

## THEORY AND INSTITUTIONS OF EDUCATION

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### PECULIARITIES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS FOR THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN LEARNING ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

***Olha Dienichieva,***

*PhD in Education, Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics,  
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University (Zhytomyr, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1655-8688  
[olhadienichieva@gmail.com](mailto:olhadienichieva@gmail.com)*

***Olena Bernatska,***

*PhD in Education, Associate Professor,  
Professor at the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages  
and Teaching Methods in Primary and Preschool Education,  
Dragomanov Ukrainian State University (Kyiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0289-9254  
[elenengteach@gmail.com](mailto:elenengteach@gmail.com)*

***Maryna Komogorova,***

*PhD in Education, Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages  
and Teaching Methods in Primary and Preschool Education,  
Dragomanov Ukrainian State University (Kyiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6829-811X  
[mkomogorova@ukr.net](mailto:mkomogorova@ukr.net)*

***Svitlana Lukianchuk,***

*PhD in Education, Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages  
and Teaching Methods in Primary and Preschool Education,  
Dragomanov Ukrainian State University (Kyiv, Ukraine)  
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6799-3666  
[svitlanalukianchuk@gmail.com](mailto:svitlanalukianchuk@gmail.com)*

**Abstract.** The issue of developing students' communicative competence in the study of English is highlighted by the requirements for professional training outcomes in higher education institutions and current societal demands. It is summarised that communicative competence is developed through direct interaction and becomes the result of communication experience for individuals. Communicative competence is viewed as the ability to understand and produce English at the phonological, lexico-grammatical, and cultural knowledge and language skills level and in accordance with the goals and specifics of professional communication situations. Purposeful work towards developing students' communicative competence during the study of English for professional purposes is understood as a holistic process of structuring the educational process based on the alignment of its key components: goal-setting (reflecting the aim of the study and the requirement for the simultaneous participation of all students in completing specific tasks); content (based on the selection of specialised learning tasks); technological (defining the conditions, methods, and tools for the development

of communicative competence); and evaluative-resultative (designing tools to determine the effectiveness of the proposed changes and their impact on the state of communicative competence among higher education students).

**Key words:** peculiarities, educational process, students, communicative competence, English for professional purposes.

**Introduction.** The expansion of international contacts is transforming the conditions of professional activities for specialists in any field (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002: 17). An important challenge in higher professional education is developing students' ability to conduct professional dialogues with foreign partners while adhering to cultural and business etiquette norms. This is driven by significant societal changes, including integration into the global information space, the creation of a unified European educational area, and the realising of the need for mutual understanding and cooperation with professionals from various countries, including those in Europe. The growing demand for intercultural professional communication and the need to ensure national security has led to new approaches and directions in the education system to effectively prepare professionals. English has become the primary language of international communication (Breus, 2017: 264). Therefore, higher education content must be structured to ensure that students acquire a broad thesaurus relevant to their professional fields, enabling them to establish working contacts during professional activities.

The transition of higher education to new state standards requires higher education institutions to improve the training of competent specialists in their professional domains and communication (Shestopalova, 2021: 186). Therefore, the formation of students' communicative competence is increasingly significant. When considering this phenomenon in the context of its development during the study of professionally oriented English, it is appropriate to define it as a personal construct that includes structural and functional components related to an individual's cognitive processes, the specifics of their development, the acquisition of both specific and general cultural knowledge, and communicative skills. It also encompasses the formation of motivation for communicative self-improvement within professional communication, wherein the communicative activity becomes a value. This includes an interest in self-analysis of communicative activities in English, self-exploration, self-awareness, understanding professional situations, and appropriately perceiving conversation partners; effective information exchange in line with relevant norms and communication behaviour patterns; and the ability to interact with representatives of other nations.

From this definition, it is evident that developing students' communicative competence while studying English for professional purposes must be based on the planning and modelling of the educational process in higher education institutions. This necessity arises from the complexity of the phenomenon being studied and the diversity of the contemporary professional communication thesaurus (Savignon, 1997, 18).

