FUNDAMENTALS OF LAWYERS' PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH- LANGUAGE INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

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Abstract

This research aims to identify key communicative skills necessary for lawyers' intercultural collaboration: writing and speaking skills that contribute to grammatical, lexical, phonetic, stylistic correctness of legalese and rhythmic, stylistic, semantic factors of placing the stress in polysyllabic English, Russian words correctly. Formation of lawyers' communicative competence, legalese skills, Received Pronunciation (RP) proficiency when using polysyllabic words are given the priority. The study uses a qualitative approach with interviews and observations as a key research tool for data collection; descriptive and qualitative analysis is proposed as a means of presenting key concepts. The conceptual provisions of international researchers of linguistics, theory of teaching intercultural communication, theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages, competence approach, content and language integrated learning, intercultural interaction, English for specific purposes, practical phonetics as an integral part of complex communication, higher education in professional context, and professional linguodidactics are the methodological bases of this paper. As the main findings, this study indicates three fundamentals: received pronunciation (RP), legalese, communicative competence significant in training multinational non-immigrant masters of Arts (CIS, Iran, Mongolia, Peru, Serbia, Syria, Vietnam, etc.) for professionally-focused English-language intercultural interaction within legal domain of Law Institute, RUDN University. The presented research practical value is in deepening multinational non-immigrant masters of Arts' knowledge of both the English and the Russian languages necessary for intercultural collaboration within the legal domain. The results of this study can be useful as well as applied by law faculties and universities' academic staff.

Keywords: English for specific purposes, legalese, non-immigrants, Received Pronunciation, writing/speaking skills.

1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary worldwide tendencies to implement innovative approaches and methods of foreign languages teaching are integrated into the practice of teaching English by this paper's author based on the content of education and curricula provided to masters of Arts studying at RUDN University. Present legal practitioners' professionally-focused interaction suggests their skills to analyse legal issues, resolve problems, outline their activities' strategy, broaden knowledge including foreign languages and the set of key competences indispensable for intercultural communication with received pronunciation (RP) proficiency like one of the key factors of mutual understanding. This highlights the importance to view and master the rhythmic of words as an integral part of lexical work while teaching professionally-focused English based on the interdisciplinary approach to multinational non-immigrant law-students, with lexical importance (polysyllabic poly-accented terms and terminological units) like the key selection principle. The research data revealed that for most masters of Arts studying at Law Institute, RUDN University both the English and Russian languages are not L1 – the first language, they had difficulties when accentuating polysyllabic words. It is indispensable to identify the main factors: semantic, rhythmic and stylistic determining the English or Russian words' pronunciation that prevent them from slurred pronunciation during interaction within various legal activities.

Lawyers' successful English-language interaction depends on their writing and speaking skills essential to draft legal documents necessary for legal analysis; to precisely enounce their opinions and judgements using various legal terms, terminological units, considering the interlocutors countries' norms of culture; to adjust communicative tactics to variable settings of interaction processes. These required skills' development and application for professional tasks' solution is in the focus of teaching English as a foreign language.

This research relevance is based on the society's need for lawyers competent to speak on various legal issues with sufficient received pronunciation, write legal texts and documents, correctly articulate thoughts during professionally-focused intercultural interaction with multinational counterparts. The requirement for accurate pronunciation as competency of language users is extensively defined in the materials of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2002).

1.1 The objective of the Paper

The purposes and objectives of the research are to study theoretical and practical materials on the issues of masters of Arts' English-language communicative competence formation necessary for intercultural professional interaction, to identify the key communicative skills essential for lawyers' collaboration: well-developed writing and speaking skills that contribute to grammatical, lexical, phonetic, stylistic correctness and efficacy of legalese, and stress accentuation factors in polysyllabic English, Russian words. RP proficiency is important for interlocutors' mutual understanding in professional communication: the development of practical recommendations is aimed at improving these skills. To achieve these primary objectives, a descriptive and qualitative analysis is proposed as a means of profiling essential concepts. Comparative analysis of some polysyllabic words occurring in texts' translation by students is provided here.

This research object is the process of teaching students studying English for special purposes in RUDN University's intercultural environment (non-immigrant students from CIS, Iran, Mongolia, Peru, Serbia, Syria, Vietnam, etc.). The subject is the content and components of masters of Arts' professionally-focused English-language communicative competence and means of its formation throughout the process of learning English at non-linguistic University. Lawyers' main professional skills (including RP) actual for professionally-focused intercultural interaction within legal domain and the basic methods of their formation are examined and generalised; the term "professionally-focused communicative competence" in the context of lawyers' intercultural interaction is considered and defined. Practical application is determined by the implication of its findings for didactic purposes. The main scientific methods: analysis, comparison, synthesis and systematization of research material helped to investigate the worldwide approaches and norms that regulate actual educational processes.

