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**LEVEL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES OF NON-LINGUISTIC SPECIALTIES: DRAWBACKS
OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALLY-ORIENTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN KAZAKHSTAN**

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Abstract

The article discusses teaching professionally-oriented foreign language students of non-linguistic specialties. The article discusses the level of knowledge of a foreign language of graduates of non-linguistic specialties from Institutions of Higher Education and proposes some practical ways of its improvement.

It reviews the level of foreign languages, the strengths and weaknesses, the language skills which graduates of non-linguistic specialties need improvement with. In order to find out that information questionnaire survey was conducted. The findings are discussed in this article. Possible reasons for ineffective teaching foreign language for students of non-linguistic specialties are regarded as following: the absence of systematic approach to curriculum formation, lack of coursebooks and teaching aids. Several ways to deal with those issues are proposed: developing systematic approach to curriculum composition, creation of coursebooks with content relevant to students' professional field. Practical activities as projects, task-based learning, role-play, presentations are described.

Key words: foreign language, professionally-oriented language, non-linguistic specialty, language skills, language proficiency.

**ТІЛДІК ЕМЕС ЖЖО ТҮЛЕКТЕРІНІҢ ШЕТ ТІЛІН МЕНГЕРУ ДЕҢГЕЙЛЕРІ:
ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ КӘСІБИ-БАҒЫТТАЛҒАН ШЕТ ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУДЫҢ
КЕМШІЛІКТЕРІ**

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Аңдатпа

Мақалада тілдік емес мамандықтар студенттерінің шет тілін оқытуы қарастырылады. Мақалада ЖОО-ның тілдік емес мамандықтар түлектерінің шет тілін меңгеру деңгейі анықталып, білім беру процессінің кемшіліктерді жақсарту мақсатында практикалық ұсыныстар берілді. Түлектердің жоғарыәрітөмен дәрежеде меңгерген тілдік дағдылары қарастырылады. Бұл ақпаратты анықтау үшін тілдік емес ЖОО-ның түлектерінен арасында сауалнама жүргізілді. Тілдік емес мамандықтар студенттеріне шет тілін тиімсіз оқытудың ықтимал ететін келесі себептері анықталды: оқу жоспарын құру жүйелі түрінде жасамауы, оқулықтар мен оқу материалдарының жетіспеушілігі. Жоғарыда аталған мәселелерді шешудің бірнеше жолы ұсынылған: оқу жоспарлар құруын жүйелі түрде қарастыру, студенттердің кәсіби саласы мазмұнына сәйкес келетін оқулықтарындайындау, оған қоса, рөлдік ойындар, презентациялар, жобалық іс-шаралар тәрізді практикалық жаттығуларын құрастыру.

Түйін сөздер: шет тілі, кәсіпби-бағытталған тіл, тілдік емес мамандық, тілдік дағдылар, тілмеңгеру деңгейі.

**УРОВЕНЬ ВЛАДЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКОМ ВЫПУСКНИКАМИ
НЕЯЗЫКОВЫХ ВУЗОВ: СЛАБЫЕ МЕСТА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ
ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОГО ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА
В КАЗАХСТАНЕ**

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается обучение иностранному языку студентов неязыковых специальностей, выявлен уровень владения иностранным языком выпускников ВУЗов неязыковых специальностей, а также даны практические рекомендации для улучшения недостатков образования.

Рассмотрены языковые навыки, которыми выпускники владеют в наибольшей и наименьшей степени. Выявлены возможные причины неэффективного преподавания иностранного языка студентам неязыковых специальностей: отсутствие систематизированного подхода в составлении учебного плана, недостаток учебников и учебных материалов. Предложено несколько путей решения вышеизложенных проблем: разработка систематического подхода к составлению учебных планов, составлению учебников с содержанием, соответствующим профессиональному полю деятельности студентов, а также практические упражнения, такие как: ролевые игры, презентации, проектная деятельность.

Ключевые слова: иностранный язык, профессионально-ориентированный язык, неязыковая специальность, языковые навыки, уровень владения языком.

Introduction

The importance of knowing foreign languages could hardly be overestimated nowadays. People need them for different purposes: to travel, to study, to work, to communicate. Foreign language proficiency may help in career growth and provide additional opportunities. Therefore, students of various specialties study foreign language at the university.

