

THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING SPEECH ACTIVITIES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO INTERNATIONAL LAW STUDENTS

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The article explores the challenges and methodologies involved in teaching speech activities in English to students specializing in International Law at the School of Law. The problems are further complicated by the conditions of distance learning, which, on the one hand, exacerbate the teaching process, but on the other hand, offer facilitation as distance learning, by its nature, enhances interaction between students and teachers, granting flexibility in terms of both spatial and temporal dimensions. Among the many means of communication utilized, Zoom stands out as a prominent service for organizing online classes. The key factor in optimizing language skills is the use of a student-centered model. The current level of development of students' speaking skills in the target language does not meet modern educational requirements, which emphasizes the relevance of this issue. In the era of globalization, the main goal of teaching English is not just to master the language system or gain linguistic knowledge, but to master it as a means of communication. Creating favorable conditions for the development of students' communicative skills in a foreign language is one of the main tasks of the teacher. By recreating circumstances that are similar to those when native speakers acquire native language skills, students can immerse themselves in a similar environment, and this will contribute to the effective development of their speech skills.

Law students specializing in international law should have the communicative competence that will allow them to communicate effectively with both native speakers and people who use the language as a communication tool. In the absence of a natural language environment, teachers should build the educational process in accordance with a reasonably constructed model of educational and professional communication. A prerequisite for the creative use of the acquired language and speech material is communicative orientation in the process of teaching a foreign language.

Keywords: *distance learning, language teaching, speech activities, student-centred approach.*

Problem statement. The article addresses the challenge of teaching speech activities in English to students learning this language as a foreign one. The significance of this issue arises from the contemporary need to cultivate highly skilled, communicatively competent international professionals, particularly in the field of law. Enhancing the teaching of foreign languages in higher education institutions necessitates the integration of innovative methodologies, the establishment of conducive learning environments to unlock students' creative potential, and their active engagement in the language learning process.

The interaction between students and teachers in the learning process is facilitated by distance learning, recognized by scholars as an educational format where students and teachers are physically separated but maintain communication through various technological means. Among these tools, Zoom stands out as a service for organizing online classes. Its features include video and audio communication, screen sharing with sound, and a chat function for messaging.

This mode of education has gained significant traction in recent years due to its flexibility and accessibility, enabling learners to access educational resources and engage in coursework regardless of geographical location or time constraints.

Considering the global challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine, the necessity and urgency of distance learning have become even more pronounced. As scholars like V. Kuharenko and V. Bondarenko have highlighted, the adoption of crisis or emergency distance learning strategies has been imperative for domestic educational institutions [4].

One of the critical factors that greatly enhances the development of students' skills and abilities in speech activity is the adopting of a student-centred model tailored to their interests and needs. This necessitates fundamental changes within the education system. The current level of development of students' speech skills in the target language does not meet the demands of modern education, underscoring the relevance of this issue.

Recent research and publications. Contemporary scholars highlight a shift in the primary objective of teaching in modern educational contexts. Rather than merely transmitting knowledge from teacher to student, as is done in the traditional training system where the central figure is the teacher, the emphasis is on optimizing foreign language instruction and actively engaging students as interested and proactive participants in the learning process. "The integration of innovative teaching practices entails a move away from traditional pedagogical approaches towards a student-centred model that prioritizes the interests and needs of learners" [6: 131].

It is worth noting that this transition from a teacher-centred to a student-centred educational system inevitably presents challenges and obstacles. Redistributing roles in the learning process and shifting the focus from the student as a passive recipient of knowledge to an active participant requires readiness on the part of both teachers and students. Students are expected to develop the ability to independently articulate goals, as well as to search for and identify optimal pathways to achieve them.

In the context of globalization, the primary objective of teaching English extends beyond mere mastery of the language system or acquisition of linguistic knowledge; rather, it aims to equip learners with the ability to effectively communicate. Paramount is creating an environment conducive to the development of students' communication skills in the foreign language they are studying. It is within such an environment that native speakers naturally acquire proficiency in their mother tongue. "While the issues of mastering native and foreign languages have been extensively discussed in methodological literature, it's important to note that these processes are distinct from each other" [5: 108].

Considering the training of international lawyers to meet contemporary demands, it is essential to emphasize that graduates of the School of Law specializing in "International Law" must possess

communicative competence. This entails the ability to communicate effectively in the target language with both native speakers and non-native speakers who use it as a second language. In the absence of a natural language immersion environment, English teachers play a crucial role in modelling appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication behaviours.

One essential condition for fostering students' ability to creatively utilize acquired language and speech materials is the communicative orientation of the foreign language teaching process. Regardless of the instructional context, the primary objective should be to cultivate students' proficiency in using language to accomplish communicative objectives. A fundamental principle underpinning communicative language teaching is the collaborative involvement of all participants in the educational process. This principle emphasizes the cooperation between students and teachers in defining language learning goals within a specific context, selecting optimal strategies to achieve these goals, choosing educational materials, and utilizing information and communication technologies tailored to the language learning process [2].

