

Article

# The Educational Technology of Monological Speaking Skills Formation of Future Lawyers

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**Abstract:** In modern higher education, there was a change in the educational paradigm, when the emphasis shifted to the formation of competencies. The goal of the competence approach is to improve the quality of education, which is impossible without the use of educational technologies that guarantee a steady effective result. The priority of teaching foreign languages to future lawyers is the foreign speaking skills formation in general and the monological ones in particular. The introduction of educational technology in the process of monological speaking skills formation, including a set of methods and techniques such as peer review, discussion, working with the text, etc., took place over the course of the pedagogical experiment. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis allowed us to determine the difference in the level of the monological speaking skills formation in experimental and control groups at all stages of the experiment conducted. The effectiveness of the developed technology is determined by the significance of the adaptation stage, the use of the peer review method, which implements the potential of students' metacognitive skills, and the possibility to change the role while evaluating students' answers.



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**Keywords:** educational technology (ET); speaking skills; monological utterance (MU); adaptation; peer review

## 1. Introduction

Modern higher education reflects the world's economic, political and social processes. The high degree of international integration connected with both the market economy and the information boom required a change in the educational paradigm of higher professional education [1]. The actualization of the competence approach helped to shift the emphasis from the fundamental knowledge carried by a specialist throughout his professional career to the ability to learn even after graduating from a higher educational institution [2,3]. The aim of modern education is competence formation, i.e., the skills to operate with fundamental strategies based on the knowledge of mental perception processes [4,5]. The introduction of the cognitive aspect in higher education allows us to form a specialist who can recognize the necessary information, process it, and integrate it into the professional sphere of knowledge.

In the context of the competence approach, the educational standard defines foreign language communicative competence as universal. It involves teaching the formal side of the language and strategies that contribute to the effective development of the material. The multi-aspect nature of foreign language teaching makes it difficult to identify the most significant types of activities. However, the evident significance of the practical activity for any specialty results in the acknowledgment of the communicative skills formation importance. The priority of communicative competence in the context of teaching a foreign language is confirmed by a series of studies on the foreign-speaking skills formation of engineers [6], managers [7], medical personnel [8], etc.

Many articles analyze the experience of teaching foreign languages to future lawyers over the course of their academic study [9–12]. Traditionally, methodologists study the foreign communicative skills formation of lawyers in terms of professional-oriented skills [13,14]. Despite the dominance of speaking skills, the group of researchers confirm that grammatical, lexical and phonetic skills should be formed in parallel. As legal terminology is a key element of the communication, its integration into the process of speaking skills formation is obligatory but occurs as a supplementary step in the teaching process [15,16]. The communicative skills of lawyers are mediated by basic grammar and the specific grammatical units that should become actual while studying legal English [17]. T.V. Emelianova states the significance of received pronunciation among other components of the speaking skills product [18]. The specificity of the juridical communicative culture determines the need to teach the legal speech etiquette and communicative clichés used to reflect the speaker's attitude [19,20]. The significance of all stated components of the utterance as a product of speaking activity should be taken into account both in the process of speaking skills formation and in the final product evaluation.

The law specialty refers to the type of "person-person" and determines the priority of the activities that are associated with the information transfer. The lawyer communicates with his client and becomes his representative in court, where he performs the function of both a defender and a prosecutor, directs the trial, etc. In addition to legal practice, lawyers take part in international symposia, where they present compiled data on the issue studied. Thus, the lawyer must be proficient in an oral speech in its two types: monological and dialogical. The process of foreign speaking skills formation involves a step-by-step process from simple to complex, from monologue to dialogue [21,22], which repeats the evolution of human speech in phylogeny [23,24]. This continuity determines the importance of the first stage, the monological utterance (MU), which is a verbal constitution of knowledge determined by a specific context.

However, the foreign speaking skills formation of future lawyers encounters several difficulties. Foreign language studying at university is episodic [25]. The lack of the discipline Foreign Language in the last years of study at universities does not allow students to overcome the level of foreign language proficiency B1-B2. A foreign language teacher also faces the problem that signifies the students' lack of professional competence, i.e., fundamental knowledge of the law, by the second year. Accordingly, the attention is shifted from the foreign speaking skills formation to the tasks of related disciplines, which negatively affects the quality of foreign language teaching.

