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FUTURE ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT USING THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S LEARN ENGLISH PLATFORM

РОЗВИТОК ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ФАХІВЦІВ УПРАВЛІНСЬКИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ ПЛАТФОРМИ LEARN ENGLISH БРИТАНСЬКОЇ РАДИ

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Шепель М.С., Балан О.С. Розвиток іншомовної комунікативної компетентності майбутніх фахівців управлінських спеціальностей за допомогою платформи Learn English Британської Ради. Науково-методична стаття.

Дана стаття присвячена розвитку іншомовної комунікативної компетентності майбутніх фахівців управлінських спеціальностей з використанням онлайн-платформи Learn English від Британської Ради. Автори обґрунтовують актуальність теми у світлі глобалізаційних викликів, цифровізації освіти та потреби України у висококваліфікованих фахівцях, які здатні ефективно взаємодіяти на міжнародному рівні. Описано структуру та можливості платформи, зокрема розвиток навичок читання, письма, аудіювання, говоріння, а також ділової англійської. Висвітлено педагогічний потенціал ресурсу для формування професійної іншомовної комунікативної компетентності та запропоновано практичний досвід його інтеграції в освітній процес. Стаття узагальнює теоретичні підходи щодо поняття комунікативної компетентності, а також пропонує інструменти її ефективного формування в умовах сучасної цифрової трансформації освіти.

Ключові слова: комунікативні навички, іншомовна компетентність, економіка, менеджмент, адміністрування, управління, цифрові інструменти, діджиталізація, освітні технології, платформа Learn English Британської Ради

Shepel M.Ye., Balan O.S. Future Administrative Professionals' Foreign Language Communicative Competence Development Using the British Council's Learn English Platform. Scientific and methodical article.

This article is dedicated to the development of future administrative professionals' foreign language communication skills using the British Council's Learn English platform. The authors justify the relevance of the topic in light of the challenges of globalisation, the digitalisation of education, and Ukraine's need for highly qualified professionals who are able to interact effectively at the international level. The structure and capabilities of the platform are described, in particular the development of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and business English skills. The pedagogical potential of the resource for the improvement of professional foreign language communication skills is highlighted, and practical experience of its integration into the educational process is proposed. The article summarises theoretical approaches to the concept of communicative competence and proposes tools for its effective development in the context of the current digital transformation of education.

Keywords: communication skills, foreign language competence, economics, management, administration, management, digital tools, digitisation, educational technologies, the British Council's Learn English platform

The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022 showed that Ukraine needs not only highly qualified military personnel, but also professionals of administrative majors (representatives of economics, management, finance, audit, marketing and public administration) who have sufficient foreign language skills and can represent our country in the international arena. The European language policy aims to develop citizens' social and communicative competences, ensuring their competitiveness in the international labour market. According to the European Union's language policy, every citizen of the European Union should be proficient in three languages: his/her native language and two foreign languages – one widely used international language and one less common. This concept was officially proclaimed at the Barcelona Summit in 2002 [1]. Teaching a foreign language at a university that does not specialize in linguistics is focused on both communication and professional development. As international interaction and cultural connections expand, contemporary professionals should possess the ability to read and translate foreign documents, instructions, and websites. Therefore, students need to develop the knowledge and skills essential for ethical and creative self-determination in both social and professional contexts. We should also take into account that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed approaches to teaching – it has become more digitalised. Many digital learning platforms and videoconferencing tools are used to provide interaction between teachers and students.

Analysis of recent researches and publications

Both domestic and foreign scholars dedicated their works to communicative competence development: O. Dobrotvor, N. Stetsenko, I. Chebotareva, I. Androshchuk, V. Marenichenko, S.J. Savignon; a foreign language communicative competence formation: M. Podoliak, K. Petryk, N. Mukhan, T. Horokhivska, O. Ievliev, N. Chubinska, V. Kobryn, D. Hymes, S.L. Heggernes, A. Sevarakhon, Yo. Munezane; digitalisation of education: V. Areshonkov, O. Buynytka, L. Varchenko-Trotsenko, B. Hrytselyak, C. Karpliuka, V. Kremenya, V. Bykova, O. Lyashenko, S. Litvynova, V. Lugovoi, Y. Malyovanoy, O. Pinchuk, O. Topuzov, P. Mertal, J.T. Schmidt, M. Tang, V.F. Crittendent, I.K. Bylia, V. Lovely; using digital platforms in teaching English: M.R. Ardiansyah, I. Borkovska, S. Volkova, T.A. Parnawati, A. Ulinuha, R. Maglie, A. Taronna, O. Gulich and others.

