

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES:
COMPETENCE-BASED DISCOURSE**

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape, higher education institutions are undergoing profound transformations. These are driven by three key pressures: globalization challenges, rapid digitalization of all spheres of life, and dynamic, often unpredictable changes in the labor market. These factors fundamentally reconceptualize the role of higher education, transforming it from an institution of knowledge transmission into a platform for developing adaptive, competitive professionals capable of lifelong learning and effective intercultural interaction. Within this framework, foreign language teaching becomes particularly relevant, as it gradually overcomes the long-standing traditional knowledge-oriented approach focused primarily on mechanical acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary. It is being replaced by a competence-based paradigm, which reorients the educational process toward building comprehensive practical skills that ensure successful professional communication in real, often volatile conditions.

In this study, competence-based discourse is interpreted as an integrated methodological and organizational foundation for educational practice. It draws upon and synthesizes students' knowledge, skills, experience, and values to address specific professional challenges. It transforms foreign language learning from an end in itself into an instrument of professional development, enabling graduates to adapt flexibly to a globalized, intercultural environment.

This study is relevant due to several key factors. First, it addresses recommendations from the European Council on developing foreign language communicative competence, which emphasizes skills for effective discussion of professional problems, reasoned defense of one's position, critical analysis of information, and engagement in constructive intercultural dialogue. Second, within the Bologna Process and the integration of Ukrainian higher education into the European space, the competence-based approach has become a normative requirement, signifying a clear reorientation toward outcomes – the development of professional foreign language communicative competence. Accordingly, foreign language ceases to be an abstract "subject" and becomes a practical tool for effective

interaction in a specialized field. Third, contemporary research emphasizes that effective teaching requires integrating both linguistic (language) and sociocultural (norms, traditions, context) components, along with discursive (construction of coherent speech) and strategic (ability to compensate for lack of knowledge) elements. This integration makes learning motivating, personally meaningful, and professionally significant.

The theoretical basis of the study is grounded in the works of leading Ukrainian and international scholars in foreign language teaching methodology, applied linguistics, higher education pedagogy, and communication theory. The competence-based approach is considered the leading methodological mechanism for modernizing the educational process, aimed at developing professionally significant attributes, particularly communicative flexibility, the ability to interact effectively and work in teams in a foreign language environment, as well as the capacity for lifelong learning and reflective practice (Savchenko¹, Kremen, Luhovyi²; Zavalevskyi, Berezhna³; Avsheniuk⁴; Kucherenko⁵). In universities, this is realized through professionally oriented discourse, which structures educational content around students' future specialization, including mastering specialized terminology, genres of professional correspondence and oral communication (presentations, negotiations, case discussions), as well as ethical norms of interprofessional interaction. Such teaching not only increases academic motivation and promotes efficient use of instructional time but also fosters emotional intelligence, tolerance, and cross-cultural sensitivity through interactive, simulation, and digital technologies.

This article aims to comprehensively analyze competence-based discourse as a foundation for developing foreign language professional communication in universities. It examines the theoretical and

¹ Савченко О. В. Компетентнісний підхід у навчанні іноземної мови і склад професійно-комунікативної компетенції. *Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Філологія. Соціальні комунікації*. 2020. Т. 31 (70). № 2. Ч. 2. С. 218–224. DOI: 10.32838/2663-6069/2020.2-2/38.

² Кремень В. Г., Луговий В. І., Саух П. Освіта і наука – основа інноваційного людського розвитку. *Вісник Національної академії педагогічних наук України*. 2021. Т. 2. Вип. 2. С. 1–5.

³ Завалевський Ю. І., Бережна Т. І. Професійна компетентність вчителя у реалізації концепції нової української школи. *Проблеми сучасних трансформацій. Серія: педагогіка та психологія*. 2023. Вип. 2. С. 16–22. DOI: 10.54929/pmptr-2023-2-02-01.

⁴ Вектори розвитку сучасної освіти: духовність, взаємодія, комунікація, компетентність: монографія / Н. М. Авшенюк та ін.; за заг. ред. Н. М. Авшенюк, Г. В. Товканець. Ужгород: РІК-У, 2024. 456 с.

