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ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ У СТУДЕНТОВ-ЭКОНОМИСТОВ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ КАК LINGUA FRANCA

Аннотация. В условиях глобализации английский язык как *lingua franca* (ELF) становится ключевым инструментом профессиональной коммуникации для будущих специалистов в сфере международных экономических отношений. В статье представлена методика обучения ELF, направленная на формирование междисциплинарных компетенций, необходимых для успешной карьеры в сфере международного бизнеса, дипломатии и научных исследований. Анализируются:

1. Типы компетенций, формируемых при обучении ELF (лингвистические, социокультурные, стратегические, цифровые);
2. Методические подходы к их развитию (ролевые игры, анализ аутентичных профессиональных текстов, использование цифровых инструментов);
3. Результаты эксперимента, проведенного среди студентов факультета МЭО МГИМО, подтверждающие эффективность предложенной модели.

Ключевые слова: английский язык как *lingua franca*, профессиональные компетенции, межкультурная коммуникация, методика преподавания английского в вузе, международные экономические отношения, аутентичные материалы, цифровая коммуникация.

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DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN FUTURE ECONOMISTS: TEACHING ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (ELF)

Annotation. In an era of globalization, English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) has emerged as a critical tool for professional communication among future specialists in international economic relations. This paper presents a pedagogical approach to ELF instruction, designed to cultivate interdisciplinary competencies essential for careers in global business, diplomacy, and academic research.

The study examines:

1. Types of competencies developed through ELF training—linguistic, sociocultural, strategic, and digital—tailored to the needs of economists in an international context;
2. Methodological strategies, including role-playing simulations, analysis of authentic professional texts, and digital tools, to foster these competencies effectively;
3. Empirical findings from an experiment conducted with students at MGIMO's Faculty of International Economic Relations, confirming the effectiveness of the proposed model.

Key words: English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF), professional competencies in economics, intercultural communication, English teaching methodology in higher education, international economic relations, authentic materials, digital communication.

1. Introduction

Training students from the Faculty of International Economic Relations (FIER) in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) must go beyond standard linguistic instruction. While traditional English teaching often focuses on grammar and formal language norms, this approach does not always meet the real-world needs of future economists, diplomats, and analysts who frequently communicate with international partners, colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds, and clients [1; 2].

In today's professional environment, ELF is defined by several key features:

- Lexical flexibility—using terms from different languages, informal expressions in formal contexts, and adaptive vocabulary;
- Structural adaptation—abbreviated phrases, ellipsis, and incomplete sentences for efficiency in communication;
- The importance of nonverbal cues—intonation, gestures, and pauses as compensatory tools when linguistic barriers arise;

- Cultural adaptability—adjusting speech based on whether a partner comes from a low-context (e.g., U.S., Germany) or high-context (e.g., Japan, Arab countries) culture [3].

The primary goal of this study is to identify and justify the competencies developed through ELF instruction for FIER students and to propose a modern pedagogical methodology that leverages contemporary educational technologies to foster these skills.

2. Types of Competencies Developed in ELF Training for Future International Economic Professionals

When learning English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), students specializing in international economic relations develop four essential skill sets that prepare them for professional success in a global context [4; 5]:

Table 1.

Competency Groups	Content	Examples in Professional Practice
1. Linguistic Competencies	Ability to use ELF in diverse professional settings (business correspondence, presentations, negotiations, analytical reports).	Writing a report in English for an international organization, participating in an online conference with foreign colleagues.
2. Sociocultural Competencies	Understanding cultural nuances in business communication across different countries.	Adjusting communication style during negotiations with Chinese partners (indirect phrasing) vs. American counterparts (direct approach).
3. Strategic Competencies	Ability to compensate for language gaps, recode information, and maintain communication despite partial understanding.	Using paralinguistic cues (gestures, tone of voice) to convey meaning when a term is unfamiliar.
4. Digital Communication Competencies	Skills in using digital tools (simultaneous interpretation, video conferencing, corporate language platforms).	Conducting online negotiations with automated translation features, analyzing international datasets.

