



Business game como método eficaz para gestionar el desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas y profesionales de los filólogos-traductores

Business game as an effective method of managing the development of communicative and professional competences of philologists-translators

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Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la eficacia del juego empresarial como herramienta para gestionar el desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas y profesionales de los filólogos-traductores. El trabajo involucró los siguientes métodos de investigación: análisis de métodos de construcción de competencias comunicativas y profesionales de filólogos; formas de medirlos; y requisitos para los juegos de negocios. También se utilizó el método de observación y comparación. El estudio mostró que el juego de negocios tiene un efecto positivo en el desarrollo de la capacidad de los estudiantes para comunicarse y mantener un diálogo con confianza sobre temas profesionales. También, ayuda a aumentar el nivel de dominio del idioma extranjero y despierta el interés por aprender. Business game puede ser utilizado productivamente en la formación de componentes lingüísticos, sociolingüísticos y pragmáticos de las competencias comunicativas y profesionales de los filólogos. También se encontró que el juego de negocios es una herramienta efectiva para determinar el nivel de estas competencias. Por tanto, puede considerarse un método eficaz de gestión del desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas y profesionales de los filólogos. Los resultados de este estudio pueden ser útiles para investigadores y educadores que se esfuerzan por encontrar métodos efectivos de enseñanza y gestión del proceso de desarrollo de competencias.

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Palabras claves: Comunicacion, lingüística, business game, filología.

Abstract

The aim of this work was to study the effectiveness of the business game as a tool for managing the development of communicative and professional competencies of philologists-translators. The work involved the following research methods: analysis of methods of building communicative and professional competencies of philologists; ways to measure them; requirements for business games. The method of observation and comparison was also used. The study showed that business game has a positive effect on the development of students' ability to communicate and confidently maintain dialogue on professional topics. It also helps to increase the level of foreign language proficiency and arouses interest in learning. Business game can be used productively in the formation of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components of communicative and professional competencies of philologists. It was also found that the business game is an effective tool for determining the level of these competencies. Therefore, it can be considered an effective method of managing the development of communicative and professional competencies of philologists. The results of this study can be useful for researchers and educators striving to find effective methods of teaching and managing the process of competence development.

Keywords: Communication, linguistics, business game, philology.

Introduction

The “skills of the 21st century” include communication skills, along with creativity, problem-solving skills, cooperation and interaction (Liu et al., 2020). They are also part of the competency models that graduates must have in order to succeed in their professional activities (Strong et al., 2020). Intercultural communicative competence is of great importance in view of globalization and integration (Thongprayoon et al., 2020). Teachers acquire this competence, for example, while teaching abroad (Dwyer, 2019), and students must acquire it while studying at an educational institution.

Researchers emphasize in the academic literature that building students' writing skills rather than communication skills is the focus of learning a foreign language (Pakula, 2019). The reasons for such an uneven distribution between writing and oral language are the lack of skills to teach oral language, the higher status of written language, the focus of textbooks on teaching to write, and so on. A separate problem is the lack of proper qualifications of teachers, linguistic knowledge (phonetics and phonology, lexicology, syntax, grammar, pragmatics) (Fernández & Andersen, 2019). Even if learning takes place orally, it is often not a psycholinguistic or sociocultural process.

Communicative competence involves language proficiency. As it cannot be interpreted as having oral skills only (Nilsson et al., 2019), it must combine both oral and written language skills. Communicative competence is important for building professional qualities of a

specialist (Yekimov et al., 2021). It is necessary for communication of specialists in a certain field, for discussions, defence of one's own point of view, avoidance of conflict situations.

There have been changes both in the very definition of the term "language" (Cummins, 2021) and in the model of communicative competence at different stages of development of language and society as a whole. In the early 1980's, the model of communicative competence contained linguistic, grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic (compensatory) components (Pakula, 2019). And, in the 1990's, they began to consider strategic competence as an executive, meta-cognitive, or meta-linguistic component. The current model of communicative competence proposed by the Council of Europe in 2001 and supplemented in 2018 provides for the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components of communicative language competence (Nilsson et al., 2019). The linguistic component provides for knowledge of the language and consists of lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competencies. The sociolinguistic component includes knowledge of the rules and norms of relations between people of different ages, genders, languages, cultures, religions, etc. The pragmatic component involves the ability to use available linguistic resources in communication, discourse.

