

ATTITUDES TO TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-LINGUISTS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF KARAKALPAKSTAN

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Abstract. This article describes the approaches to teaching English to the students of higher educational establishments in Uzbekistan taking into account their future specialities, requirements of time and the country. The author suggests to look for easy and motivating ways of teaching foreign languages to the pre-service professionals of different fields. Analyzing the results of the survey and classroom observations, where the problems and needs of teachers and students were studied, the author valued the importance of teamwork, which develops the collaboration of students, forms tolerance, creativity and critical thinking of learners. The author suggests using the principle of localization, when designing tasks and materials for teaching English for specific purposes, which, in her opinion, makes learning a foreign language interesting and easy, as it takes advantage of the existing knowledge of students, directing them to do tasks familiar to them, which are usually used in their professional field, which alleviate difficulties in learning a foreign language. Such tasks not only enrich their knowledge, but also develop the qualities and skills necessary for future specialists. In conclusion, the author suggests to work not only with students, but also with teachers who need help in creating materials and assignments for teaching a foreign language for future specialists in various activities, as well as to create foreign language textbooks for each specialty.

Key words: English for specific purposes, focus on speciality, higher education institutions, geography students, language skills, developing learner competence, critical thinking, creativity.

Introduction

Today in Uzbekistan, in the process of preparing future specialists great attention is paid to the development of their knowledge, skills and competence that can meet the requirements of the time, one of which is the ability to enter the process of international cooperation. In order to hold a discussion on their speciality with international organizations a professional should know at least one foreign language. "It's high time to establish a new system for teaching foreign languages in our country, which will be a solid foundation for the future. Since we have set the goal of building a competitive country, it is necessary that our school, lyceum, college and university graduates must know at least two foreign languages perfectly. This strict requirement should become the main criterion for the activity of the head of every educational institution." - said the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoev, at a video conference held on May 6, 2021 regarding measures to improve the system of teaching foreign languages [1:1]. Therefore, the principle of focusing on speciality (profession) in foreign language classes has become one of the essential approaches in education system of our country. In foreign language classes, when we mean focusing on a specialty (profession), we mean taking into account the student's demand to learn a foreign language based on the nature of their future specialty. E.G.Azimov and A.N.Shchukin's "Dictionary of Methodological Terms" defined the principle of professional orientation as "the methodical principle of taking into account the interests of learners and the characteristics of their future profession in teaching foreign languages and other subjects"[2:245].

Jordenias and Shaw state that the goal of "teaching the language in a profession focused way" demanded new, professional content in language classes [6:4]. It is good in sense that the learner knows in some degree the topic, being discussed in a foreign language class and has some ideas, suggestions concerning the topic. This gives learners motivation and self-esteem to learning a foreign language. Because as mentioned by O.N.Muradov, G.N.Tukhlieva and Z.R.Abdujabborova, learning the value of the issue, its role in their future profession means ensuring the perfection of the personal [7:8]. In order to achieve this, they proposed working with specialty texts, conducting discussions within specialty topics, learning words and phrases related to specialty, studying a set of grammatical and lexical materials necessary for specialty. These strategies prepare students to use work-related language outside the classroom.

So, this article describes the ways of teaching English to the students of higher educational establishments, future specialists, through collaborative work, which devel

ops learners' interaction, tolerance, creation and critical thinking. There also written the results of data collection, where we learnt teachers and students' challenges and needs, which we took into account while designing our tasks and materials for learning English.

Methodology

Analysis of materials

Preparation of specialists is usually based upon several documents like educational standards, qualification requirements, syllabus of the subject, course books and materials for the subject, which give us clear idea of the goals and objectives of training. So, in order to have a point on the process we analyzed the above mentioned documents and found out that the principle of profession-oriented learning is in the first place. This, in turn, indicates that our country is interested in perfect foreign language knowledge of future professionals. According to "State Educational Standard on foreign languages in the continuous education system" the students of higher educational establishments are prepared to become independent users [11:3] i.e. should have B2 level of foreign language due to Common European Framework of Reference [4:24.

