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SITUATED TECHNOLOGY IN MODELLING PROFESSIONALLY-ORIENTED INDEPENDENT STUDY FOR A1 FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract. The current paradigm of foreign language education in the Republic of Kazakhstan accentuates student-centered and competency-based approaches as a methodological background. This gives rise to a greater need for applying various communicative language teaching methods, encompassing a situated technology. This article aims at identifying whether a situated technology of FLT can be efficiently applied for the level of Elementary English (A1) in scope of professionally-oriented assignments for technical students' independent study. First, the published literature on the topic of situated language teaching approach was reviewed and analyzed. Then, to achieve the set objective, a professionally-oriented task was designed for bachelor students of Satbayev University using a modelling method. Furthermore, two online questionnaires were elaborated and distributed in order to accumulate both the teachers' and the students' feedback on the assignment. Based on the results of the survey, an in-depth analysis has been carried out to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the professionally-oriented situational SIS and generate suggestions on its improvement. Eventually, the analysis has detected that the situated language teaching technology is quite effective in orienting the learners in their future jobs and enlarging their professional vocabulary. Moreover, situational tasks can be designed in a manner that also facilitates proper practice of the previously learnt general vocabulary and grammar within professional settings. Therefore, professionally-oriented situated tasks should be acknowledged as an effective tool in fostering intercultural professionally-communicative competence.

Key words: situated language learning, situational technology of teaching, professionally-oriented English, foreign language education, task-based learning, English for technical students, professionally-oriented situations, situational teaching approach.

Introduction

At the current stage of development of our country the need for mastering at least one internationally recognized foreign language remains high. The knowledge of foreign languages has become a real prerequisite for achieving vital purposes: to be admitted to an abroad university or college, to get a work visa, to enhance career prospects, etc. In order to satisfy this growing demand, many opportunities have been created by both the government and the private business sector: in addition to legislatively approved educational programmes for the local universities and schools, quite a lot of private language centers are operating in all cities of Kazakhstan providing their services offline and online. Such a dynamic and progressive development of foreign language education in our country is due not only to the recognition of its important role by the population and to the state's support – it is also a great merit of Kazakhstani scientists in this field. For instance, in 2006, on the basis of Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and

World Languages, a group of scientists headed by S.S.Kunanbayeva elaborated a strategic document called “The concept of development of foreign language education of the Republic of Kazakhstan”, in which, based on the actual needs in the considered area, the main strategic priorities were identified, as well as a phased implementation plan was offered. The authors of the concept proposed student-centered and competency-based approaches to FLT as a methodological basis for the development of foreign language education in the country [1]. Both of these approaches can be effectively realized through the application of various communicative language teaching methods, including a situated technology of FLT.

This article will first discuss theoretical aspects of the use of a situated technology in foreign language acquisition. It will then provide the findings of an experiment of modelling and applying professionally-oriented situational tasks at the country’s best technical university - K.I.Satbayev Kazakh National Research Technical University (Satbayev University).

Basic provisions

Situated (or situational) teaching is based on the application of specially modelled situational tasks that allow the learners to apply the learnt grammar and vocabulary of the TL in conditions which resemble real life and professional situations.

Most of the authors relate the origination of situated teaching to an American psychologist John Dewey who first proposed the fundamentals of experiential learning in 1890s. Dewey stated that learning could be enhanced by using real life situations in the educational process as they evoked direct experience and, therefore, stimulated thinking [2].

Simiyu (2018) supports the idea that a situational teaching approach brings imagery into learning to make students better understand the material by the means of lively situations. This approach is based on the communicative theory and, therefore, it encourages realism while developing speaking, listening, writing and reading skills [3].

Furthermore, Abdallah (2015) and Tawil (2018) suggest that situated learning is closely related to task-based learning because both the approaches implicate the participants’ collaboration, cognitive activity and critical thinking. Both task-based and situated language learning aim at immersing students in authentic activities in order to provide contextualized settings for more efficient practical language acquisition [4, 5]. Supporting this idea, Richards and Rodgers (2001) confirm the importance of the originality of tasks, stating that if they do not reflect vivid situations, they might undermine the effectiveness of the entire learning process [6].

