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FROM THEORY TO APPLICATION: ENHANCING LANGUAGE KNOW-HOW AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN PROFESSIONAL CONTEXTS

Abstract. Effective communication in professional environments requires more than theoretical knowledge of a foreign language; it involves the practical ability to interpret meaning, adapt linguistic resources to specific situations, and interact appropriately with different professional partners. This article examines the relationship between practical language competence, language for specific purposes (LSP), enterprise language requirements, and the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into foreign-language education. Particular attention is given to the communicative demands of international business and technical higher education. Drawing on conceptual research, findings from a survey of Slovak enterprises, and studies on ICT-supported language education, the article identifies the importance of English and German in professional communication and examines the language skills required for business correspondence, telephone conversations, presentations, and negotiations. It also considers the potential of digital learning resources, electronic instructional materials, and pedagogical-information templates to support specialized language education and autonomous learning. The analysis demonstrates that professional language education should be based on a combination of communicative competence, workplace-oriented needs analysis, and pedagogically appropriate technological solutions.

Keywords: communicative competence, linguistic know-how, professional communication, language needs analysis, practical language skills, communicative interaction, autonomous learning, information and communication technologies, language for specific purposes.

NAZARIYADAN AMALIYOTGA: KASBIY MUHITDA TIL KO‘NIKMALARI VA KOMMUNIKATIV KOMPETENSIYANI RIVOJLANTIRISH

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada kasbiy faoliyatda xorijiy tillarni samarali qo‘llash, lingvistik bilimlarni amaliy kommunikativ ko‘nikmalarga aylantirish hamda axborot-kommunikatsiya texnologiyalaridan foydalanish masalalari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda tilni bilish faqat grammatik qoidalar va nazariy bilimlarni o‘zlashtirish bilan cheklanmasligi, balki muayyan kasbiy vaziyatlarda fikrni aniq ifodalash, suhbatdoshni tushunish va muloqot sharoitiga mos ravishda munosabat bildirish qobiliyatini ham qamrab olishi asoslab beriladi. Tilni kasbiy maqsadlarda o‘qitish (Language for Specific Purposes — LSP) yondashuvi, korxonalarning xorijiy tillarga bo‘lgan ehtiyojlari va raqamli ta’lim resurslarining imkoniyatlari o‘zaro bog‘liqlikda o‘rganiladi. Slovakiya korxonalarida o‘tkazilgan so‘rovnoma natijalari hamda Yevropa miqyosidagi tadqiqotlar asosida xalqaro biznes faoliyatida ingliz va nemis tillarining ahamiyati, kasbiy muloqotning ustuvor shakllari va xodimlarning til kompetensiyasiga qo‘yiladigan talablar yoritiladi. Shuningdek, texnik oliy ta’limda elektron o‘quv materiallari, pedagogik-axborot shablonlari va mustaqil ta’lim resurslaridan foydalanish imkoniyatlari ko‘rib chiqiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: kommunikativ kompetensiya, lingvistik bilim, kasbiy muloqot, til ehtiyojlari tahlili, amaliy til ko‘nikmalari, kommunikativ o‘zaro ta’sir, mustaqil ta’lim, axborot-kommunikatsiya texnologiyalari, kasbiy til ta’limi.

ОТ ТЕОРИИ К ПРАКТИКЕ: РАЗВИТИЕ ЯЗЫКОВЫХ НАВЫКОВ И КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ В ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ СРЕДЕ

