

**ALGORITHM OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION AT NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY****Elena N. Makarova**

Ural State University of Economics (Ekaterinburg, Russia)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4439-5521>**Nadezhda A. Goncharova**

Ural State University of Economics (Ekaterinburg, Russia)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3193-5864>

*Abstract.* The article presents an analysis of the characteristics of teaching “Professional foreign language” to Master’s students in a non-linguistic university. It contains a review of Russian and foreign literature on the organization and methodological support for educational process and discusses ways of improving professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence of non-linguistic Master’s students. On the basis of the survey and oral interview answers of 1st year Master’s students who specialize in economics, the authors present a “portrait” of a Master’s degree student, analyze their learning needs, demands and experience of using English in professional activity, and determine the degree of necessity for oral and written English language skills in the process of solving professional tasks. The results of the study have confirmed the low level of both oral and written English proficiency of the respondents. The students found listening and speaking tasks to be most difficult, whereas reading and writing were rated among less challenging tasks. The analysis has demonstrated that the majority of the respondents (67%) have never used English for completing their professional tasks. 36% have experienced difficulties when applying for a job or solving professional problems in the workplace, caused by their inability to carry out oral or written communication in English. The results of the survey show that all English language skills (writing, reading, listening, and speaking) are in high demand for about 30% of master’s students, including both employees working for international and for the Russian medium-sized and large companies. No statistical correlation between the workplace of the respondents (international or Russian company) and their experience in using English for completing professional tasks was found. The article also presents a language training plan, consisting of a business game, digital story and cooperative learning method, each of which is aimed at meeting Master’s students’ needs, revealed in the survey. The implementation of the plan may allow developing Master’s students’ professional foreign language communicative competences by participating in various activities and events including Youth Economic Forum.

The results obtained can serve as a stepping stone for a further detailed study of the ways to increase motivation to learn a foreign language in the circumstances when the demand for its usage at workplace is relatively low.

*Key words:* professional foreign language; Master’s students; professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence; non-linguistic university; survey

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## ТЕХНОЛОГИИ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ В НЕЯЗЫКОВОМ ВУЗЕ

**Макарова Е. Н.**

Уральский государственный экономический университет (Екатеринбург, Россия)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4439-5521>

**Гончарова Н. А.**

Уральский государственный экономический университет (Екатеринбург, Россия)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3193-5864>

*А н н о т а ц и я .* В статье представлен анализ специфики преподавания дисциплины «Профессиональный иностранный язык» магистрантам в неязыковом вузе. Представлен обзор российской и зарубежной литературы по вопросам содержания и методического обеспечения образовательного процесса, проанализированы особенности формирования и совершенствования профессионально ориентированной коммуникативной компетенции у магистрантов-нелингвистов. На основе анкетирования и интервьюирования магистрантов экономических специальностей первого года обучения и анализа полученных в ходе анкетирования и устного интервью данных об использовании ими иностранного языка в профессиональной деятельности составлен «портрет» магистранта экономического вуза, проведен анализ востребованности английского языка в процессе решения магистрантами профессиональных задач, выявлены их потребности в получении знаний, навыков и умений по профилю дисциплины «Профессиональный иностранный язык». Результаты исследования подтвердили низкий уровень владения магистрантами как устной, так и письменной английской речью. Респонденты, участвующие в опросе, объективно оценивают свой уровень сформированности иноязычной коммуникативной компетенции: данные самооценки их знаний, навыков и умений совпали с оценками преподавателей, работающих в группах испытуемых. Наибольшую трудность при освоении дисциплины «Профессиональный иностранный язык» у опрошенных студентов вызвали задания по аудированию и говорению, а к числу наименее сложных заданий респонденты отнесли чтение и письмо. Анализ показал, что большая часть магистрантов (67%) никогда не использовали английский язык для решения профессиональных задач. 36% участников эксперимента, осознающих важность владения профессионально ориентированной иноязычной коммуникативной компетенцией, испытывали затруднения при приеме на работу или на рабочем месте, вызванные неумением осуществлять устную или письменную коммуникацию на английском языке. Результаты анкетирования показали, что все навыки владения английским языком (письмо, говорение, чтение и восприятие на слух) являются востребованными у третьей части магистрантов, специализирующихся в области экономики, среди которых оказались сотрудники как международных, так и российских средних и крупных компаний. Статистическая взаимосвязь между местом работы респондентов и их опытом использования английского языка для решения профессиональных задач выявлена не была. В статье также представлен план обучения, включающий технологию деловой игры, образовательную технологию цифрового рассказа и технологию обучения в сотрудничестве, каждая из которых направлена на удовлетворение потребностей магистрантов, выявленных в ходе опроса. Их внедрение в процесс обучения позволит эффективнее развивать коммуникативную компетенцию путем участия студентов в различных мероприятиях на иностранном языке, например, в Евразийском экономическом форуме молодежи.

