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## The Role of English for Specific Purposes in Lviv State University of Life Safety

### Angielski o profilu specjalistycznym na Lwowskim Państwowym Uniwersytecie Bezpieczeństwa Życia

#### Abstract

Nowadays essential changes are happening in the field of education. A lot of people of different specialities feel the necessity of profound knowledge of foreign languages. To be a good specialist means not only read up-to-date literature but also keep hands on pulse. In our paper we would like to illustrate this point and present the portfolio of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for the first and second year of studies at one of the higher technical universities, namely Lviv State University of Life Safety. Our course "English for Rescuers" focuses on the development of specific English language skills for students and cadets for Fire Safety speciality.

**Keywords:** education, language skills, effective training, higher educational establishments, specialized English, specialist

#### Streszczenie

W nauczaniu można obecnie zaobserwować wiele istotnych zmian. Specjaliści widzą potrzebę znajomości języków obcych. Bycie dobrym specjalistą nie oznacza tylko korzystania z literatury specjalistycznej ale również śledzenie na bieżąco nowinek w swojej dziedzinie. W artykule podjęto próbę potwierdzenia tezy, jak również zaprezentowania portfolio kursu: Angielski o Profilu Specjalistycznym, skierowanego dla studentów pierwszego i drugiego roku studiów w jednym z technicznych uniwersytetów – Lwowskim Państwowym Uniwersytecie Bezpieczeństwa Życia. Kurs „Angielski dla Ratowników” zakłada rozwijanie specyficznych umiejętności języka angielskiego u studentów i kadetów wydziału Bezpieczeństwa Pożarowego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja, umiejętności językowe, efektywne szkolenie, wyższe uczelnie, angielski specjalistyczny, specjalista

## Introduction

To be a good specialist means not only read up-to-date literature but also devote yourself to a particular area of activity. The major driving force in acquiring high quality education is a proper language policy of the state. Since the development of international relations of Ukraine with the near and remote foreign countries in the fields of economics, agriculture, culture, science and engineering, it has been defined the social demand of the society for training of qualified specialists who must be skilled in foreign language communication in all spheres of work. However, from experience it is known that mastering a foreign language for specific purposes is not so easy. Language becomes necessary not only as a key to mastering a profession but also for broadening your own worldview, for self-development and creative work [3].

Therefore, on the current stage of higher education development in Ukraine, great attention is paid to the issue of foreign language learning, namely, foreign language for specific purposes, as far as great emphasis is put on training of competitive employees who would be able to represent our country on the world scale with dignity.

### 1. International experience is a key to improvement of ESP

One of the leading higher technical institutes is Lviv State University of Life Safety. It trains specialists in the following specializations: Practical psychology, Ecology, Environmental protection and balanced nature management, Transport technologies, Information safety management, Occupation safety, Civil defense.

There are international trainings constantly held on the basis of Lviv State University of Life Safety and 2 other higher schools, since the Ukrainian higher education development programme in context of the Bologna Process gives the opportunity for students and teachers to participate in various international trainings, conferences, seminars.

Every year the representatives of higher technical institutions of Ukraine, such as National University of Civil Protection of Ukraine, Kharkiv; Lviv State University of Life Safety, Lviv; Academy of Fire Safety named after Heroes of Chernobyl, Cherkasy exchanges their experience and knowledge with the representatives of units of Poland, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Romania during joint international trainings in the sphere of life safety.

Practically every spring the Main School of Fire Service organizes international trainings in Pionki or Zamczysko, where each group of representatives from different countries exchange their knowledge and experience that consists of four blocks: rescuing and evacuation work, chemical and ecologic rescuing, rescuers' work management and also the work of the staff.

It is also worth mentioning that representatives of the Main School of Fire Service of the PPRD EAST (Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made disasters) project, within the framework of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) conducted a series of workshops for representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

As we can see, modern society brings new demands to professional training of specialists, as they have to use not only deep professional knowledge and be flexible in using it, but also must be ready to solve professional tasks in foreign language communication conditions.

Acquiring professional qualifications by students fully conforming to the common European and world standards includes mastery of English with the aim of professional direction [4]. That is why the topicality of the issue of professionally directed technologies for foreign language learning within the system of higher education does not evoke any doubt. Since, "... one of the major targets of the university is to provide training of high efficiency graduates on the basis of implementing new methods and techniques of learning, eurointegration of educational, scientific and innovative processes..." [3].