In this case, Yekimov (2021) notes that students must achieve a sufficient level of knowledge of the language and skills to use it when participating in international seminars, conferences, meetings, telephone conversations and correspondence. It is not enough to have knowledge of the rules of the language for meaningful communication (Pakula, 2019). For example, in Sweden and Finland, mathematics and science are taught in a foreign language in order to intensify the study of a foreign language in schools (Toth, 2018). Language is best studied through social interaction (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2020). Teachers should also apply strategies and teaching methods to achieve academic goals through interactivity, dynamism (Alkamel & Chouthaiwale, 2018; Yang et al., 2021), increasing student motivation, their involvement and intensification of cognitive activity and promoting the development of communicative competence (Ju & Mei, 2018).

For the other hand, Business game is considered effective in teaching (Liu et al., 2020). The relationship between a student's personality style and his or her involvement in the learning process must be taken into account (Al-Amri, 2020). Besides, the feedback (Mäkipää, 2020) provided by this method influences learning outcomes.

There are requirements for the business game in education (Ouariachi & Elving, 2020). For example, training should be structured so that the student plays a specific role and immerses himself in another reality. At the same time, the player should interact with others. Players make

decisions, control their actions, and are responsible for them. The game should challenge the player while solving a problem, and the player brings its solution to automaticity and learns to see cause-and-effect relationships. This method should be semi-structured in the initial stages of implementing it in the learning process to provide for regular intervention of the supervisor in the game and direct it in accordance with a pre-designed scenario (Mitchell & Myles, 2019).

The business game can be used as a tool to assess the acquired skills of communication in a foreign language. Borger (2019) developed tests to assess communication skills during pair and group role interactions of students. Evaluation must be carried out reasonably and reliably (Figueras, 2019). It is necessary to take into account language skills and professional literacy, students' communicative competence in the business environment, not only language skills (Guihang & Chen, 2019).

In light of the previous background, the aim of this work was to study the effectiveness of the business game in managing the development of communicative and professional competencies of philologists-translators. This aim involved the following research objectives: 1) Analyse the communicative and professional competencies, as well as methods to develop them; 2) Develop games that would meet the requirements of the business game and would help manage the development of communicative and professional competencies of philologists; 3) Choose a system for assessing the level of communicative and professional competencies of philologists; and 4) Analyse the effectiveness of the business game in the development and evaluation of communicative and professional competencies of philologists.

Methods

Design

This study was of a qualitative nature. The first stage of the research involved the study of the classification of communicative and professional competencies of philologists-translators (Pakula, 2019). The second stage involved a preliminary assessment of the level of professional and communicative competencies of the students included in the sample.

The third stage provided for using business games by the experimental group while learning a foreign language. An average of 30% of the class time was allocated for business games. Finally, fourth stage involved the assessment of the level of communicative and professional competencies in the control and experimental groups. The results of the influence of business games on building communicative and professional competencies were obtained by comparing their videos.

Participants

The sample included 280 students: 120 students of the control group and 160 students of the experimental group. They studied in the 2nd — 4th years. The age of students ranged from 18 to 35 years. The study also involved 20 teachers who taught English in the academic groups of the sample and 5 experts (the team of authors of this study). The age of teachers ranged from 30 to 65 years. All of them had scientific degrees: 16 — PhD, 4 — Doctor of Science; 15 of them had academic titles: 11 —Associate Professor, 4 —Professor. The teaching experience of the sample teachers ranged from 3 to 30 years.

Instruments

The following methods were used in the study: literature survey, videos of business games conducted in the experimental group (with the duration 20 to 30 minutes), closed questionnaire (Fernández & Andersen, 2019), CEFR (EFSET, 2022). All questionnaires were reviewed by 3 experts (from language, psychology and pedagogy).

Data collection and data analysis

A total of 78 videos were made, 60 of which were selected for analysis. The foreign language proficiency (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) was also assessed according to CEFR. A survey of students on an adapted closed questionnaire was also conducted. The analysis was performed according to descriptors (Figueras, 2019) and criteria (Baldwin & Apelgren, 2018). The level of foreign language proficiency was determined according to the results of monitoring. Six levels were established: Basic User (A1 or A2), Independent User (B1 or B2) and Proficient User (C1 or C2). Mathematical methods and Statistica software were used to process the research results. Pearson's test and Cohen's ratio were also used.

Results

The communicative competence has the following components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. Linguistic implies knowledge of language and the ability to reproduce it. Sociolinguistic competence involves the ability to take into account different variations related to differences between interlocutors, such as age, gender, class, nationality, culture, religion, and so on. Pragmatic competence implies the ability to use linguistic resources during interaction, the ability to conduct a dialogue or discussion, to anticipate possible reactions of the interlocutor and the course of the discussion.

