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RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE “BUSINESS GAMES”

In the paper results of the questioning among students-bachelors studying in English at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (speciality 5B051400 “Public relations”) are presented. The choice of the topic is conditioned by the possibility of application business games not only as a form of training, but also as a form of control. The game not only raises the motivation to the subject, but also provides a strong connection between theory and practice. The purpose of the survey is to find out the attitude of students from English groups to business games. As the main method of the research, a verbal-communicative method - questioning (group, selective, extramural) was used; - as a mean for gathering information from the respondents - an electronic questionnaire. For processing the answers a computer program for data analysis was used. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the following conclusions were drawn: students show a high interest towards to business games; games help to assimilate not only professional but also language competencies in PR disciplines among groups speaking a foreign language; according to respondents, during the games, both theoretical and practical knowledges are acquired in equal measure. The results of the questionnaire can be used to adjust the educational process according to the preferences of student groups. The obtained numerical data can also be used in subsequent studies on related subjects.

Key words: questioning, PR, English groups, business games.

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«Іскерлік ойындар» сауалнама нәтижелері

Бұл мақалада әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университетінде 5B051400 “Қоғаммен байланыс” бағыты бойынша ағылшын тілінде оқитын бакалавр студенттер арасында сауалнама нәтижесі келтіріледі. Зерттеудің тақырыбын таңдауда іскер ойындар оқытудың белсенді түрі ғана емес, сонымен қатар бақылау түрі негізге алынған. Іскерлік ойындар пәнді оқытудың ынтасын арттырады, сонымен қатар теория мен тәжірибенің тұрақты байланысын қамтамасыз етеді.

Бұл жұмыстың мақсаты – іскер ойындарға ағылшын тобындағы студенттердің көзқарасын анықтау. Негізгі зерттеу әдісі ретінде ауызша коммуникативтік әдіс – сауалнама (топтық, іріктелген, сырттай); респонденттен мәліметтер жинау үшін электронды сауалнама пайдаланылады. Жауаптардың зерттелуі кезінде компьютерлік деректерді автоматты талдау бағдарламасы пайдаланылады. Сауалнама қорытындысы бойынша келесі тұжырымдар жасалды: студенттер іскерлік ойындарға жоғары қызығушылық көрсетеді; бизнес-ойындар кәсіби ғана емес, тілдік құзыреттер PR пәндері бойынша (шеттілін оқыту кезінде) дамуына көмектеседі; респонденттердің пікірі бойынша, ойын кезінде теориялық және практикалық білім тең дәрежеде меңгеріледі. Осы сауалнама нәтижелерін оқу барысында пайдалануға болады. Зерттеу нәтижесінде алынған сандық деректер сабақтас тақырып бойынша кейінгі зерттеулерде қолдануы мүмкін.

Түйін сөздер: сауалнама, қоғаммен байланыс, ағылшын топтары, іскерлік ойындар.

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Результаты анкетирования «Деловые игры»

В статье приводятся результаты анкетирования среди студентов-бакалавров, обучающихся на английском языке в Казахском национальном университете имени аль-Фараби по специальности 5B051400 – «Связь с общественностью». Выбор темы исследования обусловлен возможностью применения деловых игр не только как формы обучения, но и как формы контроля. Игра не только повышает мотивацию к изучению предмета, но и обеспечивает стойкую связь теории с практикой.

Цель данной работы – выяснить отношение студентов английских групп к деловым играм. В качестве основного метода исследования использован вербально-коммуникативный метод – анкетирование (групповое, выборочное, заочное); в качестве средства для сбора сведений от респондента – электронная анкета. При обработке ответов использована компьютерная программа анализа данных. По итогам анкетирования сделаны следующие выводы: студенты проявляют высокий интерес к деловым играм; бизнес-игры помогают усвоению не только профессиональных, но и языковых компетенций по дисциплинам PR при обучении на иностранном языке; по мнению респондентов, в ходе игр усваиваются и теоретические, и практические знания в равной степени. Результаты данного анкетирования могут быть использованы при корректировке учебного процесса согласно предпочтениям студенческих групп. Полученные числовые данные также могут быть использованы в последующих исследованиях по смежной тематике.

Ключевые слова: анкетирование, PR, английские группы, деловые игры.