## 2. Concerning issues of ESP

Strategically important guideline in teaching a foreign language for professional purposes is improving the methodology of learning, using up-to-date achievements of science, technology and information technology.

Numerous works by Ukrainian and foreign practitioners and theorists are dedicated to improving foreign language teaching techniques, namely N. Anosov, Yu. Yeryomina, V. Yefremenko, G. Yelizova, I. Kaspin, S. Nikolayeva, E. Polat.

That is why the quality of training specialists is directly dependent on the quality of curricula, scientific and methodical support for the process of learning.

Speaking of practical support of any educational course, the following burning issues are to be solved:

Proportion of the number of classroom hours of independent and individual work in technical schools on average is:

- for the full-time study: classroom hours – 40 %, individual work – 60%;
- for the part-time study: classroom hours – 20%, individual work – 80%.

As it can be seen, from the above proportion, there is no sufficient number of hours for learning a foreign language for professional purposes; therefore one of the ways for raising the level of language mastery is the issue of increasing the number of hours by means of engaging the students during extracurricular hours.

Not less important is the issue that is topical for the teachers and students of technical schools of Ukraine is a break in learning foreign language for

professional purposes, namely in the first, second and fifth years of study. This is a great drawback as for two years there is no practical classes, that is in the 3rd and 4th year of study. Knowledge of a foreign language has become a significant necessity for many people as well as sleeping and living in safety, nevertheless in educational work we very often face such a problem as lack of motivation for learning a foreign language.

As it is stated by psychologists, one of the most topical problems of modern pedagogics is development and constant support of learning activities, maintaining encouraging emotional climate in classes.

That is why the teacher is to work hard since the tasks must be of communicative and creative character, what will meet the needs of this or that speciality. It is necessary to use elaborately selected materials which would be based on interdisciplinary connections and students' interests, their desire to assert themselves as an adult personality; inclusion for discussion of stirring problems in using communicative and creative tasks will make learning personally significant, which is an integral attribute of high motivation. Simulation of real life situations will make it possible to use a language as means but not as a target, which will correspond to a real life communicative situation. In modern methodology there is a widespread opinion that the teacher's role in completing communicative tasks is rather not diminishing but changing. The teacher has to create conditions for the most effective completion of a task, structuring it and giving the first impulse. The teacher is also to intrude into work whenever a pause occurs, and do this mainly by asking questions. As soon as there is nowadays an opportunity to exchange scientific experience with students or colleges of other countries, read scientific literature in the original version and to come into your own conclusions, to increase competitiveness on the international markets, there is a motivation to introduce the English language for technical professional purposes into curriculum [3].

### ***2.1. Effectiveness of learning***

Many factors influence the effectiveness of learning a foreign language: motivation, applicability of the topics, useful language structures, technical means, helping and encouraging students, individual approach, personal dignity. Since learning a foreign language for professional purposes is a complicated, elaborate work, intended to be done in many years. Success is possible to be reached only as a result of directed efforts, great diligence.

Since motivation is the most indisputable and studied factor of succeeding in studying itself, and studying a foreign language in particular. It is a trigger of any activity, either it is work, communication or perception, a foreign language is not only "another subject of the curriculum", but also a new system of thinking, a new image of the world, as language is not just a set of signs, means of perception; speaking and understanding a language is not the issue of

translation, it is the issue of world perception. Without a serious stimulus such a task cannot be solved.

Of great significance is also the skill of the teacher to find kind words, praise for every student when they deserve it. This keeps students interested in their classes, creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom, where a student could feel free and comfortable; the skill to stimulate their interests, develop their willingness to practice a foreign language.

