

TEACHING PROFESSIONALLY FOCUSED INTERACTION IN ENGLISH TO MULTINATIONAL STUDENTS BASED ON METHOD OF PROJECTS

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Abstract

This paper surveys the matters of method of projects' implementation in teaching the English language professionally focused interaction to bachelors and masters studying at the Institute of Law, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. This thesis' originality and importance is based on the need for personal achievements of non-linguistic Universities' multinational students with different levels of language competence learning the English language in interdisciplinary context. The collected material throughout teaching activities is the base of this article. The main objective of this research is to identify the effectiveness of the applied method of projects and technologies of teaching English to the students studying in a multicultural environment (CIS, Afghanistan, Colombia, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Mongolia, Syria, Vietnam). To achieve this, a descriptive analysis is proposed as a means of presenting key concepts. The methodological bases of the research are the main general scientific methods such as analysis, synthesis, systematization of research material. The theoretical basis is the international researchers' scientific publications and conceptual provisions in theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages and vocational training, intercultural interaction, linguistics, methods of modern educational technologies usage in the learning process, content and language integrated learning, and English for special purposes. Bachelors and masters' personal achievements and interdisciplinary awareness were deepened. This research-paper's results highlight method of projects' efficiency and significance in developing students' professional competences and competency in making reports, exchanging opinions, participating in debates and professional argumentation convincingly. The presented issues of teaching professionally focused English-language interaction, translation and mediation to multinational bachelors and masters can be applicable and useful to various researchers and educators.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary, interaction, method of projects, multinational, mediation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Global educational environment dictates new standards in teaching professionally directed foreign languages. New values in education of the personality of contemporary bachelors and masters studying at law faculties of non-linguistic universities determine modern science' tendencies and guarantee some success in teaching professionally directed foreign languages. Teachers of Law Institutes and Universities should necessarily target at individualization of each student's personality as the country's potential legal heritage. It is vital to organize educational process so that to expand opportunities for students to be

prepared for socialization, integration, carrying out foreign language mediation and protecting human rights on the basis of the existing legislation. All States throughout the world, in particular, Russia as a multinational State, follow tendencies of global processes of education system's modernization where contribution to the formation of the conscious citizens - future lawyers, actively participating in democratic practices and global transformations is of special significance. The entirely new setting of the international community's development causes the education system adaptation to these processes. The role of foreign language teachers of the Institute of Law, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia /*hereinafter* Law Institute, RUDN University/ is to form the advanced law students' identity by teaching professionally directed English language and implementing the method of projects as a means for the competencies' formation to ensure the socialization of multinational students with a view to further dynamic community integration. The importance of development of socially adapted students' personalities were covered by many Russian and foreign scientists and practitioners. Polat E.S. (1998), Emelianova T.V. (2009), Koryakovtseva N.F. (2002) and many others emphasized these issues in their methodical research works on the efficacy of the method of projects' implementation as a means of key competencies formation while teaching foreign languages; the method of projects is a pedagogical technology that implies a set of research, search, problematic methods, creative by their very nature.

2 MAIN TEXT OF THE PAPER

2.1 Objective of the Paper

The main purpose of this thesis is to determine the effectiveness of the method of projects and the other English language teaching technologies used in teaching multinational bachelors and masters of Law Institute, RUDN University – non-immigrant students from CIS, Afghanistan, Colombia, Cyprus, Iran, Mongolia, Peru, Syria, Vietnam. The basis for the writing of this paper is the material collected as the result of the author's practical activity and experience of the modern teaching methods' application to the number of students with different levels of language training. To achieve this, a descriptive analysis is proposed as a means of presenting the basic concepts. This article's relevance and novelty is in reviewing the method of projects' implementation regarding new themes and content of the projects in teaching students with different levels of language training.

2.2 Methodology

The provisions of scientists and researchers in theory and methodology of teaching intercultural communication and foreign languages in non-linguistic universities, the theory of speech activity, psychology, methods of preparing students for productive self-studies, theory and methods of modern educational technologies application in the learning process were the methodological basis of this research paper. Communicative, cognitive and personality-oriented approaches, pedagogy of cooperation and developmental teaching are considered as the methodological foundations of project activities. The method of projects' implementing in teaching the English language to bachelors and masters studying at Law Institute, RUDN University is justified by the opportunity to develop students' skills and abilities to build a system of relations based on their individual characteristics and to competently carry out professionally oriented foreign language interaction in reality where speech is a means of social communication, thus, according to the view of Vygotsky (1999) speech is, above all, a means of speech act or utterance and understanding.

3 MAIN ARGUMENTS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION

Specificity of the age and mentality of multinational bachelors and masters determines the uniqueness of the project activities' performance and reveals the influence of individual age, socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics of each student on the nature and effectiveness of the joint project activities in the English language as for most nonimmigrant students both English and Russian are not L1 (the first language) but the foreign languages. Accordingly, the reliance on their native languages is expected throughout the projects' preparation and presentation. The multinational bachelors and masters were recommended to pay special attention to explicitation and to compile the key vocabulary and some grammatical structures of the studied material in three languages. According to L. Biel (2011, p. 12), "The degree of explicitation is correlated with the conceptual distance between legal systems: it will increase when translation takes place between common-law and civil-law systems and decrease between systems with similar legal traditions. Additionally, explicitation may depend on the translator's preference for foreignising or domesticating strategies, which is not always idiosyncratic and/or adjusted to the *skopos* of translation, but is also influenced by professional norms, such as country-specific recommendations for legal translators".