The range of these problems leads to the need to make the learning process effective by developing ET. In pedagogy, there is no unequivocal concept of ET. It is explicated by the technological approach used in education development. Thus, ET is understood as a systematic method in teaching using technological means such as the Internet, social services, software specially developed for educational needs, etc. [26–28]. The researchers interpret the term *ET* as an educational process characterized by the systematic approach and cognitive knowledge about the learning nature as well as the knowledge digestion by a person. The authors designed the technology to improve and optimize the organization of the collaborative activity of teachers and students in class.

V.N. Denisov and T.V. Kiryushkina define ET as an integrated approach that combines linguistic and extralinguistic material and methods for achieving the goal [29]. One of the vital ET components is the procedure or algorithm that ensures the achievement of the set goal. The reproducibility of the ET is determined by the stability of its results, thus confirming its effectiveness [30,31].

The series of metacognitive skills develop over the course of speaking skills formation. The variability of methods used in the ET allows the teacher to realize the dominating goal of training, develop analytical and predictive skills and strengthen educational motivation [32]. Reflective practice is the opportunity to understand oneself and the interlocutor. Consequently, it is significant in terms of the communicative act [33]. H.C. Shulman and O.M. Bullock state that self-confidence derives from metacognitive signals realized

in the utterance expressiveness [34]. Self-regulation is the universal educational skill in the context of modern higher education aimed at learning without someone's assistance (the independent work component) [35]. The formation of self-regulation is the result of training in monological speaking [36]. The above facts determine the consideration and development of metacognitive skills in the process of working on MU in terms of ET developed.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The research conducted is a pedagogical experiment which is the main method of investigation [37]. The purpose of the pedagogical experiment is to prove the effectiveness of technology as a tool for achieving the ideal quality of higher education. The authors evaluate the effectiveness of the ET aimed at teaching students to produce MUs by the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data obtained at all stages of the experiment.

The pedagogical experiment took place at Peter the Great Saint Petersburg Polytechnic University in the discipline Foreign Language in the Judicial Field. Even though it is a two-semester discipline, our research was limited to the first stage, i.e., the spring semester of 2021. The foreign monological speaking skills formation is based on the topics studied in the units, and submitted to the exam subsequently. Exam topics correspond with the units and the content of the texts discussed. Thus, the article describes an experiment limited to the fourth semester of study, i.e., the initial stage of discipline teaching. The first module includes the development of four topics: *Types of Law, The Origin of Law in Babylon and the Code of Hammurabi, the Origin of Law in Ancient Greece, and the History of Law in Great Britain.*

The study involved two groups of students, i.e., 104 people (52 students in each group). The students of the control group (C- group) studied in accordance with the generally accepted practice of monological speaking skills formation. In the experimental group (E-group) students were trained according to the multi-level ET developed. The training of lawyers in the MU production is determined by the legal terminology knowledge and the ability to operate it. The specificity of the legal vocabulary, characterized by the historical aspect, leads to the need to focus on the stage of lexical material introduction and consolidation. Consequently, the preliminary stage (0 stage) preceded the ET developed. Future lawyers of both groups went through the stage of lexical skill formation, starting with language exercises (such as imitation, differentiation, substitution, transformation, etc.) and ending with conditional speech exercises.

The ET developed assumes the necessity of adaptive measures at the first stage of teaching MU (Figure 1). If the C-group students worked on the methodological materials necessary for acknowledgment and understanding the requirements independently, the E-group students faced the teacher's assistance. The role of the specialist was to explain each component of the monologue in a "question-answer" form. In the future, the teacher assessed the students' understanding of all the requirements that must be taken into account, relying on the test results. The True False test included statements such as Hook sentence aims at attracting the reader's attention. The introduction consists of 2 or 3 sentences only. To get 2 points for the lexical aspect you need to use 25 + lexical units. Coherence is about the use of linkers only, etc. The test allowed to verify the actual knowledge of students and reveal the degree of their differentiation at the initial stage of the monological speaking skills formation. Both groups were evaluated by the parameters and criteria developed (Table 1). The parameters and evaluation criteria are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) descriptors for the foreign language proficiency levels designed by the Council of Europe [38]. The ranking system was originally based on the speech assessment criteria of A.V. Fahrutdinova and S.V. Grebcova redesigned for the prepared speeches [39] and approved in the previous work [40]. To meet the requirement of the new educational program on Foreign Language in the Judicial Field, the rating system was modernized.

