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**JEL Classification: I210, I250, I280**

## **LEARNING OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE WCO AS A KEY FACTOR OF CUSTOMS TRAINING**

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### ***Abstract***

*The paper highlights the importance of learning the official languages of the WCO for professional communications in the Customs area. Students of the Russian Customs Academy study official languages of the WCO, French and English. In order to obtain a sufficient level of proficiency in the French language for business communications it is necessary to pay attention to the specific lexical grammar, learn the specialized Customs terminology and vocabulary. Good command of French as an official language of the WCO provides the ability to communicate without interpreters with French colleagues.*

*Key words: professional training, learning the official languages of the WCO, the specialized Customs terminology.*

### **Introduction**

At present, cultural and economic links between states develop intensively, which increases the need for communication of professionals in various fields, including Customs. Discussions on professional topics are held with domestic and foreign counterparts, and therefore the knowledge of foreign languages, including professional terminology becomes a necessary condition for a successful career and a demand for skilled labor in the market today. The issues of training are at the heart of the concerns of

developed market economies; the professional qualification is closely related to the needs of the labor market and economic requirements. That is why one of the main objectives of universities is to provide high quality education to facilitate the integration of graduates in the workplace.

Customs is an organization whose mission is to make economic and strategic monitoring of economic development in the world and develop Customs activities, which is possible through a collaboration between Customs in capacity building. In this respect, professionalism of future Customs officers is closely related to knowledge obtained in training institutions and universities. These Customs schools and universities are responsible for training of high quality specialists in the control of persons at the borders, exports and imports, origin of goods, as well as international cooperation and the fight against Customs fraud, illicit trade, money laundering, counterfeiting and piracy. For example, this list includes the Russian Customs Academy, which was established in 1993 and since then has prepared a lot of Customs specialists. The Academy contains four training complexes, many laboratories and a library and information centre. To provide a quality professional training the Academy has classrooms equipped with multimedia equipment and training materials. It should be noted that education of students at the Faculty of Customs lasts for five years and at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics for four years (with awarding by bachelor's degree). The teaching is organized and carried out by experienced staff including many candidates of science and teachers with a doctoral degree. The Academy has three faculties: the Faculty of Customs, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics. The training within these faculties is carried out by the following departments: the Department of Customs Operations and Customs Enforcement, the Department of Customs Revenue and Tariff Regulations, the Department of Customs Statistics, the Department of Merchandising and Customs Expertise, the Department of Customs Control Equipment, the Department of Information and Customs Information Technologies, the Department of Humanities, the Department of Economic Theory, the Department of International Economic Relations, the Department of Administrative and Customs law, the Department of Civil Law, the Department of Theory and History of State and Law, the Criminal Law Department, the Department of Economics of Customs, the Department of Management, the Department of Financial Management, the Department of Foreign Languages, the Department of Improving language skills of graduates.

Thus, the training in the Academy is intended for future Customs officers who after studying within the departments listed above have a possibility to become high-quality professionals. In light of the foregoing it is clear that students will achieve competence in both economic and legal aspects connected with Customs activities. Graduates will be highly competent in matters related to Customs regulations for both import and export of goods, tariff classification, determination of the origin and Customs value. Since Customs activities are closely related to the international economic relations, future Customs officers are compulsory trained in this sphere. Issues related to Customs legislation are also studied in the Academy. Students have to study the four kinds of law: administrative law, Customs law, civil law and criminal law. In presenting the classification of departments and subjects studied by students of the Academy, we should not forget that all the sciences

are taught in Russian, which is the national and official language of Russia. In this respect, learning foreign languages (French, English and German) is crucial because of their inclusion in the list of mandatory disciplines in the Academy's curriculum. It can be added that French and English are widely used not only in the professional literature of the World Customs Organization (further – WCO), but also during conferences organized by the WCO Partnership in Customs Academic Research and Development (further – PICARD). These two languages are the official languages of many international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the World Customs Organization, the African Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Court of Justice, the International Automobile Federation, the International Olympic Committee, the Universal Postal Union, the World Health Organization, the Council of Europe, the European Union, Interpol and many other international organizations. Thus, the learning of these languages is required for people who would like to participate in communications at the international level.

