

## MODERN APPROACHES TO THE SELECTION OF COURSEBOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Nataliya Belenkova<sup>1\*</sup>, Irina Kruse<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ass. Prof. Dr., RUDN University, the Russian Federation, [belenkovanm@gmail.com](mailto:belenkovanm@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Ass. Prof. Dr., RUDN University, the Russian Federation, [kruseirina@rambler.ru](mailto:kruseirina@rambler.ru)

\*Corresponding Author

### Abstract

The selection of any course books and supplementary materials used in the teaching practice of the Higher Education Institutions is related to the National Educational Standards in the Russian Federation and the purposes of the professional training. Teaching foreign languages for specific purposes is a mandatory part of the Higher education curriculum. Learning foreign language students develop their communicative competences and they get knowledge of their profession-to-be. Apparently, these tasks should be realized on various materials. Nowadays, there is a great variety of paper, digital and on line resources for learning. One of the teachers' tasks in this connection is to select the most appropriate sources for their students learning. The learning materials are selected in accordance with some principles including lingo didactic, psychological and others. Contemporary teaching approaches such as a communicative approach, task based learning, content and language integrated learning etc. should also be taken into consideration. Finally, the materials selected for teaching and learning are not implemented into practice separately but are united into integrity making coherence. Consequently, a unique complex of learning materials specific for a higher education institution is made.

The objective of the paper is to compare the learning materials in accordance with the theoretical aspects of the issue, to assess the efficacy of the learning and teaching complexes implemented into the practice of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes in Law Institute, RUDN University. Textbooks on legal English/ German, Communicative General English/German, online video sites and authentic online mass media resources are the integral parts of the learning materials. The issue was studied from the point of view of both the teachers and students. To settle the task the survey of the participants was held. The findings of the experiment are presented in the paper.

**Keywords:** selection of learning materials, teaching approaches, teaching practice

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The basis of any teaching, training and studying in a foreign language is the learning course that can include several parts. The most common components of any course are Student's Book, Teacher's Book, Workbook, Class and Student's audio recordings, Test booklet. Sometimes a learning course includes videos. The

general goal of the learning course in a foreign language is to promote the basis for educational and communicative development as well as the self-development of the learners. Such content of the learning course is typical of the courses made for secondary and high educational institutions (schools, colleges etc.).

The learning materials for universities are not so diverse, though some course books are accompanied by teacher's books and audio recordings. The course book by Krois-Linder Amy "International Legal English" is supplemented by audio CDs and a Teacher's Book made by Jeremy Day an editor of the Cambridge University series of English for Specific purposes courses (Krois-Linder, 2006; Day, 2006).

The course book can be used for training students and for the self-development of lawyers with the upper-intermediate proficiency level in foreign languages, it consists of 15 Units. Therefore, the course cannot be used for the students with a lower proficiency level in foreign languages and it does not cover the whole syllabus of teaching English for specific purposes at University (It should be noted that studying a foreign language for specific purposes at RUDN University is mandatory at both bachelor and master levels). The implementation of other course books (e.g. Brown G. D., Rice S. Professional English in Use. Law, Cambridge University Press, 2007; Höcker R., *Anwalt-Deutsch/Deutsch-Anwalt: Wir verstehen uns vor Gericht*, Langenscheidt, Germany, 2008) in teaching practice needs the generation of many supplementary materials that match the practical needs of the learners and the requirements of the contemporary educational and social environments, on the one hand, and the State Educational Standards of the Russian Federation, on the other hand.

Each component of the learning course and consequently supplementary materials should take into consideration the ideas of competency-based learning, content and language integrated learning, communicative approach, learners-centred approach. Apparently, the supplementary material should be interesting for the students to solve, appropriate to their proficiency levels in the foreign language under study. Supplementary materials should provide the issues for discussion and self-development, tasks and tests for assessment and self-assessment.

Some of the issues mentioned above were studied by the international researches (Allen, 2012; Cahill, Mcdaniel et al., 2018; Richardson, 2017; van den Bosch, 2006 etc.). Further, the findings of the practical experience of the Department of Foreign Languages of Law Institute, RUDN University is presented.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

.The first stage in the experiment was to examine the materials used for training lawyer-to-be and developing their communicative competencies in a foreign language with the framework of Legal English/German. For this purpose a survey was held among the students and instructors of the Law Institute. The participants of the survey were to analyse the materials used in teaching practice and then to compare and assess objectively the quality of the learning course components.

