

**PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE: GAMES, SIMULATIONS  
AND ROLE PLAYING WHEN STUDYING  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**M.N. Makeyeva, V.I. Kopelnik, O.G. Lyabina,  
E.K. Teplyakova, L.P. Tsilenko**

*Tambov State Technical University, Tambov*

*Represented by Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
G.V. Rastorgueva*

**Key words and phrases:** case study; game; professional discourse; professional communication; role playing; simulation; quasi-professional situation.

**Abstract:** The problem of professional discourse and teaching professional communication in the lessons of foreign languages is studied. Characteristic features of games and simulations are discussed. Effectiveness of these tools in creation of quasi-professional situations in the lessons is stressed, application outcomes are analyzed.

This article is largely devoted not to the general aspects of professional discourse but to some special issues of teaching professional communication on the lessons of foreign language. This problem becomes topical mostly in senior courses when after studying general course of foreign language students begin to study professional language and acquire professional communication skills. Obviously to achieve this goal we must make our lessons more realistic owing to creation of quasi-professional situations. Games, simulations and role playing appeared to be the best way out as they recommended themselves as effective teaching methods in this aspect of education process.

The use of games and simulations in teaching foreign languages seem to be well established, with a well-developed body of literature to support their use in the teaching environment. Role-play, as an educational approach, is often referred to in the same context as games and simulations. However, the use of role-plays in teaching has received far less attention. Collectively, simulations,

---

Макеева Марина Николаевна – доктор филологических наук, профессор, заведующая кафедрой «Иностранные языки», e-mail: modlang@mail.ru; Копельник Владислава Игоревна – кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры «Иностранные языки»; Лябина Олеся Геннадьевна – кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры «Иностранные языки»; Теплякова Елена Константиновна – кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры «Иностранные языки»; Циленко Любовь Петровна – кандидат педагогических наук, доцент кафедры «Иностранные языки», ТамбГТУ, г. Тамбов.

games and role-play (**SGRP**) provide students with some form of imaginary or real world within which to act out a given situation.

The aim of simulation is to deepen students' conceptual understanding by working within, and reflecting upon, a representation of a real environment. The dynamic of a simulation may be competitive, whereby students are encouraged either to outperform other students or to achieve a high rating according to criteria set by the simulation. In these cases the simulation is also a game. However, students might also be encouraged to explore simulation, to investigate its behavior and discover its assumptions.

Games may be distinguished from other forms of simulation by the rules that dictate what it means to 'win' the game and the sense of competition they engender. Games tend to have winners and losers. For example, a typical form of business game requires students to compete with others in buying and selling shares on the stock market. Such games operate with clear rules for the process and timing of share trading, and they encourage students to compete on the basis of achieving the highest level of profit through their trading.

Simulations become role-plays when the student is expected to act as they imagine appropriate to a given role. For example, they might be asked to act as a stockbroker in a share-dealing simulation

Why use simulations, games and role-play? The answer is obvious, as we can find just a number of arguments supporting their effectiveness. Many studies (Francis and Byrne, 1999; Oberhofer, 1999) have claimed that SGRP, especially when group based, have contributed to a positive change in classroom dynamics. It has been suggested (Francis and Byrne, 1999) that they help break down barriers and stimulates a greater level of long-term interactivity between students. Problems, however, might arise if students fail to take the SGRP seriously, seeing it merely as a break from 'real' teaching. As well as knowledge and roles, SGRP can contribute positively to the development of key transferable skills, particularly in terms of communication and social skills. Depending upon the organization of the activity, it may be possible to develop skills in recognizing and presenting arguments, presenting to an audience and working collaboratively in a group.

The case study below outlines a role-play designed for senior students studying the course of "Business Foreign Language". Students are asked to work in groups. Each group chooses one issue in international trade as their focus and the group as a whole is required to research that issue from the standpoint of a specified stakeholder. They are required to provide a press release and a press information pack and to make a presentation as if they were that stakeholder.