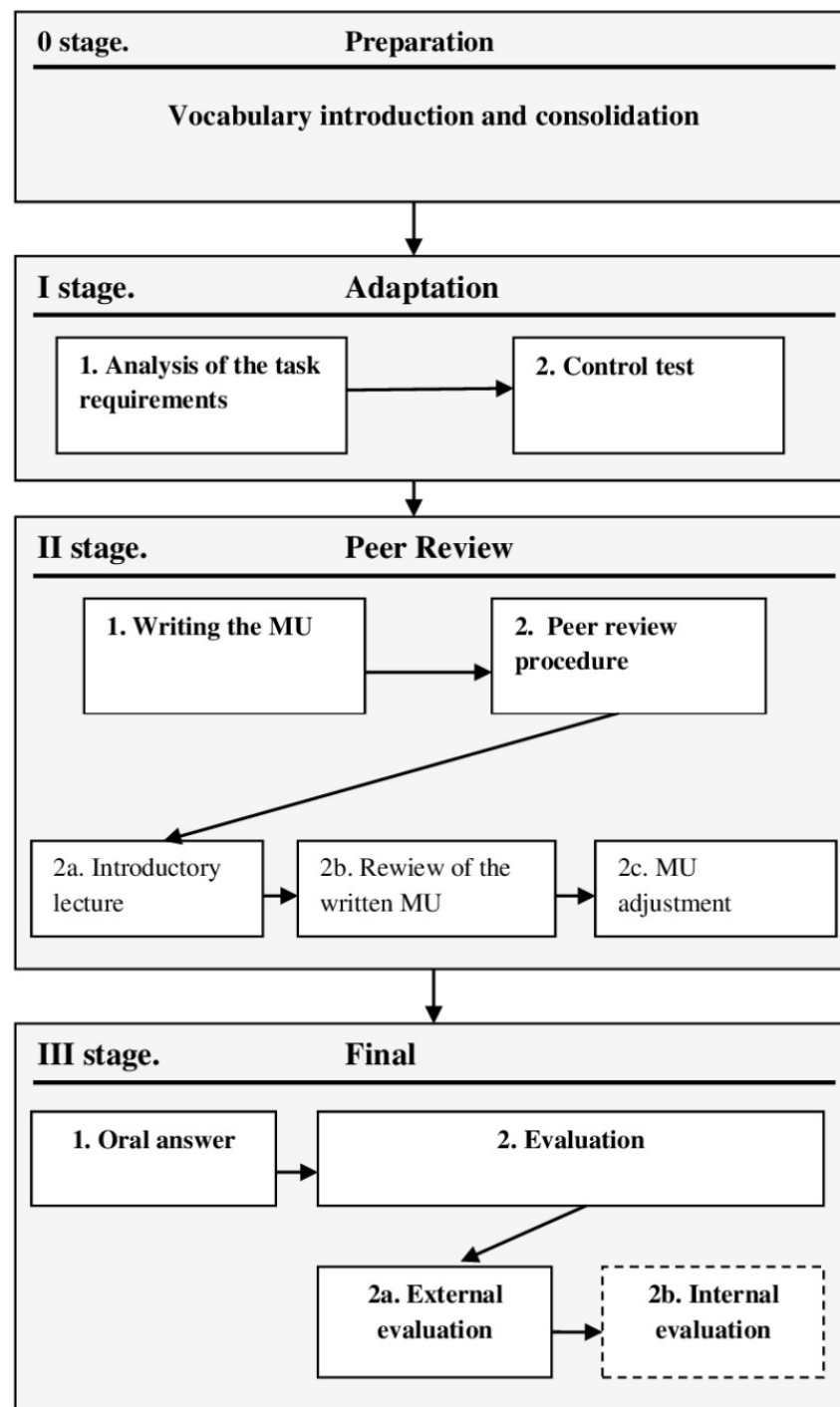


Figure 1. MU skills formation ET.

At the second stage, students wrote the monologue following the parameters developed. Students of both groups had to consider the relevance of the content to the topic of the statement, i.e., to exclude deviations from the topic. It was not allowed to combine related topics, such as *Types of Law* and *The History of Law in the UK*. The structure of the statement had a clear structure: introduction, body, and conclusion. The features of the introduction were emphasized while studying the requirements for MU in the E-group. For instance, traditionally students begin their story with the construction 'I'd like to tell you about...'. However, if you perform in public, this tactic does not lead to the planned result—to attract the audience to the speech. It is functionally appropriate to start the speech with

a hook sentence, which is the first and often the only way to interest the listeners. At the adaptation stage, the students analyzed the hook sentence variants and detected successful and unsuccessful patterns. Thus, the teacher offered the students the following structure of the introduction, with a logical transition from one element to another: *a hook sentence* → *thesis* ('I'd like to tell you...'). The peculiarity of the conclusion that correlates both with the introduction and the hook sentence was depicted. In the body of the monologue, it was necessary to present three ideas and confirm them with factual material, accordingly. The maximum score for this aspect is 2 points. In case of a structure violation, the student could get from 1 to 0 points.

