

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFL TEACHER: CURRENT TRENDS & NEW CHALLENGES

Welcome to Volume 4 Issue 4 of “Professional Discourse & Communication” – the comprehensive platform that brings together researchers in different areas of inquiry with a focus on linguistic aspects of professional interaction and practices of teaching languages for specific purposes. The editorial team has set a goal to create an international forum for both well-established scientists and new researchers, and now in collaboration with the Organizing Committee of the IV International Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to Elena N. Solovova “Teaching Foreign Languages - Modern Problems and Solutions” the journal presents its second Special Issue on the theme of **“Professional Development of an EFL teacher: Current Trends & New Challenges”**.

This Issue presents a range of articles by authors from Russia and India, including research papers and viewpoint essays on professionally-oriented interaction of school teachers and university professors of foreign languages, various aspects of streamlining professional pedagogical activities while helping students adopt and even assimilate other cultures with the focus on critical multiculturalism, the complexity of teaching materials, digitalization of education, professional competencies of EFL teachers, moral dilemmas of adopting foreign cultures and developing tolerance, enhancing important language skills, and teaching cross-cultural business communication.

The authors of the selected articles cover an array of problematic areas of study, namely the functional load of stereotypes in mass culture and its use in the classroom, comparative analysis of leading EFL textbooks in Russia, distance foreign language learning, and organization of mixed offline/online classes, teaching English in India, preparation for the English language Olympiads, phraseologisms in a lesson of English, close reading in English for detailed comprehension, optimization of cooperation between future Russian specialists in international relations with citizens of Asian countries.

In the opening paper “Functions of stereotypes in mass culture in the context of critical multiculturalism” Sofia Kamalova argues that stereotypes play a crucial role in the way students categorise the incoming information, which results in inevitably distorted perception of reality. Integration of critical, or polycentric, multiculturalism into English-language educational literature and introduction of partial functional analysis to students allow them to instill a conscious attitude to stereotypes and see exactly how stereotypes are exploited in the media, propaganda, and mass culture.

“Comparative analysis of text complexity in English textbooks” by Mariia Kazachkova and Khalida Galimova is devoted to the study of complexity indicators of popular Russian high school textbooks of English. The authors carry out their research using specialized software to make sure the complexity of the educational discourse corresponds to the age characteristics and intellectual level of high school students through quantitative assessment methods as well as selecting those teaching materials suitable for in-depth EFL classes.

Tatiana Dmitrenko's "Modern technologies of teaching foreign languages in the context of digitalization of foreign language education" analyses the most important innovative tendencies in higher education to identify factors of successful teachers' training in a highly competitive environment. The author summarizes her own experiences to prove that mastering a foreign language at the level of international standards in 2022 is unthinkable without the use of digital technologies, which are specially selected by the teacher according to certain criteria, e.g., methodological value for the formation of basic skills and abilities of students, compliance with their interests and age characteristics, topics of the teaching materials, etc. Emotional impact on students through digital technologies increases their motivation, as well as the quality of assimilation of cultural knowledge, which helps to make up for the lack of immersive language environment.

In "Professional competencies of teachers of foreign languages" Evangeline Priscilla B and Alexey Konobeiev investigate the correlation between the ever-changing world and the professional competencies that are required from a modern-day teacher of English to accommodate the expectations of learners and their potential employers – the fact that may lead to a more interdisciplinary approach to teacher training.

"Content of the tasks of the all-Russian School Olympiad in English: moral aspect" by Artem Gulov deals with the clash of traditional values and spiritual and moral aspects of educational texts in English, suggesting a more thoughtful approach to selecting language material for the Olympiads that doesn't necessarily mean prohibition of particular topics and vocabulary. The key to solving this problem is to systematise the information that should be studied by schoolchildren in preparation for the Olympiad, together with the justification of the feasibility of studying this material. The moral aspect and educational impact of the Olympiad materials should be taken into account when creating test materials.

Sergey V. Korolyov's "Fixed coordinative expressions in English language teaching" explores how improved teaching methodology can help students pick up phraseological units and make them a part of their active vocabulary.

Sergey Chernyshov, Yulia Evtushok, and Alina Osipova's "Specifics of teaching foreign language reading for detailed comprehension to high school students" suggests a series of interconnected tasks and assignments which can improve pupils' reading skills and boost the efficiency of EFL classes.

In "Contextual component in cross-cultural business interaction with Asian partners" Olga Andrianova shows how the knowledge of the basics of cross-cultural professional communication may have pragmatic value for future diplomats and specialists in international relations. The author concludes that to be ready to do business with Asian partners, it is necessary not only to have actual knowledge of the peculiarities of the culture of a particular country and demonstrate awareness to interlocutors but also to have specific interpretation skills. Knowledge of business culture, specifics of management, the political situation in the country, and the desire to adapt to existing differences are important components of success in the international market, especially for future graduates of Departments of international relations.

At the end of this Special Issue Irina Khitrova, Alexey Konobeiev, Dmitry Khranchenko and Inga Treshina present a report on the Fourth International Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to Elena N. Solovova "Teaching Foreign Languages - Modern Problems and Solutions" that brought together researchers and practitioners in teaching method-

ology, linguistics, cross-cultural studies and education from different countries to reflect on the current trends and problematic areas in teaching English as a foreign language.

We hope our readers will enjoy the selection of papers chosen for the current issue of the journal. We really appreciate all the authors' contributions and would like to thank them for the quality articles they submitted.

**Editor-in-Chief**  
**Dmitry S. Khramchenko**