Employing Case Technology to Improve Speaking Skills in EFL Classes

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Abstract

This article describes the importance and use of the case method in the process of teaching a foreign language in order to develop the professional communicative competence of students in the EFL classrooms. The article presents the possibilities of this educational technology, the goals of the cases, the stages of working with them, as well as practical recommendations. The author concludes that development of case technologies, based on learning by solving specific problems of situations will be carried out if the practical goal of organizing teaching is defined as improving communicative competence.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL), case, technology, methods, teaching, educational process.

Introduction. In recent years, there have been public discussions about updating the content of education, with a particular focus on language teaching. Language is the main tool used in transmitting and receiving education, regardless of the subject matter. Learning a foreign language can also help to develop the intellect, which is increasingly important in modern education as it is closely linked to creative and research abilities. Being able to hold a conversation is vital for forming an independent, creative, and critical-thinking personality, as well as being prepared for effective professional activity and adapting to rapidly changing socio-economic and political conditions. Therefore, improving English speaking skills is important, especially for students learning English as a foreign language, as it can impact their entire professional education. It is especially relevant to use modern educational technologies and interactive teaching methods to achieve this goal.

As there are many different ways of teaching communication skills in education, it is important to identify the most effective and advanced methods to enable students to have confident and accurate conversations in both their native language and foreign languages. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of speaking, a system should be chosen that not only motivates students to learn English but also helps them develop various communication skills such as monologue, dialogue, public speaking, and discussion in a foreign language. Therefore, it is necessary to collect, organize, and enhance the experience of teaching speaking as a form of speech activity in English in the professional training of students.

Literature review. The practice of utilizing case studies for situational analysis in business and management originated at Harvard University in the early 1900s, during the time when Edwin F. Gay was serving as dean. Gay proposed the addition of classes that focused on discussing problematic situations in these fields, along with ways to resolve them. Today, Harvard continues to be a leader in the global "case industry," producing 600 high-quality cases each year. European teachers also visit Harvard to learn about the specifics of case education, and in

the 1990s, Russia began sending trainees to Western business schools to learn how to teach this method.

In our assumption, the most precise explanation of the case method was provided by E.A. Mikhailova, who defined it as a synergistic technique that involves immersing a group in a situation, creating opportunities for knowledge multiplication, insight, exchange of discoveries, and so on. The complex case method system comprises several simple teaching techniques, including system analysis, description methods, discussions, modeling, game methods, problem method, thought experiment, and brainstorm. The teaching cases are representative of real-life situations encountered by senior students in their professional activities. The case method has immense potential in developing communicative competence as it enables students to exchange information in a group setting, thereby motivating them to speak a foreign language and improving their analytical and research skills, dialogic and monologic speech abilities.

Discussion. The method involves replicating a real-life, problematic scenario in class and tasking students with understanding the situation, identifying the issue, discussing it, and proposing a viable solution based on the given case materials. There are usually multiple ways to resolve the problem, and there is no one right answer. As a result, students can suggest several alternative solutions during the discussion. After analyzing and debating the situation, the students can select what they consider to be the most effective solution, and then compare it to the solution that was implemented in practice.

➢ The student is an active participant in the educational process and the main character in the case methodology;

➢ The teacher controls this process and directs it in the right direction

In light of the sustainable development of the skill of communicative competence of older students, an English teacher should pay attention to: sentence structure; grammar of sentences; propositional logic; used vocabulary.

When mistakes are made, it's crucial to sensitively inform the student of them and, if needed, guide them to correct their response through clarifying questions. The benefit for students lies in the process of analyzing a scenario and determining a solution. However, it's also essential for them to demonstrate their abilities during a discussion and competently defend their chosen approach to problem-solving in English, which requires careful management during these activities. This technique can be attributed to the interactive teaching method, as it solves the following tasks:

1) will develop communication skills that help to establish emotional contacts between students;

2) will solve the information problem, since it provides students with the necessary information, without which it is impossible to implement joint activities;

3) will develop special skills and abilities: analysis; synthesis; goal setting, that is, provide a solution to learning problems;

4) will provide an educational task, as it teaches students to work in a team, to listen to the opinions of others [3, p. 156].

5) The training case contains: 1) situation - any problem, real life story, case;

6) the context of the situation - historical, chronological, features of the actions of the participants in the situation; 3) commentary on the situation; 4) tasks for working with the case; 5) various applications [4,p.109-117].

Furthermore, Surmin Yu.P. noted in his book that whatever the situation, it must meet the list of requirements, namely: 1) be close to real life; 2) is framed in such a way as to allow establishing a connection with the accumulated life experience, as well as with the future life situations of high school students; 3) allow interpretation from the point of view of the participants; 4) contain

problems and conflicts; 5) be monitored and solved in terms of time frames and individual knowledge, skills and abilities of high school students; 6) allow different solutions [5, p. 86].

Cases offer a benefit in that they allow for the effective integration of theory and practice, which is crucial in the learning process. By utilizing the case method, individuals can enhance their skills in analyzing situations, assessing different options, selecting the optimal solution, and devising a plan for execution. When this approach is repeatedly employed throughout the learning process, students can acquire a solid aptitude for tackling real-life problems.

What is the difference between a case study and a problem situation? The case does not offer students a problem in an open form, and the participants in the educational process will have to isolate it from the information contained in the description of the case. The technology of working with a case in the educational process is relatively simple and includes the following steps: individual independent work of students with case materials; identification of the problem, formulation of key alternatives, proposal of a solution to the recommended action; work in small groups to agree on the vision of the key problem and its solutions; presentation and examination of the results of small groups at the general discussion within the study group. Case - stages:

Step 1: Formulate one specific problem and write it down.

Step 2: Identify and write down the main causes of its occurrence. The reasons are formulated with the words "not" and "no".

Steps 1 and 2 represent the "minus" situation. Further, it must be transferred to the "plus" situation.

Step 3: The problem is reformulated into a goal.

Step 4: Reasons become tasks.

Step 5: For each task, a set of measures is determined - steps to solve it, responsible persons are appointed for each step, who select a team to implement the measures.

Step 6: Responsible determine the necessary material resources and time to complete the event

Step 7: For each block of tasks, a specific product and criteria for the effectiveness of solving the problem are determined.

Distribution of functions between students and teacher:

Work phase	Teacher actions	Student actions
Before the lesson	1. Picks up a case 2. Defines the main and auxiliary materials for the preparation of students 3.Develops a lesson script	1. Receives a case and a list of recommended literature 2.Individually prepares for the lesson
During the lesson	1. Organizes a preliminary discussion of the case 2. Divides the group into subgroups 3. Leads the discussion of the case in subgroups, provides students with additional information	1. Asks questions that deepen understanding of the case and problem 2. Develops options for solutions, takes into account the opinions of others 3. Makes or participates in decision making
After the lesson	1. Evaluates student work 2. Evaluates the decisions made and the questions raised	Compiles a written report on the lesson in a given form

Conclusion. Thus, in this paper, it is considered the use of the case method as an interactive form in teaching EFL students, conducting a business conversation in order to form its rhetorical tools and professional communicative competence of students. We have made an attempt to describe the possibilities of this interactive technology, didactic principles of the method, the goals of the cases, sequence of stages of working with them, as well as recommendations for

their use in an elective course when teaching speaking skills in the EFL classes. Also, the development and improvement of case technologies, as a type of communicative, linguistic and grammatical competencies and the competence of creative thinking on the basis of active problem-situational analysis, based on learning by solving specific problems of situations, will be carried out most effectively if the practical goal of organizing training is defined as a high level of developing communicative competence.

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