

## DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF FUTURE LAW BACHELORS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

**Lytvynenko H. M.**

*Assistant at the Department of Applied Linguistics*

*State University «Uzhhorod National University»*

*Narodna Square 3, Uzhhorod, Ukraine*

*[orcid.org/0000-0002-6760-8630](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6760-8630)*

*[hanna.lytvynenko@uzhnu.edu.ua](mailto:hanna.lytvynenko@uzhnu.edu.ua)*

**Key words:** *authentic materials, English for Specific Purposes, context learning, legal discourse, language competence.*

The scientific paper is devoted to the author's research on the issue of formation of communicative competence of first (bachelor's) level students of «Law» specialty in foreign language classes. This subject has continuously received a significant attention of specialists in pedagogy and language studies, as foreign language for students not majoring in languages presents an intricate combination of the necessary language skillset, professionally-oriented lexis and the ability to appropriately apply knowledge in disciplinary and intercultural contexts in future activities. The attention is also brought to the previous diverse research of the problem, conducted by both domestic and foreign researchers. The topicality of the paper is explained by the importance of mastering foreign language for a professional activity, which is additionally highlighted by the national legislation. In terms of relevance, the research contributes to the existing research paradigm that shows the ties between language learning and professional training in legal education. The purpose of this article is to analyse the concept of communicative competence as a key element in the professional training of law students, to identify its constituent components, and to correlate them with the specific features of legal education, as well as to provide methodological recommendations for their development. This approach enables future specialists with the necessary skills in the field of international legal communication. An important yet challenging way of developing students' foreign language communicative potential is the usage of authentic materials and professionally oriented topics in the learning process. However, despite the obvious advantages of such an approach, particularly the increase in students' motivation, the instructor should ensure proper structuring of tasks and their adaptation to the needs and language level of the class. For the effective use, the following legal sources are recommended: JURISTnews, Law360, Law Society Gazette, and the ECHR database. The study also outlines promising directions for further research, namely the practical observation and evaluation of tasks aimed at developing students' competence in multicultural and professional environments.

---

## ФОРМУВАННЯ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ БАКАЛАВРІВ ПРАВА НА ЗАНЯТТЯХ З ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

Литвиненко Г. М.

*асистент кафедри прикладної лінгвістики*

*Державний вищий навчальний заклад «Ужгородський національний університет»*

*площа Народна, 3, Ужгород, Україна*

*orcid.org/0000-0002-6760-8630*

*hanna.lytvynenko@uzhnu.edu.ua*

**Ключові слова:** автентичні матеріали, англійська для спеціальних цілей, контекстне навчання, юридичний дискурс, мовна компетентність.

Статтю присвячено дослідженню проблеми формування комунікативної компетентності у здобувачів першого (бакалаврського) рівня вищої освіти спеціальності «Право» на заняттях з іноземної мови. Означене питання у центрі уваги фахівців із педагогіки та лінгвістики, позаяк іноземна мова для здобувачів вищої освіти нефілологічних спеціальностей є складним поєднанням необхідного набору мовних навичок, професійно орієнтованої лексики та здатності належним чином застосовувати знання у дисциплінарному та міжкультурному контекстах у майбутній професійній діяльності. Звертається увага й на багатосторонні дослідження означеного питання, проведені як вітчизняними, так і зарубіжними науковцями. Актуальність статті пояснюється важливістю володіння іноземною мовою у професійній діяльності, що додатково підкреслюється вимогами національного законодавства. Наукова новизна визначається внеском у сучасну дослідницьку парадигму, що демонструє взаємозв'язок між вивченням мови та професійною підготовкою у сфері юридичної освіти. Метою статті є аналіз поняття комунікативної компетентності як ключового елемента професійної підготовки студентів-правників, виокремлення її складових компонентів та співвіднесення їх зі специфікою юридичної освіти, а також надання методичних рекомендацій щодо їх формування. Означений підхід дає можливість забезпечити майбутніх фахівців необхідними навичками у сфері міжнародної юридичної комунікації. Важливим і водночас непростим шляхом розвитку іншомовного комунікативного потенціалу студентів є використання автентичних матеріалів та професійно орієнтованих тем у навчальному процесі. Однак попри очевидні переваги такого підходу, зокрема підвищення мотивації студентів, викладач має забезпечити належне структурування завдань та адаптувати їх до потреб і рівня підготовки аудиторії. Для ефективного використання на заняттях з іноземної мови рекомендовано такі джерела правового змісту: JURISTnews, Law360, Law Society Gazette, база даних ЄСПЛ. У дослідженні також окреслено перспективні напрями подальших розвідок, зокрема практичне спостереження та оцінювання завдань, орієнтованих на розвиток компетентності студентів у багатокультурному та професійному середовищах.

