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Métodos y técnicas activos de enseñanza de inglés para futuros profesionales de servicios

Active methods and techniques of teaching English for future specialists in the service sphere

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Resumen

El artículo estudia la eficiencia de los métodos de enseñanza activa para dominar el inglés para fines específicos de futuros especialistas en la esfera del servicio. La primera etapa de la investigación implica el análisis, la síntesis y la sistematización de los antecedentes teóricos sobre la enseñanza activa que desarrolla el dominio del lenguaje. La segunda etapa se presenta a través de la encuesta del cuestionario de estudiantes y maestros para determinar los métodos activos aplicados en las universidades. La tercera etapa se realiza a través del experimento empírico destinado a definir las técnicas interactivas más efectivos que garantizan la mejora de las competencias del lenguaje. Los resultados de la encuesta a los estudiantes destacan que los métodos más preferibles para aprender lenguajes extranjeros son el juego de roles y el juego comercial, mientras que las prioridades de los maestros entrevistados son el trabajo grupal, las tablas redondas y un método creativo y productivo. Los resultados del experimento demuestran el aumento de la competencia del lenguaje después de aplicar métodos activos de enseñanza entre estudiantes de todos los niveles, excepto el elemental. Por lo tanto, la investigación establece la necesidad de implementar técnicas interactivas para desarrollar las habilidades de comunicación profesional fácil.

Palabras clave: Idioma inglés, aprendizaje, educación, pedagogía, creatividad, lenguaje.

Abstract

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The goal of the research is to demonstrate the efficiency of active teaching methods and techniques in mastering English for specific purposes of future specialists in the service sphere. The first stage of the research involves the analysis, synthesis and systematization of the theoretical background on the active teaching which develops language proficiency. The second stage is presented via the questionnaire survey of both students and teachers to determine the active methods applied at universities. The third stage is realized through the empirical experiment aimed at defining the most effective interactive methods and techniques ensuring the language competences improvement. The students' survey results highlight that the most preferable methods of learning foreign languages are role-playing and business game, while the interviewed teachers' priorities are group work, round tables and, a creative and productive method. The experiment results prove the increase of language competence after applying active methods of teaching among students of all levels except the elementary one. Thus, the research establishes the necessity to implement interactive techniques to develop the skills of coherent professional speech.

Keywords: Keywords: English language, learning, education, pedagogy, creativity, language.

Introduction

Nowadays, interactive teaching is a special form of organization of cognitive activity, which has a specific intended purpose: to create comfortable learning conditions in which each student feels his success and intellectual challenge (Eastman, 2007). The core of interactive teaching is that the learning process takes place under the condition of constant, active interaction of students. It is co-learning, mutual learning, where the student and the teacher are equal subjects of the studying process. The organization of active teaching involves modelling life (professional) situations, using role-playing, business games, and problem-based learning. In interactive teaching, the management of students' learning activities is combined with the principle of cooperation between the teacher and the student, interaction and mutual assistance of students, as well as with the integrated use of group and individual forms of work. Interactive teaching contributes to the effective formation of English communicative skills and abilities.

The main consequence of conventionally Applied Linguistics is that all methods of learning English belong to passive learning. Some teachers believe that as soon as their learners spend 80% of their class time speaking English, they are using active learning. However, only one person speaks at a time; the rest of the class is listening to the teacher or the broken English of their peers (Zilberman, 2017). To be an active participant in the learning process means to work individually and in a group, listen and understand, speak, annotate, discuss, create a professional content of future speciality. The student acts as a «participant» of a learning process, which allows him to acquire

actively the necessary language skills in the chosen profession. Consequently, we believe that current and effective methods and techniques of active teaching and learning are: independent work, group work (in the forms of dialogues and polylogues), formulating questions, focused listening, annotating, a creative and productive method, brainstorming, discussing, business and role-playing games, etc.

