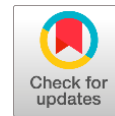


# Formation of foreign language competence of future lawyers/law enforcement officers: Contemporary challenges



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**Abstract** The article highlights an increasingly popular English teaching form in 2021-2022. The authors realize the most effective ways and methodologies to form foreign language competence of future lawyers and law enforcement officers. The article reveals that these methodologies can overcome contemporary challenges, including the Pandemic and Global destabilization. The article under consideration aims to demonstrate pedagogical approaches, interactive applications, and digitalized resources that, in theoretical and practical terms, have a positive experience in training future law enforcement officers in disciplines such as "Foreign Language" and "Foreign Language for Professional Purposes" at higher educational establishments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. The study proves the author's method of forming foreign language competence of future lawyers/law enforcement officers using educational web technologies, which have the following components: pedagogical and organizational, users, language, social, and technical. The methodology expresses the following conceptual principles: multilevel nature of foreign language teaching which involves the formation of students' different communicative competencies per the European recommendations on language education; communicative orientation of learning foreign languages, which allows students to form competencies on which the success and effectiveness of intercultural communication depend; organization of foreign language training based on professionally-oriented material; integration of educational Web and pedagogical technologies (blended learning, methods of projects and case technologies, students' electronic language portfolio) which allow implementing the principle of individual approach to learning foreign languages; informal education in foreign language training at higher educational institutions with specific conditions of learning taking into account the gender approach in the process of forming the foreign language competence of future law enforcement officers. Based on the study, the authors concluded that the availability and prevalence of educational Web-technologies allow their use as an integrated part of foreign language training of non-philological students, especially in a blended learning format. Furthermore, the obtained experimental data allowed the formulation of methodological recommendations corresponding to the research results.

**Keywords:** adaptive learning, challenges, and benefits, cross-educational communication, English language, interactive tools, University of Law

## 1. Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the demand for foreign language competence among professionals has become more prominent than ever before. Among the diverse array of professions requiring such skills, the legal field stands out as one that necessitates a high level of proficiency in foreign languages. Future lawyers and law enforcement officers must navigate an evolving landscape where cross-border interactions, international collaboration, and multicultural communication are integral components of their work.

The formation of foreign language competence among future lawyers and law enforcement officers poses contemporary challenges that need to be addressed. As legal systems continue to interact on an international scale, lawyers are frequently required to interpret and apply laws from different jurisdictions, represent clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, and engage in negotiations and legal proceedings with foreign counterparts. Similarly, law enforcement officers face situations that require effective communication with individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, such as international investigations, border control, and collaboration with foreign law enforcement agencies.



This paper explores the contemporary challenges involved in developing foreign language competence among future lawyers and law enforcement officers. It examines the importance of linguistic proficiency in the legal profession, the specific challenges faced by these professionals, and the strategies and initiatives that can be implemented to overcome these challenges. By addressing these issues, we can better understand the implications of foreign language competence for the legal field and develop effective approaches to equip future lawyers and law enforcement officers with the necessary linguistic skills.

The globalization of legal systems, advancements in technology, and the increased mobility of individuals across borders have significantly impacted the legal profession. Lawyers and law enforcement officers are now required to engage with a diverse range of clients, witnesses, defendants, and colleagues who speak different languages. The ability to communicate effectively in foreign languages is crucial for establishing rapport, gaining a comprehensive understanding of legal issues, ensuring accurate interpretation and translation, and facilitating fair and just outcomes.

Moreover, foreign language competence is not solely about communication; it also encompasses the comprehension of cultural nuances, customs, and legal traditions. Understanding the cultural context in which legal processes occur is essential for effectively representing clients and resolving legal disputes. Foreign language proficiency allows lawyers and law enforcement officers to transcend linguistic barriers, fostering trust and cooperation while avoiding misunderstandings or misinterpretations that could have significant consequences for legal proceedings.

