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FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES AT UNIVERSITY: DEVELOPMENT OF FLUENCY

This article explores the challenges and methods related to developing fluency in a foreign language for professional purposes at university. It deals with the difficulties faced by both teachers and students in maneuvering through linguistic complexities, overcoming language barriers and mastering specialized terminology relevant to various professional fields. The article highlights the importance of a targeted approach that fosters not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of cultural distinctions and communication norms, specific for various industries. Additionally, it investigates pedagogical strategies and methods aimed at enhancing fluency acquisition at classes of foreign language for professional purposes. Key challenges in the

process of developing fluency at classes of foreign language for professional purposes have been highlighted: linguistic complexity; language barriers; cultural nuances; motivation and engagement; limited practice; fear of making mistakes; individual learning styles and preferences; assessment and feedback. Possible methods for developing fluency have been considered: communicative language teaching; immersion into a targeted language; organizing language exchanges; using authentic materials; role-playing and simulation; fluency-oriented activities, unassisted repeated reading and audio-assisted repeated reading; digital storytelling; vlogging, etc. By highlighting challenges and a certain number of existing methods of fostering fluency development, the article stresses on the necessity to provide regular feedback and correction of mistakes. Creating a favorable, engaging, interactive, and stress-free learning environment in the classroom has been stressed as the key prerequisite.

Keywords: challenges, fluency development, methods, professional purposes, teaching a foreign language, university.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, proficiency in foreign languages is increasingly becoming a precondition for success in various professional fields. At university it is absolutely evident, as far as students seek to equip themselves with the knowledge of a foreign language necessary for effective communication in their chosen fields. However, while the importance of fluency in foreign languages for professional purposes is widely acknowledged, it achieving presents numerous challenges for both teachers and students. At the classes of a foreign language for professional purposes students often face the problem of limited time and chances for practicing speaking. Moreover, they encounter a deficit in cultural and communicative contexts that could enhance their speaking abilities. Additionally, many students exhibit low self-efficacy concerning their English-speaking proficiency and tend to shy away from public speaking activities (Shadiev et al., 2023).

Due to this, educators have a task to employ innovative methodologies to bridge the gap between classroom learning of a foreign language and its application in real world. In this regard, a targeted approach is important, as far as it does not only raise linguistic proficiency but also cultivates a deep understanding of cultural differences and communication norms, specific for particular industries.

The purpose of the article is to explore the challenges encountered in development of fluency at lessons of foreign language for professional purposes at university and possible pedagogical strategies and methods of its development, that have proven their effectiveness and contribution to fluency acquisition.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The concept of fluency. In the modern era, university students need to possess a range of competencies including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information and media literacy, technological proficiency, adaptability, leadership, initiative, productivity and soft skills. Proficiency in speaking is crucial for mastering and demonstrating these competencies effectively and it plays a vital role in the contemporary world. In particular, the prevalence of English as a «lingua franca» emphasizes the vitalness of English speaking skills in acquiring and using these competencies (Harahap et al., 2024).

Fluency refers to the ability to express oneself in a language smoothly and without unnecessary pauses or hesitations. It can be assessed by various indicators such as frequency of pauses, instances of reformulation, substitution, false starts, and repetition, as well as speech rate (words or syllables spoken per minute), and the degree of automatization, measured by the length of uninterrupted speech (Hasnain, & Halder, 2024). Fluency is

sometimes viewed as an all-encompassing measure of language proficiency that incorporates various aspects of effective performance, such as syntactical complexity, lexical diversity, and communicative smoothness. In a more specific sense, it primarily refers to the capability to convey one's intended meaning naturally, smoothly and with minimal interruption (Tavakoli et al., 2016, p. 2).

Fluency includes several key components, including comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. A fluent speaker can understand spoken and written language without difficulty, express themselves clearly and accurately, and easily engage in conversations or presentations. Fluency also involves a natural flow of language, with appropriate use of vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions. Essentially, fluency reflects a high level of proficiency and comfort in using a language in various contexts, ranging from casual conversation to professional communication.

Fluency is sometimes viewed as an all-encompassing measure of language proficiency that incorporates various aspects of effective performance, such as syntactical complexity, lexical diversity, and communicative smoothness. However, in a more specific sense, fluency primarily refers to the capability to convey one's intended meaning effortlessly, smoothly, and with minimal interruption (Tavakoli et al., 2016, p. 2). At the same time, efficient speaking performance involves an interactive exchange where learners articulate, comprehend, and interpret information to convey and construct particular meaning. It is a dynamic process that engages both physical and mental faculties, encompassing the speaker's utilization of language in meaningful interactions (Harahap et al., 2024).

