

## Management of Students' Independent Work through the Project Technology in Foreign Language Education

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### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the management of students' independent work in the specialty "Journalism" on the subject "Special Foreign Language" in high school through project-based learning, which is one of the most important and modern types of tasks. The goal of this work is theoretically and experimentally proved the effectiveness of the project work for the complex formation of the intercultural communicative competence. The data that is listed in this article have been identified during the author' research practice. In conducting this study the age and interest of the students took into account and, accordingly, intercultural communicative and reflexive-developing competences were formed. Intercultural communicative competence involves the ability of students to produce their own texts in oral and written form in accordance with a given communication task, as well as the knowledge, abilities and skills acquired in the classroom of a foreign language for academic purposes. The author conducted a comparative survey among students and on the efficiency of project work during independent work, which is the result of research.

### KEYWORDS

Management, independent work, project activity, intercultural and communicative competence

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### Introduction

Changing the ratio of classroom and independent work towards increasing the share of self-learning in the educational process influenced on the training of future specialists, competitive on the labor market, competence in the field of their professional activities, mobile and mission-minded, oriented in the flow of scientific and specific information capable of individual creativity in self-solving tasks, ready for professional growth and self-developing throughout life (Masalimova & Chibakov, 2016). Modernization of education stipulates the formation of students' independent work as a leading activity in the educational process.

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The main strategic directions of professional training of our university is to create a harmonious personality with highly developed creativity and analytical thinking types, basic training, able to respond flexibly to rapidly changing working conditions and requirements for the professional level of specialists, with a developed ideological culture of the existing system of human values.

Thus, the teachers and students have before them the challenge of strengthening student-problem-oriented training that meets the needs of the employer that is through the use of various methods of learning, teaching and assessment.

### ***The Problem***

After analyzing the literature on this issue, we have been revealed by the fact that in the universities the control and monitoring of the independent work are not given enough attention. Accordingly, level of motivation for mastering foreign language education is reducing and there is lack of incentives for foreign language communication with representatives of different countries. Also in universities there is acute shortage of creative and enterprising students. The majority of students must generate personality and specific competencies required in further studies and work during training in undergraduate.

The study in the research practice led us to consider the problem of the management and monitoring of students' independent work on specialty "Journalism" on the subject "Special foreign language" at the university through the project activity.

Pre-emptive use of project work is to establish an educational environment in which students have a need for training due to immersion in the information environment. This method activates self-skills of students and teachers in their interactions.

The selection and maintenance of the problems being solved in the course of project activity of students, is anticipatory and provides a practical project participation with professional orientation and helps students acquire initial professional experience.

### ***Actuality***

As mentioned above, the changes in the character of the modern labor market new demands on university graduates are placing. Today, the ability to work in a team is one of the requirements when applying for a job. Syllabuses usually do not provide the development of team work methods, so students often begin their careers, badly imagining the importance of timely implementation of corporative projects within the allotted time. As a result, they face serious problems regarding the timing and quality of work. It should be noted that the team qualities are needed for any high school graduate, no matter to what professional activities, he is going to work. Also, research shows that most students are not able to solve professional tasks in a foreign language and to participate effectively in cross-cultural communication. One of the possible solutions to problems can act the integration of competences 'willingness to work in a team" through project learning and the mechanisms of formation of intercultural communicative competence. Their relationship will enable an opportunity to increase the share of independence and activity of students in the educational process and increase the level of motivation of students to

communicate, as well as the very project learning promotes effective formation of independent thinking in students, the whole range of intellectual abilities of critical and creative thinking. This is evidenced by the large number of studies on the issue of inclusion of project technology in the educational process.

Problems of the project activity realization are at the center of scientific interest of many domestic and foreign researchers. In academic writings of J. Dewey (1929) and others are considered self-reflection of the project activity that allows students to talk about the project approach, as well as scientific papers of E.S. Polat (2000), W.H. Kilpatrick (1918, 1925) and others were discussed the theory of modern pedagogical technologies.

