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Identifying and Fostering Gifted University Students Across English Language Skills

Abstract. *Being a gifted and talented learner may mean having academic and creative skills that are above the norm in the classroom. This small-scale study that lasted 12 weeks explored how English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in tandem were improved among Kazakhstani Pre-service English teachers.*
Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligence and Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) were used as theoretical frameworks. A total of 20 (12 females and 8 males) respondents participated in the study. In addition to the pre-course, mid-term, and post-course English language assessments, each week's assessment and survey data were collected. The language assessments showed improvement in participants' language skills; whilst survey data indicated two prevalent themes: the importance of the intervention for professional development and the importance of scaffolding. Limitations of the study included the lack of standardized measurement tools for language assessment. The study recommends further research that involves a larger sample with equal gender representation to enable the generalization of the outcome.
Keywords: *gifted students, English language skills, mass media language.*

Introduction. In Kazakhstan, the concept of human development is analyzed using strategic documents such as Kazakhstan-2030 and Kazakhstan-2050 [1]. The documents contain the sectoral programs of regional and national action plans which include poverty reduction, health, and education improvement of the population. Ever since Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, it has been experiencing growth in many areas of life including education. In 1996, an important document regarded an extra classroom provision for gifted students [2]. This enabled the creation of conditions for achieving academically further. The document identified the type of school for gifted students: A special school for gifted children is a type of comprehensive school, aimed at the teaching and training of children showing a wide range of intellectual abilities and special talents in different subjects. This apparently gave the green light for an education system different than the Kazakhstani system. Currently, there are various schools in Kazakhstan for gifted students, and, Astana (the capital city) has seen the emergence of schools using academic standards that are different than Kazakhstan, such as Nazarbayev Intellectual School, International School Miras, the school for gifted children Zerde, the Kazakh-Turkish Lyceum, the international schools Nur Orda and Haileybury.

Since 2011 Kazakhstan adopted the State Program for Development and Functioning of Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 which recognizes Kazakh as the state (national) language, Russian as the official language used alongside the Kazakh language, and English as the international language. Thus, trilingual education has been launched in 33 schools

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including those for gifted students (the Republican Scientific and Practical Center "Astana Daryny") [3], [4].

In general, the Kazakhstani educational system is expected to incorporate the skills of innovation, creativity, and critical thinking into the school curriculum. Likewise, universities provide such opportunities for students in the form of scholarships, grants, student exchange programs, work, and travel programs with the aim of improving the educational outcome for students. Similarly, authors of the Kazakhstani Mapping Digital Media project urged that it underpinned the citizen's provision of reliable and abundant information. Equally, the authors focused on the importance of being aware of the changing technology that could affect locally and internationally [5, p.76]

The aim of the study was to explore how the linguistic skills of Kazakhstani gifted students further improved and to understand their perception of learning English in this study. Firstly, the context of linguistic giftedness in Kazakhstani will be explored to serve as a springboard for the study. Then, the method used to collect data for the study will be detailed after which the finding will be explored before concluding the paper.

Literature Review
Linguistic Giftedness Model in Kazakhstan

Giftedness is one of the most controversial notions in education (Heller, 1989; Howe, 1990; Berger, 1991; Feldhusen 1991; Eysenck et al., 1993; Heller et al., 1993; Gagne 1995; Freeman 1998; Faulkner 2003; Mönks et al. 2005; Tadeyev, 2008; Davletova 2012 [6, p.5]; Yakavets 2014 [7, p.515-517]. However, Faulkner's (2003) work Predicting Gifted Foreign Language Learning and Performance emphasized the controversies around the notion of giftedness and adapted the definitions by Porter [8, p. 78]. Faulkner notes that Porter reflects on the diversity of definitions and points out that there is a lack of clarity. Although the notion of giftedness appears to be universal, its definition and method of identification are actually more complex because differing ideologies and assumptions give rise to diversity and controversy in definition and consequently in assessment.

Furthermore, Faulkner (2003), stressed that according to Sternberg and Davidson (1986), giftedness is a structured notion by society rather than a natural discoverable phenomenon that is far from being static [8, p.87]. Similarly, Faulkner highlights that Howe (1990) raised an important point in which he rejected the existence of direct relationship between genetic factors and being gifted claiming that 'the idea that genetic factors severely limit the success of individuals is false'.

The definition by Sternberg and Davidson opened a new perspective on giftedness particularly the statement that "giftedness is not a fixed construct" [9, p.56]. During the preparation phase of the study, we adhered to this statement to successfully identify the gifted students as well as to test their performance throughout the course.

With the fast and growing development in the world society, it is obvious that working with gifted students would require more means and more new education techniques. The advantage of Kazakhstani education is that it turns to foreign educational experiences and incorporates them into its education system which can be beneficial for society. Recently, the economic growth in the country prompted technological improvement in education. There are more schools equipped with all the necessary means to deliver the appropriate provision. Moreover, Kazakhstani educational institutions follow new trends in education which enable many opportunities to be accessed such as foreign libraries in an electronic method. This study has direct relevance to the government's 2011 three-language policy. Within this policy, English is identified as a Lingua Franca and spoken worldwide. Kazakhstan follows the same trend as many countries in recognizing the importance of the English language and encourages students to gain native-like fluency. For this study, we mainly focused on linguistic giftedness and foreign language aptitude as it can be regarded as a juvenile trend that may positively contribute to globalization efforts in achieving Kazakhstan's 2030 and 2050 visions.

Since the data on teaching English to gifted students is abundant, it was quite a challenge to adhere to specific theoretical approaches to the study. Also, Golombek's (1998) study of language teacher's personal practical knowledge which acknowledges the role of the second language in education and theory was considered [10, p. 451-455].