**Table 1.** MU parameters and criteria.

N <sup>o</sup>	Aspects	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points
1	Content and organisation of MU	The topic is elaborate and all MU elements fully correspond with the topic. The use of 25 + lexical units of the total amount (47). NB. The lexical unit is considered to be correct only if it is pronounced right.	Content discrepancy or lack of one structural element.	Content discrepancy or lack of two or more structural elements.
2.	Vocabulary	All structural elements of MU are coherent. The use of 10 linkers and more.	The use of 16–24 lexical units.	The use of 15 lexical units and less
3.	Coherence	No more than 4 grammatical mistakes are allowed.	The use of 6–8 linkers.	The use of 5 linkers and less.
4.	Grammar: grammatical mistakes	The speech is fluent. Pronunciation corresponds to the norm. The speaker relies on nothing while performing the utterance.	5–6 corrected grammatical mistakes are allowed.	More than 6 grammatical mistakes are made.
5.	Fluency and pronunciation, presentation of MU		The speech is rather fluent. Some phonetic and prosodic mistakes are made. The speaker relies on his plan or notes.	The speech is slow with lots of pausing; the same words are often repeated. The speech contains many phonetic and prosodic mistakes. The speaker relies on the text of MU.

Each sentence in the monologue must be coordinated as well as the ideas. The relationship of sentences is based on their semantic content, but linkers provide a logical sequence of each monologue element. The use of 10 linkers in the monologue gave students 2 points, 6–8 linkers—1 point, 5 or fewer linkers—0 points.

The appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar gave students 2 points for each aspect. The identical assessment of both the special vocabulary and grammar use is determined by the need to implement advanced grammatical structures. The students had to consider the need to use the lexical material presented in the list designed for each topic. The methodological note determines the number of lexical units. Any grammatical mistake affected the final grade: 5 mistakes led to the loss of 1 point; 7 or more errors led to the loss of 2 points.

The fifth significant aspect includes fluency, pronunciation, and speech presentation. A few students could get the maximum number of points for it, as it reflected the level of proficiency of each student in the foreign language. However, the preparation of the monologue could bring the student one point: it was necessary to prepare the oral MU well enough (1 point—for the lack of any support; 0.5 points—for using a self-developed plan of the MU).

The second stage of the technological process is the implementation of the peer review method. Even though this method is mainly associated with writing skills formation, the authors adapted it to the monological speaking skills formation. The practical activity was preceded by a mini-lecture on the concept of 'a peer review', the history of its development, and the potential of the method in the field of higher education. The researchers offered the students the peer review form developed for this type of monologue (Figure 2). It includes

questions that correspond to the MU aspects. The students sent the first version of the monologue to the teacher, who delegated the right to review it to other students from the E-group. The peer-review method was based on the principle of anonymity. The students sent the peer review results to the authors for final changes.

**Peer Review Form: MU**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Groupmate's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of groupmate's MU: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the topic? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the essay expository or persuasive? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Write the thesis statement here (e.g. I'll tell you about..., I'd like to tell you about... *some rhetorical question, etc.*): \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many body paragraphs are there? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does the introduction have a hook? \_\_\_\_\_ What other information is there in the introduction? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Underline the topic sentence in each body paragraph. \_\_\_\_\_ If it is absent, state it. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Underline the concluding sentence in each body paragraph. \_\_\_\_\_ If it is absent, state it. \_\_\_\_\_ Does it correspond with the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Define the type of the supporting sentences (explanation, giving example and illustration). \_\_\_\_\_ Are they reasonable? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does the conclusion tie back to the introduction? \_\_\_\_\_ What functions does the conclusion fulfill? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many lexical units has the author used in the text? \_\_\_\_\_ Is their context right? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How many linkers has the author used in the text? \_\_\_\_\_ Are they reasonable? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Have you found grammatical mistakes in the MU? \_\_\_\_\_ Comment on them. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Write a question mark (?) by anything in the MU that you didn't understand, that is illogical or irrelevant. Write a short note to explain.
14. Mark two or more places in the MU you liked with a star (\*).
15. Leave other comments. \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 2.** Peer review form: MU.