Unsolved aspects of the problem

Despite the existence of numerous studies dedicated to the foreign language communicative competence development, insufficient attention is given to using educational platforms, such as Learn English British Council, for fostering foreign language communicative competence among future professionals in administrative majors.

The article aims to consider using the British Council's Learn English platform as a tool for future administrative professionals' foreign language communicative competence development.

The main part

In the framework of our paper, we should consider the concepts of communication and competence.

Communication is understood in four dimensions: 1) is the act of communicating with people; 2) the various methods of sending information between people and places, especially phones, computers, radio, etc. 3) the process by which messages or information is sent from one place or person to another, or the message itself; 4) the process of sharing information, especially when this increases understanding between people or groups [2].

Competence is considered as: 1) the ability to do something well; 2) an important skill that is needed to do a job [3]. The International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction (IBSTPI) defines competence as the ability to perform activities, tasks and work competently. It is indicated that competence consists of a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable an individual to act and perform functions aimed at achieving certain standards in a professional field or activity [4].

S.J. Savington argues that for the integration of meaningful communication in the classroom, grounded in sociolinguistic realities and learner needs [5].

The term 'communicative competence' first appeared in social psychology, where it is defined as the ability to establish and maintain effective interpersonal interaction, provided that one has the appropriate knowledge and skills. In scientific research, this term is interpreted as a set of cognitive, operational and behavioural components that ensure productive communication, which are formed in the process of learning and gaining practical experience of social interaction [6].

In linguistics, communicative competence, introduced by Dell Hymes in 1972, expanded the understanding of language learning beyond the mastery of grammatical structures to include appropriate language use in social contexts [7].

O. Dobrotvor considers communication competence as a person's integrative quality, which includes knowledge, skills, abilities and personal qualities necessary for effective interpersonal interaction [8].

I. Androshchuk defines communicative competence as the foundation of effective educational interaction, encompassing speech regulation, dialogue, and conflict resolution. It integrates active listening, precise articulation, empathy, tact, and ICT usage, thereby enhancing both educational outcomes and professional growth through collaborative and intercultural engagement. Ethical conduct is an essential dimension of this competence [9].

Communicative competence is a key aspect of professional readiness, which includes the strategic use of language for effective communication. It includes a high level of proficiency in native and foreign languages, knowledge of cultural and intercultural peculiarities, as well as the principles of language interaction. In addition, competence implies mastery of information and communication technologies and a formed readiness for productive cooperation in a professional environment (figure 1) [6].

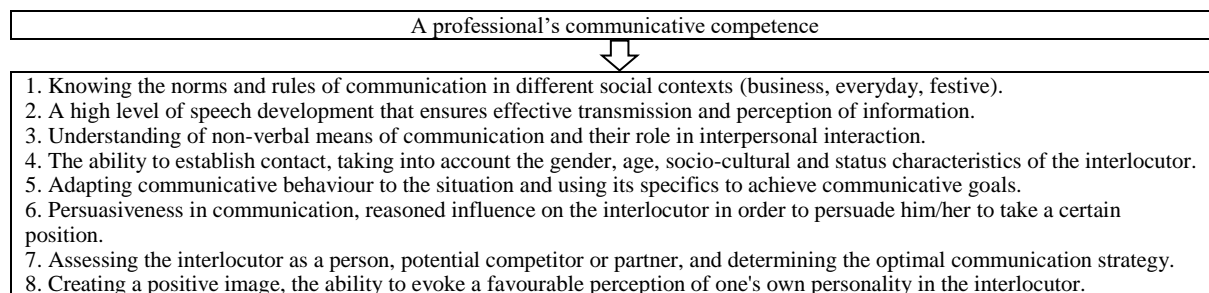


Figure 1. The complex of communicative knowledge and skills that form a professional's communicative competence

Source: elaborated by the authors based on [10]

Foreign language communication is a process of verbal interaction to exchange information, emotions and experiences in a foreign language. Its effectiveness is determined not only by the knowledge of the language but also by the formation of appropriate communication skills, which determines the relevance of scientific and pedagogical analysis of foreign language communication competence.

