

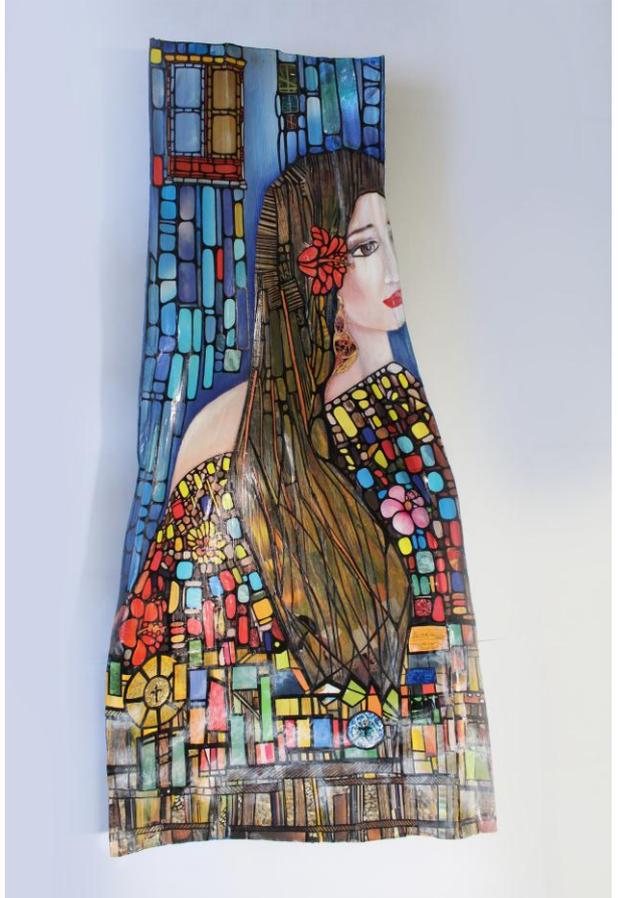
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Nourishing law-students' professionally-directed English-language communicative abilities including socio-perceptual skills

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to determine key skills and abilities necessary for law-students to be effectively involved in professionally-directed English-language communication. The descriptive analysis was implemented to present key issues. This paper's methodological bases are the conceptual provisions of researchers in linguistics, theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages, psycholinguistics, intercultural interaction, English for special purposes. In result, one of the indicators of the high level of law-students' communicative competence development was their speech culture. In conclusion, law-students were shifted into the next gear by transforming into legitimate interlocutors with the only mission of getting their job done.

Keywords: Legal Activities, Professionally-Directed, Language.

Nutrir las habilidades comunicativas del idioma inglés dirigidas profesionalmente por los estudiantes de derecho, incluidos las habilidades socio-perceptivas

Resumen

El objetivo de este documento es determinar las destrezas y habilidades clave necesarias para que los estudiantes de derecho participen de manera efectiva en la comunicación en inglés dirigida por profesionales. El análisis descriptivo fue implementado para presentar temas claves. Las bases metodológicas de este trabajo son las disposiciones conceptuales de los investigadores en lingüística, teoría y metodología de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, psicolingüística, interacción intercultural, inglés para fines especiales. Como resultado, uno de los indicadores del alto nivel de desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes de derecho fue su cultura del habla. En conclusión, los estudiantes de derecho pasaron a la siguiente fase al transformarse en interlocutores legítimos con la única misión de hacer su trabajo.

Palabras clave: Actividades legales, Dirigidas profesionalmente, Lenguaje.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article presents some insights into the importance to nourish the abilities of law-students to competently communicate in the English language in carrying out professional activities. A new take on socio-perceptual skills (reflection, identification, attraction, and

causal attribution) as components of professionally oriented English-language communicative competence is given here. The professionally directed foreign-language communication of lawyers is a multifaceted course of action. The point of view of Ozerova is relevant to this study. She stated that:

It is a complex and purposeful process of interaction of several people within the framework of their professional activities, that solve critical activity problems by influencing each other's intellect, attitudes, behavior and emotions...; this process takes place in certain social and psychological conditions, that is, in certain spheres and possible situations of professional communication in a foreign language. The sphere of communication is an extra-linguistic background, but it determines the nature of the activities of communicants, affecting their speech behavior and the choice of language means (2000: 23).

Law-students need to master the ability to legitimately influence partners in professional international interaction – representatives of other linguistic cultures. Following the logic of this study and according to the scientific vision of Skalkin, it seems appropriate to carry out training in professionally directed communication within the framework of professional and socio-cultural spheres (Skalkin, 1981). The first sphere includes everything related to the professional activity of a person – in this case, it is associated with a wide context of general, professional and political interaction of the named specialists: relations with various legal institutions, public services, administrative bodies, mass media, etc. The second sphere includes everything that is connected with the situations of social and cultural interaction of

people (local and international events and leisure of public nature, mass cultural events, etc.). From the perspective of this research, law-students should be prepared to communicate effectively in the English language in the professional and socio-cultural spheres implementing all types of speech activity.

