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10.00.00 Filologiya fanlari
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MUNDARIJA СОДЕРЖАНИЕ CONTENTS

DEVELOPING LAW STUDENTS' WRITING COMPETENCE THROUGH THE IRAC METHOD IN LEGAL ENGLISH CLASSES: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY AT TSUL

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Abstract: This article examines the efficacy of the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion) method in enhancing the legal writing competence of first-year law students at Tashkent State University of Law (TSUL). Over a four-week instructional period, 28 students were trained to deconstruct judicial opinions and draft structured case briefs. The study employs a mixed-methods approach to measure improvements in logical coherence, rule precision, and analytical synthesis. The results indicate that the IRAC framework significantly reduces the "cognitive load" for non-native English speakers, enabling a transition from descriptive narrative to rigorous legal analysis.

Key words: legal English, IRAC method, writing competence, first-year law students, case brief, fact-to-law synthesis, ESP.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti (TDYU) 1-kurs talabalarining yuridik ingliz tili darslarida yozuv kompetensiyasini oshirishda IRAC (Muammo, Norma, Tatbiq, Xulosa) metodining samaradorligi tadqiq etiladi. To'rt haftalik o'quv davri mobaynida 28 nafar talaba sud qarorlarini dekonstruksiya qilish va tizimlashtirilgan "case brief" (sud ishi xulosasi) loyihalarini tayyorlash bo'yicha o'qitildi. Tadqiqotda mantiqiy izchillik, huquqiy normalar aniqligi hamda tahliliy sintez darajasidagi o'sishni o'lchash uchun aralash metodlardan foydalanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, IRAC tizimi ingliz tilida so'zlashuvchi bo'lmagan talabalar uchun "kognitiv yuklama"ni sezilarli darajada kamaytiradi hamda ularga oddiy bayonchilikdan (deskriptiv nutqdan) qat'iy yuridik tahlilga o'tish imkonini beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: yuridik ingliz tili, IRAC metodi, yozuv kompetensiyasi, 1-kurs huquqshunos talabalari, case brief (sud ishi xulosasi), fakt va huquq sintezi, ESP.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуется эффективность метода IRAC (Проблема, Норма, Применение, Вывод) в повышении письменной компетенции студентов первого курса Ташкентского государственного юридического университета (ТГЮУ) на занятиях по юридическому английскому языку. В течение четырёхнедельного учебного периода 28 студентов обучались деконструкции судебных решений и составлению структурированных "case brief" (резюме судебных дел). В исследовании использовался смешанный метод для измерения улучшений логической последовательности, точности изложения правовых норм и аналитического синтеза. Результаты показывают, что структура IRAC значительно снижает "когнитивную нагрузку" для студентов, для которых английский язык не является родным, позволяя им перейти от описательного повествования к строгому юридическому анализу.

Ключевые слова: юридический английский язык, метод IRAC, письменная компетенция, студенты-юристы 1-го курса, case brief (резюме судебного дела), синтез фактов и права, ESP (английский для специальных целей).

INTRODUCTION

In the era of legal globalization, the ability to communicate complex legal reasoning in English is no longer a luxury but a professional necessity. For students at Tashkent State University of Law (TSUL), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) serves as a gateway to international commercial arbitration, human rights advocacy, and transnational litigation. However, the primary challenge faced by first-year students is the "cognitive gap"– the difficulty of translating complex legal reasoning from their native language into a coherent English legal argument. Traditional writing practices often rely on a chronological narration of facts, which is insufficient for professional legal analysis. To facilitate students' transition into professional legal practice, the TSUL first-year syllabus includes a dedicated four-week intensive module on case analysis and case brief writing. Recognizing that case-based teaching is a cornerstone of the curriculum, instructors typically employ the IRAC method

(Issue, Rule, Application, and Conclusion) as a core pedagogical tool. This structured approach enables students to bridge the gap between general linguistic fluency and the technical precision required for drafting professional case briefs, ensuring their ability to synthesize judicial opinions into actionable legal documents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, and Conclusion) method into legal education is not merely a stylistic preference but is firmly grounded in decades of pedagogical and cognitive research. This framework functions as the "grammar of legal logic," providing a standardized pathway for deconstructing and analyzing complex legal disputes. Barbara Blumenfeld (2018), in her seminal work The Power of Legal Analysis, emphasizes that law students must internalize the cognitive process of "thinking like a lawyer" before they can effectively "write like a lawyer." Blumenfeld argues that the IRAC method functions as a form of "scaffolding," a concept derived from Vygotsky's educational psychology. This structural scaffold provides a temporary yet robust framework that enables students to perform cognitively demanding tasks–such as legal synthesis and the application of law to facts–which might otherwise overwhelm novice practitioners. Building upon this structural foundation, the most intellectually demanding stage of legal writing involves the synthesis of abstract legal rules with concrete factual circumstances. Anne Enquist and Laurel Oates (2017), in Just Writing: Grammar, Punctuation, and Style for the Legal Writer, assert that "the hallmark of a sophisticated legal writer is the ability to use the 'Application' section to distinguish or align the current case with relevant precedents." For students studying law in a second language under ESP conditions, this stage often presents a substantial linguistic barrier. Consequently, Enquist and Oates argue that learners must be equipped with specific "linguistic connectors" (e.g., analogously, conversely, notwithstanding) to signal logical transitions. Without such markers, even analytically sound legal reasoning may appear fragmented and fail to persuade a judicial reader.