There is a social order: to prepare as soon as possible a specialist with knowing foreign language within the curriculum requirement basing on minimal numbers of curriculum hours of non-linguistic university [1]. According to the Concept of development of foreign language education in the Republic of Kazakhstan the goals of teaching foreign language for professional purposes are: students' acquisition of communicative and professional competence including their ability to interact with native speaker in situations of everyday, cultural, educational and professional communication, to comprehend and read texts of a general humanitarian, professional, scientific and general technical orientation, to solve professionally-oriented tasks of a problematic nature [2]. Thus, after graduating the university professionals should be able to solve tasks and communicate in foreign language.

Regardless the official purpose of teaching foreign languages to future specialists, the final result still much differs from the expected one. This article views the level of knowledge of foreign language of graduates of non-linguistic specialties and proposes some practical ways of its improvement.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted by means of survey with the use of theoretical methods such as questionnaire survey, collecting information, analysis, and systematization. Seventy-two people, graduates of non-linguistic specialties, answered six questions about skills and knowledge of foreign language which has been taught in institution of higher education. The wide range of specialties is represented: economy, law, social science, natural science,

engineering, journalism, and marketing. The research was carried out in order to check how much former students are satisfied with the foreign language proficiency and what are the drawbacks of teaching foreign languages in Kazakhstani universities.

Table 1. Gender distribution among respondents

Gender	Male		Female	
	M	%	F	%
Variables	11	15,3	61	84,7

It can be seen that 15,3% (11 people) are male respondents, whereas 84,7% (61 people) are female respondents.

Table 2. Respondents age rate

Age	18-25		26-40		41-60	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Variables	2	2,8	47	65,3	23	31,9

Table 2 shows that most respondents (65,3%), 47 people are from 26 to 40 years old, fewer people (31,9%), 23 are between 41 and 60 years old, and the third group (2,85) consists of 2 people, aged from 18 to 25 years old.

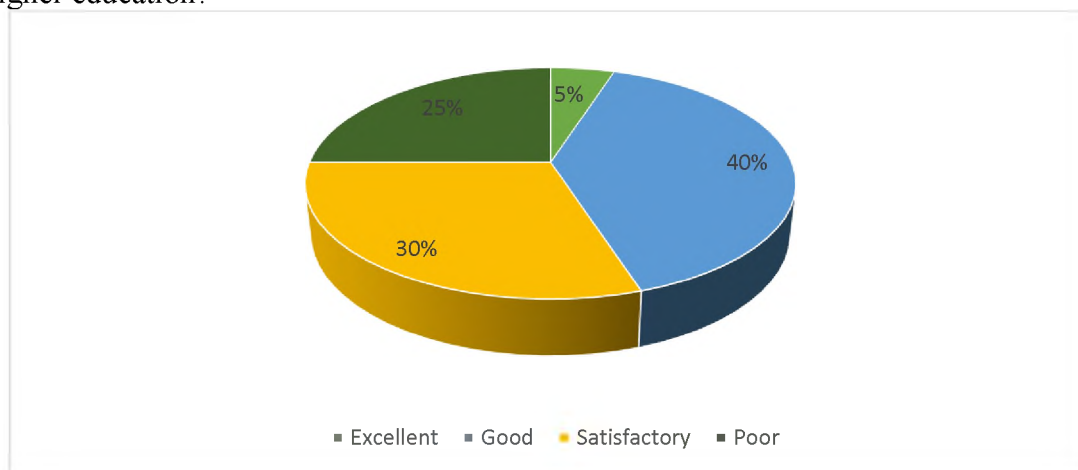
Respondents answered the following questions:

1. How do you assess the knowledge of foreign language after graduation of institution of higher education?
2. Which language skills need to be improved more?
3. What satisfied you the most during the foreign language classes?
4. What did you find inappropriate during the foreign language classes?
5. Do you think the content of language course corresponded to your specialty field?
6. Is there something that could be improved in teaching a foreign language to students of your specialty?

Results and discussions

According to the result of survey the variables are shown as following:

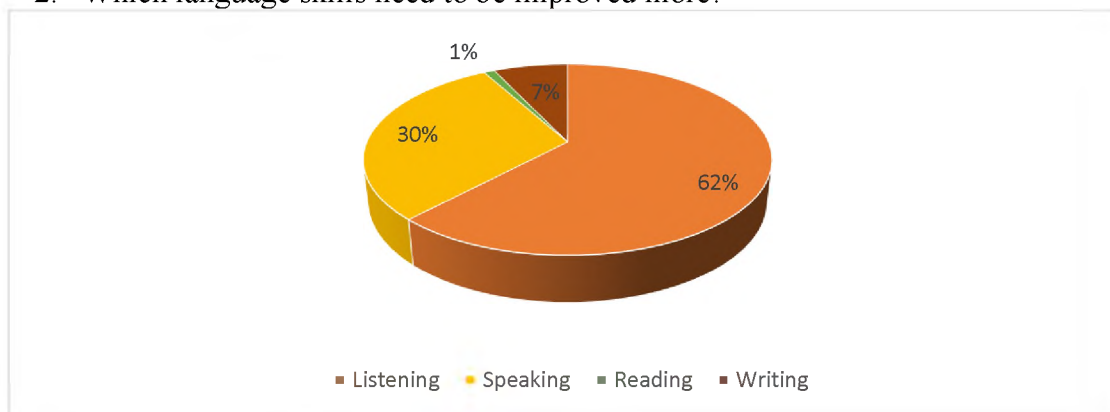
1. How do you assess the knowledge of foreign language after graduation of institution of higher education?



