

Nation-building and identity development through ethnocultural content in university English for Specific Purposes courses in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

It seems obvious that that educational activity establishes conditions for the development of a person capable of combining ancestral traditions and values while maintaining their distinctive ethnoculture. This paper investigates how integrating ethnocultural material into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) university courses contributes to nation-building and students' identity development while at the same time exerting impact on ESP curriculum advancement. The empirical part of the research involved 104 first-year engineering students learning English as a foreign language for specific purposes. The experiment demonstrated that exposing students to regional material and enabling them to communicate in English about their region empowers them in their national and regional identity, while contributing to nation-building goals of university education. The findings of the study reveal that integrating ethnocultural material into ESP university courses positively impacts both students' motivation and their national identity development.

Keywords: Ethnocultural material, ESP, national identity, nation-building, students, criteria, reflection.

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1. Introduction

The Republic of Kazakhstan, a country in the central part of Eurasia, former member of the USSR, appeared on the map as an independent state only in 1991. Kazakhstan is one of the 10 largest countries in the world, ranking 9th in the world in terms of territory. Located between Europe and Asia, Kazakhstan boasts of a rich history. It was of great importance for the civilisations of the ancient world, since it used to be a significant part of the Silk Road, which connected the East and the West, and was central to the economic, cultural, political and religious interactions between the regions from the 2nd century BCE to the 18th century. The territory of Kazakhstan was previously inhabited by nomads. The name of the native people – Kazakhs – has Turkic roots and in translation means ‘free people’.

Kazakhs are native to the territory of Kazakhstan, but currently more than 130 different nationalities live in this country. Kazakhs are the most numerous ethnic group of nearly 19 million total population, followed by Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tatars and Germans. The basic principle of interethnic relationships is laid down in the constitution: all citizens of Kazakhstan, regardless of their eye shape and skin colour, have equal rights and obligations. The Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, created on March 1, 1995, on the initiative of the President of the country Nazarbayev (2013), strengthened the interests of all ethnic groups to ensure the strict observing of the rights and freedoms of citizens irrespective of their ethnic affiliation. The concept of ‘Eternal Country’ was accepted in the 24th Congress of Kazakhstan People’s Assembly as the leading idea of values that form Kazakhstani national identity, unity and social harmony (Nazarbayev, 2013). Another programme to serve as the basis for Kazakhstani nation-building was formulated as ‘Spiritual Revival’, with the aim to focus on the revival of traditional culture, preserving national identity, respecting spiritual values of Kazakh people, while at the same time taking into account the risks and challenges of modernity and enabling Kazakh people to compete in the face of globalisation (Nazarbayev, 2017).

The globalisation processes taking place in the world and the development and strengthening of the English language as the one of the main languages of modern civilisations has been facilitated by global processes and the expanding of international connections and collaboration. Also in Kazakhstan, English has the priority as the first foreign language in the educational system. The spread of English skills contributes to Kazakhstan’s dynamic entry into the world’s economy.

Due to sociolinguistic, demographic and multinational distinction Kazakhstan has a unique language peculiarity. Constitution of Kazakhstan Republic defines the Kazakh language as the state language. Despite the Kazakh language, Russian is used as the language of communication between nationalities and has one of the leading places. This caused by historical and political processes that occurred in Kazakhstan during the Soviet Union. The application of Kazakh and Russian as official languages, the widespread teaching of English and the use of a yet another home language in case of some ethnic groups create a challenging and interesting linguistic situation in Kazakhstan.

English is taught at all levels of education. The process begins in primary school, where the content of the programme is aimed at developing learners’ interest and basic language skills. In middle school, the teaching of English corresponds to Levels A1 and A2 by the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2011). Learners are expected to complete their language education at the B1 level in high school.

At the university level in non-linguistic specialties, English is studied over two semesters. The aim of the English courses is to form intercultural and communicative competence of students, while

also developing the ESP component. Depending on the level of training, the student at the time of completion of the course reaches the B2 level of the pan-European competence, or, with a higher starting point, the B1 level (Educational System Concept, 2012). Instructors usually use course books proposed by British publishers, most frequently from Oxford University Press, which they supplement with their own material for the purposes of ESP and students' regional and national identity needs.

