

THE SCIENTIFIC-THEORETICAL ESSENCE OF PROFESSIONAL-LEXICAL COMPETENCE

Maxamatxo'jayeva Go'zal Ulug'bek qizi

Department: Department of foreign languages for other Faculties.

Faculty: Faculty of Tourism

University : Chirchik state pedagogical university

Email: g.maxamatxojayeva@cspu.uz

Orcid: [0009-0009-5798-3232](https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5798-3232)

Abstract: This article explores the scientific and theoretical essence of professional-lexical competence as an important component of foreign language learning and professional communication. Professional-lexical competence refers to the ability of learners to understand, use, and apply specialized vocabulary related to their field of study or future profession. The article analyzes the role of professional terminology in developing communicative competence, improving academic literacy, and ensuring effective interaction in professional contexts. Special attention is paid to the linguistic, methodological, and pedagogical foundations of forming professional vocabulary skills in English language education. The study emphasizes that the development of professional-lexical competence helps students express field-specific ideas accurately, participate in professional discussions, and use English effectively in academic and workplace environments. Therefore, professional-lexical competence is considered a key factor in preparing competitive specialists who are able to communicate successfully in international professional settings.

Keywords: professional-lexical competence, specialized vocabulary, English language learning, professional communication.

Introduction

In modern education, the development of professional communication skills has become one of the most important requirements for preparing qualified specialists. English, as an international language of science, technology, business, and education, plays a significant role in this process. Students are expected not only to know general English vocabulary but also to master words and expressions connected with their future profession. This need has increased the importance of professional-lexical competence in foreign language teaching. Professional-lexical competence helps learners understand specific terminology, use field-related vocabulary correctly, and communicate effectively in academic and professional situations. It also supports the formation of communicative competence, which is necessary for successful interaction in the modern labor market. Therefore, teaching professional vocabulary should be considered an essential part of English language education. The scientific and theoretical study of this competence helps to define its structure, functions, and role in professional training.¹⁵

Professional-lexical competence is closely connected with learners' ability to understand and apply specialized vocabulary in meaningful contexts. It includes knowledge of professional terms, their meanings, usage rules, and stylistic features. In addition, this competence requires the ability to choose appropriate lexical units according to the

1. ¹⁵ Basturkmen, H. (2025). Core Concepts in English for Specific Purposes. Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/9781009376723.

communicative situation. For example, a future teacher, doctor, engineer, economist, or lawyer must be able to use professional English terms accurately in oral and written communication. The formation of such competence is based on linguistic, psychological, and methodological principles. From a linguistic point of view, it involves the study of terminology and professional discourse. From a methodological point of view, it requires effective teaching strategies, practical tasks, and context-based learning. Thus, professional-lexical competence is not limited to memorizing words but includes their conscious and purposeful use in professional activity.

The concept and structure of professional-lexical competence

Professional-lexical competence is one of the essential components of foreign language competence. It means the ability of learners to understand, remember, and use professional vocabulary related to their future field of activity. In English language learning, this competence helps students move from general communication to professional communication. A learner who has professional-lexical competence can correctly use terms, phrases, and expressions connected with a specific profession. This competence is especially important in higher education because students need English not only for everyday communication but also for academic and professional purposes. Therefore, professional-lexical competence is considered an important part of preparing future specialists.

The structure of professional-lexical competence includes several important elements. The first element is lexical knowledge, which means knowing the meanings of professional words and terms. The second element is contextual understanding, which means using professional vocabulary according to the situation. The third element is communicative application, which means using field-related vocabulary in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. In addition, this competence includes the ability to distinguish between general vocabulary and special terminology. For example, some words may have one meaning in everyday English and another meaning in a professional context. That is why learners must study professional words together with their usage, meaning, and function.¹⁶

From a scientific-theoretical point of view, professional-lexical competence is not limited to memorizing separate words. It is a complex system that combines language knowledge, professional thinking, and communication skills. Professional vocabulary reflects the main concepts of a particular field, so mastering it helps students understand the content of their profession more deeply. For this reason, terminology should be taught through meaningful texts, practical exercises, dialogues, and professional situations. When students learn words in context, they can use them more accurately and confidently. Thus, professional-lexical competence forms the basis for successful professional communication in English.

