

ЕВРАЗИЙСКИЙ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ИМЕНИ Л.Н.ГУМИЛЕВА



Филологический факультет
Кафедра иностранных языков



СБОРНИК МАТЕРИАЛОВ
международного семинара
**«STRENGTHENING FOREIGN LANGUAGES
TEACHING: CHALLENGES,
APPROACHES AND TECHNOLOGIES»**

27-29 марта 2018 года

Астана, Республика Казахстан

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Сборник содержит статьи участников международного семинара «Strengthening Foreign Languages Teaching: Challenges, Approaches and Technologies». В сборнике рассмотрены актуальные вопросы касательно основных тенденций и особенностей развития современной методики преподавания иностранных языков в средней и высшей школе в условиях полиязычия, проанализирован опыт по реализации инновационных технологий в языковом образовании, рассмотрены вопросы преподавания предметов на иностранном языке, представлены исследования результатов независимого и интегрированного подходов с особым упором на креативность и критическое мышление, необходимых для академического письма в учебной деятельности магистрантов.

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THE WAYS OF PLANNING ACTION RESEARCH IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS IN HIGHER SCHOOLS OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Action research is a new influence on Kazakhstan education that is why this paper presents the advantages of action research in teaching. Our daily life connects with action research in order to investigate, make analysis and evaluate our work. Nowadays, the term *action research* has become particularly popular in education, specifically in teaching foreign languages. In this paper, my colleagues and me are going together to investigate our work in teaching English for students of non-languages specialties and research our own practice.

The purpose of this paper is to study basic concept of *action research*, develop a model of action research process in teaching English, and determine the effectiveness and advantages of action research in teaching English for students of non-languages specialties.

Within a historically short period after gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has managed to take a strong position on the international scene. Kazakhstan became a member state of the United Nations and other international organizations. Since then, Kazakhstan has been actively involved in the activities of many UN organizations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, ECOSOC, UNHCR, to name but a few. Kazakhstan also began to collaborate with a number of major international organizations, *eg*, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). It was an initiator of the convening of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Asian analog of the OSCE. And it is actively involved in the integration processes within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Central Asian Economic Union (CAPS), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Kazakhstan became the first Asian country to chair the OSCE.

Thus, in view of the political and economic internationalization, the command of English became more and more important. For this, since Kazakhstan announced its independence, President Nursultan Nazarbayev has constantly been advocating a *trilingual* model: Each citizen of Kazakhstan should strive to gain fluency in English, Russian, and Kazakh. Accordingly, the national project 'Trinity of languages' determines Kazakh as the state language, Russian as an official language, and English

as the language of international communication (Nazarbayev, 2007). At once, this trinity is understood as harmony rather than competition.

As a consequence, it is important to accompany as well as to support the implementation of that trinity by scientific explorations. That trinity needs to be related to the multicultural policy, which requires the knowledge of the native language and also stimulates the learning of other languages.

The transformation into the new multilevel system of higher education in Kazakhstan has shaken all academic community to enter a modern curriculum, to create methodical workings, to publish teaching aids, to introduce new technology of education. A lot of new lexical units as a module, a syllabus, criteria of marks, flowing, intermediate and advanced control, students original work (SOW), credits were appeared in the term of teaching.

The multilevel system of education in Kazakhstan should correspond to the European standards and answer «L³» idea (Life Long Learning), which is a visiting card of Bologna transformation. Each level of education provides for studying foreign language according to the state educational standard of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The goal and task of teaching English in the higher institutions is the practical acquiring colloquial and professional ways of speaking for active using as in real and professional conversation (Passov, 2002).

Our study of *action research* bases on Lewin (1946), Masters (1995), Jean McNiff (2002), Kemmis (2004), Reason (2007). The main goal of the researching was to identify the meaning and concept of action research from different perspectives. K. Lewin described *action research* as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action.” In other words, each research is done by action. Dewey (1986) completely describes the educational traditional action research in his book and gives real samples from his own experience. He always reminds about the process of *action research* in teaching (planning, action, reflection, and observation). The important aim of *action research* in teaching is to contribute the experience of teachers in problematic situation, follow the plan and targeted goals. It is concurrently collaborative work with students or colleagues. Gilmore (1986) notes, that *action research* requires the active collaboration of researcher (a teacher) and a client (a student). Scientifically, *action research* is a systematic inquiry of knowledge in educational practice to clearly understand the situation in which the practice is carried out.

Thus, *action research* is a practical approach that can be used in any social situation to generalize different ideas, improve, empower and develop critical research altitude in solving real problems. It is believed that action research develops powers of thoughts, discussions, decision and action by ordinary people who participate in research on “private troubles” that they have in common (Mills, 2000). In other words, *action research* refers to the unity of three parts: action, research, and participation. Freire (1970) tries to integrate three main aspects in this issue: participation, action and research. It makes orientation on methodology that enables

teachers or researchers to work in partnership with stakeholders in a manner that leads to action for change.

The studying the basic concept of *action research* prompts to develop our model of action research process in teaching English for students of non-languages specialties.