Gardner's (1983) analyzed Multiple Intelligences theory was analyzed. It is believed that his theory makes sense in that any classroom might contain students of different abilities [11, p.57] For instance, some students might exhibit skills in English but perform quite well in mathematics, science, or other areas. Gardner introduced the model of giftedness in his book "Frames of Mind". He distinguished eight intelligences: musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic.

Gardner recognized the existence of verbal-linguistic intelligence and that some students might show proclivities to learning languages including their native language more easily than other students. Further acquaintance with related literature made it clear to us that the role of motivation is paramount. Gardner termed the role of motivation as a crucial component in English language classrooms for linguistically gifted students. Although it is worth mentioning that motivation is needed in any type of classroom, Gardner's work inspired our perception of gifted students and their needs.

Similarly, Heller's (1989) 'Munich model of giftedness' appears to be of utmost importance as it illustrates how to work with gifted students (Figure 1) [12, p. 141-147]. Heller discussed the key topics regarding the diagnosis of giftedness and proposed the notion of giftedness to be conceptualized as a dynamic potential rather than only as a disposition. Heller seemed to signal that distinguishing between intelligence and creativity is meaningless when providing a concept for giftedness. He further postulated that: giftedness is dependent on the intended use, for example, from the goals and type of support program, from scientific goals, but also from social considerations and norms.

Heller also emphasized that the definition of giftedness could also be determined by the individual's choice of how to measure and what type of instruments are used. Additionally, Heller stressed two crucial points regarding the legitimacy, rights and responsibilities of talented people when provided for a particular support program: 1) through the right of every individual to receive optimal nurturance of talents and development, 2) through the societal demands on everyone, as well as on the gifted, to make an appropriate contribution for others.

However, the assessment tools for measuring gifted students seem to rely on different aspects, in addition to different cognitive personalities, such as elements of the person's talent indicator or predictors, achievement criteria, and sociocultural variables.

Heller distinguished talent factors, non-cognitive personality characteristics, performance areas, and environmental conditions in his giftedness model. Heller defined giftedness: as the individual['s] cognitive and motivational potential for – as well as social and cultural conditions of – achieving excellent performance in one or more areas such as in mathematics, languages, or artistic areas regarding difficult theoretical vs. practical tasks.

In this study, we adopted the talent factors and performance area in languages and omitted the environmental conditions and non-cognitive personality characteristics described in Heller's model.

Thus, we set out to explore what way is effective for developing English language skills among Kazakhstani university students.
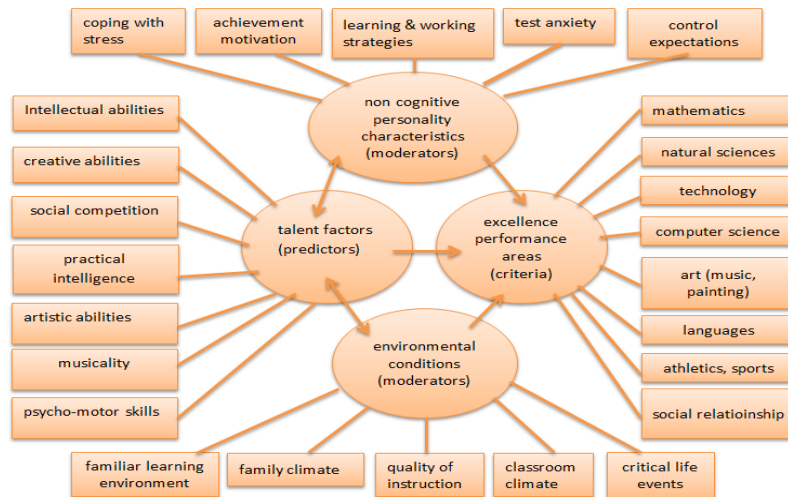
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Figure 1. The Munich model of giftedness adopted from Heller (2004)

Furthermore, to strengthen the study outcomes, Fisher's (1990) model of linguistic intelligence was used as its main points regards the development of four basic language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Figure 2) [13, p. 78].
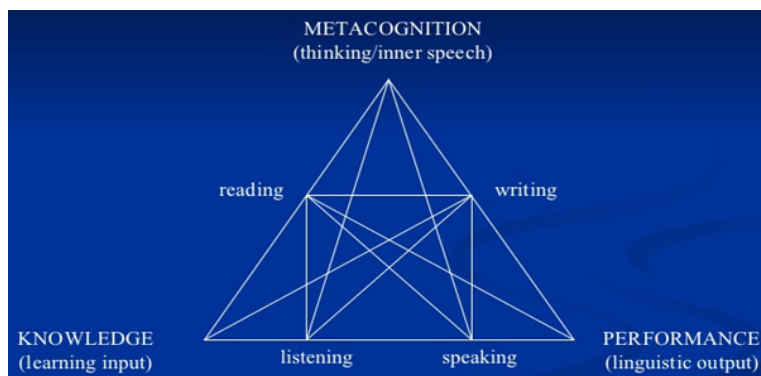

Figure 2. Fisher's (1990) model of linguistic intelligence

Likewise, Vygotsky, (1978) introduced the term "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) which is termed as the distance between what the learner can do alone and what they can do with the help of adult guidance working with them or more capable peers [14, p.21-25]. Vygotsky's ZPD is important because, during the intervention, we anticipated that students would interact and scaffold each other.

