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**Developing decision-making skills in English for economics students**

**Sobirov Qudratillo Zokirjon o'g'li**

Andijan State Technical Institute

1st-year student, Faculty of Economics

Scientific supervisor: **Karimova Feruzaxon Inoyatovna**

**Abstract.** This article explores the development of critical decision-making skills among economics students through the integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It argues that in a globalized economy, students must simultaneously process complex economic data and communicate their reasoning effectively in English. The study examines key theoretical perspectives, including Cognitive Load Theory and dual-process thinking (System 1 and System 2), to explain the challenges faced by learners operating in a second language. Special attention is given to the role of conditional logic, modal verbs, and professional language functions in expressing economic decisions. The article also analyzes innovative pedagogical approaches such as case-based learning, game theory simulations, and digital tools for enhancing decision-making competence. Additionally, it highlights the “Foreign Language Effect” as a factor that may improve rational thinking. The study concludes that integrating language learning with decision-making frameworks is essential for preparing globally competitive economists.

**Keywords:** decision-making skills, English for Economics, cognitive load theory, ESP, conditional logic, modal verbs, game theory, foreign language effect, economic education, critical thinking

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada iqtisodiyot yo'nalishi talabarlari uchun ingliz tilida tanqidiy qaror qabul qilish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish masalasi tahlil qilinadi. Unda globallashtirish sharoitida talabalar murakkab iqtisodiy ma'lumotlarni tahlil qilish bilan birga, o'z fikrlarini ingliz tilida aniq ifodalashi zarurligi asoslab beriladi. Tadqiqotda kognitiv yuklama nazariyasi hamda ikki tizimli fikrlash (1-tizim va 2-tizim) yondashuvlari orqali ikkinchi til muhitida qaror qabul qilishdagi qiyinchiliklar yoritiladi. Shuningdek, shartli gaplar, modal fe'llar va professional til vositalarining ahamiyati ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada keys-metod, o'yin nazariyasi simulyatsiyalari va raqamli texnologiyalar kabi innovatsion pedagogik usullar tahlil qilinadi. Xulosa qilib aytganda, til va qaror qabul qilish ko'nikmalarini integratsiya qilish zamonaviy iqtisodchilarni tayyorlashda muhim ahamiyatga ega.

**Kalit so'zlar:** qaror qabul qilish ko'nikmalari, iqtisodiyot uchun ingliz tili, kognitiv yuklama nazariyasi, ESP, shartli gaplar, modal fe'llar, o'yin nazariyasi, xorijiy til effekti, iqtisodiy ta'lim, tanqidiy fikrlash

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается развитие навыков критического принятия решений у студентов экономических специальностей через обучение английскому языку для специальных целей (ESP). Подчеркивается, что в условиях глобализации студенты должны одновременно анализировать сложные экономические данные и эффективно выражать свои мысли на английском языке. В работе анализируются теоретические подходы, включая теорию когнитивной нагрузки и концепцию двух систем мышления (Система 1 и Система 2). Особое внимание уделяется роли условных конструкций, модальных глаголов и



профессиональных языковых средств в процессе принятия решений. Рассматриваются инновационные методы обучения, такие как кейс-метод, симуляции на основе теории игр и использование цифровых технологий. Также отмечается эффект иностранного языка как фактор повышения рациональности мышления. Делается вывод о необходимости интеграции языкового обучения и навыков принятия решений для подготовки современных экономистов.

**Ключевые слова:** принятие решений, английский язык для экономики, теория когнитивной нагрузки, ESP, условные конструкции, модальные глаголы, теория игр, эффект иностранного языка, экономическое образование, критическое мышление

In the dynamic and often unpredictable landscape of the global economy, the ability to make informed and timely decisions is one of the most valuable competencies an economist can possess. Economic decision-making lies at the core of both microeconomic and macroeconomic processes, shaping outcomes that affect individuals, organizations, and entire nations. However, for students who are learning economics through the medium of a second language—particularly English—the challenge becomes significantly more complex. They are not only required to analyze intricate financial and economic data but also to interpret, process, and communicate their decisions in a language that may not be fully internalized. This dual demand creates a unique educational context that necessitates specialized pedagogical strategies.

In the twenty-first century, English has firmly established itself as the dominant language of global business, finance, and economic discourse. International organizations, multinational corporations, and academic institutions rely on English as the primary medium of communication. As a result, economics students must develop not only technical expertise but also the ability to articulate their reasoning, justify their decisions, and engage in professional dialogue in English. The capacity to explain the rationale behind a decision—clearly, logically, and persuasively—is often as important as the decision itself. Without this communicative competence, even the most accurate and well-calculated economic conclusions may fail to gain recognition or influence.

At its core, decision-making in economics involves selecting the most appropriate course of action from a set of alternatives based on available information, expected outcomes, and risk assessments. This process requires a combination of analytical thinking, critical evaluation, and strategic foresight. When conducted in a second language, however, it introduces an additional cognitive burden that can hinder performance. Students must simultaneously process economic concepts, construct grammatically correct sentences, and anticipate potential counterarguments. This phenomenon can be effectively explained through Cognitive Load Theory, which posits that human working memory has a limited capacity for processing information.

According to this theory, learners engaged in complex tasks may experience cognitive overload when the demands placed on their working memory exceed its capacity. For economics students operating in English as a second language, this overload is particularly pronounced. They must manage multiple streams of information at once: interpreting data, recalling relevant terminology, structuring coherent arguments, and monitoring linguistic accuracy. This “double burden” can slow down decision-making



processes and reduce the clarity of expression, even when the underlying understanding of economic principles is sound.