The years of teaching practice of the author of this article revealed that Information and Research Project are rather resourceful to increase bachelors and masters' abilities and skills to independently search for information on the required issues in mass-media and in the Internet (including BBC, CNN, numerous news channels, web-pages of various governmental, law and other organizations and institutions), analyze, classify and construe it. Various projects were performed by the multinational bachelors and masters, for example: "Famous Judges", "Artificial intelligence technologies in Law", "Let's prevent and stop wars", "Digitalization and Legal practice", "LegalTech", "Solicitors and Barristers: best practices", "The Court structures in different States", "The Judiciary", "The most scandalous lawyers in the XX and XXI centuries", and others. We started with the project "Solicitors and Barristers: best practices" with bachelors-sophomores as part of classroom activities within "Practical course of English for Specific Purposes"; with the first-year masters, after the decision of three cases on divorce we completed "Marriage contract" project. Given the world situation with regard to military conflicts, masters expressed their wish for the project "Let's prevent and stop wars". All project activities are as a rule divided into several stages. The first stage of the project "The Court structures in different States" was rigorous and careful examination of the studying material presented in Unit 5 "The Court structure" of the course book titled *"Test Your Professional English: Law"* (2002).

The second stage of the project "The Court structures in different States" was bachelors and masters' self-training – they immersed in the English language, searching for necessary information, looked through a variety of materials in a range of foreign-language media, including Internet resources, and comprehended their contents. Well-chosen authentic materials contribute to interdisciplinary results of students in the course of the projects' preparation and implementation. The multinational bachelors and masters (CIS, Afghanistan, Colombia, Cyprus, Mongolia, Peru, Syria) used diverse materials to prepare for the project, for example, *"Test Your Professional English: Law"* (2002), *"Introduction into International Legal English"* (2009), *"Professional English in Use. Law"* (2011), a wide range of academic and non-fiction texts, legal documents, BBC News, CNN News, The Moscow Times... The principle of selection of materials must meet the level of students' foreign language communicative competence. The project's stage of self-training contributes to the development of bachelors and masters' research skills, abilities to collect, percept, understand and systematize information presented in English texts, thus it stimulates the educational and cognitive communicative activity of bachelors and masters. They are in a continuous creative process during the run-up to the project; they significantly expand their vocabulary and professional knowledge.

The third stage of the project "The Court structures in different States" was the classroom forum on the theme of the project. The students participated in it making their reports on the project prepared at its second stage. One of the objectives of the third stage is to apply students' knowledge and to develop their ability to ask questions after listening to the fellow-students' reports in order to obtain essential information as well as to formulate various comments. This type of unprepared speech and communication allows students to express their opinions, ask other participants questions and answer their questions, take part in the discussions after listening to the fellow-students' reports and presentation. During the classroom forum, the students act both as speakers and opponents in accordance with their statements. Their communication as a whole is very diverse and involves them into a very creative process of thinking. This stage ends with the wording of the joint summary, based on the findings.

The fourth stage of every project is the discussion with the students carried out at its end, which is actually the after action review. We considered each student's contribution to the preparation and participation in the project, analyzed the causes of occurred difficulties in communication and commented on the lexical and grammatical mistakes. This stage of the projects is crucial to objectively evaluate the results of the joint activity, verbal and nonverbal communicative behavior, and the development of dexterity in argument which is important for the upcoming professional activity. The criteria for the bachelors and masters' success in the project activities like adequacy of responses and replications at the stage of discussions, conversational fluency, culturally sensitive translation and mediation, lexical and grammatical accuracy, the ability to correctly adapt to meet the specific linguistic and cultural requirements of the target audience, the ability to work independently and in a team, the scope of the project comprehension, were marked.

Project-based training allows to personalize the process of teaching the English language professionally focused communication, taking into account the interests of bachelors and masters. Their skills and abilities to participate in extracurricular activities increased intensely; the students analyzed materials, made their own conclusions, clearly, concisely, correctly and convincingly expressed their opinions, developed the ability to discuss and comment on the information. The students, who participated in this form of communication, stated in the conducted by this article's author opinion poll that they acquired knowledge and skills which they certainly apply in future real professional activities. It is rather important that bachelors

and masters, while performing this task, experienced favorable psychological conditions and prerequisites for the development of self-assessment skills. As the result, they developed reflection, self-awareness, critical thinking, and creative skills. Thus, the process of teaching the English language professionally focused interaction was rather successful, because the simulated in classroom communication situations reflected the forthcoming real legal practice of the multinational bachelors and masters. Active search for solutions to the goals and objectives of the projects created a stable cognitive curiosity arising on the basis of the situational concern. All these created motivational attention that advanced the students' socio-cultural skills and adequate language usage. Project-based training endows the education process with quality and guarantees some success in teaching the English language professionally focused interaction in a multicultural environment. Throughout the project the multinational bachelors and masters formed the skills of forecasting and goal setting, developed the ability to organize their own activities. Due to the projects' cognitive and informative focus, the students mastered their skills of intellectual work, self-study, communication in the English language within an intercultural environment, willingness to continue learning and academic development; and accumulated the experience in cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of interaction.

CONCLUSION

It can be asserted with confidence that the use of the method of projects is of essential significance in teaching professionally focused interaction in the English language to multinational students. The bachelors and masters used authentic, accessible facts and information, legal cases and documents, taken from the factual practical reality while preparing for projects' activities. They developed their English language professionally focused communication skills effectively. Thus, the multinational bachelors and masters, studying at the Institute of Law, RUDN University, could meet their future specialized needs and interests, and the students' engagement into the method of projects became a considerable tool for their professional socialization, the English-language communication and mediation. This research-paper's results proved method of projects' efficiency and importance in developing students' professional competences and competency in making reports, exchanging opinions, participating in debates and professional argumentation convincingly. The presented issues of teaching professionally focused English language interaction, translation and mediation to multinational bachelors and masters can be applicable and useful to various researchers and educators.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The publication was prepared with the financial support of the "RUDN University Program 5-100".

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