

## Project-Based Learning as the Form of Extracurricular Work in Teaching English Aimed at Formation of Social Competence of Tourism Students

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### Abstract

Tourism is one of the priority areas of the economies of many countries. The active growth in the number of economic entities, operating in the field of tourism indicates the demand for specialists in this field. However, it is necessary to note, that rather high requirements for knowledge of their business are imposed on workers in this field. Knowledge of foreign languages, in particular English, is the main requirement for employment in tourism sector, since work in this industry involves constant communication with customers and partners from around the world. Along with this, the formation of social competence among such specialists is also important. The ability to act in conditions of uncertainty, quickly adapt to certain professional situations, flexibility in communicating with people are necessary requirements for a successful career. This study demonstrated the effectiveness of using of the project-based learning method in English classes for tourism students. The topics of the project work were selected, taking into account the trends in the development of tourism in Kyrgyzstan and abroad. While working on projects, students learnt to interact with each other, to explain their point of view regarding the issue, thus contributing to the formation and development of social competence.

**Key words:** project-based learning, tourism industry, English language, communication, competence, social competence.

### Introduction

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) tourism is one of the most lucrative sectors of the world economy, inferior only to oil production and refining (Kazybai kyzy, Mukhanova, & Smagulova, 2015: 265). It is known that the development of this industry has a salutary effect on related sectors of the economy, and on the level of employment and welfare of the population as a whole (Ozturk, 2021: 37). The development of this sector contributes to the increase in demand for specialists in the tourism and service sector, which is represented by the work of tour operators and travel agents, transport companies and hotels, organizations that provide catering services, as well as recreational and entertainment facilities.

However, it is necessary to note that modern employers impose rather high requirements to the quality of tourism industry personnel. Since work in this industry assumes constant communication with people from different corners of the globe, knowledge of foreign languages is one of the paramount requirements. In addition, workers in the tourism and service sector have such requirements as the ability to adapt to rapidly changing working conditions, to make decisions in situations of stress and indeterminacy, to be client-oriented, which requires the formation of their social competence (Ozturk, 2015: 148).

Traditionally, it was considered that the purpose of higher professional education was for the student to acquire a certain set of knowledge, skills, and abilities (Ozturk, 2021: 12). However, nowadays, this approach to learning is not enough. The society and, primarily, the employer, wants to see graduates who are able to apply the acquired knowledge in practice and who are able to solve professional problems that arise in their professional life (Ozturk, 2021: 12). This requires to a greater extent the additional qualities of a graduate and not only the knowledge acquired during his/her studies.

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In this regard, higher professional education should be aimed not only at providing students with a certain scope of knowledge, skills and abilities, but also at developing competencies that will help them to be competitive in the labor market. The knowledge-based approach has been replaced by the competence-based approach as a response to the requirements of the modern labor market for specialists. The competence approach, which occupies an important place in modern pedagogical science, implies such notions as “competency” and “competence”.

Y.G. Tatur considers competency as a characteristic of a person, an indicator of successful activity. He believes that competency characterizes the ability of a specialist to realize his/her human potential to solve professional tasks (Tatur, 2004: 5-6). I.P. Podlasiy defines competency as the ability to apply acquired knowledge in practice (Podlasiy, 2015: 576). The term competencies defined in Oxford dictionary as the ability to do something efficiently or successfully (Oxford Lexico, 2022: ). Competence is a highly valued qualification that accounts for the effective use of one's knowledge and skills in a specific, usually complex context (Westera, 2021: 5). Competence is represented by a set of interrelated personal qualities (knowledge, skills, and abilities) necessary for qualitative activities.

We will consider the definition of the term social competence from the point of view of a number of authors. According to I.E. Shishova, social competence is the ability to interact effectively with other people in the process of communication on the basis of existing knowledge, skills, abilities, formed interpersonal communicative abilities and qualities (Shishova, 2006: 111). The Dictionary of Psychology defines social competence as a skill a person has in interpersonal relationships with the ability to handle different situations (N., Sam, 2013: 1). Social competence is defined as the ability to handle social interactions effectively (Nägele, 2019: 10).

In the framework of activities in the field of tourism and service social competence should be considered as a willingness and ability to interact, and to adapt to specific professional situations. Therefore, we assume that to form social competence in tourism students implies teaching them to interact effectively in various situations of professional communication (Ozturk, 2020: 9). According to experience, young professionals often encounter some difficulties during their independent work activities. These difficulties are primarily related to interpersonal communication. In addition, they are supplemented by insufficient knowledge of a foreign language, which is essential in the field of tourism and service.

