

TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES: PECULIARITIES  
OF LEGAL TERMS USED IN TEACHING  
THE LANGUAGE OF A SPECIALITY  
FOR INTERNATIONAL SPECIALISTS

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim.** One of the most important tasks which precedes the setting of goals for teaching a foreign language of a speciality and the selection of methods for achieving them is to identify the competencies that a qualified specialist must master. Therefore, the authors of this article see the need to set the following research tasks: the identification of professional competencies in the professional discourse of international affairs; the allocation of competencies among those that require the knowledge of a foreign language; and determination of the language material necessary for studying the speciality in the language lessons for international affairs.

**Methods.** The empirical methods of our research comprise studying and analysis of the works of Russian and foreign scientists and teachers working in the related fields; and interviewing specialists in the international sphere who have graduated from the faculties and institutes of international relations, international law, world politics and economics in the form of an anonymous questionnaire. Theoretical methods include analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalisation, deduction, and induction.

**Results.** A study based on the analysis of a survey completed by international specialists showed that a large number of professionals in the field of international relations, international law, politics, and economics use legal terminology in their work more often than others. Among the professional skills that are required in their work, the respondents named negotiation, business dialogue, and correspondence.

**Conclusion.** A recent study has shown that disciplines such as international law must be included in the language training programme for international specialists as diplomats and lawyers.

**Key words:** professional foreign language, international specialists, legal terms, communicative competencies

## INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons that complicate communication between university graduates and foreign colleagues is the insufficient formation of foreign language competencies in the field of future professional activities. Proficiency in the language of a speciality is one of the conditions for a successful activity in a particular area. Many graduate specialists of higher educational institutions, becoming excellent specialists in their field, experience difficulties in professional contacts with their foreign partners. In this study, professional discourse is understood as verbal and non-verbal communication aimed at solving professional problems, as well as the entire set of theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for professional activity. Based on this interpretation of professional discourse, teaching the language of a speciality is inextricably linked not only with its linguistic aspect but also with a purely professional one, which must be taken into account when choosing methods of teaching the foreign language of a speciality. The choice of a necessary language material and a particular method of teaching the foreign language of a speciality depends primarily on the specifics of the future specialisation, and, accordingly, the competencies developed. It implies interdisciplinary cooperation with specialised teachers. Thanks to their participation in the process of students' special

language training, it will be possible to increase not only the number of professionally oriented methods but also the effectiveness of their application in the classroom. One of the most important tasks preceding the setting of goals for teaching the foreign language of a speciality and the selection of methods for achieving them is to identify the competencies that a qualified specialist must master, and therefore, the authors of this article see the need to set the following research tasks:

1. Identification of professional competencies in the professional discourse of international affairs and the allocation of competencies those that require knowledge of a foreign language.
2. Determination of the language material necessary for studying on the language lessons of speciality for future international specialists.

Since international relations are regulated by interstate documents, acts, and agreements, one of the main competencies of a specialist who is called upon to regulate these relations is knowledge of a foreign language, which covers both oral and written communication in this area. Expanding the framework of international cooperation leads to their intensification, placing higher requirements on a specialist in this field. A foreign language as an element of the professional activity of a specialist in the field of international relations covers an increasing number of professional competencies, involving not only the operation of lexical and grammatical units in a foreign language but also their correlation with the conceptual apparatus of this area. That is, the formation of the foreign language competencies of the future international relations specialist is based on interdisciplinary ties – a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of a foreign language with the ability to apply it in a professional environment.

The solution to the first research question is based on the analysis of professional skills used by specialists in their professional activities in a foreign language. For this purpose, a survey was conducted among specialists in the international sphere who graduated from the faculties and institutes of international relations, international law, as well as world politics and economics. 150 specialists took part in the survey. The specialists were asked to answer the question of the questionnaire – “What professional skills do they need during their work?”. The specialists were asked to use the following scale:

- 5 – the most necessary skills
- 4 – popular and often applicable
- 3 – sometimes applicable
- 2 – very rarely
- 1 – not applicable

In order to answer the second research question, we performed a theoretical analysis of the language material that is used in foreign language lessons for the purpose of teaching professional knowledge in the professional sphere.