Developing action research model in teaching English assists to investigate clearly our teaching experience and students' learning. This model explains and directs teachers to use *action research* in practice. We draw on Freire's the three main aspects of *action research*. The syllabus on English for students of non-languages specialties is the main credential in our study. According to it, we determine the group of students to participate in our experiment. Then we describe the following action and do research (Figure 1).

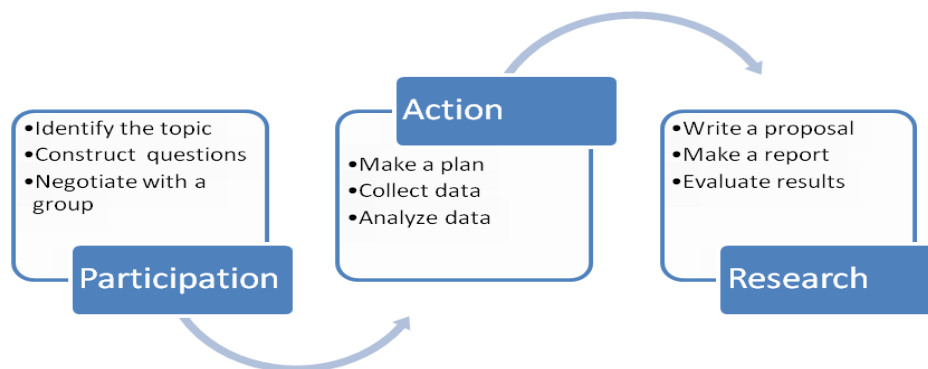


Fig.1 Action research process in teaching English

Action Research is the process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective, goal, or need [1, p.138] to improve the educational process. There are two ways to conduct research in education: academic and action. This approach is not problem solving, it is a process that improves education through some changes. The purpose of the Action Research is that each participant identifies a problem in the professional practice which she/he would like to change. In order to change the situation we have to follow the Action Research step by step guidelines. The change question is being researched in a systematic way and we come up with one or more actions to take. After implementing these change actions we evaluate their effect and might decide for further steps to take.

Action Research provides a way to actively help teachers design and revise their materials: “Action Research is primarily concerned with change, being grounded in the idea that development and innovation are an essential part of professional practice” [2, p.214]. In Action Research teachers design existing curriculum, explore relevant aspects of their teaching practices, and reflect with a group of teachers on what is needed for specific subject matter, a student or a student group.

Our research was carried out with students of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. To implement action research in our teaching practice, teachers use the cyclical process. The cycle begins with a series of planning actions on the chosen problem (theme). The English knowledge level of students is elementary.

The problem of action research is “How can we organize the teaching process to reach the goals grounded in the idea of equal learning outcome?” All students have their own role and responsibilities. 3 students were stakeholders, and other students were critical friends.

During the lesson, students asked different questions about their problems, tried to change our teaching activities. At the same time we had some conversations with other students about the same problems of their group mates, what they know about them. The experienced teachers, who know those students also as experts on action research, gave some advice. In our project 32 students engaged in action research to design the context materials to improve the teaching and learning process.

3 experienced teachers participated in the project for fifteen months starting from September 2015. Each participant was interviewed prior to the onset of the research. Different ideas and designing materials from the teachers’ experience were collected and discussed. The teachers were trained to be each other’s critical friends and they became familiar with action research instruments such as asking critical questions. Also thirty two students were asked questions and challenged to give some reflection on the situation.

To determine how the research process developed first six months various data were collected, including interviews, meetings, and written reflections. Then researchers (the authors of the given article) processed all the information and feedback of all participants to find the ways to solve our problem.

During the research all the responsibilities and roles have to be clarified and discussed. Collecting empirical data, analyzing the data in collaboration with others and following the implications are interesting but difficult and time-consuming process [3, p. 42].

The first six months of our project the focus was on finding some changes in teaching and learning processes in designed materials to teach equally different English language level students and get the relevant outcome. Then we used the materials and approaches suggested by our stakeholders: 1. we gave these three students different individual tasks according their knowledge; 2. made them work in teams with high English language level students; 3. encouraged them with praising words. In some weeks they felt more confident in expressing their ideas and assumptions in doing the assignments. In May 2016 we got their feedback where they shared their impressions on the learning process, the changes in their behavior and mainly in their desire to learn more. We noticed that they became more confident and were not frightened to speak English, their level increased.

This study concludes in determining the effectiveness and advantages of *action research* in teaching English. The aim of this research was to develop students’ ability to construct questions on given topic concerning their specialty, make a plan, collect data, analyze data and evaluate the results of researching. Before beginning data collection of our research, students were introduced with the syllabus and series of topics. Students had time to choose to select a research topic and construct research questions. The choice of a research topic was negotiated between each of

the students and us. Our role was to direct students to steps of researching, and evaluates their results of the action research.

1) The exchange of critical friends' experience and ideas are very motivating and stimulating.

2) Collaboration was really vital and helped all the participants to appreciate and improve teaching and learning process.

3) Action Research activity does not need any financial investment but it needs open discussion and team cooperation.

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