Полученные результаты могут стать основой для детального изучения проблемы повышения мотивации к изучению иностранного языка в условиях, когда спрос на применение языковых знаний, навыков и умений в профессиональной деятельности является сравнительно низким.

*К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а :* профессиональный иностранный язык; магистранты; профессионально ориентированная иноязычная коммуникативная компетенция; неязыковой вуз; анкетирование

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### Introduction

The current political and economic situation has an impact on all spheres of society. The changes which are taking place contribute to the revision of the content and educational activities in higher education. In the context of internationalization of universities and export of Russian education, which continue to be significant trends in the development of educational environment, the need for foreign language skills of both teachers and students remains high [Nikolaev 2022]. The results of the earlier research confirm students' understanding of the prospects of using English in their future professional activities [Makarova 2022]. The issue of the necessity and demand for English language knowledge and skills of Master's students in changing conditions remains open and needs further study.

The aim of the article is to give a brief description of the process of teaching the discipline "Professional foreign language" to Master's students in a non-linguistic university, to present a "portrait" of a Master's student majoring in economics, to reveal learning needs and demands for professional English language skills from students' point of view, to analyze the level of their English usage in professional activities and to work out a training plan based on the use of modern approaches to teaching English.

**Research novelty:** this article, based on the survey among Master's students, provides a "portrait" of a modern Master's degree student from the point of view of the use of the English language in the professional sphere. The survey helped identify the problematic areas in the students' use of the foreign language and work out a training plan that includes the modern methods and techniques of language teaching relevant for Master's students. Analysis of the needs of Master's students, majoring in Economics, for professional foreign language knowledge and skills was carried out for the first time.

### Literature review

The findings of the studies on the development of professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence, presented in both

the Russian and international scientific works of recent years, show that modern authors apply a systematic approach to the research of this issue: the content of professional foreign language training is discussed, principles of organizing the educational process are described, traditional and newly introduced methods and approaches are analyzed. A brief review of the literature on the study of the issue under consideration is given below.

In the discussion of the content of professional foreign language Master's degree programs, much attention is paid to the selection of teaching materials. Most researchers and educators express the opinion that their value, primarily professional and scientific, remains the main criterion in the selection of teaching materials [Idilova 2018]. M. V. Solodikhina and A. A. Solodikhina write about the necessity of referring to real scientific and technological problems when creating assignments for a Master's class [Solodikhina, Solodikhina 2019].

A review of the discussion on the organization of Master's students educational process allows us to outline two main issues. Firstly, it is the organization of students' independent work, the importance of which in the process of Master's training has been increasing. Its proper organization is vital: at present, the development of the ability to independently gain knowledge and apply it in professional field for any specialist is essential. The significance of effective organization of Master students' independent activity is also determined by a limited number of classroom hours allocated to foreign language training compared to Bachelor's degree programs, which leads to the limited intensiveness of the learning process. Undoubtedly, organization of Master's student independent work should not be focused on checking the tasks completed by students. According to M. I. Balikoeva and V. P. Rubaeva, the organization of students' independent work in a foreign language training can be efficient only in case of active interaction between all the participants of the educational process, including academic supervisors of the students, who work in the major discipline-based departments. The results of the authors' approbation of the experimental methodology based on the interdisciplinary approach confirm the possibility

of high effectiveness of students' independent work for formation and improvement of their professional and communicative skills if properly organized [Balikoeva, Rubaeva 2016]. Secondly, researchers discuss the issue of the importance of establishing a relationship between Master's students and professional communities. Cooperation with representatives of professional and scientific associations aimed at improving the quality of professional training can undoubtedly become an effective form of organizing Master's students' education [Elsakova 2020; Chervonnyy 2018; Kokanova et al. 2020]. Development of their innovation skills, including cooperation with representatives of real economy, can become more effective with the application of knowledge, skills and abilities acquired in the process of learning a foreign language, especially the skill of professionally oriented reading.