While taking part in situated assignments learners become more motivated as they realize that the knowledge and experience they gain can further be applied in real life communication, including interaction within professional settings. In this manner, situational tasks can be professionally oriented.

Professionally oriented situational activities include case studies, role-plays, production of monologues or dialogues in both written and spoken forms, group discussion, writing an email, etc. within a particular professional context. Thus, for

instance, if a student is studying on a specialty called “Architecture” these types of situational tasks will help him or her to not only master general vocabulary and grammar of the target language within the compulsory educational curriculum, but also to acquire some useful lexis and grammatical structures often used in such areas as “Design” or “Construction”. This result, in its turn, will further enable the future specialist to settle in and adjust to the foreign professional environment more smoothly. The learners will feel themselves more confident when starting work in an international company or during abroad business trips. Therefore, situational assignments can be considered as very efficient in building up intercultural professionally-communicative competence.

Nowadays, as globalization and internationalization are taking ground, innovative and effective teaching methods capable of fostering intercultural professionally-communicative competence are highly coveted for all professional spheres with no exception. However, currently in our country, a greater priority is being projected to the sphere of technical education. As in his recent formal speech, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev has declared the necessity to nurture and graduate more engineers, and for this, to establish more technical universities in Kazakhstan within the upcoming five years.

Description of research methods

Review and analysis of the literature

Published works of some authors have been reviewed and analyzed in order to determine the conceptual basics of the situational language teaching technology. The main findings have been briefly presented in the “Basic provisions” section of this article.

Modelling

According to the current paradigm of foreign language education in Kazakhstan, a method of modelling can be applied to the process of didactical creation of particular situations of real communication. In this way, a model of a communicative situation has been listed within the five basic objects of modelling in FLT by Kunanbayeva (2010) [7]. Moreover, if a process of intercultural communication is viewed as a series of communicative acts of interaction between communicants, then, a single act of communication within a separate communicative situation is able to reflect all the characteristics of the entire communication process [7, p.171].

The method of modelling has been used in design of an assignment for the students’ independent study (hereinafter – the “SIS”) called “I am a future scientist”.

Questionnaires among the students and the teaching staff

Two questionnaires were elaborated to get feedback on the experimental SIS task both from the teachers and the students. The questionnaires included multiple choice and open-ended questions, as well as Likert-type scales for evaluating the respondents’ satisfaction, agreement and disagreement or their neutral position. The survey was conducted online using the application called “Google Forms”.

Results

The following communicative situational professionally-oriented SIS has been designed for Satbayev University by the author of this article A.B.Kalkayeva using the modelling method:

SIS-1 'I am a future scientist'

Most of the students at Satbayev University are future scientists. It is important to be able to write a short post about yourself, including your interest in science, on social networking websites.

Instructions:

1. Choose 4 photos with you related to your future profession and science from any of your social networking accounts.
2. Write at least (minimum) 5 sentences to describe each photo.
3. In your description, include information about the date/time and place, about the surrounding people and things in those photos. Use active course vocabulary and technical terms that you know.
4. Use the Present Simple form of the verb to share information about your everyday/repeated activities and preferences. Use the Present Continuous form to write about the actions which you are doing in those photos.
5. Upload your 4 photos with the written description on your social networking page. Make screenshots of these 4 posts and add them to the SIS-1 file.
6. Upload the "SIS-1" MS Word file in MS Teams or send it to your teacher's email.