In most universities in the world, at the faculties of international relations, international law, and world politics, preparing specialists in international relations, and teaching a foreign language is carried out according to a

programme that provides a special language training in political translation, abstracting within the framework of such subject-lexical topics as international visits, meetings, summits, conferences, negotiations, political parties, elections, international conflicts, litigation, combating terrorism, and international organisations.

International law is a key discipline included in the educational programme of international affairs. Theoretically and practically, this is explained by the fact that no relations in the world are possible without a special agreement containing the norms and principles governing such relations. Accordingly, the following documents are the main linguistic material necessary for studying by international experts in a foreign language:

- Charter of the UN (1945);
- Vienna Convention on Foreign Relations (1961);
- Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969);
- UN Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (1980);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992);
- European Convention on Human Rights (1950).

The choice of the above-mentioned documents may be explained by their primary importance for the international community.

The Charter of the United Nations establishes the basic principles and rules of the international legal order. The main goals of the UN are to maintain and develop cooperation and friendly relations between states, prevent wars as a global threat, joint activities to improve the living conditions of poor people, fight hunger and disease, eliminate illiteracy and promote respect for rights and freedoms, as well as help countries in achieving these goals. The UN Charter is a universal key document for international relations, especially for specialists in the field of international law and international relations. In linguistic terms, the text of the Charter contains common international political and legal terminology, an uncomplicated structure of syntax, which allows its study in a foreign language, starting from the second and third courses in groups of the first language.

The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969) is a universal, fundamental legal document in international law. The Convention establishes the basic principles for the development of an international treaties signature and ratification, as well as procedures for the adoption of amendments and changes to the text of the treaty. The convention is a necessary study for all international experts, diplomats, lawyers, economists, and political scientists, since all relations, in whatever area they are created, are governed by a contract or agreement and it is necessary to know the clear rules for creating such a document. The text of an agreement contains specialised terminology inherent in this branch of law, as well as complex grammatical and syntactic constructions, which are interesting and suitable for studying for students of the 4th year.

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), UN Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (1980), European Convention on Human Rights

(1950)– these are the key industry conventions in the field of international law, international relations, and economics. The texts of these documents contain specialised terminology necessary for studying by international specialists in the relevant field. Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) should be studied in a foreign language by diplomats.

The UN Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (1980) is required for economists and lawyers specialising in international affairs. The European Convention on Human Rights (1950) is one of the key documents for specialists in the field of world politics.

The texts of the above documents, methodological exercises, and developments aimed at a deep study of their terminology are proposed by the authors of this study to be included in the manuals on the language of a speciality.

#### LITERATURE ANALYSIS

Scientific works by Russian and foreign authors, covering the issues of teaching foreign languages in humanities, as well as the results of a teacher's questionnaire regarding English-language bachelor's degree programme have provided the basis for our research. Each type of activity implies the possession of a certain set of competencies based on acquired knowledge and skills. Based on the analysis of scientific literature (Rabab'ah, 2008; Scheller-Boltz, 2010; Blackwill, 2013; Hurtado, 2017; Merkish, 2020), all the competencies of an internationalist can be divided into the following two large groups: linguistic competencies and extra-linguistic competencies.

The paradigm of competencies not static, but changeable under the influence of market requirements, depending on changes in social and political life, the emergence of new industries, and the development of technological progress. One of the competencies of international affairs is knowledge of foreign languages (Council of Foreign Affairs, 2013). However, a good command of a foreign language is not enough to work in the field of international relations, just as exceptional knowledge of a foreign language in the modern world is not enough for any profession, including purely linguistic specialities. The authors of the study tried to identify a range of professional skills, which should be developed while learning foreign languages. These include:

- working with information sources;
- presentation at conferences and round tables;
- business dialogue, correspondence, negotiations;
- elaboration of documents, contracts, agreements;
- translation of specialised literature;
- solving professional tasks.

In order to teach a foreign language of a speciality in a teaching practice, a large number of methods are used: projects (Bokut, 2016; Weda, 2018); case studies (Fesenko, 2017); ICT (Kaschchuk, 2018; Bylieva, 2020); games (Nechayuk, 2017); tandem technique (Pomino, 2016); extensive reading (Renandya, 2017); podcasts (Masudul, 2016); associative learning (Vasyuhnevich, 2016); cooperative and collaborative learning (Mikhina, 2018); slides (Antselevich, 2015);

discussions (Yelon, 1984); dilemma (Kholod, 2018); Jigsaw Reading (Yuhananik, 2018); theatre performance (Raquel, 2011); Scrum (Jurado-Navas, 2017); round table (Rodomanchenko, 2017); peer review (Sysoyev, 2016); mnemonics (Ostrikova, 2018); video blogging method (Meeder, 2008); grammar and translation, direct method (Thamarana, 2015); audio-lingual method (Bidenko, 2017); flipped learning/flipped classroom (Jun, 2017); CLIL subject-language integrated learning (Kovacikova, 2019); and cooperative teaching method (Wysocki, 2010).