In the scientific discourse, foreign language communication is interpreted as a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses not only the transmission of information in a foreign language, but also a wide range of social, cognitive and pragmatic aspects. Depending on the approach to the analysis, the emphasis in the definition may vary from technical message exchange to intercultural interaction and influence on the interlocutor. The table below summarises the main approaches to understanding the essence of foreign language communication [11].

Table 1. The main approaches to understanding the essence of a foreign language communication

Concept	Key aspects
Transferring information	The process of transmitting information, messages, emotions, feelings from the addressee to the addressee by means of a foreign language.
Interaction between individuals	A two-way process of exchanging thoughts, ideas, feelings and information between communication participants.
Meaning construction	The importance of not only transmitting, but also perceiving and understanding information through language, symbols, gestures, and context.
Social process in a cultural context	Interacting within the social, cultural and institutional environment to shape meanings and relationships.
Impact and achievement of goals	A process of influence where one party tries to change the thoughts, beliefs or behaviour of another.

Source: elaborated by the authors based on [11]

Foreign language communicative competence is a system of knowledge, skills and abilities formed in the process of purposeful learning that ensures interpersonal, intercultural and international interaction. It implies foreign language proficiency for effective communication in a global environment [12].

Professional foreign language communicative competence is an integrated category that combines linguistic competence with professional knowledge. Optimal acquisition and use of professional vocabulary is possible only if there is a deep understanding of its content, which confirms the relationship between foreign language and subject matter competence.

Table 2. The components of foreign language communicative competence

Linguistic and professional component	Specialised vocabulary, terminology, and grammatical structures are necessary for accurate and logical professional speech.
Socio-cultural component	Adequate use of language, taking into account cultural norms, traditions, and social contexts of the country whose language is being studied.
Pragmatic component	Rules for forming and organising statements according to the purpose and situation of communication.

Source: elaborated by the authors based on [12]

Thus, foreign language communicative competence is the integrative ability of a person (higher education student, specialist) to use a foreign language effectively and appropriately in oral and written communication, taking into account linguistic, socio-cultural, pragmatic, and cognitive factors. It includes knowledge of a foreign language and speech norms, the ability to construct statements in accordance with the communicative purpose, understanding the communication context and the ability to intercultural interaction.

The COVID-19 pandemic, along with the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine, has significantly transformed the landscape of education. Online and distance learning have emerged as primary modes of instruction, offering a wide range of opportunities for both educators and students to engage with educational content.

Given that students at non-linguistic universities typically do not study ethnolinguistics, which provides insights into the sociocultural, spiritual, and personal dimensions of the target language, it is essential to place greater emphasis on these aspects when teaching a foreign language in such educational contexts.

In the era of globalisation, Technology Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) plays a key role in English Language Teaching (ELT) [13]. The online learning format encourages English language teachers to widely use digital technologies that diversify interaction in class, increase students' engagement and, at the same time, allow them to conduct short tests with instant analysis of their results in the minimum time [14].

Many platforms are performing this function, but in this research paper, we will focus on Learn English British Council.

The British Council is a UK-based institution dedicated to fostering international cultural and educational exchanges. Operating across more than 100 countries, it plays a crucial role in promoting global awareness of British culture and the English language, alongside the Welsh language in Argentina. Furthermore, it facilitates

collaboration in the realms of culture, science, technology, and education, strengthening intellectual and diplomatic ties with the United Kingdom [15].

The Learn English website by the British Council is a comprehensive platform designed to support English learners of all levels. It has the following features.

Table 3. Features of the British Council's Learn English Platform

Structured learning	The website offers well-organized lessons covering grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing skills.
Interactive exercises	Users can engage with quizzes, listening activities, and writing tasks to reinforce their learning.
Diverse content	It provides lessons tailored for different proficiency levels, from beginner to advanced, ensuring accessibility for all learners.
Practical applications	Many lessons focus on real-world English usage, such as describing charts, writing emails, and understanding verb patterns.
Free resources	A significant portion of the content is available for free, making it an excellent tool for self-study

Source: elaborated based on [16]

The British Council's Learn English platform is a valuable resource for students of Economics and Administration majors by enhancing their professional communication skills in English.

In our practice, we use this platform as a supportive material in line with our developed methodological guidelines.

At the beginning of teaching English courses for students of Administrative majors we use a free-entry level test provided by this platform. As for bachelor's degree students, most of them have A2-B1 level, master's degree students have B1–B2 level, and PhD students have B1-C1 level.