An interesting approach to the organization of educational professionally directed communication is of Alekseeva, who recommends organizing it as "a joint educational activity aimed at the acquisition and exchange of professionally significant information, the establishment of interpersonal contacts and the achievement of communicatively meaningful results" (Alekseeva, 2002: 32). The position of the scientist seems relevant to this study, since such an organization of students' learning activities contributes to the formation of a professionally oriented foreign-language communicative competence. Practitioners and scientists who research the issues of professional foreign-language communicative competence formation define it as a generalized set of knowledge, abilities and skills that determine the level of the professional skills' formation in situations of inter-social behavior that is adequate to the goals, spheres and conditions of the communicative process Fadeikina (2001) or as an integrative feature of the individual, characterized by the volume and nature of the acquired knowledge, abilities, skills in a foreign language and ethics of professional communication, as well as habits, qualities and properties, implemented in future professional activity (Iskandarova, 2000).

The approach of Petrova to this problem's consideration is also of interest to this paper. The researcher understands foreign-language professional communicative competence

...as a single verbal communication ability, including special knowledge of the subject..., which is based on a complex of acquired lexical and grammatical knowledge, terminology, knowledge of ways to compensate speech act, knowledge of linguistic and socio-cultural realities, as well as the ability to conduct a comparative analysis of native and foreign-language culture (1999: 68).

Petrova considered it as "the qualitative aspect of widening the subject-communicative knowledge at the stage of professional development of a specialist" (Petrova, 1999: 62).

Current state and conditions of life have changed the task of training specialists with knowledge of a foreign language in various professional fields. The appeal to a new scientific paradigm in language teaching is due to the geo-economics and geo-cultural situation in the world where people should be able to conduct a mutually beneficial dialogue with all subjects of the common living space; to build bridges among people of different faiths, cultures and countries, and language plays an important role in this process (Gal'skova, 2004). In this case, it concerns the future lawyers, who by the nature of their activities should promote legitimate actions leading to mutual understanding and development of contacts among representatives of different countries in the twenty-first century.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goal of this paper is to determine key skills and abilities necessary for law-students to be effectively involved into professionally directed communication in English. To achieve this objective, the structure of professionally oriented English-language communicative competence including socio-perceptual component was revealed and the methods of teaching to develop these skills were identified. Scientists and practitioners' consideration of the named problem suggests that the formation of professionally oriented foreign-language communicative competence of law-students can and should act as a pragmatic goal of training professionally directed foreign-language communication. Consequently, the main task of law-students' training is the practical mastery of a foreign language, the development of skills necessary to perform professional foreign-language activities including socio-perceptual skills (reflection, identification, attraction, and causal attribution) as components of professionally oriented English-language communicative competence. According to the logic of the current study, law-students have to be able to equate native and foreign language cultures. This allows them to choose adequate strategies for their communicative behavior in the conditions of professional foreign-language communication, achieving, as a result, feedback from the partners of the interaction.

3. MATERIALS & METHODS

The descriptive analysis was implemented to present key issues. The methodological bases of the paper are the conceptual provisions of many Russian and foreign academicians, practitioners and scientists (Andreeva, 1996; Ageev, 1989; Coyle et al., 2010; Dudleyevans & Stjohn, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1996). In their many years' research, they focus on the issues of higher education in professional context, linguistics, theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages, psychology and psycholinguistics, intercultural interaction, Content and Language integrated learning, English for special purposes, social perception and cognition, digital technologies in university teaching usage. The methodology of teaching the professionally directed English language in a non-linguistic University should take into account the specifics of the specialization both in the subject and in the operational content of training: lexical content and a special format of oral and written texts, skills to be formed and abilities to be developed, the possession of which is important for the implementation of professional activities of lawyers. In this regard, the interdisciplinary construction of a course of professionally directed English is actualized, in the structure of which various subjects of the lawyer's area of expertise are reflected, that is based on a thorough study of the provisions and requirements of Federal State educational standards for higher professional education and the Federal Law On Education in the Russian Federation, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The study of the language and its use imply the actions of future lawyers; in the process of their completion law-students develop a

number of competencies, first of all, general and communicative – in the classification of the Common European framework of reference of language proficiency: learning, teaching, assessment. These competencies ensure the solution of problems in different conditions, taking into account various constraints, and are implemented in the types of activities and processes (actions) aimed at generating and/ or perceiving texts within certain topics, spheres of communication and applying appropriate strategies. The consideration of these processes by law-students leads to the further development and modification of these competencies. The requirement for advanced curriculum in the English language at non-linguistic Universities in the context of subject-specific (professional) and general cultural competences attracted the attention of Emelyanova (Emelyanova, 2017a).