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются вопросы практического применения иностранных языков в профессиональной деятельности, формирования коммуникативных навыков и использования информационно-коммуникационных технологий в процессе языкового образования. Обосновывается положение о том, что владение языком не должно ограничиваться усвоением грамматических правил и теоретических знаний, а предполагает способность эффективно выражать мысли, понимать собеседника и адекватно реагировать на различные профессиональные ситуации. Особое внимание уделяется подходу Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), анализу языковых потребностей предприятий и возможностям цифровых образовательных ресурсов. На основе результатов исследования словацких предприятий и европейских аналитических материалов рассматриваются значение английского и немецкого языков в международной деловой коммуникации, основные формы профессионального взаимодействия и требования к языковой подготовке сотрудников. Кроме того, анализируются возможности применения электронных учебных материалов, педагогико-информационных шаблонов и ресурсов самостоятельного обучения в техническом высшем образовании.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативная компетенция, языковые знания, профессиональная коммуникация, анализ языковых потребностей, практические языковые навыки, коммуникативное взаимодействие, самостоятельное обучение, информационно-коммуникационные технологии, профессионально ориентированное обучение.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, expanding international economic relations, and the rapid development of information exchange, the demand for specialists capable of using foreign languages effectively in professional environments continues to increase. Professional success increasingly depends not only on possessing specialized knowledge but also on the ability to communicate that knowledge clearly and appropriately with international partners, clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Consequently, foreign-language education should extend beyond the acquisition of grammatical rules and vocabulary to the development of practical communication skills that enable learners to apply their knowledge in authentic professional situations.

The relationship between linguistic knowledge and the practical ability to use language has long been discussed in linguistics and philosophy. The distinction between *know-how* and *know-that*, introduced by Ryle (1949), provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding this relationship. According to this perspec-

tive, the ability to perform an activity cannot be reduced to knowing the rules governing it. Applied to language learning, this means that knowledge of grammar and vocabulary does not automatically guarantee effective communication. Language users must also be able to interpret meaning, understand the intentions of others, and select appropriate linguistic expressions according to the communicative situation (Davidson, 1986; Simpson, 2010).

The importance of practical language competence is particularly evident in international business and technical higher education. Companies operating in international markets expect their employees to communicate with foreign headquarters, customers, and suppliers through business correspondence, telephone conversations, presentations, and negotiations. The European Commission's ELAN study demonstrated that insufficient foreign-language skills may result in missed business opportunities and lost contracts (European Commission, 2006). Similarly, the PIMLICO project examined language-management strategies adopted by European small and medium-sized enterprises to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers and improve their international competitiveness (European Commission, 2011).

In this context, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), particularly English for Specific Purposes (ESP), provides an appropriate educational framework for connecting language instruction with learners' professional objectives. This approach emphasizes the importance of identifying learners' actual communication requirements, selecting relevant professional vocabulary, and developing language activities based on authentic workplace situations. Needs analysis therefore becomes an essential stage in designing effective language courses and instructional materials (Hutchinson & Waters, 1990). At the same time, the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has significantly expanded the opportunities available for foreign-language education. Electronic learning materials, digital databases, multimedia resources, and autonomous learning platforms can facilitate access to specialized content and support the development of professional communication skills. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these technologies depends on their integration with clearly defined pedagogical objectives and cooperation between language educators and information technology specialists (Reháková & Moravčík, 2008; Svetský et al., 2008).

Despite the growing attention given to professional language competence and technology-enhanced education, the relationship between theoretical linguistic knowledge, workplace communication requirements, and ICT-supported learning resources requires further integration. In particular, educational approaches should establish a stronger connection between the communication tasks performed in professional environments and the learning activities implemented in higher education.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the theoretical and practical foundations of professional communicative competence, identify foreign-language requirements in business environments, and explore the educational potential of ICT-supported learning resources. The study aims to demonstrate how practical

language knowledge, professional needs analysis, and digital educational technologies can be combined to improve the preparation of specialists for multilingual professional communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between linguistic knowledge and practical language competence represents an important research area in contemporary philosophy and linguistics. Ryle (1949) introduced the distinction between knowing how to perform an activity and possessing theoretical knowledge about it. His approach suggests that practical ability cannot be fully explained through the possession of explicit rules. Stanley and Williamson (2001), however, challenge the strict separation between these two forms of knowledge and examine the relationship between practical abilities and propositional knowledge. Bengson and Moffett (2010) further explore the intellectual foundations of practical knowledge and its relationship with human action. Hanna (2006), through the comparison of swimming and speaking Spanish, illustrates how language mastery, like other practical skills, develops through experience and application rather than through theoretical instruction alone.