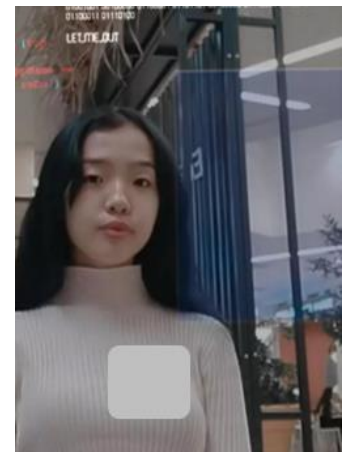
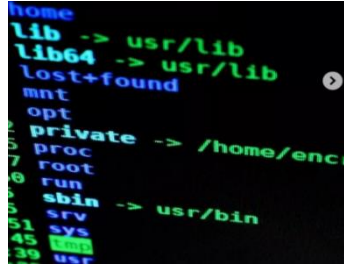
Picture 1 – A situational task “I am a future scientist”


This task was created for Elementary English students and implemented at the university in the spring semester of academic year 2021-2022. The aims of this SIS were set as the following:

- to practice the verb “to be”, modal verbs “can”/ “can’t”, the Present Simple and the Present Continuous forms in writing;
- to practice the active course vocabulary and technical terms in writing;
- to develop skills of writing posts on social networks in English;
- to enable the students learn and write the main information about their future profession in English.

Therefore, the task was targeted at the freer writing practice of the grammar and vocabulary learnt by that moment and the instructions were also graded for the Elementary English level (A1). As grading the target language is very important at lower levels for the learners' correct understanding and full comprehension.

An example of the implemented SIS-1 by one of the students is presented in picture 2:




 **aru_sagatbek_** My name is Aruzhan. I work at Sberbank. My specialty is cyber security. My company keeps clients' money. My task is to protect the bank's website so that hackers do not steal our clients' money.

Edited · 2m

aru_sagatbek_ I can work for 2 companies at the same time. Because the work of a cyber specialist does not require much time. Every day I check the protection of the site. Cyber attacks do not happen so often and I have a lot of free time. In my spare time I write websites and sell it.

1m


 **aru_sagatbek_** My job is not simple. Every day new technologies and programming languages appear. An IT specialist cannot keep up with technology. I learn new programming languages every day. I like my job.

Edited · 27s

aru_sagatbek_ Sometimes this work is difficult. Every day I check the servers and improve security. Servers often do not have problems. So I often monitor the server, but I love my job. My job is the best in the world.

Edited · 47s



 Liked by **_qanatovnaaa_04** and 1 other

25 MINUTES AGO

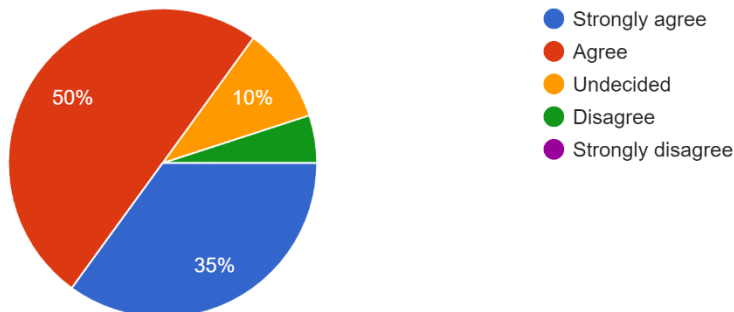
Picture 2 – A real example of SIS-1 “I am a future scientist”

At the end of the semester a survey was designed and conducted using Google forms among the teaching staff to generate their perspectives about this professionally-oriented situational assignment. The questionnaire was semi-anonymous, as the field for entering the full name was optional. There were some statistical questions at the beginning (on the respondents' age, teaching experience, position at the university, etc.), followed by queries to generate feedback for conducting a further analysis of the effectiveness of the situational task. Overall, 20 teachers of the Elementary English link took part in it: 1 associate professor, 6 senior lecturers, 8 lecturers and 5 tutors. At the moment of responding 5 teachers possessed experience of teaching English of more than 30 years, 13 teachers – of 6-30 years and only 2 teachers were at the start of their teaching career (1-5 years of experience).

Questions for evaluating the efficiency of the situational SIS were formulated and responded to as the following (Pictures 3-8):

To what extent do you agree with the statement: “The SIS assignment “I am a future scientist” helps to immerse the learners into a real life professionally-oriented situation”?

