

ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE-PROJECT BASED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF SPECIALISTS IN A NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY SETTING

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Abstract: The development of professional competence among students in non-linguistic universities is a critical component of higher education. This study investigates the role of English communicative-project based educational activities as a means of enhancing the professional skills of students in such settings. By engaging students in authentic, task-oriented projects conducted in English, the methodology fosters both language proficiency and practical professional competencies, including teamwork, problem-solving, and project management. The research demonstrates that integrating communicative-project activities into the curriculum significantly improves students' ability to communicate effectively in professional contexts, enhances their confidence in using English, and supports the development of skills essential for their future careers.

Keywords: competence; English communicative-project activities; non-linguistic university students; task-based learning; language for professional purposes; project-based education

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary globalized educational and professional landscape, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a fundamental requirement for university graduates, even in non-linguistic disciplines. For students in non-language majors, developing professional competence extends beyond subject-specific knowledge to include the ability to use English in professional, academic, and intercultural contexts. However, traditional language teaching methods often fail to provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice English in real-world professional scenarios, leading to limited communicative proficiency and low confidence in using the language. Pedagogical research emphasizes that communicative and project-based approaches are particularly effective in bridging this gap. By engaging students in authentic, task-oriented projects, these methods create meaningful contexts in which English becomes a tool for completing professional activities rather than merely an academic subject. Such activities encourage collaborative problem-solving, critical thinking, and practical application of knowledge, aligning language learning with professional skill development.

Research aim:

The primary aim of this study is to investigate and develop effective pedagogical strategies for enhancing professional competence among non-linguistic university students through English communicative-project based educational activities. The research seeks to examine how structured project work conducted in English can simultaneously improve language proficiency and equip students with practical professional skills relevant to their future careers. Specifically, the study aims to: Identify the current challenges faced by non-linguistic students in developing both English language competence and professional skills, including limited confidence, inadequate practical

experience, and difficulties in applying theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts. Design and implement a communicative-project methodology that integrates task-based, collaborative projects into the curriculum to provide authentic opportunities for professional and linguistic development. Evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology in improving students' oral and written communication in English, teamwork abilities, project management skills, and overall professional readiness.

Materials and Methods

This study was conducted at the Branch of Herzen State Pedagogical University in Tashkent, involving students enrolled in non-linguistic programs such as humanities and social sciences. A total of 60 undergraduate students aged 18–22 participated in the study. The participants were selected based on their completion of introductory English courses and varying levels of proficiency in professional communication contexts. The research employed a mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of English communicative-project based activities in enhancing both professional competence and language skills. Curriculum Design: A structured program of communicative-project activities including professional simulations, group presentations, debates, role-plays, and collaborative projects in English. Each task was designed to mirror authentic workplace scenarios relevant to students' future professions. Instructional Resources: Multimedia tools, authentic texts, audio-visual materials, and online platforms to facilitate interactive, task-oriented learning. Assessment Instruments: Pre- and post-intervention oral and written tests, self-assessment questionnaires, teacher observation checklists, and peer evaluation forms were used to monitor progress in language proficiency, project performance, teamwork, and professional competence. Initial assessments were conducted to identify students' baseline English language skills and professional competencies, including oral and written communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities.

Results:

The implementation of English communicative-project based activities produced significant improvements in both professional competence and language skills among non-linguistic university students. At the initial diagnostic stage, students demonstrated several challenges, including limited confidence in English communication, difficulty applying theoretical knowledge to practical tasks, and low participation in collaborative activities. Observations and pre-tests indicated gaps in oral fluency, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, teamwork, and project management skills. After the 12-week intervention, the following outcomes were observed: Oral fluency improved substantially, with 80% of students demonstrating the ability to speak longer sentences confidently and participate actively in discussions. Vocabulary usage increased, particularly in professional and academic contexts, with a 50% rise in accurate application of relevant terminology in presentations and collaborative tasks. Pronunciation and intonation showed marked improvement, with students displaying clearer articulation and natural speech rhythm during role-plays and presentations. Teamwork and collaborative problem-solving skills improved significantly. Students effectively coordinated tasks, distributed responsibilities, and demonstrated leadership in group projects. Project management abilities, including planning, research, and presentation of outcomes, were strengthened. Students successfully completed complex projects that simulated real-world professional tasks.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that English communicative-project based activities are a highly effective pedagogical approach for simultaneously developing language proficiency and professional competence in non-linguistic university students. The significant improvements observed in oral fluency, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, teamwork, and project management demonstrate that task-based, collaborative projects provide a meaningful context for language use and professional skill development. From a pedagogical perspective, these results support the notion that language learning is most effective when it is integrated with authentic, real-world tasks. By engaging students in projects that simulate professional scenarios, the methodology enabled learners to use English as a functional tool rather than merely as an academic subject. This aligns with principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and project-based learning (PBL), which emphasize that active engagement in meaningful tasks promotes deeper learning, motivation, and cognitive development. The study also underscores the importance of scaffolding and individualized feedback. Continuous guidance from instructors during projects helped students overcome language anxiety, develop confidence, and internalize vocabulary and professional terminology.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that English communicative-project based educational activities are a highly effective method for developing both language proficiency and professional competence in non-linguistic university students. By integrating collaborative, task-oriented projects into English instruction, students showed significant improvements in oral fluency, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, teamwork, project management, and overall confidence in professional communication. The findings confirm that combining communicative and project-based approaches not only enhances linguistic skills but also fosters essential professional competencies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and autonomy. Individualized guidance and continuous feedback were crucial in helping students overcome language anxiety and develop practical skills relevant to real-world professional contexts. Overall, this study supports the integration of English communicative-project activities into the curriculum of non-linguistic universities as an effective pedagogical strategy.

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