**Main part.** Today, the mission of higher education extends far beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. Higher education institutions are "called upon to prepare citizens capable of independent thinking and seeing cultural differences as an opportunity for meaningful dialogue" (Hryshkova, 2015: 56). The goal of higher education is to nurture professionals capable of performing in business environments, achieving professional growth, and maintaining mobility in the context of an information-driven society and the development of advanced, knowledge-intensive technologies, all while possessing strong communicative competence.

The importance of English for professional purposes for highly educated professionals hardly needs justification, particularly in an era of international contacts. Foreign languages have become key production factors in economic globalisation and the close intertwining of information flows. They have become universal tools for professional and industrial life, without which it is impossible to function effectively. In academic literature, mastering a foreign language is viewed as a means

of self-actualisation and the development of creativity and the ability to make independent decisions concerning life, work, and relationships, thus forming an active personal stance (Kriukova & Pavlovych, 2019: 55).

It is essential to analyse situations, goals, and conditions to construct linguistic expressions in English within professional communication. When addressing an interlocutor, the communicator must consider factors such as age, social status, and the formality of the conversation. These linguistic operations foster the development of communicative competence. In pedagogical literature, communicative competence is regarded as a criterion for readiness for successful professional activity in all its functions: informational (as a means of obtaining and conveying information), interactive (as a culture of interaction), and perceptive (aimed at understanding the internal world of the interlocutor).

The outcome of language learning is the acquisition by students of practical skills in speaking, writing, listening comprehension, and reading, as well as the ability to apply these skills to express their thoughts and comprehend the content of texts received aurally or visually. In other words, the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language is the development of communicative competence. Teaching people to communicate is challenging and complicated because communication is not merely verbal. Its effectiveness depends on many factors: language proficiency, communication conditions and culture, etiquette rules, knowledge of non-verbal communication, and deep background knowledge, among others.

An analysis of the experience of teaching foreign languages in domestic and foreign higher education institutions and the author's practical experience has led to the conclusion that teaching English for professional purposes is predominantly focused on accumulating knowledge, explicitly enriching vocabulary and practising grammar. Undoubtedly, lexical and grammatical skills are essential for mastering a professional foreign language; however, instruction based solely on rote learning does not foster students' creative activity nor contribute to developing their communicative competence. With this approach, motivation levels are low, as students fail to see how their acquired knowledge can be applied in their future professional activities (Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013: 300). A typical practical session follows this structure: checking homework, explaining new grammatical material, introducing and reinforcing vocabulary, and assigning homework. Such lessons do not promote free-flowing language communication or improve students' communicative competence.

Foreign language teaching is currently experiencing, like other areas of social life, a complex and challenging period of restructuring, re-evaluating values, and reviewing goals, tasks, methods, and materials. The primary goal of foreign language teaching is to learn the language as an actual and full-fledged means of communication. With the expansion of international cooperation in the economic and political globalisation framework, employers' demands on university graduates have changed significantly. In addition to a high level of professional expertise, modern graduates must possess a sufficiently high level of ability to establish professional contacts through specialised English to facilitate their future professional activities.

In the long term, developing communicative competence in English language communication promotes professional growth by considering both domestic and international achievements, facilitating experience exchange with foreign colleagues, and supporting scientific research, among other activities. However, observations of students' communication in higher education institutions during English lessons on professional topics show that future specialists often experience specific communication difficulties. These difficulties manifest in low self-assessment of their communicative potential, an inability to adequately evaluate their communicative "self," difficulties initiating and maintaining conversations, articulating their positions, and adjusting their behaviour in communication situations. These issues are often related to communicative literacy.

Moreover, during foreign language classes, students exhibit difficulties linked to situational anxiety, which is partly due to an insufficient baseline level of proficiency in English for professional pur-

poses. The practical importance of communicative competence for specialists of any profile, where subject-subject interaction is crucial, cannot be overstated.

The radical changes in our country's social life and its integration into the global community have made the English language a practical means of various types of communication. In higher education, foreign language instruction aims to form communicative competence in everyday and professional communication spheres.