20 ответов



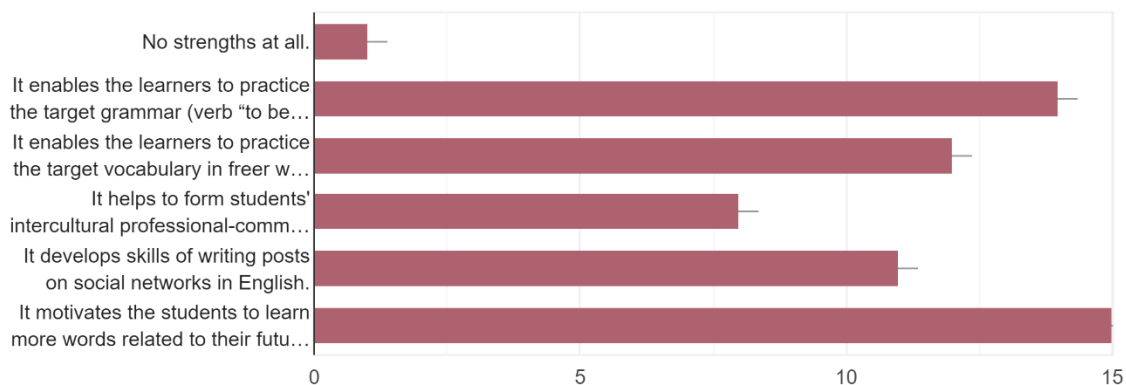
Picture 3 – SIS evaluation by the teachers: question 1

What are the most important reasons for your answer in the previous question?
This assignment is really professionally-oriented, as it enables the learners to make independent research on their future profession.
Topic
The topic is very useful and interesting
Students are not ready to write on this topic
It's difficult for elementary learners to talk about
First, our students will not be necessary scientists. Secomadly, is not clear what is meant by professionally-oriented situations. Thirdly, most students do not have enough vocabulary to write about their future profession.
Students are able to share their point of view about their future career, their vision of the future
Content based task
It helps in professional and self grow.
To share my own opinion and to get my colleagues' point of view
Immersing into profession
Students like talking about their specialities.
It encourages them to act as autonomous learners cause they have to search lexis related to their major even though they are of Elementary level and it's one of the positive aspects of the SIS.
Since the students will acquire some knowledge about their future profession as well as some scientific skills in a specific professional field.
Since students are studying at a research university, each of them has a great opportunity to develop as a scientist in the future. This assignment immerses students in the field of their future profession.
In the second semester, all students had the opportunity to practise technical terms in writing. The students wrote a post including their interests in science and posted on instagram. The students developed their writing skills in a real-life context.
Usage of professional term and specific vocabulary
Students' aims and future professions are interrelated
This SIS sets the learners in the real life environment making them think about their future profession in the TL.
It is a well designed assionment that enables the students to think and talk about their future job in English.

Picture 4 – SIS evaluation by the teachers: question 2

What do you think are the strengths of SIS-1 ("I am a future scientist")? You can choose more than 1 answer and insert additional information in "Other/Другое":