It is known that for a more effective foreign language teaching it is necessary to apply in the classroom active forms of activity, with the help of which it is possible to bring students closer to their future professional life. Therefore, within the framework of our experiment, we used interactive learning technologies such as role-playing games, brainstorming, case study, Project Based Learning, etc. to organize educational cooperation, formation and development of social competence of students, future specialists in the tourism industry. This article will focus on the Project Based Learning.

An employee of the tourism and service industry should be able to take responsibility, cooperate in a team, defend their point of view, which once again confirms the need for the development of social competence. Thus, we believe that the Project Based Learning methodology is one of the effective techniques for the formation of social competences of students. Project work allows students to develop their “team spirit”, teaches them cooperation, efficient time management, and also helps to build self-confidence.

The use of Project Based Learning methodology in professional education of tourism industry students is described in the works of such authors as V.K. Borisov, T.V. Voroshilova, I.A. Malakhova, Siti Maria Ulfa, Phung Bui, Jantima Simpson, etc. Through the Project Based Learning, students are well trained and encouraged their ability to work in a group, to be always connected to the problem of the real world (Ulfa, 2017: 107).

E.S. Polat proposed a classification of projects according to the following typological features (Polat, 2000: 18-19):

- type of activity: exploratory, creative, informational, role-playing, practice-oriented, etc;
- subject-content area: monoproject (within one field of knowledge) interdisciplinary project;
- nature of project coordination: direct (rigid, flexible), latent (implicit, imitating project participant)
- the nature of the contacts (among the participants of one school, class, city, region, one country, different countries of the world)
- the number of participants in the project;
- the duration of the project.

When organizing project work in English lessons of tourism and service students we stipulated the stages proposed by E.S. Polat (Polat, 2000: 18-19):

1. Selection of the project theme, type of the project, determination of the number of participants.
2. Problem elicitation (assumes independent activity of students with the teacher's suggestion "brainstorming").
3. Formation of groups and distribution of tasks, possible methods of research and information search.
4. Independent work of project participants.
5. Interim discussion of obtained data.
6. Project demonstration.
7. Evaluation of the results, collective discussion, conclusions.

Classes involving students' project activities were planned according to the scheme proposed by I.M. Gorbacheva and E.A. Gorbacheva (Gorbacheva, Gorbacheva, 2017: 45). Thus, the plan of each lesson included: 1) introduction, 2) tasks of the lesson, 3) the course of the lesson. The results of the project can be presented in the form of: presentation in the program Microsoft Power Point, oral report, video clip, advertising, interviews, etc.

E.S. Polat has defined the following project evaluation parameters (Polat, 2000: 18-19):

- Significance and relevance of the problems put forward;
- correctness of the research methods used;
- activity of each participant of the project in accordance with his/her individual capabilities;
- the collective nature of decisions to be made (in a group project);
- the nature of communication and mutual assistance, complementarity of the project participants;
- necessary penetration into the problem, application of additional knowledge from other spheres;
- ability to justify their conclusions.

The current state and directions of development of the tourism industry in Kyrgyzstan and the world have been included in the content of English language teaching for students. As an example, here is a fragment of the project assignment within the theme "Travel Agencies".

#### **Project Assignment "Welcome to Kyrgyzstan" (Ozturk, 2021: 124-125).**

**Project Objective:** Acting as a member of the staff of a travel agency, develop a tour package for foreign tourists and make a presentation in English.

1. The topic of this work is chosen according to the lexical and grammatical material studied in class.

Type of project: creative. Group work.

2. The teacher asks a question: "Dear students, how do you think why is it important to attract tourists to our country? How can you, as travel agents, do it?"
3. Since this assignment is done in pairs, each participant is assigned certain responsibilities. In addition, research methods and information sources that can be used by students in their work on the project are discussed.
4. The next stage involves students' independent activity and intermediate discussions.
5. At the final stage of the work students demonstrate their projects in Power Point format. A sample plan might look as follows.

##### I. Introduction.

1. Introduce yourself (Imagine that you work in a tourism company and is going to advertise tour to Kyrgyzstan).

Example: Hello everybody. My name is Ainura. I am representative of Kyrgyz Travel Company. Today I'm here to tell you about Kyrgyzstan.