A major assumption in the choice of additional material lies in the conviction that in order to understand target-language culture and world culture for *lingua franca* communication, the learners need to have a solid standing of their own culture, called here ethnoculture, as well as awareness of their ethnicity and pride in individual cultural heritage. Consequently, the inclusion of ethnocultural material into the process of learning English acts as a connecting element that facilitates insights into foreign cultures. The ethnocultural content in English Foreign Language (EFL) can be updated and supplemented with text material related to improving the national cultural identity of young specialists, thus ensuring the connection between education and the sociocultural environment.

Regional content allows for the incorporation of content pertaining to a region's customs and culture into the educational process. The target language can be used to convey issues of regional importance (values and facts). Integrating ethnocultural material into EFL courses can positively reflect on the nation-building and national identity development of students. Thus, it contributes to upgrading EFL/ESP curriculum at university. With regard to this issue, Chao (2016) notes the necessity to conduct empirical research on intercultural teaching practices of local English teachers, as relevant studies on EFL teaching in Asian countries are still insufficient.

1.1. Conceptual framework

Ethnoculture is recognised as an important part of teaching in Kazakhstan and has been increasingly integrated into policy and curriculum documents and the general rhetoric of education (Uzakbayeva, 2017). The field of ethnos is expected to be an active participant of the educational domain. The term ethnos is understood 'An extensive kin group, strongly associated' is a term used to describe a group of people who are closely related. Ethnography is expected to become a major participant in the educational space. A person's culture is like the pinnacle on which all aspects and degrees of group cultures are centered. The culture of the country in such an ethnically diverse country like Kazakhstan aims to encompass ethnic cultures allowing nation-building through both individual ethnic identity and a strong national ethos.

With language and culture closely related, it is still necessary to provide substantial reasons for using ethnocultural material in the EFL class. Firstly, ethnocultural material has a special function in the study of a foreign language, where learning is carried out through the knowledge of textual material. Filling the content of texts with ethnocultural material saturates students' cognitive process with a value-semantic component and components of cultural knowledge: the history of the native land, customs, traditions and culture of the native people and information about the accomplished individuals of their region. A strong regional identity empowers students for international communication which is ultimately the aim of English as a *lingua franca*. This idea was supported by Nizegorodcew (2015), who noted that to use English as a *lingua franca* through messages is not enough to construct a practice community and in order to have this practice, learners should understand their cultural values.

Additionally, many researchers believe that teaching EFL contributes to learners' understanding of their own culture. For example, Aleksandrowicz-Pedich (2009) maintains this idea

and states that learners frequently think about their own culture when they learn about the culture of other people during the EFL learning process. It is obvious that the EFL teacher's attention is aimed at the elements of target-language culture as the teacher provides teaching English as a *lingua franca*. However, when a student engages in intracultural dialogue, a mental understanding of his own culture starts, and as a result, this intercultural dialogue causes cultural comparison between his own culture and the target-language culture (Aleksandrowicz-Pedich, 2009).

The region where the study was conducted is the upland area of Zhezkazgan in Central Kazakhstan. The significance of the Great Mountains there stems not so much from their size as from the historical significance, generated by the great events of national history associated with the unification of Kazakh families. Ethnocultural material about Ulytau, located in Zhezkazgan, as the geographical centre of Kazakhstan, would provide knowledge about the original culture of Ulytau. A better understanding of the heritage of the region in the context of studying a foreign language would strengthen students' perception of the role of their region for Kazakhstan and contribute to their local and national identity (State Programme, 2004).

Importantly, ethnocultural material encourages language acquisition, as well as expands students' language awareness, since they provide a particularly appropriate way of stimulating this acquisition within meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting a new language. Along with this, texts with such content serve as good didactic material for various exercises for the development of students' foreign language use. Ethnocultural material boosts motivation, the key vehicle for successful language learning.