Based on the developed theoretical data and analysis of modern concepts, the structure of professionally oriented English-language communicative competence of law-students is viewed and presented by this paper's author as a multi-component formation. The main components are personal qualities, foreign-language communicative competence, professional qualities, knowledge, skills and abilities. All of these components are a set of interrelated professionally oriented language knowledge and communicative skills needed to perform future professional English-language activities: drafting legal documents on the basis of the acting legislation of the particular State, writing speeches for their delivery in courts of various instances, reviewing legal articles in mass media, legal support throughout negotiations, presentations, interviews, surveys, conferences,

preparation of business correspondence, registration of the cases' documentation, etc. When teaching professionally directed communication in the context of intercultural contacts, it is necessary to constantly motivate students for their active work on the conscious use of a foreign language, taking into account the national and cultural specifics of the countries of the language being studied. In the course of preparing law-students for professionally directed English-language communication in the context of intercultural environment, throughout classroom's activities there were taken into account the factors like the peculiarities of national character and mentality of the people of the studied language, the national and cultural specifics of their communicative behavior, differences in systems of behavioral and speech etiquette, and communication strategies (Tkhorikov et al., 2018).

When carrying out joint legal activities with colleagues, when communicating with clients in a foreign language, law-students need to be able to quickly formulate their thoughts, provide accurate and objective lawful information, taking into account the social status of the partners of interaction, their emotional attitude, the realization of which is facilitated by the developed socio-perceptual skills. Consequently, the interconnection of the professionally oriented English-language communicative competence's components ensures the effectiveness of interpersonal professional interaction in a foreign language. As it was stated by Emelyanova (2017), law-students' professionally oriented communicative competence for interaction in the English language is:

The totality of linguistic, sociolinguistic, socio-cultural knowledge, communicative and pragmatic skills of professionally focused communication and culture of interaction in various specialized fields and situations, as well as personal qualities: attraction, causal attribution, communicability, identification, reflection, responsibility, tactfulness, tolerance; it is a meaningful generalization of theoretical and practical knowledge of specialized communication, represented in the form of specific legal concepts, principles, significant positions and situations necessary for successful professional interaction (2017b: 343).

From the content of the acquired professional skills and abilities in the course of law-students' training, summarized on the basis of normative documents, research and studies, it follows that future lawyers should be ready for professionally directed foreign-language communication. In the light of the above, special significance was given to the formation of law-students' professionally oriented English-language communicative competence in the structure of which the socio-perceptual component is of particular importance, which provides an opportunity to achieve feedback in the process of professional English-language communication.

In this regard, the logic of the research required to highlight issues related to the concept of the socio-perceptual component of the communicative competence that determines the nature of the verbal and non-verbal interpersonal intercultural, professionally directed interaction of law-students of a non-linguistic University. Social perception is of particular interest from the perspective of this research. Social perception is the process of people's cognition of each other and

communication, as a rule, in the structure of communication there are three interrelated components: communicative – information exchange among communicants, interactive – organization of interaction, exchange of not only knowledge, but also actions, and perceptual – perception and cognition of each other by people, establishing rapport. Following the standpoint of this study, the development of law-students' skills like empathy, reflection, identification, attraction, causal attribution allows them to carry out adequate foreign-language speech activity in a professionally directed interpersonal interaction. The need to impart to the learner a special perceptive ability to comprehend a different mentality, strategy and tactics of life, i.e. another way of understanding information regarding all aspects of this life, was indicated by Khaleeva (2000), this creates the prerequisites for achieving feedback in professionally directed foreign-language communication of law students.

The questionnaire survey of seventy law-students (bachelors and masters) studying the English-language in multicultural environment (Commonwealth of Independent States, Afghanistan, Colombia, Cyprus, Iran, Kingdom of Jordan, Mongolia, Nigeria, Peru, Syria, Somalia, Vietnam, Zambia) at the Institute of Law, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) was conducted. The analysis of law-students' questionnaire survey demonstrated the necessity to develop the above-mentioned abilities and skills. All respondents agreed that possession of social-perceptual skills – reflection, identification, attraction, and causal attribution guarantees

success in interaction in the field of lawyers' professional foreign-language activities.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As a result of research in these fields, authentic materials were selected, assignments and exercises were developed to expand the vocabulary, professional terminology and to develop writing and speaking skills necessary for professionally directed English language communication in the field of professional and socio-cultural spheres; a fund of evaluation tools was formed to use in the educational process for law-students' competences development and consolidation of knowledge; in this regard, the professionally oriented nature of communicative competence was reflected in the professionally directed sociolinguistic and linguistic-cultural content of the chosen authentic materials, which formed the basis for the formation of communicative-cognitive skills and language skills of law students, ability to get feedback with various types of professional contacts.