Learning foreign languages in the Academy, and particularly the French as an official language of the WCO fosters future business communications. At the Faculty of Customs training specialists such disciplines as "Foreign Languages", "Foreign Languages in the professional activity", "Professional Foreign Languages" are trained. Training hours depend on the faculty. The Faculty of Customs also trains graduates for master's degree and in this respect, teaching lasts five years, including the learning of foreign languages, which is divided into four semesters. At the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics education lasts four years, learning foreign languages is also organized into four semesters, but the number of hours is less than at the Faculty of Customs. Students of the Faculties of Law and Economics as well as of the Faculty of Customs can continue to study foreign languages, but it is optional. It must be added that in all three faculties training is structured along training modules included in the curriculum and focused on achieving a high level of linguistic competence and the formation of career-oriented practical skills to successfully implement communication in a foreign language. The topics of these training modules reflect major issues of Customs activities such as "Activities of a Customs inspector", "The role of Customs in our society", "Taxes and duties", "Customs declaration", "Customs inspection", "Rules of goods importation", "Taxes levied on imports", "Certification of imported products", "Sanitary-Epidemiological Certificate", "Organized crime in the economic sphere", "International struggle against corruption" and others.

It is clear that the learning of foreign languages at the Academy is based on the knowledge obtained in the secondary school. During the years of study future Customs officers have to learn professional foreign language, terminology and also to revise the rules of grammar in order to avoid making mistakes in their speeches. A good knowledge of grammar helps students quickly understand the content of complicated texts in terms of grammatical structures. The other pillar of professionalism is the knowledge of Customs terminology as students work with authentic texts on current topics in the field of Customs activities.

Many researchers and linguists have been studying the peculiarities of professional languages in different sectors such as economic, legal, military, environment and others. It

should be noted that research into the Customs professional language is not made by linguists deeply enough. This is why, the key objective of our research is to analyze the texts from the "WCO News" journal and identify its linguistic characteristics. The information contained in these texts is of interest not only to those working in the Customs service, but also for future Customs officers including students of the Russian Customs Academy. The journal "WCO News" is published in both official languages of the WCO, in French and English, and reflects the most important problems of Customs today, the key issues of the structure and activities of the Customs services worldwide. The information obtained from the translation of texts helps future Customs officers to expand their professional skills, to orient in the international Customs performance. "WCO News" includes sections in which the information is very varied, such as "Calendar of events", "Editorial", "Dossier", "In conversation" "Around the world" "Events," "Flash info", "Zoom", "Point of view", "Focus".

Therefore, the analysis of the texts of "WCO News" means to determine the linguistic peculiarities preventing translation and understanding the content and thus to facilitate the reading of texts of the journal. It should be noted that the Customs language is a special language with its own style, its own grammatical constructions that are often used in any professional literature including Customs one. During the research process we scored the most problematic lexico-grammatical characteristics for the translation:

- the specialized Customs terminology and vocabulary;
- the use of prepositions in constructions;
- grammatical constructions such as the passive forms, the present participle, the past participle;
- the idioms and metaphors.

So, as we noted earlier, the Customs terminology is taught in the Russian language within the courses at the Academy. Reading the texts of the "WCO News" journal the principle of inter-discipline links is put into practice: students make the vocabulary of already known terms and expressions to translate them well and to understand the contents of the texts. However, the problems with understanding the terms still exist: there are words having no literal translation whose content is specific and knowledge of economic, legal and cultural aspects is necessary to understand and translate the information in the text. During the work with the texts we made the classification of the specialized vocabulary used most often in the following areas:

- Customs terminology: *la douane, des douanes françaises;*
- Economic terminology connected with Customs matters: *la perception, la gestion douanière;*
- Legal terminology concerning Customs policy: *la législation et la politique douanières, des autorités douanières, vérifier les personnes;*
- Regulatory terminology : *être conforme au droit, des dispositions nationales et des accords internationaux, les nouvelles lois, entrer en vigueur, la prison centrale.*

There have also been identified terms concerning :

- Titles of Customs post, including management positions : *le secrétaire général, le Sous-secrétaire, Co-secrétaire au Bureau central des douanes et accises, le Directeur de l'administration douanière fiscale, le Président-directeur général, le Président du Conseil*

de l'OMD;