1.2. Related research

Culture needs to be integrated in language instruction (Chen & Yang, 2016). The cultural component has always been one of the most essential dimensions of intercultural language teaching and is based on the following principles: awareness of one's own culture; study of the target-language culture; and comparison of both cultures. With English as a *lingua franca*, the concept of intercultural competence has developed as the ability to deal with the other, with new unpredictable phenomena and people, while the emphasis in culture teaching has switched more into awareness of managing the unknown and developing learners' tolerance and sensitivity to otherness.

Thus, the process of learning more about the interrelationship between culture and language within the native environment led the way to the consideration of the effect of the foreign culture on second language learning (Grigorian et al., 2018)

Being as the leading character in the process of communication a human and language play an important role in interaction between people. As a result, it is difficult to learn a foreign language due to the great disparity in languages and cultures. Interethnic communication is multifaceted and takes place within a complex 'person–language–culture' system. (Kendirbekova, 2002)

According to Kramsch (2013), the teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom had taken two main directions: one focusing on cultural information, statistical information, institutional structures and facts of civilisation, including highbrow information, while the other aiming to situate culture within an interpretive framework, taken from cross-cultural psychology or cultural anthropology, using universal categories of human behaviour and procedures for making sense of foreign reality. Since the 1980s, the intercultural approach in language teaching has promoted topics focusing on language awareness, the discussion of cross-cultural experiences and stereotypes or the negotiation of meaning (Neuner, 2003). Byram (2018) stresses that many models of intercultural

competence exist, and they often specify the traditional triad of knowledge, skills and attitude, while newer models also tend to put forward values such as human dignity, cultural diversity and cultural otherness or equality.

Language demonstrates all of an ethnos' current cultural elements and is thus an intrinsic aspect of that culture. Gantara (2017) emphasised that including local content into English learning can give opportunities for students to use their own experience while they are implementing their writing assignments.

The active renaissance of cultural and historical heritage of the past took place in Kazakhstan, as well as in other places in the world. Ethnic culture is the most important component of this process. Language teachers should always find some material which, in this respect, would interest and involve the students and then skilfully and efficiently employ it in their foreign language classes. Muslim (2017) strongly believes that teachers should include more heritage narratives in English learning so that students become more motivated to improve their English skills and feel prouder as young Indonesians. This would be true for students in other diverse countries in the world. Speaking activities related to local content can be used in the communicative approach, which assumes that the goal of foreign language learning is to achieve communicative competence in the target language.

Ethnocultural material included in an effort to provide local culture-sensitive teaching enrich students with local cultural knowledge and enhance their ability to socialise with the surroundings and then gain the ability to narrate their national and regional background in the foreign language in international encounters (Ayirir, 2011). So, ethnocultural material brings dual benefits for the students like enhancing their local cultural knowledge and developing their linguistic and intercultural EFL competence. The use of English in the international context is facilitated when speakers have a strong sense of identity based on regional and national heritage.

Although national identity is not visible and concrete since it is addressed as imagined community (Chen & Yang, 2016; Gelisliya & Beisenbayeva, 2015), national cultural identity is a significant element to the existence of a nation. The incorporation of ethnocultural elements in EFL teaching materials through local cultural artefacts enhances the sense of belonging to the national culture.

1.3. Purpose of the study

Consequently, the following two research issues will be addressed in our study:

- 1) How will integrating ethnocultural material influence nation-building, student identity development and motivation in English learning?
- 2) How can ethnocultural material advance the EFL curriculum at university?

The aim of the experiment was to verify whether integrating ethnocultural materials into EFL course at university impacts students' motivation and national identity development.

2. Method and materials

With a view to identify the initial level of regional knowledge, we tested students from both the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG). Along with grammar and vocabulary, the tests included questions aimed at identifying general notions about the region. We used materials about Zhezkazgan region since most of the students had resided and studied in this region. A graduate-resident of this region is expected to hold a regional identity; care about the continuous development

of its material and cultural wealth; respect the nature of the region; be an active citizen; and value history, national characteristics and labour traditions of the people.