The key role is traditionally played by the selection of methods and educational technologies allowing effective foreign language training of Master's students. The latest works on educational technologies discuss improving the use of both, well-known and new interactive teaching methods. O. A. Egorova writes about introduction of case-study method in teaching a professionally-oriented foreign language to students majoring in the field of natural sciences. According to the author, case modeling is not only an effective tool for developing critical thinking and increasing motivation level, but also a way to improve competitiveness of future Master's degree graduates, as cases can be used by potential employers as tasks for job placement [Egorova 2021]. M. V. Solodikhina and A. A. Solodikhina also present evidence of the effectiveness of a case-study method, claiming that its use helps increase students' critical thinking skills. The authors prove this effectiveness on the example of a set of STEM cases (Science + Technology + Engineering + Mathematics), noting that their use in the teaching/learning process contributes to the increasing of students' motivation and interest [Solodikhina, Solodikhina 2019]. One of the most important forms of educational process optimizing, concerning professional foreign language training, is the simulation of Master's students' future professional environment and work-place communication

situations [Atamanova et al. 2015, Denisenko et al. 2021]. Among widely used methods of professional foreign language training is creation of presentations, as well as tasks aimed at developing students' ability to lead a debate. These two belong to the most important elements of foreign language communicative competence [Zelenina, Kolesova 2018]. Development of oral communicative skills which are necessary to meet professional needs of Master's students can be reached in the process of discussing and debating professional topics, as well as modelling communicative situations, relating to students' future professional activities. Tasks of this type also contribute to the development of soft skills, which in recent years have been of key significance for the university graduates' employment. The introduction of the latest information technologies into the educational process and their widespread usage are recognized by the scientific and pedagogical community and are considered to be an effective means of creating productive learning environment. Electronic portfolio (E-portfolio), electronic diary (Online Diary), role play and business games are listed among less popular but no less effective methods in a foreign language training [Doghonadze, Zoranyan 2021; Voronova 2018]. Among the effectively proven ones is also digital storytelling, which is widely used for the development of foreign-language communicative competence in the bachelor's degree programs, but has not yet found extensive implementation in Master's students' training. Modern authors also discuss ways of improving foreign language listening comprehension methods, which, within Master's Degree course, have their own characteristics connected with students' professional and academic individual needs. These needs can be satisfied with learning activities, both in and out of the classroom. As it has been mentioned above, one of the distinctive features of modern educational process is the increasing role of students' independent work. Access to various educational Internet resources and online platforms gives students an opportunity to independently develop such a traditionally difficult skill as listening comprehension [Idilova 2018]. Distance learning during the pandemic showed potential and certain benefits of digital learning, among which is the possibility of

Master's students' distance support allowing to apply a differentiated approach to the training of each learner [Semushina 2020]. At the same time, modern researchers and educators emphasize the fact technological innovations cannot bring the desired results without implementation of pedagogical innovations and adaptation to the challenges of the university teachers themselves [Bakhmanova, Olshevskaya 2022]. However, it shouldn't be forgotten that only joint efforts and the active role in the learning process of Master's students themselves, will contribute to the implementation of the holistic principle in teaching foreign languages. That is why the demand for English language knowledge and skills in Master's students' working environment and the experience of English use in professional activities, is relevant to study.

To sum up, the main trends in teaching foreign language to Master's students include: 1) selection of proper teaching materials related to scientific and professional interests of these students; 2) use of simulation assignments imitating real communication situations at work; 3) improving students' ability to work independently; 4) interdisciplinary approach; 5) introducing technological innovations and extensive use of digital technologies in the learning process; 6) teacher professional development aimed at adapting teaching strategies to the digital environment and Master's students' professional and scientific needs. Among the teaching methods which have proved their effectiveness and have demonstrated widespread use in professional English language teaching and learning are the use of business game, which allows Master's students to work as a team on some task and promotes their interaction; cooperative learning, which is also based on group work and gives students an opportunity to work together to maximize both their own and other students' learning; and research based learning, when students are involved in real research projects, which demands development of search skills to find relevant information in a foreign language, as well as possession of writing or presentation skills.