The independent user (B2) level of foreign language requires students to develop more academic and career-oriented language skills]. Therefore, the main goal of teaching a foreign language in higher educational institutions is to train future specialists who can freely use foreign languages in their everyday life, scientific and professional activities. To achieve it, the syllabus of the subject "Foreign language" for the higher education has put the following tasks: in particular, development of students' reading, writing, listening and speaking skills; formation of socio-cultural and pragmatic competences; development of oral and written presentation skills on topics related to scientific, professional and social activities; teaching phrases and terms used in scientific and professional world; organization of independent work of students based on their scientific and specialty directions [3:2]. Analyzing these documents we learned that teaching English in the higher education is quite different from teaching English at schools and English should be taught with approaches oriented on profession.

To study the process of teaching English by using methods and materials related to specialization, to learn the experience of teachers, their opinions, difficulties, achievements, and suggestions in this regard, to analyze the appropriateness of the materials they use and how much they affect on the knowledge of language learners on the development of their skills such as reading, writing, listening comprehension and speaking we have collected data through questionnaires and also by chatting with English language teachers who teach students of the following educational fields like, physical training, physics, mathematics, history, economics, tourism, law, engineering, chemistry, biology and technology in the higher education institutions in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, including Karakalpak State University, Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, Urgench State University in Khorezm region, Bukhara State University in Bukhara region, and by observing their classes.

In order to find out the opinions of students about English language classes, a survey was conducted among the students of the above mentioned higher educational institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, whose specialization is not a foreign language. The data was taken on the basis of 15 questions. 480 students participated in the survey, including 142 from Karakalpak State University, 131 from Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, 104 from Bukhara State University and 103 from Urgench State University. The respondents' specialties are: geography, economics, Karakalpak language and literature, geodesy, cartography and cadastre, hydrometeorology, physics, mathematics, electric power, history and others.

Analysis and Findings

In response to our question about the aspects students have difficulty in studying English materials, the teachers indicated the following things like; mispronouncing of terms, misusing polysemantic words, which make learners feel shy, embarrassed, and another challenge is the low level of English, which prevents them from interaction, writing, listening and understanding foreign speech, showing their attitude to the issue being discussed. The teachers pointed out that they used vocabulary learning tasks, topic consolidation exercises, speaking and listening comprehension exercises and discussions during English classes, and they gave grammar tasks, sentence completion, finding true/false sentences as a homework, and their students made lexical and grammatical errors while doing them. Almost all respondents consider it important to develop four language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in the process of learning English, but they have problems in designing materials for this purpose. 50 percent of the respondents think that students cannot learn English independently, while 50 percent say that they can learn English independently because of the large number of online lessons in Internet.

Teachers believe that English lessons will be effective if they prepare appropriate materials, make lessons interesting, use games, debates, divide students into groups based on their level of knowledge, and have an individual approach to each student. They also mentioned that well-designed textbooks for the English language, more lessons per week would have their positive impact on foreign language learning. The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire confirmed the thesis of the researcher that today teachers do not have a clear idea about the concept and essence of the methodology of using professional materials in foreign language learning classes.

The analysis of student responses gave us the following results: 96% of students-respondents learn English more than two years, but they still have problems with speaking, reading, understanding English speech, not say about writing in English. 58 percent of students answered the question, what they can do in the English language, that they can translate sentences and words, 32% can read texts, 6% of respondents can understand the listened discourse, 2% can write short texts, only 2 students can interact with their partners.

As we can see, in our English classes, a lot of attention is paid to the translation of sentences and isolated words, listening to texts, but little attention is paid to speaking and writing, i.e. productive skills of students. We noticed that teachers focus only on giving information and comprehension. This is only two of the 6 learning strategies of Bloom's taxonomy (Knowing, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating) and they develop students' lower order thinking skills. The higher order thinking skills are not developing well. So, we can come to the conclusion that our lessons are not reaching their goals. For this reason, a student who has studied a foreign language for 10-11 years does not master this language. Respondents clarified that they learn grammar (40%), different topics (30%), general topics (20%), texts related to specialty (7%), sentence structure and usage (5%), English tenses (2%). The analysis of the answers showed that in English language classes little attention is paid to topics related to specialization, such topics are almost not studied in the first year, and attention is paid to them only in 2nd and 3rd years of study at the higher educational institution.

Students mentioned that they do grammar tasks, answer the questions, and translation tasks in classes and as homeworks. We believe that these assignments will help our students learn English grammar, but not improve their language skills, thinking skills and creativity, which are necessary for their life and job. Each of our lessons should be focused not only on increasing students' knowledge, but also on developing their reading, listening, speaking and writing skills, critical thinking, cognition and life skills.