Picture 1. The self-assessment of the knowledge of foreign language

This result shows that only 5% of respondents find their knowledge of foreign language proficient, whereas 30% and 25% of respondents find the level of their language skills satisfactory and poor.

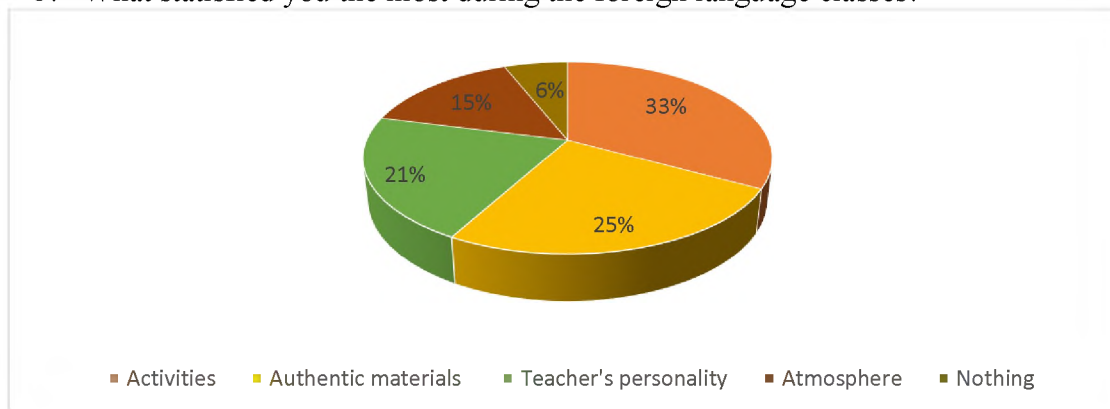
2. Which language skills need to be improved more?



Picture 2. The language skills improvement

Variables demonstrate that respondents feel listening skill need to be improved the most (62%), the development of speaking skill takes the second place (30%). Writing and reading skills mostly are not regarded as areas for the improvement (7% and 1% respectively).

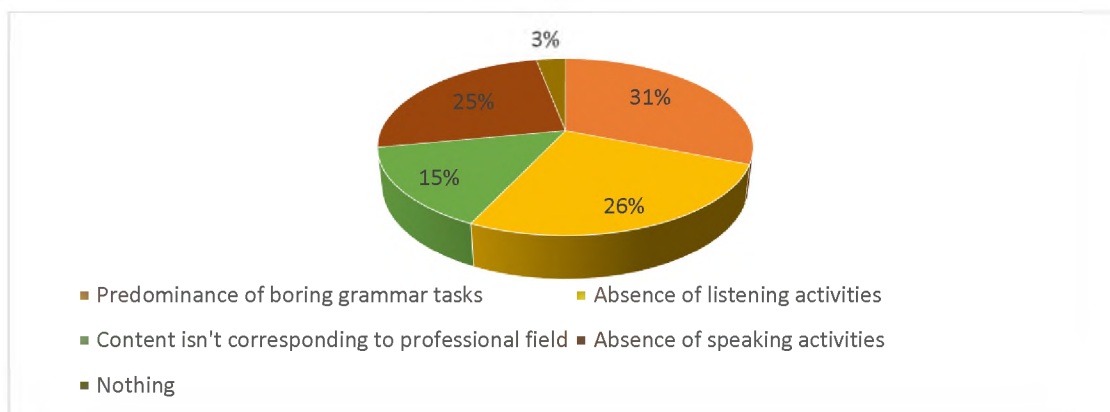
3. What satisfied you the most during the foreign language classes?



Picture 3. The most satisfying parts of the foreign language classes for students

It could be seen that respondents find variety of activities (33%) and use of authentic materials (25%) bright sides of foreign language classroom. People also believe that teacher's personality plays an important role in education (21%) as well as positive atmosphere in the classroom (15%). Unfortunately, few people (6%) responded that there wasn't anything useful during studying foreign language at the university.

