

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY-BASED COMMUNICATION TO DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AMONG LAW STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study explores law students' perceptions of professional foreign language education and the role of technology-based communication in developing their communicative competence. Data from structured interviews indicate that most participants view language learning as vital for career success, yet face challenges such as limited professional vocabulary, reliance on traditional methods, and low motivation. Students identified case studies, problem-solving, and game-based learning as the most effective approaches for enhancing communication skills. The findings suggest that integrating interactive technologies can significantly strengthen intercultural and professional communicative competence in legal education.

Keywords: legal education, communicative competence, professional foreign language, technology-based learning, intercultural communication, case studies.

Аннотация: В данном исследовании рассматриваются взгляды студентов-юристов на профессиональное обучение иностранным языкам и роль технологий в развитии их коммуникативной компетенции. Данные, полученные в результате структурированных интервью, показывают, что большинство участников считают изучение языка жизненно важным для профессионального успеха, однако сталкиваются с такими проблемами, как ограниченный профессиональный словарный запас, зависимость от традиционных методов и низкая мотивация. Студенты отметили кейс-стади, решение проблемных ситуаций и игровые методы как наиболее эффективные подходы к развитию коммуникативных навыков. Результаты исследования показывают, что интеграция интерактивных технологий может значительно укрепить межкультурную и профессиональную коммуникативную компетенцию в юридическом образовании.

Ключевые слова: юридическое образование, коммуникативная компетенция, профессиональный иностранный язык, обучение на основе технологий, межкультурная коммуникация, кейс-стади.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqotda huquq yo‘nalishidagi talabalarning kasbiy xorijiy til ta‘limiga bo‘lgan qarashlari hamda texnologiyaga asoslangan kommunikatsiyaning ularning kommunikativ kompetensiyasini rivojlantirishdagi o‘rni o‘rganiladi. Tashkil etilgan intervyular natijasida aksariyat ishtirokchilar til o‘rganishni kasbiy muvaffaqiyat uchun muhim deb bilishlarini, biroq cheklangan kasbiy so‘z boyligi, an‘anaviy usullarga tayanish va past motivatsiya kabi muammolarga duch kelishlarini ko‘rsatdi. Talabalar “case study”, muammoli vaziyatlarni hal etish va o‘yinlarga asoslangan usullarni kommunikativ ko‘nikmalarni rivojlantirishda eng samarali yondashuvlar sifatida belgiladilar. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, interaktiv texnologiyalarni integratsiya qilish huquqiy ta‘limda madaniyatlararo va kasbiy kommunikativ kompetensiyani sezilarli darajada mustahkamlashi mumkin.

Kalit so‘zlar: huquqiy ta‘lim, kommunikativ kompetensiya, kasbiy xorijiy til, texnologiyaga asoslangan ta‘lim, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya, keys stadi.

1. Introduction. In the modern era of globalization, lawyers increasingly operate within multilingual and multicultural environments. Consequently, developing professional foreign language competence is becoming an essential component of legal education (Hartle et al., 2022). In Uzbekistan and similar contexts, legal professionals are expected not only to understand foreign legal systems but also to engage effectively in intercultural professional communication. However, traditional teaching methods often fail to equip students with the practical skills required for real-world communication (Mikhailova et al., 2021).

This study aims to explore law students’ perceptions of professional foreign language education and their experiences with technology-based communication methods. Specifically, it seeks to identify factors that hinder language learning and determine which technological approaches most effectively enhance professional communicative competence.

2. Methodology. A qualitative-descriptive research design was employed, using structured interviews with law students enrolled in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. The questionnaire included eight key questions focusing on students’ attitudes toward language education, self-assessment of proficiency, motivation, and the perceived effectiveness of various technology-based methods.

Responses were analyzed quantitatively by calculating percentage distributions for each item. The results were then interpreted thematically to identify patterns in students’ perceptions and challenges in professional foreign language acquisition.

3. Results.

3.1. Importance of Professional Foreign Language Education.

A vast majority of respondents considered professional foreign language education *vitaly important* for future lawyers, with a smaller portion rating it as *very important*. No participants regarded it as unimportant, underscoring the universal recognition of language as a key professional skill.

3.2. Career Impact

All participants agreed that learning a professional foreign language *improves career opportunities*, highlighting the direct link between language proficiency and employability in legal professions.