In recent years, professional communication contexts have become considerably more complex. New components of the educational content have been identified, requiring the mastery of new professional "roles," such as that of a joint venture organiser, a distributor for a foreign company, or a manager skilled in conducting negotiations and entering into contracts with representatives of other cultural and linguistic communities.

An analysis of existing approaches to structuring the studied process has shown that one of the main reasons for the inefficiency of students' communicative activities is the underdeveloped strategy, methods, organisational forms, and overall system of communicative preparation of students when learning English for professional purposes. One key issue is the disregard for the multifunctional nature of communicative competence as a personal phenomenon, encompassing the following competences:

- professional language and speech competence, which implies mastering basic professional terminology and the etiquette of business communication, as well as the ability to produce and interpret statements relevant to the professional field;
- the intercultural aspect of professional language competence, which requires knowledge and skills related to reflecting value orientations in language and speech in both English and Ukrainian cultures, as well as the ability to use speech acts that appropriately reflect the value orientations of the studied cultures;
- logical-informational competence, which entails the ability to analyse and extract significant professional foreign-language information structure coherent statements while considering cause-and-effect relationships, style, and the genre of professional texts;
- the intercultural aspect of logical-informational competence, which involves the ability to identify socio-cultural aspects of information, analyse and internalise universal cultural values reflected in the information, and structure typical professional communication patterns that accurately reflect culturally appropriate language behaviour;
- socio-psychological competence in intercultural communication includes overcoming adverse ethnocentric reactions associated with attributions such as uncertainty and anxiety and positively accepting different worldviews as the basis for cultural variations in behaviour.

This article substantiates the author's perspective on the peculiarities of the educational process aimed at forming students' communicative competence when learning English for professional purposes. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were generated:

- analysis of current practices in forming communicative competence among students during the study of English for professional purposes in higher education institutions;
- identification of potentially effective factors that can intensify the learning process and positively influence students' communicative competence when studying English for professional purposes;
- presentation of the substantive content of the process of forming communicative competence in students learning English for professional purposes;
- description of methods and forms of educational activities for students that should be applied during the study of English for professional purposes to ensure the development of communicative competence.

**Materials and methods.** The achievement of the aim and objectives of the article was based on the use of the modelling method, the essence of which in the didactics of linguistic training is

reflected in creating conditions in the educational process that replicate the field of professional communication. The research methods used also included analysis, generalisation, and synthesis, which were applied to identify factors whose implementation ensures the achievement of the aim. These factors included development of specific personal qualities in students (such as orientation towards humanistic communication, an equal and friendly position towards the communication partner) and professional communicative qualities (such as an adequate assessment of the situation and the interlocutor, the relevance of the speech act to the communication partner, the demonstration of appropriate communicative activity); implementation of a context-situational approach to learning English; use of communicative exercises that simulate actual conditions of professional communication and contribute to the formation of communicative skills within the field of professional communication.

The practical implementation of the proposed conditions involved updating the content of students' professional training concerning the formation of communicative competence when studying English for professional purposes. The substantive aspect of the educational process involved the justification of the selection and systematisation of educational content according to the following parameters:

- compliance with current regulatory programme documents, particularly the standards of higher professional education;
- realisation of integrative and socio-cultural approaches at the level of educational content;
- reference to the provisions of competence-based and student-centred approaches. For example, the integrative component at the professional foreign-language training content level is implemented through interdisciplinary connections with the fundamental foundations of speciality-related disciplines, selecting typical situations relevant to professional business communication, and combining the course content with the content of future professional activities.

The socio-cultural component at the professional foreign-language training content level is realised by selecting information, including cultural realities, phenomena, and elements. The identification, activation, and assimilation of such elements aim to consistently form and simultaneously develop all components of communicative competence and prepare students to participate in intercultural professional communication while adhering to cultural and business etiquette norms.

Targeted work on developing students' communicative competence during their study of English for professional purposes was understood as a holistic process of modelling the educational process based on the alignment of its key components: objective (reflecting the article's aim and simultaneously requiring the participation of all students in completing specific tasks); content-based (based on the selection of tasks that promote the successful development of communicative competence); technological (defining the conditions, methods, and tools for the formation of communicative competence); evaluative-resultative (constructing tools to assess the effectiveness of the proposed changes and their impact on the development of students' communicative competence).