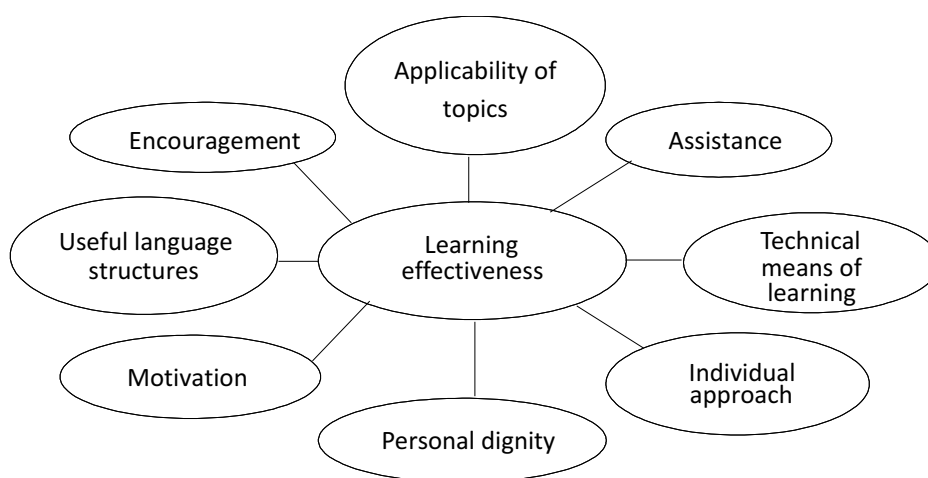


Fig. 1. The scheme of effective training

Therefore a precondition of successful work with students is an individual approach. This rule seems to be universal. The teacher should not concentrate on one technique and use it in classes with all students. It is far more effective to discuss with students (in the first class) their peculiarities of information perception and learning as some students are better at visual while others are better at additive perception. Hence, there is an increasing responsibility of the teacher for the level of student's knowledge.

High quality language training of students is impossible without using modern educational technology in professionally oriented foreign language learning, project work in learning, using information and telecommunication technologies, work with educational computer programmes in foreign languages (multimedia systems), distance technologies in learning foreign languages, the Internet resources, learning a foreign language in a computer community (forums, blogs, e-mail).

Not less important for the teacher is to compile a syllabus so that it takes into account interdisciplinary ties. That is, including interesting tasks into classes, role plays, songs with the help of which we increase perception interest of students, maintain communicative and esthetic motivation in classes.

### 3. Properly compiled syllabus is a precondition of successful learning

Free movement of professionals from Europe brought to life not only professionally oriented learning, but also the necessity of level assessment criteria for professional language mastery, what is very uneasy. Taking this into consideration, communication of students on professional topics in a foreign language, particularly developing skills of higher schools' alumni to communicate in dialogues and monologues on professional topics, becomes of great significance in the education system in our country.

For direct contact with native speakers a professional needs skills not only to hear information, but also skills to participate in a discussion of a subject/object of professional communication, reflecting on it; skills to feature the subject/object of discussion, depicting and describing its weak / strong sides; skills to analyze and comment on other considerations and opinions [3].

Exactly the insufficient number of available English language textbooks for cadets and students of firefighting and saving specialities, forces some specialists to get engaged in compiling their own text editions.

Therefore, one of the key tasks of Lviv State University of Life Safety in context of the Bologna process becomes providing students with high quality learning literature, as learning a foreign language for professional purposes is a significant section of training firefighting and saving service specialists.

That is why there is mentioned in the curriculum, that:

1. The aim of teaching the discipline "Foreign language (for professional purposes)" is forming necessary communicative capability in the spheres of professional and situational communication in oral and written forms, skills of practical language mastery in different kinds of linguistic performance within the scale of the subject matter which is defined by professional needs; mastering new professional activities by means of foreign sources.
2. The main task of studying the discipline "Foreign language (for professional purposes)" is learning, developing and improvement of different kinds of linguistic performance, listening, speaking, dialogic speaking, reading writing and translation.
3. According to the demands of the professional syllabus students have to:

**Know:**

phonetics, vocabulary, word-building, grammar, of the foreign language within the scale provided by the syllabus; information of the main kinds of emergency situations; rules of interpersonal communication in a foreign language.

**Know how to:**

- use lexico-grammatical minimum in a certain field, during oral business contacts, use techniques and methods of oral communication and corresponding communicative methods:

- hold discussions of general scientific and professionally oriented character, that aims at reaching mutual understanding;
- exchange information during day-to-day and business contacts (business meetings, consultations etc.) with the aim of receiving information necessary for solving certain activity tasks;
- understand monologue message within the frames of a definite field and communicative situation;
- build a dialogue by the content of the text.

Using lexico-grammatical minimum in a certain field and foreign (printed and electronic) sources, under the conditions of written business contacts, using techniques and methods of written communication and corresponding methods of drawing up business documents:

- make records, abstracts, make a plan of a text, a written message, which reflects a certain communicative intention;
- keep correspondence, making use of background culturological and country research knowledge;
- imprint information acquired while reading a text;
- implement communicative intentions in writing.

