**Teaching Professional English to BA and MA Economics Students**

**at Kazakhstan Branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University**

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1. **Introduction**

Teaching a foreign language (hereinafter referred to as FL) is significantly different from teaching any other discipline, since teaching a FL is not only transferring a certain amount of knowledge to students (which usually happens when teaching other subjects), but also developing certain language skills of students (hereinafter - LSS). For the LSS formation a number of conditions are necessary, the most important of which are the psychological qualities of the learners, that is, the ability and inclination to learn FLs. It is possible to develop in learners the so-called *language competence* (or theoretical knowledge of the language), but so far no one has succeeded in artificially inculcating the *sense of language*, developing *communicative competence* (or the ability to correctly apply the obtained theoretical knowledge in the process of communication, using the same language tools that a native speaker would use in this particular situation).

 The module *Professional English* has a distinctive feature – it is interdisciplinary in nature, combining knowledge from various subject areas: literature, history, natural sciences, from the social spheres of life in different countries. Studying a foreign language, learners get acquainted with the second (third, etc.) cultural reality, cultural traditions, cultural specifics of verbal communication, mastering the cultural experience of an authentic cultural-linguistic personality, thus forming communicative competence.

According to Lvov M.R. (1999) there is the following definition of *communicative competence* (hereinafter as CC) in the “Dictionary-reference book on the methodology of teaching Russian language”: *knowing language (native or foreign) and its phonetics, lexis, grammar, stylistics, speech culture; having these means and mechanisms of speech – speaking, listening, reading, writing – within the limits of a person’s social, professional, cultural needs. CC is one of the most important characteristics of the linguistic personality; … acquired as a result of natural speech activity and as a result of special training* ” [1, 92–93].

Van Ek (1999) described CC based on the Council of Europe specification. He believed that it consists of the following components or sub-competences:

* linguistic competence (knowledge and ability to use vocabulary and grammatical rules);
* sociolinguistic competence (ability to use and interpret language forms in accordance with the situation / context);
* discourse competence (knowledge of the features inherent in various types of discourses, the ability to use certain strategies for constructing and interpreting text on FL, that is, the ability to generate discourses in the process of communication. The most common types of training courses in the field of communication are: report, discussion, questioning, etc.);
* strategic competence (the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for missing knowledge);
* socio-cultural competence (learners' knowledge of the national-cultural characteristics of social and speech behavior of native speakers: their customs, etiquette, social stereotypes, history and culture of the country, and the ability to use knowledge in the process of communication);
* social competence (the desire and willingness to interact with others, the ability to manage the situation) (pp. 12-14).

While teaching learners we get learners acquainted with the second (third, etc.) cultural reality, cultural traditions, cultural specifics of verbal communication, mastering the cultural experience of an authentic cultural-linguistic personality. Thus, we – English teachers – try to form communicative competence and professional competence of both BA and MA students.

The **objective** of this paper is to explain the means of teaching *Professional English* to BA students and *Business Communication* to MA students studying Economics at the Branch. Among the most important aims of teaching these modules to the learners is the development of language, communicative and professional competences as the learners are non-native speakers of English.

1. **Discussion**

The contingent of BA Economics students remains conditionally stable, due to the number of grants allocated in the Branch. The number of MA students increases every year. Thus, in the 2018-2019 academic years the total number of BA students is 154 students. The number of MA students studying *National Economics* is 16; and those studying *Regional Development* *Economics* is 14. The total number of MA students is 30 this academic year.

***Figure 1. Ratio of BA and MA Economics students at the University***

When developing a program for teaching *Professional Foreign English Language* for BA students at Astana Branch, the teaching staff of the **English Language Department** assumes that curriculum development depends on a number of factors: the specifics of the university, the objectives of teaching foreign languages, the conditions of study, and the type of specialty. These aspects should be taken into account, since they are the basis for achieving the main goal, i.e. the formation of effective foreign language communicative competence of students.

The course of studying *Professional Foreign English Language* at Astana Branch is communicative-oriented and professionally oriented. Tasks are determined by the needs of future specialists of the appropriate profile. The purpose of the course is the acquisition of communicative competence, the level of which would allow using English to be practiced practically both in the professional sphere and for further professional training and self-education.