### **Materials and methods of the research**

In order to achieve the research objectives, the survey and oral interviewing of 102 first year

Master's students of Ural State University of Economics were conducted. All the respondents studied professional foreign language in the groups of the authors of the research.

The survey contained 31 open- and closed-ended questions including multiple-choice ones, and allowed to outline the "portrait" of a contemporary Master's student and get information about his/her needs for English language knowledge, and experience in English usage in his/her professional activities. Answers to the survey questions also allowed to clarify Master's students' understanding of the importance and necessity of developing professional foreign language communicative competence. The answers received were supplemented with the respondents' views and opinions given during oral interviews, carried out by the authors of the research. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used in processing the received answers. The data obtained served as a basis for developing a language training plan, which consists of three groups of tasks and includes three educational methods, namely business game method, digital storytelling technology and cooperative learning method.

### **Results of the study**

The respondents, as mentioned above, were 102 first-year Master's students majoring in economics. 87% of them are full-time Master's students, the remaining 13% are part-time students. 39% of the respondents are men, 61% are women. The age structure of the survey participants is the following: 78% belong to 22–23-year-old age group, 11% are between 31 to 40 years old, 6% are Master's students aged from 24 to 30, and 6% of the respondents belong to the category of over 40.

The analysis of the answers to the block of questions related to the Master's student's occupation allows to present the data on their employment. All the students have some work experience, but 18% of the respondents at the time of the survey conducting were either looking for a job or were on maternity leave. Of the remaining 82%, 40% of the respondents work for state-owned enterprises, while 60% are private sector employees. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by the type of enterprise they work for:

Table 1 – Distribution of Master's students by the type of the company they work for

Enterprise type	Large international company (over 1,000 employees)	Large Russian company (over 1,000 employees)	Medium Russian company (between 500–1,000 employees)	Small enterprise (less than 500 employees)
Number of respondents (percentage)	12%	35%	26%	27%

Only 12% of the respondents work for international companies. Most of the respondents work for the Russian companies with the range of employees from less than 500 up to more than 1,000. One can suggest that those working for international companies are more in need for possessing English language knowledge and skills.

The next block of questions in the survey concerns the respondents' experience in learning English (both at school and at university), as well as their self-assessment of the knowledge and skills acquired as a result of this experience. The answers to these questions allow to make a "linguistic portrait" of the Master's students who took part in the survey.

The mother tongue for the absolute majority of the respondents is Russian, 7 people pointed out that their native language was Tatar (2 people), Kyrgyz (1), Ukrainian (2), Azerbaijani (1) and Hebrew (1). However, these 7 Master's students mentioned that they know Russian equally well. 2% of students didn't learn English at either school or university, 4% learnt English

as a foreign language at school only. The remaining respondents took an English course at both school and university. 12% of these respondents improved their English language skills additionally (private classes with a tutor, internships in English-speaking countries, work abroad, reading professional literature). 85% of the students had a break in their studies: 20% had a 1-year break, 60% – 2 or 3 years, 10% of the respondents had from 4 to 9-year break in learning the language, and 10% had more than 10-year period of non-developing their English language skills (Table 2). The process of foreign language communicative competence development for 20% of the respondents can be called continuous; for more than half of the respondents the break is relatively small and amounts to 2 or 3 years. As the majority of the students continue learning English within professional foreign language course after a short period of time, one can assume that they acquire new material and develop language skills on the ground of the knowledge gained during their Bachelor's degree studies.

Table 2 – Distribution of respondents according to the criterion "Duration of a break in learning English"

Length of a break in learning English	1 year	2–3 years	4–9 years	Longer than 10 years
Number of respondents (percentage)	20%	60%	10%	10%

However, 20% of Master's students have a long break in regular English language studies: from 4 to 10 years and even longer. All of them belong to the group of part-time students, who graduated from the university from 4 to 15 years ago.