**Results and discussion.** Communicative competence is formed in the context of direct interaction and, as a result, becomes a product of communication experience for individuals. Communicative competence should be considered a person's ability to comprehend and produce the English language at the phonological, lexical-grammatical, and cultural knowledge and language skills by the goals and specifics of the professional communication situation. Therefore, for linguistic communication, it is not enough to merely know the language system at all levels or to follow the rules for constructing sentences according to grammatical norms; it is also necessary to influence the interlocutor and make speech statements in line with this during communication.

Thus, alongside interdisciplinary connections, special attention in the educational process should be paid to the cultural content of professionally oriented information (the principle of didactic cultural relevance). This ensures that students understand and accept cultural norms in business and socio-cultural communication. The cultural content of professionally oriented foreign language material includes specific aspects. At the lexical level, attention is focused on lexical variations whose

meanings are influenced by the cultural context of a particular field of activity and the economy in the English-speaking world. When studying English for professional purposes, students at the phrase and sentence level must apply language etiquette and consider variations in language etiquette units to express different communicative intentions based on social factors. This involves the selection of a significant amount of culturally related information that allows for:

- introducing students to new categories, such as attributions, stereotypes, generalisations, cultural universals, and empathy;
- participation in simulations and role-playing activities that encourage dual perspectives on the cultural aspects of professional communication;
- discussion and resolution of misunderstandings and intercultural conflicts.

As practice demonstrates, organising student learning around communication is one of the most effective approaches to the educational process in higher education institutions when teaching English for professional purposes (Holmes & O'Neill, 2012: 707). This is because, despite some drawbacks (such as an incomplete understanding of language mechanisms formulated as rules), it enables students to move beyond the mechanical expression of thoughts in another language towards mastering the culture of the language-speaking countries and how cultural realities are represented. All this contributes to the formation of students' readiness for professional communication as a specific behavioural strategy that includes professional, intellectual, emotional, motivational, and creative aspects of the individual. The viewpoint that the practical readiness of a higher education graduate for professional communication in English involves both conscious and subconscious attitudes (Huang, 2022: 248), models of probable behaviour, determining optimal methods of activity (Matsuo, 2012), and an assessment of one's capabilities about future challenges and the need to achieve specific results in their profession is well-founded.

Professional communication refers to a category of activity that primarily characterises interpersonal behaviour. The ability to initiate a dialogue and plan its potential directions determines the level of success in a specialist's professional activity. It can be confidently assumed that successful communication is only possible if individuals possess communicative strategies, making productive communication the foundation for fostering business cooperation. However, a new issue arises—the compatibility or incompatibility of applying specific strategies in different business cultures, which is directly related to the manifestation of communicative tolerance within professional cooperation. Communicative tolerance, as one of the key characteristics of linguistic personality interaction, reflects the level of acceptable or unacceptable behavioural norms in relationships between communication partners. As an informative component of a linguistic personality, communicative tolerance reveals important characteristics such as upbringing, communication experience, values, temperament, cultural attitudes, cognitive processes, and behavioural norms (Kukhta, 2018).

Particular attention in higher education institutions when studying English for professional purposes should be given to implementing professional and socio-cultural components (developing skills in reading, summarising, and annotating texts related to the field of study and cultural studies, delivering monologues and engaging in dialogues in the professional communication sphere). Thus, students must read authentic English literature on socio-cultural topics to acquire information for further professional application; summarise and annotate scientific literature in their field of study; participate in professional communication in English; and be familiar with the structure of document management in the country of the studied language.

