

Developing of Speaking Skills According to the “Case Study” Method

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Abstract: Globalization of manufacturing makes studying languages, especially topical for both students and people who seek for additional education. This study deals with one of the methods of developing speaking skills. This is a case study method, an approach which is used for solving educational tasks in the process of teaching languages. The aim of the study is analysis of application of this method with regard to various classes of trainees. First, we have presented history and classification of case study method. Second, we have described the algorithm of its application in work when studying Foreign languages. Third, in the course of investigation of this topic, we have performed a quiz regarding the following question: “Is case method liked, when the language is studied?” which showed, what is noteworthy in the work with various classes of trainees. Investigation of the abovementioned allows making the following results. This method is efficient and it may be used at all levels of competences of languages with consideration of cases’ graduation according to level of difficulty; thorough preparation is required; it is possible to use impromptu with the most prepared groups of students providing that case method is applied to acute current issues.

Key words: Case method, language learning, development of speaking skills, globalization, algorithm

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with requirements of modern society and market, a specialist must be professionally competent, intelligent and skillful in many spheres of life; he or she must be creative and socially active. The main task of higher educational establishment is training competitive specialist. Globalization of manufacture does not allow doing with a single language in promoting the business. That is why, mastering of one European language is an integral part of successful specialist. Common discipline turned into “basic element of modern educational system, into the mean of achieving person’s professional realization”.

Investigation: English-language manuals present various methods of teaching languages. In this study, we speak about the method of situational study, case study and its usage at English lessons to teach students and practitioners in various spheres. The main aim of any education is to prepare students for graduation, so that after graduation they are in some way different from their condition when they started their education. However, it is quite difficult to describe these changes as well as their degree and reference. There are various aims of education, which may be chosen for a certain course, by using case method. Examples of possible educational goals of this method are provided below: Acquisition of knowledge;

development of general ideas; acquisition of skills of using the method, concepts and knowledge; acquisition of skills of analyzing complex and unstructured problems; acquisition of skills of developing actions and their implementation; skill of establish reliable connections; development of responsibility for one’s own decisions and results; development of judgements; ability to consider situations on a long-term horizon, etc. Desired results of cognitive learning may be classified as six main groups of training targets. Assessment: to form criteria, to see into a matter, to find mistakes, to assess, to take decision. Synthesis: to obtain data that was previously unknown (originality and creative approach are required). Analysis: to define components and understand in which way they are located and interconnected. Application: to apply knowledge for solving new tasks in new situations, when requirements and methods of solving are not stated. Understanding: to transform information into more meaningful form, to retell, explain, suppose and make conclusions. Knowledge: to set out terms, define data, categories and means of actions.

Classification of cases may be performed according to various characteristics. One of widely used approaches to cases’ classification is their complexity. At the same time, a distinction is made between the following situations: illustrative training situations, which are cases, the aim of which is with the help of certain practical example teach algorithm of taking correct decision in a certain situation;

training situations, which are cases with problem formation, in which situation is described at a certain period of time, where problems are detected and clearly formulated; the aim of such case is diagnostics of situation and independent decision-making on the problem given; training situations which are cases without problem formation, in which a more complex than in the previous type situation is described and where the problem is not clearly distinguished but rather presented in statistical data, evaluation of public opinion, public authority, etc. The aim of such case is to independently detect the problem, note alternative ways of its solution with analysis of resources available; applied exercises, in which a certain situation is described and we are offered to find ways out of it; the aim of such case lies in a search of ways of problem solving (Geikhman, 2006). According to presence of plot, cases are divided into those that have topic and those that do not have it. The ones that have topic usually contain the narration about events that took place, include actions made by persons and organizations. As a rule, cases that do not have plots hide the narration because clear statement of ploy largely reveals the solution.