Methodology
This study was undertaken in the fall term of the 2022-2023 academic year and lasted for 12 weeks. The discipline under study was Mass Media Language. Participants of the study were 20 in total (12 female and 8 men), who were third-year Pre-service English teachers. The pre-course selection test on linguistic giftedness displayed that out of the 58 students, 20 students met the criteria set for participation in the course. After they consented to participate in the study, different activities were planned for the participants which aimed to reinforce and consolidate their English language skills.

The experimental base was the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University located in Astana city.

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We studied and analyzed an enormous amount of theoretical data and different approaches to giftedness, various models, and techniques such as (Freeman 2001; Bialystok 1991 [15, p.116-118]; Naiman et al. 1978; Porter 2005; Renzulli 1998 [16, p.62]; O'Malley et al. 1990; Mitchell et al. 2013; Skehan 1989; Spolsky 1989 [17, p. 140-142], Ellis 2000; Johnson 2008; Gagne 1995). We tried to envisage how certain techniques and models would work with the profession of journalism (Heller 1998; Renzulli 1998; Sternberg et al. 2005; Towell et al. 1994; Hilary Faulkner 2003 (VanTassel-Baska; Roberts; Fisher; Berger; Tannenbaum); Carroll et al. 1958; Rybalka 2011 [18, p. 18-22].

To collect data for the study, the language assessment outcomes data was used. They consisted of pre-course (starter), mid-term, and post-course (end) proficiency language.

Descriptive statistics were used for the pre-course (starter) and post-course (final) language assessments as Gagne V. emphasized that it is a way of organizing and summarizing data whether it comes from studies of population or samples [19, p.107-109].

In recent years, the use of new information technologies in education has significantly raised in coronavirus situation in 2019-2021. It is not only new technical means but also new forms and methods of teaching, a new approach to the learning process. The introduction of computer-assisted technologies in the pedagogical process increases the teacher's confidence in the team, as teaching is conducted at a modern, high level [20, p.510]. At the same time, the teacher's self-esteem increases as they develop their own professional competencies.

Now teachers need to be able to get information, use it, and create it themselves. The widespread use of digital tools opens new opportunities for teachers to teach their subject, as well as significantly simplifies its work, increases the effectiveness of teaching, and improves the quality of teaching [21, p.265].

So, we used digital tools at the end of each week, and the target language content for the week was benchmarked to see the performance of each student.

Additionally, a survey and questionnaire were used to capture the participants' perceptions regarding their experience of participation in the intervention course. The survey was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis [22, p. 80-83].

Developing four basic language skills is also known as the framework of the ZPD and competency-based approaches. Our objective was to integrate the mass media language into our study to provide a full immersion into the English language [23, p.45]. Exploring authentic programs like TED Talks, magazines, YouTube links, and digital storytelling techniques significantly promotes mastering mass media language for Pre-service English teachers [24, p.42].

Intervention activities

The first week of the study was dedicated to testing the English proficiency of the participants and included their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and speaking. As a warm-up, a set of exercises "Heads up" were introduced which mainly focused on activating their prior knowledge of the four basic language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

Week 2 was about a *book challenge project.* Each participant was assigned a project: to write an essay with an unlimited word count. Although the aim was to give participants the ownership of their free writing style, the theme of the writing was explained to be a 'persuasive essay'; where they should provide justification for the question of why certain books were worth reading while others were less so.

Week 3 involved participants dealing with lessons in the form of videos. The following videos were made available to the participants:

The movie *Death becomes her*. Participants were expected to complete a set of tasks after watching the movie and perform discussions around the concept of *immortality*.

1) Video lesson on TED presentation, *Detroit City*, by Toni Griffin. The aim was to reinforce the participants' speaking competency by sharing their observations of the presentation.

2) Newspaper headlines: this lesson was assumed to equip participants with the skill needed to write effective headlines for different topics as this had a direct relationship with their profession.

Week 4. Game-based learning was about developing the vocabulary skill of participants by introducing a game-based learning activity – playing a computer game in the classroom. The games contained many new vocabularies which were believed to be new to the participants. A Sherlock Holmes: Crimes & Punishments game which took place in London and its suburbs in 1894 and 1895 was introduced.

The aim of week 5 was to enable the participants to understand the most common English mistakes that journalists make by involving them to participate in a workshop. The delivered topics of the workshop were based on the books: Cambridge English for the Media, and Grouchy Grammarian – A How not to Guide to the 47 most common mistakes made by broadcasters.

Then, Week 6 was reserved for the mid-term test week. The test was like the pre-course test.

Week 7 regarded the digital storytelling activity. Although the aim of the study was to develop the English language skills of participants, equally important was the inclusion of journalism topics in the intervention activities. Participants were introduced to the notion of digital storytelling and the basics of creating digital content and they learned how to create videos by using oral English.

Week 8 concerned the Newspaper project. The aim of the project was to augment the participants' creativity. The expectation was to create a newspaper of a particular genre. Participants were divided into groups: 4 groups of 5 students each and each group was expected to come up with the name of their newspaper. They came up with the names Astana Weekly, Astana Times for Teens, The Spectator, and The Perspective. Then each group was assigned to write 2 articles, a total of 8 articles whilst each article should not be less than 2 pages using an A4 paper, single page.

During Week 9, participants were required to focus on how to structure their mass media writing as a crucial component. The book: Writing for Journalists by Hicks and, et al. (2008) was used as an example as it has, except for the introduction, five chapters – writing news, writing features, writing reviews, writing online, and style –particular attention was given to the chapter *style* since it provides suggestions on how to properly combine ideas into a particular style when writing a story.

Week 10 was concerned with a blogging activity since it became part of everyday communication where people of different professions, backgrounds, and ages share their views on different matters. The task assigned to the participants was to create a blog with content corresponding to their future profession. To facilitate the activity, participants were introduced to the blogger.com website and explained to them how to register.