Introduction

At the present stage of PR development, employers are looking for professionals who possess not only professional knowledge, but also speak a foreign language. Previous research has detected that in Kazakhstan English is the most taught foreign language, it is perceived as a language of developed world and prestige. It is clearly observable among the young people (Akynova et al., 2014, p. 228). Hence the choice of the language from the student's side. Training of students by the speciality 5B051400 “Public relations” in Al-Farabi KazNU is conducted also in English. English-speaking groups function at the 1st and 2nd year of the bachelor's degree.

For the equal assimilation of language and professional competencies in PR disciplines, it is proposed to use business games in the educational process.

Business game is considered to be a limited in space and time activity to create a new relationship (new experience) to the subject of study (research) (Babanova, 2012, p. 3). The game not only raises the motivation to the subject, but also ensures a stable connection between theory and practice. Another plus of business games is the possibility of their application not only as a form of training, but also as a form of control.

Students now prefer and expect opportunities to be actively engaged in their own education. As more methods become available to engage students

in experiential learning, examining the impacts of these methodologies becomes even more important (Blackford & Shi, 2015, p. 84). Therefore, the importance of researching students' opinion is very high.

The role games and simulation games, which have complex circumstance, can make the students gain interactive experience, avoid their delight losing in a boring classroom, and help them to seek the fun of learning. Educational games have a positive effect on students' multiple intelligence development (Jing et al., 2012, p. 1749). The use of games or games elements in the classroom can also enhance the classroom atmosphere (Yang, 2012).

By means of the game the flow effect increases the motivation, performance and creativity of all participants in order to systematically support the critical innovation step of idea generation (Laurischkata & Viertelhausena, 2017, p. 115). The journal “Games and Economic Behavior” affirmed that when in the game both identity and financial considerations are present, high-endowment participants are strongly attracted to each other, with one's word-task-group affiliation eclipsed by the opportunity to earn more. Nevertheless, the team-building exercise greatly increases the level of contribution (Charness et al., 2014, p. 322).

Besides, active use of business games contributes to the development of language skills, models (in a certain degree) the real situation of the formation of a working team. During a business game in a foreign language, the material is assimilated in a professionally meaningful context (Merzlyakova,

2016, p. 140). The future PR specialists, the ones that contribute immensely to building a person's or an organization's self-image, must use the language accurately. The focus is on practical exercises, on discussing and analyzing the given examples because, in this way, the students may assimilate the information more easily (Susu et al., 2015, p. 712). A foreign language should be used accurately and consciously at twice. Business games affect on to these factors too.

The fact that satisfaction with choice and confidence in a future career in public relations decreases with each year of study may mean that curricula is failing students expectations... The students have an initial idealistic image of the PR profession. Adequate measures taken in due time will result in better retaining the students in the program, in their easier transition to work at graduation, in shaping a professional pride and identity at an early stage of their development (Cernikova & Palea, 2014, p. 2831). Professional games can give to the students feeling of so-called PR-reality. Through the games they can receive knowledges, which will have strong connection with life, with the real situation on the market.

So, unlike traditional forms of teaching, business games contribute to: the formation of professional knowledge; development of socially significant motives; formation of professional motivation; ability to work in a team; informal dialogue with teachers; stimulation of self-management, self-education, self-control; easier remembering the content of training; more adequate self-esteem; greater emotional involvement in the learning process (Samsonova, 2006, p.15).

The above-mentioned enumeration of business games' advantages gives the right to talk about the importance of holding them in university auditoriums. But, how students are interested in business games? So, the aim is to find out student's attitude to business games (English groups of "PR" speciality). To achieve this aim, it is necessary to solve the following tasks: a) to formulate questions for the questionnaire; b) upload the questionnaire into the system; c) send invitations to participate in the survey; d) collect and analyze the data; e) draw conclusions according to the obtained results.

According to Rossiter J. A., to have "feedback" from students it is very important it the improvement of learning process. (Rossiter, 2016, p. 57). The object of our study will be the attitude of students towards business games. The subject of the study will be results obtained during the survey. The novelty of the study - there was no such questioning in Al-Farabi KazNU earlier. The results will allow

tutors to correct the educational process according to the preferences of student groups.