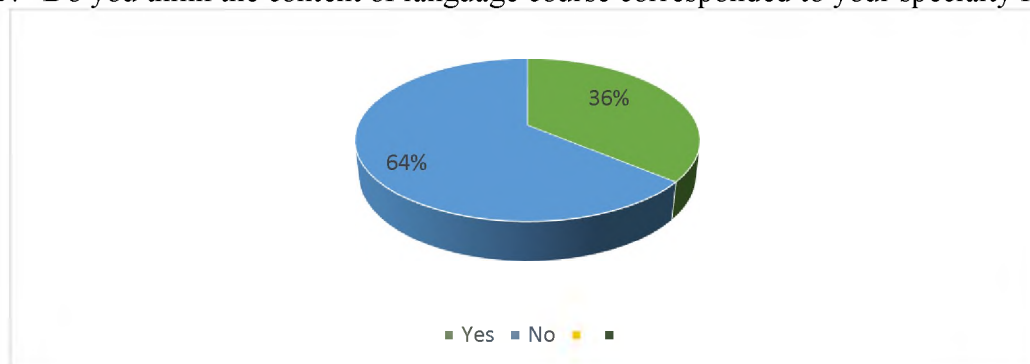
4. What did you find inappropriate during the foreign language classes?



Picture 4. Contradictional part of the foreign language classes for students

The variables demonstrate that respondents found mostly in equal parts that there are too many boring grammar activities (31%), not enough work on the development of listening skills (26%) and speaking skills (25%). Some respondents (15%) feel that the content of language course didn't fulfil the needs of their professional field. Only 3% of respondents didn't find anything to complain about the language study.

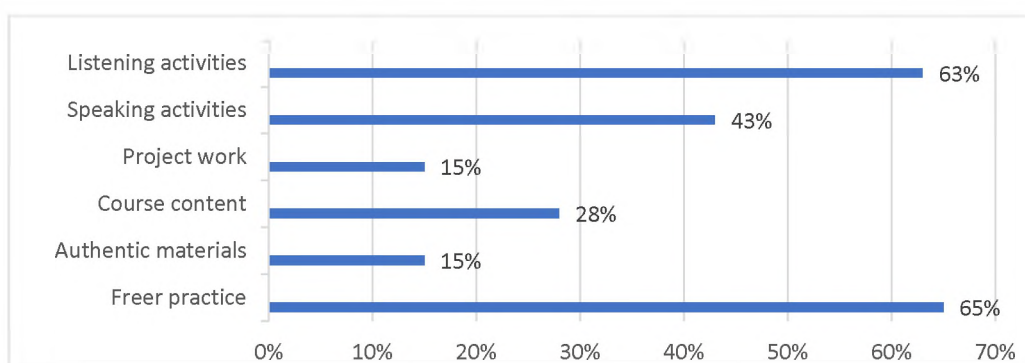
5. Do you think the content of language course corresponded to your specialty field?



Picture 5. The correspondence of the course content to the specialty field

It can be seen that the biggest part of respondents (64%) claim that the content of the foreign language course didn't correspond to their specialty field. However, 36% of responded found the course content appropriate to their professional area.

6. Is there something that could be improved in teaching a foreign language to students of your specialty?



Picture 6. What could be improved in teaching the foreign language

While answering this question respondents had an opportunity to choose more than one point from the list or propose their own ideas. Variables show that most respondents still feel the need of more freer language practice (65%) while studying language, as well as develop listening (63%) and speaking (43%) skills. Respondents also feel the need of content change – 28%. Some people believe that using more authentic materials (15%) and more project work (15%) will help to improve language study.

The result of this survey demonstrates that the most of university graduates of non-linguistic specialties are not satisfied with the level of foreign language. They feel that the course they had taken was full of boring unnecessary activities, there was the lack of development listening skills, the content of the classes didn't correspond to their professional field. Graduates feel that they have poor listening and speaking skills.

Zhetpysbaeva B.A, Shaikhyzada Zh.G., Taborek Ya. in the article “About the state of teaching professionally-oriented foreign language in the Republic of Kazakhstan: analysis of foreign language training students of technical specialties” define the reasons of ineffective foreign language teaching. They are:

1. The educational gap between school and university
2. The lack of hours devoted to foreign language classes at the university
3. The variety of approaches to determine the purpose, objectives and content of the foreign language course
4. The lack of coursebooks and teaching aids
5. The challenges in transferring Kazakhstani education system to international credit system [3].