Linguistic competence was built during the business game in the course of the experiment. The following sequence was followed: the material necessary for the study was illustrated. Then a game was introduced, which allowed the use of new material in the simulation of a certain situation, while providing for active communication (interaction) of game participants using the newly illustrated language resources. At the end of the game, its participants drew conclusions that they came when completing the assignment (induction). Attention was also paid to building sociolinguistic competence in the course of a business game.

All students were given different roles, which took into account the existence of different representatives of society (for example, representatives of different ages, different cultures, religions, etc.) in real life. During the interaction, students had to follow the courtesy rules, taking into account existing differences and features. The business game also allowed to achieve the authenticity of situations. This contributed to the development of pragmatic competence, the ability to use language in different contexts, such as to offer, advise or ask, or consider different forms of apology, refusal, support, etc. in different contexts. This taught students to predict what reaction they will receive from the interlocutor when using certain expressions.

In order to ensure high efficiency of business games used in foreign language learning, in particular, in building communicative and professional competencies, they were created to meet the criteria of identity, interaction, production, risk, control, multilevel, timeliness of new educational material and its conciseness, the development of critical thinking. That is, each of the participants of the business game had to take on a role, become a different person, immerse themselves in a new situation. During the game, students had to interact with each other, while respond to the actions of their partners in the game in a timely manner in accordance with the situation. The players were producers of action and joint decisions. At the same time, the game was to encourage players to take risks, to make them try new roles and situations that could lead to failure and negative emotions.

As the literature survey and the research conducted in this paper showed, business games are best prepared and conducted when they comply with the following requirements: 1) The number of participants in the game and their composition, the level of knowledge of students in the team should be such that all participants can be active; 2) It is best to communicate the rules of the game and the situation under consideration through specially created cards that the team receives before the game; 3) The game itself should take no more than 20-30 minutes. The preparation for the game should not be long. It is best when students

receive instructions for the game 10-15 minutes before it starts. This time is enough for students to adjust and adapt to the communicative situation they will consider.

4) It is necessary to organize the business game so that all its participants are the authors of their own actions and remarks in dialogues. However, the teacher can help players at the initial stage of introducing business games into the learning process or at the beginning of language learning, when students lack experience. But this should be gradually abandoned, giving full initiative to students. Finally, 5) It should be kept in mind that the team must achieve the goal and get the result specified in the assignment, or more of the range of possible results in the course of the dialogue. In this case, Table 1 presents the results of the expert assessment of the level of communicative and professional competencies through general descriptors by analysing videos of business games conducted among students included in the sample at the initial and final stages of the research.

Table 1

The results of the analysis of business game videos

Descriptors	Percentage of students			
	Control group		Experimental group	
	Before the experiment	After the experiment	Before the experiment	After the experiment
The student is free to use terminology within the range of his or her professional interests	25 %	33 %	25 %	42 %
The player communicates freely with other team members on professional topics, using information from a variety of sources to share or prove his or her own point	21 %	28 %	21 %	39 %
The student can discuss issues of culture, art, life, education, family, tourism, etc.	46 %	57 %	46 %	65 %
Follows the thoughts of the interlocutors and maintains the dialogue in a timely and appropriate manner	23 %	26 %	23 %	41 %
Has enough vocabulary to speak freely on professional topics	24 %	28 %	24 %	36 %
Fluent in speech styles, depending on the context	25 %	31 %	25 %	39 %
Can maintain a conversation in a highly specialized area of his or her future professional activity	21 %	26 %	21 %	37 %

Table 1 shows that students of both groups had a positive dynamic in the development of skills to communicate on professional topics and on topics not related to the profession during the year of research. However, this trend is more rapid in the experimental group. Business games had the greatest impact on the development of students' ability to communicate freely, reasonably with other team members on professional topics, to maintain dialogue. Students also learned to discuss issues of culture, art, etc. Table 2 presents the results for the levels of foreign language proficiency of the sample students according to the CEFR standard at the beginning and end of the study.