Material and methods

As the main method of the research, a verbal-communicative method - questioning (group, selective, extramural) was used; as a mean for gathering information from the respondents - a specially designed list of questions was used - a questionnaire (Academician. Dictionary, 2018). Contact with the respondent for questioning, in contrast to interviewing, is minimized. Feature of this method is anonymity (the identity of the respondent is not fixed; only his answers are used). The questioning expediently is conducted in cases where it is necessary to find out people's opinions on some issues and to cover a large number of people in a short time (Academician. Dictionary, 2018).

Firstly, we will describe the diversity of the survey in several categories (Questioning. Sociological research, 2018):

1) *by the number of respondents*: in this survey we used group questioning;

2) *by completeness of coverage*: in this work a selective questionnaire was used (a survey of some sample members);

3) *by type of contact with the respondent*: we used an absentee questionnaire (there was no anketter), sending a link <https://ru.surveymonkey.com/r/Z8K8XC3> to the questionnaire posted on the official website of the SurveyMonkey program. The design was made so, to be attractive for teenagers. See picture 1.

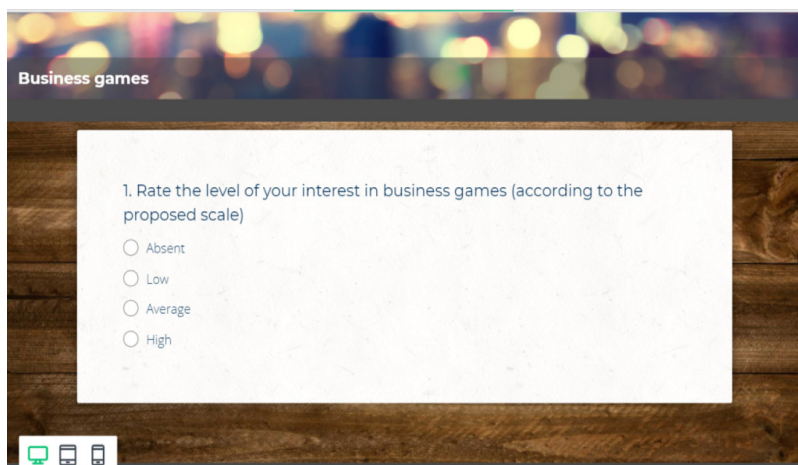
Secondly, consider the stages of the questionnaire.

The preparatory stage includes all stages of preparation for the survey. First, we determined the duration: from February 8, 2018 to March 10, 2018 inclusive (1 month). The questionnaire "Business games" during that period was in the public domain. The computer program automatically allows only one filling of the questionnaire from one IP address of the computer or smartphone. You can not answer twice. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent by electronic messengers, the system archive stores the addresses from which the replies were received. Falsification of the data is excluded.

Closed and open-ended questions were included in the survey - totally 10. According to Zapin M., open-ended questions are being used frequently in online surveys. They are very effective. 64 % report using text box questions and 52 % report using essay style questions in their online surveys (Zapin,

2013, p. 1). As he said, open-ended questions should provide commentary that goes hand-in-hand

with the closed-ended questions. We followed this recommendation.



Picture 1 – The appearance of questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire is formulated: to confirm or refute the hypothesis put forward about the high interest to business games from the English group's students. As a way to control the progress of the experiment, we chose daily e-mail notification of incoming replies. Also at the preparatory stage, an approbation was organized, after which corrections to the survey questions were made.

The conduction stage. At this stage, specificity and conditions of work are revealed. The participants were briefed: the aim of gathering information was explained. Ethical norms are taken into account: anonymity and voluntary participation, the opportunity to refuse further questioning at any time.

As a focus group, we selected a contingent of students studying on speciality 5B051400 “Public relations” in Al-Farabi KazNU in English-speaking groups (1st and 2nd year of bachelor's degree). All students agreed to participate in the study.

The final stage is describing the results and describing the conditions under which the results were obtained. Participants answered questions in a relaxed atmosphere; they were not limited in time and in the formulations of their answers to open-ended questions.

In conclusion, we made a transition from empirical study to theoretical processing of the material. The processing of the material is done by calculating the statistics to test the hypothesis, after that the results were interpreted.

Literature review

We must note, earlier such questioning in the universities of Kazakhstan was not carried out. However, there is a research from the contrary side of the problem. The paper of Vos Y. provides evidence of how tutors who use business simulation games support and assess their students (Vos, 2015, p. 57).