The role-play takes the form of a press conference, where the conference presentation must be given in role, and the relevant supporting materials must also reflect the presenting group's perspective. The press release provides an abstract of the group's position. It is to be given out at the time of the press conference and students are told that the media will base their choice of headline on the content of the press release. The press pack contains the detail, and offers an in- depth analysis of the group's standpoint. Students are encouraged to use a variety of resources within the pack, including material

written by the group, supporting articles from other sources, statistics, and suggestions of sources of further information (such as websites). Students are informed that the strength of the press pack is in how it adds to the relevance of the group's argument. The presentation, no longer than 15 minutes in length, needs to articulate the press briefing. As with the briefing and the press pack, the presentation must be in role.

This assignment consists of three assessed components:

- a press release (10 %);
- a press pack (40 %);
- a presentation (50 %).

*The press release.* The press release should take the form of a single side of A4, which is to be given out at the press briefing. The release should identify the main issues you support and the policies you propose, as well as giving the media a headline!

*The press pack.* The press pack should offer the reader an in-depth analysis of your views and standpoint. It should include a wide variety of resources, which you feel help to make your case. Such a press pack will include material written by the group, articles from other sources, statistics and research sources. The press pack should be well structured and organised. It should include no more than 2000 of your own words (articles, statistics and research sources are in addition to this). The key to a good press pack is relevance and how it adds to your argument.

*The presentation.* The presentation must be no longer than 15 minutes in length. In this time you will be expected to outline your position on your given issue and make a case for your policy suggestions. The presentation must be in PowerPoint (a laptop and data projector will be provided). The presentation you make must be in role. It is not expected that you will present a balanced argument, but an argument from a particular viewpoint, expressing particular concerns and offering particular policy suggestions based upon these concerns.

*Groups.* Groups will be selected at random and will be no larger than five students. There are three topic areas identified that are currently big issues in international trade. Each topic area must be considered from the perspective identified.

– *Free trade and the environment: from the perspective of an environmental pressure group, such as Greenpeace.*

– *Child labor: from the perspective of a pressure group advocating its abolition, such as Save the Children.*

– *Genetically modified food: from the perspective of the EU.*

*Learning outcomes.* The learning outcomes from this assignment are as much skills based as subject based. Students will be expected to analyze and evaluate a current issue in international trade, and identify alternative viewpoints regarding the nature of the issue and its potential resolution. Preparing to the press conference students have to use their knowledge of economics as well as enlarge their active and passive vocabulary in the field of economic professional discourse. They will be expected to identify the difficulties, speak about trade issues give economic arguments approving or disapproving proposed viewpoints.

This assignment also offers the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills: group work and interaction, information retrieval and analysis, and presentational skills. The presentation skills include the use of PowerPoint, which is mandatory for the group presentation.

The assignment also attempts to promote independent learning and encourages students to take personal responsibility for and control of their own learning.

### *References*

1. Oberhofer, T. Role-Playing in the History of Economic Thought / T. Oberhofer // Journal of Economic Education. – 1999. – Vol. 30, No. 2. – P. 112–118.

---

### **Профессиональный дискурс: имитация, ролевые и учебные игры на занятиях по иностранному языку**

**М.Н. Макеева, В.И. Копельник, О.Г. Лябина,  
Е.К. Теплякова, Л.П. Циленко**

*ФГБОУ ВПО «Тамбовский государственный технический университет», г. Тамбов*

**Ключевые слова и фразы:** квазипрофессиональная ситуация; профессиональный дискурс; профессиональная коммуникация; ролевая игра; симуляция; учебная игра; учебный пример.

**Аннотация:** Изучаются проблемы профессионального дискурса и обучения профессиональной коммуникации на занятиях по иностранному языку. Рассматриваются отличительные черты имитации, ролевых и учебных игр. Подчеркивается их эффективность в создании квазипрофессиональных ситуаций на занятиях, анализируются результаты применения.

---

© М.Н. Макеева, В.И. Копельник, О.Г. Лябина,  
Е.К. Теплякова, Л.П. Циленко, 2012