The role of professional vocabulary in English language education

Professional vocabulary plays a significant role in English language education because it connects language learning with students' future careers. In modern society, English is widely used in science, technology, business, education, medicine, and many other fields. Therefore, students need to know not only common English words but also special terms related to their profession. For example, future teachers need pedagogical terminology, future doctors need medical terminology, and future engineers need technical terminology. This shows that professional vocabulary is an important tool for academic and professional

2. ¹⁶ Diachok, N. (2023). Professional Lexical Competence Development in Blended Learning. The Modern Higher Education Review, 8. doi: 10.28925/2617-5266.2023.84.

development. Without it, students may face difficulties in understanding scientific texts and expressing their professional ideas.

The use of professional vocabulary helps develop all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. When students read professional texts, they learn new terms and understand how they are used in context. When they write reports, essays, or presentations, professional vocabulary helps them express ideas clearly and accurately. In speaking activities, students learn to participate in professional discussions and explain their opinions. Listening to lectures, interviews, or professional videos also improves their understanding of field-specific language. As a result, professional vocabulary becomes a practical means of communication rather than only a list of words to memorize.¹⁷

Another important role of professional vocabulary is increasing students' motivation. When learners understand that English is directly connected with their future profession, they become more interested in language learning. Professional vocabulary gives them an opportunity to see the practical value of English in real life. It also prepares them for international cooperation, academic mobility, scientific research, and workplace communication. In addition, professional vocabulary helps students become more independent learners because they can work with professional sources in English. Therefore, teaching professional vocabulary should be an important part of English language programs in higher education.

Scientific and methodological foundations of forming professional-lexical competence

The formation of professional-lexical competence is based on linguistic, pedagogical, and methodological principles. From the linguistic point of view, it is necessary to study terminology, word formation, semantic relations, and professional discourse. Students should understand how professional words are created, how they are used, and how their meanings change in different contexts. For example, prefixes, suffixes, compound words, and abbreviations are widely used in professional English. Understanding these features helps learners remember terms more easily. Therefore, linguistic analysis plays an important role in developing professional vocabulary skills.

From the pedagogical point of view, professional-lexical competence should be formed according to students' needs, interests, and future professional activities. Teachers should choose materials that are connected with the learners' field of study. These materials may include scientific articles, textbooks, professional documents, instructions, presentations, and authentic texts. Such resources help students learn vocabulary in real professional contexts. Moreover, tasks should be organized step by step, beginning with understanding new words and ending with their independent use in communication. This approach makes the learning process more effective and meaningful.¹⁸

Methodologically, different interactive methods can be used to develop professional-lexical competence. For example, teachers may use role plays, discussions, project work, case

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3. ¹⁷ Skarpaas, K. G., & Rødnes, K. A. (2022). Vocabulary Teaching Practices of L2 English in Upper Secondary Vocational Classrooms. *Languages*, 7(1), 55. doi: 10.3390/languages7010055.
 4. ¹⁸ Oblova, I. S., & Gerasimova, I. G. (2024). Ensuring Equal Opportunities in an English-for-Specific-Purposes Course for Working-While-Studying Technical Students. *Education Sciences*, 14(7), 685. doi: 10.3390/educsci14070685.

studies, presentations, vocabulary maps, and problem-solving tasks. These methods help students apply professional vocabulary in practical situations. Digital technologies are also useful because they provide access to online dictionaries, terminology databases, videos, quizzes, and interactive exercises. In addition, group work and pair work encourage students to communicate and exchange professional information in English. Thus, the formation of professional-lexical competence requires a systematic, practical, and student-centered approach.

Conclusion

In conclusion, professional-lexical competence is an important part of English language education and professional training. It helps students understand and use specialized vocabulary related to their future field. This competence is not limited to memorizing terms, but also includes using them correctly in real communicative situations. Through professional vocabulary, learners can read scientific texts, prepare presentations, write reports, and take part in professional discussions. Therefore, the development of professional-lexical competence increases students' academic and communicative abilities. It also prepares them to become qualified specialists who can use English effectively in their professional activity.

The formation of professional-lexical competence requires a systematic and practice-oriented approach. Teachers should use authentic materials, interactive methods, and tasks connected with students' future professions. Such methods help learners understand professional terms deeply and apply them confidently in speech and writing. Digital technologies, online dictionaries, professional texts, and multimedia resources can also make vocabulary learning more effective. As a result, students become more motivated, independent, and ready for international communication. Thus, professional-lexical competence plays a significant role in preparing competitive specialists for the modern global labor market.

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