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PROJECT WORK AS AN ESSENTIAL PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILL

The article under consideration focuses on the importance of project work and its role in problem-solving issues as well as a tool motivating the students to learn a foreign language. Project works enable to develop various skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, time-management and research. Students research different information relevant to the problem, analyze data and identify potential solutions. These processes strengthen their research skills and teach them to evaluate information critically. Moreover, project-based activities allow students to go beyond the curriculum and develop a range of vital skills from job searching and resume building to effective teamwork and cyber security. Working in a team, they develop communication skills, learn to cooperate and understand each other. These skills help them successfully adapt to an ever-changing world. The authors, relying on their own teaching experience, focus on some issues envisaging how some types of project work are designed and adopted into the English Language Department (hereafter ELD) of Satbayev University (hereafter SU).

Keywords: project work, problem-solving skills, project-based learning, motivation, critical thinking, independent work, SU, ELD.

Introduction

To begin with, project-based learning first appeared in agricultural schools in the United States of America to develop labor lessons. The word 'project' from Latin 'projektus' means 'progress', and the translation of 'projet' from French implies 'goal to be fulfilled in the future' [1]. In teaching, this can be interpreted as

following: the project method used in teaching a foreign language is a type of work in which students make plans and implement it on their own using all language skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. This teaching method is aimed at not only learning and memorizing some important information, but also it requires independent study, analytical / critical skills, and proper application of the knowledge gained.

Over time, the principle of project work is based on the fact that learners (students) directly link the knowledge they receive with their life experience, find a solution to common problems, and analyze them from cognitive and creative points of view. Therefore, developing students' skills of doing independent work, critical thinking, evaluation, self-assessment and creative abilities has become one of the crucial objectives of academic institutions. Accordingly, every language teacher systematically prepares for each lesson and makes 'new things' to ensure an engaging and interactive lesson, to boost students' interest in the subject, and improve their knowledge. One of the common approaches they are taking currently is above-mentioned project work of the western pedagogical model, which has become widespread in recent years. Project based learning can be defined as an interdisciplinary pedagogical learning approach that is student-centered and focuses on real world issues [2]. As it has been noted earlier in the article, project work has a great role in the learning process. It is considered that students can supplement their acquired knowledge, work independently, share opinions, and exchange experience, etc. If a student is able to study, perceive, compare and analyze certain issues in different spheres of life, and learn to make necessary conclusions and concepts, then as a specialist they will be able to consciously regulate negative things in society, assess them from a different perspective, and find ways to make relevant solutions to all possible anticipated problems. Thus, they are supposed to become the most valuable and demanding specialists in the society.

Materials and methods

The ELD has implemented a multi-level English language training in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages competence (CEFR) since 2016. The level of English proficiency is determined at the beginning of the academic year; freshmen pass free online testing at University's website and have an interview with teaching staff. According to the online testing and interview results, they are grouped into various academic levels such as Elementary English, General English, Academic English, Business English, Professional English and IELTS Preparation. As the mission of the ELD is to increase students' competitiveness in the modern global labor market by developing a sufficient level of English language communicative competence, teaching staff apply innovative learning technologies