Dummett (1976, 1978) investigates the nature of linguistic knowledge, focusing on theories of meaning and the relationship between understanding a language and being able to use it. Davidson (1979, 1982, 1986, 1994) develops a different perspective by questioning whether successful communication necessarily depends on a fixed and universally shared linguistic system. He emphasizes the importance of interpretation, contextual understanding, and the communicative intentions of language users. Dummett (1986) further examines these arguments, particularly the relationship between linguistic conventions and mutual understanding. Similarly, Devitt and Sterelny (1999) approach linguistic competence as a combination of abilities rather than merely the possession of semantic knowledge.

These theoretical perspectives are complemented by the work of Gallagher (2001) and Gallagher and Hutto (2007), who emphasize the importance of direct interaction, embodied experience, and narrative practices in understanding other people. Abbott (2006) examines how linguistic analysis can contribute to the clarification of conceptual and philosophical problems. Simpson (2010) also addresses the practical dimension of language competence and emphasizes the importance of linguistic know-how in real communicative situations. Collectively, these studies provide a theoretical basis for understanding professional communication as an activity that requires not only linguistic knowledge but also interpretation, adaptation, and practical interaction.

Another important research direction concerns foreign-language requirements in international business. The ELAN study, conducted by the European Commission (2006), investigated the economic consequences of insufficient foreign-language skills among European enterprises. Its findings highlighted the relationship between language barriers and lost business opportunities. The subsequent PIMLICO project

examined language-management strategies implemented by European small and medium-sized enterprises and identified practices that could improve international communication and business performance (European Commission, 2011).

The CELAN initiative also emphasized the importance of cooperation between businesses, language-service providers, and educational institutions in strengthening competitiveness and employability (CELAN, 2013a, 2013b). Its research activities included the development of language-needs analysis tools designed to help organizations identify employees' language competencies and determine their future training requirements (CELAN, 2013c). Furthermore, studies conducted among higher education networks highlighted the need for closer cooperation between universities and enterprises in preparing graduates for professional communication (CELAN, 2013d).

In foreign-language education, Language for Specific Purposes provides a framework for adapting instructional content to learners' professional objectives. Hutchinson and Waters (1990) emphasize that needs analysis should determine the content, methodology, and objectives of specialized language courses. This approach makes it possible to identify the vocabulary, communication skills, and professional situations most relevant to learners' future occupations. Bátovská (2016), examining the teaching of specialized Russian to students in economics-related faculties, also demonstrates the importance of adapting language instruction to professional terminology and discipline-specific communication requirements.

A further research direction focuses on the integration of information and communication technologies into multilingual and technical-language education. Reháková and Moravčík (2008) and Svetský et al. (2008) examine the application of ICT in higher education and technology-supported learning environments. Vašková (2008) highlights the importance of foreign-language competence in the professional preparation of technical specialists. Research by Reháková and colleagues also addresses the development of electronic instructional materials and pedagogical-information templates designed to support specialized language learning. Such resources can facilitate access to technical vocabulary, grammar exercises, oral presentations, scientific communication, and autonomous learning activities.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that theoretical approaches to linguistic competence, enterprise language requirements, and ICT-supported education have been investigated from different perspectives. However, their integration into a coherent educational framework remains important. In particular, professional language education requires a stronger connection between practical communication skills, workplace needs, and the development of digital learning resources. This study addresses this relationship by bringing together the theoretical, empirical, and technological dimensions of professional language education.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an integrative and descriptive-analytical research design combining conceptual analysis, the examination of existing empirical research findings, and the analysis of ICT-supported educational resources. The methodological framework is based on three complementary dimensions: the theoretical foundations of communicative competence, the identification of foreign-language requirements in professional environments, and the educational application of digital learning resources.