Experience shows that case turns into effective training and methodological piece when it is thoroughly developed scientifically, methodologically and scenically (Syrmin, 2002).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method of case training has been used since early 20th century in the spheres of law and medicine. Leading role in expansion of this method belongs to Harvard Business School. Over the 1909-1919 period, training was made according to scheme when practitioners were asked to narrate specific situation (problem) and then provide analysis of the problem and corresponding recommendations. In Russian educative practice only in 1990s, when hurtling renewal of all disciplines' content took place, favorable preconditions for application of interactive methods were created, in general and particularly of case method. Among caseologists, who are theorists and practitioners one should note such domestic specialists as; G. Bagiev, G. Konishchenko, V. Naumov, A. Sidorenko, Yu. Surmin, P. Sheremet (Geikhman, 2006).

In recent decades, methods of teaching business disciplines has been under the influence of Western approach, which is distinguished by problematocity of offered knowledge, focus on practical activity, major role of independent activity and self-organization of students' training (Bobrova, 2015).

Thus, case study is a specific training method, which is used for solving educational tasks. Above mentioned Harvard Business School defined case method as training method, in which students and teachers actively participate in direct discussion of business situations and business tasks. The principle of this method lies in reasoning, critical analysis and solution of certain problems or cases. This is a kind of instrument, by means of which classroom is endowed with a part of a real life, a practical situation, which is to be discussed and provide reasonable decision. Cases which are usually prepared in written form and composed based on the experience of real people, are read, studied and discussed by students. They form the base of class' discussion under teacher's guidance. That's why, case method implies both special type of training material and special means of application of such material in learning process (Gubaidullina and Ilyasova, 2009). Teacher's task, pursuant to this definition, lies in selection of corresponding real material and students must solve the problem set and see how other people (students and teacher) react on their actions. At the same time, one should understand that different variants of task solving are possible. Thus, the teacher must help students to reason, argue but not to impose his or her opinion to them. Students must understand from the beginning that they are responsible for the risk of decision-making and the teacher only explains the consequences of taking hasty decisions. Teacher's role lies in directing the conversation or discussion, for instance with the help of problematic questions in control over the time, required for performance of task, in encouraging students to abandon shallow pool mind, in involvement of students in the process of case analysis. From time to time, the teacher may generalize, explain and remind theoretical aspects or give reference to corresponding literature. In addition, case method implies students learning the subject by means of consideration of large amount of cases in certain combinations (Gubaidullina and Ilyasova, 2009). Such education and attempts to manage various administrative situations develops (often unconsciously) student's understanding and ability to think in the language of main problems, which are faced by manager in this or that sphere of activity. Case method favors development of ability to analyze situations, estimate alternatives, choose the best variant and compose the plan to bring it to life. If during training cycle such approach is applied multiple times, students develop stable skill of solving practical tasks. In spite of the fact that some cases is considered as a basic situation, when students start learning new topics, they repeat the techniques of case method. For increasing of intensity group may be divided into subgroups, i.e.,

moderation approach is applied, which provide extra efficiency of case method. Case considers some specific situation that reflects enterprise's condition in some time interval. Description of situation includes main cases, facts, decisions that were previously take. At the same time, the situation may reflect both complex problem and some specific task. Case may be compiled on the base of some generalized experience, i.e., it is not obligatory to reflect the activity.

It should be remembered that such "cabinet" cases may not be perceived by the audience. Thus, case should contain maximally real picture and several precise facts. In this case, narration of real and fictitious events reduce differences between them to minimum. As a rule, information doesn't provide full description (biography) of enterprise's activity but rather is or orienting character. That is why for the purpose of logic model building, required for taking reasonable decision, it is considered acceptable to complete the case with the data which, according to participants' opinion, could have taken place in reality (Gubaidullina and Ilyasova, 2009). In such way, student not only imprints the considered case but also sees into it, so deeply that he or she may make prognosis and demonstrate the information, which was omitted in the case. While working with practitioner, one may offer preparing case for consideration. In this case, teacher's task is eased, since in such cases he or she may fully concentrate on vocabulary or grammar, since listeners have more information about the enterprise and specific task that is being considered.

At choice one may offer situation, which has already been considered and ways out were found or alternatively, the situation, which is currently under discussion and which may help the listener in his/her further research. Internet with its resources is inexhaustible source of materials for cases. This is a large-scale, flexible and efficient-response source (Zolotova and Demina, 2015).