While recognizing the importance of foreign language competence, we must also acknowledge the contemporary challenges associated with its formation among future lawyers and law enforcement officers. These challenges encompass factors such as limited resources, time constraints, the need for specialized legal terminology, and the rapid evolution of language and technology. Overcoming these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes innovative teaching methodologies, integration of language training into legal curricula, collaboration between legal and language professionals, and the effective utilization of technological tools.

The purpose of this article is to explore the contemporary challenges involved in developing foreign language competence among future lawyers and law enforcement officers. In accordance with the purpose the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. The study of foreign language competence among Future Lawyers/Law Enforcement Officers corresponds to the demands of the globalized legal landscape.
2. The implementation of Eurointegration compels Lawyers/Law Enforcement Officers to intensively study foreign languages for the purpose of cooperation in cross-border interactions.

## 2. Literature Review

Numerous studies emphasize the significance of foreign language competence for lawyers and law enforcement officers. Liberman et al (2017) highlight that effective communication in foreign languages is essential for professionals in legal settings, enabling them to engage in international cooperation, participate in cross-border investigations, and navigate multilingual legal environments. Moreover, foreign language skills enhance professionals' abilities to comprehend legal texts, interpret international treaties, and interact with diverse clients and witnesses (Yogesh et al 2022). Researchers such as Zappa-Hollman (2017), Yu and Liu (2017), Van den Branden (2016), Schiller (2009), Mano (2022), Little (2003) emphasize the need for innovative and learner-centered approaches to foreign language training, moving away from traditional grammar-based instruction towards communicative and task-based methodologies. This shift enables students to develop practical language skills relevant to their future legal careers (Abdulkadir et al 2019). Mamonova (2020) highlights the challenges associated with teaching legal English, as it requires a deep understanding of legal terminology, genres, and conventions. Legal discourse poses unique linguistic challenges, and educators must develop specialized materials and strategies to address these complexities.

The integration of technology in foreign language learning has gained significant attention in recent years (Chapelle et al 2015; Alharbi 2022; Peng et al 2023). Researchers, such as Khairulina and Dubova (2021) emphasize the benefits of incorporating computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools, virtual simulations, and online resources to enhance language acquisition and provide opportunities for authentic legal communication. These technological tools facilitate interactive learning experiences and allow learners to practice legal language skills in simulated professional contexts (Hadley and Charles 2017).

In addition to language proficiency, intercultural competence is essential for lawyers and law enforcement officers working in diverse cultural settings. Rahaman et al (2020) highlight the importance of developing intercultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication skills to navigate cultural differences, understand diverse legal systems, and effectively interact with clients, witnesses, and colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. Effective assessment and evaluation methods are crucial for measuring the attainment of foreign language competence (Khairulina, 2021). Koehler and Vilarinho-Pereira (2021) emphasizes the need for comprehensive assessment frameworks that consider multiple language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and integrate legal-specific language tasks and assessments. Authentic assessments, such as role plays, case studies, and legal document analysis, provide a more accurate reflection of learners' language abilities in legal contexts.

Methodological approaches, the specificity of legal discourse, integration of technology, intercultural competence, and appropriate assessment methods are crucial factors that need to be considered to enhance foreign language training in these

fields. By addressing these challenges, educators and institutions can better equip future lawyers and law enforcement officers with the necessary linguistic and cultural competencies to excel in their professions in a globalized world.

### 3. Methods

The assessment of foreign language proficiency among future lawyers/law enforcement officers was conducted through a survey of cadets specializing in Law (081) at Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after Ye.O. Didorenko. The research consisted of the following stages:

1. Group selection: The study was conducted with three groups of cadets corresponding to different educational qualification levels of the bachelor's program in Law (081). The first group consisted of 28 cadets from the first year (Group I), the second group consisted of 23 cadets from the second year (Group II), and the third group consisted of 25 cadets from the third year (Group III).