When organising the learning process to develop students' communicative competence, teachers should consider the following factors when preparing lessons in English for professional purposes:

- training in the concise translation of the content of a read or listened-to text in English, as well as the composition of annotations and summary reports, should be carried out through the performance of a series of unique exercises;

- phonetics and grammar should not be presented as a set of rules to be memorised but as language material through which students develop language skills and abilities;
- mastery of lexical material takes place through working with textbook texts, educational manuals, socio-humanitarian, and original professional literature;
- reading texts at all levels of learning should be authentic, structurally complete, and contextually cohesive, varying in length and language richness at different stages of learning. The average volume of classroom reading should be 200–300 pages. Notably, along with independent reading (200–300 pages), the total volume of text material for all study years should amount to 450–600 pages;
- the phonetic minimum includes the correct articulation of sounds, adherence to all punctuation marks during reading through pauses of varying lengths, and the use of three primary tones (falling, rising, and fall-rise) (Tarnopolskyi & Dehtiarova, 2011: 243);
- the lexical minimum consists of 2,500 lexical units (Module 1 – 800 lexical units considering the school minimum; Module 2 – 1,200; Modules 3 and 4 – 500). The lexical composition includes common, socio-humanitarian, and general scientific vocabulary;
- the grammatical minimum includes standard grammar as well as grammatical phenomena characteristic of the language of science and those grammatical aspects that present particular difficulties in language acquisition (Salashchenko, 2019: 78);
- in achieving practical learning goals, general educational, cognitive, and socio-cultural objectives are also realised. Learning English as a cultural and social phenomenon should contribute to students' overall cultural development and deepen their general linguistic knowledge. Therefore, it is recommended to use socio-humanitarian literature that constitutes 40% of the total text material (Panashenko & Akopian, 2010: 32).

Thus, the formation of communicative competence in students will enable them to draft instructions based on professional texts, summarise the provided professional and business materials, understand the document structure of the countries whose language they are studying, format documents in a stylistically appropriate manner, conduct professional telephone conversations on specified topics, engage in professional correspondence, deliver monologues of a professional nature, and possess elements of oral translation during business interactions, meetings, and conferences.

A practical method for enriching a professional foreign language thesaurus is the exploratory reading of texts from various styles and genres, focusing on the analysis and perception of the following intercultural aspects:

- norms and values of business cultures (in the context of comparative analysis) (Celce-Murcia, 2017: 42);
- manners and methods of conducting business contacts, international standards of business etiquette (Schnabel, 2015: 39);
- the structure and meaning of speech acts (requests or offers of assistance, complaints, apologies);
- communication methods (conversation order, elaboration of details, patience towards a lack of information).

Through such active engagement, students master linguistic and behavioural strategies for resolving business issues in English within different business cultures. To achieve this objective (communicative learning), it is advisable to base the learning process on interactive formats (business and role-playing games, "round table" discussions, presentations, and solving communication tasks), which encourage the use of new information technologies and create learning scenarios (simulated situations) that mirror future professional business communication. Together, these activities enable students to develop their lines of communicative behaviour according to their abilities and understanding of specific situations.

A productive idea for developing communicative competence in learning English for professional purposes in higher education institutions is dialogic problem-based learning, which is characterised

in academic literature as effective. Indeed, dialogic problem-based learning most fully conveys the essence of the collaborative process between lecturers and students, highlighting their mutual activity within "subject-subject" relations (Iakovleva, 2003: 6). However, within modern higher education, it is not enough to create conditions for subject-subject communication; it is also crucial to teach students how to perform complex quasi-professional tasks (where features of both educational and future professional activities are organically combined) (Shestopalova, 2021). This can be achieved through active learning methods such as case studies, role-playing and business games, group discussions, and justifying one's point of view (expressing one's position on a particular situation or issue concerning a company or entrepreneur).

A distinctive feature of this active communication training is that it occurs in situations that closely resemble real-life scenarios. In such cases, communicative skills, alongside the linguistic material to be acquired, become the primary goal of the educational process. In addition, students gain practical skills in applying professional knowledge, creating a multidimensional situation as close to real life as possible.

Practice shows that this approach to learning fosters skills related to managing and adjusting one's behavioural styles by understanding how others may perceive their behavioural patterns and what actions provoke specific reactions (such as sympathy, antipathy, trust, and mistrust) or leave interlocutors indifferent. Mastering various behavioural strategies develops personal qualities such as sensitivity and receptivity to the mental state, attitudes, and aspirations of others. Understanding ethnocultural specifics allows students to establish effective business communication with international partners. This enhances their ability to empathise and see a situation from another person's perspective.