In working conditions, on the basis of lexico-grammatical minimum, use professionally oriented foreign language (printed and electronic) sources, by means of corresponding methods to read for gist, scan read the text, and read for details.

Summing up the above mentioned, it is worth saying that practical targets in the first, second and fifth years of study are forming professionally oriented communication competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic) taking into account the above mentioned types of linguistic activities.

#### **4. Concerning the problem of compiling text editions for professional purposes**

Nowadays there are enough diverse reference sources for studying a foreign language. That is why compiling text editions in a foreign language for professional purposes gives the opportunity to provide new disciplines with professionally selected educational and methodological material, and help students and cadets to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and abilities. As it is emphasized by O. Yarchuk "... taking into consideration the obligatory character of using abridged texts in a certain speciality and integration of all the professionally directed subjects will lead to more effective learning of material by the students. Under such conditions a student realizes the significant integral part of their own life prospect, satisfying their professional learning interests and other basic personal needs through the process of learning; in the process of learning the student has to become a real subject of their activities, realize not

only their self-value, but also the necessity and directions of the future self-development” [7].

Mastering professionally directed vocabulary by students, acquiring grammatical and phonetic competences can become possible in case these processes are provided with proper text editions and materials. That is why the issue of creating text editions and textbooks in a foreign language for specific purposes remains constantly topical. Some of the learning means are used during all the course of study. One of those is an auxiliary means, whose role in modern foreign language learning is hard to overestimate: the point is in the foreign language textbook as a means of special purpose, that has a long history and is not rarely considered as the basis of any teaching and educational process. The textbook is a model of the educational system and that is why it guides the teacher's and students' activities in conformity with the concept of learning, chosen by those who are learning.

Problems of compiling educational-methodical text editions in a foreign language for professional purposes in the field of fire safety and civil defense are dealt with by such Ukrainian and foreign researchers as T. Dobryans'ka, N. Yeremyeyeva, O. Ivashchenko, M. Krasnodebs'ka, N. Kryns'ka, I. Lohvynenko, T. Panova, L. Popova, O. Spirikina, Yu. Shevchenko, L. Shuhay, Ye. Khadynyak.

In our opinion, extremely important is a problem in compiling text editions is its apt structure. L.M. Revuts'ka on this issue points out that nowadays “... in compiling a textbook it is necessary to take into account the following demands: topicality, correspondence of its content to the syllabus, up-to-date pedagogical technologies, scientifically pedagogic level, originality” [6].

The text edition “English for Rescuers” was compiled for the cadets and students of the direction “Fire Safety” and “Civil Defense”, who according to the curriculum study firefighting and rescuing profession.

It is necessary to emphasize that the main precondition, and more correctly to say, the need to create the given text edition is first and foremost the absence of any professional literature of the above mentioned direction in English in non-linguistic institutes today. Particularly, when it concerns the systematized presentation of a certain teaching material. It is essential to be emphasized that work on the material of a text edition provides that cadets and students have a proper level of English in the second year of a higher technical institution. The given text edition is developed specially for cadets and students, teachers and the staff of higher institutions, professionals in the field of fire safety and civil defense of the Emergency Situations Service of Ukraine, and also for all who improve their knowledge by themselves.

Main attention in the course “English for Rescuers” for the first and second year of study [2] is paid to the topic of natural and man-made emergency



situations, which force is considered to be a serious threat to safety of a man, the society and the environment.

As a basis of the course of study such principle of material presentation are used:

- a) thematic principle of text selection;
- b) the principle of gradual with the following complication introduction and learning of vocabulary and grammar;
- c) the professional purpose of speech.

It is essential to point out that in our text edition we took into account the following criteria:

- Correspondence of the text edition to the syllabus;
- Originality of the text edition, its positive differences from those published before;
- Use of pedagogic technologies;
- Use of “live” material and results of latest scientific researches which cover firefighting and rescuing field of activities.

That is why the course “English for Rescuers” consists of the syllabus that is divided into 5 modules. In the first year of study the 1, 2, 3, 4 parts are studied, and in second year it is part 5 [1].