To address this challenge, it is essential to consider the distinction between two modes of thinking identified by psychologist Daniel Kahneman: System 1 and System 2. System 1 thinking is fast, automatic, and intuitive, while System 2 thinking is slower, more deliberate, and analytical. In the context of language learning, many students initially rely on System 2 to process and produce English, consciously translating words and constructing sentences. However, effective decision-making requires a more fluid and immediate use of language, which can only be achieved when key terminology and structures become part of System 1 processing.

The goal of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction in economics, therefore, is to facilitate the transition of professional language from conscious, effortful use to automatic, intuitive application. When students no longer need to pause and think about terms such as “liability,” “opportunity cost,” or “marginal utility,” they can focus more fully on the decision-making process itself. This shift enhances both speed and accuracy, enabling students to participate more confidently in discussions and negotiations.

A critical component of decision-making in economics is the ability to use conditional logic. Economic reasoning often involves hypothetical scenarios, projections, and risk assessments that are expressed through “if-then” structures. Mastery of conditional sentences in English is therefore essential. The second conditional allows students to discuss hypothetical situations and their possible consequences, while the third conditional enables them to analyze past decisions and consider alternative outcomes. For example, a student might say, “If interest rates were increased, investment would decline,” or “If the company had diversified earlier, it might have avoided losses.” These structures provide a linguistic framework for exploring uncertainty and evaluating potential strategies.

In addition to conditional logic, modal verbs play a crucial role in expressing degrees of probability and certainty. Economic decisions are rarely absolute; they are based on predictions, assumptions, and varying levels of confidence. Words such as “will,” “should,” “may,” and “might” allow students to convey nuanced judgments about future events. The ability to distinguish between high, medium, and low probability is essential for effective communication in professional contexts. For instance, stating that “the market will recover” conveys a stronger level of confidence than saying “the market might recover,” and such distinctions can significantly influence how a message is received.

To develop these linguistic and cognitive skills, educators must adopt innovative and interactive teaching methodologies. One of the most effective approaches is the case method, widely used in leading business schools. In this method, students are presented with detailed real-world scenarios that require them to analyze complex situations and make strategic decisions. These cases often involve companies facing financial difficulties, market disruptions, or strategic dilemmas. Students must evaluate the available information, consider alternative courses of action, and ultimately choose a solution, which they then present and defend in English.



This approach not only enhances analytical skills but also strengthens the ability to communicate persuasively. Students learn to structure their arguments, support their claims with evidence, and respond to questions and critiques from their peers. The emphasis on verbal presentation mirrors real-world professional situations, where economists must justify their decisions to stakeholders, colleagues, and decision-makers.

Another valuable pedagogical tool is the use of game theory simulations. Concepts such as the Prisoner's Dilemma and Nash Equilibrium provide a framework for understanding strategic interaction and interdependence. When incorporated into language learning, these simulations create dynamic environments in which students must negotiate, collaborate, and compete using English. The language used in these interactions—whether to persuade, threaten, or build trust—directly affects the outcome of the game. This reinforces the idea that communication is not merely a supplementary skill but an integral part of economic decision-making.

An interesting dimension of decision-making in a second language is the psychological phenomenon known as the Foreign Language Effect. Research suggests that individuals may make more rational and less emotionally biased decisions when using a foreign language. This is because the emotional resonance of words is often weaker in a second language, reducing the influence of cognitive biases such as loss aversion. For economics students, this effect can be advantageous, as it encourages more objective analysis and reduces the impact of emotional reactions on decision-making.

In the digital age, the nature of economic decision-making is also evolving. The increasing use of artificial intelligence, big data, and digital analytics tools has transformed how economists gather and interpret information. Students must therefore learn not only how to analyze data but also how to interact with digital systems in English. This includes formulating questions, interpreting outputs, and communicating insights effectively. For example, they may need to ask, "What patterns emerge from this dataset?" or "How does changing the discount rate affect the outcome?" These types of inquiries require both technical understanding and linguistic precision.

The integration of technology into the classroom provides new opportunities for experiential learning. Digital simulations, data visualization tools, and AI-driven platforms can create immersive environments in which students practice decision-making in realistic contexts. By engaging with these tools, students develop both digital literacy and language proficiency, preparing them for the demands of modern workplaces.

Despite the effectiveness of these approaches, it is important to recognize and address the challenges that students may face. Language anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence can all hinder participation and limit the development of decision-making skills. Educators must therefore create supportive learning environments that encourage experimentation and value the process of learning as much as the final outcome. Providing constructive feedback, promoting collaborative learning, and emphasizing progress over perfection can help students overcome these barriers.

In conclusion, developing critical decision-making skills in English for economics students requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. It is not sufficient to teach vocabulary and grammar in isolation; language must be embedded within meaningful, context-rich activities that reflect real-world challenges. By incorporating theoretical



insights from cognitive psychology, focusing on essential linguistic structures, and employing interactive teaching methods such as case studies and simulations, educators can equip students with the tools they need to succeed. Ultimately, the goal is to produce economists who are not only technically competent but also capable of thinking critically, communicating effectively, and making informed decisions in a global context. Such individuals will be better prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern economy and to contribute to its development in innovative and impactful ways.

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