Here, the authors will examine the content of the discipline *Professional Foreign English Language* in more detail, located in the basic part of the studied disciplines of the course of study "Economics" (BA 1-3 years; MA 1-2 years).

The objectives of mastering the discipline in the framework of the disciplines required for training in the first and second year of the BA education level are: the development of intercultural and communicative competence; mastering prepared and unprepared dialogic and monologue speech; development of the ability to intercultural interaction in professional English. The course *Professional Foreign English Language* in the third year of the bachelor’s level sets as its objectives the improvement of the independent work skills with authentic text: compiling a glossary, viewing the text and a brief summary of its content (annotation), developing a written essay writing skills, writing from English into Russian and vice versa. At this stage, there is an improvement in the skills of perception and note-taking of lectures, discussion on research and business topics, presentations, analysis of periodical materials. The ability to interpret and independently present graphic information is also important.

The curriculum of the discipline *Professional Foreign English Language* at the master's level (1st year) is a logical continuation of the previously studied undergraduate program and is intended for in-depth work on a foreign language. The main goal is to improve the skills of analyzing a research text in a specialty, followed by writing an abstract as well as developing the skills of a productive academic writing, i.e. writing research articles and reports with their subsequent presentation. During this course, a deep study of specialized economic terminology within the framework of a given topic is offered. Much attention is paid to the development of discussion skills on topical issues of the national economy, regional development economy and financial analytics. Practical work consists of a series of educational, monitoring and creative assignments for further automation of the reproduction and use of basic vocational-oriented phrases and clichés in foreign speech. An active professional vocabulary is being studied (glossary, abbreviations), where keywords are presented as part of combinations with large word-formation capabilities.

Practical development and further improvement of previously acquired skills of speaking and writing in a professional foreign language in the field of economics is also carried out by MA students in their second year in the framework of *Business Communication* course. In the context of the globalization of world economic relations and the internationalization of business contacts in modern society, knowledge of the features of international business communication becomes especially relevant for future specialists in the economic sphere. In this regard, the problems of the most effective transfer of the pragmatic component of business messages by the authors are put forward in a prominent place, taking into account the specific features of foreign-language business communication between partners belonging to different socio-cultural layers of the international business community.

Within the framework of this course, it is intended to familiarize with the fundamental principles of *Professional Business Communication* with the subsequent possibility of developing written and oral communication skills. MA students improve their skills in compiling basic genres of business correspondence, including business e-mails, business proposals, corporate blogs, websites, business reports, minutes, resumes, etc., as well as working out skills for compiling and presenting oral business presentations, reports, and business projects, business negotiations, etc. In addition, special attention is paid to familiarization with effective strategies for the compilation of oral and written business messages that help avoid many communicative and pragmatic errors and problems in the course of professional work, especially when compiling negative posts (a letter of rejection, a letter of complaint, etc.).

Based on the goal (i.e. the formation of communicative language competence) the selection of the discipline content in question is carried out, the features of training BA and MA students of "Economics" are taken into account.

The training of future economists is aimed at the development and consolidation of LSSs in all types of speech activity (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). An important task is also the development of the ability to conduct conversations on general humanitarian topics, acquaintance with the cultural traditions and customs of the countries of the studied language and introduction to the language of professional communication. The need to introduce general humanitarian themes into the language content of foreign language education is explained by the need to a more complete picture of the world that would ensure the personal needs of future specialists. The topics for speaking should cover various areas of communication both in our country and in the countries of the language being studied.

The first course of study (bachelor stage) consists of four main sections “Language and Society”, “Language and Culture”, “Education”, “Youth's problems” and covers the following areas: social, educational, labor, socio-cultural, administrative spheres communication. Each section is represented by the main text and the active dictionary of the text. Students also get acquainted with additional articles on the topic "The Role of the English Language", "Universal Language", "Youth Problems", "Types of Universities" and many others. The students perform various types of tasks aimed at consolidating new words and expressions. Students answer questions on the text, lead a conversation, during which they express their opinion on this aspect. Work with lexical exercises is aimed mainly at expanding and deepening the learnt material.

Thorough attention is also paid to the study of English grammar: the program includes repetition and reinforcement of skills to use all tenses of the English verb, plural and singular nouns, articles, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Students learn the rules of writing an essay, resume, letters of recommendation, statements. Individual work of students in this discipline is also conducted, during which students make presentations, abstracts and presentations on topics of interest to them within the framework of the program in English.