**Problem statement.** Since English is acknowledged as a lingua franca in all spheres of contemporary global activities, its leading role in various educational programs within all levels of education can hardly be unnoticed. The adoption of the Law of Ukraine «On the Use of the English Language in Ukraine» (2024) [5] only highlights the strategic importance of English as a language of international communication and professional mobility, especially for a wide range of specialists, including prosecutors,

law enforcement officers, military personnel, public servants, and managers of state institutions. According to the law, the command of English is now a prerequisite for holding positions in state administration, the judiciary, prosecution, law enforcement, higher education leadership, and other strategic sectors. This legislative act stresses the necessity of enhancing English language training for future law bachelors, since their professional activities are now closely tied to international cooperation and participation in global

discourse. Legal English is a highly specialized and complicated register that demands not only language proficiency but also a deep understanding of legal terminology, sometimes jargon, phrasing and reasoning. However, traditional foreign language instruction for law students does not always meet such specific demands, as it typically emphasizes general English rather than the professional language. Although students' language proficiency may be relatively low, it is still essential to introduce domain-specific English related to legal discourse alongside general training as to both promote foreign language competence and contextual learning.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

Contemporary domestic and foreign studies almost unanimously prove the abovementioned points. A. Liuolienė, R. Metiūnienė concur that traditional English language training may not be sufficient enough to meet lawyers' language requirements. The main prerequisite for this is the fact that this training generally ignores the ways in which English usage may be modified by the particular demands of legal practice – and by the conventions of legal English as a separate branch of English in itself, i.e. legal English which now is a global phenomenon [10, p. 56]. I. Hrachova, O. Dubinina and S. Bulenok state that using authentic texts and modern technologies in English teaching helps develop the language and professional competence [2]. O. Balanaieva et al. in the course of their respective study, highlight the important task of foreign language training for future lawyers which is overcome the language barrier. Moreover, the process of learning a foreign language should be aimed at mastering, first of all, a spoken foreign language, which can be used in the most typical situations of professional communication [7]. Similarly, H. Leshchenko claims that mastering a foreign language expands the worldview of professionals, allows them to conduct professional activities, especially with foreign partners. The author also insisted on updating the content of foreign language education, on the active implementation of modern competence-oriented technologies and methods aimed at practical mastery of foreign languages [3]. When it comes to the content of foreign language classes, H. Poliakova suggests implementing contextual learning, i.e. an approach which helps students perceive the subject more logically, assimilate material consciously through repetition, make use of interdisciplinary links, and improve the overall effectiveness of foreign language course [4, p. 113].

**The purpose of the article** is to substantiate the concept of communicative competence of future law bachelors as an integral component of their professional training, to identify its specific features in the legal sphere, and to develop methodological recom-

mendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of its formation in higher education institutions so as to equip future professional with a sufficient set of skills to boost their competitiveness in a global market and legal cooperation.

**Presentation of the main research material.** The notion of foreign language communicative competence has always received substantial attention in pedagogical circles, especially when it concerns students of non-language majors but whose specialties are closely connected to global cooperation. Despite the variety of existing definitions, its essence lies in the ability and readiness of a specialist to creatively solve practice-oriented tasks in the field of professional activity and foreign-language professionally oriented communication. Its structural components include:

1. linguistic competence – mastery of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics etc;
2. discursive competence – ability to ensure coherence, cohesion, and logical organization of oral and written texts;
3. speech competence – ability to speak fluently, naturally, and without undue hesitation when receiving and transmitting professional information;
4. pragmatic competence – ability to convey communicative meaning in accordance with the social context;
5. information-technological competence – ability to search for professionally significant foreign-language information from various sources and to effectively use foreign-language Internet resources in professional activity;
6. strategic competence – ability to apply verbal and non-verbal professional communication strategies to compensate for gaps in knowledge in real-life interaction;
7. sociocultural competence – knowledge of the sociocultural context in which the language is used;
8. personal-creative competence – ability to improve one's level of foreign language proficiency and to develop self-directed learning and creative skills in the process of independent research and professional activity [6, p. 117].

