concerning New Year's Day and Christmas; lyrics and records are strongly desirable. The third group member will research the clothing customs. What do British people wear on New Year's holidays? Are there any special clothes? These are the questions to be answered and illustrated with photos or any other visual means. One more expert in your strategy group will find out everything he or she can about the New Year and Christmas decorations popular in Britain. And the last but not least things to be explored are activities, popular games, and crafts traditional for these holidays in Britain. (Depending on the number of group members, some tasks may be combined or divided by the teacher.)

2. Use resources collection presented in the quest in your research. The sites are not divided by topics, so each member of the group should look through all of them and choose which correspond to his/her task. You are also free and greatly welcome to use search engines ([www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com), [www.vahoo.com](http://www.vahoo.com), [www.soosle.com](http://www.soosle.com)) or any other possible sources, in case the resources given are insufficient for the completion of the task, to your mind, and the online English dictionary ([www.linsvo.ru](http://www.linsvo.ru)) or multimedia encyclopedias and translators from the university media library (<http://cd>).

3. Next, when all members of your team are ready with their parts, you should put all the materials found together in one project.

4. Create your summary of the British way of the holiday celebration based on the data you have got.

5. Present your final creation in the form of a Power Point presentation, reflecting general information and all the special topics mentioned above. Be sure to include all the multimedia components into the slides to make them as attractive as possible. Remember that the presentation should impress your boss.

6. Showing of the presentation should also be accompanied by eloquent oral speech, commenting on the slides. Prepare it with your group and let each expert speak on his part of the research.

In the Resources section, 4 links were presented, selected by the experimenter using Altavista search engines (www.altavista.com ) and Yahoo (www.yahoo.com ), to English-language sites dedicated to the New Year and Christmas in the UK.

#### Resources

1. <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/England-History/VictorianChristmas.htm> THE history and heritage accommodation guide to England, Scotland and Wales

2. <http://www.iohnshepler.com/articles/christmas.html> A Web of Christmas. Merry Christmas in 100 Languages Around the World

3. <http://www.christmas-2uide.com/traditions/around-the-world> Traditions - Around the world. Christmas-guide

4. <http://www.maturita.cz/amlicitina/festival.html> British and American festivals and traditions 5. <http://www.christmasarchiyes.com/gbx.html> The Christmas Archives

In the Evaluation section, a table was presented describing the criteria taken into account when evaluating the results of the project according to the "competent judges" method, and a three-point scale of assessments for each of these criteria (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

Your strategy group will be graded on this project using the following three-point rubric.

	<b>Developing 1</b>	<b>Proficient 2</b>	<b>Exemplary 3</b>	<b>Score</b>
Group Exhibits Cooperative Teamwork	Very little group effort	Moderate teamwork	Excellent collaboration	
Use of additional resources not presented in the task.	No	Little	Much	
Oral presentation	Grammar and pronunciation show that preparation is not enough; there are no valuable cultural facts.	Grammar and pronunciation reflect average performance, with few valuable cultural facts.	Grammar and pronunciation exhibit confidence in knowledge of all the material presented, along with many valuable cultural facts.	
PowerPoint presentation	The presentation lacks valuable cultural information and is poorly illustrated.	The presentation exhibits some cultural information and structure, and it includes some interesting visual elements.	The presentation demonstrates the group's well-organized thoughts and creativity, featuring rich multimedia content that reflects valuable cultural facts.	

In the "Conclusion" section, the student could get generalized information about the goals and objectives of the web quest.

## 5. Conclusion

For this project, you will be responsible for researching British customs and traditions of the New Year's Day celebration for your boss, who is going to visit his British partner at this time. The winner is supposed to be awarded. After completing this assignment, your group will have learned about a multitude of amazing things, details, and surprising facts, gained a closer look at British culture, customs, and traditions of people living in that old country, and had the opportunity to share their experience with mates all over the world by publishing the presentation compiled on the World Wide Web.

### 5.1. Good Luck in Your Research!

The preparation time for the reporting session on the web quest was distributed so that the first week was spent searching for and saving text and multimedia information on the topic of the quest by students on the Internet, and the second week was spent compiling a single project and creating a presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint.

From the perspective of the language difficulties that arose when working with the original English-language materials, there were no problems preventing the proper execution of the quest. It should also be noted that, despite the fact that all five

microgroups received exactly the same task, neither oral messages nor presentations were completely repeated in any of the groups. Most, on the contrary, were filled with complementary, not duplicative information, both textual and visual.

Thus, students from different microgroups could learn a lot about those cultural realities that were not discussed in their own research. This confirms the truly limitless wealth of the worldwide computer network in terms of information in general, and original linguistic and socio-cultural materials in particular. The winners of the competition were determined by competent judges who were represented by university teachers.

Estimates, in accordance with the Evaluation scheme presented in the Evaluation quest section, are reflected in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2.**

The results of the evaluation of the projects of the 2nd year students on a three-point scale.