The analysis of self-assessment of knowledge and skills, which were possessed by the students before studying discipline "Professional foreign language" within the framework of the Master's program, is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 – Distribution of respondents by criterion  
 “Self-assessment of knowledge and skills in English”

Self-assessment	Oral speech	Written speech
excellent	1 person	1 person
good	18 people	20 people
average	26 people	26 people
below average	33 people	21 people
bad	20 people	30 people
lack of knowledge and skills	4 people	4 people

More than half of the respondents chose the criteria “below average” or “poor” to assess both oral and written skills. This group includes both students with a short and long break in learning English. Only 25% of the respondents, in their opinion, have an “average” command of English. The subjective assessment of their English proficiency coincides with the one given by the authors conducting professional English language classes in the test groups: the authors' observations confirm the accuracy of students' assessment of their English proficiency. The results agree with the data presented in the work of P. S. Minakova et al. [Minakova et al. 2019]: the test conducted to determine the level of English proficiency of 120 Master' students majoring engineering, proved that most of the subjects spoke English at a low level. In spite of the fact, that the comparison of self-assessment data and objective assessment based on the tests is not completely correct, the data from literature sources confirm that the level of both written and oral foreign language communication skills of non-linguistic Master's students remains low [Semushina 2020]. More than half of the respondents chose the criteria of “below average” or “poor” to assess their oral and written proficiency. This group contains both part-time students with a long break in learning English and those who graduated from the university a year ago. The group containing the fewest number of respondents (not considering 4 students with lack of English language knowledge and skills) assessed their English level as good and even excellent (1 person). The analysis shows that most of these respondents have taken additional English language training in the forms mentioned above (private classes with a tutor, internships in English-speaking countries, etc.).

The distribution of the responses considering the level of oral and written English communication skills can be compared with the results obtained by O. M. Sherekhova. In her article she presents the results of the survey conducted with the participation of Master's students majoring in law, who take the course “Foreign language in the field of professional communication”. The aim of the survey was to determine the level of Master's students' confidence in English writing skills (namely their ability to put their knowledge into practice, for example, when writing a scientific article in English or an abstract to it). The results of the students' self-assessment, presented in the article, are the following: 30% of the respondents considered themselves not to be very confident in their English writing skills, 29% gave the answer «completely unconfident» [Sherekhova 2022: 155]. Students' self-assessment of written language skills presented in Table 3 is close to the results given in the work by O. M. Sherekhova. 29% of the respondents rated themselves as “poor” in writing skills, 21% – assessed their skills to be “below average” (Table 3). As for the speaking skills, the results do not differ considerably: though fewer students find their oral speech to be “bad”, more respondents consider it to be on a below average level.

The analysis of the aspects of learning English (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) that present the greatest difficulty for 97 out of 102 respondents (4 students with “lack of English knowledge” didn't answer the question, 1 student answered that “not a single aspect of learning English is difficult for me”) shows that speaking and listening comprehension were considered by the students to be the most difficult (70% and 75% correspondingly). Reading and writing were found to be the least challenging. L. V. Sidorova,

E. K. Timofeeva, P. N. Zhondorov present the results of entrance test, including four main types of speech activity, aimed at analyzing the level of formation of students' foreign language communicative competence. The findings showed that while the level of students' reading skills proved to be at an average level, the levels of the other three types of speech activities (speaking, listening, writing) were quite low [Sidorova et al. 2021]. These objective data agree with the self-assessment by Master's students majoring in economists, who referred the reading skill to the least difficult. Our findings are also close to the results of self-assessment of English speaking and writing skills by non-linguistic Master's students presented by Z. Akbari [Akbari 2016]. The author claims that 70% of respondents participating in his survey, confirmed having good English reading skills, compared to 42% of learners who thought they were proficient in listening comprehension, and 35% who thought they had the ability of speaking English.