Week 11 covered a case study regarding public journalism in cyberspace. The participants examined the role of public journalism in the formation of people's viewpoints.

In week 12, participants conducted their post-course test. Each week's task was benchmarked and given scores for the participants to know what went well and what needed to be improved that week.

Survey (Questionnaire)

Ruel, Wagner, and Gillespie (2016) postulated that using a survey method in research can be a highly effective method of measurement when conducting a social study [25, p. 139-145]. Thus, in week 12 we decided to explore the perception of the participants. Participants were asked to rate the following questions. and gave a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represented the least favorable and 10 the most favorable (not for Question 1):

1) How would you rate your experience from the course?
2) What was/were your favorite activity/ties?
3) Did this course have an impact on you in the professional way? If yes, state how?
4) What was your favorite kind of work: in groups, individually, or both?
5) Would you recommend other students to take this course?

Discussion
Findings from the 12-week intervention activities

Week 1 – The students' English proficiency test covered all linguistic areas. The highest student's score on the Starter test was 94 and the lowest score was 78. Chart 1 illustrates the week 1 test.

Week 2 – This week, participants were feeling relaxed and looking forward to starting the course. As the group consisted of 20 students, we decided to divide them into 4 groups, with the assumption that the overall interaction between them and their presentation would improve.
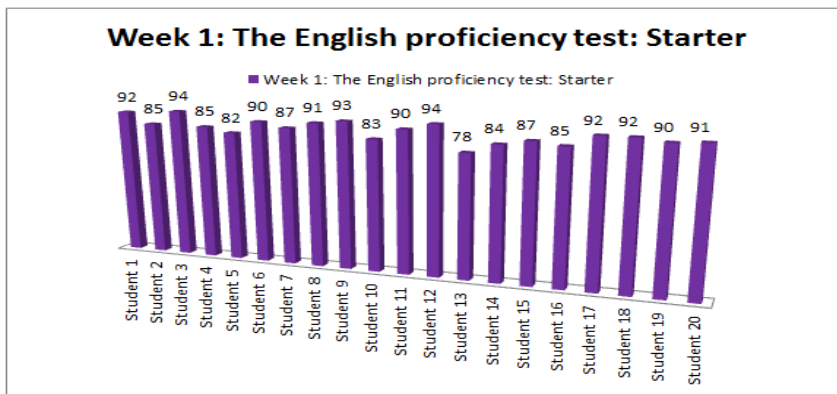
Chart 1. week 1 test

Students studied the notion of project work independently before coming to the class. Each of them wrote an essay and read it out loud in front of the class. When a student finished the reading, they came over to the blackboard and wrote the most interesting and catching phrases or expressions from their essays. Participants agreed to call the activity "a book challenge word cloud". The highest grade achieved was 100 and the lowest mark was 85. The achievement can possibly be attributed to the intervention activity.
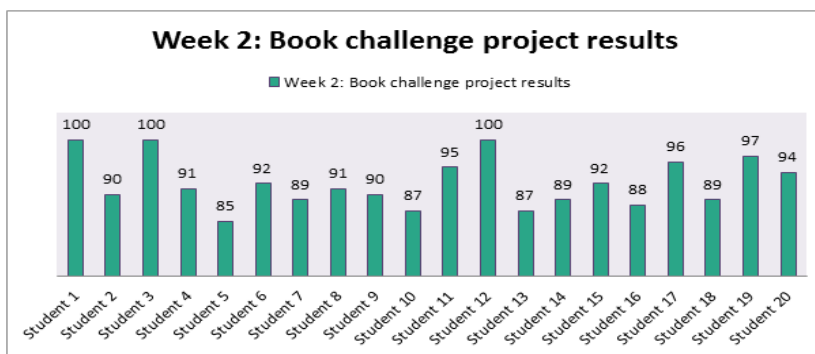

Chart 2. Week 2 Book challenge project

Week 3 – In this activity, a student-centered approach was used, and participants were encouraged to complete tasks on their own. The teacher's role remained to be that of a facilitator and intervened only when needed. Students 3's comment about this particular activity was positive:

It was something I never imagined. Well, we received video recordings with our teacher' explanation, we received handouts, we had the whole group together. All we had to do was to proceed by following the instructions.
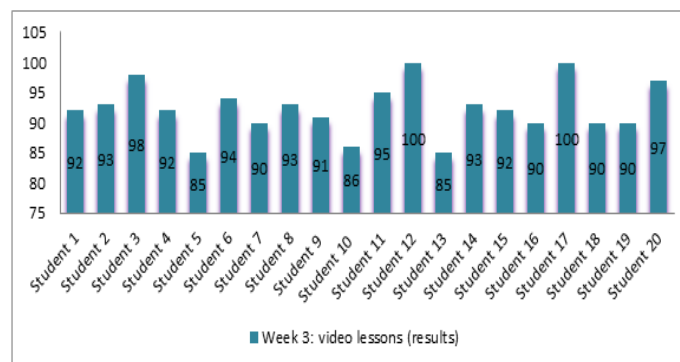
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Chart 3. Week 3: video lessons