2.1. Linguistic Competencies in the Context of ELF

Teaching English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) focuses not on rigid grammar rules but on practical communication skills, including:

- Lexical flexibility: The ability to choose synonyms, blend terms from different languages

(“brainstorming” vs. “idea generation”), and adapt vocabulary to context.

- Grammatical adaptation: Using concise phrasing (“Let’s do it!” instead of “It would be advisable for us to proceed with this action”) to improve efficiency.

- Intonation and paralinguistic skills: Employing pauses, questioning tones, and other non-verbal cues to keep conversations flowing naturally.

Example Task: Students rewrite a formal business email in a more natural ELF style, typical of multinational corporations.

2.2. Sociocultural Competencies: Adapting to Cross-Cultural Business Communication

Students in International Economic Relations must develop an understanding of cultural communication patterns that shape successful global business interactions:

- High-context cultures (Japan, Saudi Arabia): Rely on implicit cues, indirect speech, and non-verbal signals to convey meaning.
- Low-context cultures (USA, Germany): Value clarity, directness, and concise communication.
- Collectivist cultures (Russia, China): Prioritize harmony, conflict avoidance, and group cohesion over individual opinions.
- Individualistic cultures (USA, UK): Focus on personal achievement, direct feedback, and independent decision-making.

Example Task: Students analyze negotiation fragments between Russian and American companies, identifying key cultural markers that influence their effectiveness and outcomes.

2.3. Strategic Competencies: Overcoming Language Barriers in ELF

In an ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) environment, students learn strategies to navigate language challenges, including:

1. Information recoding – Substituting unfamiliar terms with explanations (e.g., ESG criteria, i.e. Environmental, Social, and Governance factors).
2. Paralinguistic communication – Using gestures, facial expressions, and pauses to convey meaning when words fail.
3. Style adaptation – Shifting between formal and informal language depending on context, audience, and cultural norms.

Example Simulation: A role-play negotiation where one student represents an American partner

(direct, explicit communication), while another plays a Japanese counterpart (indirect, context-dependent speech). The goal is to reach an agreement despite linguistic and cultural differences.

2.4. Digital Communication Competencies

A modern International Economic Relations professional must be proficient in:

- Synchronous translation tools (Zoom, Microsoft Teams AI live captions/interpreting).
- Corporate language-learning platforms (Duolingo for Business, Preply for professional English training).
- AI-powered analytical tools for processing large datasets and generating insights in English.

Digital Integration Example: Using Mentimeter for an interactive English business presentation, incorporating live polls, audience Q&A, and real-time discussion to enhance engagement.

3. Methodological Approaches to Developing ELF Competencies

3.1. Role-Play Based on Professional Scenarios

To foster strategic and sociocultural skills, role-playing exercises simulate real-world business interactions, including:

- contract negotiations with partners from different cultural backgrounds;
- project presentations to an international audience;
- conflict resolution in multicultural teams.

Role-Play Structure:

1. Preparation – Students receive pre-assigned roles, objectives, and cultural nuances of their partners.
2. Execution – Participants engage using ELF communication strategies (flexible grammar, paraphrasing, cultural adaptation).
3. Debriefing – A structured discussion identifying successful and challenging moments, with a focus on cultural and linguistic insights.

3.2. Types of Authentic Professional Materials for ELF Learning

The following types of real-world materials are used to develop linguistic and analytical skills:

Table 2.

Material Type	Example	Student Tasks
Business Emails	Emails exchanged between a German and a Brazilian company.	Analyze tone (formal vs. conversational), structural patterns, and cultural cues (e.g., directness in requests).

