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MEASURING VALUE-ORIENTED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN GRADE 7 ESL CLASSROOMS THROUGH ABAI'S POETRY

This study explores the integration of Abai Kunanbayev's literary works into English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to promote value-based learning among Grade 7 students. The research aimed to examine how Abai's poems and literary works could support the development of key school values, including respect, patriotism, honesty, global citizenship, hard work, and responsibility, while enhancing students' engagement with language learning. The intervention consisted of five lesson series delivered over one month by four teachers. The lessons incorporated selected literary texts by Abai and interactive learning activities designed to encourage reflection on moral and social values. A mixed-method approach was employed. Quantitative data was collected through pre- and post-intervention student surveys administered to all participating students. Qualitative data was gathered through classroom observations conducted throughout the implementation process. The findings revealed positive changes in students' awareness and understanding of the targeted values. Survey results indicated increased appreciation of cultural heritage, personal responsibility, and greater respect for others. Classroom observations showed higher levels of student participation, meaningful discussions about values, and increased confidence in expressing personal opinions. The project culminated in a recitation competition where Grade 7 students memorized and performed Abai's poems and "Kara sozder" ("The Book of Words"), demonstrating both linguistic development and deeper engagement with the values explored during the lessons. The study concludes that integrating Abai's literary works into ESL instruction is an effective approach to foster value-based education while simultaneously supporting language learning and cultural identity development among secondary school students.

Keywords: ESL instruction, value-based education, literature-based learning, Abai's poetry

Introduction

In the modern educational system, a lot of attention is given not only to the development of academic knowledge and language competency of the learners but also to the formation of moral and value-oriented qualities. Value-oriented learning conception assumes the integration of moral, cultural and social values in the content of educational curriculum which contributes to the upbringing of responsible, respectful and active citizens of society. In the context of teaching English as a foreign ESL instrument the literature is considered as an effective means of achieving this aim owing to its rich cultural and educational potential of the learners [1].

Brady L. [2] highlights the important role of literature in the development of language and individual qualities of the learners. As, Keshavarzi [3] notes that use of literary works in the learning of English encourages the development of language competency, critical thinking, creative abilities and intercultural understanding. Literary texts allow learners the opportunity to analyze various life situations, moral dilemmas which make the process of learning the language more important and more meaningful.

According to Beach, Appleman, Simon and Fecho [4], teaching literature to teenagers facilitate the form of individual position of the learners, development of empathy and abilities and assimilate social and cultural problems. The authors emphasize that discussion of literature compositions allow learners to establish the link between the content of the text and own life experience thereby deepening the understanding of the learnt values. Teaching English as an ESL provides a wide

range of possibilities for the value development through literary texts. The literature allows learners to improve not only language skills but also to comprehend life situations, to analyze the actions of heroes and to form their own moral direction. The use of national literature works in the English language fosters the strength of cultural identity of the learners and the form of respectful relationship to the cultural heritage of the country [5].

The particular significance of literature in the context of moral education is highlighted by Cubukcu [6], who emphasizes that literary works are effective instruments for shaping values, as they allow learners to examine moral issues in a safe educational environment and develop ethical thinking skills. The same idea is given by Ahmad [7], who claims that the use of literature in EFL/ESL-classes helps to learn moral values, such as respect, honesty, responsibility and tolerance. According to the opinion of the author, the literary texts encourage learners to assume the consequences of human actions and to form own moral persuasion.

Despite considerable number of researches, devoted to the use of literature in the teaching foreign languages, the question of integration of literature of Kazakh Literature in the ESL-learning has not been studied fully yet. Especially the limited attention is given to the pedagogical potential of Abai's poems [8, 9] as means of formation of learners' values. That is why this research is guided to the study of the effective integration of his poems and "the Book of Words" in the process of learning English of 7 grade learners for the development of the key school values: respect, patriotism, honesty, global citizenship, hard work and responsibility [10].

Materials and Research Methods

Research Approach and Design

This study employed mixed-methods research approach based on the concept of methodological triangulation [11]. Integration of qualitative and quantitative data allows to overcome the limitations inherent in each method individually. The study of such complex and dynamic constructs as personal values and ethical orientations of students requires a comparison of subjective assessments of respondents with objectively recorded patterns of their real behavior in the classroom.

The research consisted of three main stages:

Diagnostic stage: conducting an entrance (preliminary) survey of students.