including a range of project work activities. Further in this article, the authors share several types of project work designed and developed by Business English teachers. One of them is 'Job satisfaction'. The aim of it is to learn how people feel about the jobs they do, their expectations, challenges they face and decisions they make. The other aim or even hope is this project might help each student learn the challenges they will face on a job place upon graduation, and during their studies can get themselves prepared for expectations their future employers will be looking for. According to the project criteria, students have to interview a person, who might be a family member, friend, neighbor or acquaintance, on their job satisfaction and write interview questions paying special regard to the interviewee's background (age, gender, area of expertise, job place, status, experience, etc.). The aim of the interview is to increase students' awareness about job satisfaction. Students make interview arrangements, and then conduct them, prepare a report based on their interview findings. One of the team projects considered to be engaging and entertaining is 'Job interview'. This project team is to develop a headhunting strategy on behalf of an 'organization', to make job interview arrangements and to select the best candidates. The team prepares a job interview project in four stages such as writing a resume, headhunting/recruiting, 'job interview' simulation, and interview report. The team is required to report periodically on the progress. It is vitally important that every member of the team makes a contribution to the total result. What does this teach? Students learn how to write a winning resume, practice the ability to structure a resume and apply appropriate language means for writing efficiently, and increase general writing skills. Moreover, they learn how to apply for a job, explore and examine how organizations recruit employees in a real business environment, and develop business planning and communication competences, master critical and creative thinking skills, encourage team building and group work, and use a project-based approach for developing mutual understanding and interpersonal sensitivity. These two projects train future engineers for surviving in the severe competitive labor market. Furthermore, in the era of digitalization they might face various challenges related to cybercrime. It is not notorious that almost everyone has been a victim of some kind of cybercrime. Therefore, the next project work "Cybercrime" designed for students of intermediate level aims at raising students' awareness about cybercrime, helping how to protect and how to avoid it, etc.

To engage and motivate students to get the project done, it is valuable to expose them to brainstorming session and generating ideas for their project work out of a video session lesson [3]. A pre-project work includes a discussion on computer problems students have ever experienced. After watching the video where people talking about their computer problems and how they have solved them, students can compare their answers with partners on whether people in the video have had the same problems as they do. While-project work incorporates the interview with a principal threat researcher

of the leading internet security firm where he provides an insight into cybercrime, its types, how it might happen, how cyberattacks are changing and what solutions internet security is currently providing. The speaker comments on how machines are becoming infected with malware, and how this malicious application called itself Security Shield is installed on the user's system. Security Shield tells cybercrime victims that they have many problems on their systems thereby trying to trick users paying for removal of these non-existing problems, how sites have accidently been attacked by hackers cause users' browser to redirect to malicious sites. To respond to the changes in cybercrime and the types of attacks that the criminals are using, internet security has also to continually adapt. The speaker's interview based on the real-life experience may increase students' motivation to learn English [4].

As for post-project work, it comprises summarizing the interview in pairs using the words in the word cloud and writing a 130-150-word summary of where students focus on writing the key points and leaving out the details, paraphrasing the original speaker's words, replacing words and phrases with synonyms they have run through before watching an interview about cybercrime.

Adherence to a step-by-step procedure can result in achieving some specific objectives. The students research and analyze different types of cybercrime (for example, hacking, phishing, malware, identity theft, cyberbullying) by navigating reputable sources such as government websites and reports, academic journals and news articles. Note-taking can help students delve into the content and reduce distractions they might come across while browsing online resources. This hones their critical thinking skills and ability to summarize the key points [5]. Moreover, by focusing on reputable websites, students can learn to identify reliable sources of information, and this is a crucial skill in the New Media Age where they encounter a vast amount of content online. To make their presentations more engaging, they can use statistics, facts, case study; they can build a real-life content and apply the tools like PowerPoint, Canva or Piktochart. Students make a multimedia presentation or infographics. By presenting their findings, they can effectively educate their groupmates on how to protect themselves from different types of cyber threats.

Results and discussion

Since a language serves as a tool to convey all possible thoughts, language teachers should provide students not only with language skills, but also with tasks aimed at gaining new things, understanding, self-awareness and self-development [6]. Therefore, using project work in the classroom allows language teachers to inculcate qualities such as collaboration, team responsibility and patience in their students during the learning process. In order to get students exposed to project work, they need to master not only the ability to speak a foreign language fluently, but also think and analyze, show ways to solve various problems, openly express

their thoughts, and agree or disagree with others. This means turning foreign language classes into large-scale discussions and research [7].