3.3. Self-Assessment of Language Proficiency

When asked to evaluate their own professional language competence:

- Most students indicated they can read and understand the overall idea but struggle to communicate effectively.
- Some reported that they can only read due to grammar-related difficulties.
- A smaller group confidently stated they can use English for solving profession-oriented tasks or communicate easily in any sphere.

These findings reveal a significant gap between receptive (reading) and productive (speaking) language skills.

3.4. Causes of Poor Professional Communication Skills

The main reasons identified for weak communication skills were:

- Usage of traditional methods and technologies
- Lack of professional lexis
- Boring material

A few students attributed their low performance to personal factors such as laziness. The predominance of pedagogical factors suggests that curriculum and methodology reform are essential.

3.5. Emotional Response During Classes

Emotional engagement varied, with many students reporting feeling demotivated during lessons, while others described themselves as motivated or happy. This indicates the need for more engaging, student-centered teaching strategies.

3.6. Effective Technology-Based Communication Methods

Regarding effective teaching formats, students most frequently selected case studies, game-based methods, and problem situations, followed by project work. This reflects a preference for interactive, practice-oriented learning environments.

3.7. Methods that Improve Communicative Skills

Students believed that speaking activities and games, problem-solving tasks, and case studies most effectively enhanced their communicative competence. Debates and discussions were also valued for promoting critical thinking and fluency.

3.8. Experience with Case Studies

Most participants had *some experience* working with case studies and rated them as *very helpful* for developing professional communication. Only a small fraction found them *slightly* or *not very helpful*.

4. Discussion. In the modern era, professional communities have become increasingly globalized, and intercultural interactions now occur not only across countries but also within organizations, institutions, and courts (Garrote Salazar and Fernández Agüero, 2016). In Uzbekistan and Central Asia, this trend is especially evident in the spheres of law, education, and governance, where professionals regularly engage with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. These interactions demand not only linguistic competence but also intercultural communicative awareness—a skill that allows professionals to navigate cultural nuances, interpret behavior accurately, and respond appropriately in complex social contexts (Holmes, 2017).

In Uzbekistan's legal system, intercultural communication challenges often arise in multilingual courtrooms. Judges, lawyers, and prosecutors frequently work with clients who speak minority languages such as Karakalpak, Tajik, or Russian. For example, in the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, many legal proceedings require translation between Uzbek and Karakalpak. Misinterpretation of a single phrase—especially when it concerns intent or emotion—can alter the outcome of a case. Similarly, in regions like Samarkand or Surxondaryo, where Tajik is widely spoken, defendants may struggle to express themselves in official Uzbek, which can lead to misrepresentation of facts. The presence of qualified interpreters, as well as intercultural sensitivity among legal professionals, becomes crucial to ensure fairness and justice (Axmedjanova, 2023).

Another illustrative example involves differences in communication styles between urban and rural clients. Rural clients in Uzbekistan often explain disputes—especially over land or inheritance—through stories that reference family history, social customs, or local traditions rather than presenting information in a linear, factual manner. Courts, however, typically operate under Western-influenced legal frameworks that value concise, direct evidence. A lawyer who lacks cultural awareness might dismiss a client's narrative as irrelevant or emotional, missing key legal details embedded in the story. On the other hand, a culturally competent lawyer recognizes this narrative form as a valid communicative pattern rooted in traditional Uzbek discourse, interpreting it in a way that aligns with legal reasoning.

The **findings** reveal a clear awareness among law students of the importance of professional foreign language education for their future careers. Despite this recognition, many still face difficulties in achieving communicative competence due to traditional, grammar-focused teaching methods. The reported emotional disengagement suggests that current approaches fail to sustain motivation.

Technology-based methods—especially those emphasizing interaction, collaboration, and real-life problem solving—are perceived as more engaging and effective (Alasadi and Baiz, 2023). Case studies, in particular, bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and professional application, allowing students to practice legal reasoning in a foreign language context (Liu, 2022).

These results align with contemporary research on task-based and communicative language teaching, which emphasizes the importance of context, authenticity, and learner participation. Implementing such approaches within legal education can foster not only linguistic proficiency but also intercultural awareness and critical thinking—key components of professional competence in the globalized legal sphere.

5. Conclusion. This study highlights the strong demand among law students for more dynamic, technologically supported approaches to professional foreign language education. Integrating methods such as case studies, problem-solving tasks, and game-based learning can significantly enhance learners' motivation and communicative competence. The results suggest that reforming legal English curricula toward interactive, professionally relevant, and culturally informed instruction will better prepare future lawyers for international collaboration and cross-cultural professional communication.

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