The intervention stage: conducting a series of 5 specialized English lessons with the integration of Abai Kunanbayev's poetry and the maintenance of observation sheets.

Evaluation stage: conducting a final survey and statistical analysis of the results.

Research site

The study was conducted on the basis of one of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools in Kazakhstan. This educational context is characterized by the education of gifted children with high academic motivation and the presence of a multilingual environment (Kazakh, Russian and English). While the general education system of the school declares a wide range of corporate values, six key values were purposefully selected for the focus of this study: respect, honesty, diligence, patriotism, responsibility and global citizenship (respect, honesty, diligence, patriotism, responsibility, world citizenship).

Sample

This study employed purposeful sampling as the research was focused entirely on the students grade 7. Morse (2010) and Patton (2015) argue that purposeful sampling presupposes that a researcher seeks "information-rich cases" in order to better meet the research purpose and questions posed (as cited in Leavy, 2017, p. 79) [12]. The participants included all 10 seventh-grade classes of the school, totaling 152 students. Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools provide education for students from grade 7 to grade 12. For the purposes of this study, grade 7 were chosen as participants due to them being new to the educational system as it is their first year in the NIS and they have had less time than other grades to become familiar with the value system. In addition, 13-14 years is beginning of the active formation of personal identity and value orientations in adolescents.

Data Collection Instruments

To ensure the validity of the conclusions, data collection was carried out using two complementary tools: Preliminary and final questionnaire. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 meant "completely disagree / do not understand the concept", and 5 - "completely agree / understand the concept". The questions assessed students' understanding of the six chosen values through the lens of their school life and English lessons. The survey was conducted twice: one week before the start of the intervention and one week after the end of the intervention. To avoid the effect of social desirability in the questionnaires, teachers monitored the entire 5 lessons using a checklist. Behavioral markers were recorded, such as the use of polite phrases of academic disagreement ("I respect your point, but..."), cases of cheating (peer-copying), initiative in discussing the culture of Kazakhstan and the specifics of responsibility sharing when working in groups. The pedagogical intervention lasted 5 consecutive English lessons in all 10 grades. Abai Kunanbayev's poems in academic translation into English became the didactic basis: "Gylym tappai maktanba" ("Do Not Boast Until You Have Mastered Knowledge"), "Asempaz bolma arnege" ("Do Not Be Content With Shallow Pursuits"), "Internatta okyp zhur" ("On Studying at the Boarding School") and fragments from "Kara sosder" ("The Book of Words"). Lessons 1-2: Working with poems about the importance of ethical work. Developing the values of "Diligence," "Respect," and "Honesty" through guided reading and discussions about academic integrity. Lessons 3-4: Discussion of civic duty and love for the motherland based on Abai's texts. On these lessons students discussed the values of "Patriotism" and "Responsibility" through debate and role-playing. Lesson 5: Creative project and comparison of Abai's ideas with universal humanistic philosophy as one of the value of NIS is Global Citizenship. The culmination was the poetry recitation contest "Abai through our voices".

Data analysis

Survey results were processed using descriptive statistics. For each value, an arithmetic mean was calculated in the stages before and after intervention, as well as a difference between them. The statistical significance of changes was checked using a pair t-criterion for dependent samples [13]. The text records of the observation sheets were analyzed using the thematic analysis. Behavioral patterns were encoded and grouped to explain the causes of quantitative shifts.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the standards of the American Association of Educational Researchers [14]. An official permit for the project was received from the school administration. The parents of all the participants signed the informed consent forms. Children's participation was strictly voluntary, and all data collected was completely anonymized and encrypted. Participants were guaranteed the right to opt out of the study at any time without consequences. Privacy ensured through the use of pseudonyms and anonymization of participants' names.

Results

Analysis of Pre and Post Questionnaire of 7th grade ESL students

To assess the understanding of NIS values (respect, hard work, honesty, patriotism, responsibility, global citizenship) there was conducted pre and post questionnaire among all 7th grade NIS students (n=128). The research instrument was a questionnaire based on 5-point Likert scale (1- "completely disagree"/"I do not understand the concept", 5- "completely agree", "I understand the concept").