⁵ Кучеренко І. А. Сучасний компетентнісний урок в умовах технологізації навчання в закладах П(ПТ)О: електронний навчальний курс. Біла Церква: БІНПО ДЗВО «УМО» НАПН України, 2025. 94 с. URL: <https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/745491/> (дата звернення: 08.01.2026).

methodological framework of this approach, identifies its structural components and communicative characteristics, and highlights the most effective pedagogical methods and technologies for its implementation in practice to develop professionally competent 21st-century graduates.

To achieve this aim, the article addresses the following tasks:

1. To analyze current educational trends and challenges that necessitate the transition from a knowledge-oriented to a competence-based approach in foreign language teaching in universities.

2. To clarify the essence and content of the categories "competence-based discourse" and "foreign language professional communicative competence (FLPCC)" as applied to language pedagogy and professional training.

3. To systematize the structural components of FLPCC (linguistic, sociocultural, discursive, strategic, subject-professional), defining their interrelationship and role in developing holistic competence.

4. To investigate the characteristic features and genre diversity of professionally oriented discourse as a central element of instruction, including analysis of specialized terminology characteristics, business etiquette, and typical communicative situations.

5. To characterize contemporary pedagogical methods and interactive technologies most effective for implementing the competence-based approach (e.g., project-based learning, case studies, role-playing and business simulations, flipped classroom, digital platforms and simulators).

6. To determine criteria and instruments for assessing the development of FLPCC aligned with the principles of the competence-based approach (authentic assessment, portfolios, rubrics).

7. To highlight potential challenges and prospects for implementing competence-based discourse in Ukrainian higher education, including issues of teacher training, development of curriculum and instructional materials, and adaptation of international best practices.

The study applied a set of general scientific and specialized methods to examine competence-based discourse as a foundation for developing professional foreign-language communication in universities. This methodological framework ensured a systematic and objective analysis.

The primary method was theoretical analysis, used to examine and synthesize contemporary scholarly works on the competence-based approach, professionally oriented discourse, and foreign-language communicative competence. This method enabled clarification of key concepts, refined the terminological framework, and defined the conceptual foundations of the study.

The comparative analysis method was employed to contrast traditional knowledge-oriented and competence-based approaches to foreign language teaching, as well as to examine domestic and international approaches to developing professional foreign language communication. This made it possible to identify shared and distinctive features of methodological models and to determine their applicability within Ukrainian higher education.

Systematization and classification methods were applied to identify the structural components of FLPC and to establish a typology of professionally oriented discourse. These methods facilitated the identification of interrelations among linguistic, sociocultural, discursive, and strategic components of competence.

Discourse analysis methods were used to examine the specific features of professional communication in a foreign-language environment, particularly patterns of genre organization, terminological specificity, and communicative strategies characteristic of different professional domains.

The method of generalization made it possible to formulate conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the competence-based approach and the outlining of prospects for its implementation in foreign-language teaching practice in higher education institutions.

The methodological framework is grounded in the competence-based paradigm of higher education and the discourse-oriented approach to foreign language teaching. The study assumes that professional foreign language communicative competence is developed through the integration of linguistic, sociocultural, discursive, and strategic components within a professionally oriented educational discourse.

The competence-based approach serves as the core methodological principle, focusing on learning outcomes defined as students' ability to apply foreign language skills in authentic professional contexts. This approach ensures the alignment of educational content, teaching methods, and assessment procedures with real-life communicative tasks relevant to professional practice.

The discourse-oriented approach underpins the analysis of professional communication, viewing language as a social practice embedded in specific institutional and professional settings. Within this framework, professionally oriented discourse functions simultaneously as both a learning objective and a medium of instruction, enabling students to acquire language through meaningful participation in simulated or real professional interactions.

The framework also incorporates elements of the communicative approach, emphasizing interaction, learner autonomy, and the functional use of language, as well as principles of constructivist pedagogy, whereby knowledge is actively constructed through experience, collaboration, and reflection.

Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative analysis of theoretical sources and pedagogical models, allowing for the synthesis of existing research findings and the identification of effective instructional strategies for implementing competence-based discourse in higher education. The integration of these methodological perspectives provides a coherent basis for examining how foreign language education can support the development of professional communicative competence in a globalized and digitally mediated environment.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Competence-Based Discourse

Competence-based discourse in foreign language teaching in higher education institutions is formed within the framework of the contemporary educational paradigm, which views learning not as the accumulation of linguistic knowledge but as the development of an individual's ability to perform purposeful, socially situated, and professionally relevant communicative action. In this sense, foreign language education emerges as a complex communicative process within which the student gradually masters ways of participating in professional and social discourses. Accordingly, competence is interpreted as an integrated result of combining knowledge, skills, abilities, and value orientations that are actualized in speech and ensure the learner's practical capability in specific communicative situations.

From a discourse-linguistic perspective, the competence-based approach views language as a dynamic system. This system functions in socially and professionally marked contexts. This means that the object of learning becomes not isolated linguistic units or rules but typical discursive practices within which these units realize their communicative meaning. Such an approach presupposes orientation toward analysis and production of coherent texts, participation in communicative events, and interpretation of meanings and pragmatic intentions of speakers, which is crucial for building functional foreign language competence.

The transition to competence-based discourse signifies a fundamental change in the objectives of foreign language training: from acquiring linguistic structures formally to using a foreign language as an instrument of professional communication. Thus, language is no longer viewed as the ultimate goal of learning but rather as a means of solving professional tasks, participating in intercultural interaction, and inclusion in professional discourse. What becomes important is not only knowledge of linguistic forms but also the ability to select them according to communicative situation, addressee, genre, and social roles of communication participants. Such interpretation of foreign language education objectives is consistent with the provisions of the competence-based approach in foreign language

teaching, within which the learning outcome is determined by the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in professionally significant situations⁶.

Within competence-based discourse, professionally oriented discourse occupies a central position, shaping the content and structure of the educational process in line with students' professional needs. From a discourse-linguistic perspective, it encompasses not only specialized vocabulary and typical grammatical models but also genre conventions, pragmatic strategies, communicative roles, and sociocultural norms of speech behavior characteristic of a particular professional community. It is through mastering professionally oriented discourse that students acquire specific ways of organizing text, argumentation, interpreting information, and interacting with communication partners. Thus, foreign language training is integrated with professional content and acquires an applied character, contributing to building holistic foreign language professional competence⁷.

From a theoretical-methodological standpoint, the competence-based approach emerges as an integrative model of organizing English language teaching in higher education, within which the educational process is structured around typical discursive situations, communicative tasks, and professionally significant scenarios of language use. The combination of linguistic material acquisition with active practice of its use contributes to overcoming the gap between theoretical knowledge of language and its functioning in real, professionally oriented communicative situations. Such organization directs the educational process toward learning outcomes and the development of critical thinking, the ability to analyze speech strategies, and make communicatively motivated decisions.

Furthermore, competence-oriented English language teaching is multi-dimensional. It encompasses the personal level related to the development of learner autonomy, reflection, and individual discursive strategies, enabling students to consciously manage their own learning process. Alongside this, the institutional level is realized, within which English functions as a means of professional and social interaction, academic mobility, and integration into the international educational and scientific space. Such an approach ensures flexibility of the educational process, its adaptability to changes in professional

⁶ Мягко М. М., Срьоменко І. В. Компетентнісний підхід до викладання іноземної мови у військовому закладі вищої освіти. *Вісник Національної академії Державної прикордонної служби України. Серія «Педагогіка»*. 2021. Вип. 76. Т. 2. С. 127–132. DOI: 10.32840/1992-5786.2021.76-2.22.

⁷ Antufieva V., Holubova H., Lisovska A., Kuleshova K., Oriekhova L. Professionally-oriented discourse in foreign language teaching in HEIs. *World Journal of English Language*. 2023. Vol. 13. No. 4. P. 61–67. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n4p61>.

requirements, and correspondence to the conditions of globalization and digitalization of contemporary higher education⁸.