The analysis of the answers to the block of questions about students' experience in the use of English in professional environment shows that only 23% of the respondents have had such experience (Table 4). The assumption that most of them work for large international companies was not confirmed: 50% of the respondents who have used or use English in professional activities, work for large or medium-sized Russian companies (the remaining 50% work

for large international companies). Among the situations at work, where these 23% of the respondents could or can apply their English language knowledge and skills the following were mentioned: reading professional literature and technical documentation; its translation into Russian; business correspondence; business meetings; communication with foreign employees, managers and clients; video conferences and participation in them; "survival" in business trips abroad. 67% of the respondents have never had any experience in using written or spoken English language for completing their professional tasks. This, however, does not mean that their professional activities do not involve use of English. The analysis of the data, presented in Table 4, shows that 36% of Master's students (13% more in comparison with 23% of respondents who use their English knowledge and skills) have faced or are facing situations when using English is necessary for fulfilling their duties (including reading professional literature, negotiations, communication with customers, correspondence with partners and clients, preparing presentations, writing reports, listening to lectures, working with computer programs). Negative answers to the question "Have you ever had any experience in using English in your professional activities?" were accompanied by such comments as "unfortunately", "not yet", "the knowledge of English is welcomed".

Table 4 – Distribution of the respondents' answers to the questions about the demand for foreign language skills in their professional environment.

Question	Yes	No
Does your occupation involve use of English?	36%	67%
Have you ever had any experience in using English in your professional activities?	23%	77%

The analyses demonstrate that all language skills (writing, reading, listening, and speaking) are in demand. Reading foreign literature and English-language resources, as well as conducting meetings and negotiations ranked first in the list of students' needs. Overall, it can be concluded that only about one-third of Master's students realize the necessity to speak English at the workplace. The survey answers prove, that even employees of international

companies can perform their professional duties without possessing professionally-oriented communicative foreign language competence.

The students' answers to the questions aimed at revealing their negative professional experience related to the lack of proper English language knowledge and skills show that 15% of the respondents got rejected at work or when looking for a job because they lacked sufficient English language skills. 13% of the respondents



were unable to obtain a higher position for the same reason and felt uncomfortable in their professional environment. Among the comments to these responses, the most typical are the following: "I did not understand foreign lecturers in professional training", "I felt out of place at negotiations", "I couldn't have a dialogue with foreign partners at an exhibition", "I did not get an internship at an international company", "I did not understand the tasks to be performed", "I did not understand the interlocutor". The total number of the respondents who have had a negative experience and, as a result, are aware of the significance of English language knowledge in achieving professional success, is also close to one-third.

### Discussion

The respondent's answers, given in the survey and oral interviews serve as the basis for developing a plan aimed at improving foreign language professional competence of Master's students, majoring in economics. Identifying Master's students' needs, teaching methods and approaches which allow to meet them in the course of professional foreign language teaching, have been chosen. As more than 50% of the respondents demonstrate a low level of foreign language proficiency, and only 1/3 of them realize benefits of foreign knowledge and skills for completing their professional tasks, it can be assumed that the level of Master's students' motivation to learn a professional foreign language is low. This was proved during the oral interviews. Therefore, teaching methods, aimed at raising Master's students' motivation to learn a professional foreign language is considered to be significant. This need for positive attitude to the process of learning a foreign language can be satisfied by a business game which can be also aimed at meeting Master's students' professional needs. Then, the need for developing speaking skills, which are, judging by the answers of the majority of the respondents, the most difficult for them to develop. It can be satisfied by creating a digital story, containing oral component. Alongside with the improving monological form of oral speech, this technology also helps develop Master's students' professional competence (if the topic is relevant) and digital competence. The final teaching method, offered as part of the

training plan, is aimed at improving students' reading and writing skills, which, though considered less difficult in comparison with speaking and listening, are most demanded (the respondents mentioned their need for reading professional foreign literature and corresponding with clients). These, as well as research skills, which are essential for Master's students, can be developed through writing scientific papers. Apart from this, as the respondents included making presentations on professional topics in the list of activities, they perform at work, the results of the research can be presented orally at university conferences and scientific events. This type of activity can also help expand students' experience in foreign language communication and improve not only monological, but dialogical forms of speech as well as listening comprehension skills, considered to be extremely difficult by the respondents. Each of the three teaching methods, allowing to solve a wide range of problems, arising in the process of teaching professional foreign language to Master's students, is presented below in more detail.

