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## ENHANCING LAW STUDENTS' ORAL PROFICIENCY THROUGH DISCURSIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH

### Annotation

The article is about the most commonly used English legal phrases, their lexical meaning and usage features are given. Discursive competence makes a significant part of the professional vocabulary, demonstrates the rich, original and unique character of the language, therefore, one of the aim of the article is the knowledge of stable expressions contributes to a significant increase in the vocabulary of law students, thereby contributing to the formation of their secondary linguistic personality. Furthermore, the article depicts to classify the most popular English legal languages according to their subject, which makes it much easier for students to find the necessary lexical units for successful and productive foreign language communication.

**Key words:** discursive competence, idiom, phraseological unit, legal English language, English language law students, oral speech, discourse analysis.

## РАЗВИТИЕ УСТНОЙ РЕЧИ СТУДЕНТОВ ЮРИДИЧЕСКИХ ВУЗОВ ЧЕРЕЗ ДИСКУРСИВНУЮ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЮ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

### Аннотация

Статья посвящена актуализации и значению дискурсивной компетенции в формировании устной речи студентов-юристов на основе английского языка. Автор отмечает, что дискурсивная компетенция и знание устойчивых английских выражений помогают студентам-юристам развивать устную речь, навыки анализа, для успешной и продуктивной коммуникации на иностранном языке.

**Ключевые слова:** дискурсивная компетенция, идиома, фразеологическая единица, юридический английский язык, студенты-юристы, устная речь, дискурсивный анализ.

## YURIDIK YO'NALISH TALABALARNING INGLIZ TILIDAGI OG'ZAKI NUTQINI DISKURSIV KOMPETENSIYA ORQALI RIVOJLANTIRISH

### Annotatsiya

Ushbu ilmiy maqolada eng keng tarqalgan inglizcha huquqiy iboralar o'rganilgan bo'lib, ularning leksik ma'nosi va qo'llanilish xususiyatlari keltirilgan. Diskursiv kompetensiya kasbiy lug'atning muhim qismini tashkil etadi, tilning boyligi, o'ziga xosligi va noyobligini namoyon etadi. Shu sababli, maqolaning maqsadlaridan biri — barqaror ifodalarni o'rganish orqali huquqshunoslik yo'nalishidagi talabalar lug'at boyligini sezilarli darajada oshirish va ularning ikkilamchi lingvistik shaxsini shakllantirishga hissa qo'shishdir. Bundan tashqari, maqolada eng mashhur inglizcha huquqiy iboralarni mavzulariga ko'ra tasniflashga harakat qilingan, bu esa talabalarga kerakli leksik birliklarni topishni ancha osonlashtiradi va samarali xorijiy tilda muloqot qilishlariga yordam beradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** diskursiv kompetensiya, idiom, frazeologik birlik, ingliz huquqiy tili, huquqshunos talabalar, og'zaki nutq, huquqiy leksik birliklar.

**Introduction.** In the context of modern education, the development of legal awareness within the learning process serves as a foundation for enhancing public legal consciousness. Therefore, preparing well-qualified legal specialists has become a pressing priority in higher education. There is high demand for professionals who have an ability not only gaining their professional skills but also can communicate in foreign language. In case of legal professionals especially who work in international law it is essential to gain knowledge in compiling legal proceedings that involve usage of linguistic competences both in written and in oral forms and in plethora activities that involve using foreign language.

**Literature review.** Discursive competence in legal English is particularly noteworthy due to the diversity and richness of legal idioms, making their study both engaging

and essential. This article aims to identify commonly used legal idiomatic expressions, explain their meanings and origins, and demonstrate their relevance for learners and educators in the field of legal English. Mastering these stable phrases enhances fluency, expressiveness, and linguistic sophistication, which are indicators of high proficiency and creative thinking among law students [1]. The theoretical framework is based on multiple sources, including Phraseology of the English Language by L.P. Smith, A.V. Kunin's Phraseology of Modern English, Steven Collins' Advanced Everyday English, the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms, and works by Linda and Roger Flavell. From this analysis, it is evident that legal idioms are abundant in English.

From the author's perspective, discursive competence involves the encoding of information using

appropriate lexical, syntactic, and grammatical conventions, while also considering genre, stylistic, cultural, psychological, and emotional dimensions. Conversely, from the recipient's viewpoint, it entails decoding that information with sensitivity to the same parameters, relying on cohesion and coherence to achieve communicative intent [2, 3, 7].

The theoretical foundation of discursive competence defined communicative competence as comprising four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence. Discourse competence—later refined into the broader concept of discursive competence—deals with the ability to produce connected speech that is meaningful and appropriate in a given context.

Legal English presents unique challenges and characteristics that require specialized forms of discourse. Legal language is distinguished by its formality, ritualism, and reliance on precedent.

Further studies explore the rhetorical dimensions of professional language use, asserting that discursive competence involves more than fluency - it encompasses the speaker's ability to manipulate discourse structures to assert authority, present arguments, and navigate power relations. In the legal domain, this skill becomes crucial for lawyers and law students who must engage in persuasive argumentation, cross-examinations, and negotiations.