Thus, Özer (2020) emphasizes that active learning techniques are more efficient in acquiring Vocational English Course. The findings of study have been proved by an experiment based on a pre-test and post-test control group model. By its part, Qaddumi et al. (2021) examined how to teach tourism and hospitality learners in Palestinian. They suggest restructuring and reconsidering the traditional teaching methods in order to help students receive proper instruction to achieve intended learning outcomes and meet future workplace requirements.

Also, Suwastini, Nalantha and Dantes (2021) studied the effectiveness of Google Classroom media in teaching English to tourism students during online learning in 2020. The research is based on qualitative analysis, implementing the QAIT model for assessing the effectiveness of Google Classroom in teaching English. Zahedpisheh (2017) gives an overview of the purpose of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Tourism Purposes (ETP). The research outlines the distinguishing features of ESP and ETP in terms of course development, curriculum planning, learning style, English efficiency, types of methods and techniques that can help students be ready to meet their workplace requirements. Other studies report one of the methods, highlighting the communicative approach to the learning process (Dos Santos, 2020) or dwell on an issue of technical specialities in teaching foreign languages (Kravchyna, 2018).

Summarizing all the researches mentioned it is clear that most of them substantiate the need to adapt methods, techniques, approaches and tools while teaching ESP to allow students to realize themselves in various fields. Nevertheless, the analysis has proved that specific active methods of teaching foreign language to the service sphere students have not been given much investigation in research and not proved with an evidential base. Therefore, the research objective is to present the results of implementing active methods in teaching English for specific purposes to students of the service sphere specialties.

Methodology

Design

The starting point of the research was literature review on active teaching and learning at universities. This empirical research was aimed at examining students and teachers' attitudes to the applied teaching methods and defining the most preferable in improving language competences. A special survey questionnaire was created to gather information among students and teachers. The participants were proposed to assess the active methods according to the following scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often, 4 = Very often and select the most efficient methods applicable to their learning (Table 1).

Table 1

Active methods and techniques of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes to the service sphere specialists

Digital Methods	Learning in Teams and Individually	Problem-Solving Methods	Professional Games
Blended Learning	Project Methods	Discussion	Role-playing
E-textbooks	Group Work (Dialogues, Polylogues)	Case Study	Business Games
Mobile Learning	Presentations	Round Table	Creative and Productive Method
Podcasting	Independent Work (Menu Planning, Position/Job Description)	Brainstorming	Situational Tasks
Video Interview	Annotating	Formulating Questions	

Figure 1 and 2 show the statistical results regarding the most preferable and efficient active methods from the questionnaire. At the next stage the cluster sampling was used to divide the students into experimental and control groups in order to define the effectiveness of active methods of teaching. At the beginning of the term all the groups were offered an introductory test to define their level of language proficiency according to all the language competencies (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