The initial assessment revealed that there were uneven disparities in understanding of values among 7th grade students (Picture 1). The highest baseline level was demonstrated in the values of "Respect" (M=3.8) and "Hard work" (M=3.6). Due to regular integration into daily school routine, these concepts seem to be understandable and relatable to students at an everyday level. On the contrary, the lowest rate can be seen in the initial assessment of "Global citizenship" (M=2.4). For the students of this age, this concept seemed to be abstract and not resonant with students' everyday

experience, showing that most respondents could not connect the idea of global responsibility with English learning process. Relatively, the same tendency can be noticed in the value “Patriotism” ($M=2.9$) in the context of English lessons.

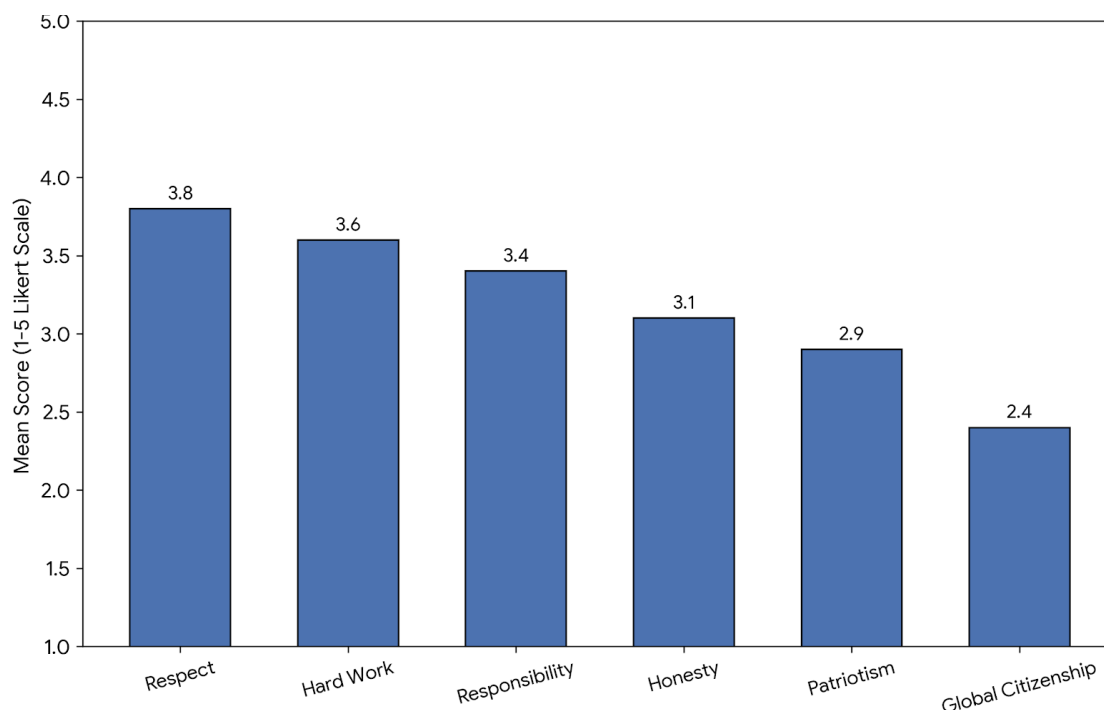


Figure 1 - Baseline Assessment of Understanding of Values of 7th Grade NIS students

After conducting series of lessons with integration of Abai’s poems, the post questionnaire demonstrated a significant positive shift across all six criteria; however, the degree of growth (delta) varied. The highest delta was indicated in categories such as “Patriotism” (increase from 2.9 to 4.3, $\Delta=1.4$) and “Honesty” (increase from 3.1 to 4.4, $\Delta=1.3$). In addition, the concepts of “Hard Work” (increase from 3.6 to 4.8, $\Delta=1.2$) and “Respect” (increase from 3.8 to 4.9, $\Delta=1.1$) showed attained the maximum value among all other concepts.

