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## ACTIVE MINDS, FLUENT FUTURES: ENHANCING PRIMARY SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION THROUGH ACTIVITY-BASED APPROACH

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*This study investigates the impact of the Activity-Based Learning (ABL) approach on enhancing English language proficiency among primary school students. For primary school students, the foundational years are crucial, as younger learners possess heightened language acquisition capabilities due to cognitive plasticity. Conducted as part of a six-week practicum, the research involved 15 students aged 8–10 from two schools in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The study began with observations of traditional teacher-centered methods, which revealed limited student engagement and underdeveloped communicative skills. In response, a series of activity-based exercises were designed and implemented, emphasizing interactive tasks such as group work, pair activities, and games to foster listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. A comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test results demonstrated notable improvements, particularly in listening and speaking skills, with students exhibiting greater confidence, motivation, and active participation in classroom activities. Qualitative observations supported these findings, highlighting increased collaboration and the effective use of English in communicative settings. This article explores ways to improve foreign language education for primary students through activity-based methodologies, bridging the gap between theory and practice to align education with 21st-century learning styles.*

**Keywords:** Activity-Based Learning (ABL), Active Engagement, Foreign Language Education, Primary Education.

### ***Introduction***

An activity can be defined as a state of being active that encourages individuals to engage in specific actions or work. It can be conducted individually or in groups, promoting active participation among students and helping them achieve specific goals or objectives. In modern education, fostering active engagement among primary school students remains a significant challenge. Activity-Based Learning (ABL) encourages active student involvement, which aligns with the principles of

cooperative learning discussed by Johnson (1993) in terms of promoting student interaction and engagement [1].

Traditional teacher-centered approaches often fail to effectively engage young learners, limiting their ability to develop critical language and life skills. These methods can lead to passive learning environments that do not meet the developmental needs of primary students. Addressing this gap is crucial for equipping students with the necessary tools to succeed in an increasingly globalized society.

**Activity-Based Learning (ABL)** is an educational methodology where students actively participate in their learning process rather than passively listening. The Activity-Based English Language Teaching Method (ABETM) is an approach used by EFL teachers to emphasize active, individual participation in learning a foreign language. This method incorporates various activities designed to provide students with real-life, practical experiences, making the learning process more interactive and meaningful. ABL, rooted in constructivist theories, encourages active student involvement in classroom activities to effectively foster language skills development [2].

The origins of Activity-Based Learning date back to 1944 during World War II, when David Horsburgh, a pioneering British educator, began his innovative teaching practices at Rishi Valley School in India. His approach significantly influenced ABL's evolution, marking a milestone in the history of modern educational methodologies. Since 2003, the ABL method has been widely implemented in schools across India, providing specialized education, particularly for children freed from bonded labor. The Activity-Based Approach (ABA) emphasizes students' active participation, collaboration, and practical application of knowledge. This approach contrasts with traditional teacher-centered methods by prioritizing hands-on activities that foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. By involving students in activities that require analytical and creative thinking, this methodology ensures an engaging and meaningful learning experience [3].

In primary education, the Activity-Based Approach is particularly effective as it promotes cognitive development while also nurturing social, emotional, and creative growth. This approach aligns with the developmental needs of young learners, equipping them with skills that extend beyond academic knowledge and preparing them for future challenges. Through activities tailored by language teachers, students gain the confidence to address real-world problems, becoming more responsible and motivated learners. Learning through experimentation and exploration provides sensory experiences that are not only unique but also long-lasting, leaving a profound impact on students' understanding.

Despite the recognized benefits of ABL, its adoption in foreign language education for primary school students remains inconsistent. Many educators continue to rely on traditional rote-learning methods, which neither fully engage students nor

cater to their developmental needs. While existing studies have explored the theoretical underpinnings of ABL, there is a lack of practical guidance on implementing activity-based approaches tailored to the unique challenges of foreign language instruction in primary schools.