Table 2

Level of foreign language proficiency according to the CEFR standard

Year of study	Average score and level			
	Control group		Experimental group	
	Before the experiment	After the experiment	Before the experiment	After the experiment
II	27 (A1)	29 (A1)	27 (A1)	33 (A2)
III	29 (A1)	32 (A2)	29 (A1)	38 (A2)
IV	32 (A2)	35 (A2)	32 (A2)	41 (B1)

Note: A1- Beginner (1-30), A2 – Elementary (31-40), B1- Intermediate (41-50), B2 - Upper intermediate (51-60), C1 – Advanced (61-70), C2 – Proficient (71-100)

As Table 2 demonstrates, the use of business games in learning a foreign language helps to improve the level of foreign language proficiency according to the CEFR standard, being a more effective method compared to traditional teaching methods (training exercises, translations, reading, listening to texts and their rendering). In the second year, students were able to move from the Beginner level to the Elementary level due to the use of business games in learning the language during the academic year. Students of the control group were able to show this result only in the third year. In the fourth year, the students of the experimental group reached the Intermediate level, while the students of the control group slightly increased the average score but remained at the Elementary level.

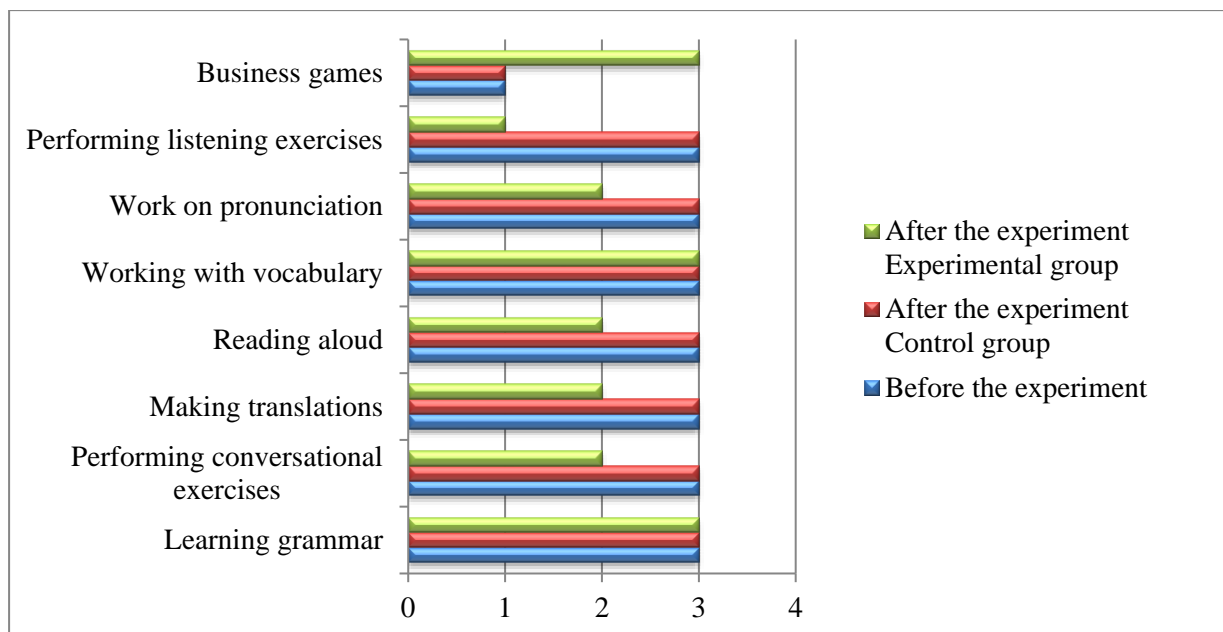


Figure 1. Results of a survey of students on foreign language teaching methods (0 — never, 1 — rarely, 2 — once a month, 3 — weekly)

The survey showed that the introduction of a business game in a foreign language class did not interfere with the study of grammar and vocabulary (Figure 1). However, it reduced the frequency of conversational and listening exercises. It also replaced the traditional translation, reading aloud and work on pronunciation.