This platform helps to develop future professionals' communicative competence via development of listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. One can choose the level that is appropriate to his/her students.

Listening practice is essential for improving both language comprehension and pronunciation. This section offers self-study lessons, carefully structured according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The students can engage with audio recordings of diverse scenarios and interactive exercises that develop key listening skills – helpful for academic success, professional growth, and effective communication in daily life [17].

It is valuable that the recordings feature speakers from different nationalities, reflecting how English is spoken globally today.

The reading section provides a range of activities designed to develop reading proficiency. Engaging in regular reading practice contributes to improved language comprehension and supports vocabulary expansion. The self-study lessons are systematically structured according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), ensuring learners can progress effectively. Various text types and interactive exercises are available to strengthen essential reading skills, aiding academic success, professional development, and effective communication in diverse contexts [18].

The writing section delivers structured activities aimed at enhancing writing proficiency through the analysis of model texts and their structural components. Developing writing skills involves understanding linguistic patterns, stylistic conventions, and the effective organization of information. The self-study lessons are systematically designed under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), ensuring a progressive approach tailored to various proficiency levels. The platform offers diverse model texts, complemented by writing strategies and interactive exercises, to refine essential writing techniques for academic, professional, and everyday communication contexts. PhD students improve their ability to structure research papers, reports, and case studies using the website's writing exercises [19].

The speaking section furnishes structured activities aimed at developing speaking proficiency through contextual language analysis and practical application. Effective spoken communication requires an awareness of linguistic patterns used in various situations, as well as the ability to confidently apply key phrases in real-world interactions. The self-study lessons are systematically designed according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), ensuring a progressive learning approach. The platform includes videos featuring workplace dialogues alongside interactive exercises that refine speaking competencies essential for professional advancement and everyday communication. These resources facilitate the practice of functional language, reinforcing both memorization and practical usage [20].

All these sections have the following structure: preparation exercises (introducing new vocabulary or lexical exercises) → the main part (reading or listening to the text/dialogue) → exercises for comprehension. They also have a self-reflection part focused on the students' experiences.

The British Council's LearnEnglish platform also has vocabulary and grammar sections that help students to improve their lexical and grammar skills.

The vocabulary section offers structured activities designed to facilitate the student's vocabulary acquisition by enhancing word meaning, pronunciation, and spelling proficiency. A strong vocabulary foundation contributes

to improved linguistic competence, enabling confident and effective communication in English. The materials are systematically organised by thematic categories, ensuring focused learning within relevant contexts. Interactive exercises support the retention and practical application of newly acquired vocabulary, reinforcing comprehension and long-term mastery [21].

English grammar proficiency through structured explanations and interactive exercises designed to reinforce understanding. Learning materials are categorized by proficiency level, providing a clear progression path. A dedicated grammar reference offers the students concise explanations of verb tenses and essential rules. Learners can select specific grammar topics, engage with practice exercises, and track their progress [22].

The platform offers Business English lessons, including writing emails, conducting meetings, and negotiating.

The Business Magazine section provides a collection of magazine articles tailored for intermediate (CEFR B1) and upper intermediate (CEFR B2) students, aimed at enhancing reading comprehension in English.

Future professionals will engage with specialized business topics, presented from multiple perspectives, to develop both linguistic proficiency and subject-matter understanding. The materials include strategies and techniques for effectively navigating business challenges. It is valuable interactive exercises accompany each article, facilitating practical application of key concepts and vocabulary. Articles reflect current business challenges and strategies, making them useful for professionals, students, and researchers. As for PhD and Master's degree students, this section helps to refine business communication skills, essential for writing research papers, presenting at conferences, and engaging in professional discussions.

In the Podcast for professionals section, the students can listen to audio recordings for upper intermediate (CEFR level B2) learners and improve their listening skills in English. Useful language for a wide range of business topics from talks, presentations and dialogues, tips and techniques for dealing with business issues are given. Each recording has interactive exercises and a transcript to help the students understand and use the language. The podcasts feature discussions on business-related topics help PhD students to refine their ability to understand complex arguments, industry terminology, and professional discourse. Structured conversations improve clarity in academic writing, conference presentations, and professional discussions. The podcasts model effective communication strategies that can be applied in research settings [23].