Each task included five response options with one correct answer. The items tested general and regional knowledge. Students were also asked to answer questions with just 'Yes' or 'No'. Additionally, they were asked: Enumerate the famous sights of your town; What do you want to know about your native town?

The test results demonstrated that both the student groups had a good command of world history and the history of Kazakhstan, gained from humanities, natural cycle subjects and from non-fiction and fiction. Their knowledge of the region was surprisingly weaker. Nothing in the answers indicated that the use of English might have been a problem.

2.1. Research model

With a view to eliminate these contradictions, we implemented the transformative stage of the experiment where regional material, local history of the Zhezkazgan region in particular, was included in the content of the foreign language teaching programme. Therefore, we created additional material that focused on the local environment.

The regional material was implemented through all types of activities: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The use of additional materials related to the region partially changed the curriculum content.

In order to obtain objective findings and compare the results alongside the transformative experiment in the experience group, the control group students were offered the following tasks: 1. Answer the questions; 2. Find the match; 3. Translate from native language to English and vice versa; and 4. Choose the correct option. We worked with this group using their regular course book which does not contain any regional materials.

2.2. Participants

Overall, 104 student-respondents of Zhezkazgan University majoring in engineering participated in the empirical part of our research. The respondents were distributed to control and experimental groups. Both experimental and control groups included 52 students.

The students study English three times per week and all of them had B1 level according to the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2011).

2.3. Data collection tools

In order to measure students' knowledge and skills cognitive, value-based and activity-based components were applied. We used a diagnostic test, achievement tests and interviews with students. The test consisted of 20 close – ended questions and the interview covered oral questions referring to ethnocultural content.

In our research the cognitive component focused on the following:

- discovering the recognizing the levels of factual knowledge of national culture;
- assistance in the formation of the foundations of the national and cultural competence of students;
- the use of lexical units with historical, cultural and national semantics in communication in the foreign language.

The value-based component included the value attitude of the personality of the future specialist to professional activity, the formation of cognitive interests, and the demonstration of interesting historical, cultural and national-cultural life of the region.

The activity-based component covered the relationship between history and modernity and the relation of historical facts and phenomena for future professional activity.

2.4. Data collection process

Our research consisted of three stages. The ascertaining experiment held at the first stage was aimed at identifying the initial level of ethnocultural knowledge as well as the basic level of students' develop these CG and EG, i.e. their learning abilities, level of learning motivation, interdisciplinary knowledge, and theoretical thinking.

At the second stage we based our teaching content on incorporating ethnocultural material in the EG. Classes in CG were conducted without any changes in the syllabus. EG students were given assignments as speaking about the sights of their native land, ceating historic sites tours, writing essays, performing test tasks and presenting their research projects. The results of their work were collected for analysing at the next stage: The material was analysed through qualitative approach.

At the last stage tests and oral interview from the first stage were conducted again in both groups in order to see if ethnocultural materials contributed cognitive, value-based and activity-based components.

3. Results

By implementing the ethnocultural knowledge and national identity structure, we considered national identity as *a process* aimed at the accumulation of axiology-based experience in solving educational and national identity goals. The process consisted primarily of mastering the academic programme through ethnocultural material. The actual level of mastery of the ethnocultural material and reflection upon it are considered as *a result*. Such understanding of the future professional's development process enabled us to consider the outcome of national identity development, namely the *national position* of a future specialist based on axiology-based experience. The conducted experiment gave us the following results (See Table 1).

Table 1 : Results of the experiment

	Low		Middle		High	
	CG	EG	CG	EG	CG	EG
Cognitive	25 48.08%	21 40.38%	14 26.92%	16 30.77%	13 25.00%	15 28.85%
Value-based	14 26.92%	10 19.23%	20 38.46%	22 42.31%	18 34.62%	20 38.46%
Activity-based	14 26.92%	12 23.08%	25 48.08%	26 50.00%	13 25.00%	14 26.92%
Average value (%)	33.97%	27.56%	37.82%	41.03%	28.21%	31.41%

To determine the confidence difference in the control and experimental groups, we used the χ^2 method (in accordance with Pearson's criterion), which is used in pedagogical research and takes into account the specifics of the statistical data of the educational process.