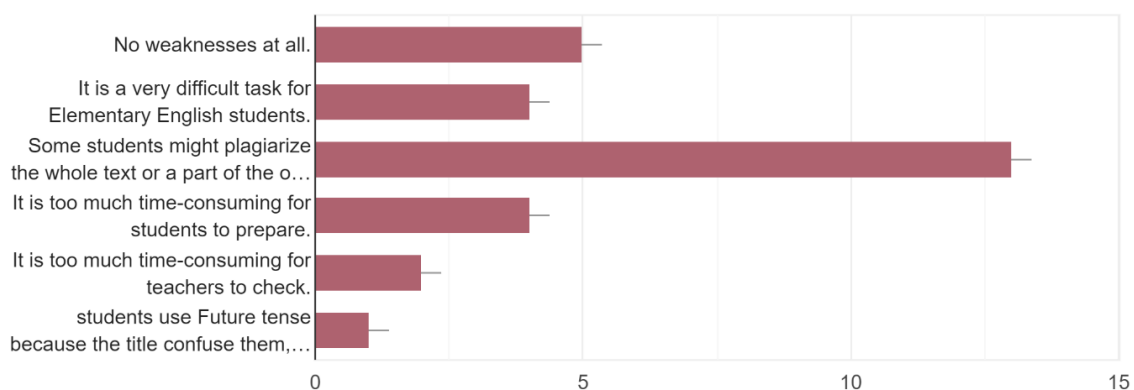
20 ответов



Picture 5 – SIS evaluation by the teachers: question 3

What do you think are the weaknesses of SIS-1 ("I am a future scientist")? You can choose more than 1 answer and insert additional information in "Other/Другое":

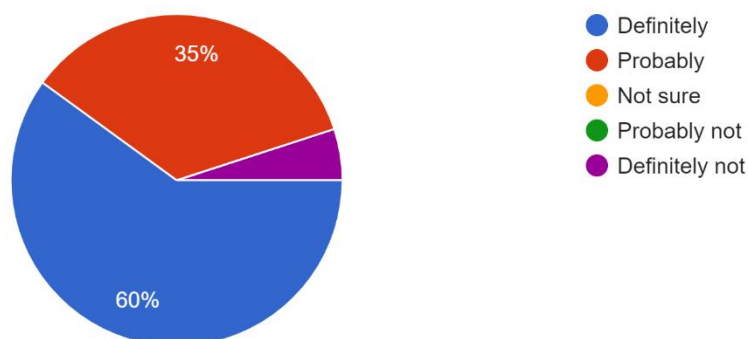
20 ответов



Picture 6 – SIS evaluation by the teachers: question 4

Do you recommend applying this assignment as one of SIS projects in the next semester?

20 ответов



Picture 7 – SIS evaluation by the teachers: question 5

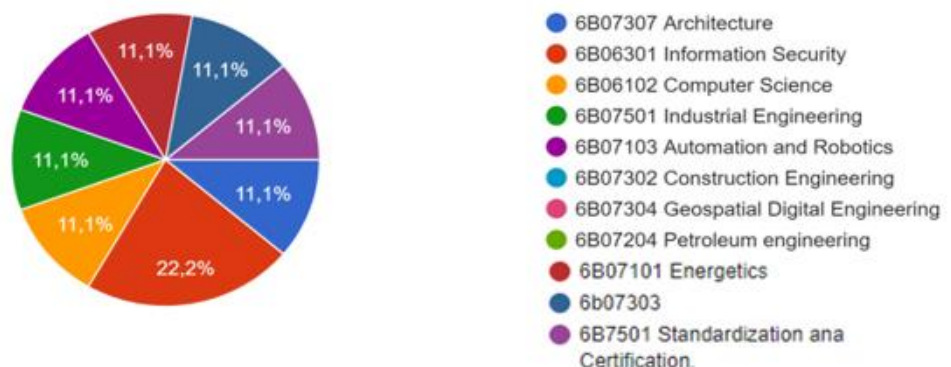
What are the most important reasons for your answer in the previous question? What are your suggestions on modifying this SIS (if any)?
Maybe, we should elaborate a basic vocabulary bank for each specialty and give it to our students for using in this SIS, so that they don't need to search for the suitable professional words on their own.
Applying grammar and vocabulary learned
To change the title of the work, not to use future scientist. Instead to title as "My profession is the best", something like this.
May be it should be changed
I strongly recommend to include at least one socio-emotional question.
I think it should be specified. For example, in the first post students should introduce themselves and explain why they decided to become an engineer/IT specialist, etc. The second photo should depict equipment used in the profession and its function/s. In the third picture there might be some professional activities, etc. In the next there might be famous people representing a particular professional sphere, etc.
-
Fruitful
No
To investigate and make the analysis of the texts on the similar topic
Grammar, vocabulary and speaking development
-
For building up students' ability to identify and employ major - related vocabulary in their future jobs, students can be asked to compile a technical terms glossary consisting of approximately 12-15 words with translation and comments.
I don't think that there is a need to modify this SIS.
From my own experience, I can say that many students presented their future profession with great interest. They demonstrated the labs and the teachers who they usually work with. In my opinion, this assignment motivates learners to develop and they like learning the new vocabulary related to their future profession.
-
Sts need tasks which involve them into their prof and as well develop linguistic skills
Students should understand and know the role of the future professional their lives.
It is a very interactive and interesting task for both teh students and the teachers.
My students liked this task. They have learnt the key vocabulary about their future profession and have made a profound research about their professional area while preparing for it.