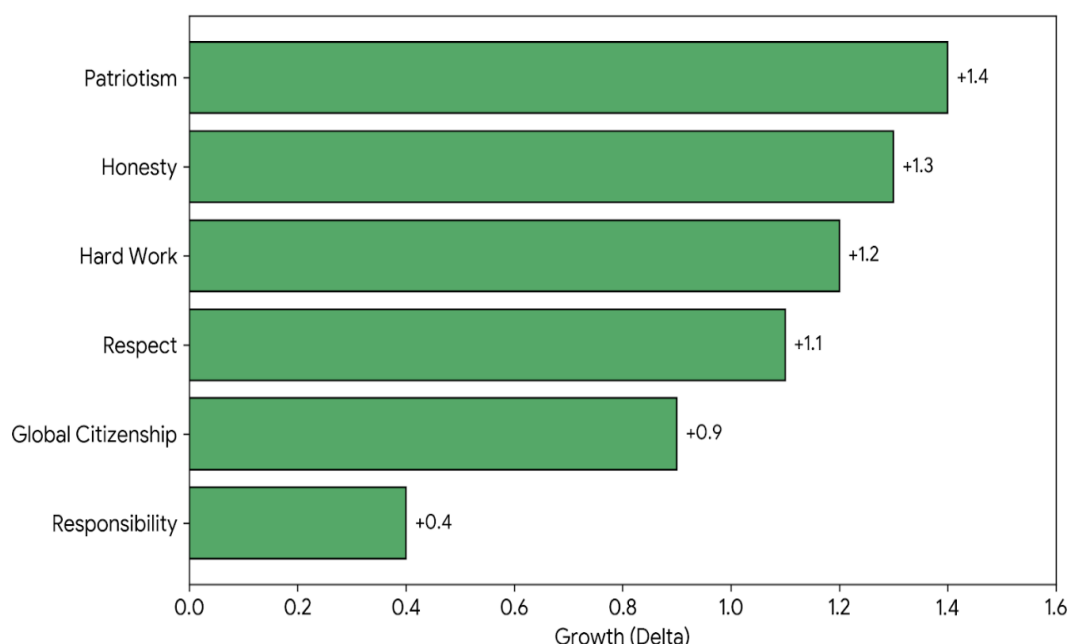


Figure 2 - Growth (delta) in Understanding of NIS values Post Intervention

Despite the general positive tendency, the analysis revealed the concepts, which were the most resistant to the series of lessons. The value “Global Citizenship” had an increase from 2.4 to 3.3, but it remained as the lowest indicator recorded upon the conclusion of the experiment. The data shows that five lessons were not sufficient for complete formation of complicated paradigm for the minds of 12-13 years old adolescents. The post questionnaire also revealed that the value “Responsibility” had the minimum growth delta (3.4 to 3.8, $\Delta=0.4$). The respondents theoretically understand the idea of responsibility, illustrating that integration of literary works did not influence perception of academic accountability within this time period.

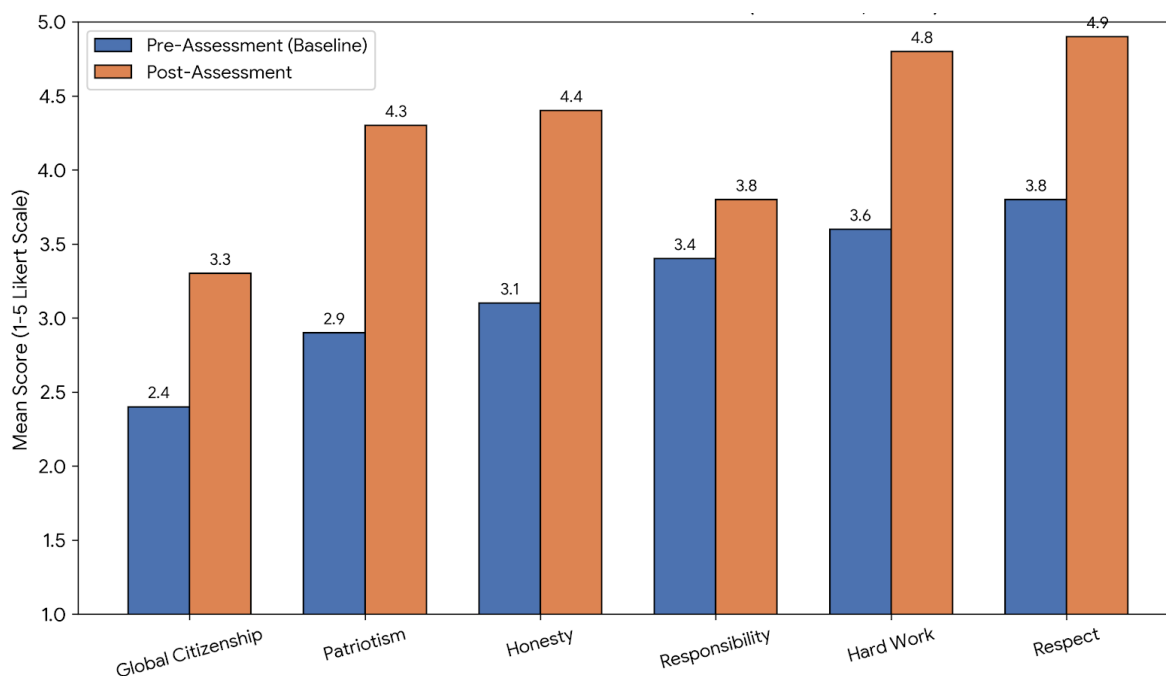


Figure 3 - Pre and Post Assessment of NIS values (7th Grade)