Based on the methods conducted for testing the effectiveness of the pedagogical system, it can be concluded that this study gave positive results. The level of students' cognitive activity had increased, which contributed to the high motivation for professional study.

The experiment showed that EG students desired for self-improvement, meeting teachers' requirements, independent and creative approach to achieving goals, higher level of knowledge and self-education skills. All these changes are due to a reasonable combination of self-management and self-education management skills.

3.1. Data Analysis

The analysis of the progress of the experiment revealed that a large number of students can use ethnocultural material in a conversation in English, determine the semantic centre of basic concepts and form arguments. EG students showed their activity and independence at the discussion stage in defining their own positions, their citizenship and sense of pride of their country. They figured out a number of challenges to be addressed for the welfare of the region and sometimes put forward constructive suggestions. We considered the positive results of the regional topic-related tests as proof of students' readiness to solve national tasks on the basis of axiology-based experience. In general, analysing the transformative experiment results, we traced the dynamics of change at this stage of national identity formation.

The test results proved that students have a good command of general history knowledge gained from humanities and natural cycle subjects as well as from non-fiction and fiction.

Students were asked to answer questions with just "Yes" or "No" and supplement by: Enumerate the famous sights of your town; What do you want to know about your native town?

The test results revealed that students lack knowledge about their region rather than language. Students are not able to apply regional knowledge to solving educational and professional tasks.

The transformative stage resulted in students' desire for self-improvement, meeting teachers' requirements, independent and creative approach to achieving goals, high level of knowledge, and self-education skills. All these changes are due to a reasonable combination of self-management and self-education management skills.

The regional material was implemented through all types of activities: speaking, listening, reading, and writing, which facilitated students' understanding of regional text materials. The selected priority educational and professional tasks partially changed the curriculum content.

With implementing ethnocultural knowledge and national identity structure, we considered national identity as *a process* aimed at accumulation of axiology-based experience in solving educational and national identity goals. The process consisted primarily of mastering the academic program through ethnocultural material. The actual level of mastery of the ethnocultural material and reflection upon it are considered as *a result*. Such understanding of the future professional's development process enabled us to consider the outcome of national identity development.

According to work evaluation criteria we received the following results in the cognitive component: high level - 28.85%, satisfactory level - 30.77% , low level - 40.38%; axiology-based component: high level - 38.46%, satisfactory level - 42.31%, low level - 19.23%; activity-based component: high level - 26,92%, satisfactory level - 50%, low level - 23.08%.

The creative tasks including the ethnocultural content ascribe students to their national identity, develop their skills of successful adaptation in different social situations, helping them to address professional issues on a prompt and correct basis. Such tasks encourage students to practice active learning, find themselves, and achieve their goals.

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4. Discussion

The interest in ethnocultural material led to the creation of English course book entitled 'Ancient monuments of the Zhezkazgan region' that includes chapters such as 'Ulytau,' 'To value, conserve, and pass on to the future generation...', and 'A summary of the Zhezkazgan region's monuments.' They contain exercises in vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, we provided lots of activities, for example teaching songs, poetry, tongue twisters, quotations, and proverbs about native land. These exercisers were aimed at giving live atmosphere in our classes. Making up crosswords appeared to be the most efficient vocabulary learning tool. Different visuals such as photographs, slides, reproductions of paintings, book illustrations, video clips and movies were used in all classes. During the concluding lesson we organised different activities such as contest, quizzes, dictations and tests.