Week 4 – To assess the participants' knowledge of the plot, vocabulary phrases, and expressions a test was created. One separate mark to each student was given for the discussion task, where students shared their opinions on each of the cases in the game, and which actions they chose since the players might either fail or succeed in the game depending on the presence of clues at their disposal. Finally, most students mastered this activity and were able to perform well on the test. Possibly because of regarding the task as entertainment. The highest score of Week 4 was 100 and the lowest one was 85.
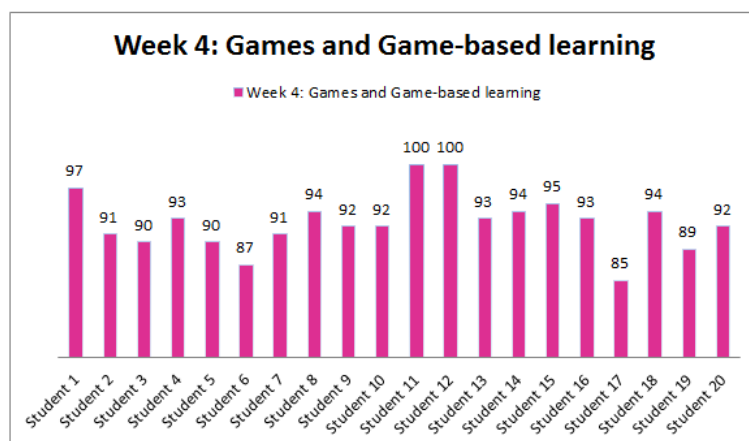

Chart 4. Week 4: Game-based learning

Week 5 – This week, participants worked individually as well as in a group focusing their attention on the complexities of the English language. It was discovered that the eagerness of participants to acquire as much mass media vocabulary as possible and, also build on their grammar skills. Participants' achievements were encouraged as they achieved in the range of 90 and 100. It is remarkable that in the pre-course test, the lowest score was 82.
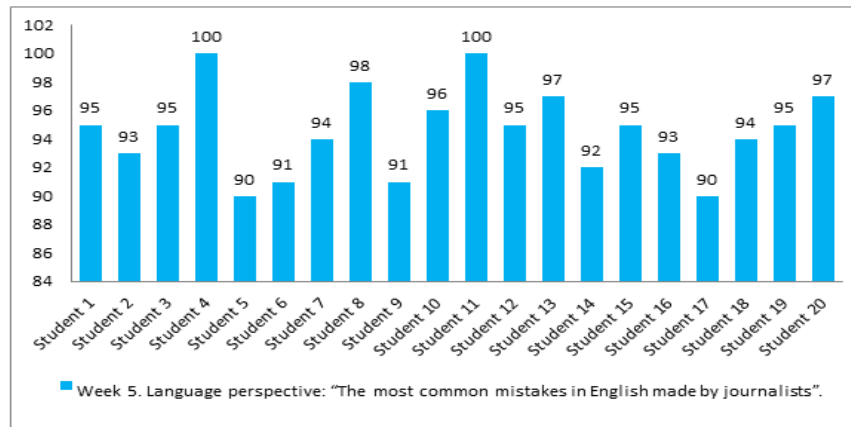
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Chart 5. Week 5 The most common mistakes in English in mass media

Week 6 – The mid-term test indicated a visible shift in students' progress in English language skills. In comparison to the Starter test, all 20 students demonstrated better results in all respects. The nine students who initially had difficulties in speaking and grammar areas significantly improved their performance. The overall better performance of the participants was attributed to the intervention. The highest score on the test was 100 and the lowest score was 90.
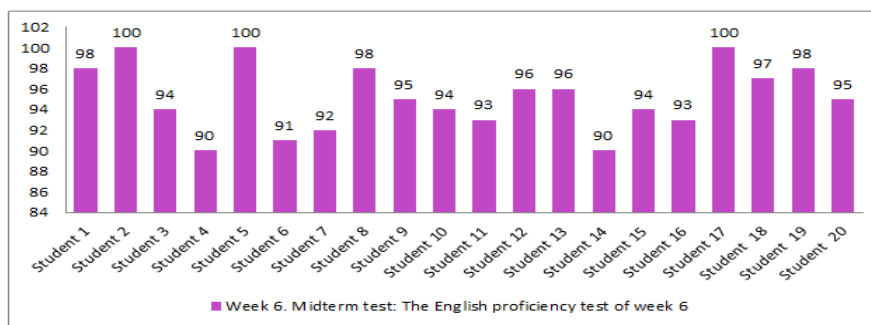

Chart 6. Week 6: Midterm test

Week 7 – Topics that students chose for digital storytelling were the following: William Shakespeare – 400 years, Students' struggles, Work challenges in the 21st century, Psychology and Innovation, Persuasive techniques in conversation, 30 is a new 20, Refugee crisis, Tiny housing, Kitchen Nightmares, Humans of New York (YouTube channel), Volunteering, News nowadays, Discover Britain, Pursing your dreams, Professional development, Critical thinking in education.

Thus, the results of week 7 showed the participants' understanding of the notion of *digital storytelling*. Furthermore, participants received good marks for their videos, i.e., 6 students received the highest marks – 100%, 2 – 98%, 4 – 97%, 5 – 95%, 1 – 94%, 1 – 93%, and 1 – 91%.
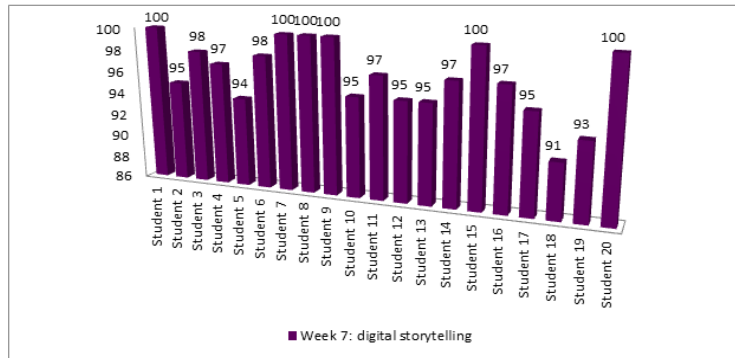
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Chart 7. Week 7 Digital Storytelling

Week 8 – *Astana weekly* group wrote articles on the following topics: Astana and Expo-2017, great debaters – a new craft, Astana's agenda, exams and tension about it, McDonald's opening in Astana and the fuss about it, Kazakhstan, and money value…, schools with I-phones? Any parking spaces nearby?