As well as at conducting other business games, here we also set the goal to maximally activate each student and involve him or her into the process of situation analysis and decision taking. That is why, the group is divided into such number of subgroups that the latter ones would consist of 3-5 persons; the lesser amount of participants in the subgroup, the higher involvement one should expect from each student it the work on case. Professional responsibility for the result increases. The line-up of subgroup (team) is formed by the students according to their preferences. Moderator's role lies in responsibility for arrangement of subgroup's work, distribution of questions between the participants and for decisions that are made. After completion of

work upon a certain topic moderator makes speech that lasts within 10 min, in which he narrates about results of his subgroup's research (Gubaidullina and Ilyasova, 2009).

Thus, students' work begin with learning situational task. As it has already mentioned, the teacher in his discretion offers some case for consideration. Students independently analyze the case's content within 10-15 min, writing out specific information. As a result, each student should fall under integral impression regarding case's content. Insight into the case finishes with discussion. The teacher assesses the level of material's mastering, resumes discussion and announces the program for working at the first lesson.

In future working subgroups are formed with 3-5 persons. Each subgroup is located at some place in the lecture room, if possible, at some distance at each other. The teacher with consideration of each subgroup's wishes makes distribution of topics. If the topic is universal for each of the subgroup, the teacher announces it and defines the term, in which the result should be presented. The main task of teacher is also making emphasis on language practice. Then, all subgroups are working simultaneously at the same section (topic) of the case, competing with each other while searching optimal decision. Training group is one team, divided into subgroups. Decisions in groups are taken based on information that is available in the case and with the usage of investigation methods, which are based on knowledge, intuition, experience and common sense of the ones who participate in problem discussion (Gubaidullina and Ilyasova, 2009). Then people exchange information and discuss the results with all project's participants. Thus, we may say about gradual, continuous process of educating speaking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Application of case method allows solving such tasks as taking right decisions; development of algorithm of taking decisions; acquisition of skills of case study; development of plan of actions, aimed at intended result; application of obtained theoretical knowledge, including in the course of studying other disciplines for solving practical tasks, etc. However, the main task is language practice. It should be noted that this method is an integrated professional approach, which develops reading, speaking and listening skills (Zolotova and Demina, 2015). Efficiency of education with the help of case method has been proved demonstratively by many training and scientific schools. The student is given an opportunity to check this theory in practice, to verify

one's ability to think creatively. On the other hand, practical situation stimulates interest to studying process, since it becomes apparent which theoretical knowledge lack for solving of the task (Gubaidullina and Ilyasova, 2009). Therefore, usage of the above mentioned training method implies: formation of students' ability to formulate one's thoughts correspondingly to communicative situation; ability to listen to interlocutor, ability to vibrantly express one's thoughts in educational and cognitive process and later in real situations of intercultural communication; formation of skills to intercommunicate in training process and later in real situations of intercultural communication; formation of students' ability to change their activity according to reaction of other people on it (Bystrai, 2006).

As it has already mentioned, we use this method when teaching students speaking skills and also we train listeners and practitioners in various spheres of industry. We have performed quiz regarding the following question: "Is case method liked, when the language is studied?" Total 95% of respondents of both categories gave positive answers. As for the questions regarding difficulties students are experiencing while using this method both listeners and students concurred that they lack lexical resource and grammar structures. It is interesting to note that if students' main problem is special terminology, specialists face difficulties with general vocabulary. In addition, colleagues from other higher educational establishments note that students are less focused on grammar mistakes and are more communicable, they analyze experience of their groupmates with a keen interest. However, listeners who attend the program enthusiastically perceive communicative method of practical lessons (Kontrimovich and Payunena, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Application of this method is effective and may be used at each level of language mastering with consideration of cases' graduation according to level of difficulty. However before doing this, it is necessary to thoroughly prepare, develop vocabulary on topic as well as grammar structures, language cliches, which are needed for discussion, taking decisions and presenting

them. At the same time, we admit that with the most prepared groups, it is possible to use impromptu, when case method comes from some current high profile incident.

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