The first component involves conceptual analysis of the relationship between linguistic knowledge, practical know-how, and communicative interaction. The study draws on the distinction between know-how and know-that discussed by Ryle (1949) and Stanley and Williamson (2001), as well as the philosophical approaches to language and interpretation developed by Dummett (1978) and Davidson (1986). Particular attention is given to the idea that language competence is demonstrated through the ability to understand context, interpret communicative intentions, and use linguistic resources appropriately in different professional situations (Simpson, 2010).

The second component examines enterprise language requirements through the analysis of existing survey findings presented by Holúbeková and Fórdósová (n.d.). Their research involved 14 respondents selected from an initial population of 50 small, medium-sized, and large Slovak enterprises. Data were collected anonymously through an online questionnaire consisting of 11 closed-ended questions between November and December 2016. The questionnaire addressed foreign-language requirements, workplace communication, recruitment practices, employee language competencies, and language-management strategies.

The original survey findings were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages. The reported results were considered in relation to the broader European evidence provided by the ELAN study (European Commission, 2006). This comparative approach made it possible to examine the relevance of foreign-language skills in business communication and identify the professional situations in which such skills are particularly important.

The third component focuses on ICT-supported learning-resource development for students preparing to become teachers of technical subjects. It examines pedagogical-information templates and electronic instructional materials developed through the use of the database software known as *Zápisník*. The resources include German grammar, Technical English, oral presentations, discussion vocabulary, scientific posters, and activities designed to promote autonomous language learning (Reháková et al., n.d.).

Within this approach, language educators are responsible for developing the educational content, while IT specialists contribute to its technical design, organization, and electronic implementation. The resulting materials are intended to support classroom instruction, independent study, access to specialized language content,

and the development of professional communication skills. Computer-generated speech is also considered as a supplementary resource for listening and pronunciation practice.

Finally, the three research components are integrated to establish a relationship between theoretical communicative competence, actual workplace language requirements, and technology-supported educational resources. The study uses descriptive and analytical procedures to identify common principles and educational implications. No additional primary survey data or unsupported statistical procedures are introduced. Instead, the conclusions are derived from the systematic interpretation and comparison of the selected literature and previously reported empirical findings.

RESULTS

The conceptual analysis indicates that effective language competence extends beyond theoretical knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic structures. Although these elements constitute an essential foundation for language learning, they do not independently guarantee successful communication. Professional communication also requires the ability to interpret meaning, understand the intentions of others, adapt expressions to particular situations, and respond appropriately to different communicative demands. In this respect, practical linguistic know-how represents an essential component of professional language competence.

The analysis of enterprise language requirements revealed the importance of foreign-language proficiency in international business activities. According to the findings reported by Holúbeková and Fórdósová (n.d.), the survey involved 14 respondents representing Slovak enterprises. Of these, 57.1% operated in the secondary economic sector. A substantial majority of respondents, 92.9%, considered foreign-language competence important for maintaining international competitiveness.

Regarding the languages required by enterprises, English was identified as the most important foreign language, with 13 companies reporting a need for it. German was mentioned by 11 enterprises, while Russian was identified by four. These findings demonstrate the dominant position of English in international business communication while also indicating the continuing relevance of German and Russian in particular economic and regional contexts.

The survey further revealed differences in foreign-language requirements according to employees' professional positions. Language competence was considered particularly important for top management, as indicated by 85.7% of respondents, followed by middle management at 71.4%. These findings suggest that foreign-language proficiency is especially relevant for employees responsible for international coordination, negotiations, communication with foreign headquarters, and organizational decision-making.

The main communication partners identified by the enterprises were customers (71.4%), foreign headquarters (64.3%), and suppliers (64.3%). This distribution demonstrates that foreign-language skills are required across several dimensions of

business activity, including external customer relations, organizational communication, and international supply-chain cooperation.