2. Component Structure of Foreign Language Professional Communicative Competence

Within competence-oriented foreign language communication teaching, foreign language functions as a basic instrument of professional, social, and intercultural interaction in polycultural and multilingual environments. Its role extends beyond purely linguistic training, as it ensures integration of professional knowledge, communicative skills, and socially significant values that are necessary for effective professional activity in a globalized space. Accordingly, FLPCC is conceptualized as a holistic multidimensional construct. It develops through the interaction of speech, linguistic, socio-cultural, and general educational components. Each component performs an independent function while simultaneously complementing the others. Such an approach reflects contemporary scholarly conceptions of foreign language competence structure, oriented toward functional, context-dependent, and practically relevant use of language in professional communication contexts, where the effectiveness of language use is determined by the subject's ability to effectively solve professional communicative tasks⁹. Communicative competence constitutes the operational core of FLPCC, facilitating the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills across a range of typical professional communication contexts. It presupposes the ability to effectively perceive and produce oral and written texts of various genres of professional discourse, adhering to communicative norms and interaction strategies. The development of communicative competence is based on the active use of authentic materials, the analysis of professional communication models, and the simulation of real professionally oriented tasks, which brings the educational process closer to future professional practice and is consistent with the action-oriented focus of the competence-based approach in foreign language teaching. Linguistic competence serves a foundational systemic function and encompasses knowledge of grammatical structures, lexical minimum, phonetic and orthographic norms necessary for normative and precise use of language in oral and written professional discourse. It ensures the correctness of the linguistic formulation of utterances and enables

⁸ Панасюк Ю. В. Розвиток критичного мислення на заняттях з вивчення англійської мови у ВНЗ. *Дослідження інновацій та перспективи розвитку науки і техніки у XXI столітті: матеріали Міжнар. наук.-практ. конф., м. Рівне, 25 – 26 листопада 2021 р.* Рівне: Видавничий дім «Гельветика», 2021. Ч. II. С. 89 – 90.

⁹ Редько В. Г., Полонська Т. К. Місія іноземної мови в сучасному полікультурному і мультилінгвальному світі. Компетентнісно орієнтоване навчання іншомовного спілкування. *Педагогічна газета України*. 2021. Вип. 286 (6). С. 6.

conscious choice of linguistic means according to communicative intention and specifics of professional context. Development of linguistic competence involves not only the mechanical acquisition of linguistic material but also the development of linguistic awareness, an analytical approach to linguistic phenomena, and the ability for independent development of linguistic resources, which is an important foundation for further professional growth.

Sociocultural competence integrates language use into a broader cultural and social context. This requires understanding norms, traditions, values, and behavioral models of native speakers, as well as the development of the ability for intercultural dialogue. It forms readiness for adequate interpretation of communicative situations, consideration of cultural differences, and respectful engagement with a foreign language communication partner. In professionally oriented discourse, sociocultural competence determines the ethical parameters of communication, regulates business and interpersonal relationships, and ensures the effectiveness of professional interaction in an international environment, while simultaneously creating conditions for the conscious representation of one's own cultural identity.

General educational competence functions as a meta-competence. It enables learners to organize and regulate their own learning in foreign language education. It encompasses the development of independent work skills, cooperation, use of digital resources, strategies for searching, critically analyzing, and processing information, as well as reflection skills regarding learning outcomes. General educational competence supports the idea of lifelong learning, ensures flexibility of educational trajectory, and promotes adaptation to changes in professional and educational environments, which is especially relevant amid globalization and digitalization of contemporary education.

3. Methods of Implementing Competence-Based Discourse in the Educational Process.

Implementing competence-based discourse in foreign language teaching presupposes purposefully introducing specific teaching methods. These methods combine linguistic training with its practical application in professionally oriented communication settings. Against this background, teaching is based on interactive practices, an action-oriented approach, and active teacher–learner interaction, in line with the logic of the competence-based approach. The methodological foundation consists of role-playing and business games, the case method, project work, and group discussions. These approaches model foreign language professional communication situations and actively engage students in communicative practice. These methods foster communicative initiative, responsibility for collaborative outcomes, and effective interaction in professional contexts using a foreign language.

