

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SPEAKING AND WRITING SKILLS OF MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS IN KAZAKHSTANI UNIVERSITIES VIA THE CALLAN METHOD

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Abstract

The Kazakhstani education is paying great attention to the development of innovative technologies in the improvement of English teaching process in higher institutions. Undoubtedly, the advance of the English level in the contemporary society of Kazakhstan plays a prodigious role among a young multilingual generation. In terms of academic domain, the Kazakhstani scholars aim at achieving a proficient level of English among Bachelor degree students of the Kazakh nationality encouraging their academic speaking and writing skills. Firstly, it advocates the main challenges in improving academic speaking and writing of university students on the base of the Callan method. Considering the effectiveness because of its empirical approach and avoidance of mental translation, the Callan method of teaching provided an opportunity to make students' speech and writing more coherent and cohesive. Furthermore, the Callan techniques depicted the positive outcome because of its constant reiteration of academic vocabulary and grammar in multilingual groups. Secondly, the practical usage of the Callan method and its efficiency in multilingual groups was scrutinized and successfully implemented at the Eurasian National University. The Kazakh/Russian groups of the foreign language department were under the study. Moreover, they were divided into experimental/control groups. The control group was taught traditionally whereas the experimental was tutored by means of the Callan method. The results demonstrated the discrepancies of the groups under the study, it was apparent that the experimental group students depicted higher scores in writing and speaking than the control one besides the experimental group showed improvements in making the utterances coherent and they did overcome fear of speaking.

Keywords: Academic Speaking, Academic writing, multilingualism, EFLT.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the Kazakhstani policy is aimed at the internalization of the educational space and training of competitive specialists with the knowledge of several languages. It is absolutely apparent, in the address to the people of Kazakhstan the President of Kazakhstan N.A.Nazarbayev (2013) noted: "Kazakhstan should be perceived all over the world as a highly educated country where the population utilize three languages: Kazakh language, Russian as a language of interethnic communication and English as a language of successful integration in the global economy." the emphasis is on the pedagogical component, which can be completely delineated as a multilingual education. in our contemporary society, the term "multilinguism" is extremely popular and widespread in Kazakhstan. It has several definitions, but the most leading term is "the use of several languages within a given social community (especially the state); individual intake (group of people) for multiple languages, each of which is selected according to the specific situation of communication" (1999).

The current system of our national education sets new aims and objectives in the process of training future specialists. In terms of academic teaching, there is the necessity to motivate students in improving academic speaking and writing. In this regard, the development and improvement of approaches and methods of teaching academic English is becoming increasingly pivotal. Encouraging academic English skills of university students means developing the skills of oral and written scientific speech, critical thinking, and comprehension of academic culture. Academic English is significantly different in its transparency, accuracy, unambiguousness. It is essential to teach students simultaneously and with equal care to improve speaking and writing skills. This makes it much more effective to master academic speech and writing making them coherent and cohesive. Therefore, the Callan method provides an opportunity to achieve positive effects.

The Callan method was created by Robin Callon (1932-2014), an innovator in pedagogy in Great Britain. It is the method that revolutionized the English learning system and is still widely used in our contemporary teaching process. It is considered to be direct and the most fascinating and efficient one because of rapid training of students. The basis of this technique is a multiple repetition, resulting in the formation of conversational skills; the speed of the lesson does not allow a person to be distracted and even speculate on the topic in their native language. Such lessons are quite effective if students are dealing with a teacher who knows Callan's technique from the inside. Furthermore, the advantages of this method of studying the language include small groups, the speed of the teacher's speech, constant repetition of the material, relevant grammar.

The Callan method's efficiency is based on two main factors:

- 1) the empirical approach to the study where the practice plays the crucial role in the teaching process.
- 2) the authentic classes where students focus on oral communication and become faster without paying attention to the mental translation from the native language. They remain concentrated on the authenticity.

The given method is the technique that does provide significant extraordinary results. The main discrepancy of Callan method and a traditional one is the continuous repetition of grammar constructions and vocabulary, constant readiness to respond questions. Moreover, students do not know when they will be interviewed. However, it is noticeable that the traditional teaching methods rarely permit to concentrate on the communicative approach during the lesson. The Callan method makes it possible for students to learn English very quickly. It's popular with students and schools all over the world because it's fast and effective, because it's lively and enjoyable, and because the lessons involve constant listening and speaking practice. The Callan method offers learners constant speaking and listening practice in the classroom, and teaches English quickly and effectively. The method consists of 12 levels or stages.

As it was mentioned above the Callan method was introduced by its author Robin Callon who established the Callan school and took an active part in managing this school. Nowadays, the Callan school is the most prodigious school in London. The given method is used successfully in more than 25 countries such as United Kingdom (Sonia Hill), Spain (Rossana Triaca), Brazil (Salvador da Bahia), Kazakhstan (Forward school, 2014), etc.

