# THE IMPORTANCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG RESCUERS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND ITS ROLE IN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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**Abstract:** In the context of increasing global risks and the growing frequency of natural and man-made emergencies, foreign language proficiency has become an important component of the professional competence of rescue personnel. Effective communication during international rescue operations, interaction with foreign specialists, provision of assistance to foreign citizens, and coordination of emergency response activities require rescuers to possess appropriate linguistic and communicative skills. This study examines the importance of foreign language proficiency in the professional activities of rescue personnel and identifies the main linguistic competencies required in emergency response situations. Particular attention is given to professional terminology, operational communication, intercultural interaction, and the ability to understand and convey critical information under stressful conditions. Furthermore, the study proposes a scientific and methodological approach to developing foreign language competencies among rescuers through specialized terminology training, scenario-based exercises, simulation activities, and practical communication assessment. The proposed approach is aimed at improving the professional preparedness of rescue personnel, reducing communication barriers, and increasing the effectiveness and safety of emergency response operations.

**Keywords:** emergency situations, rescue personnel, foreign language proficiency, professional competence, operational communication, linguistic competence, international cooperation, rescue operations, emergency response, communication barriers

Introduction. In the modern world, the increasing complexity of natural disasters, technological accidents, industrial emergencies, and other hazardous events has created new requirements for the professional training of rescue personnel. Emergency response activities increasingly involve international cooperation, the exchange of operational information, and interaction between specialists from different countries. Under these circumstances, foreign language proficiency is becoming an essential element of the professional competence of rescuers.

The effectiveness of rescue operations depends not only on the technical equipment, physical preparedness, and professional knowledge of rescue personnel but also on their ability to communicate accurately and efficiently. During emergency situations, rescuers may encounter foreign citizens, international rescue teams, representatives of humanitarian organizations, and foreign technical specialists. The inability to communicate effectively in a common language can create serious obstacles to information exchange, coordination of rescue activities, evacuation procedures, and the provision of emergency assistance.

Foreign language proficiency is particularly important in situations where decisions must be made rapidly and operational instructions must be understood without ambiguity. For example, during earthquakes, fires, floods, industrial accidents, and large-scale technological disasters, rescuers may need to communicate with victims, provide safety instructions, identify injured persons, and coordinate their actions with international response teams. In such circumstances, even minor communication errors may lead to delays, misunderstandings, and increased risks to human life.

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), operating under the United Nations framework, has developed internationally recognized guidelines for urban search and rescue operations. These guidelines establish organizational and operational principles for international rescue teams, including coordination, information exchange, and cooperation between participating countries. The INSARAG methodology demonstrates the importance of standardized operational procedures and effective communication in international rescue activities.

Based on the reviewed literature, the present study focuses on developing a professional and methodological approach to foreign language training for rescue personnel. Particular attention is given to the relationship between linguistic competence, operational communication, and the effectiveness of rescue activities.

Materials and methods. The methodological framework of this study is based on a systematic analysis of scientific literature, international emergency response guidelines, comparative analysis, and pedagogical approaches to professional foreign language training.

The research methodology is designed to identify the linguistic competencies required by rescue personnel and determine appropriate educational methods for developing these competencies in professional emergency response environments.

Research approach. The study applies an integrated methodological approach combining the following research methods:

Systematic literature analysis: Scientific publications, international recommendations, and methodological materials related to emergency communication, language barriers, and professional foreign language education were examined.

Comparative analysis: International approaches to emergency communication and the professional training of rescue personnel were compared to identify common requirements and effective methodological practices.

Structural-functional analysis: The communication tasks performed by rescue personnel during different emergency situations were examined to identify the linguistic skills necessary for operational activities.

Results and discussion. The analysis of professional communication requirements demonstrates that foreign language proficiency is an important component of the operational preparedness of rescue personnel. In modern emergency response environments, rescuers are increasingly required to interact with foreign citizens, international specialists, humanitarian organizations, and representatives of emergency management institutions. Consequently, the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language contributes to the quality of information exchange and coordination during rescue operations.

The findings of the theoretical and methodological analysis indicate that professional foreign language competence should be developed in accordance with the specific tasks performed by rescue personnel. Unlike general language education, professional language training must focus on the practical application of linguistic knowledge in situations characterized by time limitations, psychological stress, potential danger, and the need for accurate information transmission.

One of the principal findings of this study is that foreign language proficiency should be considered an integral element of professional preparedness in emergency response systems.

During international rescue operations, personnel from different countries may participate in a single emergency response process. These activities require the exchange of information regarding the location of victims, the condition of damaged infrastructure, existing hazards, evacuation routes, and available technical resources.

In such circumstances, insufficient communication skills may create additional difficulties in coordinating rescue activities. For example, a rescuer who cannot understand a foreign specialist's warning about a hazardous area may experience difficulties in interpreting the operational situation and selecting appropriate actions.

The consequences of inadequate communication may be particularly serious in situations requiring immediate action.

For methodological purposes, the main communication problems can be classified into four categories:

1. Informational barriers. These arise when rescuers cannot obtain accurate information about the location of victims, the number of affected individuals, or the nature of existing hazards.

2. Operational barriers. These occur when instructions, warnings, and coordination messages are misunderstood during rescue activities.

3. Medical communication barriers. These involve difficulties in identifying injuries, understanding symptoms, determining the medical history of affected individuals, and communicating essential information to medical personnel.

4. Intercultural barriers. These are associated with differences in communication practices, social conventions, and cultural expectations among individuals from different backgrounds.

The identification of these barriers demonstrates the necessity of including professional communication exercises in the training programmes of rescue personnel.