According to some research, project work focuses on a completing task that requires skills and abilities to reflect on information, to think critically and find creative solutions. In the course of fulfilling a project work, students have opportunities to practice all language skills such as listening, reading, speaking and writing. In fact, all these language skills are supposed to be practiced and mastered through doing various types of project work designed by the teachers. It is worth noting that project work breaks new ground to attain a range of learning ends, it requires strong classroom management skills. Project work mainly needs learners' independence to plan and realize the work, however, the role of the teacher remains crucial [8]. In fact, the curriculum and students' needs are usually taken into consideration; as a result, different types of project work have been widely used in foreign language teaching. Students get involved in a wide range of project works, develop their communicative skills and other abilities, strengthen their knowledge, form own opinions, expand their critical thinking skills and enrich their creative experience. Doing project work, students can express their personal opinion and ideas in a relevant way. This type of teaching is believed to have a great educational value not only in the learning process, but also in some other aspects. For instance, students are adapted to work in a team, which means that they learn to listen to each other, respect others' opinion, and acquire new things, etc. [9].

According to some researchers, project-based learning has a range of advantages over traditional learning methods. These advantages include [10].

- working with various literature, encyclopedias, dictionaries, collecting necessary materials in a foreign language;
 - developing critical thinking skills;
 - increasing interest in learning a foreign language;
 - doing research;
 - applying their knowledge in specific situations;
 - using new technologies;
 - having student-centered approach;
 - challenging;
 - giving a boost to academically challenged students;
- forming moral qualities to listen, respect others' opinion, get some advice, and share opinions;
 - working in a team;
- eing able to condense a huge amount of information, make short statements and convey them, etc.

Thus, the advantages of including different types of project work in the course syllabus is believed to outweigh its disadvantages.

As far as the types of project work are concerned, they may vary according to the purpose and topic under consideration. However, what they have in common is all types of project work require students' independent work and research. In the course of performing the work, students comprehensively consider a specific problem and offer relevant solutions to them. It is true that all types of project work require a lot of research, various skills, knowledge, patience, and students themselves mainly implement them. Then what is the role of the teacher? Of course, she/he is a consultant, assistant and facilitator [11]. Before taking project work in the learning process, the teacher determines the relevance of the topic, the availability of information about it, how interesting and useful it is for the students, etc. However, in the course of carrying out the project teachers may encounter unexpected difficulties. It can be exemplified by the lack of interest in the subject/topic, inability of a student in a divided group to communicate with other team members, limited level of the English language, less motivation, lack of competence or necessary materials, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration the scope, nature, importance, relevance of the topic, the level of knowledge of students working together on the project, and the compatibility of their character. It should be considered that people with similar behavior can work freely in a team, appreciate each other's work and have common interest. Even if it seems less important, such aspects have an impact on the successful implementation of project work [12].

When project work has been successfully completed, it needs to be evaluated. Summative assessment method can be viewed as the most traditional one when it is primarily essential to evaluate content knowledge, and see whether students could demonstrate a solid understanding of the subject matter explored in the project, and if they are in position to effectively use the skills they have learnt throughout the project: research, critical thinking, innovative approaches, problem – solving, etc. It is recommended to develop a rubric beforehand, outlining the criteria for successful project completion [13]. This should include specific assessment criteria for various aspects like content, research amplitude, grammar accuracy, versatile vocabulary, intelligible pronunciation, creativity, presentation style, good communicator evidence, etc. Teachers should deliver the evaluation criteria to students at the beginning of the project. This helps students be aware what to expect and how their work is going to be assessed which is crucial for them. Instructors should also provide their students with constructive feedback to identify what areas learners are good at and what areas they need to work on [14].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project method used in teaching a foreign language is not just a type of work, in which students make plan and implement it on their own using all language skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. These skills are widely practiced through performing various types of project activities that are highly motivating. Overall, some project works train students for life skills and challenges they face as well as decisions they make [15]. Performing project works, they learn how to apply for a job, explore and examine how organizations recruit employees in a real business environment, educate their groupmates on how to protect themselves from different types of cyber threats, master critical and creative thinking skills, encourage team building and group work, and develop mutual understanding and interpersonal sensitivity. To conclude, it is worthwhile to mention that the core goal of the ELD is training competitive technical specialists with the sufficient English language along with relevant practical problem-solving skills in order to communicate effectively in a professional environment.