The survey also identified specific communication skills required in professional environments. Telephone communication was considered the most important microskill, reported by 100% of respondents. Business negotiations followed at 92.9%, while business correspondence accounted for 64.3%. Presentations and small talk were each reported by 57.1% of respondents.

These findings indicate that professional language education should prioritize the development of practical communication skills, including listening comprehension, spontaneous verbal interaction, formal correspondence, presentation techniques, and negotiation strategies. The survey also identified company-funded language training as the most frequently reported language-management strategy (Holúbeková & Fórdósová, n.d.). This finding highlights the role of enterprises in supporting employees' continuing professional development.

Evidence from European research further reinforces the economic significance of foreign-language competence. The ELAN study reported that 11% of surveyed small and medium-sized enterprises had lost contracts because of insufficient foreign-language skills (European Commission, 2006). The PIMLICO project, meanwhile, highlighted positive business outcomes associated with the implementation of language-management strategies (European Commission, 2011). Together, these findings demonstrate that language competence should be regarded not only as an individual educational achievement but also as an important factor influencing organizational performance and international competitiveness.

The analysis of ICT-supported educational resources revealed additional opportunities for improving specialized language instruction. The pedagogical-information templates developed using the *Zápisník* database software provided an organized structure for presenting different types of instructional materials. These included German grammar, oral presentations, discussion vocabulary, scientific posters, Technical English, and autonomous language-learning activities (Reháková et al., n.d.).

The electronic organization of these resources allows instructional materials to be accessed and used in different educational settings. Their potential applications include classroom teaching, independent study, professional vocabulary development, and supplementary listening and pronunciation practice. Computer-generated speech also offers an additional means of supporting listening comprehension and pronunciation activities.

An important feature of this approach is the cooperation between language educators and IT specialists. Teachers contribute subject-specific knowledge and determine the pedagogical objectives, while technical specialists support the organization and electronic presentation of learning materials. Such cooperation helps ensure that technological solutions serve educational purposes rather than functioning as isolated technical additions.

Overall, the results identify three interconnected factors influencing professional language education. First, communicative competence requires the practical application of linguistic knowledge. Second, language instruction should reflect the actual communication requirements of professional environments. Third, ICT-supported resources can facilitate the development of specialized language skills and promote autonomous learning. Their integration provides a foundation for a more practice-oriented approach to foreign-language education.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate the importance of understanding linguistic competence as practical communicative know-how rather than simply theoretical knowledge of language rules. Effective communication requires the ability to interpret contextual information, recognize communicative intentions, and adapt language use to specific professional situations. This perspective is consistent with Ryle's (1949) distinction between practical and propositional knowledge and is further supported by Davidson's (1986) emphasis on interpretation and context in communication.

The enterprise survey findings provide additional evidence of the importance of aligning language education with professional requirements. The high demand for English and German, together with the reported importance of telephone communication and business negotiations, indicates that general language instruction alone may not adequately prepare learners for international professional interaction. Instead, educational programmes should incorporate tasks that reflect authentic workplace situations.

For example, learners should have opportunities to practise conducting telephone conversations, responding to customer enquiries, preparing business correspondence, presenting professional information, and participating in negotiations. Such activities allow students to develop not only linguistic accuracy but also the confidence and flexibility required for spontaneous communication. They also help learners transfer their theoretical knowledge into practical professional performance.

In this regard, LSP and ESP approaches provide an effective pedagogical foundation. As emphasized by Hutchinson and Waters (1990), the identification of learners' needs should guide the selection of course content and teaching methods. Therefore, professional language programmes should take into consideration students' academic specializations, anticipated occupational responsibilities, communication partners, and the linguistic demands of their future workplaces.

Structured language-needs analysis can contribute significantly to this process. The diagnostic tools developed within the CELAN initiative offer opportunities for identifying organizational language requirements and evaluating employees' existing competencies (CELAN, 2013c). Such instruments can help educational institutions and enterprises establish a closer relationship between language instruction and professional practice.