An important methodological requirement is that emergency messages should be short, understandable, unambiguous, and appropriate to the situation. Complex grammatical constructions and unfamiliar terminology should be avoided when communicating with individuals experiencing psychological stress.

The practical development of linguistic competence requires the integration of foreign language education with professional rescue training.

Scenario-based learning provides an opportunity to reproduce operational communication conditions within a controlled educational environment.

The following scenarios are recommended for professional language training.

Table 1

Recommended emergency scenarios for foreign language training

| No. | Emergency scenario | Main communication tasks | Expected learning outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Earthquake | Identifying victims and providing evacuation instructions | Ability to communicate safety instructions |
| 2 | Fire | Warning individuals and directing evacuation | Ability to deliver clear emergency commands |
| 3 | Flood | Communicating rescue locations and requesting assistance | Ability to exchange operational information |
| 4 | Industrial accident | Identifying hazardous substances and communicating risks | Ability to use technical safety terminology |
| 5 | Emergency medical situation | Identifying injuries and obtaining essential information | Ability to communicate basic medical information |
| 6 | International rescue operation | Coordinating activities with foreign specialists | Ability to participate in professional communication |

The implementation of these scenarios should involve practical exercises in which participants perform different professional roles.

For example, during an earthquake simulation, one participant may act as a rescue specialist, another as a foreign citizen requiring assistance, and a third as an international rescue team representative.

The exercise should include communication tasks such as identifying the location of injured persons, determining the presence of additional victims, providing evacuation instructions, and transmitting information about hazardous conditions.

Such activities help connect theoretical language knowledge with the practical requirements of rescue operations.

The development of artificial intelligence, mobile communication technologies, and automated translation systems provides additional opportunities for overcoming language barriers in emergency situations.

Modern digital tools can support rescue personnel in translating short messages, identifying professional terminology, preparing multilingual instructions, and communicating with individuals who speak different languages.

Artificial intelligence-based translation systems may be particularly useful when immediate communication is required and professional interpreters are unavailable.

However, the application of these technologies in emergency response activities requires careful consideration of their limitations.

Automated translation systems may incorrectly interpret specialized technical expressions, produce inaccurate translations, or fail to recognize speech in noisy environments. Furthermore, internet connectivity may be unavailable in disaster-affected areas.

The main purpose of this model is to establish a structured educational framework that integrates linguistic knowledge, professional terminology, situational communication, and practical assessment.

The model is designed to ensure that foreign language education corresponds directly to the operational responsibilities of rescue personnel.

The proposed model consists of four interconnected stages.

Stage 1. Diagnostic and Preparatory Stage. The initial stage involves determining the existing foreign language proficiency of rescue personnel.

The diagnostic assessment focuses on:

- basic vocabulary knowledge;
- listening comprehension;
- speaking abilities;
- understanding of simple operational instructions;
- knowledge of basic emergency terminology.

The results of the assessment provide information about individual educational needs and help determine the appropriate level of subsequent training.

Stage 2. Professional and Terminological Training Stage. The second stage focuses on the systematic development of specialized vocabulary associated with rescue and emergency response activities.

The educational content should include terminology related to firefighting, search and rescue operations, industrial safety, hazardous materials, evacuation procedures, emergency medical assistance, and personal protective equipment.

Particular attention should be given to the correct pronunciation, meaning, and practical application of professional expressions.

Stage 3. Practical and Situational Training Stage. The third stage involves applying acquired linguistic knowledge in simulated emergency situations.

Training activities should reproduce professional communication conditions through role-playing exercises, operational simulations, and practical assignments.

Participants should learn to communicate with foreign citizens, provide emergency instructions, exchange information with international specialists, and report hazardous conditions.

Stage 4. Assessment and Improvement Stage. The final stage involves evaluating the acquired foreign language competencies and identifying areas requiring further development.

Assessment should be based on practical communication performance rather than grammatical knowledge alone.

The results of this stage provide feedback for improving individual training programmes and developing continuous professional education.

Conclusion. The conducted study demonstrates that foreign language proficiency represents an important component of the professional competence of rescue personnel in the context of modern emergency response activities.

The analysis of international experience and professional communication requirements indicates that linguistic competence contributes to effective information exchange, coordination of rescue operations, and communication with foreign citizens and international specialists.

The following conclusions can be formulated:

1. Foreign language proficiency should be integrated into the professional training system of rescue personnel as an important component of operational preparedness.

2. Language barriers may create additional difficulties during evacuation, emergency medical assistance, identification of victims, and coordination between international rescue teams.

3. General foreign language education does not fully address the specific communication requirements of rescue personnel. Therefore, specialized training based on professional terminology and emergency scenarios is necessary.

4. The proposed four-stage methodological model provides a structured approach to developing professional foreign language competence through diagnostic assessment, terminological training, practical exercises, and competency evaluation.

5. The proposed assessment system makes it possible to evaluate listening comprehension, speaking competence, professional terminology, situational communication, and intercultural competence.

6. Digital translation technologies and artificial intelligence-based communication tools may provide additional support in multilingual emergency environments. However, they should complement rather than replace the independent language competence of rescue personnel.

7. The integration of professionally oriented foreign language training into continuous professional development programmes may improve the readiness of rescue personnel for international cooperation and multilingual emergency response activities.

In conclusion, foreign language proficiency should be regarded not merely as an additional educational qualification but as an important professional resource that supports communication, coordination, and operational safety during emergency response activities.

Further research should focus on the experimental implementation of the proposed methodological model, the assessment of foreign language training effectiveness among rescue personnel, and the development of specialized educational materials adapted to the operational requirements of emergency response services.

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