Challenges in developing fluency at lessons of a foreign language. To comprehend the attainment of oral fluency in a foreign language, it's crucial to delve into the foundational mechanism of speech production. As per commonly acknowledged models, speech production includes three sequential phases: conceptualization, formulation and articulation. When producing speech, speakers initially evaluate their communicative objectives to determine the content and style of their message. Drawing upon their long-term memory and world knowledge, they devise a preverbal plan according to these goals. Next, in the formulation stage, this preverbal plan is linguistically encoded, integrating lexical, syntactic and phonological elements. Finally, in the articulation stage, these linguistic structures are pronounced through articulatory gestures. Throughout this process, an internal and external monitoring mechanism ensures that the outcomes of each stage are in line with the initial plan (Hanzawa, 2021, p. 2–3).

Acquiring proficiency in English is a considerable and challenging endeavor for many individuals, both in academic and professional spheres. As far as English is among the most prevalent languages worldwide, mastering it can significantly improve communication skills and ease access to education and job prospects (Kemelbekova et al., 2024, p. 70). Developing fluency in a foreign language is a complex effort that presents various challenges for both students and teachers. These challenges can arise from linguistic complexities, cultural differences, individual learning styles, and the specific context in which the language is being taught. Key challenges in the process of developing fluency at classes of foreign language for professional purposes include: *linguistic complexity; language barriers; cultural nuances; motivation and engagement; limited practice; fear of making mistakes; individual learning styles and preferences; assessment and feedback.*

Students' psychological readiness to communicate in a foreign language is shaped by both the learning environment and their individual psychological traits. The teacher must establish conditions where students become active participants and creators in the educational process. This can be achieved, in particular, by integrating the communicative teaching method with modern innovative technologies (Vlasenko & Mirochnyk, 2016, p. 202).

Languages differ in their grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and phonetics, which can pose significant challenges for students, learning a foreign language for professional purposes. especially when switching from their native language to a foreign one. Learning new grammatical structures, mastering pronunciation and acquiring vocabulary are ongoing challenges in language learning. Furthermore, students may face difficulties in understanding and expressing themselves due to language barriers. These barriers may include unfamiliar phonetic sounds, idiomatic expressions, or linguistic nuances that are challenging to interpret or use correctly.

At the same time, language is deeply intertwined with culture, and understanding cultural nuances is essential for effective communication. Learners may struggle with understanding cultural references, gestures, social norms, and communication styles, which can hinder their ability to communicate fluently in real-world contexts. Students may also have problems with motivation and engagement, especially in long-term language learning programs. Students may experience periods of frustration, boredom, or demotivation, impacting their willingness to engage with the language and impeding their progress towards fluency. Developing fluency requires consistent exposure to the language and plentiful opportunities for practice. However, students may have limited access to authentic language sources and opportunities for communication outside the classroom. Fear of making mistakes can inhibit students from taking risks and practicing their language skills actively. This fear of embarrassment or failure may lead to unwillingness to take part in speaking activities, which impedes fluency development. Naturally, students have various learning styles, preferences and capabilities, which may not always be in line with the teaching methods used at classes of a foreign language for professional purposes, and this can be challenging in the conditions of a classroom with limited time and resources. Assessing language proficiency and providing meaningful feedback to learners are integral aspects of language instruction. However, making assessments that accurately measure fluency and providing timely, constructive feedback to support students' progress can be challenging for teachers of a foreign language for professional purposes (Masrul et al, 2024; Jin, 2024; Harahap et al., 2024; Wu & Abdul Halim, 2024).

To resolve the problem of students' demotivation while learning a foreign language for professional purposes, the following strategies can be recommended: to make learning more engaging and enjoyable by varying classroom activities and making tasks more appealing; to present and manage tasks in a way that motivates students; to give students frequent opportunities to succeed; to boost their confidence through regular encouragement; to foster motivation by promoting cooperation and autonomy; to increase students' satisfaction by offering rewards in a motivating way (Durdas et al, 2022, p. 35–36).

