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DEVELOPING FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS
THROUGH THE USE OF PBL METHODS

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the improvement of non-linguistic specialty students' foreign language skills using problem-based learning. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the effectiveness of implementing problem-based learning methods in training of non-linguistic specialists. The objectives: to reveal the essence of problem-based learning; to describe the main methods of problem-based learning; to identify the advantages of proposed method in teaching a foreign language to students of non-linguistic specialties. The study uses theoretical and empirical methods: analysis of scientific works on the topic of the research, observation and questionnaire.

Currently, the use of PBL at English lessons is relevant, since it contributes to the intensification of professionally oriented training. The article reveals the concept of problem-based learning at the university and theoretically justifies its application in foreign language classes. In this study, samples of problem tasks used at foreign language lessons for students of non-linguistic specialties are proposed.

The study will be useful for university teachers practicing problem-based learning, as well as educators dealing with the problem of forming foreign language professional communicative competencies of students of non-linguistic specialties.

Keywords: problem-based learning, efficiency, higher education institutions, professional foreign language, communication skills, research.

ПРОБЛЕМАЛЫҚ ОҚЫТУ ӘДІСТЕРІН ҚОЛДАНУ АРҚЫЛЫ
СТУДЕНТТЕРДІҢ ШЕТ ТІЛІНДЕГІ КӘСІБИ ДАҒДЫЛАРЫН ЖЕТІЛДІРУ

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Андапта

Бұл мақала проблемалық бағдарланған оқытуды пайдалана отырып, тілдік емес мамандықтар студенттерінің шет тілін меңгеру дағдыларын жетілдіруге арналған. Мақаланың мақсаты - лингвистикалық емес бағыттағы мамандарды даярлауға проблемалық оқыту әдістерін енгізу тиімділігін негіздеу. Келесі міндеттер қойылды: проблемалық оқытудың мәнін ашу, оның негізгі әдістерін сипаттау, лингвистикалық емес мамандықтар студенттерін шет тіліне оқыту кезінде ұсынылған әдістің артықшылықтарын анықтау. Мақалада зерттеу тақырыбы бойынша ғылыми жұмыстарды талдау, бақылау, сауалнама жүргізу сияқты теориялық және эмпирикалық әдістер қолданылған.

Қазіргі уақытта ағылшын тілі сабақтарында проблемалық оқытуды қолдану өзекті болып табылады, өйткені ол кәсіби бағытталған оқытуды күшейтуге ықпал етеді. Мақалада университеттегі проблемалық оқыту ұғымы ашылады және оны шет тілі сабақтарында қолдану теориялық тұрғыдан негізделген. Бұл

мақалада тілдік емес мамандықтар студенттері үшін шет тілі сабақтарында қолданылатын проблемалық тапсырмалардың үлгілері ұсынылған.

Зерттеу проблемалық оқытуды қолданатын университет оқытушылары мен лингвистикалық емес мамандықтар студенттерінің шет тілді кәсіби коммуникативтік құзыреттерін қалыптастыру проблемасымен айналысатын педагогтар үшін пайдалы болады.

Түйінді сөздер: проблемалық оқыту, тиімділік, жоғары оқу орны, кәсіби шет тілі, коммуникативтік дағдылар, зерттеу.

СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЕ ИНОЯЗЫЧНЫХ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫХ УМЕНИЙ СТУДЕНТОВ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ПРОБЛЕМНЫХ МЕТОДОВ ОБУЧЕНИЯ

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена совершенствованию навыков владения иностранным языком у студентов неязыковых специальностей с использованием проблемно-ориентированного обучения. Цель статьи - обосновать эффективность внедрения методов проблемного обучения в подготовку специалистов нелингвистического направления. Задачи: раскрыть сущность проблемного обучения; описать основные методы проблемного обучения; выявить преимущества предложенного метода при обучении иностранному языку студентов нелингвистических специальностей. В исследовании использованы теоретические и эмпирические методы: анализ научных работ по теме исследования, наблюдение, анкетирование.

В настоящее время использование проблемных заданий в процессе обучения английскому языку является актуальным, поскольку оно способствует интенсификации профессионально ориентированного обучения. Раскрывается понятие проблемного обучения в вузе и теоретически обосновывается его применение на занятиях иностранного языка. Предложены образцы проблемных заданий, используемых в формировании иноязычных профессиональных умений студентов неязыковых специальностей.

Исследование будет полезно для преподавателей высшей школы, практикующим проблемное обучение, а также педагогам, занимающимся проблемой формирования иноязычных профессиональных коммуникативных компетенции студентов нелингвистических специальностей.

