

## COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AS A COMPONENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN UKRAINE

## КОМУНІКАТИВНА КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЬ ЯК СКЛАДОВА ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ ПРАВООХОРОННИХ ОРГАНІВ УКРАЇНИ

*The article deals with the current issues of communicative competence of law enforcement officers. The author underscores the importance of communication competence as an essential component of contemporary qualifications for law enforcement officers in Ukraine. This competence is directly related to fulfilling the functions and responsibilities entrusted to law enforcement agencies. The central premise of this study suggests that the most crucial aspect of law enforcement officers' professional activities is their interaction with people. However, in contrast to other professions, the process of building interpersonal relationships for officers is governed by unique working conditions, unconventional circumstances, and a wide variety of cases and situations that rarely resemble each other. In this regard, there is a need to improve the level of communication competence of law enforcement officers.*

*The article analyzes theoretical research and practical developments in the field of formation and development of law enforcement officers' communication competence, identifies existing gaps in this area and proposes methods and means of forming communication competence which should be implemented in the professional activities of law enforcement officers. The author emphasizes that today there is also a realized need for high-quality foreign language training, since it is becoming an essential component of the professional activity of a law enforcement officer, and therefore the formation of appropriate language skills, abilities and competencies for the successful performance of direct official tasks by police officers should be in the first place in the process of teaching such a discipline as "Professional Communication in a Foreign Language". In conclusion, the author notes that the process of forming communicative competence should be reduced to the formation of communication skills; communication skills will help a law enforcement officer to successfully solve the tasks he or she faces; to develop personally and be successful in professional activities.*

**Key words:** communication competence, professional competence, speech interaction, law enforcement officers (policemen), foreign-language professional communication.

*У статті розглядаються актуальні проблеми комунікативної компетентності співробітників правоохоронних органів. Автор підкреслює,*

*що комунікативна компетентність виступає центральним компонентом у системі сучасних вимог до кваліфікаційних характеристик співробітників правоохоронних структур України, що безпосередньо пов'язано з реалізацією покладених на органи внутрішніх справ функцій та обов'язків. Парадигмою дослідження є твердження про те, що найважливішим аспектом професійної діяльності працівників органів внутрішніх справ є робота з людьми, але, на відміну від інших професій, специфіка вибудовування взаєностосунків із громадянами для працівників органів внутрішніх справ визначається особливими умовами праці, нестандартними обставинами, а також випадками й ситуаціями, які не схожі одна на одну. У зв'язку з цим виникає необхідність підвищення рівня комунікативної компетентності співробітників органів внутрішніх справ.*

*У статті проаналізовано теоретичні дослідження та практичні розробки в галузі формування та розвитку комунікативної компетентності працівників правоохоронних органів, виявлено наявні прогалини у цій царині та запропоновано методи й засоби формування комунікативної компетентності, які доцільно впроваджувати у професійну діяльність працівників органів внутрішніх справ. Автор наголошує, що також на сьогодні з'являється усвідомлена потреба у якісній іншомовній підготовці, оскільки вона стає найважливішим компонентом професійної діяльності працівника органів внутрішніх справ, тому формування відповідних мовних навичок, умінь та компетенцій для успішного виконання працівниками поліції безпосередніх службових завдань повинно бути на першому місці в процесі викладання такої дисципліни, як «Професійна комунікація іншомовною мовою».*

*У висновках статті автор зазначає, що процес формування комунікативної компетенції має зводитися до формування навичок комунікації; комунікативні навички допоможуть співробітникам органів внутрішніх справ успішно вирішувати завдання та особистісно розвиватися й бути успішним у професійній діяльності.*

**Ключові слова:** комунікативна компетентність, професійна компетентність, мовленнєва взаємодія, співробітники правоохоронних органів (поліцейські), іншомовна професійна комунікація.

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**General statement of the problem and its connection with important scientific or practical issues.** Communicative competence is a fundamental component within the contemporary criteria framework for the qualification characteristics of law enforcement officers in Ukraine. It is directly tied to the execution of the functions and responsibilities entrusted to the internal affairs departments. The development of effective speech interaction and the

ability to create an optimal system of professional communication within the scope of their functional responsibilities are included in the content of professional education and training programs for future law enforcement officers.