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results are based on the data of a survey of international experts working in the field of international law, political science, and international economic relations.

The following questions were posed as part of the questionnaire:

What skills and abilities do you need to work in a foreign language?

Table 1  
*Results of the questionnaire survey*

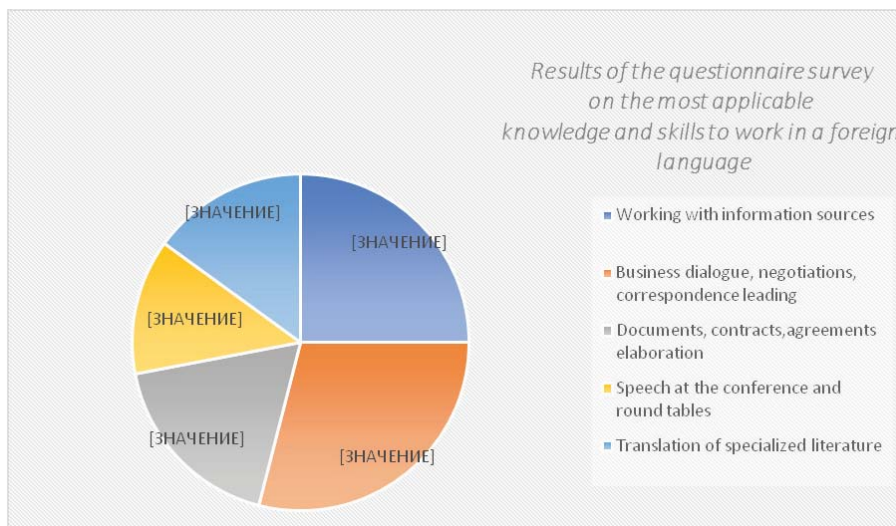
No.	Competencies	Participants
1.	Working with information sources	30
2.	Business dialogue, negotiations, correspondence leading	34
3.	Documents, contracts, agreements elaboration	22
4.	Speech at the conference and round tables	15
5.	Translation of specialised literature	18
6.	Solving professional tasks	31

*Source:* own research and analysis

Of the 150 interviewed specialists, 34 people identify the competence of negotiation as the main type of activity in a foreign language during their professional activities. Working with information, press, and documentation is the main activity for 30 interviewed specialists.

The smallest number of specialists spoke in favour of the skill of speaking at conferences and round tables. This is due to the fact that not all specialists work in organisations or participate in events where this type of activity is necessary. Nevertheless, as the survey shows, all competencies are required to some degree by future specialists.





*Fig.1.* The most applicable knowledge and skills to work in a foreign language expressed in %.

Source: own research

The second stage of the research is the analysis of the language material, which is seen as the main item for teaching the professional language of international affairs. The authors of the article conducted an analysis based on the data from the survey completed by 150 specialists in international affairs. In the questionnaire, the following question was asked:

What is the specialisation of the language that you work most often with?

The survey results are presented in the following table:

Table 2.  
*Language material specialisation*

No.	Language material specialisation	Participants
1.	Legal, law	65
2.	Economics	45
3.	Politics	40

Source: own research and analysis

The table shows that most often international experts meet with legal vocabulary since they predominantly work with international legal documentation and sources of international public and private law: conventions, bilateral and multilateral treaties, pacts, and resolutions. Economics vocabulary is important for 45 professionals. The smallest number of specialists chose political vocabulary.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of professional communicative competencies which are necessary for the professional activity of international affairs specialists allows us to identify the main directions of methodological work in order to create appropriate manuals and programmes.

This study has shown that disciplines such as international law must be included in the language training programme for international specialists as diplomats and lawyers.

Among the communicative competencies, it is necessary to highlight the competence (skill) of negotiation. To this end, it is recommended that appropriate exercises allowing the formation of skills in public speaking and participation in debates in a foreign language will be included in the teaching aids.

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