Picture 8 – SIS evaluation by the teachers: question 6

As for the students' questionnaire, 459 prospective bachelors took part in the fully anonymous survey. They were 1st year students from various faculties and of different majors as presented in picture 9:

What is your specialty?

459 ОТВЕТОВ

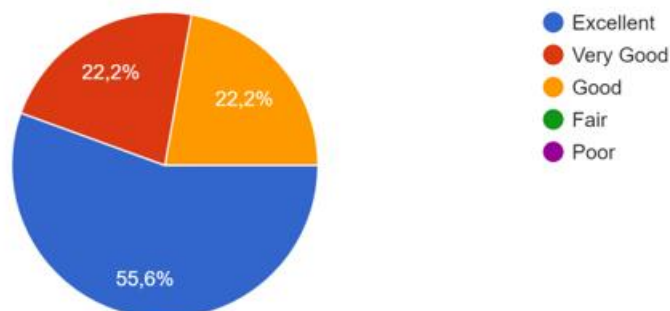


Picture 9 – Specialties of the responding students

The students were asked to rate the professionally-oriented SIS from “poor” to “excellent” and their ratings are provided in picture 10:

Please, rate the SIS-1 assignment (“I am a future scientist”) / Өтініш, SIS-1 (“I am a future scientist”)
СӨЖЫН бағалаңыз:

459 отбетов

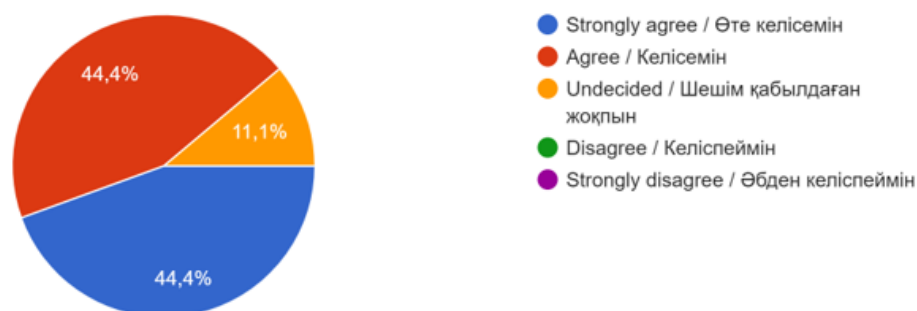


Picture 10 – SIS evaluation by the students: question 1

After that, a question followed on whether the students considered SIS-1 beneficial for their future professional work. The responses are demonstrated in picture 11:

Do you agree with this statement: “SIS-1 is useful for students’ future professional work”? / Сіз осы мәлімдемемен келісесіз бе: “SIS-1 “I am a futur...тердің болашақ кәсіби жұмыстары үшін пайдалы”?

459 отбетов



Picture 11 – SIS evaluation by the students: question 2

The last was a clarifying open-ended question on the reasons for the students’ ratings. All the answers can be grouped up in 6 categories:

- “Because while doing this SIS I learnt a lot of useful information about my future job” (41%);
- “Because I learnt some technical terms and words related to my future job in English” (19%);
- “Because this task made me think about my future profession in a more profound manner” (18%);
- “No reasons” (11%);
- “It was an interesting assignment” (9%);
- “The task is very clear and gives proper instructions” (2%).