The professional skills, competence, personal, and business traits of the staff are major determinants of a service's prestige and are crucial in shaping a positive perception of both individual units and

the entire system as a whole. Nowadays, the professional recruitment of candidates for service, along with the development and cultivation of professionally important qualities in new recruits, holds special relevance and practical significance.

The relevance of the current research is determined by the special role of language in the modern communicative process. Practice has convincingly proved that modern society needs specialists with a high level of communication culture. As known, the success of internal affairs officers' activities largely depends on their communication competence. Communicative competence is an essential characteristic for professionals, and its cultivation is emphasized in higher education. Enhancing communication skills enables police officers to effectively manage both operational and service duties, skillfully build relationships with citizens and colleagues, and contribute to shaping a positive public perception of the country's law enforcement system.

**Analysis of the latest publications. Identifying previously unresolved parts of the general problem.** As the challenges associated with the topic become more intricate, enhancing training initiatives for police officers is becoming critically essential (Cockcroft T., Nelken, D., Turpin, S., Nunez, E.). Experts define communicative competence as an individual's ability to effectively engage in interpersonal exchanges (D. Uznadze, V. Tyurina and M. Kots). According to S. Maksymenko, L. Orban-Lembryk, and N. Kuzmina, communicative competence is deemed a crucial factor in an individual's attainment of professionalism. These researchers perceive communicative competence as a composite of personal qualities. This perspective is shared by G. Eisenk, R. Kettel, G. Allport, V. Zlivkov, O. Zemlyanska, and M. Molokanov, or as a complex of personality abilities according to S. Bocharova, V. Harkusha, K. Platonov. As an appropriate pragmatic use of social knowledge and skills in communication, communicative competence is considered in the works of O. Mysenko, V. Moskalenko, E. Artsyshevska, O. Turinska.

The examination of scholarly literature and field practices has underscored the disparities between the imperative to enhance the communicative skills of law enforcement personnel and the provision of educational tools to fulfill this requirement efficiently.

**The aim of the article** – to analyze communication competence as a component of the law enforcement officers' professional competence.

**Presentation of the main material.** Professional competence is the mastery, possession of the competence set, including his/her personal attitude to it and the subject of activity, as well as the ability and readiness to solve problems and tasks arising in professional activity using knowledge, learning and life experience, values and inclinations. Consequently, it is a complex, long-term process leading to

professionalism of a specialist and involving a set of psychophysiological, mental and personal changes occurring in a person in the process of mastering and long-term performance of activity, providing a qualitatively new, more effective level of solving complex professional problems, which is understood as the formation of professional competence. Therefore, the formation of professional competence of a law enforcement officer consists in a systemic unity of psychological and pedagogical knowledge, experience, properties and personal qualities allowing to effectively carry out professional activities and purposefully organize the processes of professional communication.

Communicative competence encompasses personal traits that enable a police officer to adeptly navigate communication tasks. This entails building and sustaining psychological rapport with a variety of citizen groups, listening closely, offering explanations in a lucid and comprehensible way, organizing and impartially evaluating the information gathered, and creating a welcoming environment for everyone involved. Beyond individual characteristics, communicative competence requires not only an understanding of the social norms that influence the dynamics of interaction but also the behavioral capability to apply communication skills effectively. Additionally, it requires the versatility to engage with various groups of citizens, ensuring interactions are handled with sensitivity and understanding [1].

Groups of competencies are the result of educational activities developed in law enforcement officers:

- *key competences* – general person's competences, that are essential for socially productive activity of any modern specialist (conceptual, instrumental, value-ethical, integrative, contextual, adaptive);

- *basic competences* – skills in a certain professional field (competences in the field of self-education, communicative, organizational, research);

- *special competences* – skills that are necessary to fulfill a specific professional situation (projective, predictive, constructive, analytical, developmental, reflexive).

To form competent staff, it is necessary to have a well-functioning system of education and professional training of personnel, which in turn implies the introduction of effective ways and methods of mastering new knowledge, skills, acquisition of new skills.

At higher educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs system communicative competence is developed through the following:

- enhancement of essential humanities knowledge pertinent to communication within its societal and professional contexts;

- theoretical and practical familiarization (in both genetic and synchronous aspects) mainly with those

types of communicative activities that most fully correspond to the professional and personal needs of law enforcement officers;

- development of a comprehensive understanding of the fundamentals of rhetorical knowledge, which provide the basis for the speech competence of law enforcement officers;
- acquiring the skills for effective role-based and public speaking engagements;
- studying the techniques of conflict-free communication and speech behavior in conditions of communication resistance [2].