In the case of law students, all the components mentioned above are essential and require tailoring to meet the demands of professional practice. As for linguistic competence one may associate it with mastering legal terminology, sentence structures, appropriate grammar structures and clichés typical for contracts, rulings, agreements etc. In the same vein, discursive competence presents itself in the ability of a students and a future professional to construct coherent arguments. Conversely, pragmatic and sociocultural competences gain a critical role, especially in a globalised context, as they ensure that future graduates are able to communicate appropriately and stay culturally informed.

Correspondingly, R. Shramko et al. illustrate that within the framework of the educational and professional program for bachelor students in law, foreign language competence is also formed and influenced by general humanitarian subjects. Courses such as Language, Culture, Society, Cultural Studies, and Philosophy constitute the general foundation, fostering pragmatic, intercultural, and linguasociocultural competences. Consequently, these courses contribute to students' multidimensional understanding of human knowledge, the structure and organization of society, and the strategies of communication that influence both the individual and the community. Thus, these subjects form an integral part of communicative competence in a foreign language, preparing students for professional and intercultural interactions [12, p. 207].

In this respect, a foreign language instructor may not be limited just to teaching linguistic skills, but also act as a mediator between the general humanitarian basis and the professional sphere of students' interest. For instance, students may be offered to select a recent legal event (through platforms like JURISTnews, Law360, Law Society Gazette) and present a short briefing in groups, leading to further discussion in terms of cultural specifics, relevant legal norms or students' own worldview. Some articles can be discussed within a class time and tailored to specific grammatical or lexical topic. Through drawing clear connections between legal notions, cultural awareness, communication techniques and worldview-shaping humanitarian disciplines, one contributes to the holistic all-round development of students' personality. Moreover, this teaching paradigm creates favorable conditions for the development of personal-creative competence, which ultimately fosters autonomy and continuous self-improvement, as there is a need for Ukrainian lawyers and professionals in related spheres to engage more in international cooperation and manage multicultural environments, all the while using English as a means of communication.

J. Babiak, L. Dzhydzhora and O. Perenchuk have emphasized that ESP (English for Specific Purposes) most fully meets the needs of international communication in a professional environment, provides a sufficient lexical and grammatical minimum for a specialist, the necessary pace and fluency of speech [1, p. 13], since it primarily focuses on teaching English for activity in particular professional or academic fields, providing language skills directly relevant to students' future careers. One of the recent trends in ESP education is its embedding with authentic materials and context learning. Unlike simplified or adapted materials, authentic texts expose students to real-world legal discourse, terminology, and argumentation strategies. Since the main purpose of using educational materials in ESP classes is to create potential opportunities

for practical interaction, an appropriate and motivating language environment, it is authentic texts, that are the basis for achieving this goal. They provide students with a meaningful context and necessary vocabulary, and act as a connecting link to their future activities. A professional foreign language in higher education does not involve direct study of grammatical categories within a separate topic of the curriculum, but only indirectly through texts and tasks of a professional direction and a ready set of grammar patterns, observed in various texts (like imperative in instruction, official notices or procedural documents) [ibid, p. 14].

A vital point in any research in this field is students' motivation, which stands as a cornerstone in the broader educational context, acting as a driving force that significantly influences students' academic journeys. In the broader educational landscape, motivated students tend to exhibit increased engagement, enhanced cognitive performance, and a proactive approach to learning [11, p. 300]. As it was outlined before, students' sometimes limited language background may hinder a productive educational process and demotivate them. However, inclusion of career-oriented and real contexts may aid them in the language journey. Thus, the efficacy of authentic sources in ESP cannot be overlooked as they resonate with the professional aspirations, bridge the gap between theory and practice and instill a sense of purpose [ibid, p. 301]. Students directly deal with real documents, observe patterns, learn relevant vocabulary and, with the correct approach, hone communicative skills. In this respect, problem-based learning (PBL) offers a promising approach.

Although not unique, the focus on problem-solving activities is a strong and distinctive feature of legal education. PBL encourages academics to place that aspect at the centre of the learning process. In this way, students are confronted with the materials and facts underlying a problem from which they have to work out both the nature of the problem and an appropriate solution, usually without (much) prior instruction in the necessary knowledge to solve it. The commonly acknowledged characteristics of problem-based learning include stimulus materials, problems that are presented as a simulation of professional practice or a real-life situation and students are prompted to work cooperatively as a group [9, p. 367].