Results of Classroom Observations

During the delivery of all 5 lessons, there was conducted a structured observation of learning process. The main focus was how the declared NIS values are manifested in students' behaviors during discussions and collaborations.

Respectful Communication and Honesty

The most noticeable behavioral changes happened in the communication between students. On the first two lessons, students often interrupted each other during discussions. However, at the end of the series (lessons 4-5) the dynamics has changed, reducing this type of situations to single cases. The participants started to consciously use target language expressions and sentence structures to show their disagreement (such as “I respect your point, but...”, “I disagree with you because...”). As for the concept of “Honesty”, there is a decrease in attempts to peek into a neighbor's work (peer-copying) during individual tasks in final lessons. When students faced the problem with understanding of new vocabulary, they preferred to ask a teacher or use dictionaries.

Patriotism and Global Citizenship

During the work with Abai's literary texts, the 7th grade students demonstrated engagement with the topic of national identity and culture. Students showed their initiative to understand and express their opinions on specific Kazakh concepts, actively using target vocabulary. However, it is not the same with “Global Citizenship”, students tried to connect the philosophy and meaning of Abai's literary works with global context only after direct leading questions (prompting) from the teachers.

In addition, as the culmination of these series of lessons, there was organized poetry recitation contest called “Abai through our voices”. The observation during the stage of preparation and event

itself showed the high level of academic engagement. The participants voluntarily spent their time to practice their pronunciation and intonation in target language, striving to authentically convey the message of Abai's poems.

Hard Work and Responsibility

Since the focus group was students from a school for gifted children (NIS), we observed a high level of academic diligence (time-on-task) from the very beginning. Teachers recorded the manifestation of "hard work" through increased persistence. When faced with complex concepts in Abai's texts, 7th grade students tried not to abandon the task at the first difficulty and tried not to switch to their native language (L1). However, during peer work and collaboration, there was indicated a problem with delegation of responsibilities. On final lessons, more able students were still more active in taking responsibility for cognitive and presentation tasks, whereas others still preferred a passive role in a group.

Discussion

The purpose of these series of lessons was to evaluate how well Abai's literary works were incorporated into the process of forming NIS values in English language instruction for ESL students. The analysis of pre and post questionnaire allows to say that the usage of culturally relevant content is an effective tool for value-oriented learning.

Interpretation of Findings

The most positive shift can be seen in the values of "Patriotism" ($\Delta = 1.4$, increase to 4.3), "Honesty" ($\Delta = 1.3$, increase to 4.4) is due to integration of Abai's philosophy allowed students to act as bearers of their own cultural code in English, which gave the learning process a high personal significance. The growth in delta of value "Honesty" is confirmed in the reduction of peer copying cases during the lessons. Through usage of Abai's "Book Words" and his poems with its moral principles as learning material created a new understanding of academic ethics.

One of the most prominent changes was in the value of "Respect", reaching the maximum ($M=4.9$). Such high questionnaire results are confirmed by the shift in their behavior during discussions by decreasing the frequency of interruption from 5-6 to 1-2, using more polite expressions during the lessons. By looking from the perspective of second language acquisition, familiar philosophical context helped to reduce "affective filter" or in other words their language anxiety.

As for the one of lowest results in the concept of "Global Citizenship" ($M=3.3$), it remained consistent with classroom observations. Students' attempts to connect the Abai's ideas with global processes arose only after the teacher's leading questions (prompting). Teenagers of age 12-13 are still on the stage of formation of their cohesive mind, making the abstract global problems out of their daily focus. The value "Responsibility" showed the lowest increase in its dynamics ($\Delta = 0.4$), which relates to the problem of delegation in small groups. On final lessons, complicated tasks were still carried by 1-2 of the more able students (high achievers), proving that theoretical discussion of values is not enough for quick change in habits ingrained in a competitive environment.