Ключевые слова: проблемное обучение, эффективность, высшее учебное заведение, профессиональный иностранный язык, коммуникативные навыки, исследование.

Introduction

At present time, for the developing of education and science a set of systematic measures is being implemented in Kazakhstan. Knowledge of foreign languages is one of the requirements of the modern world. In the last decade, special emphasis has been placed on knowledge and proficiency in English. Knowledge of a foreign language opens up wide opportunities for a person: communication, education and successful career.

Now the development of science and practice is characterized by a variety of pedagogical approaches. One of the wide spread technologies is PBL.

Problem-based learning was first introduced in 1960s in the medical field in Canada. At present time, problem-based learning is used for teaching various disciplines such as arts, humanities, political and social sciences.

According to Sheeba Sardar Ali, "problem-based learning is a student-centered educational method which aims to develop problem-solving skills through a self-directed

learning as a life time habit and team work skills” [1, p.73]. In his study, the scholar reported about some principles of PBL process.

In their paper Singapore researchers Eline H.J. Yew and Karen Goh emphasize the importance of conducting more rigorous experimental studies. The educators point out that “all the phases of PBL are necessary in influencing students’ learning outcomes” [2, p.75].

In his book “Problem-based learning innovation”, O. Tan writes that many variations are possible in the design of PBL activities and it depends on the purpose and goals of the curriculum [3, p.37].

At present time, the aim of teaching English language at university is to develop foreign language communicative competence of students in the field of professional communication. Knowledge of a foreign language plays an essential role in training competitive specialists.

For English language development, one of the most beneficial aspects of the PBL process is purposeful group discussion and question formation that will guide English language learners to seek further information in order to develop thoughtful solutions [4, p.50].

Foreign scholars note, that PBL is not used in all universities [5] and is focused on task-based teaching [6].

Other scholar writes that in problem-based learning “students work with classmates to solve complex and authentic problems that help develop content knowledge as well as problem-solving, reasoning, communication, and self-assessment skills” [7, p.3].

Experimental research was conducted by Malaysian teachers. They investigated the efficiency of problem-based learning. 128 students took part in experimental research. The authors of the study emphasized that students showed more improvements [8, p.125].

F.Z. Kök and B. Duman carried out their own experiment. The researchers write that “where problem-based learning was applied, there was a significant increase in problem-solving skills of the experimental group compared to the control group in which PBL was not applied” [9, p.154]. According to the practitioners qualitative data indicate that using PBL approach develops students’ language skills.

The research study of scholars S. Bayat and R.A. Tarmizi. was aimed to investigate cognitive variables among postgraduate students who were taking Educational Statistic course [10, p.3146].

S. Al-Busaidi, T. Yusuf and H. Reinders conducted the research using a case study approach. The educators state that the proposed model is unique and consists of elements, which include the use of hybridizing courses, the scaffolding of teachers and students, and the development of a PBL culture of collaboration and interdependence [11, p.1].

N. Phumeechanya and P. Wannapiroon, in their study point out that during problem-based learning activities, the teachers must use scaffolding at their lessons. According to Thailand scholars, “Scaffolding refers to the assistance offered to the students in the form of support in order to help them achieve their tasks” [12, p.4804].

B. Chiou emphasizes developing students’ motivation; improving vocabulary, fluency, and grammar [13, p. 447].

Research methods

In the study to investigate the effectiveness of problem-based learning approach, we used empirical methods: interviewing and monitoring.

The experiment was carried out using problem-based learning methods.

Problem-based learning approach is suitable for all levels of education. This approach is focused on the development reflexive skills of students.

Results and discussion

The experiment was conducted during the first semester in the academic year 2022-2023. Twelve students of the specialty “Chemistry” of Kozybayev University took part in the pedagogical experiment.

The lessons in the framework of the discipline “Foreign language” were conducted using problem situations, case study, role-plays. Before conducting activities, we carried out preparatory work: doing exercises on practicing the use of terminological vocabulary, reading and analyzing professional oriented texts.

At professional foreign language lessons, students work with specialized texts of professional character. Samples of tasks:

1. Read the text “What is professional networking?” and answer the questions:

What is the goal of professional networking? Can you build a professional network in various places (online, in person)? Coworkers have a clear understanding of your professional capabilities, don't they?

2. Vocabulary. Find synonyms of the following words: career, capability, benefit, goal, important, etc.

3. Writing. Write a paragraph about the importance of networking and building professional relationships.

PBL is based on the consistent and purposeful creation of problem situations. The problem situation is one of the main elements of problem-based learning, with the help of which thought, the cognitive need of students are aroused, and thinking becomes more active. A problem situation arises when there are several points of view of solving a certain problem.