The whole array of scientific publications on this topic boils down to the study of the advantages and species diversity of business games. We also found no articles about the effectiveness of business games for future PR specialists. However, special interest for us presents the work of Lara A.-B. H., Lluna A. P. and Lopez E. S. This study applies learning analytics and data mining techniques to explore the online discussion forums of 362 business students at the bachelor and master levels, who participated in business simulation games between 2011 and 2016. The findings revealed that the most frequent contents in the students' online discussion forums were related, firstly, to the parameters and features of the business simulation game (Lara et al., 2018, p. 10).

The results of another survey suggest that the use of business games and can be considered a useful tool to improve student's achievements and to foster a good level of competences (Bertran et al, 2014, p. 452).

The survey by Eliasa E. I. is dedicated to integrating education character in lectures through games. According to her, there are many various

games for learning, but here the games are developed in certain ways, which provide values of teamwork and responsibility inside them. Based on this basic competence, the values of teamwork and responsibility become one of the values in students' characteristics and can be integrated to the students through the games (Eliasa, 2014, p. 196).

Dufourny S. and Dhaenen C. have researched optimization of business game decision. The optimization process should be able to propose a set of good decisions to improve firm profitability and to assume customers' needs (Dufourny & Dhaenen, 2016, p. 271).

There are many works on related fields. For example, the article by the researcher Lapa E. A. contains an important conclusion for us that the undoubted advantage of using active training methods is the integration of the transfer of new knowledge with training of management skills (Lapa, 2016, p. 111).

The work of researchers' group: Kalyuzhnaya T. V., Skorobogatova E.V. and Vlasova A.V. is devoted to the effectiveness of business games in a foreign language educational process. The key moment of any business games is to create a staunch faith in yourself, according to the principle "You can express your thoughts in a foreign language, even if you do not remember vocabulary and grammar. You're doing fine just because you do not keep silent". During business games, participants develop spontaneous speaking skills in a foreign language, passive vocabulary and the acquired database of grammatical rules are activated, the language barrier is overcome, and the fear of spontaneous use of a foreign language is reduced (Kalyuzhina et al., 2015, p. 52).

The new face of a university foreign language course must integrate the development of the most important

skills of the 21st century – higher-order thinking, problem-solving, self-directed learning, communication and collaboration with the ability to demonstrate these skills using a foreign language. Problem-based learning (PBL) is a unique approach that allows achieving this in the field of foreign language education (Jaleniauskiene, 2016, p. 265). Note, that business games are important component of PBL.

Barr M. writes, while the games play an important role in skills development, interaction between students, facilitated by game play, is also a significant factor (Barr, 2018, p. 283). This affirmation emphasizes again the importance of playing games with students. Especially with students, whose future profession will be linked with PR and management.

In the article of Schwarz J. O., reflecting on the practical use of business wargaming in the classroom, it is described how such simulations prepare management students for making strategic decisions in complex and dynamic environments characterized by high uncertainty concerning the future (Schwarz, 2013, p. 59). Business wargaming, a dynamic strategic simulation, is discussed as a management simulation, which can respond to the contemporary challenges in management education.

The review of the literature has a small volume, the reason of it is that Kazakhstani or foreign scientific works exactly on the covered topic were not found.

Results and discussion

After processing the data, we obtained the following results. First part of them is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1 – The first part of the questionnaire

<i>№</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer/percent</i>			
1	Rate the level of your interest in business games (according to the proposed scale)	High - 76,47%	Absent – 11,76%	Average - 5,88%	Low – 5,88%
2	In your opinion, how often business games can be played during the university classes?	Often - 64,71%	Hardly ever - 17,65%	Rarely - 17,65%	More often than not – 0 responses
3	Classify your level of knowledge's assimilation during business games	High – 62,5%	Generally not acquired - 18,75%	Low – 12,5%	Average - 6,25%
4	Name the field of knowledge, which is the best for business games?	Social Sciences - 64,71%	Philosophical Sciences - 29,41%	Natural and Technical Sciences - 5,88%	Mathematical Sciences – 0 responses
5	What are the types of skills obtained during business games?	Theoretical and practical - 64,71%	More practical - 17,65%	Business games do not give such skills - 17,65%	More theoretical – 0 responses

According to the received replies, we can state a sufficiently high (76%) level of interest in business games from the student’s side. It follows that young people want to play games in student audiences more often. Also here we can talk about a high percentage of knowledge’ assimilation during the game. Thus, according to students, both theoretical

and practical knowledge are assimilated. Further, the respondents were asked: “Name the field of knowledge, which is the best for business games?” The largest percentage have “Social Sciences”, which includes PR.