Therefore, the following steps could be taken into account in order to improve the present situation. In the first place, teachers themselves must be trained for teaching foreign language for professional purposes. Next, teacher bases the process of teaching on learners' needs analysis or uses curriculum which was constituted in the particular domain. There is a need of systematic approach which allows making a common system throughout all universities in Kazakhstan. Creation of the coursebooks with relevant content is still in high demand. It is also important which ways, approaches, methods, techniques, teaching aids are used in the classroom.

Rybakova E.E. and Kudinova T.V. in their article “Project activity in teaching ESP”, 2020 propose to use Task-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning approaches in teaching foreign language for specific purposes. They have checked those approaches on students of information technology institute. The task was to create an efficient and engaging website. The students were provided with the resources, links and homework assignments. Later teacher used those materials in order to teach some grammar elements (verbs “to be” and “to have”) which could be considered as the flipped classroom. After that students had to work in groups and defined the criteria of the successful website, which enhanced their speaking skills. Next students presented the result of their exploration and discussion. At that stage students were able to demonstrate knowledge of some grammar structures (conditionals and modal verbs) as well as vocabulary (terms related to ICT). Thus, the authors of the research claim the usage of Task-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning approaches play an important role in teaching foreign language for professional purposes. The advantages are regarded as following: work with the real-life situations, deal with the grammar and vocabulary which are not isolated, in the context, arrange a lot of opportunities for communication in a professional field. All stated above facts lead to improvement of the educational process.

Jean Parkinson in his article “English for Science and Technology” proposes a few activities for engineers, who study English, which are aimed to develop target performance competence: a role play: the role of corrector, journal editor (students peer-reviewed each other’s work) and collaborator (collaborative assignments involved research and had multiple readers); professional engineers’ team meetings [4]. These activities put students into natural environment of using English in the qualified field. They develop speaking skills and enrich professional vocabulary. It also improves students’ perceptions that the course serves their needs.

Talha Boualem in the article “Using creative activities and ICT to teach vocabulary to ESP students”, 2022 introduces some efficient ways to teach vocabulary effectively. They are: text-based learning, role-plays, presentations, projects, using ICT and interactive games. Let us examine those activities in more details.

Text-based learning is considered to be the most popular way for presenting new vocabulary. In the foreign language lessons authentic texts are preferred. Students will feel more comfortable dealing with the professional field, which also promotes motivation level.

Role-plays are also believed to be an effective tool for practicing vocabulary. The author gives an example of using role plays for medical students: Routine Check-up. This is an important part of their future job and by pole playing this situation students apply practical medical knowledge, get familiar with check-up questions, develop their speaking skills and enhance medical jargon.

Presentation is another way to teach foreign effectively. However, this could be quite challenging for students in terms of using foreign language in research and discussion parts. The author claims that it helps in development of different skills such as: organizing, planning, designing, public speaking and choice of the proper content within the creativity.

By project working students are involved into solving problems, critical thinking, decision making and reflection. During the research students study and accumulate the language which they need to present information orally.

It is needless to say that with the growth of modern technologies Internet has become one of the most popular teaching tools. With the increasing number of different applications teachers have been able to use technologies to design variety of activities. There could be multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises. Such programmes are instrumental for teaching vocabulary, developing students’ skills. Even learners themselves can create tasks based on authentic texts or recordings as most of them prefer using ICT to traditional textbooks.

Interactive games are also one of the modern sources to enrich English classroom. They are “scramble”, “scrambled letters”, “the hangman”, “memory challenge” and many others. Those activities give additional vocabulary practice and are the great source of motivation, especially for competitive students.

It is concluded that the choice of techniques and how they are used are crucial for effective learning process. Students have to accumulate vocabulary in particular domain and some of the most effective and modern ways to do that are text-based learning, role-plays, presentations, projects, using ICT and interactive games.

Conclusion

Teaching foreign language to students of non-linguistic specialties is aimed to form a professional ability to solve professional tasks in international field. Regardless official policy, the big number of graduates is not confident users of a foreign language: they have poor listening and speaking skills. They also believe that the content of the language course does not

correspond to the professional area. Researches define a few reasons for that situation such as lack of studying hours, the absence of systematic approach to curriculum development, not enough teaching aids. As a part of state programme there could be following solutions: deep analysis of the existing curriculum, systematic approach to set goals and objectives of the university course, enlarge number of lessons within the course of the foreign language. To proceed to teaching aids there could be used plenty of modern and effective ways of teaching foreign language for professional purposes. They are task-based learning, project-based learning, using information and communication technologies, interactive games and applications.

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