In response to the question of what kind of tasks you would like to do in English classes, 48% of students said that they would like to learn more new words, 8% of students would like to listen to texts, dialogues, and interviews related to their specialty, 16% of students would like to speak on topics related to their specialty, 6% of students would like to write information related to their specialty, and 17% of students would like to study topics related to their specialty. They indicated that they would like to make a presentation. In order to learn English perfectly, students believe that they need teachers' support, good learning materials and new methods. 97% of students want to learn English in groups or in teams. They emphasize that individual learning is difficult, because they think that language is learnt in interaction/conversation, and there needed specific, purposeful assignments and also teachers' support in foreign language learning process.

Students also expressed their opinions about English language textbooks. They indicated the variety of information in textbooks published abroad, but sometimes their culture is not quite clear to them, most textbooks they are working on have no topics related to their future professions and they find texts from the Internet, but they are difficult to understand and they are also suffering from different topics, which are not logically sequenced with each other.

As can be seen from the quantitative indicators presented above, the majority of higher education students are able to adequately evaluate the role of English in their lives today and in their future professional activities. At the same time, they pointed out the difficulties faced in English language education objectively. The answers to the questions were taken into account in the next stage of experimental work.

We attended about 35 lessons of English in the above mentioned higher educational institutions and we witnessed that about 14 lessons were devoted to learning grammar, 11 lessons to general English, where students learn about travelling, holidays, music and education system, and only in 10 lessons students had opportunity to learn words concerning to their specialties, read texts and speak about their profession. What we noticed was the interest, motivation of students when they worked with familiar (professional) topics, they tried to say their opinion to the issues which were close to them. It seemed to me that the foreign words, foreign expressions met in the texts were nor a barrier to them in that case, on contrary they learned their meanings by themselves, reacting to the content of the texts. From the analysis of these lessons, we can

conclude that English language lessons should focus on topics that are broadly related to the future specialization, that provide broad information in their field, and are aimed at deepening students' knowledge and skills. Teachers are doing their best to bring the necessary information, materials to their classes, but not all of them know the principles of materials evaluation and design. We noticed some drawbacks in designing tasks and organization of profession-oriented classes. In the result, we came to the conclusion that teachers need materials, textbooks rich in information intended for specific specializations, which are helpful for them to conduct their lessons.

From the answers of the students to the questionnaires, from our own observations of lessons we understood that one of the reasons of difficulties in learning English was that our learners have problems in working or learning individually. We tried to learn its reason and after thorough observation and analysis of learners' life and environment, we came to the conclusion that this in some case depends on the mentality and life style of our learners. Most of our learners live in large families, with several brothers, sisters, and grandparents, they have close relationship with their relatives and neighbours, attending their birthday parties, weddings, and other celebrations. This style of life makes our learners communicate with many people, listen to their advice, share their opinions and be tolerant with different people. That's why they do not like to be alone, to learn by himself. Taking into consideration all of these factors, in our methodology, we decided to let them work in collaboration with their group members. According to Olsen and Kagan "cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others" [8:8]. Accepting the value of team working, at the beginning of the semester we form teams consisting of 4-5 students, which are constantly active throughout the semester, as Rodgers promote the idea of "building cooperation in learning into regular classrooms on a regular and systematic basis" [10:12]. All assignments are given to the team and team performance is evaluated. One of the advantages of working in a team is that students consult with each other, pay attention to each other's ideas and encourage each other. Working in a team also develops in the student the skills necessary for a person's life, such as responsibility for work, tolerance, creativity and trying to excel his team members. "Collaboration teach learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning, which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills" recognize Richards and Rodgers [9:199]

We planned to experiment our methodology with geography department students of higher education and in order to increase students' motivation, to make the learning easy and interesting the materials we created were aimed to study the information related to the country (Central Asia, Uzbekistan) and regions where they live, that is, the localization principle was used. Mc.Donough and Shaw's points that "What may work well in Mexico City may not do so in Edinburgh or in Kuala Lumpur" cited in Ian McGrath [5:74] were close to our points. This approach has given good results in the coordination of professional materials. Our learners learn to draw the maps of Uzbekistan, identified the coordination of the country on longitude and latitude, learned the value of Kizil Kum, made a visit to the Aral Sea and wrote their impression on the journey, created a travel brochure about ancient cities and holy places of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, shot video about flora and fauna of Uzbekistan. Due to these works they increased their professional vocabulary, learned to compose sentences, to present their products. Their critical thinking, creativity developed while evaluating and designing their own materials for presentation, their motivation to learning foreign language is emerged as they see they can do it, that it is not so difficult as they think.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of research results, the following suggestions are made for improving profession-oriented English language education; mainly, increasing the integration of foreign language teachers with content teachers and try to use adjunct model of CLIL approach in higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan, developing teachers' materials designing skills, which enable them to develop their own materials, taking into account localization, modernization, personalization principles, and using appropriate techniques and methods, which arouse learners motivation to learn English for professional purposes.