Acquiring behavioural strategies can be structured into specific stages of students' educational work when learning English for professional purposes. Here is an outline of these stages.

1. During the introduction to a new topic, it is necessary to determine the student's level of knowledge on the subject (this can involve questionnaires or short tests to identify the degree of basic familiarity with the material and the ability to construct language strategies on the topic).

2. The main task of acquiring language knowledge and skills is achieved by completing lexical and grammatical exercises on the given topic. The selection of exercises must include language samples to construct discussions on the topic.

3. Expanding and deepening professional skills and discussing the stated topic. Students should be encouraged to search for new or missing information and independently verify their ideas at this stage.

4. The acquisition of intercultural communication strategies should be based on fragments of professional communication in various business and management styles (in other words, "role-playing" a situation by exploring its potential development and possible solutions within the framework of Asian or American business management styles, for example). Particular attention is paid to cultural norms and rules of linguistic behaviour associated with using specific language tools.

5. Researching and discussing problematic situations. This work aims to teach students to consider a situation from different perspectives (considering intercultural differences in conducting business in different fields) and to find appropriate ways to resolve it to foster cooperation with representatives of different business cultures.

In linguistic science, it is noted that modelling everyday and professional context situations is an effective method for enriching students' communicative competence when learning English for professional purposes. This method involves educational activities where the object and the subject are united to achieve a common goal and interact collaboratively. Modelling communication situations stimulate the linguistic activity of learners.

The teaching of situational language is a complex process that combines the language system and the interaction between the teacher and students. It takes place in specially created conditions without



a linguistic environment. In English for professional purposes, it is essential to select practice-oriented material, consider the linguistic characteristics of dialogical speech, and choose the appropriate methods.

When selecting linguistic material, it is important to use language that differentiates situational language with a practical focus from other forms of language activity. Language material should be understood not just as specific grammatical, phonetic, and lexical phenomena but as language samples, formulas, and clichés characteristic of a particular situation. For example, when discussing a trip or an excursion, it is advisable to follow an algorithm: proposing a trip, choosing the idea of going on an excursion, discussing the location (where exactly to go), planning, and assigning responsibilities. In teaching English for professional purposes to develop students' communicative competence, the modelling of the following situations in the educational process is practical:

- situations of social-status relationships (discussions, conversations, dialogues with representatives from the countries of the target language);
- situations of role-based relationships (acting out informal situations, role-playing games);
- situations of cooperative activities (sharing experiences, group work, discussions).

Modelling communication situations involves artificially creating specific intercultural communication scenarios (Hoff, 2014: 509) to predict possible communication reactions and outcomes. This modelling is based on using real-life situations to reinforce behavioural patterns. In these communication situations, the conditions resemble real-life scenarios but with trial-and-error possibilities during practice. Modelling communication situations helps students build confidence in applying acquired skills in real-life situations (Shestopalova, 2021).

The following features characterise the modelling of communication situations based on role-playing interactions:

1. The participant must be mentally prepared for the role-played situation.
2. The participant must be able to adapt to the fundamental role being performed.
3. The participant must behave naturally as if everything is happening in reality.
4. The participant must respond to the situation—silence is also evaluated as a response (Camerer, 2014: 208).

Communicative learning within situational modelling is built around situations understood as systems of relationships. The main focus is not on reproducing fragments of reality using visual aids or verbal descriptions but on creating a situation as a system of student interactions. Discussions of situations based on the relationships between participants in communication make learning English for professional purposes as natural and close to actual communication conditions as possible.

By its nature, communicative learning of English for professional purposes is implemented through role plays, business games, discussions, debates, and similar activities. In communicative learning, students learn communication techniques, master speech etiquette, and acquire dialogic and group communication strategies and tactics. They also learn to solve various communicative tasks, assisting them in future professional activities.

Gaining communicative competence involves mastering the foreign language at a level that allows students to use it to meet professional needs, establish business contacts, and continue their professional self-education and self-improvement.