Additionally, the efficiency of learning is influenced by thinking, perception, and memory. Figurative memory and imagination aid in remembering foreign words. Occasionally, people struggle to find the right word even in their native language. Some words are easily memorized and later recalled with ease, while others are hard to remember and quickly forgotten. Regardless of one's psychological traits, it is important to remember about such concepts as willpower, cognitive interest, abilities and inclinations. Learners enjoy any process only when it is meaningful and interesting to them (Ovsyanko, & Kyrychenko, 2021, p. 161).

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates effective teaching methodologies, promotes cultural understanding, fosters learner autonomy and provides plentiful opportunities for language practice and interaction. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, teachers can create a supportive learning environment favorable for development of fluency at classes of a foreign language for professional purposes.

Suggested methods of developing fluency at lessons of a foreign language for professional purposes: Developing fluency in a foreign language requires a complex approach that joins various methods according to students' needs and learning styles. In this respect, several methods for developing fluency at classes of a foreign language for professional purposes can be suggested. At the same time, developing fluency in a foreign language for professional purposes involves targeted strategies that focus on both general language skills and specific industry-related terminology. Thus, it is necessary to define specific professional goals and set clear objectives, for example, to learn how to conduct business negotiations; to master technical vocabulary, to learn how to write formal letters and prepare documentation; to be able to participate in industry events conducted in a foreign language. Due to these, the methods and techniques may include: *communicative language teaching; immersion into a targeted language; organizing language exchanges; using authentic materials; role-playing and simulation; fluency-oriented activities; unassisted repeated reading and audio-assisted repeated reading; digital storytelling; vlogging.*

Communicative language teaching provides for meaningful communication and interaction in the process of learning of a foreign language for professional purposes. In particular, such activities as role-plays, group discussions, and communicative tasks provide students with opportunities to use the language in authentic contexts, facilitating fluency development. Immersion programs are efficient because they immerse students in an environment where the target language is the primary means of communication. They include programs of studying abroad, language camps, or virtual immersion experiences.

Through conversation practice with native speakers and mutual language support, students can improve their fluency while also helping their language partners improve. Analyzing and discussing authentic materials, such as newspapers, articles, videos, and podcasts helps students develop fluency while also enhancing their cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. At the same time, role-playing activities simulate real-life situations, such as job interviews, meetings, or social interactions, allowing students to practice language functions and communication strategies in context. Role-plays encourage spontaneous speech and help students build confidence in using the foreign language fluently. Fluency-oriented activities focus on developing speaking fluency through timed speaking exercises, fluency drills, and rapid-fire question-and-answer sessions. These activities encourage students to respond quickly and spontaneously, helping them overcome hesitation and develop fluency.

At the same time, the process of learning a foreign language for professional purposes is more successful when it is personality-oriented. Personality-oriented learning promotes the development of students' cognitive abilities and skills, enabling them to influence their personal experiences to understand and realize their individual potential. Together with this, activity-based learning involves students into the process of acquiring knowledge by investigating a subject at their own pace through their cognitive engagement, rather than being provided with ready-to-use information (Zablotska, & Tsar, 2022, p. 163).

In the context of developing fluency, N. Y. V. Pham, J. R. Baker & T. Nguyễn (2024) stress on the importance of reading in developing speaking skills. They state that foreign language learners «often read at rates below recommended reading speeds needed for reading fluency. Two methods are often employed to facilitate reading rates: unassisted repeated reading and audio-assisted repeated reading» (Pham et al., 2024). These two methods can be used for development of fluency in a foreign language and growing a learner's confidence in speaking a foreign language. At the same time, texts serve as the primary source of terminology and professional knowledge, simultaneously enhancing reading and speaking skills. For this purpose, scientific and technical texts should be chosen to engage students,

encourage discussions, facilitate information exchange, and, most importantly, spark a shared interest in the topic of conversation (Mosiy & Shtangret, 2023, p. 138).

Today the adoption of new teaching methodologies in teaching a foreign language for professional purposes is essential given the current educational landscape. Today's classroom environment heavily relies on computer-assisted tools, and the integration of modern educational devices has significantly boosted innovation in learning methods, resulting in substantial improvements in educational quality (Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023, p. 500). The use of multimedia resources, language learning software, and online platforms provide students with additional opportunities for independent practice and improvement of language skills. The use of technologies increases engagement, facilitates learning and offers personalized feedback to support fluency development at classes of a foreign language for professional purposes.