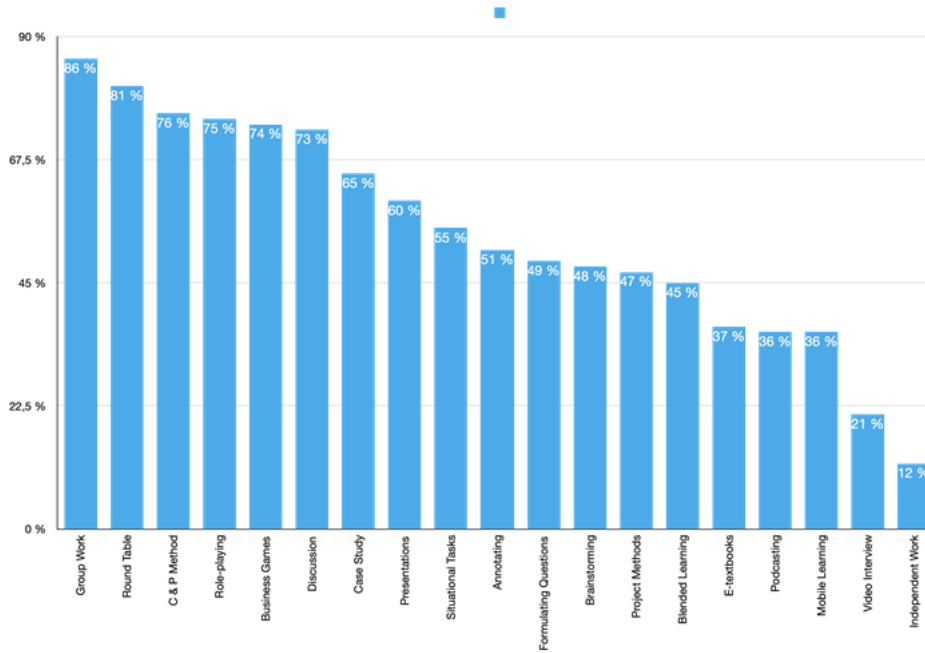


Figure 1. The popularity of the methods among teachers

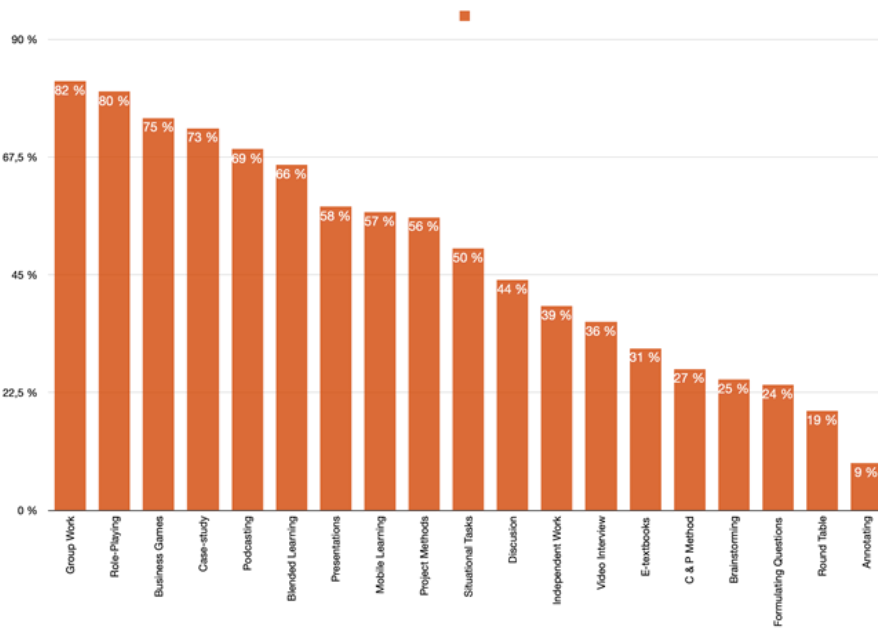


Figure 2. The popularity of the methods among students

Then, experimental groups were taught with active methods and techniques, while control groups – with the traditional ones. At the end of the term the groups were offered the end-of-the-term

test to assess their knowledge. Progress of the language proficiency is mathematically represented in percentage terms (Figure 3).