The novelty of learning of foreign language communication with using of project technology is that students have the opportunity to determine themselves the content of foreign language communication, select the material that will be useful in their future careers. Students work on the problem on their own, independently, find the necessary material, analyze it, actively participating in making a decision. Also, project technology creates the conditions under which students gain communication skills by working in different groups, develop research skills (the ability to identify problems, gather information, observations, experiments, analysis, construction of hypotheses, generalizations), develops system thinking. Considering the specificity of the subject of "Special foreign language", it may be noted that the project technology makes it possible to use a foreign language in situations of real cross-cultural communication, while students practice to verify the degree of formation of skills outside the class using species such as observation, surveys, interviews, questionnaires carriers language, collaborating with public institutions, collection and evaluation of material and other actions.

### **Theory**

An analysis of the existing literature on the issue of the research of the usage of project technology in teaching foreign language communication showed that nowadays in the methodology there is no single universally accepted definition of the concept of "project technology".

The first project method has been described by American psychologist and teacher W.H. Kilpatrick in the "Method of projects. W.H. Kilpatrick (1918) gave the definition of the concept "projects" as "heartily executed plan" and divided the project into four phases: design, planning, execution, evaluation.

According to J. Dewey (1929), method of projects is a joint activity of a teacher and students, aimed at finding a solution to the problem, the problem situation and the implementation of the results in a particular product.

E.S. Polat (2000) emphasis on students' independent activities, accompanied by the detailed problem's design with the completion as a real, practical results.

A.A. Khromov determines the method of projects as a "training system" flexible model of organization of educational process focused on creative self-realization of students' personality, the development of intellectual and physical abilities, volitional qualities and creative abilities in the process of creating a new product having objective and subjective novelty and having a practical significance under the teacher supervision (Strelova, Tsyrenova & Aushyeva, 2009).

K.N. Polivanova considers the project as a form of self-organization of practical work of students, where the ways of activity turn into a means of solving this problem as a result. The project-based learning technology, as an integrative fifth-generation technology (V.V. Guzeev), includes elements of other technologies (Polivanova, 2008).

V.V. Kopylova determines the project methodology as a focused, in general students' independent activity, which carries out under the supervision of a flexible socially significant pragmatic problem and leads to obtain concrete results in the form of a perfect product (Kopylova, 2004).

Any project activity involves some research, the study of all aspects of the problem in the search for its solution. However, depending on the dominant focus of the project, its specific organization, projects are divided into types that distinguish one from the other projects and defining features of the organization of project activities (Strelova, Tsyrenova & Aushyeva, 2009).

Project activity fully reflects the basic principles of personal-oriented approach based on the principles of humanistic direction. Revealing the essence of the person-centered approach, it is important to emphasize the effectiveness of its implementation through the use of project technology. Renowned Austrian teacher, R. Steiner believed that children should be taught to apply their knowledge in solving practical problems. The child needs to know "where?" and "how" he will be able to apply his knowledge in practice (Kunanbayeva, 2010; Slavina & Khairova, 2016).

In our research, we relied on the principles underlying the project technology of learning foreign language communication in language high school. The most important are:

- principle of activity;
- principle of accessibility;
- principle of system;
- principle of validity;
- principle of predictability.

The project activity is an independent, collaborative, creative, educational activity, problem in the form of material presentation, practically by the method of its application.

We can add the fact that the project is aimed at achieving the goals of the learners themselves, and that is why it is unique. The project forms an incredibly large number of skills and abilities, and therefore it is effective. The project gives students the experience of, and therefore it is indispensable. The project is a "five Ps": Problem; Planning; Pursuit (search for information); Product; Presentation. The Sixth "P" of the project is the student Portfolio.

Specification of typology is required using the method of projects in foreign language education:

- dominant in the project activity: research, search, creative, role-playing and application.
- subjective and informative: monoprospects, interdisciplinary project;
- nature of the project coordination: direct (rigid, flexible), hidden (implicit that simulates a project participant, which is typical for telecommunication

projects): projects with a clear coordination and projects with hidden coordination;

- nature of the contacts (group, stream, faculty, university);
- number of project participants: individual, pair, group;
- project duration: short, medium and long term.

In foreign language education international telecommunication projects are the most interesting based on Internet technologies. Selection of a project-based learning depends on the mastery of foreign language education, individual characteristics of students and future careers. The project aim is to create technology of personal educational product. Project work puts the student into situation of using the target language, promotes awareness of the goals and capabilities of its study in its own activity and includes the development of language in the process of creative activity.

