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LINGUISTICS AND THE LAW IN THE SPHERE OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE: FOREIGN EXPERIENCE. INTERACTION BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC

Topicality: Interaction between the police and the public is one of the main indicators of a democracy society. Every police interaction — from a simple question on the street to a courtroom testimony — depends on clear, accurate, and respectful language. When communication fails, misunderstandings grow, trust disappears and conflicts can escalate. But when language is used effectively, it builds understanding, safety, and public confidence in law enforcement. In modern conditions, effective cooperation between law enforcement agencies and citizens helps to ensure public order, prevent crime, and build trust in state institutions

Purpose: The aims of my research are to analyze how language shapes police–public interaction, to identify communication barriers that reduce mutual understanding, to examine successful international practices, and to propose linguistic strategies that can strengthen trust and safety. In other words, my purpose is to show that effective communication is not just a professional skill, but a foundation of justice.

Main Body: Police–public interaction is based on mutual trust, respect for human rights, and transparency. According to the Law of Ukraine “On the National Police” (Article 11) [1], the police must act on the principles of legality, openness, partnership, and respect for human dignity.

Key directions of interaction include:

Community policing – cooperation between police officers and residents to identify and solve local safety issues.

Public consultations and meetings – ensuring citizens’ participation in forming safety strategies.

Information openness – timely communication through the media and social networks.

Preventive work – educational projects, youth engagement, and awareness campaigns.

Effective communication and transparency increase citizens' confidence in the police and help create a sense of security and partnership. International practice shows that community-oriented policing reduces the level of conflict and promotes stability in society.

One of the useful perspectives for studying police communication is Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles H. 1973). It explains how people adjust their speech, tone, and style to fit the context and the interlocutor. In law enforcement, this means balancing authority and empathy: police officers must maintain professionalism and control while remaining understandable, respectful, and culturally sensitive. [2]

Modern societies require innovative approaches to law enforcement. As Ukraine aims to integrate into the European community and meet common democratic standards, it is vital to study and adapt the experience of other countries that have successfully built trust-based cooperation between the police and the public.

The United Kingdom provides one of the most developed models of community policing, where cooperation with citizens is central to maintaining public safety. British policing is still guided by the principles established by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 — particularly the idea that *“the police are the public and the public are the police.”* This philosophy underpins numerous community-based initiatives.

A key form of public participation is the Special Constabulary, which consists of trained volunteers who support the local police. Special Constables possess the same powers as regular officers but work part-time, usually four hours per week. They patrol neighborhoods, respond to incidents, and act as a direct link between the police and local residents.

The Belgian police system consists of two autonomous but interconnected levels — the Federal Police and the Local Police, forming an integrated structure that operates under democratic oversight. The Federal Police perform specialized administrative and judicial functions, while Local Police ensure safety in municipalities, working closely with community representatives.

The guiding philosophy of Belgian policing is “Community-Oriented Policing”, which emphasizes integration of the police into the community and joint problem-solving with citizens.

Both the British and Belgian experiences demonstrate that public trust and participation are key elements of modern policing. These models show that transparency, volunteer involvement, and local cooperation strengthen legitimacy and efficiency.[3]

Conclusions: To conclude, language is not only a tool of communication — it is a tool of justice, trust, and safety. The way police officers speak, listen, and respond reflects the values of the entire legal system. Foreign experience proves that effective linguistic practices lead to stronger communities, safer environments, and higher public confidence in the law. Integrating linguistics into law enforcement is therefore not a luxury — it is a necessity for modern democratic societies.

References:

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MODERN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION METHODS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME

Organised crime remains one of the most complex threats to public order and national security: its actors operate as established