2 METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This research uses a qualitative approach. The methodological basis is constituted by conceptual provisions of worldwide researchers of theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages, intercultural communication, competence approach, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), English for specific purposes (ESP), theoretical phonetics in linguistics, practical phonetics as an integral part of complex communication, higher education in professional context, and professional linguodidactics. The linguistic methodology, various exegetical and hermeneutic traditions of textual analysis are applied in the English-language practical work of explaining the subtleties of law rules interpretation and implementation.

Legal professionals' multilingualism implies knowledge of three or more foreign languages (English, French and others); rising the level of masters of Arts' professional and communicative competency is relevant, a great deal of research is being done in this field. Scientists have observed law practice in the English/Russian languages with distinct consideration of lawyers' stronger professional training in English. The USA, for example, revised legal education role in community as to priority change in law-students' training and enlarged their curricular with compulsory courses in professional interaction developing skills like culture of collaboration, legal ethics, legal documents' writing techniques, forensics, etc.

Phonetics like an integral part of complex communication has been revealed by Howlader, (2010); Liu, (2002); Ladefoged & Maddieson, (1998); Rokoszewska, (2012); Varasarin, (2007); Wrembel, (2008), etc. Following some of their concepts as well as theoretical and practical findings of this research author, within this study non-immigrant multinational students were explained three factors influencing the accentuation of polysyllabic, as a rule, polymorphemic words in the English, Russian languages: 1) equal-strength stresses and unequal-strength stresses are used in poly-accented English and Russian words; 2) the secondary accent precedes the main one in English and Russian words and word forms with several accents; 3) reduction in all parts of poly-accented words is observed in both the English and Russian languages.

Practicing good enunciation, sufficient rate of utterance, pronunciation of polysyllabic words in English and Russian was an integral part of lexical work within this study.

Analysis of works of Dudley-Evans & St-John, (1998); Emelyanova, (2017); Hosseini Karkami & Rahimi, (2015); Hutchinson & Waters, (1996); Kennedy & Bolitho, (1991); Simpson W.L.W. et.al., (2019); Woodrow, (2006); study of concepts of curriculum development in language teaching (Richard, 2001); relationship between personality types and teaching styles (Bayazidi & Behnam, 2013), task-based information-gap, opinion-gap and reasoning-gap activities (Azadi et.al., 2015) revealed that a foreign-language course in structurally-meaningful terms should consider specific significant goals and tasks for students' training for forthcoming sphere of actions. Sharing their positions, the curricula within this study included pertinent classroom activities imitating legal practice and widening students' interest in law thus developing writing, speaking skills necessary for legal analysis and concentrating their attention on the research and reasoning processes. They were explained that legal documents interpreting differs from general norms of law elucidation, for example, court interpreters should translate but not take over attorneys' functions that is presenting evidence in court or judges' functions that is interpreting the law. Morris Ruth mentioned that legal profession has tight control of knowledge totality required for practicing law, and it will not easily give up that authority to any related profession (Morris, 1995).

Based on the above objective observations, within this study we identify that key communicative skills necessary for lawyers' intercultural collaboration are writing, speaking skills contributing to grammatical, lexical, stylistic correctness of legalese, and rhythmic, stylistic, semantic factors of word stress accentuation in polysyllabic English/ Russian words. Lawyers' communicative competence for professionally-focused English-language intercultural interaction is defined as the totality of linguistic, sociolinguistic, sociocultural knowledge; it comprises communicative and pragmatic skills of professionally-focused interaction, culture of collaboration in specific affairs/ settings, and personal potentials: communicability, identification, reflection, responsibility, tactfulness, tolerance; it is a conscious consolidation of theoretical and practical data of specific communication, represented in the form of legal concepts, principles, significant positions and settings essential for effective professional interaction (Emelyanova, 2017).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Following the curricula and requirements of academic programmes, this study was based upon the authentic texts at an intermediate level selected from plentiful resources and coursebooks. While reading, translating, discussing them, a review of the English language was done in the context of "portable" skills training valuable in further activities of academic environment. Masters of Arts were provided a range of language exercises relating to legal issues presented in texts; they selected polysyllabic words, translated into Russian, their mother tongues, examined stress location coincidences/ differences: single- or poly-stressed words; compiled trilingual mini-vocabularies: triplets of polysyllabic English-Russian-mother-tongue words (CIS, Iran, Peru, Mongolia, Serbia, Syria, Vietnam, etc.). Two illustrating samples were chosen within the limits of this research:

Table 1. Triplets with the Serbian language (Europe, non-CIS States)

№	English	Russian	Serbian
1	Incompetent	некомпетентный	Nekompetentan
2	on secondment	в командировке	Na poslovnom putu
3	Nonpracticing	не практикующий	Nepraktikant
4	Independent	независимая личность/ выполняющий работу своими средствами	Nezavisna licnost
5	Preconditions	предварительные условия	Preliminarni uslovi
6	Represented	представленный	Predstavljen
7	self-employed	Самозанятый	Samozaposlen