Forming the communicative competence of a law enforcement officer is a purposeful, organized, integrative, complex and multidimensional process, meaning the development and obtaining of stable communicative qualities and properties of the law enforcement officer's personality, providing social literacy and consideration of other people's point of view, the ability to listen, and if necessary - the ability to engage in dialogue, to be active in the general discussion of problems, to unite and interact effectively [3].

Forming communicative competence is a process depending on the individual characteristics of the personality. Personal qualities relevant to this aspect encompass the capacity to establish rapport, gather and interpret information accurately, and listen attentively. They include the skills to regulate one's own emotional state and that of others, display attentiveness and affability, demonstrate genuine interest, practice empathy and sensitivity, and maintain engaging conversations. A mastery of communication etiquette, sincerity, tact, adaptability, and self-awareness are vital, along with the ability to reflect, exhibit social intelligence, and possess emotional sophistication. Furthermore, intelligence and effective interpersonal communication abilities are essential.

Self-education is the main way to develop communicative competence. Only constant objective analysis of one's own experience, critical evaluation of successes achieved and mistakes made, combined with the creative use of the positive experience of others allows achieving the development of professional thinking and improving the level of qualification of a law enforcement officer [4].

The specifics of personal self-development of a law enforcement officer in the communicative sphere are determined by the specifics of the professional system and activities in which they are included from the moment of professional training. Among the special features are the following: strictly regulated activity, extremity; the possibility of clear identification of oneself as a member of the professional community, depersonalization; the presence of authority, subordination and the need to obey orders.

The most effective method for a law enforcement officer to develop communicative competence is

by designing and implementing a personalized development trajectory for their communicative abilities, tailored to their individual needs. In the process of independent work on the formation of the officer's speech culture it is necessary to follow the following tasks:

- to create conditions for the development of new communicative experience;
- to promote self-promotion in various types of communicative activity;
- to instill interest in active participation in communicative activities.

An indicator of the development of personal properties and qualities, as well as communicative abilities necessary for productive communicative activity, is the formation of an individual style for interpersonal behavior. The main effort to form communicative competence in one way or another belongs to the system of higher education, in the framework of which the appropriate disciplines and forms of presentation of material are encouraged.

To develop communicative competence, various forms of extracurricular activities are used for students, creating an even greater opportunity for the development of intuition, self-confidence, the ability to cope with emotional instability and tension, and to learn how to correctly assess various situations and act with this assessment in mind. In addition, situations arising in communication, especially with offenders, sometimes require the manifestation of self-control, endurance, resourcefulness of cadets and thus contribute to the accumulation of bits of invaluable experience for their future professional activities, as well as form skills necessary for the performance of future professional duties [5].

For the formation of communicative skills, it seems appropriate to use methods and technologies of heuristic and problem-based learning: case studies, group and individual exercises to improve speech technique, modeling business situations, presentation of projects, interactive trainings, role-playing and business games.

The training algorithm is organized as follows:

- studying the theory (understanding the theoretical foundations of communication allows laying the foundation of specialized skills);
- employing practical, profession-oriented examples that allow participants to assess the real-world application and effectiveness of communication skills;
- applying the algorithm of actions related to the realization of communicative skills;
- practicing communication techniques in real-life scenarios;
- self-analysis on the application of communicative knowledge, skills and abilities in practical activity [6, 7].

The following common methods contribute to improving the communicative competence of a law

enforcement officer: discussions (group discussion, analysis of problematic practical situations, analysis of situations of moral choice, etc.); game methods: business (management) games, role-playing games (behavioral learning, game psychotherapy). Role-playing is a collaborative activity that enhances the development of communicative competence. Participating in dialogue and scenarios in role-playing games enhances participants' verbal communication, critical thinking, and decision-making aptitudes. Events with a non-traditional structure also contribute to the development of communicative skills of the officers. These activities provide training in innovative work methods, placing students in situations that demand independent decision-making.

Implementing the methods outlined above within the educational and training framework for developing communicative competence in law enforcement officers boosts student engagement and cultivates their capacity for independent work. At the same time, using collective forms of work contributes to the formation and practice of communicative skills.