1. Firstly, we suggest introducing in the process of learning English at Master's level various game activities. The use of games as a teaching method in foreign language training actualizes the creative component of professional activity, which is so demanded when making non-standard decisions in any professional field, including economics. Application of games at different stages of foreign language teaching contributes to the realization of the developmental potential of a foreign language. Games are also proved to successfully simulate real professional communicative situations, appropriate language behavior in which is the goal of the professional foreign language course. While playing games individual characteristics of each student, no matter what his or her level of proficiency in English is, are taken into account. Besides, introduction of game-based learning into the educational process may help create a relaxed atmosphere, which will facilitate the students' willingness to demonstrate and apply their professional knowledge, skills and abilities, no matter if their English language level is sufficient or not. Getting positive emotions, especially in first-year Master's students' groups can also be a way to increase motivation to learn

a foreign language [Tsyganova et al. 2021]. To increase the effectiveness of English language training at the initial stage we suggest using a business game. The business game allows students to analyze specific work situations with participating of a wide range of “specialists”. This gives a possibility to involve in a business game every Master’s student, regardless of their level of proficiency in English. Interaction of students during a business game, which is a prerequisite for finding ways to solve a common problem, also contributes to the development of foreign language communication skills. Possible topics of business games, including online business games for students are widely presented and discussed in numerous publications [Grijalvo et al. 2022; Huang et al. 2022].

2. At the second stage we propose to use such an educational technology as digital storytelling. This is an individual assignment, the purpose of which is to create a professional profile of a Master’s student in English using modern digital technologies. The professional profile includes information about the student’s professional experience and professional skills, as well as the description of his/her achievements related to professional activities. Along with this information, a student can share any personal information that can contribute to better understanding of his/her professional goals, including character traits and hobbies that reveal personality traits and allow first year Master’s students to get to know each other better. Work at this stage contributes to the development of the ability to organize students’ independent work, improve English language and communication skills, as well as to the improvement of their digital skills.

3. The third stage is based on the implementation of such instructional method as “learning in cooperation” and is aimed at their involvement in research activities. The educational environment of a university of economics offers Master’s students a wide range of activities, participating in which they can realize their research potential and improve their language skills. Research-based learning technologies in the process of English language training in a university environment are widely used [Pirozhkova 2021]. They include participation in research conferences or research

paper contests, for example the Youth Economic Forum “Multipolar World in the Focus of the New Reality” held in April 2023. Participation in such events covers two activities: oral presentation and article writing. Considering Master’s students’ different levels of English proficiency, it seems reasonable to unite several students into research groups of 3 people. The convergence of the research interests of the participants in one and the same group will compensate for the difference in their language training. Students with low English proficiency can realize their potential by searching for and processing information, or preparing presentation slides or research paper results for publication; intermediate English speakers can also contribute to the preparatory work for a project by doing more advanced tasks in a foreign language, such as writing an abstract or doing primary editing of a machine translation; a high level English speaker can contribute to the research project by doing more advanced work in a foreign language, for example presenting the project results in front of the audience. Participating in and preparing for a research contest helps improve several competencies: professional, research and foreign language communication competence. Besides, working in a research group a Master’s student with any level of foreign language proficiency has an opportunity to realize his/her creative potential and improve soft skills such as teamwork and ability to conduct a constructive dialogue to achieve a common goal. Moreover, participating in international events, allows students to get a unique chance to develop intercultural communicative competence, which remains among the key competences which a modern young professional must possess in order to adapt in modern professional environment.

11 Russian and foreign universities, including universities of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizia and Tajikistan are co-organizers of the 2023 Youth Economic Forum “Multipolar World in the Focus of the New Reality”, which is held annually at Ural State University of Economics. Participation of foreign students and guests implies Russian MA students’ ability to communicate in English. Competing within Forum international contests implies not only presenting the project in English, but also answering questions and participating in

a scientific discussion. According to the survey of bachelor students who took part in the Youth Economic Forum in 2021, creating a research project and presenting it allowed them to see the prospects for further research, to feel themselves part of the international youth scientific environment, as well as to develop foreign language communication skills [Makarova, Ochilova 2021].

