



Attitudes to Profession-Oriented English in Higher Educational Institutions in Uzbekistan

Tajieva Aliya Utebaevna ¹, Bekmuratova Nargiza Arslanbaevna ²

¹ PhD, associate-professor Nukus State Pedagogical Institute

² Assistant teacher, Karakalpak State University

Abstract: This article describes the attitude to teaching English to the students of higher educational establishments taking into account their future specialists, and determines the importance of collaborative work, which develops learners' interaction, tolerance, creation and critical thinking. There also written the results of data collection, where there learnt teachers and students' challenges and needs, which the authors took into account while designing their own tasks and materials for learning English for specific purposes.

Keywords: a new system for teaching foreign languages, focus on specialty, profession-oriented English, content-based approach, developing learner competence, collaborative work, working in a team, designing content materials.

Introduction

Due to the participation of Uzbekistan in the processes of mutual integration with other countries the role of foreign languages, especially English has become high in the country's economic, social and political relations with other countries. The task of the government on fundamentally reforming the system of teaching and learning foreign languages has imposed huge responsibilities on the pedagogical team and specialists of the whole country, it is required to implement the tasks of creating advanced pedagogical technologies, information and communication systems, electronic and multimedia textbooks in the teaching of foreign languages, and the development of student learning activities. "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 2 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.

Today, in the training of specialists in Uzbekistan, great attention is paid to ensuring that their knowledge, qualifications and skills meet the requirements of the time. One of the requirements of the time is the ability of our future specialists to enter the process of international cooperation, to be able to hold free discussions in international organizations in their specialty. For this, it is necessary to know a foreign language. Therefore, the principle of focusing on specialization (profession) in foreign language classes is considered one of the most relevant directions today, because communication in a foreign language is considered an indispensable source of professional activity of every specialist.

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

Literature review

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"(1999) 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".

Jordenias and Shaw (2005) state that the goal of "teaching the language in a profession focused way" demanded new, professional content in language classes. 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 (2012), learning the value of the issue, its role in their future profession means ensuring the perfection of the personal. M.V. Lyakhovitsky (1973), who made a great contribution to the theory of learning a foreign language by focusing on the profession, emphasized that learning a foreign language should not be just a goal, but should serve to increase the student's general level of knowledge, increase his erudition in the field of specialization. In order to achieve this, he 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.

In order to teach profession-oriented foreign language there designed and implemented several methods, like content-based approach, content and language integrated learning and others. Patsy M.Lightbown (2014) points the advantages of content-based approach like efficiency, where "two for one" approach can increase the amount of time students spend in contact with the new language without taking time away from their regular curriculum. She also mentions that content-based language teaching promotes advanced proficiency, as students can use academic styles of grammar and discourse as well as increasingly varied and sophisticated vocabulary there.

People learn language successfully when they use it as a means of acquiring information is one of the two central principles of content-based instruction, which was mentioned by Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001) and the second one is that content-based instruction better reflects learners' needs for learning a foreign language. We know that people learn language in order to be able to react to some life situations, that's why tasks and exercises in content-based classrooms should reflect real life, or taken from real life.

The issue of how to organize profession-oriented learning in foreign language classes has attracted the attention of researchers, methodologists and teachers, and there are many ideas and proposals in this regard. Most of researchers paid their attention to the issue of teaching students to work autonomously in order to use a foreign language in acquiring professional knowledge (T.O.Garber, A.I.Kozyrova, P.O.Rusanova and others). The benefit of this issue was caused by large amount of knowledge needed in professional development, and the student should have the ability to sort and choose the necessary information from among this variety of information. Those who urged to read foreign language professional literature (N.G. Vavilova, G.I. Slavina, N.I. Shevchenko, S.K. Folomkina) identified that learners read foreign language sources for the following purposes; to be familiar with works written on specific problems, to identify the main direction and inclinations of foreign researchers in this direction, to gather materials for their research work and to make decisions.

Coyle (2010) suggests the 4Cs Framework, which consists of four building blocks: content, communication, cognition, and culture and points that effective learning takes place through

progression in knowledge, skills and understanding of the content, through engagement in cognitive processing, through interaction in the communicative context and through deepening of intercultural awareness.

Today, in the higher education system, there is a need to teach a foreign language as a means of communicating with experts from other parts of the world. The development of reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills should be carried out in a profession-oriented manner. In this regard, the use of modern methods and technologies leads to an increase in the professional competence of specialists and the formation of their world knowledge. Organization of a real communication process has become one of the methodological requirements of profession-oriented education. Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001) mentions that collaborative learning is an effective approach in mainstream and foreign language classes, as it enhances learner motivation and reduces stress, creates positive affective classroom climate and provides opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies.

Analysis of points given by researchers and methodologists concerning to profession-oriented teaching of foreign languages gave us ideas in learning our learners' needs, in observing the current situation of teaching foreign languages to future specialists, and in developing our tasks and materials for learning English.

Methodology

Analysis of materials

We started the process of teaching and learning of English language in higher education institutions by analyzing the programs created for this subject. The first program we studied was the "State educational standard for foreign languages of the continuing education system" approved by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on May 8, 2013. This state educational standard determines the level of preparation and level of learners in foreign languages classes. The educational standard was developed on the basis of communicative activity and individual-oriented, integrative and competence approaches to learning a foreign language. The purpose of teaching a foreign language in all types of educational institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan is to acquire communicative competence in a foreign language (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, strategic, socio-cultural, social and educational-cognitive competences).