The most effective way of creating a situation promoting the formation of communicative skills is a role-playing game, as it is the most accurate model of communication. Its effectiveness lies in the following:

- emotions, generated in the process of conversation or in any situation, represent a favorable ground for learning communicative skills;
- cooperation and partnership are developed during the learning process, and motivation for collective activity arises;
- the level of listeners' involvement in the activity during the lesson is increasing.

Improvement of communicative competence, the ability to carry out interpersonal and intercultural communication, education of an active self-developing officer of internal affairs bodies can also be carried out through the use of various techniques that activate the activity. In particular, one of such methods can be psychological trainings conducted with internal affairs officers, as well as professional trainings, where it is possible to work out various life situations in order to avoid irreparable mistakes and to develop professional persuasive speech.

Business communication training, aimed not only at developing the participants' skills of successful interpersonal communication, but also at increasing their general level of competence in the communicative sphere, should be recognized as very effective. In the course of business communication trainings in law enforcement agencies, such issues as the structure of the business communication process, management of group discussion of problems (group discussion, meetings), establishing and maintaining psychological contact, methods of persuasion of the interlocutor, listening skills, conflicts in business communication, constructive strategy for resolving

conflict situations and some others are commonly considered. Trainings help to create a comfortable microclimate in the team, contributing to the solution of many problems in the field of communicative development. The participation of specialists (philologists, psychologists) in trainings contributes to the formation of a more complete understanding of communicative competence as a professionally significant quality, its dominant role in solving a number of professional tasks [9, 10].

The formation of appropriate language skills, abilities and competencies for the successful performance by police officers of their immediate official tasks should come to the forefront in the teaching of such discipline as "Professional communication in a foreign language". To date, there is a realized need for quality foreign language training, as it is becoming an essential component of the professional activity of a law enforcement officer. The sphere of foreign-language professional communication includes the following components: subjects of communication, typical situations of foreign-language professional communication, professional activity, the main elements of which are attributes, means and rules of activity, professional actions of an employee, characteristics of professional behavior; professional terminology as a specific language means of professional communication and its content basis, speech communication, professional communication.

The matrix of typical situations of foreign-language professional communication is the basis for the methodological systematization of lexical material, developing a set of tasks for the development of foreign-language professional communication skills of future law enforcement officers in foreign language teaching.

The development of foreign-language professional communication skills is a specially organized pedagogical process implemented as part of professionally oriented communicative foreign language teaching and aimed at preparing future law enforcement officers for real professional communication in a foreign language. However, it should keep in mind that foreign language communicative competence in the sphere of professional activity is not only formed, developed, but also quickly lost if a bachelor / specialist is excluded from the context of foreign-language professional activity. In this regard, the formation of students' strategies for independent mastering of foreign language speech activity seems to be in demand.

In addition, law enforcement officers are required to know the basics of managerial communications that ensure the maintenance of a stable state of the law enforcement system: interpersonal, functional-role, group, intergroup, mass. Professional education of law enforcement officers in the field of communication is also aimed at improving the efficiency of human

and material resources, optimizing the decision-making system, developing the adaptive capacity of law enforcement agencies in the conditions of technological growth and digitalization of socio-economic space [11].

The communicative competence of law enforcement officers is a significant factor in shaping a positive image of the law enforcement system and in the execution of its standard functions:

- creation of a desired representation in target groups;

- demonstration of the specifics of police activity;
- inducement citizens to law-abiding behavior [3].

Public perception of internal affairs bodies is significantly influenced by the predominant communication models used within the internal affairs system when interacting with the community, forming a stable and emotionally resonant image. This perception, bearing social significance, is constructed from both the actual perceptual attributes of the system and those that are ascribed to it.

**Conclusions and perspectives of further research.** The development of communicative competence is viewed as a crucial aspect of the training content for law enforcement officers. It is practically integrated into the training program through a deliberately organized sequence of activities designed to solve professional communication tasks. The process of forming communicative competence should include as the development of communication skills, involving a variety of factors: the person's ability to interact with others, the ability to express thoughts clearly, the skills to correctly interpret the obtained information, etc.

Communication skills will help a law enforcement officer to successfully solve the tasks set before him, to perform before the audience, to be understood, to interact with colleagues, management and citizens; to develop personally and be successful in professional activities.

These methods and techniques of forming communicative competence of the officers, which were highlighted in this study, are aimed at mastering the communicative skills of professionally competent

communication with citizens in the performance of service, and other operational-service tasks. All methods of communication competence formation should be implemented in the professional activities of law enforcement officers.

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