Pedagogical Implications

Based on the correlations of quantitative data and their behavioral changes, there can be formed three different recommendations for ESL teachers:

1. Moving from declarative to contextual learning

One of key findings of this experiment was how upbringing potential of English language lesson reveals itself to the maximum by making the language learning not as the purpose but the tool to solve cognitive and moral cases. The high concentration of students with authentic texts proves that value-oriented lesson materials increase their academic perseverance. It is recommended to integrate values such as respect or honesty not only through direct instructions from teachers but through analysis of culturally relevant content. This shrinks the effect of rejection among teenagers and develops the internal motivation to practice target language, since their desire to express their perspective on the topic increases. Moreover, the experience of conducting poem

recitation contest named “Abai through our voices” proved that transmission of values is effective when students have an opportunity to publicly demonstrated their results of their context and language work in the creative atmosphere.

2. Changing the format of group work

The results in the value of “Responsibility” highlight the need for the revision of traditional group work formats. Group projects frequently cause more able students to take over cognitive load in the highly competitive academic environment. In order to create formation of personal responsibility, teachers need to integrate strategies of positive interdependence such as method of “mosaic” (Jigsaw Reading), where the task excludes the possibility to perform it without participation of each member. Moreover, the focus of assessment must change from the final product such as presentation to assessment of contribution of each student in the groups.

3. Explicit scaffolding for the formation of Global Mind

Poor performance in concept of “Global Citizenship” demonstrates that 7th grade students do not have sufficient cognitive experience to independent transfer of local philosophical ideas to the global context, requiring a strict guiding approach (explicit scaffolding). It is not enough to provide a poem of the author, but to purposefully integrate understandable, age-appropriate English-language cases into the lesson such as connecting Abai’s philosophy about responsibility with the problem of consumption or Abai’s ideas about respect with rules of behavior in the academic as well as digital environment.

Limitation of the Study

This experiment has its own limitations such as short-term duration of intervention of 5 lessons. It does not allow to fully assess the long-term stability of formed patterns in behavior. In addition, the focus group for the series of lessons was from school for gifted children with high academic motivation, creating limitation of transfer of results to public schools.

Conclusion

The conducted research investigated the effectiveness of integrating Abai Kunanbayev’s cultural heritage into English language learning process for the establishment of the value-oriented education for grade 7 ESL learners. The results indicate that literature-based language learning influences not only to the development of linguistic competence but also the formation of important personal and social values.

The comparison of pre- and post-intervention student surveys depicted positive dynamics for all the values studied, such as respect, honesty, hard work, patriotism, responsibility, and global citizenship. The most significant increase was recorded in terms of patriotism, honesty and respect. These quantitative findings were conducted by classroom observations, which demonstrated more respectful communication, greater academic integrity, increased participation in discussions, and stronger engagement with cultural and ethical content.

The study also highlights the high educational potential of Abai’s literary works in the context of teaching English. The appeal to the national cultural heritage provided students with authentic opportunities to explore moral issues, reflect on personal behavior, and connect language learning with their cultural identity. Such integration is particularly effective in increasing students’ motivation and fostering meaningful classroom interaction.

At the same time, the results suggest that such complex values, particularly responsibility and global citizenship require longer and more focused pedagogical support. The relatively limited progress in these areas indicates that complex values cannot be fully developed through short-term interventions. Furthermore, the study was conducted within a single educational context and involved highly motivated students from a selective school environment making it difficult to extend the findings to other educational contexts.

Further investigation may consider the long-term influence of literature-based value education, include a wider range of educational settings, and analyze the integration of other works of Kazakh literature into foreign language instruction.

Overall, the integration of the works of Abai Kunanbayev into the process of teaching the English language can be considered as an effective tool of value-oriented education, providing the interconnection of linguistic development, moral education and the formation of the cultural identity of students.

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АБАЙ ПОЭЗИЯСЫ АРҚЫЛЫ 7-СЫНЫПТЫҢ ESL (ЕКІНШІ ТІЛ РЕТІНДЕГІ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІ) СЫНЫПТАРЫНДА ҚҰНДЫЛЫҚҚА БАҒЫТТАЛҒАН БІЛІМ БЕРУ НӘТИЖЕЛЕРІН БАҒАЛАУ