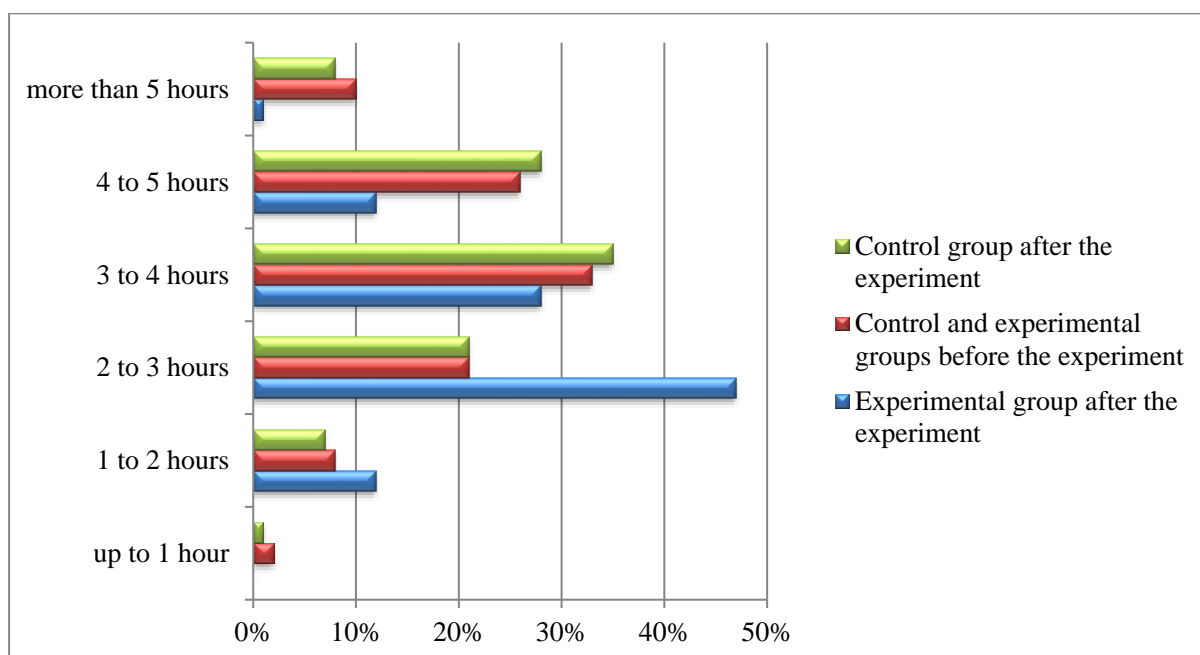


Figure 2. The time that students spent preparing for one lesson

As Figure 2 shows, the use of traditional foreign language learning methods provides for spending much time by students on homework. Before the experiment, students spent an average of 2 to 5 hours preparing for classes. The use of business games during classes makes the language learning process more efficient. Business game is interesting for students. This enhances their cognitive activity and promotes faster learning of the same educational material, both in terms of content and volume. Under such conditions, students spend an average of 2 to 4 hours.

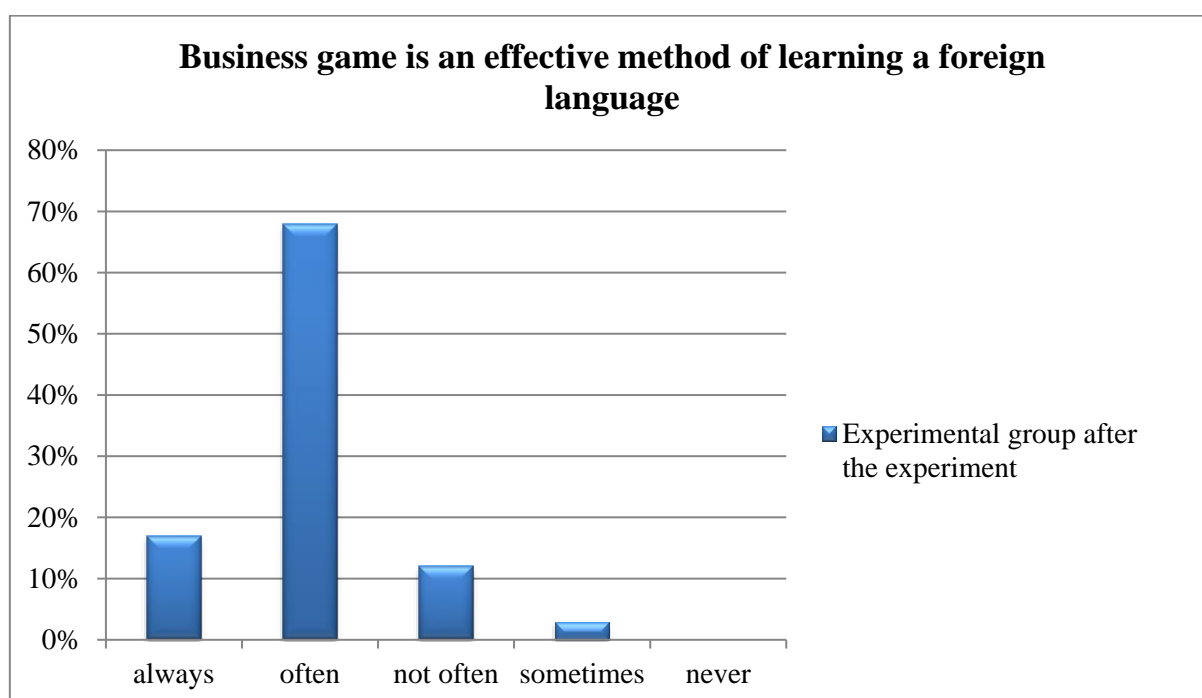


Figure 3. Students' attitude to the business game (survey results)