In addition to enhancing logical coherence, the IRAC method reinforces the core principles of the "Plain English" movement. Bryan Garner (2013), a leading authority on modern legal style, states in The Elements of Legal Style that "the best legal writing is plain, clear, and logically organized." By enforcing structural clarity, IRAC eliminates irrelevant narrative detail and compels writers to focus exclusively on the ratio decidendi (the reason for the decision). Adherence to this model helps students avoid the prose-heavy summaries typical of novice legal writing and guides them toward the concise and logically disciplined prose required in international commercial practice. Furthermore, the IRAC method may be understood as a contemporary adaptation of the classical Aristotelian syllogism. Charles Calleros (2020), in Legal Method and Writing, explains that legal analysis is fundamentally a form of deductive reasoning: the Rule functions as the major premise, the Facts operate as the minor premise, and the Conclusion emerges as the logical result. Calleros observes that many students struggle with "conclusory writing," in which outcomes are asserted without demonstrating the analytical reasoning that supports them. In this context, IRAC serves as a corrective mechanism, ensuring that the Application section functions as the critical analytical bridge connecting the Rule to the Conclusion. Finally, as Richard Neumann (2017) explains in Legal Reasoning and Legal Writing, legal discourse is inherently intertextual. Legal writing does not exist in isolation; rather, it represents an ongoing dialogue between prior precedents and contemporary disputes. Neumann contends that the IRAC method constitutes the universal language of this dialogue. For international students, including those at TSUL, mastery of IRAC is equivalent to acquiring global legal literacy. It transcends jurisdictional boundaries, enabling students to participate in the same analytical discourse as legal professionals practicing in New York, London, or Hong Kong.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review, the pedagogical intervention at Tashkent State University of Law (TSUL) was designed to move beyond passive legal knowledge toward active drafting competence. To bridge the gap between understanding the IRAC logic and autonomously applying it, a four-week instructional cycle was implemented. This module was specifically tailored for 28 first-year students, providing them with a structured environment to internalize the "scaffolding" suggested by Blumenfeld and the syllogistic reasoning advocated by Calleros. The curriculum was divided into four distinct phases, each progressively increasing in complexity to ensure the steady development of legal writing skills.

- *Week 1:* **The Anatomy of the Issue and Rule (Recognition Phase).** During the first week, students focused on deconstructing judicial opinions to identify the Issue (I) and the Rule (R). The primary objective was to master the linguistic formulation of the legal question using the "Whether" template. By stripping away extraneous facts, students learned to articulate legal principles in an abstract and universal manner, thereby laying the groundwork for deductive reasoning.

- *Week 2:* **The Logic of Application (Synthesis Phase).** The second week addressed the most cognitively demanding component of IRAC, namely the Application (A). Students were provided with "linguistic scaffolding" to support the synthesis of abstract legal rules with concrete factual scenarios. This process involved intensive drills using transition signals such as "analogous to," "distinguishable from," and "in accordance with." Students were required to perform the "because test," ensuring that every legal conclusion was explicitly supported by a corresponding factual premise.
- *Week 3:* **Structural Synthesis through Case Briefing (Application Phase).** In the third week, students transitioned from single-paragraph IRAC analyses to a full Case Brief structure. This stage emphasized "information filtering," during which students were trained to distinguish between ratio decidendi and obiter dicta. They practiced condensing twenty-page judicial opinions into a one-page analytical format that included the procedural history, legally significant facts, and the court's reasoning.
- *Week 4:* **Professional Drafting and Peer Review (Evaluation Phase).** The final week focused on autonomous production. Students drafted a comprehensive Case Brief for a landmark case and subsequently participated in a blind peer-review process. Using a standardized rubric, they evaluated their peers' work according to logical coherence, adherence to the IRAC structure, and clarity of expression. This evaluative stage reinforced the principles of plain English and professional precision in legal writing.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The empirical data collected before and after the intervention demonstrate a significant improvement in students' legal writing competence. The assessment was conducted using a 100-point rubric, with particular emphasis on structural integrity and analytical depth.

Table 1: **Detailed growth in writing metrics (n=28)**

Competency Category	Baseline (Week 1)	Mid-Point (Week 2)	Final (Week 4)	Net Growth (%)
Issue Identification	56%	71%	94%	+38%
Rule Precision	45%	58%	87%	+42%
Analytical Application	32%	63%	79%	+47%
Structural Logic	35%	66%	90%	+55%
Grammatical Accuracy	69%	82%	92%	+23%

The data from the four-week module reveal a significant transformation in students' writing capabilities. The most striking finding is the 47% net growth in analytical application, which surged from a baseline of 32% to 79% by the final week. This dramatic improvement suggests that while students' grammatical accuracy showed a steady but comparatively modest gain of 23% (reaching 92%), their ability to perform complex legal analysis experienced a far more substantial acceleration. This finding supports the conclusion that the irac method functions as a critical cognitive "unblocker," providing a structural template that enables students to apply legal rules to facts more effectively than general linguistic training alone. Structural logic demonstrated the highest overall improvement (+55%), rising from an initial 35% to a mastery level of 90%. This result indicates that the irac framework successfully trained students to organize legal reasoning in a coherent and methodologically sound manner. Rule precision also improved substantially: students' ability to accurately state and apply legal rules increased by 42%, reaching 87% proficiency by week 4.