##### II. Main body.

1. Information about Kyrgyzstan. 2.
2. Bishkek is the capital of Kyrgyzstan. 3.
3. Information about the tour to Kyrgyzstan.

##### III. Conclusion.

Why Kyrgyzstan is interesting tourism destination?

Finally, the instructor thanks all participants for their interesting presentations: "Dear students. Thank you for your very interesting presentations. It's time to talk about results" and moves on to a discussion of the results.

The project method involves working with various sources of information, gathering information, and forming a personal point of view on the issue under study.

Project activities allow students to express their ideas in a creative way. In addition, this kind of work gives students the opportunity to apply the learned grammatical concepts and structures, to use in speech the learned lexical material.

**The first experimental lesson using the technology of project activity (Initial stage) (Ozturk, 2021: 155).**

**Introduction:** Greeting. Discussion of the features of the project. Identification of the topic of the project "Tourism potential in Kyrgyzstan".

**Objectives of the class:** to raise a problem; to form groups, distribute tasks, possible methods of research and information seeking.

**Course progress:**

**Discussion of proverbs:**

- 1) The world is a book and those who don't travel read only one page (English Language Blog, 2013).
- 2) Every country has its customs (Infourok, 2017)
- 3) Travel is the only thing you buy, that makes you richer (Ozturk, 2018: 180-181).

**Students' answers to the questions suggested by the teacher:**

- 1) What is tourism?
- 2) What forms of tourism do you know?
- 3) What forms of tourism are developed in our country?
- 4) Which of them have a great potential? (Which of them have a great potential?)
- 5) Why do you think it is important to develop tourism in our country?

In discussing these questions with the students, the problem is formed and the tasks are defined.

**Project Objectives:**

1. Identify the types of tourism most developed in Kyrgyzstan.
  2. Identify types of tourism with great potential for development.
  3. Determine how the development of the tourism and service industry will affect the country's economy.
- Conclude the class by forming groups and assigning roles.

**The 2nd experimental session, using project-based activities (Basic Phase) (Ozturk, 2021: 156).**

**Introduction:** Greetings to each other. Warm-up speech.

**Objectives of the lesson:** Organize group work to find and select the information the project requires; determine how to present the results.

**Course progress:**

- 1) Repetition of lexical material.
- 2) Reading the text "Types of Tourism". This text is taken from the English Online website. Group discussion of the text. The teacher asks students the following questions: What is this text about? What types of tourism are described in this text? (What is importance of tourism for country's economy? (What is the importance of tourism for the country's economy?) Reading this text encourages students to search for information needed for the project.

3) Learning new vocabulary on the topic: one of the world's fastest growing industries; worldwide industry; untouched nature; source of income; source of employment; types of tourism; package tour; tourism provides jobs; popular tourist attractions; popular destinations; winter tourism; cultural tourism; ecotourism; beach tourism; medical tourism; adventure tourism; educational tourism.

The class ends with a discussion on how to present the results of the project. It was decided to present the results in the form of a presentation using Microsoft Power Point.

**The 3rd experimental session with the use of the technology of project activity (Final stage) (Ozturk, 2021: 157).**

**Introduction:** Greetings to each other.

The teacher announces the final stage of the project work:

Good afternoon dear students. Today we are here to discuss a very important topic such as tourism potential in our country.

Objectives of the lesson: prepare to defend the project "Tourism potential in Kyrgyzstan"; defend the project; evaluate the results and summarize the results of the project work.

**Course progress:**

1. Preparing students for the project defense. The time allotted for this stage is 10 minutes.
2. Students' defense of the projects.

Project methodology can be used in pairs, groups, as well as in individual work. In our experiment the work was carried out in groups and in pairs. While working on the projects, the students faced various kinds of difficulties. And to solve them, students were forced to listen to the opinion of others, to argue their point of view, to avoid conflicts, etc. In other words, during the work students learn to interact with each other, which certainly contributes to the development of social competence of students. In our opinion, project topics should not only fit into the general context of language learning, but also be interesting enough for students. Through doing those kinds of activities, students are encouraged to be more active and creative to find and create their learning experience by themselves (Lasauskiene, & Rauduvaite, 2015: 790-791).

Covering the individualization and differentiation of learning, it is necessary to note that this type of work allows students to work on tasks that correspond to their level of training. Thus, all students, without exception, have the opportunity to realize their potential. Table 1 presents a list of project topics completed by students in the process of learning English for Tourism.