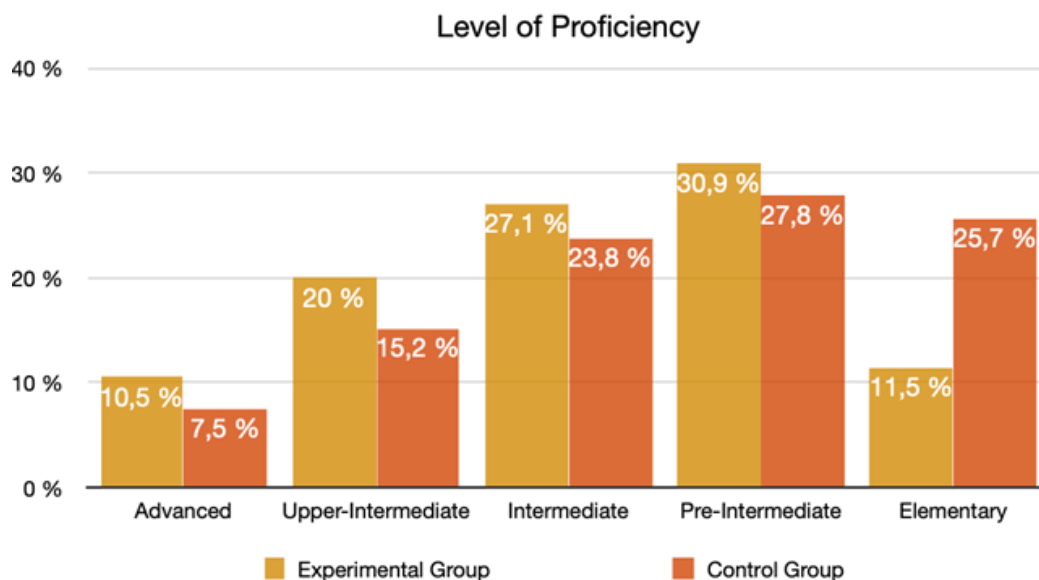


Figure 3. Analysis of the effectiveness of active methods and techniques based on a curricular experiment

To conduct the research a number of general scientific and specific methods were used: theoretical analysis and synthesis (collecting and scrutiny of the scientific literature); induction and deduction (diagnostics of students’ language proficiency before and after the introduction of active methods and techniques of teaching in the educational process); comparative method (drawing conclusions of communicative advancement of student from the experimental and control groups); systematization (processing and summarizing the research results).

Participants

Students of the following state and private universities were involved in the study: State University of Trade and Economics (SUTE, Department of Hotel and Restaurant Business), Chernivtsi Institute of Trade and Economics (CTEI, Management, Tourism, and Restaurant Services Department), Vistula School of Hospitality in Warsaw (Hotel and Catering Business Department), WSB University in Gdansk (Tourism and Hotel Management Department), VATEL International School of Hotel and Tourism Management (Madrid, Hotel and Tourism Management Department) (Figure 4). In total, there

were 70 student participants of the experiment from different countries, such as Ukraine, Poland, and Spain.

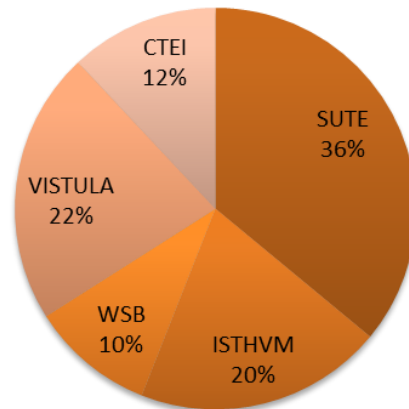


Figure 4. Distribution of students in educational institutions

Instruments

The instruments used to conduct the research are: survey (the questionnaire in the form of the PDF file was applied to conduct a survey in order to identify the most effective teaching methods, the results of the survey were analyzed via the mathematical method of statistical data processing.); observation over two groups of students taking part in the experiment on the efficiency of active methods and procedures; tests (an introductory and end-of-the-term ones to measure the students language proficiency).

The active methods of teaching were studied through the method of analysis. The method of synthesis was used to group the active methods and techniques of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes to the service sphere specialists. The comparison of both students' and teachers' assessment of efficient methods of learning and teaching the language proves the validity and reliability of the research. Moreover, the validity of the questionnaire is proved by the following criteria: content, construct and criterion.

Data Collection and Analysis

The work is based on a student assessment of traditional methods of teaching English. The authors introduced specific active methods and techniques into the learning process of the service sphere students during the first term. Subsequently, one more student assessment was accomplished.

Following that, the same methods and techniques were requested to the teachers who had to choose the most popular and efficient ones in their view. The written questionnaire was realized to inquire preference of teachers, their proactive stance and prospects for professional development as well as students' match to teaching methods. The contemporary active methods and techniques of teaching a foreign language are displayed in the table (see Table 1).

Ethical criteria

In particular, participation in the survey and experiment was voluntary. The students were orally informed on the goal of the research and participated in the classes within a regular learning environment, therefore, there was no need in the written consent. The authors observed the rules of anonymity and confidentiality to follow the ethical standards of the study.