	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year microgroup No. 1</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year microgroup No. 2</b>
Cooperation	3	3
Additional materials	3	3
Oral report	2,5	3
Multimedia presentation	3	2,5
Total	11,5	11,5

**Table 3.**

The results of the evaluation of the projects of the 3rd year students on a three-point scale.

	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year Microgroup No. 1</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year Microgroup No. 2</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year Microgroup No. 3</b>
Cooperation	2	2	3
Additional materials	2	2	2
Oral report	3	2	3
Multimedia presentation	2	2	3
Total	9	8	11

Thus, as can be seen from the tables, the following results were obtained: In the 2nd year, out of a maximum of 12 possible points, both microgroups scored 11.5 points. In the 3rd year, out of a maximum of 12 possible points, microgroup No. 1 scored 9 points, microgroup No. 2 scored 8 points, and microgroup No. 3 scored 11 points.

In addition to the points awarded to the groups based on the web quest evaluation system, some of the judges expressed their opinions and wishes about this type of work, which was used for the first time at the university. All the judges were unanimous in their opinion that the work on the technology of webquests is certainly effective and noted the high motivation of the students in the experimental groups.

For a comparative analysis of the oral presentations of students from the control and experimental groups on the topic of the project, it was necessary to determine the indicators of the level of socio-cultural competence within the framework of the topic assigned to students. Such indicators included components of the socio-cultural competence of students at a language university, which, in our opinion, were relevant to our experiment and could be identified and measured within the framework of the method for developing the socio-cultural competence under study. Thus, we have identified two groups of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the development of socio-cultural competence within the framework of the experiment.

1) The first group included components that could be identified in students' messages on a given topic. These included linguistically colored vocabulary, socio-cultural stereotypes, regional knowledge, information relevant to the topic of the project, knowledge about behavioral patterns and traditions of the native-speaking people, and cultural realities of the country of the language being studied.

2) The second group included the personal components of socio-cultural competence, namely: students' motivation for socio-culturally oriented study of a foreign language, interest in studying the culture of the country of the language being studied, as well as the degree of motivation for using computer technology in the study of foreign languages and cultures. Since we set ourselves the task of evaluating the effectiveness of the application of our proposed methodology for the development of students' socio-cultural competence in general, and not each of its components separately, we considered it appropriate to combine the components of socio-cultural competence placed by us in the first group under the conditional term "cultural units" and use these units to measure the socio-cultural content of students' messages on the theme of celebrating New Year and Christmas in the UK. Quantitative analysis of the presence of cultural units in the messages of control and experimental groups showed the following results, presented in the tables. (See Tables 4 and 5).

**Table 4.**

Results of the analysis of messages on the topic "New Year and Christmas in the UK" by second-year students.

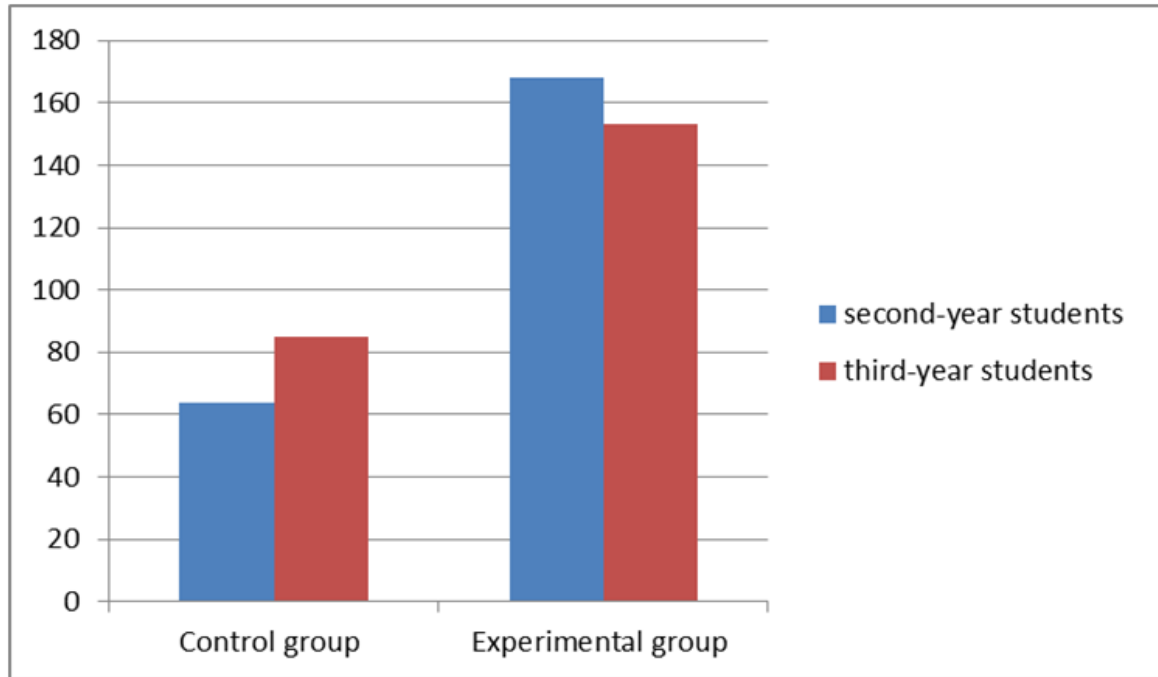
	<b>Control group</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>
Number of cultural units	64	168

**Table 5.**

Results of the analysis of messages on the topic "New Year and Christmas in the UK" by third-year students.