Бұл зерттеу 7-сынып оқушылары арасында құндылықтарға негізделген оқытуды дамыту мақсатында Абай Құнанбайұлының әдеби шығармаларын ағылшын тілін шетел тілі ретінде (ESL) оқыту үдерісіне кіріктіруді қарастырады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – Абайдың өлеңдері мен қара сөздерінің мектептің негізгі құндылықтарын, атап айтқанда құрмет, патриотизм, адалдық, жаһандық азаматтық, еңбекқорлық және жауапкершілікті қалыптастыруға ықпалын анықтау, сондай-ақ оқушылардың тіл үйренуге деген қызығушылығын арттыру. Зерттеу аясында төрт мұғалім бір ай бойы бес сабақ топтамасын өткізді. Сабақтарда Абайдың таңдап алынған шығармалары мен адамгершілік және әлеуметтік құндылықтарды түсінуге бағытталған интерактивті тапсырмалар қолданылды. Зерттеуде аралас әдіс пайдаланылды. Сандық деректер барлық қатысушы оқушылар арасында сабақтар басталғанға дейін және аяқталғаннан кейін жүргізілген сауалнамалар арқылы жиналды. Сапалық

деректер сабақтарды бақылау нәтижесінде алынды. Зерттеу нәтижелері оқушылардың қарастырылған құндылықтар туралы түсінігі мен санасының оң бағытта өзгергенін көрсетті. Сауалнама қорытындылары мәдени мұраға қызығушылықтың артқанын, жеке жауапкершілік сезімінің күшейгенін және өзгелерге деген құрметтің жоғарылағанын көрсетті. Бақылау нәтижелері оқушылардың сабаққа белсенді қатысуын, құндылықтар туралы мазмұнды пікірталастарға араласуын және өз ойын еркін жеткізу дағдыларының дамуын анықтады. Жобаның қорытынды кезеңінде 7-сынып оқушылары Абайдың өлеңдері мен қара сөздерін жатқа мәнерлеп оқу байқауы ұйымдастырылып, олар тілдік жетістіктері мен меңгерген құндылықтарын көрсетті. Зерттеу нәтижелері Абай шығармаларын ағылшын тілі сабақтарына кіріктірудің құндылықтарға негізделген білім беруді дамытуда, тілдік дағдыларды жетілдіруде және оқушылардың мәдени болмысын нығайтуда тиімді тәсіл екенін дәлелдейді.

Түйін сөздер: екінші тіл ретінде ағылшын тілін оқыту (ESL), құндылықтарға негізделген білім беру, әдебиетке негізделген оқыту, Абай поэзиясы.

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ОЦЕНКА ЦЕННОСТНО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННЫХ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ РЕЗУЛЬТАТОВ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ВТОРОГО В 7-Х КЛАССАХ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ ПОЭЗИИ АБАЯ

Данное исследование рассматривает интеграцию литературных произведений Абая Кунанбаева в обучение английскому языку как иностранному (ESL) с целью развития ценностно-ориентированного обучения среди учащихся 7-х классов. Цель исследования заключалась в изучении того, как стихи Абая и его «Слова назидания» могут способствовать формированию ключевых школьных ценностей, таких как уважение, патриотизм, честность, глобальная гражданственность, трудолюбие и ответственность, одновременно повышая вовлеченность учащихся в изучение языка. Практическая часть исследования включала серию из пяти уроков, проведенных в течение одного месяца четырьмя учителями. На уроках использовались отобранные произведения Абая и интерактивные задания, направленные на осмысление нравственных и социальных ценностей. В исследовании применялся смешанный метод. Количественные данные были собраны с помощью анкетирования учащихся до и после проведения серии уроков. Качественные данные были получены посредством систематического наблюдения за учебным процессом. Результаты показали положительные изменения в осознании и понимании учащимися изучаемых ценностей. Данные опросов свидетельствуют о росте интереса к культурному наследию, усилении чувства личной ответственности и уважения к окружающим. Наблюдения выявили более высокий уровень участия учащихся в обсуждениях, развитие навыков аргументации и уверенности в выражении собственного мнения. Итогом проекта стал конкурс чтецов, на котором учащиеся 7-х классов наизусть читали стихи и «Слова назидания» Абая, продемонстрировав языковой прогресс и глубокое понимание изучаемых ценностей. Исследование подтверждает, что интеграция литературного наследия Абая в преподавание английского языка является эффективным инструментом формирования ценностей, развития языковых навыков и укрепления культурной идентичности учащихся.

Ключевые слова: обучение английскому языку как второму (ESL), ценностно-ориентированное образование, обучение на основе литературы, поэзия Абая.

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