Astana Times for Teens group penned the articles: taking a gap year, Astana then and now, Kazakhstan in the world arena, stress reduction, is it possible? The problem with prices, the impact of lighting on school performance, traveling, and economic crisis, take a break: boost in creativity.

The Perspective group presented articles such as tips for going through a job interview, audiobooks, and school, Kazakhstan in crisis: fewer people buying designer clothes, tell me what your pet is… and I will tell you who you are, tips for saving money, seeking inspiration from the internet, perils of traveling in India, libraries of today.

The Spectator group presented articles on such topics as the trilingual policy of Kazakhstan, and Germany in crisis. What is the right salary for living in Kazakhstan? Student exchange practices, interview with a British professor, volunteering in Astana: look at us now, a woman leader in politics, USA predicament: Trump or Clinton?

The results of that week were regarded as excellent in every way, as students' articles were written impeccably in terms of English grammar and structure. Many students added different pictorial elements to their newspapers and printed them out with a color print. The results were amazing as the newspapers looked professional and artistic.

Each group received marks for their overall performance. Before getting down to work students were told that their marks would be highly affect to their overall performance. This kind of activity may make students aware of their part in the whole project, as each student had to contribute to the project to get a good mark. The chart below shows the results achieved by each group: Astana Weekly group received 96 %, Astana Times for Teens group – 95 %, The Spectator group – 100 %, and The Perspective group – 98 %.
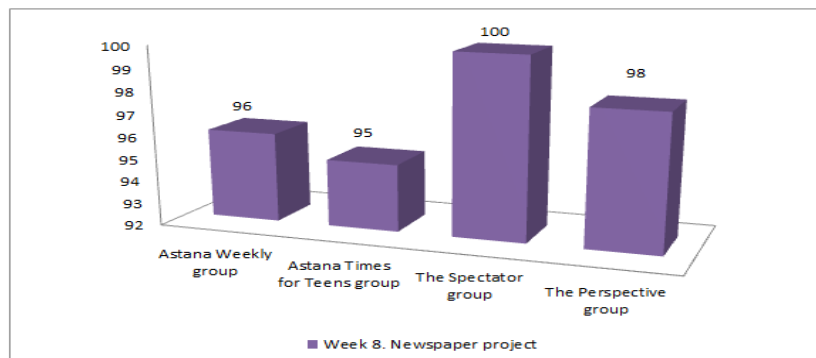

Chart 8. Week 8: Newspaper project

Week 9 - Students' stories written in this were the following: dancing with horses, living in the world's priciest city, the birds addicted to junk food, supercomputer copying human blood flow, the wonderful world of pi, in conversation with an astronaut, college students create a backpack for students on the autism spectrum, the months-long manhunt for Paris attacks fugitive, Goodwill employee finds $10,000, how an eight-year-old boy invented a new word, The woman who lives like it's 1939, the evolution of surfing, the building that went for a walk, the hidden math in great art, what's the song of your generation? The man who created Paris.

Participants were eager to learn about the ways to professionally write and structure news stories. Their highest score for accomplishing this assignment was 100 %, and the lowest score was 93 %. These marks indicate steady progress in students' English language skills, and it is noticeable that they felt confident and excited about the class assignments including this assignment.
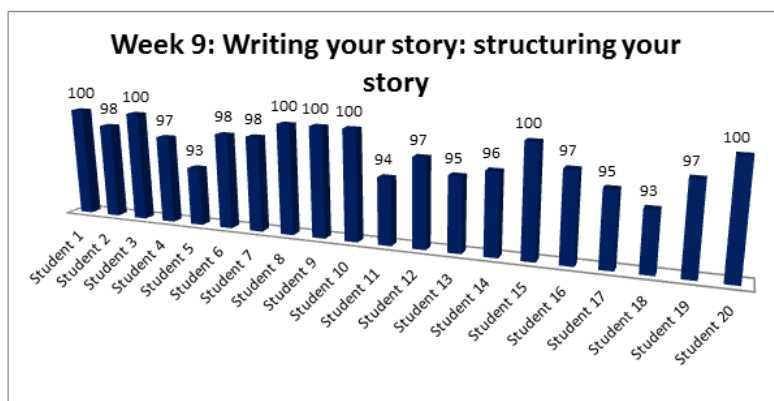

Chart 9. Week 9: Writing your story: structuring your story.

Week 10. Participants signed up to the website and each student came up with their own name for the blog. Some participants named their blogs after themselves, however, most students created the name of the blogs according to the news they wanted to cover for the blogs. Interestingly, students expressed a desire to cover worldwide news along with magazine news.

To guide participants through getting to know the basics of blogging, we introduced the book *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. This book describes how to start blogging for journalists in such articles as objectivity, *Professionalism, and Truth Seeking in Journalism*, *Convergence and Cross-Platform Content Production*, *Agenda Setting*, *Rethinking News and Myth as Storytelling*, *Alternative and Citizen Journalism,* and *Towards De-Westernizing Journalism Studies*.