The second part of the questionnaire is presented in the Table 2.

Table 2 – The second part of the questionnaire

<i>№</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer/percent</i>					
6	Rate the teachers who use this type of activity in the classroom (5 stars is the best grade)	5 stars - 82,35%	1 star - 5,88%	3 stars - 5,88%	4 stars - 5,88%	2 – 0 responses	
7	What is the main advantage of business games?	8 – They are interesting	3 - skipped	2 – I don’t know	1 - More practice	1 - Improve skills in subject	1 - Develop business skills
8	What is the main disadvantage of business games?	8 – Need a big group for playing	3 - skipped	2 – I don’t know	2 – Absent or do not have	1 – It depends from ...	1 – Sometimes it’s boring
9	How important are business games for students of the speciality “Public Relations”	Average number - 79 (from 100)					
10	What business game (held Al-Farabi KazNU) did you like most of all?	8 – Press conference	3 - skipped	3 – I don’t know	1 – Find out is the information true or false	1 – I don’t remember	1 – I have never played business game

To learn how students evaluate tutors using the methodology, a specific question was asked: “Rate the teachers who use this type of activity in the classroom (5 stars is the best grade)”. As follows from the received data, students highly appreciate the teachers who apply business games in class.

As can be seen, the majority found it difficult to name the disadvantages of business games.

In addition, participants were asked to mention in the rating: “How important are business games for students of the speciality “Public relations””? Average number - 79 (from 100). This fact also shows the high importance of games for the speciality.

Also, based on the obtained data, we can say that most of the survey participants remember one or another business game conducted in the alma mater. This indicates the memorability of games.

Conclusion, consequences

The game is a method of effective learning, as it removes the contradictions between the abstract character of the academic subject and the real nature of the professional activity (Babanova, 2012, p. 7).

According to Nihal-Kuyumcu F., now we are faced with a student type who watches and observes more than its predecessors. Therefore in education in general and in the foreign language education in particular, we have to incline to new quests and have to prepare course schedules which allow students to participate and to be active (Nihal-Kuyumcu, 2013, p. 6). Business games can help us to solve this problem.

The use of business games makes it possible: a) to increase the efficiency of the learning process; b) to reduce the time allocated for the study of certain disciplines; c) to activate the learning process, to make it more creative, exciting; d) to increase the interest of the trainees; e) to force the student to be so active that this activity can be comparable with the activity of the teacher. It is also important to include the student in an environment that is close to the real one.

The use of active forms and methods of teaching in the learning process requires a high level of skill and experience from the teacher. Using active forms and methods of work in the educational process, the teacher himself attains a high level of skill, preparing

highly organized, comprehensively developed and creative specialists (Tyumenova, 2014, p. 229).

Brazilian scientists have already evaluated the effectiveness of gamification platforms as a strategy for the engagement of students. According to their results, students with low engagement can be stimulated to do activities through gamification techniques (Seixas et al., 2016, p. 48). It is one of the good news for the teachers, who planned to use business games.

Gamification represents an innovative and engaging methodology to motivate students and enhance their learning process. Nevertheless, despite an increasing academic interest in gamification over the last years, teachers' attitude towards gamification and actual use of gamification remains a neglected research area (Marti-Parreno et al., 2016, p. 682). The opening of previous year said that, the intention to use gamified applications has a positive influence on business. Game's characteristics helps business to be more attractive and ease to use (Costa, 2016, p.

392). So, games penetrate in reality, not only in the educational process.

Based on the information received, we can confidently talk about the high interest from students in such an interactive form of teaching as a business game.

Undoubtedly, this research has a local character. The limitations are clear (one university, small groups, etc.). A small number of participants in the survey is due to the low number of students in English-speaking groups. For example, in the second semester of 2017-2018 academic year (the period of the survey), the number of students in the first year of bachelor's degree in the English-speaking group of future PR specialists was only 6 (in the first semester - 7 students). Thus, this study can not be absolutely objective in relation to the entire student youth in Kazakhstan.

Further study of this topic seems to us very promising. The results of the study can be used by teachers to adjust the educational process according to the preferences of student groups. The obtained digital data can also be used in subsequent studies.

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