According to J. Fathi, M. Rahimi, & A. Derakhshan (2024) by employing online platforms, individuals learning a foreign language can surpass the conventional limitations encountered in classroom settings, such as limited class sizes, brief durations, and large student populations. Through these platforms, learners can benefit from constructive feedback facilitated by mediation, engage in communication and learning beyond the confines of the classroom, and consistently enhance their speaking abilities via interactive speaking exercises. Another aspect influenced by instruction via online platforms is the willingness to communicate, which denotes the degree to which a learner is inclined to participate in conversations in a second language. This willingness can be attributed to contextual factors that shape the desire to confidently interact with peers (Fathi et al., 2024).

S. Jin (2024) states that «a learning environment cultivated via social media, particularly vlogging, improves speaking proficiency and positively influences affective factors like Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety». The researcher admits that integrating social media into speaking activities, particularly through vlogging, provides a valuable and effective teaching approach that enhances speaking proficiency in encouraging and low-pressure environments (Jin, 2024).

The introduction of vlogging and other social media-based activities into language teaching is well-supported by evidence showing reduced anxiety, increased willingness to communicate, and improved speaking proficiency within the vlogging group (Jin, 2024).

R. Zhussupova and R. Shadiev (2023) suggest *digital storytelling* as a means of enhancing fluency in foreign language. According to them, digital storytelling offers a novel approach to recounting stories, utilizing computer-assisted tools and methods to modernize narrative techniques. This method revolutionizes storytelling by integrating various media formats, including websites, audio, video, animation, and graphics, to craft vibrant and imaginative presentations (Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023, p. 501). The researchers admit that digital storytelling allows students to engage their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic abilities. It serves as a valuable tool for fostering creativity and critical thinking skills as students collaborate and brainstorm ideas to make narratives. Additionally, it promotes teamwork and collaboration among students. By merging interactive technology with traditional storytelling, digital storytelling creates immersive cultural experiences that captivate audiences (Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023, p. 501). Digital storytelling offers a creative method for both teaching and learning. It serves as an effective educational resource by integrating digital media with inventive instructional approaches. In addition to enhancing students' technological competencies, digital storytelling fosters various educational benefits. It boosts learners' motivation and assists educators in constructing constructivist learning environments that promote creative problem-solving through collaboration and peer communication. Moreover, digital storytelling is instrumental in facilitating integrated program development and engaging learners in higher-order thinking and profound learning experiences

(Zhussupova & Shadiey, 2023, p. 503). Digital storytelling offers an advantageous method for narrating and creating stories through the use of animation, websites, audio, video, and graphics. Students have the opportunity to develop their own narratives, incorporating images and scripts that explore cultural differences or similarities within English communication (Zhussupova & Shadiey, 2023, p. 505).

Providing regular feedback and correction of mistakes is essential for guiding students' language development. Teachers can offer corrective feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary use during speaking and writing activities, helping students refine their language skills and improve fluency over time. In particular, teachers' focused feedback on repeated students' mistakes, when integrating social media-based speaking activities such as vlogging, can lead to improvements in speaking accuracy (Jin, 2024).

X. Li and W. Hu (2024) highlight the importance of peer feedback as a possible remedy for addressing the limitations posed by time constraints associated with teacher feedback. The researchers emphasize that while teacher feedback is more likely to have a noticeable effect on students compared to peer feedback, peer feedback still holds significance as a valuable alternative (Li & Hu, 2024, p. 2). One advantage of peer feedback is the swift and abundant feedback students can obtain from their peers; a feature not commonly found in traditional academic feedback. Additionally, students see valuable perspectives in both giving and receiving feedback. Another potential benefit of peer feedback over teacher's feedback is its ability to shift the learning process from a solitary pursuit to a shared and cooperative one. This shift is particularly influential given that participants of the studying process highly regard the opinions of their peers, which increases the potential influence of peer feedback (Li & Hu, 2024, p. 2).

At the same time, indirect feedback is considered more effective for helping students internalize the form, as it compels them to correct the mistakes identified by their teachers without being given the correct form directly (Masrul et al, 2024).

It is also very important to create a favorable, engaging, interactive, and stress-free learning environment in the classroom. Creating an engaging, interactive, and stress-free learning environment is crucial, as it allows learners to practice speaking a foreign language for professional purposes without feeling anxious. This method helps learners overcome emotional barriers and improve their language skills (Jin, 2024). University teachers of foreign languages for professional purposes should focus on enhancing key attitudinal factors like anxiety and willingness to communicate, as these elements play a crucial role in the overall development of fluency in a foreign language (Jin, 2024). Teachers must acknowledge their vital role in creating a supportive and non-intimidating atmosphere, which is essential for learners to effectively improve their speaking proficiency (Jin, 2024). At the same time, classroom activities mirror teachers' principles and beliefs, and the differences in these belief systems often explain the variations in how teachers conduct their classes (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 251).