2 OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the current study is to explore the effectiveness of academic writing and speaking using the Callan method among Kazakhstani university multilingual students. Besides, sub objectives are to look at whether the different scopes and areas in which academic speaking and writing skills with the help of the Callan method can be integrated as a significant source in academic writing and to improve students'

academic speaking skills of polylingual groups which will benefit them when applying their knowledge and performances in their professional endeavour.

The problem tackled in the given research is of huge importance. The Callan method is suitable for students of all nationalities, of all ages, and for all purposes of study. It is based on repetition and speed that compose the two main things that guarantee success in learning a foreign language. Students spend less time and efforts on lessons by learning English in a quarter of the time that it takes to learn by other methods.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 To what extent does the academic writing and speaking meet the students' needs from polylingual groups of higher institutions?
- 2 To what extent does the ways of the Callan method improve the students' academic writing and speaking skills particularly their coherence, cohesion, task achievement and task response?
- 3 How to encourage University students' academic writing and speaking skills of multilingual groups?

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The research was carried out at the Eurasian National University in Astana at the Foreign language theory and practice department. 60 Pre-Service 3d year students of the speciality "Foreign Languages: Two Foreign Languages" during the autumn term in 2018 were involved in the experiment. The participants were 19-20 years old learners of different nationalities: Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek, German, Kirgiz, Ukraine, etc. They master their own native language, the language of communication either Kazakh or Russian, and less than one foreign language. 15 weeks had been scheduled for data collection.

The discipline under this research was "Courses on IELTS preparation" according to the program of the given specialty. It is obvious; this discipline was the most pivotal one for our students. According to the requirements of this international examination, the students should be prepared on four main activities as: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Actually, the most arduous parts for students are considered to be writing and speaking. These parts of IELTS are intermingled with each other, therefore, speaking and writing were taken into account and a huge amount of hours were devoted to these parts. The topics of speaking and writing sections dealt with social and environmental problems, mass media, education, information technologies, health and many others. The aim of the research was to improve speaking and writing skills according to Callan techniques. The academic vocabulary and grammar were permanently reiterated by different speaking and writing exercises and it gave a golden opportunity to develop students' skills in the experimental group "B". In addition, each group was divided into two subgroups due to the academic aptitude: subgroup "A" and subgroup "B", 12 students in each. Subgroup "A" overall has the same scores and level of knowledge as subgroup "B". The group "A" control has a traditional teaching approach. The academic proficiency of the whole group is high enough. We conducted a pre-experimental data analysis of the students' writing and speaking skills before the experiment so that to check it after experimental teaching (Table 1).

Table 1. The data of writing and speaking performances before experiment

Score (points)	95-100 A	90-94 A-	85-89 B+	80-84 B	75-79 B-	70-74 C+	65-69 C	60-64 C-	55-59 D+	50-54 D	0-49 F
Control group (%)	8	16	16	15	14	12	11	8	-	-	-
Experimental group (%)	6	14	15	13	13	14	13	10	2	-	-

The results of writing and speaking tests before experiment were counted by 100 points assessment system that is used at the ENU as the highest score. As far as it seen, the control group passed the tests more successfully and got the higher scores than experimental one. In comparison 95-100 points received only 6% of students in the experimental group but in control group - 8%. 60-64 points in experimental group were

10% comparing to control group 8%. 55-59 points scored 2% in the experimental group.

However, there are a couple of girls who eagerly arrange all class activities and keep the students united. They are the most responsible people who are ready to help with any arrangement. Overall, the students are well-mannered. They do not utilize obscene language, at least, in teacher's presence. At the lessons, the part of the group is active and loud, but another part is quiet silent. A teacher has to make effort to arouse them from the indifference. Subject matter of texts and assignments meet the students' needs and interests in compliance with claimed age. Majority of students have b2 level of English proficiency.

4.2 Data Collection

The empirical classes dealt with diverse tasks and exercises aiming at improving speaking and writing skills. All the activities were conducted to extend academic vocabulary and develop speech to make it precise and fluent as well as expand the knowledge of grammatical constructions.

Taking into consideration the speaking section, students of the experimental group were involved in implementing 3 main parts: the response for several questions, the response for the whole topic with the given plan and the response for the different abstract questions. According to the Callan techniques, the students were engaged in multiple reiterations of the necessary and relevant vocabulary and the variety of grammar, they were concentrating on the authentic way of speaking. Moreover, the main focus of the practical training was to pay students' attention to the authentic expression of ideas not the mental translation from their native languages as Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek, etc.

The huge attention in training was paid to the improvement of communication skills. Students were facing to the discussions on such topic as: Education in Kazakhstan and foreign countries, Health problems in rural areas, Poor conditions of retired people and many others. The students shared ideas, expressing their own opinions and trying to find solutions in their small discussion groups. The students were involved in agree or disagree discussions providing their solutions. It is essential in this case that student tried to form the conversational skills. In addition, these activities fostered to develop the critical thinking of students and decision making, and students learned how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with the others. Furthermore, the students were always encouraged to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification, and so on. It was apparent, such activities were beneficial and efficient because everyone had the opportunity to speak and make their speeches fluent.