The importance of professional language competence is particularly evident in technical higher education. Future engineers, technical specialists, and vocational educators are increasingly expected to access international research, understand technical documentation, participate in academic conferences, and communicate specialized knowledge in foreign languages. Consequently, technical language education should incorporate both discipline-specific terminology and the communicative conventions of scientific and professional environments.

ICT-supported learning resources offer additional opportunities to address these requirements. The pedagogical-information templates developed through the *Zápisník* software illustrate how specialized educational materials can be systematically organized and made available in electronic formats. Digital resources, audio materials, and independent learning activities can extend learning beyond the classroom and provide students with greater flexibility in developing their language skills.

However, the availability of technological tools does not automatically guarantee improved learning outcomes. Their effectiveness depends on the quality of educational content, the relevance of learning activities, and the extent to which digital resources are connected to clearly defined pedagogical objectives. Therefore, collaboration between language educators and IT specialists is essential in designing resources that are both technically functional and educationally meaningful.

Another important consideration is cooperation between higher education institutions and enterprises. Regular communication with employers can help universities identify changing workplace language requirements, update educational programmes, and introduce more relevant professional learning activities. Practical projects, workplace-oriented assignments, and opportunities for professional interaction can strengthen the connection between academic preparation and employment expectations.

European language-policy initiatives also emphasize the importance of multilingualism in economic mobility, international cooperation, and professional development (European Parliament, 2017). Similarly, the European Union's business communication guidelines highlight the role of foreign-language competence in successful international trade (European Union, 2011). These perspectives reinforce the need to treat foreign-language education as an integral component of professional preparation.

It should also be acknowledged that the empirical evidence discussed in this study has certain limitations. The Slovak enterprise survey involved only 14 respondents and was conducted in 2016. Therefore, its findings should be interpreted within the context of the original sample and should not be generalized to all enterprises or considered a direct representation of current labor-market requirements. Likewise, the analysis of ICT-supported resources primarily identifies their educational potential rather than demonstrating experimentally measured improvements in learning outcomes.

Despite these limitations, the combined analysis of theoretical perspectives, enterprise requirements, and educational technologies provides a useful basis for understanding the development of professional communicative competence. It suggests that effective language education should integrate practical communication, needs-based instruction, and pedagogically appropriate digital resources.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the relationship between practical language competence, professional communication requirements, and the integration of information and communication technologies into foreign-language education. The analysis demonstrates that effective language use cannot be reduced to theoretical knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Instead, it involves the ability to interpret meaning, understand communicative intentions, and apply linguistic knowledge appropriately in different professional situations.

The findings concerning enterprise language requirements highlight the importance of English and German in international business communication. They also demonstrate that particular attention should be given to telephone communication, business negotiations, professional correspondence, and presentations. These requirements indicate the need to develop language programmes that reflect authentic workplace communication rather than focusing exclusively on general linguistic knowledge.

The study further emphasizes the educational potential of ICT-supported resources, including electronic instructional materials and pedagogical-information templates. Such resources can support specialized language instruction, facilitate access to professional terminology, and encourage autonomous learning. Their successful implementation, however, requires appropriate pedagogical planning and sustained cooperation between language educators and information technology specialists.

An integrated approach combining communicative competence, professional needs analysis, and technology-supported instruction can contribute to improving the quality of foreign-language education in higher and technical education institutions. Cooperation between universities, enterprises, educators, and IT specialists is particularly important in ensuring that learning materials remain relevant to changing professional requirements.

Ultimately, the transition from theoretical language knowledge to practical communicative ability should be regarded as a central objective of modern professional language education. Preparing graduates to communicate confidently and effectively in multilingual professional environments requires educational programmes that connect linguistic knowledge with authentic communication tasks, professional experience, and accessible digital learning resources.

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