Thus, we believe that three teaching methods we have chosen, such as business game, digital story and cooperative learning present an original algorithm of professional linguistic education of MA students' majoring in economics. It can be an effective tool to improve their professional foreign language communicative competence. Consistent compliance of the three methods ensures creation of a friendly learning atmosphere, realization of individual professional and creative potential of each student. It also allows all the students to reveal their research and language learning potential despite MA students' different level of English language proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

The discipline "Professional foreign language" for Master's students majoring in economics is aimed at developing skills obtained during foreign language training in the bachelor's degree programs, and to master the professionally-oriented foreign language competence.

In modern literature the issue of improving teaching and learning quality within professional English language training is actively debated. Along with the content of training, issues of organizing the educational process, an important characteristic of which should be cooperation with professional communities and productive independent students' work, are discussed. Both the use of traditional methods and the introduction of the newest information and communication technologies, capable of accelerating the pace of learning activities, require an active position of a university teacher. The significance of teacher's role has increased due to the limited number of classroom hours allocated to the development of professionally-oriented communicative competence of Master's students.

The results of the survey, conducted in the Ural State University of Economics, allowed to present the portrait of a Master's student. Both full-time and part-time Master's students have work experience, the absolute majority was working during the surveying and interviewing process. 61% of the respondents work for large or medium-sized Russian companies. Only 12% of the students, who are considered potentially to be in most need for English language knowledge, work for international companies. The native language for the overwhelming majority of the respondents is Russian. 80% of master students, who participated in the survey, have had a short (from one to three years) break in the process of developing their language skills. The remaining 20% have had a longer break (from 4 to 10 years and longer). There has not been found any statistical correlation between the length of this break and the level of students' English language proficiency, as well as between the place of work of the respondents (international or Russian company) and their experience in using English in professional environment.

The analysis of the answers to the survey questions given by Master's students proved that the majority of them started learning the professional foreign language without having acquired the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities during their Bachelor's English language training. The respondents proved to be aware of the problems that hinder the efficiency of the learning process: their self-assessment of the English language proficiency level agreed with the assessment of the teachers working in the respondents' groups. The students rated listening and speaking skills as the most challenging aspects of learning professional English. We conclude that low level of oral and written foreign language skills makes it difficult to improve foreign language communicative competence within the limited period of study. The results also demonstrate that 67% of Master's students have had no experience in using English in their professional activities. It doesn't mean though that their English skills are not in demand. 36% of the respondents have found themselves in situations where the use of English was necessary either for new employment or the successful completion of professional tasks. However, only a third of the students realize

the need and areas of practical application of professional English knowledge and skills. This result poses the problem of finding ways to increase students' motivation to learn a foreign language at present. Absence of possibilities to use English language knowledge and skills can lead to students' loss of interest and poor academic performance. The further study of the ways to increase the motivation to learn English can become the subject of further research. Identifying Master's students' needs for developing foreign language skills allowed

to introduce a 3-component language training plan. Such algorithm combines such teaching methods as game-based learning, digital storytelling technology and cooperative learning. Their implementation will allow to solve a number of problems, including motivating students with different level of English language proficiency. Introducing the algorithm will also help students with the need for foreign language knowledge and skills to complete their professional tasks, develop professionally-oriented foreign language competence.

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#### Данные об авторах

Макарова Елена Николаевна – доктор филологических наук, доцент, заведующий кафедрой делового иностранного языка, Уральский государственный экономический университет (Екатеринбург, Россия).

Адрес: 620144, Россия, Екатеринбург, ул. 8 Марта, 62/45.

E-mail: makarovayn@mail.ru.

#### Author's information

Makarova Elena Nikolaevna – Doctor of Philology, Associate Professor, Head of Business Foreign Languages Department, Ural State University of Economics (Ekaterinburg, Russia).

Гончарова Надежда Анатольевна – кандидат исторических наук, доцент  
кафедры иностранных языков, Уральский государственный экономический  
университет (Екатеринбург, Россия).

Адрес: 620144, Россия, Екатеринбург, ул. 8 Марта, 62/45.

E-mail: nadini325x@yandex.ru.

Goncharova Nadezhda Anatolievna – Candidate of History, Associate  
Professor of Foreign Languages Department, Ural State University of Economics  
(Ekaterinburg, Russia).

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