The following requirements were imposed on the educational texts included in the guide in light of the communicative orientation in teaching a foreign language: 1) information content; 2) practical value; and 3) availability of content (State Programme, 2010)

As an example, we prepared supplementary materials (6 hours) 'Ulytau', united by a common goal: to study material about Ulytau as the geographical centre of Kazakhstan, about the sights of the original culture of Ulytau and consolidating and applying the knowledge gained in various types of activities.

The practical tasks involved the following goals: improve vocabulary; form the ability to independently semantise unfamiliar vocabulary in context; form the ability to work with advertisements; develop monologic and dialogic speech through role-playing games; develop imagination and creativity; improve listening, reading and writing skills; and work out a strategy for completing test tasks.

The main forms of work included research, work with a map of the city, accumulation of information, conversation, role-playing, planning an excursion and a creative workshop.

The activities consisted of reading a text in English (working with newspaper advertisements or working with text), completing test tasks, dialogue, written statement and independent work. Teaching aids were used, such as visual materials (illustrations, map or newspaper ads), didactic cards and badges of travel agents, visitors, guides, and tourists. The following types of tasks were suggested for reading comprehension:

1. Read general information about Ulytau (Parts I–III)
2. Fulfil the post-reading exercises

Listening:

1. Listen to the information about rock drawings of 'Terekty-Aulie'.
2. Decide whether the information given in the card is true or false.

Furthermore, students worked with newspaper advertisement texts.

There are a lot of companies in Kazakhstan which offer tourists different services.

1. Examine the advertisements.
2. Read the information and think where you can find the answer to these questions.
3. Match the question and the text.
4. Answer the questions

Which advertisement offers:

1. To preserve a memory of everything you'd seen?
2. Unforgettable sea voyages?
3. To feel comfortable in good clothes?
4. Individual tours?
5. All types of tourism services?

Students were offered a city map to study.

1. Examine the map of the central part of the Zhezkazgan region and name the following:

1. The most famous streets.
2. The historical monuments and their location.

2. Look at the map and answer the following questions:

-What historical monuments are located in Zhezkazgan?

-What streets of Zhezkazgan are historically famous? Why?

-Have your friends from other cities ever been to these historical places?

-What monuments have you already seen?

In addition, students made up dialogues:

1. Choose one of the cards and show the city to your friend.
2. Ask about: a) places to visit; b) means of transport; c) traveling time; d) places to have dinner etc.

Writing played a considerable role in the experimental part. It included the preparatory stage before essay writing, involving the search for additional material and reviewing information. For example, students had to find information about the monuments of the natural boundary of 'Taldysaj' and stone sculptures.

To determine the value of cognitive and activity indicators, we offered students a business game, 'Excursion in the Zhezkazgan-Ulytau Region', where pronunciation, lexical and grammatical competencies were formed and language speaking skills were trained.

During the business game, students demonstrated the ability to apply existing knowledge and experience to solve problems, as well as the ability to transfer existing knowledge to a new situation. The business game itself did not simply involve identifying the meanings and values embedded in regional texts, but also the teacher built a set of requirements on the basis of knowledge about the characteristics of pedagogical values in a particular sociocultural situation. At the same time, students used the knowledge gained in the study of regional material from the teaching aids.

The stages of the business game are as follows: Now, pretend you are in a travel agency. Take the badges. Who wants to be the visitor / travel agent? Play out the situation: 'A visitor comes to the office to book a historical tour of Ulytau-Zhezkazgan region'. Think what questions to ask / how to answer.

And now, one more situation: Act out the conversation between a tourist and a guide during the excursion. Use the badges.

When introducing the ethnocultural material, we used a variety of interesting types of work. For example, the work on newspaper ads, city map study, making up dialogues, preparation of abstracts, role-playing and self-written work at this stage enabled students to expand their knowledge of basic subjects, thus supporting their general educational needs and developing communicative competence.

To develop speaking skills, students were asked the following questions (in English) during their work with the text:

1. Was the text difficult to understand? 2. Is the text interesting? 3. What did (didn't) you like in the text content? 4. Would you like to read more on this subject? 5. Which of the texts you read did you like most (least) of all?