The third stage of the ET involves an oral answer: the students learned the text of their monologue corrected after peer-reviewing. The final stage was a two-way process: the oral MU evaluation with the students' active participation. While analyzing the groupmates' answers the students were assisted by the teacher who acted as a coordinator, ensuring

the objectivity of the final assessment. While listening to the MU, the students evaluated the oral answer based on the parameters and criteria presented in the methodological note. The evaluation was open, i.e., each student explained his final mark. The evaluation sample was presented by the teacher while analyzing the MU of the first student. The internal assessment highlighted in Figure 1 assumes the student's self-assessment when a person identifies their strengths and weaknesses in the speech, concludes, and, if it is possible, eliminates similar shortcomings in subsequent works. The internal evaluation is an independent activity given in the form of a home task. All students got the same assignment of the type 'Evaluate your answer listing your advantages and disadvantages'. The effectiveness of this activity was tested on the basis of MUs created at Stages 2, 3, and 4.

At the subsequent stages, the researchers repeated the ET, but without the adaptation stage, as the requirements for MU did not change throughout the training.

In contrast with the E-group, the monological speaking skills formation process in the C-group was limited to learning vocabulary, entrance testing based on independent acquaintance with the methodological note, writing the text of the monologue, and oral response. The teacher evaluated the final answer without the students' assistance. Nevertheless, when discussing the mistakes made, the teacher and participants did a partial analysis of the structure, content, lexical and grammatical aspects of the MU.

### 3. Results

The data for the research were collected at the end of the semester. They included the participants' scores for the MUs performed during the four-staged experiment. The researchers calculated the arithmetic means of the C-group and E-group separately on each of the four stages of the global experiment. To prove the statistical significance of the study results, quantitative methods were used in processing the experimental data on the basis of t-testing. The analysis was performed in "STATISTICA" ver. 0.1. The t-test criterion was calculated for the data obtained (Table 2). The empirical value of  $t$  is in the zone of significance; therefore, there is a statistically significant difference between the C-group and E-group in the results due to the use of the ET developed. The calculation of the t-test revealed that  $t_{emp} = 2.45$ ;  $t_{emp} = 2.45 > t_{cr p} (5\%) = 2.00$  (Table 3). The data obtained indicate the presence of statistically significant differences between the levels of monological speaking skills formation in the C-group for this indicator at the 5% significance level. The calculation of Student's t-test revealed that  $t_{emp} = 3.71$ ;  $t_{emp} = 3.71 > t_{cr p} (5\%) = 2.00$ . The data obtained indicate the presence of statistically significant differences between levels of monological speaking skills formation in the E-group for this indicator at 5% significance level. So, the researchers detected the progress in the monological speaking skills formation developed by the future lawyers over the course of the ET implementation in contrast with the students who studied on the traditional methodology.

Table 2. Progress of MU skills.

Stage №	Arithmetic Mean		Mean Deviation		Deviation Squares	
	C-Group	E-Group	C-Group	E-Group	C-Group	E-Group
I	6	7.5	− 0.63	− 1.38	0.3969	1.9044
II	6	9	− 0.63	0.12	0.3969	0.0144
III	7	9.5	0.37	0.62	0.1369	0.3844
IV	7.5	9.5	0.87	0.62	0.7569	0.3844
Total	26.5	35.5	− 0.02	− 0.02	1.6876	2.6876
Mean	6.63	8.88				

**Table 3.** Critical value.

$t_{cr}$	
$p \leq 0.05$ 2.45	$p \leq 0.01$ 3.71

The entrance test aimed at checking the level of methodological material knowledge was conducted in the C-group and E-group. It allowed the researchers to identify the difference between the approaches to working on the material. The indicators of the E-group, which underwent a collaborative analysis of the parameters and criteria for making and then evaluating MUs (the adaptation stage), were 35% higher compared to the C-group, which studied the same material independently. The relatively low level of self-regulation of the students is the reason for this.

At the first stage of the experiment, the difference between the average C-group and E-group scores, i.e., 6 and 7.5 points, was recorded. The students coped well with coherence; they used the required number of linkers (90% of cases). There were practically no deviations from the topic, which is the result of the referential texts specificity. The main mistakes were the introduction and conclusion structural contradictions, noncompliance with the formula *1 paragraph = 1 idea*. Due to the lack of peer review practice in the C-group, the percentage of grammatical errors was significantly higher compared to the E-group.