The social demand of the modern information society requires that, within the framework of their studies, students learning English for professional purposes develop the following skills and competences:

- adaptation to large and constantly changing information flows;
- the ability to search for necessary or missing information and apply it practically to solve specific professional tasks;

- the ability to process information competently, i.e., to find relevant facts, analyse them, and evaluate problems with alternative solutions;
- the ability to substantiate their conclusions in English competently;
- communication skills for interacting with representatives of different socio-cultural groups and socio-cultural pragmatics;
- the ability to resolve conflict situations effectively (when required);
- the ability to formulate their hypotheses and ideas for solving assigned tasks.

We believe that studying English for professional purposes effectively creates tasks that encourage students to address communicative and professional challenges. At the same time, the absence of a natural language environment negatively affects the successful completion of the aforementioned tasks, as the "artificial" language environment in the classroom can only partially address the mastery of professional and communicative skills.

Therefore, it is not surprising that teaching English for professional purposes necessitates implementing the project method. Generally, a project is an independent academic task completed over a module, semester, or course. Project-based activities meet the requirements of professionally oriented English language instruction, as they promote the development of three main qualities in students: the ability to work with various data sources and process large amounts of information in English obtained from these sources; the ability to work both in teams and independently, taking responsibility for fulfilling or failing to fulfil their obligations.

The project method is based on a significant research-related problem presented to a group of students. Each student in the group independently completes a part of the project on a professional topic, presents it for group discussion, prepares a presentation speech, and defends the project.

The effectiveness of the project method in foreign language instruction is high. Firstly, the project is an independently planned and implemented research activity in which interpersonal communication in English is organically integrated into the professional and academic context. Thus, it enables the integration of specialised subjects with the English language. Notably, professionally oriented projects are integrative by nature. To address the issues posed within the framework of project preparation, students can practically apply knowledge from related and specialised disciplines. Completing the project task allows students to realise that English is the goal of learning and a means of international professional communication.

Additionally, working on the project is a creative process (Unin & Bearing, 2016: 605). Students engage in seeking solutions to professionally relevant problems. This requires them to independently transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies to a new application context. As a result, students develop creative competence as an indicator of a high level of English proficiency. In the learning process, a situation is created in which communication in English on professional topics becomes natural and fluent, similar to communication in their native language. Evidently, in this scenario, the project participant is expected to focus not so much on the linguistic form of expression as on its content.

During the project, students demonstrate activity and creativity. While working on the project, every student, even those with a very low level of English proficiency or those who are less active psychologically, has the opportunity to express their imagination and creativity, as well as their independence and initiative. A project fundamentally changes the functional roles of the student and the teacher. The former actively selects, organises, and designs the content of English language learning and the specific lesson; the latter acts as a consultant, assistant, and participant in the sessions. Therefore, project-based work lends a student-centred and activity-based learning process, fully corresponding to the new educational goals. It creates conditions in which the process of learning English communication closely resembles the process of natural language acquisition within an authentic linguistic context.

Communicative competence also encompasses mastering non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, postures, and spatial distance, which are additional factors in memorising

lexical and other material. Thus, the formation of foreign language communicative competence is a complex, multifaceted process closely linked to developing and forming all human mental processes and functions.

The process of forming students' communicative competence in learning professionally oriented English structurally differs from that of other academic subjects. In this case, the student's educational activities are multifunctional; in other words, the goal is not only to master professionally oriented English as a means of communication but also to simultaneously acquire professional knowledge from foreign sources and develop general informational and professional culture.

**Conclusions.** Improving the professional training system in higher education is primarily linked to the significantly changed social and individual demands in specialist preparation. Society increasingly requires professionals proficient in English for professional purposes at a level sufficient for effective professional communication.

The success of foreign language instruction in higher education institutions is currently associated with the necessity to align the teaching of English for professional purposes entirely with the needs of the national economy and the requirements for foreign language skills in various types of professional activities across different occupations. Foreign language instruction in higher education institutions is an integral component of the professional training of modern specialists in all fields and takes on a professionally oriented nature. Therefore, it is advisable to structure the educational process based on considering all its components. Its practical implementation relies on the principles of competency-based and student-centred approaches, whose postulates enable the organisation of a contextual educational environment.

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