Table 2. Triplets with the Kyrgyz language (CIS States)

№	English	Russian	Kyrgyz
1	interrogation	Допрос	Сурак
2	circumstance	Обстоятельство	Жагдай
3	perseverance	Настойчивость	Тырышчаактык
4	legal assistance	юридическая помощь	юридикалык жардам
5	closing indictment	обвинительное заключение	айыптоо корутундусу
6	litigation	судебный процесс	соттук процесс
7	aggravating circumstances	отягчающие обстоятельства	оорлотуучу жагдайлар
8	extenuating circumstances	смягчающие обстоятельства	жеңилдетүүчү жагдайлар

This method of vocabulary revision brought novelty to this research, was rather motivating for multinational non-immigrants studying legalese within intercultural environment, its practical value lied in students' usage of various dictionaries. Being targeted at listening comprehension and RP proficiency, other authentic materials, news by CNN, BBC, audio-video resources, covering professional issues were selected, assignments for them were developed, for example:

VIDEO 1. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:

Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ht7pf-0rI9s>, pay special attention to polysyllabic words like intellectual, property, consequences, copyright, infringement, etc. Answer the following questions:

- 1) What is this video about?
- 2) Why are some people criminals and the others being victims?
- 3) What are the consequences for a person after copyright infringement?

Discuss this problem with your groupmates, mind polysyllabic words and RP.

Next, the leading methods of foreign languages teaching were implemented: the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion) analytical method, Socratic method, projects, moot court, case study, role-plays, discussions, etc.; students practiced positioning and arguing using new polysyllabic words, law terms, that made them keen to promote real-life communication. These activities were followed by self-reflection exercises guided by this paper's author intended to assist non-immigrants using English as a foreign language to become more conversant in it within a legal context. These activities progressively enhanced relevant communication skills in oral and written legal English. The criteria of students' RP evaluation were their utterances and polysyllabic words' proper accentuation. The chosen approach enabled students to enhance academic and professional effectiveness.

Aiming to adequately evaluate this study results, the next stage verified the chosen methodology efficacy to develop non-immigrants' writing and speaking skills necessary for professionally-focused English-language intercultural interaction in legal domain based on the results' assessment tools comprising knowledge assessment tests on grammar, vocabulary revision, translation, interpreting, mediation, listening comprehension.

Here is the sample of the brief outline of "Practical course of the English language" online lesson (four academic hours) with masters of Arts via Microsoft Teams:

- *News Digest*: interpretation and translation of press materials from the English language into Russian;
- *Unit 18 "Legalese"* from "Professional English in Use: Law" (Gillian & Sally, 2009, pp.42-43);

- *Reading Comprehension*: based on the text “Legalese”;
- *Language exercises*: RP practice, grammar and vocabulary revision;
- *Listening Comprehension*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_8RzU6JGQ0;
 - *Interaction and Discussion*: based on the listening activities and studied materials.

The present research successful results proved its novelty which lies in developing legalese and RP skills (using polysyllabic poly-accented words and terms of law) while teaching non-immigrant masters of Arts to professionally-focused English-language intercultural interaction in legal domain of a non-linguistic University's multinational environment.

4 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

This study pointed to the main findings - three fundamentals: received pronunciation, legalese, communicative competence significant in training multinational non-immigrant masters of Arts for professionally-focused English-language intercultural interaction within legal domain of Law Institute, RUDN University. In spite of the important findings reported by the present study, there are some potential limitations that deserve mention. Due to the worldwide pandemic and lockdown starting from March 2020, the English language was taught to masters of Arts online via Microsoft Teams. Succeeding the chosen methodology of teaching professionally-focused intercultural interaction, most of the lessons began with news digest and work with authentic texts followed by a range of language exercises relating to the legal issues presented in each text, received pronunciation practicing and compilation of trilingual mini-vocabularies with triplets of multisyllabic English, Russian and non-immigrants' mother-tongue words, they listened to native speakers using digital technologies, discussed new information, wrote different speeches, documents, contracts, memorandum of association, etc. This process reaches its highest targets in forming the above identified key communicative skills necessary for lawyers' intercultural collaboration: writing and speaking skills that contribute to grammatical, lexical, phonetic, stylistic correctness of legalese and rhythmic, stylistic, semantic factors of placing the stress in polysyllabic English, Russian words correctly. All these skills are crucial for the English-language interaction that leads to students' successful job-related communication. The situation caused by coronavirus problems and quarantine was challenging for both this paper's author and the students thus motivating for future work and research. This suggests further studies be focused on these important issues. This study is committed to educational excellence and language learning that the world community might benefit from.

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