At the second stage, the students of the E-group increased the average score to 9. Firstly, the progress is the result of the reviews analysis (each reviewer received comments on the work done). Secondly, the teacher played an active role in the final assessment. He evaluated the oral answers and announced the final mark at the end of the students' analysis. It should be noted that there was no actual progress in the C-group, but there were qualitative changes. Thus, 16% of C-group students got 7–7.5 points, but this was not reflected in the overall picture due to the low level of grammatical, lexical, and structural aspects, pronunciation, fluency, and presentation of the MU.

The third and fourth stages of the experiment were effective for both groups. The researchers attribute it to the cyclical nature of the training. The progress of the C-group is evident in lexical (72% of students used the necessary number of lexical units to get 1 point) and structural aspects, while grammar and presentation were still of low performance. The progress of the E-group was equal to 25% in the third stage compared to the second one. In the fourth stage, the E-group students repeated the previous result. The main drawbacks of the E-group students were pronunciation and, consequently, the lexical aspect, which is partly due to inattention and nervousness. At the same time, the dominating difficulty, according to the students, was the lexical aspect, i.e., the problem of using the maximum number of words and phrases in the MU.

#### 4. Discussion

The research conducted has shown the effectiveness of the ET developed for the monological speaking skills formation of future lawyers. The authors of the article rejected the idea of separate method descriptions aimed at improving the monological speaking skills, unlike E. Stokoe [41] and N.H. Mokhtar et al. [42], who focused on the method of conversational-analytical role-playing (CARM) and storytelling, respectively. The researchers did not describe the standalone techniques that increase students' integrativity in the educational process, unlike E. Reid [43]. The choice of ET was justified by the multi-level nature of this training, which includes a group of methods and tools integrated into a purposeful process.

ET as a standardized process involves strict adherence to the developed algorithm that ensures a steady learning performance. The stability of the result of the technology implementation at the third and fourth stages of the experiment indicates the effectiveness of the educational procedure, i.e., the technology. It is the reason that does not allow us to name the technology a private technique after T.G. Mukhina [31].



The requirements knowledge determines the success of every student at each stage of the experiment. The varying level of university students' independence depicts the necessity of additional measures implementation that increases the average level of students' awareness [40,44]. The adaptation stage in the ET developed correlates with the need to adapt students to conditions of general nature such as the socio-psychological adaptation to the requirements of university life [45–48] and different activity training in terms of the discipline Foreign Language in the Judicial Field. The importance of adaptation measures in terms of speaking skills formation directly affects the students' personal growth at the stage of studying at university, which is confirmed by the group of researchers led by A. Orlov [49].

While achieving the dominating purpose of the ET implementation, i.e., the monological speaking skills formation, the students developed metacognitive skills. The learning model when the teacher is a coordinator at the first stage and a consultant at the second contributes to the formation of self-regulation skills. The method of peer review allows you to show critical thinking both about the work of another student and one's own monologue [50,51].

## 5. Conclusions

The integrated approach implemented in the ET of monological speaking skills formation has proved its effectiveness in the research conducted. It is much more productive than traditional approaches to teaching speaking. The stability of the E-group students' results at the third and fourth stages of the experiment confirmed that the MU learning process is an ET. The basis for the successful use of this ET is a combination of adaptive measures for the material study, peer review as an intermediate stage, and active students' participation in the evaluation of oral answers. During the experiment, the teacher's role changed from active to passive. Being a mentor and coordinator at the initial stage, he focused students' attention on the peculiarities of the task, pointed out some typical mistakes, and ensured objectivity of the students' assessment. Subsequently, the teacher became a passive expert, whose function was to monitor the progress.

The ET of monological speaking skills formation is a multi-functional algorithm. In the process of its use, both the dominating objective aimed at the formation of the corresponding skills and the progress in related universal competencies (UCs) are realized. Thus, over the course of peer reviewing implemented at the third stage of the ET, the students are trained to find the components of the monologue that do not meet the requirements. By performing a critical analysis of the information, the students improve their system and critical thinking (UC-1). Moreover, students develop skills to organize their activities, choose ways to perform them, evaluate the effectiveness and quality of both the product reviewed and their monologue, and take responsibility for their actions (UC-2 and UC-6). It confirms that the ET developed meets the requirements of the modern higher education paradigm, i.e., realizes a competence-based approach.

The perspective of the ET developed implies its implementation in the process of training lawyers in the discipline Foreign Language in the Judicial Field. It is planned to specify the ET for teaching other speaking forms of legal practitioners: highly specialized MUs, such as an opening statement or closing statement, and the transition to dialogues.

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