Contracts & Agreements	Excerpts from a U.S.-China joint venture contract.	Identify legal terms, negotiate ambiguities, and explain key clauses in plain language.
Presentations & Reports	IMF/World Bank reports on economic policies.	Extract key data points despite partial comprehension; summarize for a non-expert audience.
Press Conferences	Transcripts of G20 finance ministers' speeches.	Practice extracting meaning from rapid, accented speech; note rhetorical strategies (e.g., hedging, emphasis).
Meetings & Webinars	Recorded Zoom discussions on sustainability (e.g., ISO standards).	Transcribe key decisions made implicitly; role-play clarifying follow-up questions.
Social Media & News	LinkedIn posts by CEOs or UN climate reports.	Compare formal vs. informal language; adapt messaging for different stakeholder groups.

Example Task: Using a Russian-Canadian business contract, students pinpoint cross-cultural misunderstandings (e.g., vague language in Russian vs. precise Canadian legal drafting) and linguistic challenges (e.g., false cognates, register mismatches).

3.3. Digital Tools for ELF Teaching

Modern technology enables real-world professional communication simulations, including:

- Online negotiation platforms (Zoom, Discord) with real-time translation to practice multilingual interactions.
- Interactive whiteboards (Miro, Mentimeter) for collaborative business planning in English.
- AI speech analysis tools (ELSA Speak, Speechling) to refine pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.

Example Activity:

Students host a video call with “foreign partners” (classmates or professors from partner universities) using automatic translation tools. After the session, they evaluate communication effectiveness, discussing:

- Which ELF strategies worked best?
- Where did language or cultural misunderstandings occur?
- How could technology have improved the interaction?

4. Experimental Validation of the Methodology

4.1. Experiment Design

Participants: 60 fourth-year students from the Faculty of International Economic Relations (MIR) at MGIMO-University.

Groups:

- Experimental group (n=40): Learned using the proposed methodology, including role-playing, authentic professional materials, and digital tools.
- Control group (n=20): Received traditional instruction, focusing on grammar and standard language norms.

4.2. Evaluation Criteria

The following competencies were assessed:

Table 3.

Competency	Max Score	Description
Linguistic	10	Ability to use ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) effectively in professional settings.
Sociocultural	8	Adaptation of speech to partners' cultural nuances, including tone, reference, and indirectness.
Strategic	10	Effectiveness in overcoming language barriers during role-play scenarios (e.g., negotiation, presentations).
Digital Communication	7	Proficiency in leveraging digital tools (e.g., translation apps, collaborative platforms) for professional English use.

4.3. Experimental Results

Table 4.

Group	Linguistic Competence	Sociocultural Competence	Strategic Competence	Digital Communication Competence
Experimental	8.5/10	7.2/8	9.1/10	6.3/7
Control	5.8/10	4.1/8	6.2/10	3.5/7
Improvement, %	+47%	+76%	+47%	+80%

Key Findings:

- The greatest improvements were observed in sociocultural and digital communication competencies, confirming the effectiveness of role-playing and digital tools in ELF instruction.
- Strategic competence also showed significant gains, demonstrating the success of teaching compensatory strategies (e.g., paralinguistic cues, message recoding) in English as a Lingua Franca contexts.
- While linguistic competence improved, it remained the least developed area, highlighting the need for deeper study of professional vocabulary and register.

5. Conclusion and Future Directions

Teaching English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) for students in International Economic Relations should focus on holistic competence development, moving beyond traditional linguistic skills. The proposed methodology—combining role-play, authentic professional materials, and digital tools—effectively cultivates:

1. Linguistic competence – Ability to use ELF effectively in professional settings (e.g., negotiations, presentations).
2. Sociocultural competence – Adapting speech to partners' cultural norms, norms of politeness, and communication styles.
3. Strategic competence – Overcoming language barriers through compensatory strategies (e.g., paraphrasing, circumlocution, non-verbal cues).
4. Digital communication competence – Proficiency in modern international communication tools (e.g., AI translation, collaborative platforms).

Future Research Perspectives

To further enhance ELF instruction, the following directions are proposed:

- Integration of AI for real-time analysis of students' speech strategies, providing instant feedback.

- Development of adaptive ELF online courses using machine learning to personalize learning paths based on individual needs.
- Study of the impact of overseas internships on ELF competence development, particularly in cross-cultural professional contexts.

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