As it is known, foreign language acquisition is impossible without knowing and correct using of the given language grammar structures. Grammar is the skill to correctly, according to the laws of language, build phrases, non-phrasal units and texts, which assess the level of language mastery. That is why learning grammar is a necessary integral part of the foreign language learning target, which can be formulated as “mastering communicative competence by the students on the level sufficient for foreign language communication in four kinds of linguistic activities: listening, speaking, reading and writing in typical situations” [5]. Therefore we tried to compile our course so that the consequence of grammar material is taken into account.

The syllabus consists of five block-parts which comprise 28 topics. Every topic comprises a text and a complex of exercises aimed at: understanding of the text content, words and phrases in the most typical structural models in context, developing speaking and writing language competence. A significant part is word, phrase, sentence, text translation exercises from Ukrainian into English. Every block is followed by a kind of testing subunit (Revision), intended for self-control and self-assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities (of a cadet) student after studying certain topics. Besides t, there are audio recording scripts provided, Słownik polsko-angielsko-niemiecko-rosyjski [11], Słownik pożarniczy polsko-angielski angielsko-polski [8], Wybór tekstów o tematyce pożarniczej do nauki języka angielskiego [12], and also phrase-book Na końcu języka... niezbędnik dla dyspozytora i ratownika [10].

| <b>The first year of studying</b>                                    |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Module 1. Fire service as a career</b>                            |   |  |
| Theme 1.   | Lviv State University of Life Safety.     | Nouns  |
| Theme 2.   | You Are in Fire School.                   | Articles.  |
| Theme 3.   | To Be a Firefighter.                      | Present Simple Tense.                              |
| Theme 4.   | Typical Work Activities of a firefighter. | Present Continuous Tense.                          |
| Theme 5.   | Sport and Fitness.                        | Present Simple Tense vs. Present Continuous Tense. |
| Theme 6.   | Fire Department.                          | Present Simple Tense vs. Present Continuous Tense. |
| <b>Module 2. Rescue vehicles and equipment</b>                       |   |  |
| Theme 7.   | Classification of Fire.                   | Adjectives.  |
| Theme 8.   | Rescue equipment and tools.               | Adverbs: comparison.                               |
| Theme 9.   | Firefighting Uniform.                     | Past Simple Tense.                                 |
| Theme 10.  | Kinds of Fire Extinguishers.              | Past Continuous Tense.                             |
| Theme 11.  | Fire Trucks.                              | Past Simple vs. Past Continuous.                   |
| <b>Module 3. Roles of fire service personnel and global problems</b> |   |  |
| Theme 12.  | Emergency Medical Services Personnel.     | Future Simple Tense.                               |
| Theme 13.  | Dispatch Personnel.                       | Present Perfect Tense.                             |
| Theme 14.  | World Problems.                           | Past Perfect Tense.                                |
| Theme 15.  | Extreme Weather Conditions.               | Past Perfect vs. Past Simple.                      |
| <b>Module 4. Natural calamities</b>                                  |   |  |
| Theme 16.  | Forest Fires.                             | Passive Voice.                                     |
| Theme 17.  | Drought.                                  | Passive Voice.                                     |
| Theme 18.  | Rainstorms.                               | Modal Verbs.                                       |
| Theme 19.  | Floods.                                   | Modal Verbs.                                       |
| Theme 20.  | Earthquakes.                              | Direct and indirect speech.                        |
| Theme 21.  | Avalanches.                               | Direct and indirect speech.                        |
| Theme 22.  | Volcanic Eruptions.                       | Imperative Mood.                                   |
| <b>The second year of studying</b>                                   |   |  |
| <b>Module 5. Man-made Disasters</b>                                  |   |  |
| Theme 23.  | Aeroplane crashes.                        | Conditionals (Type I, II).                         |
| Theme 24.  | Mine-fires, Explosions.                   | Conditionals (Type III).                           |
| Theme 25.  | Oil Spills.                               | Revision of Conditionals.                          |
| Theme 26.  | Fires.                                    | Infinitive.  |
| Theme 27.  | Road Accidents.                           | Gerund.  |
| Theme 28.  | Nuclear Accidents.                        | Participle.  |

**Fig. 2** The syllabus of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studying

Use of authentic texts according to the training direction, where the level of text difficulty depends on the course, gives the opportunity to master the corresponding lexical material and grammar structures inherent for their major speciality [6].

For example, *Read and translate the following text* [2].