2. Goal definition: Determining the main objectives of the research, including the assessment of language learning competencies among cadets specializing in Law (081).

3. Methodology development: Development of a specific methodology for teaching foreign languages used during the experiment. This methodology included various approaches such as individual learning, group exercises, use of interactive technologies, etc.

4. Implementation of the control stage: Conducting an initial test to assess the students' knowledge level in each group before implementing the author's methodology.

5. Application of the author's methodology: Utilizing the author's methodology for teaching foreign languages, taking into account the particularities of each group of cadets.

6. Data collection: Gathering and analysing data after the implementation of the author's methodology.

7. Results analysis: Analysing the obtained results after applying the author's methodology. The results included changes in the knowledge levels of the cadets at different proficiency levels (A1, A2, B1, B2) in each group compared to the initial indicators.

8. Comparison with the control group: Comparing the results of the experimental group, which used the author's methodology, with the control group that did not change its approach to learning.

9. Conclusions: Formulating conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the author's methodology for teaching foreign languages among cadets in the specialty of 081 "Jurisprudence" based on the analysis of results.

Additionally, the research applied a systematic and logical analysis and a method of information generalization based on the comprehensive collection of materials related to the pedagogical field. This means that data on the students' learning outcomes were systematically gathered and organized to establish connections and identify patterns. Data analysis was employed based on logical principles, including comparison, classification, generalization, and drawing conclusions.

The method of information generalization helped to systematize and summarize the collected data into general conclusions. This included analyzing changes in the students' knowledge levels at different proficiency levels (A1, A2, B1, B2), comparing the results of the experimental and control groups, and evaluating the effectiveness of the author's methodology. The application of systematic and logical analysis and the method of information generalization allowed for informed conclusions regarding the impact of the author's methodology on the learning outcomes of cadets in the specialty of 081 "Jurisprudence".

### 3. Results

Modern foreign language learning is oriented towards the use of online platforms and services. Among such technologies, platforms aimed at incorporating technology for grammar mastery and listening skills stand out. For example, "My English Lab" and "English Interactive Worksheets" have proven to be quite effective during experimentation. However, it is worth emphasizing the effectiveness of the comprehensive "My English Lab" package developed by Pearson. This learning package consists of a textbook and an interactive application that allows for a thorough practice of grammar theory and application. Another popular tool for reinforcing acquired grammar skills is "English Interactive Worksheets." This tool enables teachers to create interactive grammar exercises aligned with the curriculum and set assessment criteria and time limits. With the author's approach and limited time, learners can focus on the tasks at hand instead of seeking ways to cheat or searching for answers online.

Additionally, the service "Flippity" (flippity.net) is widely used to enhance language skills acquisition and foster interest in foreign language learning. It has the potential to impact all factors that increase learning motivation and can be utilized at all stages of education. The "Randomizer" tool allows for quick grouping of learners into groups of any size and assigns the computer to select a student who wants to respond. The use of tools such as crossword puzzles, flashcards, memory simulators, and others can help students memorize terms, concepts, names, dates, and more. In summarizing any topic, the quiz "Your Game" can be valuable. Teachers can track the progress of each student using the "Progress Indicator." Thus, the capabilities of the flippity.net service assist language instructors in optimizing the teaching process and its outcomes with a set of valuable

tools. By utilizing this service, teachers can make any lesson engaging, captivating, and effective. Placement tests, achievement tests, and professional tests are conducted using the adaptive control and learning tool with block adaptation strategy, which is hosted on the specialized website <https://test.aim2.top>.

Regarding the assessment of practical foreign language skills in the Ministry of Internal Affairs institutions, a system is widely used that consists of a task bank comprising tests of 5 levels of difficulty (Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, Advanced). The computer provides tasks corresponding to the 3rd level of difficulty (Intermediate). In case of 10% incorrect answers, the program displays tasks of the Pre-Intermediate 2 level. If the student cannot cope, the computer lowers the tasks to level 1. Similarly, there is an increase in difficulty from Intermediate to Upper-Intermediate to Advanced.