The aim of these questions was to develop students' linguistic skills and their assessment-based attitude towards information and critical thinking.

The performance criteria were shown in the framework of a conversation on the topic 'My native land and my national identity', wherein students applied their ethnocultural knowledge in the process of discussing national problems.

One example of successful engagement with the ethnocultural topic was a presentation by student Marat Akhmetov, who not only prepared interesting and colourful visual material, but in his report highlighted the history of the monument of Alash Khan. He spoke about some interesting moments of the life of Alash Khan. The report was rich in additional information, which attracted the attention and interest of other students. He also prepared a survey for the group in which everyone participated actively.

It is also worth noting that the effectiveness of ethnocultural materials is dependent on the teachers' and students' ingenuity and determination. Working with ethnocultural materials brings foreign language activities to life, making them more engaging, intriguing, and focused, as well as enhancing national identity. With a regional component, a good examination of humanities education provides a solid foundation for presenting a range of approaches to humanist principles and practices in higher education.

Two ways should be taken into consideration while teaching ethnocultural elements: firstly, it is region's ethnical structure and secondly, the staff's national structure which collaborates with foreign countries. (Kurmanayeva et al, 2017). Ethnocultural content is useful for practicing different

skills such as writing, reading, speaking and listening as well. It allows students to integrate linguistic practice and cultural diversity for future professional purposes.

Overall, ethnocultural content is able to add value, meaning, and purpose to the process of teaching a foreign language. In addition, it assists in the resolution of a variety of educational issues, developing the teaching potential of classes, and promoting the national identity of multicultural people. Integrating ethnocultural material into learning EFL has a positive impact on students to communicate about their region in English. This empowers them in their national and regional identity, while contributing to nation-building goals of university education.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined how ethnocultural material can be incorporated into EFL courses at the university level in order to provide impact on nation-building and students' identity development. This can be understood as students' level of perception of human values and the norms of the cultural heritage of mankind in the context of their country and region, which denote the level of an individual's development. Introducing local component into EFL courses at the university level corresponds to overall goals of higher education in Kazakhstan.

The creative tasks, including the ethnocultural content, ascribe students to their national identity, develop their skills of successful adaptation in diverse social situations and help them to address professional issues on a prompt and correct basis. Such tasks encourage students to practice active learning, find themselves and achieve their goals.

After establishing the importance of ethnocultural resources in the learning process, it is crucial to emphasize the various types of educational activities that may be conducted with ethnocultural materials, which expands the range of learning methods available to students. For instance, if there is a chance to broadcast in English, one can use advantages of local media for teaching listening. For reading, study city maps or analyse the local newspaper articles in English. For speaking, prepare short video recordings on local attractions to be placed in social media; similarly for writing, create social media content in English for Facebook, Instagram (descriptions of pictures) or other platforms. The integration of ethnocultural materials in the teaching process can be helpful for for improving the effectiveness of learning a foreign language and developing positive attitude for language learning process.

The most important focus of this paper has been to prove the value of nation-building and identity development through ethnocultural material in the university EFL courses. Such materials would not replace other essential parts of the curriculum, but form an extra valuable optional for the purpose of boosting teacher's moral spirit. As a result, it is conceivable to conclude that the use of ethnocultural resources would result in a significant improvement in the foreign language teaching process for students with non-linguistic majors. The new curriculum can contain ethnocultural materials. Also the ethnocultural content is not fully effective for teaching a foreign language individually, it can be considered as a factor in improving students foreign language competencies, as well as a prerequisite for the development of attitude to the culture of local people and willingness for intercultural communication.

6. Recommendations

The research resulted in the following recommendations:

1. The ethnocultural material should be systematised and constructed throughout the territory of Kazakhstan in order to increase the cognitive and axiological functions of foreign language teaching.
2. A systematised fund of ethnocultural materials should be established to address the issues of using ethnocultural materials in the study of foreign languages.
3. The guide called 'Historical monuments of the Zhezkazgan region' can be used in teaching English to non-linguistic students in all universities of Kazakhstan.

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