This method transforms the teacher's role from a passive observer to an active guide, directing students in their investigative and analytical pursuits. Activity-Based Learning encourages creativity, critical thinking, and self-confidence, allowing students to internalize concepts more effectively. By encouraging learners to identify and solve problems independently, the Activity-Based Approach ensures that learning outcomes are both impactful and enduring. This approach not only stimulates students intellectually but also nurtures their self-esteem, enabling them to handle challenges related to both academic and social aspects of life. In activity-based learning, all available resources are utilized to create a comprehensive and immersive educational experience. Teachers facilitate a structured environment where students can thrive through active engagement, collaboration, and exploration. By learning through action and participation, students develop a deeper understanding of concepts while also acquiring valuable life skills. This method supports their overall growth, fostering curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love for learning.

### ***Methodology***

The experimental research was conducted as part of a school practicum. The study included 15 primary school students aged 8 to 10 years. The students were divided into two groups for English lessons, as per the standard division in primary school. The participants were selected from two schools in Almaty where the practicum took place: Gymnasium № 138 named after M. Bazarbayeva, comprising 3rd-grade students, and Gymnasium № 35, comprising 4th-grade students.

The study began with an observation of the students' English learning processes during regular lessons to understand the effectiveness of the traditional teaching methods used. This included gathering data on lesson materials, teaching approaches, levels of student engagement, and assessment methods. The observations showed that conventional methods were mostly teacher-centered and did not sufficiently promote active participation or collaboration among students. Additionally, existing assessment methods focused primarily on written skills, leaving little room for developing communicative competence.

Based on these findings, a set of activity-based exercises was designed to improve the students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The exercises were adapted from standard textbooks and supplemented with original materials created to suit the needs of the participants. Lesson plans were developed to incorporate these exercises into structured activities, such as pair work, group tasks, and interactive games.

The intervention lasted six weeks, with each group participating in two one-hour lessons per week. To evaluate the effectiveness of the approach, a pre-test (T1) was conducted before the lessons began to assess the students' baseline English proficiency. Students' participation, motivation, and ability to complete tasks individually and collaboratively were observed and recorded during the lessons. At the end of the intervention, a post-test (T2) identical to the pre-test was administered to measure improvements in their language skills.

### ***Results***

The data from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics to assess changes in the students' English proficiency. Additionally, qualitative data from observations were reviewed to identify trends in student engagement and collaboration throughout the lessons.

The pre-test (T1) and post-test (T2) were administered to assess the students' English proficiency before and after the intervention. Descriptive analysis of the test results revealed an overall improvement in the students' English skills following the six-week intervention. Most students demonstrated notable improvements, particularly in speaking and listening skills, following the implementation of the activity-based approach. The results from the post-test (T2) showed a general increase in performance across all language skills when compared to the pre-test (T1).

In addition to the quantitative data, observations recorded during the lessons highlighted several key trends in student engagement and collaboration. Most students exhibited higher levels of participation during group activities, pair work, and interactive games. Initially, student involvement was somewhat passive, but by the end of the intervention, a majority of students actively participated in discussions, volunteered answers, and collaborated more frequently with their peers. The qualitative observations also indicated that students became more confident in expressing themselves in English, particularly in speaking tasks. The increase in participation was accompanied by a noticeable improvement in the quality of student interactions during activities, with more students using English to communicate effectively in group settings.

These findings suggest that the activity-based approach contributed to enhanced student engagement, motivation, and a noticeable improvement in their language skills, particularly in listening and speaking. The results of this study indicated a significant improvement in the English language skills of primary school students after the six-week intervention, which utilized an activity-based approach. The findings align with previous research that emphasizes the effectiveness of active learning methods in improving language proficiency, particularly in terms of speaking and listening skills. Most students demonstrated noticeable improvements, particularly in their ability to participate in discussions and collaborate with peers.

This suggests that incorporating interactive activities, such as pair work and group tasks, can be beneficial in enhancing students' communicative competence, a finding consistent with the principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which stresses the importance of real-world language use. The study results indicate that an activity-based approach can enhance primary school students' English language proficiency, particularly in terms of speaking, listening, and engagement. These findings suggest that incorporating interactive, task-based activities into the curriculum can foster a more communicative and dynamic learning environment, enhancing students' language skills.