The writing section presents a structured series of lessons designed to enhance email writing proficiency among pre-intermediate (CEFR level A2) and intermediate (CEFR level B1) students. The instructional materials focus on linguistic accuracy, organisational strategies, and effective editing techniques, ensuring learners develop practical communication skills in professional and academic contexts. The students enable to apply key language structures and refine their writing through targeted practice. The students practice reading email addresses properly, sending and receiving emails, starting and finishing emails, organising emails, making arrangements and enquiries, organising their writing, the proofreading tips and email etiquette [24].

In the section You're hired the students have an opportunity section, watch video series for intermediate (CEFR level B1) or upper intermediate (CEFR level B2) learners and improve their interview and recruitment skills in English. The students learn useful language and techniques for finding and selecting candidates, applying for a job and performing well in job interviews. Each video has interactive exercises and a transcript to help the students understand and use the language [25].

The General English section can be also used to develop future economic and administrative professionals' communicative competence. It is focused on language used in social situations and offers a variety of resources tailored to different time commitments and proficiency level.

Table 4. The Features of the General English Section

Activities	Features
Quick Practice Activities (5-10 minutes) For learners with limited time, the platform provides short activities across several zones	
Video Zone	Includes YouTube videos on topics like science, culture, and entertainment, aimed at B2 (upper intermediate) and C1 (advanced) learners to improve comprehension of various accents and colloquial language.
Audio Zone	Offers engaging audio recordings on diverse subjects, helping B2 and C1 learners enhance listening skills and
Magazine Zone	Contains articles on global issues and cultural events, suitable for B1 and B2 learners to practice reading comprehension and improve vocabulary.
Story Zone: .	Presents short stories crafted for A2 to C1 learners, focusing on reading skills and language development
In-Depth Learning Series (15-30 minutes) for more extensive study	
Audio Series	Include narratives with accompanying exercises to bolster listening skills and language)
Video Series	Starting Out, which is aimed at A1-A2 learners, this series follows everyday situations to teach basic grammar and vocabulary. Britain is GREAT: Designed for B2-C1 learners, it explores aspects of British culture, including art and history. Shakespeare that targets B2 learners, discussing the relevance of Shakespeare's works today. Word on the Street: For B1-B2 learners, this series combines real-life UK scenarios with language

Source: elaborated by the authors based on [25]

A combination of General English and Business English teaching can create a comprehensive language development approach that covers both everyday communication and professional contexts that are very important in today's transformations.

General English focuses on everyday conversations, social interactions, listening, speaking, reading, and writing in informal context; whereas Business English focuses on professional communication (emails, meetings, presentations), specific vocabulary, aormal writing and speaking styles. When they are combined together, they help the students to navigate both casual and corporate environments with confidence.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian Federation invention have shown that we need highly trained professionals of economic and administrative majors who are able to represent our country globally. In this case foreign language communicative competence development is of great importance. It should also be taken into account that teaching approaches have changed – education has become digitalised. The foreign language communicative competence can be developed with the help of different online platforms, and one of the best is Learn English by the British Council. It helps the students of administrative majors to improve their communicative competence in English.

Abstract

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 highlighted the urgent need not only for well-trained military personnel but also for highly skilled professionals in administrative fields – including economics, management, finance, auditing, marketing, and public administration – who possess strong foreign language competencies and can represent Ukraine on the global stage. In alignment with European language policy, which promotes the development of social and communicative competences to enhance employability in the international labour market, EU citizens are encouraged to master three languages: their native language and two foreign languages – one widely spoken and one less common. This multilingual approach was officially adopted at the Barcelona Summit in 2002. In non-linguistic universities, foreign language instruction is oriented toward both communication and professional application. As global collaboration and cultural exchange intensify, modern professionals must be capable of interpreting foreign texts, technical documentation, and online resources. Consequently, students should acquire the linguistic and communicative skills necessary for ethical, socially responsible, and professionally relevant self-realization. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of education, prompting widespread use of online platforms and videoconferencing tools to facilitate teacher-student interaction.

The article aims to consider using the British Council's Learn English platform as a tool for future administrative professionals' foreign language communicative competence development.

The authors provide a theoretical overview of communicative competence and its components, highlighting the significance of linguistic, socio-cultural, pragmatic, and professional dimensions. The paper presents the functionality of the Learn English platform, detailing its modules for listening, reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and business English. Practical examples of its implementation in higher education are provided, demonstrating its effectiveness in fostering professional language proficiency.

The article concludes that combining general and business English on digital platforms enhances students' readiness for academic, professional, and intercultural communication in a globalised world.

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