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Қарақалпақстанның лингвистикалық емес жоғары оқу орындарында ағылшын тілін оқытудағы көзқарас

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала Өзбекстан Республикасының жоғары оқу орындарының студенттеріне олардың болашақ мамандығын, заманның және жалпы елдің қажеттіліктерін ескере отырып, ағылшын тілін оқыту тәсілдерін сипаттауға арналған. Автор әртүрлі саладағы болашақ мамандардың шет тілін үйренудің ең оңай және ынталандыратын құралдарын табуды ұсынады. Мұғалімдер мен студенттердің шет тілін оқытудағы және үйренудегі қиыншылықтары мен қажеттіліктерін зерттеген сауалнама және сабақтарға қатысу нәтижелерін талдап, автор студенттердің іс-әрекетін дамытатын, толеранттылықты, шығармашылық пен сыни ойлауды қалыптастыратын топтық жұмыстың маңыздылығына көз жеткізді. Кәсіби мақсатта ағылшын тілін үйренуге арналған тапсырмалар мен материалдарды әзірлеу кезінде автор локализация принципі қолдануды ұсынады, оның пікірінше, бұл шет тілін үйренуді қызықты және жеңіл етеді, өйткені ол студенттердің сол сала бойынша бар білімдерінен пайдалану, өздеріне таныс, өз мамандығына тән тапсырмаларды орындау аркалы шет тілін үйренудегі қиындықтарды жеңілдетеді. Мұндай тапсырмалар олардың білімін толықтырып қана қоймай, болашақ мамандарға қажетті қасиеттер мен дағдыларды дамытады. Мақала сонында, автор тек студенттермен ғана емес, сонымен қатар болашақ мамандарға шет тілін оқытуға арналған материалдар мен тапсырмаларды жасауда көмекке мұқтаж мұғалімдермен де жұмыс істеуді ұсынады, сонымен қатар әр түрлі мамандықтар бойынша шет тілі оқулықтарын жарату қажеттілігін атап көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: Нақты мақсаттарға арналған ағылшын тілі, мамандыққа бағыттау, жоғары оқу орындары, география студенттері, тілдік дағдылар, студенттердің құзыреттілігін арттыру, сыни ойлау, шығармашылық.

Отношение к преподаванию английского языка в не лингвистических высших учебных заведениях Каракалпакстана

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Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена описанию подходов к обучению английскому языку студентов высших учебных заведений республики Узбекистан с учетом их будущей специальности, потребностями времени и страны в целом. Автор предлагает найти наиболее легкие и мотивирующие средства изучения иностранного языка будущими специалистами разных областей. Анализ результатов опроса и посещения занятий, где были изучены проблемы и потребности преподавателей и студентов убедил автора в важности работы в команде, которая развивает совместное действие студентов, формирует толерантность, креативность и критическое мышление обучающихся. При разработке собственных заданий и материалов для изучения английского языка для профессиональных целей автор предлагает использовать принцип локализации, который по ее мнению помогает изучение иностранного языка интересным и легким, так как воспользоваться имеющимся знанием студентов, направить их делать знакомые им задания, свойственные их профессии облегчает трудности изучения иностранного языка. Такие задания не только обогатить их знания, но и развивают необходимые для будущих специалистов качества и навыки. В конце автор предлагает работать не только со студентами, но и с преподавателями, которым нужна помощь в создании материалов и заданиях для преподавания иностранного языка для будущих специалистов разных деятельности, а также о необходимости создания учебников иностранного языка для каждой специальности.

Ключевые слова: Английский для специальных целей, ориентация на специальность, высшие учебные заведения, студенты географии, языковые навыки, развитие компетенций студентов, критическое мышление, креативность.