### **Methodological Framework**

The effectiveness of the model of intercultural communicative competence through project technology has been tested in the course of research practice.

The aim of the experimental work was that, the development of creative, analytical and predictive capacity provides in parallel with the development of intercultural communicative competence. It tells the estimation of the efficiency of using computer technologies and multimedia for the organization of independent educational activity of students at language high school, as well as the educational process management mechanism will be the method of project work as an educational process is based on the conceptual provisions of the cognitive and lingvocultural methodology implemented within the framework of competent and learner-centered approaches.

The base of the experimental work conducted at Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages, specialty - «Journalism».

Correspondingly, at the end of the study students of this specialty will form intercultural and communicative competence. Intercultural communicative competence involves the ability of students to produce their own texts in oral and written form in accordance with a given communication task.

According to the curriculum on this discipline 60 hours of practical classes and 60 hours of independent work of students (IWS) were given, which includes the students' independent work and independent work under the guidance of a teacher.

The leading form of activity was teamwork. Within the household, educational and cognitive, social and cultural spheres students' team work was organized mainly for implementation of projects: Student's Time Managing, Seven Global Challenges, Mass Media in Kazakhstan and abroad, Life in Colour and others.

Discipline consists of four modules, each of which registers an independent activity for students during classroom and extracurricular work.

The formative phase of experimental work has been linked to experimental verification in e-learning environment as Moodle. There were 2-year-students (26 students - 13 students in the experimental and 13 students in the control

groups), in the specialty “Journalism” in forming experiment. In the second year of training and the level of mastery of foreign language according to “European standards of language competence” and the national education system corresponds to B2 - level of basic standard.

The teacher himself/herself offered students the theme according to the curriculum called “Mass Media in Kazakhstan and abroad”. In preparation we had to observe, survey, interview; to determine the type of the experiment; to ensure equal conditions for students of experimental and control groups; to conduct pre-experimental diagnostics of formation of intercultural communicative competence. The period of the project held 2 weeks.

Students divided into teams of 4-5 people. All students of the project team had clearly formulated goals, however, they determined objectives themselves and the hypothesis of the project. Students jointly worked through the algorithm to achieve goals, assigned roles in the team, carried the mutual responsibility for the results of joint activity. Students elaborated creative tasks on the project with the use of informative and communicative technologies through the Moodle learning management system.

Considering the sequence of execution of the project in the unfolded state:

*Step 1:* searching and studying the problem.

Students discuss the topic of the project, taking into account their personal needs and opportunities, independently determine the problem and formulate the goal. At this stage, the project work of the teacher’s task is to provide students with tutorial.

*Step 2:* defining the project goals. Students formulate goal of the project their own and the teacher helps.

*Step 3:* preparation of the project implementation plan.

Students make their own plan for the implementation of the project. The teacher advises the plan drafting, consults students, stimulates and monitors.

As the project is limited in time, each student should determine their own pace of project implementation activity.

*Step 4:* implementation of the project.

At this stage, the activity of students about the implementation of the project objectives on a definite plan accomplishes.

*Step 5:* project defense.

Students demonstrate work by using information and communication technologies in remote Moodle program. All teams evaluate each other on the previously specified pattern criteria and explain the reason for this assessment, beginning with the words: “We liked ...” “We do not like ...” and “We recommend ...”. During this process the teacher is watching remotely, controlling the whole process online at any time for everyone.

Thus, all the groups evaluate each other online. The next lesson students ask questions each other, where they are trying to find out the details of the implementation of project activity. A teacher also comments, and concludes. At this stage of this activity such skills as self-esteem, self-control, reflection the ability to analyze and justify his or her own point of view are formed.

Focusing on the creation of the project as a personal educational product makes the process of mastering the knowledge of the subject personally meaningful and personally motivated for a learner himself or herself.