- Names of places and kinds of Customs controls: *les scanners portatifs de rayonnement, les points de contrôle terrestres et maritimes, spectromètres de rayonnement gamma, le contrôle par scanners aux frontières, les systèmes d'inspection non intrusifs, les systèmes de contrôle par rayonnement, le rayonnement X, l'inspection par rayon X, l'appareil mobile doté d'un système de balayage à rayons gamma, les types d'instruments de détection du rayonnement fixes ou portables, moniteurs-portiques fixes de contrôle du rayonnement, détecteurs de rayonnement sur des personnes, détecteurs portatifs de recherche de neutrons, dispositifs portatifs d'identification de radionucléides;*

- Names of the Customs universities (with mentioning geographical names): *des universités douanières, l'école des douanes de Tourcoing, la Direction nationale du recrutement et de la formation professionnelle, l'école nationale des douanes de Tunisie, l'Université de Canberra en Australie, le Centre de formation douanière de Casablanca, l'école nationale des douanes d'Oran.*

The professionally oriented Customs journal "WCO News" also contains terminology related to the Customs areas of activity, in particular :

- Socio-political terminology: *le Parlement, le Palais présidentiel, les pays en développement;*

- Historical and cultural lexis: *les biens culturels, le patrimoine culturel, l'UNESCO, la culture nationale, les œuvres d'art;*

- Terminology related to pedagogical issues and training: *la formation des personnels, le programme de formation, la formation initiale, la formation continue, les modules, les supports de cours, les ressources pédagogiques, la formation théorique et pratique;*

- Names of goods: *des chaussures de sport, des articles de tabac et de cigarettes, des boissons, des produits alimentaires, des articles textiles, les jouets et les jeux, des montres, un pneu de vélo;*

- Lexics concerning information and computer systems: *les données informatiques, l'Internet, le fret électronique;*

- Glossary of transport: *les moyens d'acheminement, les voitures, les véhicules, les machines agricoles, les carburants, le fret aérien, le transport international, les chauffeurs indéclicats, les pannes, les accidents.*

- Names of international organizations: *l'Union européenne, la Commission européenne, l'Organisation mondiale des douanes, l'Organisation mondiale du commerce, l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé, les Sociétés Nationales de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge.*

Specificity of the Customs activity (fight against drug trafficking, protection of the environment) is reflected in the use of appropriate specialized vocabulary such as:

- Biological and ecological terms: *les animaux sauvages, la nature, les déchets dangereux, l'environnement, des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages, des espèces menacées d'extinction, les varans, des reptiles, des tortues, des œufs de perroquet, des grenouilles, des chiens détecteurs, les cornes de rhinocéros;*

- Names of chemicals and drugs: *le commerce illicite d'opiacés, de cocaïne, de cannabis et de substances psychotropes, des produits stupéfiants, des produits narcotiques*

*dangereux;*

- Geographic Names: *l'Afrique de l'Est, l'Algérie, la Russie, l'Ukraine, la Roumanie, Bruxelles, Berlin, Rabat, le Ghana, la Chine, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Maroc, le Mozambique, le Pérou;*

- Dates: *le 21-ème siècle, depuis juin 2009, le 4 juillet 2007, en 1968.*

Information about the challenges and achievements of the Customs includes constructions using emotional and expressive vocabulary, in particular: *une vitesse alarmante, un programme ambitieux, déployer de façon effective, traquer le transport illégal, la lutte contre ce fleau, la contrefaçon ayant des repercussions, la confiance des milieux commerciaux, le soutien nécessaire pour combattre cet empire bâti sur la fraude, l'illusion et la tromper;*

Thus, the detailed classification of specialized lexics and terminology including Customs, economic and legal terms as well as the terms of adjacent areas helps students to easier understand texts full of very complicated lexical and grammatical constructions.

The second issue of the translation of texts is the use of prepositions in French. Their choice is a big challenge for Russian students. In our opinion, it is necessary to make a vocabulary of constructions with suitable prepositions and learn them by heart, which greatly facilitates the translation of texts. During this research the most frequently used prepositions were identified. They are: *à, de, sur, pour, contre, en, entre, via* а также сложные предлоги: *afin de, auprès de, lors de, autour de, à travers, grâce à, au sein de, au cours de, à l'issue de, à l'instar de, à l'égard de, au début de, au-delà de, en matière de, en vue de, à la lumière de, tout au long de.* It should be noted that the constructions with these prepositions are often repeated in the texts and their knowledge is necessary for students.