The following criteria are used to terminate the test:

- All questions in the test bank have been exhausted.
- The level of knowledge has been assessed with sufficient accuracy.
- The respondent demonstrated a low level of knowledge while completing the test tasks.

During adaptive testing, students with a high level of foreign language knowledge receive more challenging tasks, while those with a low level receive easier ones. Some students may have an equal number of correct answers, but considering the difficulty of the questions, each receives scores within a certain language level range.

Information about incorrect answers is displayed on the screen: question number, language level (A1, A2, B1, B2), student's response, correct answer, topic, and a web link to the material where the error occurred.

Each student receives an individual set of tasks. As a result, the possibility of hints and memorizing correct answers is minimized. Additionally, during retaking the test, students perform new tasks, which can reduce the impact of the practice effect. Since the question bank contains 800 questions covering all language levels, this significantly reduces the influence of guessing on test results.

The decision to change the order of test composition is made after analyzing the results of processing a specific block of tasks and allows the instructor to provide the student, regardless of their location in any part of the city, country, or world, with tasks corresponding to their level of knowledge (Krasnopol'skyi et al 2016).

The current trend towards transitioning to distance learning requires the adaptation of educational and pedagogical approaches in foreign language learning. The existing Ukrainian distance education system is a relatively diverse system of knowledge transmission at a distance, utilizing various means and technologies. As a result, students acquire the necessary information for successful practical application. Therefore, solving the identified issues is only possible through quality management of the processes implemented in higher education institutions and the creation of an innovative higher education environment – a system of relationships based on a complex of organizational, methodological, and psychological measures that actively incorporate innovations into the educational process.

The use of informal learning in foreign language preparation for higher education students.

Informal education is an education that is typically obtained through educational programs and does not lead to the awarding of officially recognized educational qualifications by level of education, but may result in the acquisition of professional and/or partial educational qualifications (Ovcharenko 2020).

Types of informal education include:

- Professional-oriented and general cultural courses, professional development courses, training in educational centers, participation in academic mobility programs, internships.
- Short-term courses, conferences, seminars, competitions, summer or winter schools, trainings, workshops, and more.

Informal language training for higher education students (cadets, masters, postgraduates/adjuncts) is conducted based on integrated massive open online courses (MOOCs). Cadets of the Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after E.O. Didorenko study and receive certificates for courses such as "Ethics of Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers"; International Cooperation in Criminal Cases; Introduction to the ECHR and ECtHR; Family Law and Human Rights; Refugees and ECtHR; Anti-Discrimination, located on the "Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals" (HELP) platform developed by the European Union for law enforcement agencies. They also take English language courses developed by US universities and hosted on the Coursera platform: Conversational English Course; Grammar and Punctuation; Improve Your English Communication Skills; Speak English Professionally: In Person, Online, on the Phone; Create Your Professional E-Portfolio in English.

Currently, students and cadets are taking online courses on the LEEd CEPOL educational platform. The LEEd CEPOL educational platform is aimed at enhancing and exchanging experiences among police officers from European countries. It provides the opportunity for online learning and a new online learning system, CEPOL. Regarding the assessment of the effectiveness of foreign language competence development for future lawyers/law enforcement officers, a survey was conducted among cadets of three courses of the educational qualification level "Bachelor" in the field of 081 "Jurisprudence" at the Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after E.O. Didorenko. The research results highlighted the following trends in the implementation of author's language teaching methodologies (Table 1):

1. Reduction of cadets who had the A1 level of foreign language proficiency by %. 10.25%

2. Increase in foreign language proficiency at A2 and B1 levels, - 4.4%, B2 by 2.0%.

**Table 1** Results of implementing the foreign language teaching methodology of Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after E.O. Didorenko.