In the context of foreign language instruction, PBL proves especially valuable for law students, since they engage with relevant scenarios, practicing not only linguistic skills but also the ability to agree/disagree with other groups, negotiate, and justify their positions using legal discourse. Despite the important role of such materials, it is necessary to emphasize the potential risks in this process. First of all, it should be kept in mind that the majority of

authentic texts were not written specifically for the purpose of learning the language. In addition, their use often requires great efforts on the part of the teacher in conducting searches, developing appropriate grammatical and lexical tasks, and bringing the materials closer to the learning objectives and time frames of the classroom [1, p. 14].

Continuing this line of thought, it is generally accepted that legislative writing has acquired a certain degree of notoriety rarely equalled by any other variety of English. It has long been criticized for its obscure expressions and circumlocutions, long-winded involved constructions and tortuous syntax, apparently meaningless repetitions and archaisms [8, p. 101]

However, exposure to real legal texts within a language class should not mean a student will read and translate the document, all the while dealing with the specificity of the legal discourse. It is up to a teacher to make this process more approachable and fruitful.

One particularly valuable source of authentic legal English for law students is the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which is available through the official HUDOC database. HUDOC provides access to thousands of full-text judgments and rulings in a number of languages, making it an ideal tool for language learning in the legal context. Users can search by keywords, articles of the Convention, country and filter results based on document type or language. Such user-friendly interface is easily adaptable to the needs of a class.

The database includes cases relevant to topics such as freedom of expression, a right to a fair trial, privacy rights, non-discrimination based on race, religion, disability – cases that students often study in main law curricula and present a heightened interest in. Active and multifaceted engagement with the context will facilitate students' critical thinking, reason-

ing and analysis and practical application of knowledge in the foreign language classroom.

One of the key benefits of using the material from this database is the exposure to professional legal vocabulary in context and recurring patterns in such discourse. Phrases and collocations as «*to lodge a complaint*», «*to infringe one's right to something*», «*to allege a violation of one's right*», «*to uphold the conclusion*», «*a circumvention of legal provisions*», «*to rebut a credible conclusion*», «*to strike a fair balance between*», «*the conviction was quashed*», «*case was remitted for retrial*», «*in this context the Court reiterates that*» etc. expand students' ability to understand legal texts and aid in classroom activities – presentations, drafting case summaries, participating in role-plays, or dealing with PBL tasks. Ultimately, they result in all-round development of previously mentioned elements of communicative competence – linguistic, discursive, pragmatic etc.

**Conclusions and prospects for further developments in this area.** Foreign language communicative competence is indisputably a vital part of overall education of law students. Not only it contributes to their general knowledge, but also aids in facilitating international legal discourse and enhancement of cultural awareness, presentation and interpersonal skills. Although, the usage of authentic materials, profession-related texts and contexts in discussions improve students' motivation and boost their confidence, the complexity of such texts still presents challenges. Thus, thoughtful scaffolding and appropriate task design can turn them into a powerful tool in language classes. Future studies may be aimed at practical research analysing how specific tasks, as the ones mentioned here, influence students' autonomy, ability to evaluate and assess information and present it in a clear, unbiased manner, using appropriate language.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Баб'як Ж., Джиджора Л., Перенчук О. Використання матеріалів на заняттях ESP: Автентичні завдання чи традиційні підручники. *Освітні обрії*. 2019. № 1(48). С. 12–16.
2. Грачова І., Дубініна О., Буленок С. Інтеграція автентичних текстів у навчальний процес з англійської мови у закладах вищої освіти. *Актуальні питання гуманітарних наук*. 2025. Вип. 83. Т. 2. С. 252–258.
3. Лещенко Г.А. Засоби формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності у фахівців з права: практичний аспект. *Наукові записки. Серія «Педагогічні науки»*. 2024. № 214. С. 392–396. <https://doi.org/10.36550/2415-7988-2024-1-214-392-396>
4. Полякова Г.П. Контекстний підхід у викладанні іноземних мов як чинник формування конкурентоспроможності майбутніх юристів. *Наука і освіта*. 2015. № 6. С. 110–114.
5. Про застосування англійської мови в Україні : Закон України від 04.06.2024 № 3760-IX. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3760-20#Text>
6. Юхно Н.В. Суть та структура іншомовної комунікативної компетентності фахівців. *Наукові записки кафедри педагогіки*. 2022. № 51. С. 113–120.
7. Balanaieva, O., Mamonova, O., Khuda, N., Hupka-Makohin, N., & Morozovska, L. Formation of foreign language communicative competence of future lawyers. *RevistaEduweb*. 2023. № 17(2). P. 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.46502/issn.1856-7576/2023.17.02.8>
8. Bhatia V.K. *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. London: Longman. 1993.

9. Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., & Marshall, S. (Eds.). A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: *Enhancing academic practice*. 3rd ed. Routledge. 2009.
10. Liuolienė, A., Metiūnienė, R. Legal English and Adapted Legal Texts. *SANTALKA: Filologija, Edukologija*. 2012. № 20(1). P. 56–64.
11. Nypadymka A., Danchenko L. Understanding and fostering motivation in law students studying English as a foreign language. *Актуальні питання гуманітарних наук*. 2023. Вип. 70. Т. 2. С. 297–303.
12. Shramko, R., Rakhno, M., Mokliak, V., & Mokliak, O. Роль іншомовної комунікативної компетентності у формуванні професійно зорієнтованої комунікації майбутніх бакалаврів права: виклики сьогодення. *Витоки педагогічної майстерності*. 2022. № 30. С. 204–210. <https://doi.org/10.33989/2075-146x.2022.30.270682>

## REFERENCES

1. Babiak J., Dzhydzhora L., & Perenchuk O. (2019) Vykorystannia materialiv na zaniattiakh ESP: Avtentychni zavdannia chy tradytsiini pidruchnyky [The use of materials in ESP classes: Authentic tasks or traditional textbooks] *Educational horizons*. 1(48). P. 12–16.
2. Hrachova I., Dubinina O., & Bulenok S. (2025) Intehratsiia avtentychnykh tekstiv u navchalnyi protses z anhliiskoi movy u zakladakh vyshchoi osvity [Integration of authentic texts into the English language teaching process in higher education institutions] *Current Issues of the Humanities*. 83(2). P. 252–258.
3. Leshchenko, H.A. (2024) Zasoby formuvannia inshomovnoi komunikativnoi kompetentnosti u fakhivtsiv z prava: Praktychnyi aspekt [Means of developing foreign language communicative competence in law professionals: Practical aspect] *Academic Notes. Series: Pedagogical Sciences*, (214), P. 392–396. <https://doi.org/10.36550/2415-7988-2024-1-214-392-396>
4. Poliakova, H.P. (2015) Kontekstnyi pidkhid u vykladanni inozemnykh mov yak chynnyk formuvannia konkurentospromozhnosti maibutnikh yurystiv [Contextual approach to foreign languages teaching as factor of future lawyers' competitive ability formation] *Science and Education*. (6), P. 110–114.
5. Pro zastosuvannia anhliiskoi movy v Ukraini: Zakon Ukrainy vid 04.06.2024 r. № 3760-IX. [Law of Ukraine «On the Use of the English Language in Ukraine»] URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3760-20#Text>
6. Iukhno N.V. (2022) Sut ta struktura inshomovnoi komunikativnoi kompetentnosti fakhivtsiv [The essence and structure of the formation of foreign language communicative competence of specialists] *Scientific notes of the pedagogical department*. (51), P. 113–120.
7. Balanaieva O., Mamonova O., Khuda N., Hupka-Makohin N., & Morozovska L. Formation of foreign language communicative competence of future lawyers. *RevistaEduweb*. 2023. 17(2), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.46502/issn.1856-7576/2023.17.02.8>
8. Bhatia V.K. Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings. London: Longman. 1993.
9. Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., & Marshall, S. (Eds.). A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: *Enhancing academic practice*. 3rd ed. Routledge. 2009.
10. Liuolienė, A., Metiūnienė, R. Legal English and Adapted Legal Texts. *SANTALKA: Filologija, Edukologija*. 2012. № 20(1). P. 56–64.
11. Nypadymka A., Danchenko L. (2023) Understanding and fostering motivation in law students studying English as a foreign language. *Current Issues of the Humanities*. 70(2), P. 297–303.
12. Shramko R., Rakhno M., Mokliak V., & Mokliak O. (2022) Rol inshomovnoi komunikativnoi kompetentnosti u formuvanni profesiino-zoriietovanoi komunikatsii maibutnikh bakalavriv prava: Vyklyky sohodennia [The role of foreign language communicative competence in the formation of professionally-oriented communication of intending bachelors of law: modern challenges] *The sources of pedagogical skills* (30), 204–210. <https://doi.org/10.33989/2075-146x.2022.30.270682>

Дата першого надходження рукопису до видання: 23.08.2025

Дата прийнятого до друку рукопису після рецензування: 19.09.2025

Дата публікації: 20.10.2025