### Results and Discussions

We proposed the skills composition in the structure of subcompetences of intercultural communicative competence allocated by S.S. Kunanbaeva (2010) means, which the educational achievements of students monitored:

- lingvocultural subcompetence is the ability to use language forms in accordance with the situation;
- socio-cultural subcompetence is the ability to determine the degree of familiarity with the socio-cultural context;
- conceptual subcompetence is a reflection of the submission of another world view of another society;
- cognitive subcompetence is the formation of the language as an integral part of the process of learning and the formation of thinking;
- learner-centered subcompetence is a reflection of the concept of the world through the anthropocentric paradigm;
- reflexive-developing subcompetence is the ability to assess themselves and to develop independently.

The control of students' educational achievements was conducted in the form of current and boundary control in carrying out project activity. The implementation of group mini-projects within the established schedule concerns for current control, that is, the teacher held regular monitoring to identify weaknesses or deficiencies in the performance of any of the mini-projects, despite the complexity of it. On the boundary control was carried out as a single project.

According to the questionnaire and the survey conducted at the end of the formative experiment, the students increased interest in doing independent work carried out by them in draft form, and change the attitude to it (see table).

During the implementation of the project activity the students of the experimental group showed great interest in the learning process. There was a high level of inclusion in learning activity, whereas in the control group, training was conducted on the traditional technology, that is an independent activity of students was carried out without the systematic use of project methods.

The students of the experimental group in speaking sphere mastered the skills of spontaneous expressions of their own opinion on the subject with the general cultural and general professional unit in training dialogic speech, and the ability to clearly detailed message with an expression of their own experience in teaching monologic speech through internet technology (Skype, e-mail, prezi). At the beginning of the experiment students feel the uncertainty, but in the process of implementation of the group project, students more clearly and confidently expressed their thoughts, "including" their critical thinking.

The results of the systematic report about students' activity gives us grounds to say that by the end of the experiment, students were more likely to be engaged in their own, their work has become more systematic.

The students themselves explain it by saying that over time it becomes more interesting and convenient to work in new conditions. The fact that independent work through the project activity in the e-learning environment Moodle had an active character from the part of students and their actions were truly self-reliant, and the teacher only created all necessary conditions for their successful implementation (see the Table 1).

**Table 1.** Assessment of the project activities by students

Indicators	Questionnaire 1	Questionnaire 2	Total
Increase interest on the discipline	66,7	67,1	66,9
Allows students to learn a large amount of educational material for a shorter time	64,5	64,5	64,5
Individualizing the educational process	53,2	55,7	54,4
Developing communicative skills	67,2	83,8	75,5
Forming critical thoughts	82,0	83,0	82,5
Forming creative approach to the activity	60,3	69,3	64,8

Students also pointed out project activity contributed to the development of personal qualities (see the Table 2).

**Table 2.** The development of personal qualities

Professional-personal qualities	% from total amounts of students
independence	87,8
communicability	92
activity	85
organization	90

In a research students of the experimental group were taught to the ability to analyze the case study, to determine their own capabilities, the ability to achieve goals, to simulate the way to solve the educational problem. This ability is developed to a high level in the experimental group of students - 31% (it was 2%) and students of the control group - 9% (it was 2%).

The development of skill levels to plan their own learning activity is being considered. At the beginning of the experiment parameters of experimental and control groups did not differ (20-20 %%). At the end of the experiment it reached a high level of 38% of students in the experimental group and 25% of the students in the control group.

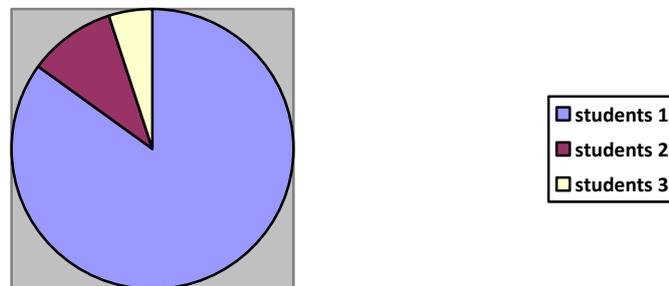
At the beginning of the experiment the ability to make self-regulation, self-control, self-esteem, self-correction in the experimental group - 2%, but at the end of the experiment - 38% of the students of the experimental group and 29% in the control group.

At the end of the experiment, we conducted a postexperimental questionnaire among the students. The purpose of the given questionnaire is a statement of increase or decrease of the level of formation of intercultural communicative competence through project technology. The questionnaire took place in the form of a questionnaire, and test results showed how effective the

proposed model of the stepwise formation of the intercultural communicative competence of students through the use of project technology.