The week of blogging was an entertaining, mesmerizing, and collaborative experience for participants as they practiced receiving peer assessment. It is worth mentioning that apart from paying attention to the content of blogs, students also were interested in the external view of their blogs. Overall, participants' blogs were a great combination of external look and internal gist where one could easily focus on reading. The highest score was 100 % and the lowest score was 94 %.
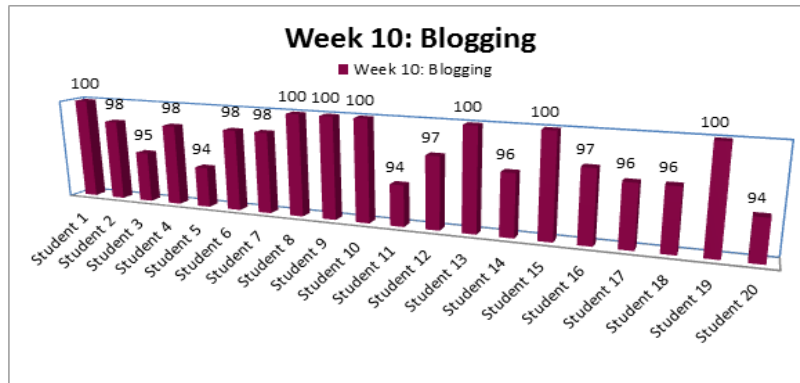
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Chart 10. Week 10: Blogging

Week 11 – Participants were divided into 4 groups and focused to research the question: Why do people use the internet? Each group was asked to choose a country of their choice. They chose the USA, the UK, Kazakhstan, and South Korea. The most common response was that people used the internet to send e-mails. At the end of week 11 participants gave their presentations on each topic as a group discussion. Their marks were encouraging. They ascertained that they enjoyed the intervention activities.
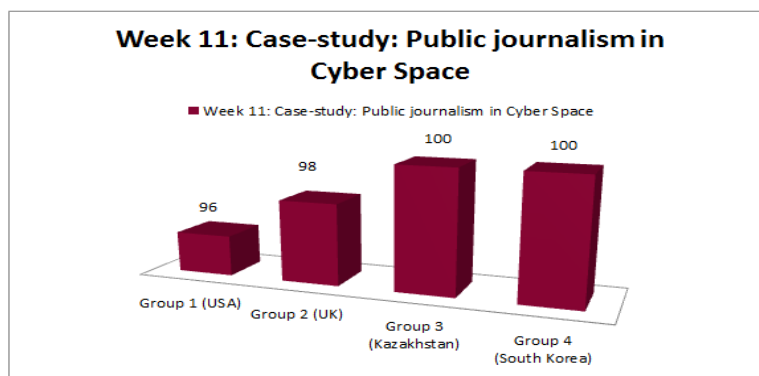

Chart 11. Week 11: Case-study: Public journalism in Cyberspace

During Week 12 students used an Internet-based weblog, essentially a homepage managed by a writer. They wrote comment feature posts so that readers of posts leave their opinions, questions, or thoughts. Finally, there was a writing style element: one individual who gives his or her thoughts in a generally relaxed, "spoken" style. After Week 12 the post-course (end) test was conducted and results were displayed in Chart 12.
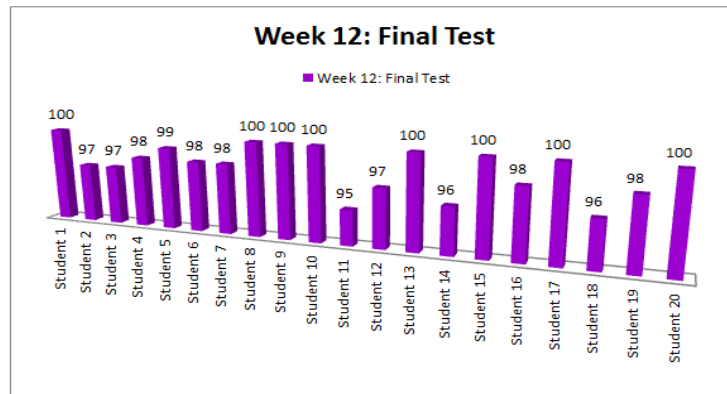
Chart 12. Week 12: Final test

The final test consisted of innovative activities that were beneficial to students of Foreign Languages specialty. Indeed, these students got to experience activities closely related to their profession and qualifications, and quite improved their English language skills. Each activity that was included in the curriculum functions according to a certain strategy (enrichment, differentiation, acceleration). In addition, each student had a chance to evaluate their personal English proficiency in four basic language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
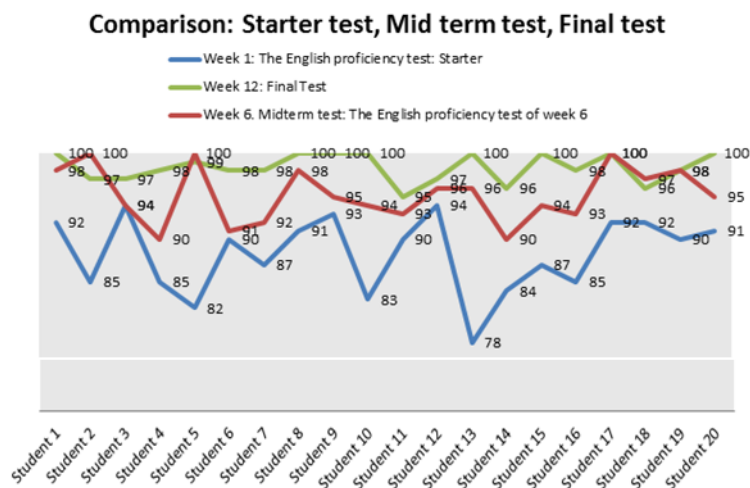

Chart 13. Comparison of pre-course (starter), mid-term and post-course tests

The comparative results of participants during assessment in the starter test, midterm test, and final test were illustrated in Chart 13. Every test for each student was demonstrated in different colors.