According to the survey, more than 80% of students believe that a business game cannot always be used in language learning. About 70% of respondents reported that this method has a positive effect on learning outcomes when used frequently (Figure 3). The standard deviations from the mean percentages of the same descriptors estimated by experts in different academic groups differed. The intergroup variance, which indicates the difference between the groups, and intragroup variance, which indicates fluctuations due to random factors not taken into account, were not equal. This evidences that the null hypothesis H_0 is not valid.

Applying Pearson's criterion to calculate the value of χ_1^2 in assessing the components of communicative and professional competencies of students of the experimental group, and comparing with χ_2^2 obtained in assessing these competencies in students of the control group,

we found that $\chi_1^2 > \chi_2^2$. This indicates that there is a connection between the use of business games in foreign language learning and managing the development of communicative and professional competencies of philologists.

Intergroup variance, which is the weighted sum of squares of deviations of group means from the general mean, which is a consequence of the heterogeneity of the sample, that is, different conditions for the introduction of business games in different academic groups, ranged from 270 to 910. Cohen's coefficient was about 1.0 in the experimental group, which indicates the high efficiency of the business game in managing the development of communicative and professional competencies.

Discussion

The research conducted in this paper showed that the use of business games in foreign language classes is an effective method in building students' linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components of communicative and professional competencies. This has theoretical and practical significance, as it complements the methodology of language learning with another effective method. It is also of practical importance because it promotes the involvement of students in the learning process, enhances interest and cognitive activity. It can be used at all stages of studying the material (when formulating the cognitive task, developing certain skills, current and final assessment of the level of students' knowledge achieved, etc.).

A survey conducted (Strong et al., 2020) among 25,000 students, teachers, employees and employers from more than 30 countries showed that oral communication second in the ranking of the employee competencies. According to Nilsson et al. (2019), the model of functional view of language is the best for the formation of communicative competence. Alisaari and Heikkola (2020) also note the importance of language production when learning the language. According to this study, the introduction of a business game in language learning allows studying, for example, vocabulary and grammar in an interesting way. Traditional listening can be turned into a dialogue, which helps to determine how well the interlocutor is oriented in the text he/she hears from colleagues.

Using games in learning enhances students' motivation (Liu et al., 2020). More than 70% of students said that learning through game is very interesting. And only 10% of students believe that the emergence of the game in the learning process did not affect their desire to learn. A comparison of methods such as lecture, text analysis, discussion and simulation game showed that students consider business games as effective as discussions and more effective

than lectures. Besides, it helps reduce the time required to learn the material compared to other teaching methods. Usually, about 90% of students spent more than 5 hours a day on homework. And after applying business games, only 60% of students spent 5 hours a day during their studies (Dube, 2015). This study confirmed that business game is a productive method of language learning and reduces the time that students spend preparing for class by an average of 1 hour.

Finally, this study had a number of limitations. The effectiveness of the business game was compared with traditional teaching methods, while other interactive methods were not considered. Besides, this study had time constraints and lasted one academic year. Future research is worth conducting appropriate to conduct research throughout the entire period of study of students in the higher educational institution.

Conclusions

The problem of sufficient knowledge of a foreign language is urgent when geographical borders are conditional and the population of different countries can move freely around the world. In this sense, the study showed that business game can help to build this competence and manage its development. It helps to increase the level of foreign language proficiency. It also has a positive effect on developing the students' ability to freely conduct dialogue on professional topics using professional terminology and information from various sources to prove their point. Students like this method of teaching because it allows them to easily acquire knowledge in the course of interesting activities. At the same time, students spend less time preparing for classes.

Also, this study is of practical importance for improving methods of developing communicative and professional competencies of philologists. The results of this work can be useful for further scientific pedagogical research, as well as in the professional activities of foreign language teachers. Further research may deal with comparing the effectiveness of interactive research methods with the business game in managing the development of communicative and professional competencies of philologists.

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