Constructions with the preposition *à* have the following structural classification:

- The construction "verb + preposition *à* + infinitive": *procéder à, destiner à, aider à, contribuer à, viser à, lier à;*

- The construction "verb to be + past participle / or adjective + preposition *à* + infinitive": *être soumis à, être habilité à, être facile à, être envoyé à, être opposé à;*

- The construction "noun + preposition *à* + infinitive": *les questions à savoir, un rôle à jouer, un défi à relever, un vase à remplir, une quantité de travail à faire, les sujets à aborder un point à prendre, des opérations à contrôler, des marchandises à contrôler, la capacité à travailler, les moyens à mettre en œuvre, les négociations à venir, les mesures à appliquer, des documents à remplir;*

- The construction "noun + preposition *à* + noun without an article": *les envois à risque, les sources à risques, des médicaments à destination.*

Verbs in the constructions mentioned have the following semantic features: Customs control – *une liste à contrôler;* Customs operations – *les administrations ont procédé à des opérations;* assistance, help – *une opération aide à renforcer sa compétitivité;* participation – *le Directeur a assisté à la cérémonie.* The past participle constructions with the preposition *à* have the following semantics: authorities – *habilités à suspendre la mainlevée;* opposition – *opposée à l'importation.* The semantics of nouns in such constructions reflects such definitions as: issues, challenges – *des défis à relever, les questions à savoir;* solutions, measures – *les mesures à appliquer;* товары – *des*

*marchandises à contrôler; quantity – une quantité de travail à accomplir; role, importance – un rôle à, un point à prendre en considération; documents - des documents à remplir; negotiations – les négociations à venir; sources – les sources de maladies à risques.*

While reading texts there were also identified many constructions with the preposition *de*, where the semantics of nouns also reflects the key definitions of the Customs activity, in particular, its tasks and mission, functions, purpose, role. They are *l'objectif est de, la tâche est de, le rôle est de, la mission est de, être en mesure de, être chargé de, avoir pour vocation de.*

Prepositions *sur, pour, contre, en, entre, via étant très* are often used in such kind of specialized texts. For example, we can mention a few, in which the semantics of nouns entering into covalent links with the preposition *sur* reflects concepts revealing the essence of the Customs areas of activity: management, simplification, harmonization, foundation, design, implementation – *sur la gestion, sur la simplification et l'harmonisation, sur la facilitation, sur la mise en œuvre, sur la base des travaux, sur la création.* The semantics of nouns being the part of the constructions with the preposition *pour* also expresses the key notions of Customs activities: foreign trade – *pour le commerce extérieur; Customs check-point, defense, mission, programs, modernization, fighting – pour les opérateurs commerciaux, pour des postes, pour la protection, pour mission, pour un programme, pour la saisie, pour la lutte.* The preposition *pour* is also actively involved in the formation of structures with similar semantics of verbs including to monitor, to protect, to prohibit, to permit, to oppose, to manage, to simplify and to develop, etc - *pour contrôler, pour protéger, pour interdire et empêcher, pour permettre, pour faire face, pour réorganiser, pour moderniser, pour réaliser, pour développer, pour gérer, pour faciliter.* Semantics of lexical items included in the constructions with the opposing preposition *contre* reflects Customs and legal aspects as well as negative factors, which Customs fight with. This includes illegal smuggling, counterfeiting, terrorism, money laundering, etc – *les actes illicites, la fraude, le trafic illicite, l'exportation non autorisée, la fraude douanière, le commerce illicite, la contrefaçon, la piraterie, le blanchiment d'argent, le financement du terrorisme, la corruption.* The preposition *en* is often involved in the formation of structures with the use of dates: *en novembre 2012*, as well as cliché structures, among which the most widely-used are: *le passage en douane, l'évaluation en douane, la mise en œuvre, une prise en charge.*

It is also of great interest for our research to study the constructions with complex or phraseological prepositions, the formation of which occurs on the basis of simple prepositions, in particular, the preposition *de*: *lors de, afin de, auprès de, autour de - lors du Conseil, afin de faciliter, auprès des Postes douaniers;* preposition *à*: *grâce à, à travers - grâce au rôle, à travers des contacts;* simultaneous use of prepositions *à* and *de*: *au cours de, à l'issue de, à l'égard de, à l'instar de, au début de - au cours de l'opération, à l'issue de ce séminaire;* simultaneous use of prepositions *à* and *en*: *en vue de, en matière de - en vue de l'élaboration, en matière de contrôle.*

Thus, taking into account the frequent use of the given prepositional constructions in the texts of professionally oriented Customs journal "WCO News", they must be deeply analyzed, classified and made a dictionary of that promotes the subsequent rapid translation of texts of this journal and, as a consequence, effective work, achieving high

performance within training in professionally oriented foreign language.