The second part of the standard is aimed at clarifying the requirements for the preparation of B2 level learners of a foreign language. This section is also considered one of the most important parts in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language, because based on these requirements, necessary educational programs, textbooks, manuals, and lesson plans are created for learning a foreign language. In each of these requirements, 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. Therefore, the "State educational standard of foreign languages of the continuing education system" is considered to be a perfectly created program, and it is considered to be a document that confirms how relevant our research topic is in our country.

The second document we analyzed was the syllabus of the subject "Foreign language", which is focused on the development of general, academic and profession-oriented language skills and competences that students will use in their future professional activities. 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 this program is to train future specialists who can freely use foreign languages in their everyday life, scientific and professional activities. To achieve this goal, the subject "Foreign language" has the following tasks: in particular, development of students' speech (reading, writing, listening comprehension, speaking), language (lexical, grammatical), 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. Another worthy point of this program is that it sets the exact requirements for the knowledge, skills, and competencies of the students in this subject,

and based on these requirements, it is planned to acquire linguistic, language, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies.

Participants

To study the process of using methods and materials related to specialization in higher education institutions, 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 higher education institutions in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, including Karakalpak State University, Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, Urganch State University in Khorezm region, Bukhara State University in Bukhara region, and by observing their classes.

A total number of respondents participated in the survey was 66, including 16 from Karakalpak State University, 13 from Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, 27 from Urganch State University, and 10 from Bukhara State University. The working experience of the interviewers who participated in the survey ranges from 1 to 32 years, particularly 8 interviewers have an experience of 1 to 5 years, 18 have an experience of 5 to 10 years, 21 have an experience of 10 to 20 years, and 19 have an experience of 20 to 30 years. This shows that our respondents are very experienced, 48 respondents have been teaching English for specific purposes for more than 10 years, and they are teaching in the following educational fields like, physical training, physics, mathematics, history, economics, tourism, law, engineering, chemistry, biology and technology.

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 195 from Karakalpak State University, 128 from Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, 53 from Bukhara State University and 64 from Urganch State University. The respondents' specialties are: geography, economics, Karakalpak language and literature, geodesy, cartography and cadastre, hydrometeorology, physics, mathematics, electric power, history and others.

Findings

In response to our question about the fields students have difficulty in studying materials related to their specialty, the teachers indicated polysemantic features of words, the pronunciation of terms, the English level of students, interaction, writing, listening and understanding foreign speech, using new words in their speech. The teachers indicated that they use discussions, vocabulary learning, topic consolidation exercises, speaking and listening comprehension exercises during English classes, and they gave homeworks such as grammar tasks, writing, sentence completion, finding true/false sentences, and their students make lexical and grammatical errors while doing them. Almost all respondents consider it important to develop four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in the process of learning English, but they have problems in designing these materials. 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, use well-designed textbooks for the English language, increase the number of lessons per week, divide students into groups based on their level of knowledge, and have an individual approach to each student. 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.

96% of students-respondents learn English more than two years, but they still have problems with speaking, reading, understanding English speech, not says about writing in English. 58 percent of

students answered the question, what they can do in English, 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 (1%). 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 1 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 tasks, 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 tasks in textbooks published abroad, but their culture is not similar to ours, the absence of professional topics in these textbooks and the difficulties of Internet materials and the logical sequence of materials brought by teachers to the classroom.

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

Methods

From the answers of the students to the questionnaires, we saw that they have problems in learning English 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. Therefore, in our methodology, we paid attention to the team work of the students. At the beginning of the semester,

we form teams consisting of 5-6 students, which are constantly active throughout the semester. 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. We planned to experiment our methodology with geography department students and in order to increase students' motivation, the materials we created were used to study the information related to the country (Central Asia, Uzbekistan) and regions where they live, that is, the principle of localization was used. This approach has also given good results in the coordination of professional materials.

Reflection and Suggestions

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 profession-oriented materials, taking into account localization, modernization, personalization principles, and using appropriate techniques and methods, which arouse learners motivation to learn English for professional purposes.

Reference

1. Azimov E.G., Shchukin A.N. (1999) Dictionary of Methodological Terms. Sankt Petersburg. Zlatoust., p.245
2. Bakieva G.X., Samatova B.R., Tursunov M.M. (2018) Syllabus of the subject "Foreign languages". Tashkent. Ministry of higher and secondary special education.
3. Coyle, D., Hood P., Marsh D. (2010). CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning. Cambridge University Press. P.41.
4. Folomkina S.K. (2005) Teaching reading in English in non-language higher educational establishments. Study guide. Moscow.
5. Jourdenais, R., & Shaw, P. (2005). Dimensions of content-based instruction in second language education. In R. Jourdenais, & S. Springer (Eds.), Content, tasks and projects in the language classroom: 2004 conference proceedings (pp. 1-12). Monterey, CA: Monterey Institute of International Studies.
6. Lyakhovitsky M.V.(1973) Some basic categories of methods of teaching foreign languages // Foreign languages at school. № 1.
7. Muradov O.N., Tuxlieva G.N., Abdujabborova Z.R. (2012) Teaching English by orienting to professional fields (manual for teachers of secondary special and vocational colleges). Tashkent., P.8.
8. Patsy M.Lightbown. (2014) Focus on Content-Based Language Teaching, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 10
9. Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Second Edition. NY: Cambridge University Press.p.207
10. State Educational Standard on foreign languages in the continuous education system. (2013). Tashkent.