Group	Level of proficiency in foreign language			
	A1	A2	B1	B2
Experimental	Decrease in 14,2 %	Increase in 7,32 %	Increase in 6,2 %	Increase in 1,6 %
Control	Decrease in 6,2 %	Increase in 1,5 %	Increase in 3,7 %	Increase in 0,4 %

Source: the author's development.

The indicator of effectiveness in foreign language training for non-philology students (progression from A1 to A2 to B1 to B2) increased by 31%. As a result of the experiment, it was found that adaptive knowledge assessment saved 15% of testing time compared to traditional methods. The study justified the author's methodology for developing the foreign language competence of future lawyers/law enforcement officers using educational web technologies, which encompasses the following components: pedagogical-organizational, user-oriented, linguistic, social, and technical.

#### 4. Discussion

Although the development of speaking skills has long been the main focus of foreign language teaching, one of the most critical developments in this area recently has been increasing attention to mastering the culture of native speakers and the development of intercultural competence of higher education students along with the development of their speech skills. The MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages explains that the goal of foreign language teaching today should be "educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence" (Foreign languages and higher education 2007). Furthermore, it is emphasized that "deep cultural knowledge and speech competence are equally necessary" (Foreign Languages and Higher Education 2007) to understand people and their communities. This emphasis illustrates the dual goal of developing speaking skills and cultural competence in foreign language teaching in the 21st century, particularly in Foreign Language for Professional Purposes classes.

One of the features of teaching foreign languages to cadets is motivation. However, there are some difficulties. An additional difficulty in increasing interest in learning foreign languages is that, until recently, law enforcement officers had minimal opportunities to use a foreign language in real-life foreign language communication situations. On the other hand, active participation of our state in international political life, holding mass international events (political, cultural, sports), and mandatory involvement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs staff in maintaining law and order significantly increase the need to learn a professional foreign language.

Another problem in creating motivation is that cadets of higher educational institutions study a foreign language initially during the formation of general cultural competencies. Professionally oriented subjects are taught much later; therefore, first-year cadets have yet to learn of the peculiarities of their future activities. Consequently, they need help determining interests in communication, including foreign languages.

Practical classes in the discipline "Foreign Language for Professional Purposes" are the primary educational activity. The method of teaching a foreign language for professional purposes at Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after E. O. Didorenko is based on the improvement of all types of language skills, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing at each stage of learning and interaction with other disciplines; professionally-oriented training and individual approach to each cadet. In addition, various exercises (answers to questions, translation, composing situational monologues and dialogues, role-play) facilitate the formation of speaking skills.

Particular attention in foreign language classes is paid to developing and improving communicative and intercultural competence. For instance, when studying the topics "The US Police" or "Judiciary in Great Britain," particular attention is focused on important issues that are inherent in the culture and traditions of the United States or Great Britain. The intensification of the educational process is also facilitated by interactive teaching methods (projects, role-play, discussions, etc.), as well as the latest educational technologies based on the most recent achievements of domestic and foreign pedagogical science.

#### 5. Conclusions

Based on the conducted research on the learning outcomes of the students majoring in "Jurisprudence" at Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after E.O. Didorenko and the application of the author's foreign language teaching methodology, several conclusions can be drawn. The experimental group, which utilized the author's teaching methodology, showed improvements in knowledge levels compared to the control group. The number of students in the experimental group with A1 proficiency level decreased by 14.2%, indicating an enhancement of their language skills. The proficiency levels of the experimental group in A2 and B2 increased by 7.32% and 2.6% respectively, demonstrating a positive impact of the author's methodology on improving foreign language proficiency. The control group also showed some changes in knowledge levels,

albeit to a lesser extent than the experimental group. The application of systematic-logical analysis and information generalization allowed for proper data processing and substantiated conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the author's methodology. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the use of the author's foreign language teaching methodology contributes to the improvement of knowledge levels among students majoring in "Jurisprudence" at Luhansk State University of Internal Affairs named after E.O. Didorenko.

### Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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