Additionally, other equally important principles of communicative language teaching include interactivity and a focus on students' interests and needs. These principles underscore the importance of collaborative engagement and joint activities between students and teachers as essential elements in fostering creative skills in the target language.

As mentioned earlier, a distinctive feature of the communicative approach to language teaching is its focus on developing students' ability to use accumulated linguistic knowledge and speech capabilities creatively and accurately to achieve communicative objectives [5].

Therefore, within the framework of communicative language teaching, the primary objective is to cultivate in students studying a foreign language as a speciality the capacity to employ learned linguistic and speech resources correctly, creatively, and appropriately to fulfil their communicative intentions. To accomplish these aims, it is imperative to enhance students' communicative engagement by involving them in verbal communication activities in the target language and encouraging the creative utilization of their linguistic and speech proficiency during real-life interactions.

Graduates of the School of Law specializing in “International Law” must acquire the ability to utilize the foreign language they are studying in verbal communication at the international and intercultural levels. This necessitates achieving language proficiency as close as possible to that of a native speaker with linguistic education. In contemporary settings, the integration of innovative methodologies into English teaching practices is essential to enhance the efficiency of training qualified specialists in the field of international law. The effectiveness of implementing innovations in the education system largely depends on the rational distribution of roles between participants in the learning process – students and teachers alike. Cooperation, mutual respect, and a shared awareness of responsibility for both the language learning process and its outcomes are pivotal factors contributing to the enhanced effectiveness of the English language teaching.

“The prevailing sentiment among specialists in the field of foreign language education is that we should shift our focus from language teaching to language acquisition” [1: 37]. This assertion holds relevance in contexts where a primary objective is to cultivate students’ capacity to engage as conscious, active, and proactive participants in the language learning process, empowering them to creatively utilize acquired materials during verbal communication.

The purpose of the article is to devise a methodology for fostering and enhancing speech activity skills and abilities in English among students of the School of Law specializing in “International Law”.

Presentation of the main research material. To cultivate students’ creative skills in English, it is essential to create conducive conditions that stimulate their creative activities. Students should have the ability to articulate their thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards various issues, as well as be prepared to creatively utilize linguistic and speech capabilities during discussions [2].

Additionally, it is crucial to develop their capacity to respect the opinions and ideas of other participants, even those differing from their own.

The selection of educational materials plays a pivotal role in the English teaching process. These materials must adhere to specific methodological criteria. Textual materials should be authentic, engaging for students, and aligned with their age, educational, and intellectual levels. They should provide models of speech behaviour exhibited by native speakers in real-life situations, thereby serving as

significant motivational tools for enhancing language proficiency among students specializing in International Law at the School of Law.

Students should be actively engaged in activities aimed at fostering creative utilization of acquired linguistic and speech materials to achieve communicative goals. This developmental work should be integrated into all stages of language learning, with the educational process tailored to the specifics of each stage.

In the first year of the School of Law, the primary objective is to nurture students' creative skills at a foundational level. First-year students in the "International Law" speciality focus on studying the phonetic system of the English language, its pronunciation, and basic grammar (including parts of speech and types of questions) during the first semester. In the second semester, topics such as days of the week, numbers, countries and nationalities, personal information, family, and friends are covered.

Subsequently, the communicative roles of participants are clarified, and socio-cultural contexts are explored. Second-year undergraduates are supposed to study topics such as "My Family", "Online Meetings", "Seasons and Weather", "Foreign Languages in People's Lives", "My Favourite Day", "Countries and Languages", "My Working Day and Day Off", "Job and Profession", "City and Country Life", "Holidays", "The Place I Live In", and "Famous Inventions".

Furthermore, a distance course has been developed on the Moodle platform for second-year students, focusing on enhancing their English language communicative competence within the context of legal terminology and international law specifics. This course emphasizes the development of speaking, comprehension, and writing skills to enable students to effectively engage in academic and professional dialogues within the international legal domain.

Teaching English as a foreign language serves the practical purpose of cultivating communicative competence in foreign students at a level sufficient to address basic communicative tasks in socio-cultural and educational contexts. This entails developing skills and abilities in fundamental speech activities such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as utilizing language tools to implement specific speech behaviour tactics aimed at achieving the communicative goals of foreign students.

The primary objectives of this distance course include the formation of the following general competencies:

1. Ability for abstract thinking, analysis and synthesis.
2. Knowledge and comprehension of the subject area, along with an understanding of professional activities.
3. Capacity for learning and acquiring modern knowledge.
4. Proficiency in oral and written communication in foreign languages.
5. Application of knowledge in practical situations.
6. Adaptability and effective functioning in new situations, particularly within an international context.
7. Capability to work independently as well as in a team.
8. Competence in utilizing information and communication technologies.