Students' speaking proficiency is influenced by various physical, psychological, and environmental factors, which can have both positive and negative impacts on their oral performance (Harahap et al., 2024, p. 130). According to L. Wu and H. B. Abdul Halim (2024) positive and negative emotions serve distinct functions; positive emotions enhance cognition, motivation, physiology, psychology, and social resources, whereas negative emotions deplete both short-term and long-term resources and influence individuals' perception of their surroundings. Positive emotions, like joy and hope encourage students to look for new information and perceive it, enhancing cognitive flexibility and creativity. When students experience positive emotions, they feel safe and secure. They think different without fear. Positive emotions also make learners more receptive to change. Conversely, negative

emotions make them feel insecure and perceive their surroundings as threatening (Durdas et al., 2022, p. 55).

Thus, by combining these methods at classes of a foreign language for professional purposes, teachers can create a dynamic and supportive learning environment that fosters fluency development and provides students with possibility to communicate confidently and effectively in the foreign language for professional purposes.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the development of fluency in foreign languages for professional purposes at university presents both challenges and opportunities. Key challenges in the process of developing fluency at classes of foreign language for professional purposes include: linguistic complexity; language barriers; cultural nuances; motivation and engagement; limited practice; fear of making mistakes; individual learning styles and preferences; assessment and feedback.

While students face obstacles such as mastering specialized vocabulary and adapting to professional context, various effective methods exist to overcome these difficulties. They may include: communicative language teaching; immersion into a targeted language; organizing language exchanges; using authentic materials; role-playing and simulation; fluency-oriented activities, unassisted repeated reading and audio-assisted repeated reading; digital storytelling; vlogging, etc. By integrating authentic materials, real-world simulations, and industry-specific language training, teachers can create immersive learning environments that prepare students for the requirements and needs of their future careers. Additionally, fostering a supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere where students feel encouraged to take risks and practice their language skills without fear of judgment is essential, by addressing these challenges with innovative teaching approaches and a focus on practical application, universities can provide students with the possibility to achieve fluency in foreign languages for professional success.

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ЗАНЯТТЯ З ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ В УНІВЕРСИТЕТІ: РОЗВИТОК ВІЛЬНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ

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У статті досліджуються проблеми та методи, пов'язані з розвитком вільного володіння іноземною мовою за професійним спрямуванням в університеті. Розкрито труднощі, з якими стикаються як викладачі, так і студенти, маневруючи крізь лінгвістичні складнощі, долаючи мовні бар'єри та оволодіваючи спеціальною термінологією, властивою для різних професійних сфер. У статті підкреслюється важливість цільового підходу, який сприяє не лише володінню мовою, але й глибокому розумінню культурних відмінностей і норм спілкування, характерних для різних галузей. Крім того, досліджуються педагогічні стратегії та методи, спрямовані на полегшення процесу набуття вільного мовлення на заняттях з іноземної мови за професійним спрямуванням. Виділено ключові проблеми в процесі розвитку вільного володіння на заняттях з іноземної мови за професійним спрямуванням: лінгвістична складність; мовні бар'єри; культурні нюанси; мотивація та залучення; обмежена практика; страх зробити помилку; індивідуальні стилі навчання та смаки; оцінка та відгук. Розглянуто можливі методи розвитку вільного мовлення: комунікативне навчання мови; занурення в іноземну мову, що вивчається; організація мовних обмінів; використання автентичних матеріалів; застосування рольових ігор та моделювання ситуацій; діяльність, орієнтована на вільне володіння мовою, повторне читання без сторонньої допомоги та повторне читання за допомогою аудіо; складання цифрових оповідань; створення відеоблогів тощо. Висвітлюючи проблеми та певну

кількість існуючих методів сприяння розвитку вільного мовлення, стаття наголошує на необхідності забезпечення регулярного зворотного зв'язку та виправлення помилок студентів. Створення сприятливого, приємного, інтерактивного та спокійного навчального середовища в аудиторії підкреслено в якості ключової передумови.

Ключові слова: виклики, методи, навчання іноземної мови, професійні цілі, розвиток вільного мовлення, університет.