Grammatical constructions such as the passive form, the present participle, the past participle (*la forme passive, le participe présent, le participe passé*) is the third issue in the process of translation of the professionally-oriented Customs texts. It should be noted that the researchers of professionally oriented literature refers the mentioned grammatical phenomena to the characteristic features of this type of literature. The problem is in a very rare use of the passive voice in Russian, which makes it difficult to translate, and often sentences containing passive constructions are translated in accordance with the rules of the Russian language, ie without saving passive verbs. When reading Customs texts there were identified many constructions with verbs in the passive forms, where the auxiliary verb *être* is used in different times, including *présent – cette taxe est prélevée; passé composé – l'opération a été soutenue; futur simple – tous les domaines de travail y seront abordés*. It is used less often in: *passé immédiat – trois brochures viennent d'être publiées; plus-que-parfait – des profils de risques avaient été fournis; passé simple – elle fut arrêtée; subjonctif passé – bien que le Bureau régional ait été créé*. Present participle in the studied texts have their own characteristics, their semantics reveals aspects of Customs operations, in particular, the construction *visant à* (the problem is): *visant à contrôler, visant à réprimer le commerce illicite*. Semantics of past participles reflects the key notions of Customs, such as *activity, operation, processes, procedures, management, withdrawal, crime: les actions, une opération, les procédures, des saisies, le crime*; notions which reflect the educational and training aspects of Customs: *le cours, une étude, un séminaire de formation*; names of goods: *les marchandises, les maillots*.

So we can see that the expressions presented as examples are quite complicated syntactically and difficult to translate. Their constant study and practical training is needed to succeed in the rapid translation of the contents of the texts.

And finally, another aspect, which is a specific for Customs texts and can create possible problems when translated into the Russian language, is idioms and metaphors, which the authors of the texts usually use to express their attitudes to the information provided to persuade the reader to recognize the importance of those involved in Customs activities, see the extent of the phenomenon described, note the important role of events and activities. For example, we can name the idioms and metaphors widely used in the texts of the Customs literature: *scene, actors, fruits, trump, to weave, to corrode, etc – sur la scène nationale, les acteurs économiques, le fruit d'enquêtes, un grand atout, tisser des liens profonds, éroder les recettes des États*. As it can be seen from the above examples, the use of metaphors in Customs literature is accounted for the authors' desire to succinctly and clearly disclose, on the basis of similarity, the importance of objects and phenomena in the field of Customs activities, achievements and current problems. These examples show that the semantics of metaphors reveals the dominant feature of the Customs in public life, the significance of events, the roles of individuals, adverse events and ways to combat it, the means to achieve objectives, Customs capacity building, cooperation between Customs administrations.

Thus, the study of the professional Customs terminology and grammatical phenomena contributes to effective working with professionally oriented Customs texts of Customs journals containing information that enhances the professional competence,



which provides the opportunity to participate in professional communications with foreign colleagues .

### **Summary and concluding remarks**

In conclusion we should highlight such main factors influencing the successful foreign language training of Customs officers by means of using the texts with the professional terminology as:

- professionally focused study of a foreign language is the basis for interdisciplinary communication in the professional education of future Customs officers;
- linguistic factors reflecting aspects of Customs activities are closely connected with such activities;
- proficiency in the official languages of the WCO is a prerequisite for the realization of professional communications, including visual ones;
- proficiency in the official languages of the WCO allows unhindered professional communication, secondment to foreign Customs educational institutions, generalizing the experience of foreign colleagues and enhancing professional competence;
- a lexical and grammatical component plays at this rate an important role in the study of foreign languages as a factor of achieving a high level of knowledge of professional foreign language;
- the basis for achieving a high level of language proficiency is grammatical material study and development of professional terminology and specialized vocabulary of related spheres of activity;
- study and proficiency in the official languages of the WCO as well as increasing professional competence open the door to cooperation with the Customs services of the world.

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## SECTION 2 – DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

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