Discussion

The results of the implementation of the professionally-oriented situated SIS explicitly prove the effectiveness of situational language teaching. Having implemented this SIS with their students, 85% of the teaching staff agree that the modelled assignment immerses the learners into a real-life professional situation (picture 3). Only 3 of 20 teachers think that this kind of task is difficult for Elementary English students - mainly because of the shortage of vocabulary to talk about their future profession. The remaining majority (17 instructors) have expressed very positive comments regarding the capability of this SIS to create a professional-like environment around the learners. As the latter had the opportunity to search for the lexis related to their future jobs and apply it in freer writing. According to the respondents, this process eventually facilitated thinking about the future profession in the target language (picture 4).

Findings on the strengths of the situational SIS resemble its previously stated benefits. As 75% of the teachers acknowledge that the task motivates students to learn more words related to their prospective profession on their own. 70% of the instructors believe that it enables the learners to practice the target grammar (verb “to be”, modal verbs “can”/ “can’t”, the Present Simple and the Present Continuous forms) in freer writing. And 55% have tracked its efficacy in developing skills of writing posts on social networks in English (picture 5).

As far as the weaknesses are concerned, more than half of the votes (65%) support the idea that some students might plagiarize the whole text or a part of the original written task from other students while preparing this type of a situated task. Roughly a quarter of the teachers (25%) have found no weaknesses at all (picture 6).

Consequently, 95% of the teaching staff recommend applying this professionally-oriented assignment in the upcoming semester (picture 7). However, they suggest some modifications to it, particularly one recommendation has been advised twice: to elaborate a basic vocabulary bank for each specialty and give it to the students for using in this SIS, so that they don't need to search for the suitable professional words on their own. The author of this SIS fully agrees with this suggestion and will consider it while designing such type of tasks for the next term (picture 8).

The students' feedback on situational SIS “I am a future scientist” is also positive: 55,6% have rated it as “Excellent”, while the remaining 22,2% and 22,2% - “Very good” and “Good” respectively (picture 9). Most of the learners reckon that the professionally-oriented assignment is very useful for their future professional development: 44,4% strongly agree, 44,4 agree, while 11,1% are undecided (picture 10). Among the reasons for this supportive attitude most of the respondents have mentioned non-linguistic arguments (getting knowledge about their future profession – 41%, thinking about their future profession more profoundly – 18%). Only one fifth of the students (19%) have highlighted a language-related reason – learning some technical terms and words about their jobs in English.

Conclusion

To conclude, a situated technology in modelling professionally-oriented SIS has proved its effectiveness for Elementary English learners despite their quite moderate knowledge of general and professional vocabulary in the target language. The most important requirement is that a situated task should be designed considering the learners' level of English according to the internationally recognized gradation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (the CEFR). Moreover, based on the findings of the real experiment described in this article, it is recommended to elaborate separate lists of basic technical terms for each specialty as attachments to the main situational assignment. For both learners and teachers, the most attractive features of this kind of tasks are the opportunities for the participants' professional orientation and the acquisition of professional vocabulary. It is also a good way of practicing the previously learnt general vocabulary and grammar within professional context. Thus, professionally-oriented situated tasks should be acknowledged as an effective tool in fostering intercultural professionally-communicative competence of foreign language learners.

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А1 ДЕНГЕЙДЕГІ ШЕТ ТІЛІН ҮЙРЕНУШІЛЕРГЕ АРНАЛҒАН КӘСІБИ БАҒДАРЛЫ ӨЗІНДІК ЖҰМЫСТЫ МОДЕЛЬДЕУДЕГІ СИТУАЦИЯЛЫҚ ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ

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Аңдатпа. Қазақстан Республикасындағы шет тілін оқытудың қазіргі заманғы парадигмасы әдістемелік негіз ретінде студентке бағытталған және құзыреттілікке негізделген тәсілдерді бекітеді. Бұл тілді оқытудың әртүрлі коммуникативті әдістерін, соның ішінде ситуациялық технологияны қолданудың үлкен қажеттілігін тудырады. Бұл мақала техникалық мамандық студенттерінің өздік жұмысына кәсіби-бағдарланған тапсырмалар аясында «Бастауыш ағылшын тілі» («Elementary English», А1) деңгейінде шет тілін оқытудың жағдаяттық технологиясын тиімді пайдалану мүмкіндіктерін анықтауға бағытталған. Алдымен тілді жағдаяттық оқыту тәсілі тақырыбы бойынша жарияланған әдебиеттерге шолу жасалып, талдау жасалды. Одан кейін қойылған мақсатқа жету үшін Satbayev University бакалавриат студенттеріне модельдеу әдісін қолдану арқылы кәсіби бағытталған тапсырма әзірленді. Сонымен қатар, осы тапсырма бойынша оқытушылар мен студенттердің пікірлерін жинау үшін екі онлайн сауалнама әзірленіп, таратылды. Сауалнама нәтижелері бойынша кәсіптік бағдарланған ситуациялық СӨЖ-ның күшті және әлсіз жақтарын анықтау және оны жетілдіру бойынша ұсыныстар әзірлеу мақсатында терең талдау жүргізілді. Нәтижесінде талдау тілді жағдаяттық оқыту технологиясы студенттердің болашақ мамандығына бағыт-бағдар беріп кәсіби сөздік қорын молайтуда айтарлықтай тиімді екенін көрсетті. Сонымен қатар, жағдаяттық тапсырмаларды бұрын үйренген жалпы тіл мен грамматикасын кәсіби контекстте дұрыс қолдануды қамтамасыз ететіндей етіп құрастыруға болады. Сондықтан кәсіби бағдарланған ситуациялық тапсырмаларды мәдениетаралық кәсіби-коммуникативтік құзыреттілікті қалыптастырудың тиімді құралы ретінде таныған жөн.

Тірек сөздер: тілді жағдаяттық оқыту, жағдаяттық оқыту технологисы, кәсіби-бағытталаған ағылшын тілі, шет тілін оқыту, тапсырмаға негізделген оқыту, техникалық студенттерге арналған ағылшын тілі, кәсіби-бағдарланған жағдаяттар, оқытудағы ситуациялық тәсіл.

СИТУАТИВНАЯ ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ В МОДЕЛИРОВАНИИ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОЙ САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОЙ РАБОТЫ ДЛЯ ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ ИНОСТРАННЫЙ ЯЗЫК НА УРОВНЕ А1

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Аннотация. Современная парадигма иноязычного образования в Республике Казахстан выделяет личностно-ориентированный и компетентностный подходы в качестве методологической основы. Это порождает большую потребность в применении различных коммуникативных методов обучения языку, включая ситуативную технологию. Данная статья направлена на выявление возможностей эффективного применения ситуативной технологии обучения иностранному языку на уровне «Elementary English» (A1) в рамках профессионально-ориентированных заданий для самостоятельной работы студентов технических специальностей. Вначале была изучена и проанализирована литература на тему ситуативного подхода в обучении иностранному языку. Затем для достижения поставленной цели было разработано профессионально-ориентированное задание для студентов бакалавриата Satbayev University с использованием метода моделирования. Кроме того, были разработаны и распределены две онлайн-анкеты для сбора отзывов о данном задании от преподавателей и студентов. По результатам анкетирования проведен углубленный анализ с целью определения сильных и слабых сторон профессионально-ориентированной ситуационной СРС и выработки предложений по ее совершенствованию. В итоге анализ показал, что технология ситуативного обучения языку достаточно эффективна для ориентации обучающихся в будущую профессию и расширения их профессионального словарного запаса на иностранном языке. Более того ситуационные задания могут быть составлены таким образом, чтобы обеспечить надлежащую практику ранее изученного общезыкового вокабуляра и грамматики в профессиональном контексте. Следовательно, профессионально-ориентированные ситуативные задания следует признать эффективным средством формирования межкультурной профессионально-коммуникативной компетенции.

Ключевые слова: ситуативное обучение языку, ситуационная технология обучения, профессионально-ориентированный английский язык, обучение иностранному языку, обучение на основе заданий, английский язык для студентов технических специальностей, профессионально-ориентированные ситуации, ситуативный подход к обучению.

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