Feedback in communication is defined as fixing the external manifestations (signals) of the respondent's consciousness response to the information presented, determining their causes and, in accordance with them, correcting the speech. It was especially important for law-students to master the ability to use feedback deliberately. This made possible to solve communicative tasks productively in terms of professional interaction; feedback allows to correct the impact of direct

communication, thereby helping to achieve the desired result that is especially important for legal investigators, lawyers, etc. The formation of social perception as a component of communicative competence is seen to be relevant for teaching professionally directed foreign-language communication to law-students, since the structural content of social perception is the motivational focus on communication, cognitive abilities (the development of reflexive-perceptual knowledge), the emotional component (self-esteem, empathy), operational-activity component (possession of reflexive-perceptual abilities and skills).

The significant indicators of the appropriate level of developing law-students' professionally oriented English-language communicative competence were not only linguistic distinctiveness but formation of their worldview, social responsibility, legal awareness, civic position, knowledge in the fields of law and important economic, political, social and cultural-educational problems, as well as modern mass communication practice; the abilities to establish and constantly maintain legitimate professional contacts with clients – individuals and all types of organizations and businesses, to provide legal support in planning, organizing and conducting public opinion polls, advertising and information campaigns taking into account the interests and demands of society ultimately based on the acting legislation.

One of the indicators of the high level of law-students' communicative competence development was their speech culture – the rhetorical aspect of vocational training for law students was also

significant as well as the ability to employ computer technologies, Internet resources and technical capabilities of the media – obviously, the professionally oriented foreign-language communicative competence of law students includes not only knowledge in the field of law. The performed teaching of the English language in a non-linguistic University, in particular, the Institute of Law, RUDN University, was based on the specifics of lawyers' activities and promoted the development of law-students' professionally directed English-language communicative abilities and skills. Thus, professionally directed instruction in a foreign language and intercultural communication presupposed and provided the development of law-students' skills for conflict-free communication, person-centered interaction, the consideration of the national and cultural characteristics of the audience and speech partners, personal qualities such as mutual understanding, empathy, critical thinking that contribute to solving problem situations.

The selected methods of teaching included project activities, role-plays, mock-trials, case study, deliberations, digital video implementation while listening and watching to the latest news followed by law-students' discussions, various texts of professional context and legal documents' translation. Preparing for the above activities and translating various documents and texts from English into Russian and vice versa, law-students studying in a multicultural environment made use of different dictionaries. That contributed to their mastering posh accent and correct usage of adequate terminology and set phrases. The consideration of professionally directed training in

a foreign language made it possible to distinguish in the development of the professionally oriented English-language communicative competence such a component as social perception including skills like reflection, identification, attraction, and causal attribution. To develop these skills, psychological training in the English language was implemented throughout classroom's activities. Law-students' possession of socio-perceptual skills affected the success of interaction in the field of professional foreign-language activities of lawyers. Teaching professionally directed the English language in the context of a multicultural environment made it possible to form law-students' readiness for intercultural communication and develop the ability to solve problematic issues.

5. CONCLUSION

The study of special scientific literature, non-fiction and publications on the covered issues, the legal and regulatory framework, consideration of European experience and Russia's integration into the global multicultural space made it possible to presume that in the sphere of lawyers' professional activities there are new trends due to the political, economic and cultural factors in the development of Russian society and the international community. Law-students' awareness of interaction in the English language in professional spheres is considered as one of the common cultural competences. Thus, the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Institute of Law students' forthcoming professionally directed communication and

mediation from the standpoint of modern didactics were revealed. The presented in this article manifestation and analysis of necessary for law-students' professionally directed English-language skills, provided the adequate selection of techniques and means of teaching a foreign language in the field of jurisprudence. Teaching the professionally directed English language in the context of a multicultural environment made it possible to form law-students' readiness for intercultural communication in the field of law and develop the ability to solve problematic issues. On the completion of appropriate discipline, law-students were prepared for solution-oriented and conflict-free English-language communication with cross-cultural contemporaries in professional and socio-cultural spheres, person-centered interaction, consideration of the national, cultural, professional distinctiveness of the audience; they developed personal qualities and skills like mutual understanding, empathy, critical thinking, attraction, reflection, identification that together with knowledge of law also contribute to solving complicated legal issues and questionable matters. Thus, organizing the educational process implementing sufficient authentic materials and teaching methods brought the benefit of adequate preparation of the Institute of Law graduates for professionally directed English-language communication in a vigorously expanding environment. Law-students were shifted into the next gear by transforming into legitimate interlocutors with the only mission of getting their job done. The findings of the current study can be useful for the practitioners and researchers of the problem of nourishing law-students' professionally directed English-language communicative abilities including socio-perceptual skills.

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