Some researchers have also discussed the pedagogical implications of teaching legal discourse. They argue that traditional language instruction often overlooks genre-specific discourse features, thereby failing to prepare students for authentic legal communication.

**Research methodology.** Viewing discourse as a two-way communicative process, discursive competence can be understood as the capacity to navigate this process effectively. For law students, this includes the ability to convey and interpret information in a foreign language while adhering to its structural and socio-pragmatic rules. Thus, our focus extends beyond basic speech practice to include discourse-oriented communication. Competence, in this context, comprises both knowledge and the application of skills.

To specify the knowledge base within discursive competence for legal education, one must explore its components. These include:

- Identifying the participants in discourse (e.g., speaker/listener, sender/receiver),

- Defining the communication context (medium, domain),

- Recognizing discourse styles and genres,

- Determining temporal and spatial conditions,

- Understanding planning and strategic components,

- Ensuring internal coherence and cohesion of discourse.

Of particular interest is the final aspect – coherence - which reflects not just grammatical continuity (cohesion), but also deeper semantic and thematic unity across the discourse [1].

Key components of discursive competence for law students include:

- Employing appropriate vocabulary to construct and interpret legal texts;

- Using genre- and style-specific language appropriately;

- Anticipating communicative suitability of expressions;

- Structuring information clearly and logically;
- Contextual behavior aligning with cultural norms;
- Articulating opinions and arguments effectively;
- Managing the flow and relevance of communication;

- Drawing inferences and understanding subtleties within discourse [7, 8, 10].

Discursive competence supports efficient oral communication and is vital in achieving communicative objectives within culturally appropriate frameworks. Its success fosters clear messaging, maintains interlocutor rapport, and ensures the effective use of verbal and non-verbal signals. Communication, whether to initiate, maintain, or end interactions, depends heavily on these competencies.

For example, expressions like "to make a killing" (gain a substantial profit), or "to have one's day in court" (have the chance to be heard), reflect figurative language often encountered in legal contexts. Other idioms, such as "face the music", rooted in military tradition, underscore the cultural-historical depth of legal English. Similarly, phrases like "to feel someone's collar" metaphorically imply arrest and law enforcement.

#### **Analysis and results.**

Numerous legal idioms reveal shared etymological roots across English and other languages, indicating cross-cultural conceptual transfer. For example:

- "The law of the jungle" – a metaphor for lawlessness and survival of the fittest;

- "Letter of the law" – strict adherence to legal wording over broader interpretations;

- "Take the law into your own hands" – private justice outside institutional frameworks;

- "Murphy's Law" – the expectation that anything that can go wrong, will;

- "Devil's advocate" – a role assumed to test arguments by presenting opposing views.

The devil's advocate approach, in fact, is pedagogically valuable in language instruction, where a teacher intentionally adopts a contrary opinion to stimulate student debate and critical thinking.

Students benefit from learning idioms like: to cover one's tracks, get caught red-handed, white-collar crime, keep one's nose clean, and have a run-in with the law, all of which enrich their ability to discuss criminal law in an engaging and accurate way.

In foreign language instruction for legal purposes, selecting exercises that develop independent text production, argumentation, and cohesive structuring is essential. Emphasis should be placed on speech tasks that teach students how to formulate main ideas clearly, reason effectively, and conclude logically. These skills are best introduced early in language acquisition, through preparatory and motivational exercises that address vocabulary, grammar, and discourse strategies [3, 4].

Notably, a superficial understanding of legal English vocabulary without discursive competence is insufficient in formal legal communication. A deep mastery requires knowledge of fixed expressions and an ability to use language dynamically and contextually. Discursive competence empowers learners to act appropriately in diverse scenarios and adapt to communicative shifts, ensuring nuanced participation in foreign language environments [9].

Key strategies for mastering legal discursive competence include:

Learning idioms contextually, paying attention to usage situations;

Investigating the historical background of expressions for better retention;

Memorizing entire expressions rather than isolated words [7].

**Conclusion.** The development of discursive competence plays a pivotal role in shaping the oral English speech of law students. It enables them not only to speak fluently but to engage meaningfully in legal discourse communities. Through structured discourse-oriented instruction, students gain the ability to construct, interpret, and respond to spoken texts with logical coherence, contextual appropriateness, and rhetorical sophistication.

Given the increasingly global nature of legal practice, law schools must prioritize the integration of discourse-based pedagogy into English for Legal Purposes (ELP) programs. This includes incorporating authentic legal genres, idiomatic expressions, role-based simulations, and reflective discourse training. Teachers should also

emphasize metadiscursive awareness, encouraging students to think critically about how they organize and present their speech in legal contexts.

By cultivating discursive competence, legal educators can prepare students not only for academic success but also for professional excellence in a multilingual legal environment. It is through the mastery of discourse - rather than vocabulary alone - that law students become competent legal communicators, capable of navigating complex legal interactions with clarity, confidence, and cultural sensitivity.

To conclude, discursive competence is vital in enriching spoken legal English, lending it nuance, expressiveness, and clarity. These stable expressions serve not only as vehicles of information but also as markers of speaker attitude, professionalism, and cultural intelligence. For law students, mastering legal discursive competence is essential to developing full proficiency in the language and participating effectively in global legal exchanges.

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