	<b>Control group</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>
Number of cultural units	85	153

For clarity, below is a comparative analysis of the results of the control and experimental groups of the second and third year in the form of a diagram (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.**

Comparison of the results of the analysis of the messages from students in the control and experimental groups of the second and third courses on the subject of the content of cultural units.

To measure the indicators of the second group, we conducted a survey of students after they presented the results of the tasks. The survey was conducted in both control and experimental groups. We have compiled two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was supposed to reveal the degree of motivation of students to study the culture of the countries of the studied language, and the second - the degree of motivation to use various means in teaching a foreign language and culture.

Summarizing the results of the questionnaire analysis revealed differences in motivation for socio-culturally oriented learning of a foreign language among students of control and experimental groups. It showed that the level of motivation of students in experimental groups for the socio-cultural study of foreign languages exceeds the same indicator in control groups by almost 1.5 times. Additionally, motivation for the use of computer technology in the study of foreign languages and cultures is quite high in both control and experimental groups; however, in the experimental groups, it was almost 1.3 times higher.

A conversation with the students of the experimental groups themselves showed that the project participants really worked on it with great enthusiasm and high motivation. Many of the students expressed their wishes to the teachers to engage in such activities more often. Almost all students in these groups realized the need to save and accumulate the results of such web projects in the portfolios of future teachers, who will begin their careers with the materials of the quest they completed for the first time. The third-year students also expressed their intention to use their presentations in school lessons, which they will have to teach during the upcoming pedagogical practice [22].

From the above, we can conclude about the positive results of the web quest, namely about the richness of the Internet with cultural and linguistic information, which makes it one of the effective means of developing socio-cultural competence, as well as about the high motivational factor of web quest technology in particular and the Internet in general [23].

The effectiveness of the use of web quests in the development of socio-cultural competence of students of a language university was determined by a comparative analysis of the results of the work of experimental groups and control groups, who also received the task to tell about the traditions and customs of celebrating New Year and Christmas, but based on the knowledge that they have accumulated on this topic during English language training at school and in university [24]. It should be noted here that in all the courses that the students of the control and experimental groups took, from the first to the third, the students received some knowledge about the holidays of the country of the language being studied.

In our opinion, the overall high level of motivation among students to use computer technology is explained by the high interest of modern youth in computer technology in general and the World Wide Web in particular. The higher rates in experimental groups are due to the experience of students in these groups in applying these technologies in practice, particularly in the creative process of completing a web quest. This occurs, on one hand, in an atmosphere of cooperation and



a sense of responsibility for the success of a common cause, and on the other hand, in the spirit of competition, with the desire to outperform their opponents and a high motivation to succeed with real, visual, and tangible results of their own labor. In addition, the Internet is currently the source of the most up-to-date information, delivered promptly to consumers on any topic from any area of human knowledge and interests.

## 6. Conclusion

Currently, in conditions of increased relevance of adequate development of socio-cultural competence among students, the search for ways and means of teaching foreign language culture is increasingly being conducted. Noting that the most effective means of teaching foreign-language socio-cultural competence is the student's stay in the country of the language being studied, it should be accepted that the teaching of foreign languages and cultures in the conditions of modern reality is mainly conducted outside the language environment in an indirect manner. Students communicate in the classroom with teachers and peers who are not native speakers of the language and culture being studied. In our opinion, the modern level of computer and telecommunication technologies opens up new opportunities for the development of adequate means of teaching foreign language culture in organized teaching of foreign languages outside the language environment. The undertaken research is devoted to the actual problem of using a global computer network in teaching the socio-cultural competence of students at a linguistic university. The study revealed that the main activities for the development of socio-cultural competence using the Internet in classroom and extracurricular work are the following:

- Working with websites specially designed for teaching foreign languages.
- Using the Internet as a source of authentic resources on foreign language culture.
- Implementation of telecommunication projects together with foreign partners.
- The use of the Internet for the development and implementation of web quest projects aimed at the study of foreign language culture.

It seems promising, based on the already existing scientific prerequisites, to introduce web quest projects into the programs of language departments as a socio-cultural accompaniment to the topics of oral and written speech studied. The development of linguistic and cultural web quests by senior students as part of the linguodidactics course is encouraged, along with the creation of a constantly replenishing bank of web quests in the unified information educational network of the university and on its website. This research has been funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant AP19678230).

## 7. Suggestions

The practical implementation of this research contributes to the development of a new field of education in the Republic of Kazakhstan and around the world. We recommend using the results of the study in universities, schools, and institutes of advanced training. We have no doubt that the results of the research will impact the development of science and technology both domestically and internationally, as well as address socio-economic needs.

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