The number of students was 100, 72 learners studied English and 38 learners studied German, besides, 32 instructors of the Law Institute, RUDN University were also interviewed. The respondents were supposed to answer the following questions:

- Are you satisfied with the quality of Russian authors' course books for teaching English/German to lawyers-to-be? Why/Why not?
- Are you satisfied with the quality of the English/German speaking authors' course books for teaching English/German to lawyers-to-be? Why/Why not?

Then the respondents were to arrange the following items from the most to the least important:

- Topicality, relevance and professional orientation of the materials to be studied;
- Well-structured learning material in the course books;
- Interactive tasks;
- Various communicative tasks;
- Tasks for self-assessment
- Multimedia and on line tasks;
- Tasks for individual work and work in mini groups;
- Tasks for project work

- The design of the course books, pictures, drawings, photos etc.

The examination of the survey findings showed that only 25% of the students and 12% of the university instructors think that the Russian course books meet the requirements of the modern training of lawyer-to-be. The opposite opinion of the students was explained by the following reasons. The content of the Russian course book is mainly concentrated on the legal system of the Russian Federation and consequently the vocabulary used does not reflect the concepts of the foreign countries. The exercises of the course book lack the practical orientation and there are no on line resources connected with the course book. The University instructors are sure that the legal terminology used by the Russian authors is not authentic and the content of the course book is far from being practical.

However, 55% of the students and 54% of the University instructors consider that the authentic course books are much better. The students think that foreign course books present the issues of the legal systems of the foreign language speaking countries and the terms and concepts used are topical. The data mentioned in these course books can be applied in legal practice.

As far as the characteristics of a modern course book are concerned, both the students and the university instructors expressed the common opinion. They suppose that a course book for training lawyers-to-be should have (1) many interactive tasks, (2) various communicative tasks, (3) present modern and topical information, (4) the material in the course book should have a particular structure, (5) be accompanied by media and on line resources, (6) include project work, (7) tasks for individual and group activity, (8) materials for self-assessment and (9) the design of the course books was considered as the least important.

Taking into consideration the opinions of the survey respondents, the supplementary materials to the course books used in teaching practice of the lawyers-to-be In Law Institute, RUDN University were worked out. The main approaches were Content and Language Integrated Learning, Communicative approach etc. Various sets of interactive and communicative tasks including case studies were developed. In general, all materials for learning, in particular, texts for reading and translation, recordings for listening, topics for discussions and exercises for language practice are updated regularly. The supplementary materials were structured in accordance with the core textbook and incorporated into teaching General English/German and training English/German for specific purposes. During the semester the students are supposed to present at least one project work. The students' achievements in learning are controlled with the self-assessment tasks and various tests. The learning activity of the students can be realized in different modes e.g. in individual way, in mini groups or with all students.

The use of IC technologies and on line resources is an integral part of contemporary teaching and learning. First, the net is the source of all supplementary materials. Moreover, all tasks, assignments, exercises and other supplementary materials are uploaded into the on line University learning environment where they can be used in open access.

### **3 CONCLUSION**

Teaching foreign languages in Higher Education Institutions cannot be realized only based on a course book without other supplementary materials that should be prepared taking into consideration the opinions of learners and teaching staff. The supplementary materials should match modern lingo didactic approaches and principles, be regularly updated and incorporated into teaching the general foreign language as well as English/German for specific purposes.

### **4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The publication is prepared with the support of the RUDN University program 5-100.

### **REFERENCE LIST**

- Allen M., Tay E., Wikis as Individual Student Learning Tools, *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*: 8(2):61-71, 2012 DOI: 10.4018/jicte.2012040105
- Cahill M. J., Mcdaniel M. A. et al. Understanding the relationship between student attitudes and student learning, *Physical Review Physics Education Research*14, 010107, 2018. DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.14.010107

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, Cambridge University Press, 2001. <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>

Day J., International Legal English: A Course for Classroom or Self-study Use Teacher's Book, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Krois-Linder A., International Legal English, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Richardson J. T. E., Student Learning in Higher Education: a Commentary, Educational Psychology Review 29(2):1-10, 2017. DOI: 10.1007/s10648-017-9410-x

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), Belgium, European Communities,

van den Bosch H., Personalized Course Delivery: An Empirical Analysis of the Feasibility of Adapting Distance Learning Courses to Individual Students' Learning Preferences, Industry and Higher Education, Vol. 20, issue: 5, pp. 337-345, 2006 DOI: 10.5367/000000006778702328