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ЖОБАЛЫҚ ЖҰМЫСТАР МӘСЕЛЕНІ ШЕШУДЕ ЕҢ ҚАЖЕТ ШЕБЕРЛІК РЕТІНДЕ

Қарастырылып отырған мақала студенттерге шет тілін үйретуде жобалық жұмыстардың маңыздылығы мен түрлі өмірлік мәселелерді шешуде олардың атқаратын рөлі және шет тілін үйренуге ынтыландыру

ықпалы жайлы ақпаратты қамтиды. Жобалық жұмыстар критикалық ойлау, түрлі мәселелерді шешу, өзара және іскерлік қарым-қатынас жасау, басымдықтар беру және зерттеу жұмыстарын жүргізу сияқты дағдыларды дамытуға мүмкіндік береді. Студенттер тиісті мәселеге қатысты ақпаратты тауып, мәліметтерді талдап және мүмкін боларлық шешімдерді қарастыра алады. Бұл студенттердің зерттеу жұмыстарымен айналысу дағдыларын дамытып, ақпаратты критикалық тұрғыда бағалауды үйретеді. Сонымен қатар, жобаға негізделген іс-әрекеттер студенттерге оқу бағдарламасынан тыс өмірлік жағдайларда, яғни жұмыс іздеу мен резюме құрудан бастап тиімді топтық жұмыс пен киберқауіпсіздік сияқты бірқатар өмірлік маңызды дагдыларды дамытуга мүмкіндік береді. Бұл дагдылар оларга үнемі өзгерісте толы әлемге сәтті бейімделуге көмектеседі. Сонымен қатар, олар топпен жұмыс жасай отырып, қарым-қатынас дағдыларын дамытады, ынтымақтастыққа, бір-бірін түсінуге үйренеді. Мақала авторлары оқытушылық тәжірибелеріне сүйене отырып, Сәтбаев университетінің ағылшын тілі кафедрасында жүргізілетін бірқатар жобалық жұмыс түрлерінің қалай дайындалып, қалай жүзеге асырылатынымен бөліседі.

Кілтті сөздер: жобалық жұмыстар, мәселе шешуге қажет шеберліктер, ынталандыру, критикалық ойлау, өзіндік жұмыс, SU, ELD.

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ПРОЕКТНАЯ РАБОТА КАК ВАЖНЫЙ НАВЫК РЕШЕНИЯ ПРОБЛЕМ

Данная статья рассматривает роль проектной работы в развитии навыков решения проблем и мотивации студентов к изучению иностранного языка. Проектные работы дают возможность развивать следующие навыки: навык критического мышления, навык решения проблемы, навыки межличностного и делового общения, навык умения расставлять приоритеты и проводить исследования. Студенты изучают информацию,

соответствующую выбранной проблеме, анализируют данные и выявляют возможные решения. Эти процессы укрепляют у студентов навыки ведения исследовательской работы и учит их оценивать информацию критически. Более того, проектная деятельность позволяет студентам выйти за рамки учебной программы и развить целый спектр экизненно важных навыков: от поиска работы и создания резюме до эффективного взаимодействия в команде и обеспечения кибербезопасности. Эти навыки помогут им успешно адаптироваться в постоянно меняющемся мире. Работая в команде, они развивают коммуникативные навыки, учатся сотрудничать и понимать друг друга. Опираясь на свой собственный педагогический опыт, авторы предлагают рассмотреть некоторые виды проектных работ, которые разрабатываются и внедряются на кафедре английского языка (далее ELD) Сатбаев университета (далее SU).

Ключевые слова: проектная работа, практические навыки решения проблем, мотивация, критическое мышление, самостоятельная работа, SU, ELD

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