Therefore, by means of reading and translating of professional texts we implement gradual transition from learning a foreign language to its practice with professional purpose. Extremely important is a system of after text learning exercises. After each text we made up a series of tasks aimed at elimination of difficulties in new lexical material acquisition. Acquisition of fire-rescuing vocabulary brings great difficulties for students and cadets, that is why success in mastering professional material can be reached by different means or combining them: by means of correct selection and arrangement of lexical material, its concentration and division, specific forms of presentation and adequate learning methods. In accordance with this principle, lexical material was grouped by thematic characteristics and is worked on within the topics provided by the syllabus.

For instance, there is a complex of exercises which concentrate our attention on professional vocabulary acquisition represented.

Thus, the complex of exercises based on authentic literature material, thematic vocabulary forms and develops reading, speaking and writing skills, which are the basis for further improvement of foreign language for professional purposes.

For example, there is represented a complex of exercises where attention is concentrated on professional vocabulary acquisition.

**Task 1. Fill in the missing words:**

1. to go ... – to be destroyed by fire or an explosion  
E.g. The whole building ... up in flames.
2. to ... out of – to avoid something  
E.g. The kids tried to get ... of doing the dishes.
3. to put something ... – to stop something from burning or shining  
E.g. Firefighters soon put ... out.
4. to cut ... – to prevent somebody or something from leaving or reaching a place  
E.g. The army was ... off from its base.
5. to ... down – to reduce the size, amount or number of something  
E.g. We need to ... the article down to 1000 words [14,16].

**Aim:** to strengthen the work on the word in context. It is very important for cadets (students) to understand nominative meanings of a word in practice that is why the exercise combines work on an isolated word and a word in context.

**Task 2. Match the following words with their definitions [15, 17]:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. airplane crashes | a. a sudden and extremely violent bursting   |
| 2. explosion        | b. a sudden descent of an aircraft as a result of which it hits land or water  |
| 3. oil spill        | c. accidents involving nuclear devices and radioactive materials   |
| 4. road accident    | d. the conditions in which you live, work, etc.  |
| 5. nuclear accident | e. a layer of oil floating on water or covering the shoreline of a body of water   |
| 6. environment      | f. a traffic incident which usually involves at least one vehicle being in collision with, another vehicle or a stationary roadside object |

Aim: to provide preparing cadets (students) to identify and differentiate words, to do semantic guess work.

**Task 3. Define whether these statements are TRUE or FALSE to the topic Drought. If false, then write the correct sentences [13].**

1. The conference was devoted to analyzing the causes of this year's drought.
2. There will be no grain left for winter.
3. Farm animals were also affected by the drought.
4. Last winter did not differ significantly from the previous ones.
5. The problem was that last winter the soil was exposed to the weather.
6. Chemical fertilizers will repair the damage done to the topsoil.
7. Irrigation is one of the means of gaining extra land for growing crops.
8. Turning up soil is one of the methods of getting rid of weeds.
9. It can be concluded that Agunda relies heavily on electricity generated by water-power.
10. Now people are banned from washing cars and watering gardens.
11. To make water safe for consumption it must be boiled first.
12. Calamitous weather abnormalities are now taking place more often than before.

Aim: to stimulate logical thinking and increase motivation of an exercise for contextual guess, which comprise elements of problem learning.

**Task 4. Sentences a-d each contains two pairs of italic words. You need to choose one from each pair. Again, look up the bold words [14].**

- a. Several villages have been inundated / soaked by the deepest / severest floods in decades.
- b. The city was affected / struck by an enormous / a massive earthquake shortly after midnight.
- c. The forest fires, blown / fanned by warm winds, flared / raged out of control for weeks.
- d. The volcano, which has been dormant / inactive for 50 years, began erupting / exploding late last night.

**Aim:** to provide concentration of students' attention on professional studied. Repeated use of lexical units in different variants of words provides better acquisition of new material.

Thus, the complex of exercise developed on the material of original literature, thematic vocabulary, form and develop reading, speaking and writing skills, which are the basis for further improvement of foreign language for professional purposes.

## Conclusion

Thus, in the course "English for Rescuers" for the first and second years of study a complex of exercises, by means of which we tried to form a proper level of professional communicative competence, was specially developed. It would give an opportunity not only to use foreign language knowledge in higher educational institutions, but also in further professional development.

One of the most perspective directions of our work in compiling text editions for professional purposes is constant development of proper selection of teaching materials taking into account psychological and pedagogic peculiarities of cadets and students.

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