Results. Two themes came out of the survey: the intervention improved the mass media language provision and the importance of scaffolding to improve speaking performance. The participants rated the course 10 out of 10, and this may be an indication of the course's effectiveness and that it might have motivated the participants.

Student 9: *This is like a snowball, we are getting immersed into the course gradually, and I enjoyed the way we are taught. There is something special in it. I definitely see the difference.*

For question 2 "What were/was your favorite activity/ties?" the participants pointed out that they enjoyed the whole intervention activity. We designed the intervention in such a way that students were challenged in an appropriate way because each week brought new activities.

Student 4: *I liked the Book challenge project. Each student made a presentation on their favorite book and others were to read them. Now I know what I should read next.*

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Similarly, Student 3 added: *I loved Game-Based learning week especially. I love games and talking about learning English through playing games. I never expected that to happen in English classroom. Usually, it is about reading and writing. I am glad I signed up for this course.*

The participants reported that the intervention was marvelous as it also focused on ass media language, and it could be further developed. In terms of group work, most participants emphasized that they prefer working in groups rather than individuals. What was remarkable was that participants unanimously agreed that they would recommend colleagues for the course. Finally, participants' general feelings about the course can be termed as effective, beneficial, and thought-provoking.

Conclusion. The study examined the English language development of 20 participants studying mass media English language. Participants were involved in 12-week intervention courses where they were learning mass media English language according to the curriculum that was necessary for Pre-Service English teachers.

As a result, at the end of Week 2 which was devoted to the *book challenge project*, it was revealed that the interesting part of introducing such a kind of activity was when teachers only assisted in the whole preparation process, and if needed advised on writing or vocabulary. Participants gave feedback to each other on what needed to be further improved. Likewise, Student 3's comments above illustrated that the teacher stood back and only intervened when help was needed. This meant giving support to the teacher when needed. The comments also showed that students strived as they worked independently. Comparing the pre-course (starter) and post-course (end) achievements by the participants paints a promising picture i.e., that the course might have been effective.

In terms of participants' perception, it can be highlighted, according to the data, that participants enjoyed the course as it focused on developing both the mass media language in fun ways as well as their other language skills. Thus, it can be tentatively claimed that where the aim is developing short interactive courses for Pre-service English teachers with different topics might be beneficial. However, it should be noted that the finding of the study is contextualized and may not be applied to another setting. Limitations of the study involved the measurement tools for giftedness which were not standardized. We recommend further research with a larger sample with equal gender representation to understand more about the ways of developing English academic writing and public speaking skills for Pre-service English teachers.

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Университеттің дарынды студенттерін анықтау және олардың ағылшын тіліндегі дағдыларын дамыту

Аңдатпа. Білімі сыныпта берілетін нормадан асатын академиялық және шығармашылық дағдыларға ие оқушылар дарынды оқушылар болып табылады. 12 аптаға созылған бұл шағын ауқымды зерттеу жұмысы қазақстандық ағылшын тілі оқытушыларының ағылшын тілі дағдыларын (оқылым, жазылым, айтылым және тыңдалым) тандемде қалай жақсаратынын зерттеді.

Теориялық негіз ретінде Гарднердің бірнеше интеллект тұжырымдамалары (1983) және Выготскийдің жақын даму аймақтары (1978) қолданылды. Зерттеуге барлығы 20 адам қатысты (12 әйел және 8 ер адам). Ағылшын тілін меңгеру деңгейін курс басталмас бұрын, курс барысында және курстан кейінгі бағалаудан басқа, әр апта сайын бағалау жұмысы жүргізіліп, сауалнама деректері

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жиналды. Бағалау қатысушылардың тілдік дағдыларының жақсарғанын көрсетті; сауалнама деректері екі маңызды тақырыпты айқындады: кәсіби даму үшін араласудың маңыздылығын және қолдау көрсетудің маңыздылығын. Зерттеудің шектеулері қатарына тілді меңгеруді бағалауға арналған стандартталған өлшеу құралдарының болмауы кіреді. Зерттеу нәтижелерін жалпылау мақсатында гендерлік бөлінісі тең болатын үлкен ауқымдағы қосымша зерттеулер жүргізу ұсынылады.

Түйін сөздер: дарынды студенттер, ағылшын тілі дағдылары, бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының тілі.

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**Определение одаренных студентов университета
и развитие их навыков английского языка**

Аннотация. Одаренными называют студентов, которые обладают яркими умениями и навыками в учебе и творчестве. Данное исследование посвящено вопросам повышения уровня изучения английского языка будущими учителями иностранных языков. Исследование длилось в течение 12 недель, и рассматривались все четыре языковых навыка: чтение, письмо, разговорная речь и аудирование.

Теоретической основой исследования являются теория Множественного интеллекта Г. Гарднера (1983) и Зона ближайшего развития (ЗБР) Л. Выготского (1978). В исследовании приняли участие в общей сложности 20 человек (12 женщин и 8 мужчин). Были собраны результаты оценивания до начала курса, все текущие оценки, результаты рубежного контроля, финального экзамена и анкетирования. Анализ оценивания показал улучшение языковых навыков участников. В данном экспериментальном обучении использовались две стратегии: стратегия вмешательства и стратегия от простого к сложному. В рамках исследования рассматривалось отсутствие стандартизированных измерительных инструментов для оценки знания языка. Данное исследование может быть продолжено в русле гендерного анализа с целью обобщения результатов.

Ключевые слова: одаренные студенты, знание английского языка, язык СМИ.

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