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## БЕЛСЕНДІ АҚЫЛ-ОЙ, ЕРКІН БОЛАШАҚ: БЕЛСЕНДІЛІККЕ НЕГІЗДЕЛГЕН ОҚЫТУ АРҚЫЛЫ БАСТАУЫШ МЕКТЕПТЕ ШЕТ ТІЛІНДЕ БІЛІМ БЕРУДІ ЖЕТІЛДІРУ

*Журтыбай Арайлым Ганибекқызы*

Бұл зерттеу белсенділікке негізделген оқыту тәсілінің бастауыш сынып оқушыларының ағылшын тілін меңгеруін арттыруға әсерін зерттейді. Бастауыш сынып оқушылары үшін негізгі жылдар өте маңызды, өйткені жас оқушылардың танымдық икемділігіне байланысты тілді меңгеру қабілеті артады. Алты апталық тәжірибе аясында жүргізілген зерттеуге Қазақстанның Алматы қаласындағы екі мектептің 8-10 жас аралығындағы 15 оқушысы қатысты. Зерттеу оқушылардың шектеулі белсенділігі мен коммуникативті дағдыларының дамымағандығын анықтайтын мұғалімдерге бағытталған дәстүрлі әдістерді бақылаудан басталды. Бұған жауап ретінде тыңдау, сөйлеу, оқу және жазу дағдыларын дамытуға бағытталған топтық жұмыс, жұптық іс-шаралар және ойындар сияқты интерактивті тапсырмаларға баса назар аудара отырып, белсенділікке негізделген жаттығулар сериясы әзірленді және жүзеге асырылды. Тестілеуге дейінгі және тесттен кейінгі нәтижелерді салыстырмалы талдау, әсіресе тыңдау

*және сөйлеу дағдыларының айтарлықтай жақсарғанын көрсетті, бұл ретте оқушылардың өзіне деген сенімділігі, ынтасы және сыныптағы іс-шараларға белсенді қатысуы байқалды. Сапалы бақылаулар бұл тұжырымдарды растап, ынтымақтастықтың артқанын және коммуникативті жағдайларда ағылшын тілін тиімді қолдануды атап өтті. Бұл мақалада бастауыш сынып оқушыларына шет тіліндегі білім беруді іс-әрекетке негізделген әдістемелер арқылы жақсарту жолдары зерттеліп, білім беруді 21 ғасырдағы оқыту стильдеріне сәйкестендіру үшін теория мен практика арасындағы алшақтықты жою жолдары қарастырылған.*

**Кілт сөздері:** Белсенділікке негізделген оқыту, белсенді қатысу, шет тілін оқыту, бастауыш білім беру.

## **АКТИВНЫЕ УМЫ, СВОБОДНОЕ БУДУЩЕЕ: СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЕ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ В НАЧАЛЬНОЙ ШКОЛЕ НА ОСНОВЕ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТНОГО ПОДХОДА**

***Журтыбай Арайлым Ганибекқызы***

*Это исследование изучает влияние подхода к обучению, на основе деятельности, на повышение уровня владения английским языком среди учеников начальной школы. Для учеников начальной школы основные годы имеют решающее значение, поскольку более молодые ученики обладают повышенными способностями к усвоению языка благодаря когнитивной пластичности. Проведенное в рамках шестинедельной практики исследование включало 15 учеников в возрасте от 8 до 10 лет из двух школ в Алматы, Казахстан. Исследование началось с наблюдений за традиционными методами, ориентированными на учителя, которые показали ограниченное вовлечение учеников и недоразвитые коммуникативные навыки. В ответ на это была разработана и реализована серия упражнений, основанных на деятельности, подчеркивающих интерактивные задания, такие как групповая работа, парные занятия и игры, для развития навыков слушания, говорения, чтения и письма. Сравнительный анализ результатов до и после тестирования показал заметные улучшения, особенно в навыках слушания и говорения, при этом ученики демонстрировали большую уверенность, мотивацию и активное участие в классных занятиях. Качественные наблюдения подтвердили эти результаты, подчеркивая увеличение сотрудничества и эффективное использование английского языка в коммуникативных ситуациях. Эта статья исследует способы улучшения обучения иностранному языку для учеников начальной школы посредством*

методологий, основанных на деятельности, сокращая разрыв между теорией и практикой для соответствия образованию стилям обучения 21-го века.

**Ключевые слова:** Подход к обучению основанный на деятельности, активное вовлечение, обучение иностранному языку, начальное образование.

### Пайдаланылган әдебиеттер тізімі

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