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The Role-Playing Method in Teaching Foreign Languages in Universities for Non-Specialized Fields: Advantages, Challenges, and Applications

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Abstract: This article explores the Role-Playing Method as an effective approach to teaching foreign languages in universities for non-specialized fields. The method involves simulating real-life communication scenarios, enabling students to develop practical language skills, overcome language barriers, and integrate professional tasks into language learning. The study highlights the method's advantages, including increased motivation, enhanced communicative competence, and the development of creativity and critical thinking. Despite challenges such as preparation complexity and evaluation limitations, the Role-Playing Method proves to be a valuable tool in modern foreign language education. The article also discusses the method's adaptability to professional interests and its relevance in addressing the demands of globalization and intercultural communication.

Keywords: Role-Playing Method, foreign language teaching, non-specialized fields, communicative competence, motivation, professional integration, creativity, critical thinking, intercultural communication, language barriers, simulation-based learning, educational tools, globalization, higher education.

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Introduction

Teaching foreign languages in universities for students of non-specialized fields has its own features and challenges. The primary goal is not an in-depth study of linguistics but the development of practical skills that enable students to use the language effectively in professional and everyday communication. In this context, the Role-Playing Method holds particular significance as a tool capable of invigorating the educational process, increasing students' motivation, and enhancing their communication skills.

The Role-Playing Method involves immersion in situations that simulate real-life communication conditions. This approach promotes a deeper understanding of lexical and grammatical constructions, helps students overcome language barriers, and builds confidence in using the foreign language. Moreover, role-playing enables the integration of language learning with professional competencies, which is especially important for students in non-specialized fields.

Modern education faces challenges related to the need to prepare highly qualified specialists equipped not only with professional knowledge but also with intercultural communication skills. In the context of globalization, knowledge of a foreign language becomes an important competitive advantage, even for specialists in non-linguistic fields.

The Role-Playing Method offers unique opportunities to address these challenges. It allows the adaptation of learning to students' professional interests, making the process more interactive and engaging, which is particularly vital given the limited hours allocated for foreign language study in universities for non-specialized fields. Additionally, role-playing contributes to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills—competencies highly demanded in the modern world.

The study of the role of the Role-Playing Method in teaching foreign languages in universities for non-specialized fields appears relevant in the search for effective pedagogical tools that can enhance motivation for language learning and adapt the educational process to students' professional needs.

Main Part

Essence and Features of the Role-Playing Method in Foreign Language Teaching

The Role-Playing Method is based on modeling situations close to real-life scenarios in which students assume specific roles. This approach not only develops communication skills but also strengthens interpersonal interaction and confidence in using the language. The core of the method lies in immersing students in contexts that require the application of the target language to solve specific tasks.

Key characteristics of the method:

- Simulation of real situations: Students act within a scenario that closely mimics their future professional activities.
- Interactivity: Active participation of each student in dialogue or discussion.
- Development of language and social skills: Role-playing requires not only language proficiency but also the ability to adapt to communicative situations.
- Flexibility: The method can be adapted to any learning objective, language proficiency level, or professional field.

Advantages of the Role-Playing Method

The Role-Playing Method offers several significant advantages that make it an effective tool for teaching foreign languages, particularly for students in non-specialized fields:

1. Increased Motivation. Participation in role-playing makes the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Students feel involved as they perform tasks with practical relevance.
2. Development of Communicative Competence. By assuming roles, students encounter real language challenges, which helps improve their speaking, listening, and interaction skills.
3. Overcoming Language Barriers. Role-playing creates a comfortable and supportive environment where students can experiment with the language without fear of making mistakes.
4. Integration of Language with Professional Tasks. The method allows incorporating elements of professional vocabulary and situations into the learning process, preparing students for practical use of the language in their careers.

5. Development of Creativity and Critical Thinking. Role-playing requires students not only to demonstrate language proficiency but also to find creative solutions and quickly adapt to changing conditions.

Application of the Role-Playing Method in Universities for Non-Specialized Fields

Given the limited hours allocated for foreign language study in universities for non-specialized fields, the Role-Playing Method becomes an essential tool for achieving educational objectives.

1. Modeling Professional Situations. For example, engineering students can participate in role-playing where they present their technical developments at an international conference. This helps integrate language learning with professional skills.
2. Intercultural Communication. Role-playing games introduce students to the specifics of communication in international settings, developing their intercultural interaction skills.
3. Teamwork Skills Formation Many role-playing activities require collective problem-solving, fostering teamwork and collaboration skills.
4. Use of Modern Technologies. Virtual role-playing games using online platforms enable students to interact in a digital environment, which is especially relevant in the context of distance learning.

Limitations and Challenges of the Role-Playing Method

Despite its obvious advantages, the Role-Playing Method has certain limitations:

- Preparation: Developing scenarios and conducting games require significant time investment from the teacher.
- Passive Students: Not all learners are ready to actively participate in role-playing, especially at the beginner level of language learning.
- Evaluation Limitations: Assessing students' success in role-playing can be subjective and difficult to standardize.

To overcome these challenges, it is important to conduct methodological training for teachers, develop clear evaluation criteria, and adapt role-playing games to students' language proficiency levels and interests.

Conclusion

The Role-Playing Method has proven effective in teaching foreign languages to students in non-specialized fields, thanks to its interactive and practice-oriented approach. This method enables the integration of language learning with professional training, develops communicative and social skills, and increases students' motivation. Role-playing helps overcome language barriers and creates conditions that closely resemble real-life communication scenarios. However, the Role-Playing Method requires thorough preparation by the teacher and consideration of students' individual characteristics. Despite its limitations, this method can be adapted to any learning objectives, language proficiency levels, and professional areas. In the context of globalization and increased demands for intercultural communication, the use of the Role-Playing Method becomes an essential element of foreign language teaching, especially in universities for non-specialized fields.

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