Other activities dealt with the writing section. A huge amount of time was devoted to the essay writing because the multilingual groups had difficulties in the formation of written speech. The aim was to draw much attention on the accurate way of writing including the coherence and cohesion. The Callan method pursues the continuous repetition of utterances based on paraphrases and synonymy. The tasks embraced the different statements where students had to provide their own relevant variants taking into account linking words, expressive means, and emphatic constructions and so on. The latter constructions, elliptical constructions are those which help students make their essays authentic and relevant to the English language.

4.3 Data Analysis

Describing the problem. The students brainstorm to create their initial ideas to paper. Students began to write their ideas at given topic. Then students have been divided into small groups and work together both in class, to research the topic. Information was collected from popular journals, newspapers and Internet. Students also interviewed their friends and ordinary citizens. Determining the causes of the problem. They brainstorm individually and in pairs, for instance, about the causes of poverty. The learners create their research; think critically what the main cause of poverty is. They exchange their drafts, review questionnaire, compare their notes on the causes of the poverty with each other and join in collaborative discussions to enhance their knowledge of the issue.

Proposing a solution to the problem. Students research possible solutions that could improve living standards and reduce poverty. Teacher suggested some questions that helped them: What are some obstacles that countries face in getting out of poverty? They exchanged their drafts, reviewed questionnaire, compared their notes on the causes of the poverty with each other and joined in collaborative discussions to enhance their knowledge. At this point students used their notes to start free writing and developing their ideas regarding the solutions to poverty. Students worked individually and collaboratively in pairs to discuss the solutions they have thought about and researched. They used the results from the research, the data from the questionnaire, combined all their drafts, and revised the complete discourse. Finally, students did a final revision and submitted their papers.

We conducted a post-experimental data analysis of the students' writing and speaking skills before the experiment so that to check it after experimental teaching (Table 2).

Table 2. The data of students' writing and speaking performances after experiment

Score (points)	95-100 A	90-94 A-	85-89 B+	80-84 B	75-79 B-	70-74 C+	65-69 C	60-64 C-	55-59 D+	50-54 D	0-49 F
Control group (%)	8	16	16	15	14	13	12	6	-	-	-
Experimental group (%)	8	15	16	14	14	13	10	10	-	-	-

After experimental teaching both groups we conducted tests in EILTS format and got the following results described above in the Table 2. The results of writing and speaking tests after experiment were counted by 100 points assessment system that is used at the ENU as the highest score. As far as it seen, both the control and experimental groups passed the tests nearly equally. More successfully were the students from the experimental group because they got the same scores in 95-100 points. The experimental group received 10% of students in the experimental group in 65-69 scores just as in the control group 12%. The experimental group improved their scores and nobody got 55-59 points.

Actually in comparison with the control group, the moderated average variance of the experimental group is higher in many scores. The results point out that all participants of the control group had made some improvements after the study but the improvement was not as huge as the one made by the experimental group learners. The average variance of the experimental group was obviously superior to that of the control group showing that the Callan method could effectively enhance the public speaking performances of the students of the University multilingual groups and improve their writing skills.

5 RESULTS

In addition, in terms of writing, their essays delineated the demonstrable level of academic requirements, their researches turned out to be cohesive. Besides, speaking skills improved in such aspects as fluency, coherence, cohesion and what is more wonderful the students did not have fear of public speaking in the classroom. The students spoke freely without hesitation or fear of making mistakes. Overall, it was proved the Callan method is worth to be applicable and effective.

Comparing the results of writing and speaking tests before and after experiment as a whole we concluded that scores of control and experimental groups improved and even the students from experimental group got the higher points after experimental teaching.

The present study thus attempted to address the problem of the Callan method usage by the teachers while studying the improvement of students' academic speaking and writing skills of multilingual students in Kazakhstani Universities alongside with the effects of provision of tasks used for assessing to students and other means of teaching. The results reflected a wide range of professional opinions, personal reflections as well as pedagogical and linguistic experiences. It gave a new input in terms of initial education and ongoing training to teachers and teacher trainers at various levels of instruction.

6 CONCLUSION

Thus, it is not an unimportant issue to clarify the efficiency of this direct method as Callan method now. The reason is that it provides an opportunity to encourage university students to improve academic speaking and writing by creating constant authenticity in class. Undoubtedly, it does develop to enhance coherence and cohesion in speaking and writing, and speeches became like a river flow. The survey research depicted the effectiveness of our national groups in improving academic skills by means of Callan method. Students of Kazakh nationality did overcome the barrier in implementing logically structured utterances in speech and writing. So, the Callan method makes it possible for students to learn English very quickly and effective, therefore, it is getting more popular with students and schools all over the world. Moreover, it is lively and enjoyable, and the lessons involve constant listening and speaking practice.

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