Results

The methodological basis of the research is a complex approach to the competences study and formation in learning English via active methods of teaching. Determining the place of active methods in teaching foreign language to students of the service sphere specialties, the imitation of future professional activity was considered to allow developing a necessary communicative style that is appropriate for customers and documentation management.

It was established that the experimental groups showed higher increase in the level of foreign language proficiency compared to the control groups. Elementary students are the exception to the overall tendency, which can be explained by the lack of professional vocabulary and basic grammar knowledge to actively participate in active learning environment (see Figure 1).

A survey of teachers determined that the most preferable methods of active teaching are: group work, round table and, the creative and productive method of professional situation simulation. The less desirable method is independent work. The popularity of the methods was discernible in Figure 2. To identify how the preferable methods and techniques differ from those which are conventionally used, the students were interviewed. Survey findings, represented in Figure 4, proved that the most preferable methods of active learning are the following: group work, role playing and business games, while the less popular method is annotating.

The difference between desirable active methods for students and the most widespread ones among teachers is as follows. Both categories are nearly on a par with group work, role-playing,

business games, and case studies while they are having a serious disagreement concerning digital methods. Student preferences show a high level of concernment in such modern teaching methods of a foreign language as podcasting (69%), blended learning (66%), mobile learning (57%), and video interview (36%). It is presumable in consequence of a digitalization era and a constrained switch to distance learning because of COVID - 19. Diverse figures in assessing the independent work (teachers – 12%, students – 39%) assumably indicate the development of the ability to study individually. Unequal variables in brainstorming (teachers – 48%, students – 25%) imply the teachers' persistency to introduce into practice not only production of the ideas but problem solving as well, while students sometimes are not ready to respond to inquiries on the spur of the moment.

The situation with formulating questions (teachers – 49%, students – 24%) is explained with its difficulty to recall grammar for students and look ahead for an appropriate question simultaneously. But for the service sphere, it is one of the key competences: an art of asking accurate questions to satisfy the client's needs. That is why the opinion of teachers in relevancy to develop this obligatory skill is well substantiated. As for annotating (teachers – 51%, students – 9%), it is a useful method of teaching students of philological specialties, but the percentage of its usage should be reduced due to the specific professional level of future specialists in the service sphere.

The place of active methods in teaching foreign language to students of the service sphere specialties is determined through the results of the experiment. It specifies the necessity of plunging into the future profession while learning foreign language terminology in particular. Generally, teachers (86%) and students (82%) are united in the regularity of applying active methods such as group work, and similarly others: role-playing (75%, 80%), business games (74%, 75%), situational tasks (55%, 50%). Whereas in contrast to these ones digital methods and techniques are preferential merely for students.

Following the results of the end-of-the-term test the experimental group showed the increase of the proficiency level compared to the control one. All competencies: listening comprehension, professional speaking, reading, analysis and annotating of special literature and documentation maintenance were improved through the use of active methods of teaching. The percentage difference of groups is from 3% to 5% in all the levels except the elementary one, where the traditional teaching methods proved to be more effective. Thus, the research proves the

effectiveness of active teaching methods and techniques and their implementation in teaching process.

Discussion

The purpose of the research was to define the most efficient methods of active teaching and learning. Having analyzed the results of the surveys conducted among teachers and students the following active teaching methods were outlined. Group work proves to be the most efficient both for students and teachers. It testifies the opinion of Eshonkulova (2020) that this teaching technique is useful in the process of forming and improving the professional English language of the service sphere students, as their future profession is associated with oral communication with clients. In particular, the dialogue is of great importance.

Types of dialogues related to the service sector are the following: dialogue-questioning, dialogue-conversation, dialogue-help, dialogue-clarification, situation-based dialogue. After all, the future profession of today's students requires the ability to ask questions, suggest, clarify, etc. Therefore, the use of such dialogues in the classroom facilitates the adaptation to the natural conditions of business communication of future professionals. Polylogue is also an important type of educational activity for students of this specialty, as it involves three or more participants in a conversation on a professional topic, which contributes to the development of the necessary communication skills to deal with guests (Pauliková, 2018).