In the subsequent stage, as the dialogic intentions of the speaker become progressively integrated into the sequence of statements within the communicative act, there is a planned development and enhancement of previously acquired creative skills to a higher level, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

For instance, in the third year of the School of Law, students are presented with topics such as “My Hobbies”, “The Films I Like”, “My Music Tastes”, “Clothes and Fashion”, “Cuisine of Your Country”, “Famous Personalities”, “Books and Reading”, “Sports in Our Life”, “Ukraine”, “Law”, “Crime”, etc. These topics aim to further develop and refine students’ communicative abilities while broadening their scope of discussion and analysis.

Conclusions. As highlighted throughout this study, the cultivation and enhancement of creative skills in a foreign language should be a continuous endeavour at all stages of teaching English. However, the emphasis on fostering creative skills in a foreign language becomes particularly significant during the senior years, aligning closely with the objectives of teaching the language as a speciality at this advanced stage.

At an advanced level, the primary aim of teaching a foreign language is to refine previously acquired skills and abilities while nurturing students’ creative capacities. To address this, we have devised a systematic methodological approach tailored to the needs of this student cohort at this stage of their training. This methodological framework, along with a corresponding set of tasks and exercises, is designed to elevate and refine existing skills to a higher level.

Central to our approach is a commitment to principles of communication, interactivity, and alignment of educational processes

with students' interests and needs – the foundational tenets of communicative language teaching. The implementation of our proposed teaching model aims to unlock students' creative potential and provide ample opportunities for enhancing their creative speech activity.

The essence of our developed system lies in constructing a methodology grounded in these principles of learning, fostering student motivation for more effective language acquisition, and utilizing a curated set of exercises focused on systematically teaching creative speech activity in English to students of the Faculty of Law specializing in International Law.

The prospect of further research lies in exploring the long-term effectiveness of the proposed methodology in enhancing students' communicative competence and creative language skills. Additionally, future studies could investigate the impact of incorporating technological advancements, such as virtual reality simulations, in language learning to further optimize students' proficiency in the field of International Law.

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The article was received by the editors 28.02.2024.

The article was recommended for printing 29.03.2024.

In cites: Bochenkov A., Ivanova T. (2024). The problem of teaching speech activities in a foreign language to international law students. *Teaching languages at higher educational establishments at the present stage. Intersubject relations*. 44, pp. 28-37. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26565/2073-4379-2024-44-02>

ПРОБЛЕМА НАВЧАННЯ МОВЛЕННЕВОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ІНОЗЕМНОЮ МОВОЮ ІНОЗЕМНИХ СТУДЕНТІВ-ПРАВНИКІВ

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Статтю присвячено дослідженню проблеми навчання мовленнєвої діяльності іноземною мовою студентів юридичного факультету, які вивчають міжнародне право. Особливу роль відіграють умови дистанційного навчання, які, з одного боку, ускладнюють цей процес, але, з іншого боку, сприяють йому, оскільки дистанційне навчання оптимізує взаємодію між студентами та викладачами, надаючи гнучкості як у просторовому, так і в часовому вимірах. Серед багатьох засобів комунікації, які використовуються у дистанційному навчанні, виділяється платформа Zoom.

Ключовим фактором в оптимізації мовленнєвих навичок та вмінь є використання моделі, що орієнтована на студента. Існуючий рівень розвитку мовленнєвих навичок студентів у цільовій мові не відповідає сучасним вимогам освіти, що підкреслює актуальність цього питання. В епоху глобалізації основна мета викладання англійської мови полягає не просто в засвоєнні мовної системи чи отриманні лінгвістичних знань, а в оволодінні нею як засобом комунікації. Створення сприятливих умов для розвитку комунікативних навичок студентів іноземною мовою є одним із основних завдань викладача. Шляхом відтворення обставин, що подібні до тих, коли носії мови набувають навичок рідної мови, студенти можуть зануритися в аналогічне середовище, і це сприятиме ефективному формуванню мовленнєвих умінь. Студенти юридичного факультету, які спеціалізуються на міжнародному праві, повинні мати комунікативну компетентність, яка

дозволить їм ефективно спілкуватися як з носіями мови, так і з людьми, які користуються нею як інструментом спілкування. За відсутності природного мовного середовища викладачі повинні будувати навчальний процес відповідно до доцільно побудованої моделі навчально-професійного спілкування. Необхідною умовою для творчого використання засвоєного мовного та мовленнєвого матеріалу є комунікативна орієнтація у процесі викладання іноземної мови.

Ключові слова: викладання мови, дистанційне навчання, мовленнєва діяльність, студентоцентрований підхід.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції 28.02.2024.

Статтю рекомендовано до друку 29.03.2024.

Як цитувати: Bochenkov A., Ivanova T. The problem of teaching speech activities in a foreign language to international law students. *Викладання мов у вищих навчальних закладах освіти на сучасному етапі. Міжпредметні зв'язки*. 2024. Вип. 44. С. 28-37. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26565/2073-4379-2024-44-02>