In the second and third years of study, BA students learn the language of *Professional Business Communication*. At this stage the economic issues are mainly discussed. Topics for discussion and debate include the following areas: “Macro and microeconomics”, “Means of economic analysis”, “Role of the state in the economy”, “Banking system in Kazakhstan and abroad”, “Unemployment and economic development”, etc.

The following grammatical aspects undergo a more in-depth and detailed analysis: indirect speech, conditional sentences, active and passive voice, personal and non-personal forms of the verb, etc. The second and third courses are aimed at familiarizing students with the main content of the course "Economics" in English. Each course consists of a series of topics containing authentic texts and a series of exercises for reinforcing grammatical and lexical structures. Each section will include a lecture on relevant topics and lecture exercises for the development of listening skills and understanding of specialized texts. At this stage of study, independent work of students is manifested through discussions and debates within the framework of educational topics, writing essays, watching films in English with their further discussion and many others aspects.

Teaching a foreign language in the MA level is based on the content of research papers of MA students and professional training subjects. Within this course, MA students of "Economics" write and submit a project, built on the principles of "Team building" and "Project Writing". The main course consists of two blocks complementing each other, namely: 1) “Transition Economies: Analytical Reading, Writing and Discussion”; 2) “Building a Financial System: Creative Writing and Report Making”. At this stage MA students compile a glossary of terms and terminological phrases on aspects of the selected project, develop skills for adequate translation of scientific economic texts and search for relevant information in various sources: economic publications and on Internet sites, learn to analyze large scientific texts on the subject of projects. Much attention is paid to the ability to structure the text, taking into account the compositional and linguistic specifics of individual genres: annotations, abstracts, critical analysis, the rationale of the project, the report on the project. A variety of tasks and exercises are aimed at the formation of special skills of reviewing and annotating the scientific economic texts underlying the project; writing reports on the problems of announced projects; producing monologue statements on aspects of the project analysis with the subsequent presentation of the selected aspect of the project, observing the norms of oral and written etiquette adopted in English-language language culture.

The methodological support of the discipline is based on the textbooks of the authors of the Economics Department of Lomonosov Moscow State University: Belilovskaya, N., Nikolaeva ,N. Tolstikova, E. – *Study Guide to Economics*; Sharabarina, N., Kulik, L. *English for the Junior Students of the Humanities* (Units 1-4); Kleimenova, E., Kulik, L. *English for Senior Students of Economics*, Kleimenova, E., *Reader for Masters: Economics: for 1st year undergraduates*; Podchasov, A., Nikolaev, N. *Manual on the translation of English economic literature (grammatical difficulties)*; Teichmann, E. *English test collection: Economics*. The textbooks are designed for BA and MA students enrolled in the specialty *Economics*, written on the basis of authentic English-language sources (including materials from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), including general humanitarian aspects and issues devoted to the most pressing problems of the modern economy. The main priority of these teaching materials is their orientation towards the Russian realities. This priority embodies both positive and negative sides. The positive aspect is obviously a detailed introducing students to the Russian economic realities. The negative aspect is the lack of any information about Kazakhstan's economic realities.

One of the main tasks of the Kazakhstan Branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University is training specialists for the labor market of Kazakhstan. In this regard, the teaching staff of English Language Department published a manual *English for Economists*, describing Kazakhstan's economic realities. The lexical material of this manual is necessary for economic specialists in the conditions of development of the state program of trilingualism (Kazakh + English + Russian languages). The manual is aimed at the development of oral and written foreign language speech of students by working with relevant material for students, carrying information about the current state and development of the economy of Kazakhstan. The textual information of the manual is a basis for holding discussions on professional economic topics and increases the general level of proficiency in a foreign language. The text of the manual describes both the current state of the economy of Kazakhstan and individual facts from the history of the countries. This will help students to be more knowledgeable in the field of economic development of the state and will allow them to describe it to foreign partners.

1. **Conclusion**

Thus, the program of teaching *Professional English* during 3 BA years and 2 MA years is designed to develop and improve the language skills of BA and MA students, forming intercultural communicative and professional competences. Due to logic and competent connection of class and individual work, BA and MA students of Kazakhstan Branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University acquire the necessary competences and language knowledge of Professional English (levels B2 and C1).

**References**

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