A Creative and Productive method is widely used in the development of skills of coherent professional speech and is highlighted by teachers as one of the most effective options. The Creative and Productive method is realized in educational business games, dialogues, polylogues, and various creative situational tasks, round-table discussions which are aimed at forming students' ability to express opinions in a professional English language (Rendleshort, 2020; Ahmadian & Long, 2021). Creativity is the highest level of thinking; it should be at the forefront of all learning environments and a final goal to achieve. That is why, the tutor should be ready to respond to any requests, value some steps for developing creativity through practicing a question-friendly environment and using unconventional learning material. Contemporary learning material is a must for creativity encouragement (Ted Talks, BBC Newsroom Live, British Council Free Resources, National Geographic Channel, etc.).

Presenting the students preferences the role-playing game is the intensive method gaining more and more attention. In the methodological literature, role-playing is defined as the spontaneous behavior of students, their reaction to the behavior of other people involved in a hypothetical situation (Pauliková, 2018). The role-play applied in course of teaching experiment encouraged students to speak freely within the given circumstances, acting as one of the participants in communication. Solving a problem situation provided maximum efficiency of students' communicative activity, making it more natural and motivated.

Authors's findings are grounded by scientific opinion. Thus, researchers have developed the following rules of role-playing games: students must be able to put themselves in a situation that may arise in a real life; students must adapt to their role in the proposed situation, and in one case they can play themselves, in another one – take on an imaginary role; role-play participants need to behave as if it all happened in real life, their behavior should match to their role (Kostikova et al., 2019). Depending on the purpose of education and the level of preparation of students, role-playing games can be held in pairs and groups.

Consequently, role-playing provides learning in action, which improves its quality. It is a motivating factor, because the game is of interest to students, especially in terms of the unpredictability of the solution (Svirepchuk & Boiko, 2016). It gives students confidence, which speech models can be used to express a particular opinion in this very situation and is usually accompanied by emotional uplift. Therefore, the use of role-playing games in the classroom contributes to the formation of English-language professional communication of future specialists in various fields.

An important condition for intensifying the formation of English-language professional communication of the specialist is business games, chosen by the students' experimental group. Educational business games close to working environment allow to trace the connection between separate disciplines; to serve as fundamentals for demonstrating innovations; to show how theoretical provisions can be applied in almost real conditions. They help to model the necessary work environment situations that students of different non-philological specialties will need in their professional activities. They create conditions for shared activities of students, aimed at achieving communicative goals (Kramarenko & Rezunova, 2019).

Researchers identify the following main features of the business game: the distribution of roles between game participants; interaction of game participants performing certain roles; the presence of a common goal of the game team (Pauliková, 2018). Interaction of personal qualities of students is shown

at all stages of the business game: at the comprehension of the purposes and tasks, development of decisions in own game group and discussion of the decisions accepted by other groups, a choice of a leader, ability to organize the joint activity. Notably, its results depend on the nature of the interaction of the game participants.

The study is limited to a number of service sphere students only. The research involved 70 participants and to make the future survey results more trustworthy further experiments may be conducted among a greater number of students of other fields of study. To enhance the validity of the findings the future research can be based on the online sampling performed in the Google Forms questionnaire.

Conclusions

The research is significant because the active methods of teaching English to specialists in the service sphere facilitate true to professional life activity and develop foreign language skills. The outcomes of the survey on the most effective methods of active learning among teachers and students revealed the difference in preferences. The students' priorities are role-playing and business games and the teachers' choice includes group work, round tables and, a creative and productive method. Nevertheless, all these methods and techniques of active teaching and learning are in top 5 as stated in the research.

According to the experiment results the group work, role-playing and business games improve the language proficiency of students of service sphere specialties. It is revealed through developing the skills of coherent professional speech in practice; holding classes in a challenging and meaningful problem-solving way; finding interconnections between participants of the teaching and learning process and stimulating students' motivation to study. The issue for further study is to implement the active techniques and methods of teaching foreign languages to university students of other specialties, such as law, customs affairs and entrepreneurship and justify their effectiveness.

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