The usage of project work in the process of independent work helped to increase students' interest to study material and provide individualization and differentiation of the learning process. Students were able to carry out self-control and self-correction of the study activity, to raise motivation and to form the ability to make independently an optimal solution in a difficult situation.

According to the results of the survey, 85% of students in the experimental group noted that the project work is effective, interesting and creative in terms of organization and management of independent work of students. Thus, the project as technology monitoring is effectively carried out. There are 10% of students were left without an answer, and only 5% disagreed (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Graphical display of survey' results.

## Results

Students accomplished the following skills that contributed to the development of personality and tend to the reflection:

— The ability to search for information on the project independently, including in foreign languages, in a variety of information sources;

— The ability to evaluate information critically, systematize, generalize and interpret the facts;

— The ability to identify the contradictions and on this basis to formulate the problem, arguing its relevance;

— The ability to develop an action plan to address the problem, choose methods and techniques;

— The ability to predict the possible positive and negative impacts of decisions;

— The ability to present the results of the project activity;

— The ability to discuss;

— The ability to master information and communication technologies if it is an international television project;

— The ability to justify its information, scientific or practical significance;

— The ability to work in a team, to collaborate;

- The ability to listen, to understand, to challenge the other point of view;
- The ability to self evaluate, self control, self reflex and self-regulate.
- The study was theoretically and experimentally proved the effectiveness of the project work for the complex formation of the intercultural communicative competence, which is confirmed by the results of experimental work of our research.

In the course of the experiment hypothesis was confirmed that the decisive factor in learning foreign language communication is a project technology that promotes self-managed and self-organized activity of students.

After V.V. Kopylova (2004) we treat the project method as a of targeted, generally independent activity of students, carried out under the flexible supervision of the teacher, solution-oriented search research or socially significant pragmatic problem and to obtain concrete results in the form of the product.

Comprehensive interest in project caused by the fact that the competence is formed, and therefore we consider the project method as a means of developing intercultural communicative competence and method of reflexive control.

The project technology promotes a comprehensive technology implementation of all components of the intercultural communicative competence:

- lingvocultural subcompetence;
- socio-cultural subcompetence;
- conceptual subcompetence;
- cognitive subcompetence;
- learner-centered subcompetence;
- reflexive-developing subcompetence.

Systematic and comprehensive development of intercultural communicative competence promotes such features of project technology for teaching foreign language communication as independence, autonomy, interdisciplinarity, creativity, intercultural orientation of the learning process.

In the process of reflection an understanding of the work is performed, the results of self-assessment and processes of individual and collective creativity, analysis of the personal attitude to the project activity, the search for alternative solutions and ways to improve the project. It should be noted that when students are reflective of the actions that they perform, and how they do it, they develop a critical attitude to their own activity. Students understand better what they explain in the process of thinking and reasoning. The student becomes the initiator, organizer, performer and controlling entity of its study activity. The teacher coordinates, provides for wrong actions accustom to constant self-control. Thus, the important thing for the teacher is to give a theoretical and practical support for students in solving professional problems.

With the rapid development of innovative technologies a huge range of opportunities for self-fulfillment in all areas opens up, this development helps enrich the scope of foreign language education, namely enrichment of teaching materials and self-development.

## Conclusions

Summarizing the data, we have made following conclusions:

1. Method of projects, as learner-centered technology of the 21st century, is becoming more pronounced creative and social purposes, so that at the current stage of development of foreign language education is given much attention. Person-centered approach requires flexibility in the definition of objectives, take into account the personal interests of their individual characteristics.

2. The project activity has a clearly defined structure and features, among which are the matching personal needs of students, autonomy at work, creative tendency, orientation on practical results.

A student take an active and conscious participation in the educational process and significantly increases his or her responsibility for his or her actions in the learning process and learning outcomes. Thus, the student summarizes, analyzes, perceives the information, sets goals and chooses ways to achieve them, logically true, convincingly and clearly builds the written and spoken word, takes the initiative to strive for self-development, improving their qualifications and skills, self-acquiring new knowledge, using modern educational and information technologies.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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