Role-playing and business games replicate typical professional scenarios, facilitating the transfer of linguistic knowledge into practical use. While participating in these activities, students acquire experience in taking on professional roles, making decisions, and interacting with communication partners, which helps reduce the gap between theoretical mastery of the language and its application in real communicative situations. Additionally, these methods engage students emotionally and motivationally, sustaining long-term interest in foreign language learning.

The project method and the portfolio aim to develop students' autonomous learning and develop planning, organizing, and evaluation skills regarding their own work. Project work and portfolio creation integrate linguistic training with professional content. They promote critical thinking and teamwork skills while increasing motivation through focus on achieving specific, tangible results. Moreover, these methods enable reflective analysis of learning achievements and gradually form an individual learning pathway.

The case method, training work forms, brainstorming, and discussions develop social, communicative, and organizational competences that are necessary for effective professional activity in a contemporary foreign language environment. Their application guides students toward analyzing problem situations, making team decisions, and defending positions with reasoned arguments, and consideration of alternative viewpoints in the process of foreign language communication. These methods promote communicative flexibility, critical information comprehension, and responsible participation in joint work.

The use of digital platforms and distance courses organically complements traditional teaching methods, ensuring individualization of the educational process and expanding possibilities for organizing foreign language training. Digital tools support learning autonomy and promote self-regulation, self-assessment, and reflection skills. They also create additional conditions for professionally oriented foreign language communication in synchronous and asynchronous formats. In combination with interactive methods, they ensure flexibility of the educational process and its correspondence with contemporary challenges of digitalization and globalization of higher education.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Competence-based discourse in foreign language teaching in higher education institutions represents a systematic methodological model that ensures the structural reorganization of objectives, content, and organization of foreign language training in accordance with requirements of a globalized, digitally mediated, and professionally volatile educational environment.

2. The transition to competence-oriented teaching shifts foreign language education from a subject-centered model to an action-oriented one, in which

the foreign language serves as a tool for addressing authentic professional and communicative tasks.

3. The implementation of competence-based discourse minimizes the gap between theoretical knowledge and language use practice through the integration of educational content into authentic professional discursive situations.

4. Professionally oriented discourse serves as the content and organizational core of foreign language education, within which linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural components are combined into a functionally holistic system capable of ensuring communicative adequacy in a professional environment.

5. FLPC in competence-based discourse emerges as an integrative result encompassing the ability for effective professional interaction, academic communication, and intercultural dialogue within institutionally and culturally determined contexts.

6. Interactive teaching methods, particularly the case method, role-playing, business games, and project-based learning, function as a didactic mechanism for actualizing competence-based discourse, ensuring the development of experience in team decision-making and reasoned professional communication.

7. The integration of digital platforms and distance learning formats within competence-based discourse creates conditions for individualization of educational trajectory, development of learning autonomy, and formation of the ability to continue professionally oriented autonomous foreign language learning.

8. The implementation of competence-based discourse in foreign language teaching enhances the quality of higher education by training graduates capable of functioning effectively under global communication, digital transformation, and dynamic changes in professional practices.

SUMMARY

The article presents a theoretical analysis of competence-based discourse as a foundation for developing foreign language professional communication in higher education institutions. The research problem lies in the necessity of transitioning from the traditional knowledge approach to an orientation toward practical competencies that meet the requirements of the globalized labor market and intercultural interaction. The theoretical foundations of competence-based discourse, its key components, and integration into the educational process are examined. Particular emphasis is placed on professionally oriented discourse, which combines linguistic, sociocultural, and communicative aspects for effective application of a foreign language in

the professional sphere. The results of theoretical analysis demonstrate the advantages of interactive methods, such as role-playing games and case studies, in developing students' motivation, adaptability, and critical thinking. Competence-based discourse fosters the development of learning autonomy, continuous self-education, and professional communicative readiness. Overall, its implementation enhances the quality of higher education, making it practical and oriented toward real societal needs. The research is based on a synthesis of contemporary pedagogical concepts and opens prospects for innovations in forming professional communication.

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