At foreign language classes students work in groups of three or four. The teacher may also use a variety of cooperative learning methods to combine these groups for sharing learning and ideas on the topic. The use of this technique at professional foreign language lessons helps students communicate on professional topics. In education, problem-based learning can be used as an element of the lesson.

One of the widely used method in PBL is case study. Used as a teaching tool, a case study engages learners in research and reflective discussion, encourages higher-order thinking, and enables students to apply previously acquired skills. The main goal of the case study method is to analyze the situation and develop a practical solution. Ultimately, all the proposed versions are evaluated and the best one is chosen. Case study allows students to practice in communicative situations and improve their linguistic skills [14, p. 32].

Problem based learning requires significant resources from both students and teachers. Students need more time to discuss new information, and the teacher needs to work out the lesson process in more detail. Teachers can write their own cases or find on the Internet sites. In using problem-based learning approach, the teachers should remember that the problem aims students to find ways to solve it.

Most problems are presented in written form. ESP students (English for specific purposes) apply it to a specific case that resembles a real life situation. They may write their own cases and seek responses from their group mates.

Real-world problems can be obtained from research literature, news and reports. Currently, problems can be presented in a variety of innovative ways, including photographs, digital videos, hypertext, graphics, etc. At foreign language lessons, for example, we use the following questions in coaching the various problem-based learning stages:

Do you have any idea about this...?

What is meant by the sentence ...?

Describe in your own words ...
 Explain what you understand by ...
 Why is it so?
 Describe what you have learnt about ...
 Have you considered all the possibilities?
 What are the pros and cons?
 Explain your solution ...
 How does it work?

The use of role-play makes it possible to intensify the educational process. Role-playing is an excellent motivator of speech activity at practical lessons. Role-playing is a kind of form of imitation modeling, during the implementation of which participants improve their communicative skills. The following features characterize role-play: presence of a task and a problem in the activity; distribution of roles between participants; interaction of participants in the game through discussion; introduction of new information; evaluation of the results. Implementation of role-playing is possible at any stage in teaching a foreign language, but it is usually better to carry out this activity at the final lessons.

Thus, research results showed students' interest to study professional foreign language through the use of PBL approach. Survey results showed that 89,2% of learners preferred classes to be conducted using problem-based learning methods and 10,8% of students wanted the use of reading, asking questions, doing exercises at foreign language classes. The results of the survey are shown in the diagram given below (Figure 1).

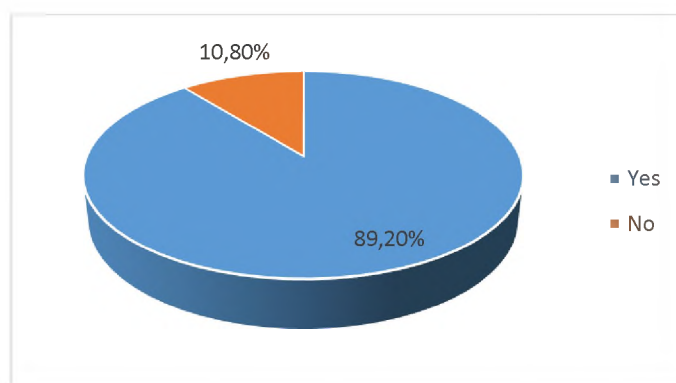


Figure 1. Students' survey results

Most students found the collaborative approaches in problem-based learning valuable. Through PBL students realized that there are many ways to solve a particular problem; students become more engaged and enthusiastic about learning process. Therefore, PBL is an effective teaching method where the learners are given the opportunity to solve real-world problems. However, despite the difficulties in conducting classes in this format the PBL is still relevant.

The table given below shows the advantages and challenges of PBL approach in teaching professional foreign language.

Table 1. Advantages and challenges of using PBL.

Advantages	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves content knowledge and competencies Increases communication skills Promotes motivation and self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a large amount of time Creating a problem situation Difficulty in assessment

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhances analytical thinking• Develops collaboration and leadership skills• Develops higher-order thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of student preparation• Integration of various disciplines• Difficulty of training facilitators |
|--|--|

Conclusion

Summing up, we note that the use of PBL technologies promotes knowledge in the specialty, ensures the formation of a personality capable of realizing itself in future professional activities. Implementing problem-based learning is an effective method to increase students' learning interests to professional development.

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