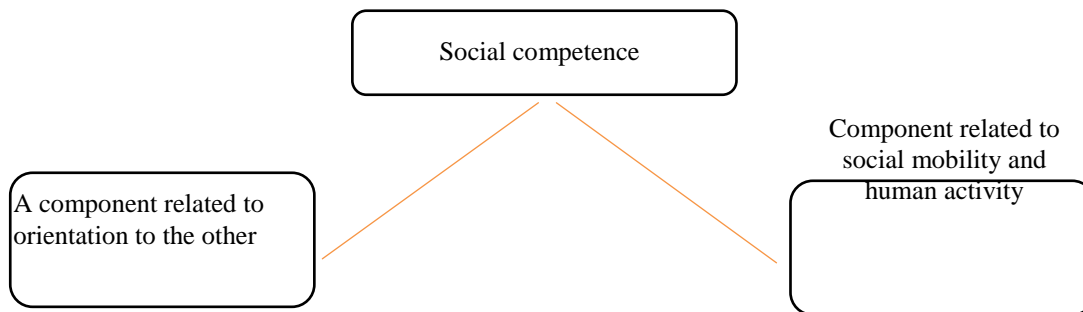
**Table 1: List of topics for project works(Ozturk, 2021: 126 )**

No.	Projectandresearchwork
1	Kyrgyzstan is the Country of Tourism.
2	HotelsinBishkek.
3	Ecotourism in Kyrgyzstan.
4	Winter Tourism in Kyrgyzstan.
5	Trends in the Development of Spa Tourism.
6	Kyrgyz Cuisine.
7	The National Games of Kyrgyzstan.
8	The Hotel I Worked in.
9	London is the Popular Tourism Destination.
10	Business Tourism sector.
11	Business Etiquette in Different Cultures.
12	Dealing with Difficult Customers.
13	Famous Festivals Around the World.
14	To Live is to Dance, to Dance is to Live. Latin, Classical and Standard American Dance Types.
15	Places of Interest in Bishkek.
16	Osh is One of the Ancient Cities in the Central Asia.

The formative experiment with the students of “Tourism” training direction lasted from September 2017 to June 2018 and, in addition to other forms of activity, included project works on the topics listed in Table 1 and on other topics.

In our study, the composition of social competence is represented by the following components (Ozturk, 2021: 51):

- A component related to orientation to the other;
- Component related to social mobility and human activity.

**Fig. 1:** Component Composition of Social Competence

In order to assess the level of formation of social competence of "Tourism" students at the qualifying and control stages of the experiment we used questionnaires "My level of social competence – 1" and "My level of social competence – 2" (Ozturk, 2021: 168).

The questions of the questionnaires were adapted taking into account the practical training of students at the end of the first year. The questionnaire "My level of social competence – 1" (questionnaire by V.V. Boyko, adapted as part of our study) was aimed at determining the level of empathic abilities of students, which are very valuable for work in tourism and services. In other words, by empathic abilities we mean emotional responsiveness, the ability to create a favorable psychological atmosphere in the working team and in communication with customers, the ability to anticipate the client's behavior. The purpose of the second questionnaire "My Level of Social Competence – 2" (questionnaire by T.V. Kornilova, adapted to the circumstances of this study) is to determine a person's ability to work on something that causes anxiety, to act in situations of uncertainty. The analysis of the results of the conducted questionnaire to determine the level of formation of social competence using the questionnaire "My level of social competence – 1" revealed that after the conducting of the forming group, the average score of the experimental group increased from 16 to 27, which indicates an average level of empathic abilities, while the control group score was 20, which is considered an underestimated level. The results of the questionnaire "My level of social competence - 2" indicated that in the experimental group the tolerance for uncertainty increased from 32 to 41, which is an average score. The Uncertainty Tolerance indicator is readiness to work on something new, uncertain. As for Intolerance to Uncertainty, this indicator decreased from 67 to 55, confirming the decrease in the desire for orderliness and clarity in work. Interpersonal Intolerance for Uncertainty decreased from 29 to 18, indicating a decrease in discomfort with uncertainty in interpersonal relationships. While uncertainty tolerance decreased slightly in the control groups, uncertainty intolerance increased slightly, indicating an aversion to uncertainty. The index of interpersonal intolerance to uncertainty insignificantly increased, testifying to the effectiveness of the conducted experiment.

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