Issue identification showed consistent progress, with 94% of students able to correctly isolate the legal issue by the end of the module, representing a 38% increase from baseline performance. Most importantly, the marked gains in structural logic and analytical application demonstrate that by week 4, the vast majority of students could clearly differentiate between a "rule" and an "application"–a distinction that posed serious difficulty for nearly two-thirds of the cohort during week 1.

Table 2: **Summary of results (n=28)**

Category	Baseline	Final (W4)	Net Growth
Highest Growth	Structural Logic	90%	+55%
Deepest Analytical Leap	Analytical Application	79%	+47%
Highest Final Mastery	Issue Identification	94%	+38%

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To demonstrate the level of competence achieved, a model case brief drafted by a student during the final stage of the module is presented below. The example is based on the seminal contract law case carlill v carbolic smoke ball co.

Case name: carlill v carbolic smoke ball co [1893] 1 qb 256

Facts: the defendants advertised that they would pay £100 to anyone who contracted influenza after using their smoke ball as directed. To demonstrate sincerity, they deposited £1000 in a bank. The plaintiff used the product as instructed but nevertheless contracted influenza and subsequently sued for the promised reward.

Issue: whether an advertisement offering a reward can constitute a binding unilateral contract with the public at large.

Rule: an offer made to the world at large (a unilateral offer) becomes a binding contract once the offeree performs the stated conditions. In such cases, prior notification of acceptance is not required.

Application: the defendants argued that the advertisement was a "mere puff." However, the £1000 bank deposit constituted objective evidence of an intention to be legally bound. Unlike bilateral contracts, mrs. Carlill accepted the offer through performance by using the smoke ball as prescribed. Principles of fairness support holding the manufacturer accountable for its promise.

Conclusion: yes. The court held that the advertisement constituted a binding unilateral offer, and the plaintiff was entitled to the reward.

The findings of this study conducted at tashkent state university of law indicate that legal writing competence is a hybrid skill, combining both linguistic proficiency and logical reasoning. The irac method functions as a "linguistic equalizer," enabling students with varying levels of english proficiency to produce work that meets professional legal standards by prioritizing structural clarity. While the application section remains the most challenging component, the four-week instructional period proved sufficient to facilitate meaningful cognitive restructuring. Students reported increased confidence not only in legal writing but also in oral advocacy and mooting activities. Moreover, clear evidence of cross-linguistic transfer emerged, as students began applying IRAC-based reasoning to their Uzbek and Russian legal essays. This confirms that structured legal reasoning constitutes a universal and transferable professional skill.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the integration of a 4-week IRAC and Case Briefing module into the first-year curriculum represents a vital step toward the internationalization of legal education in Uzbekistan, as it successfully transforms students from passive consumers of legal texts into active legal analysts capable of structured reasoning and independent evaluation. To maximize the effectiveness of this approach, IRAC methodology should be introduced during the first semester in order to establish a strong foundational logic of legal thinking at an early stage, while Legal English assessments should shift their primary focus from mere grammatical correctness toward the evaluation of analytical structure based on the IRAC framework. Furthermore, future iterations of the module should incorporate AI-driven feedback tools that provide real-time IRAC-based analysis, enabling students to revise, refine, and improve their legal writing more frequently and systematically. By adopting these standards, TSUL and other regional law schools can ensure that their graduates are well prepared to compete effectively in the global legal marketplace.

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13.00.00 Pedagogika fanlari
13.00.01 Pedagogika nazariyasi. Pedagogik ta’limotlar tarixi
13.00.02 Ta’lim va tarbiya nazariyasi va metodikasi (sohalar bo‘yicha)
13.00.03 Maxsus pedagogika
13.00.04 Jismoniy tarbiya va sport mashg‘ulotlari nazariyasi va metodikasi
13.00.05 Kasb-hunar ta’limi nazariyasi va metodikasi
13.00.06 Elektron ta’lim nazariyasi va metodikasi (ta’lim sohalari va bosqichlari bo‘yicha)
13.00.07 Ta’limda menejment
13.00.08 Maktabgacha ta’lim va tarbiya nazariyasi va metodikasi
13.00.09 Ijtimoiy pedagogika
07.00.00 Tarix fanlari
19.00.00 Psixologiya fanlari
01.00.00 Fizika-matematika fanlari
02.00.00 Kimyo fanlari
03.00.00 Biologiya fanlari
09.00.00 Falsafa fanlari
10.00.00 Filologiya fanlari
11.00.00 Geografiya fanlari

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