ON SOME EFFECTIVE METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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Abstract: English language teaching and studying plays an important role in forming professional qualities of future economists. Developing students' speaking skills requires the use of various effective methods and techniques in teaching English as a foreign language to students of economic departments. The article describes the advantages of role-play, drama and brainstorming, the most popular interactive teaching methods, as the ones that are aimed at the interaction between not only students and the teacher but also with each other, it requires an active role of students in the learning process.

Keywords: ESP, TEFL, brainstorming, educational drama, teaching-learning process, methods, procedures, techniques, role-play, speaking skills.

Rezumat: Predarea şi studierea limbii engleze joacă un rol important în formarea calităţilor profesionale ale viitorilor economişti. Dezvoltarea abilităţilor de exprimare orală ale studenţilor necesită utilizarea diferitelor metode şi tehnici eficiente în predarea limbii engleze ca limbă străină. În special, când e vorba de abilităţile studenţilor de la Departamentul de ştiinţe economice. Articolul descrie avantajele jocurilor de rol, ale brainstorming-ului. Acestea, fiind cunoscute ca cele mai populare metode interactive de predare, vizează interacţiunea nu numai între studenţi şi profesor, ci şi numai între ei (studenţi); şi totodată necesită implicarea activă a studenţilor în procesul de învăţare a unei limbi străine.

Cuvinte-cheie: ESP (Limba engleză pentru scopuri specifice), TEFL (predarea limbii engleze ca limbă străină), metoda brainstorming, drama educaţională, procesul de predare-învăţare, metode, procedee, tehnici, jocuri de rol, abilităţi de vorbire.

Introduction

The social and economic changes that have taken place in our country and in the world over recent years have led to the new requirements for the specialists in different fields, including economists. Almost ten years we have the course of *Business English communication and correspondence* with MA students from Economy Department. Nowadays the graduates in economics have to work under crisis conditions, analyse the current economic processes and find the most effective ways to solve different problems, possess leadership skills, be good at creative work and decision-making.

English for Specific purposes in TEFL

English for Specific purposes (ESP) stands out as an important and distinctive branch of English Language Teaching (ELT) that focuses on some practical aspects derived from needs analysis, genre and successful communication. It is commonplace in courses devised for professionals of informatics, engineering or business contexts. Several authors have carried out search on this topic in the international arena: Bojovic, M. (2017), Dudley-Evans, T. & St. John, M. J. (1998), Johns, A. M. & Price-Machado, D. (2001), Minodora Otilia, S. (2015). Their theoretical and methodological contributions deal with the features and essential issues of TESP, the definition of its categories, competence models and metho-

dologies for models of teaching, practical exercises, tasks, techniques, methods and procedures. To our mind, all these tools are useful for the ESP teaching-learning process. To achieve these goals, foreign language teaching should include various methods and techniques for developing students' communicative skills that are of a prior necessity for future.

Role-playing in the EFL classroom

To promote oral interaction in English classes we consider *role-play* as one of the most effective teaching communicative strategies nowadays.

According to Ladousse (1997) using role-plays enhances oral production. The author states that it minimizes stress levels, since students can interpret different roles from his/her own, without pressures of correction, both verbally and grammatically. On contrary, Davis (2014) points out that role-play enhances learning idiomatic expression and chunks, which may help students, develop the linguistic competence necessary to convey meaning.

According to Scarcely and Crookal (1990) cited in Benabadji (2007) "students' fluency can be improved by using role-playing, since role-playing as a learning strategy, allows students to internalize, live and feel language in a dramatization context" (1, p. 48). These authors discussed about three learning theories in which learners acquire language, using role-plays as a communicative tool. Besides, participating at role-play, students can participate in conversational situations. They can cover a wide range of social real-life situations, in which they develop speaking skills, which can generate interest and, possibly, activate students' participation.

As David Farmer mentioned in "*Educational Drama in English Classes*" (2015), *drama* can be used to support other teaching techniques, or to present a complete session. Dramatic activity helps to make learning more enjoyable and to develop such skills as participation and cooperation. The author added that using *role-play or drama* helps students develop such skills as creativity, enquiry, communication, empathy, self-confidence, cooperation, leadership and negotiation that are rather important taking into account TESP.

According to Țaulean (2015, 2016), from educational point of view, *drama* fosters the social, intellectual and the linguistic development of the child (Dougili, 1997; Early and Tarlington, 1992) and it centres on language development, personal awareness, group co-operation, sensory awareness, and imaginative growth. In her opinion, the change in attitude towards the use of drama and drama techniques in language teaching came about due to a greater emphasis on meaningful communicative activities instead of mechanical drills.

At our university course "*Business communication and correspondence*" we try to expand students' theoretical knowledge related to business communication and develop practical skills in using a foreign (English) language for professional communication in the economic sphere as well as develop socio-cultural competence in participating in communications in accordance with internationally accepted norms. At the EFL lessons we try to use a number of role plays developing the professional qualities of the future economists.

For instance, teaching the topic "*Applying for a job*" we suggest the students the following activities:
1) Think of the possible answers to the interviewer's questions.
   - *If you want to be a secretary, are you interested in working in an office? Can you type and file quickly?*
   - *Are you good at working with numbers?*
   - *Are you reliable person? Prove it giving one example.*
2) Looking through the advertisements of jobs, you have found one, which seems to be convenient for you. You make a call to the staff office. After answering some questions of your education and job experiences, you get to know about the salary and are asked to send your resume per email.

3) Recently you've sent your resume to the well-known company. At last, you are called by the staff-office. Your background will be clarified, and then the data of applying will be set.

For the topic "*Telephoning*" we suggest the following situation:

You are the caller and you work for a company called White Inc. You are going to phone a company called Alpha Group. You want to talk to Brian Williams and tell him that the meeting will be held at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. Brian Williams isn't available. Follow the prompts below. One of your group-mates will begin the phone call.

- *Say who you are and why you are calling.*
- *Give your email address and phone number.*
- *End the conversation correctly.*

The topic "*Business meetings*" provides studying the new vocabulary on "*Running a business meetin*g" and studying some phrases for conducting a meeting on opening, welcoming the participants, starting the principal objectives of the meeting, giving apologies for someone who is absent, dealing with recent developments, introducing the agenda, allocating roles (secretary, participants), agreeing on the ground rules for the meeting (contributions, timing, decision-making, etc.), closing the items, summarizing, etc.

Group work activity*: You all work for a British company which wants to launch a new product in our country (choose any you like). Make up an agenda and hold a marketing planning meeting. Discuss the points on the agenda (e.g. target customer, dimensions, wrappings, product name, price, launch date, advertising, etc.) and make a decision for each one.*

Brainstorming for communication

The role of brainstorming in obtaining educational objectives in different fields was under research, recently. We can apply to many empirical studies that have been performed considering the effectiveness of this approach in group idea generation. Dr. Alex Osborn proposed this term and it was defined as: "*An organized way to allow the mind to produce ideas without getting bogged down in trying to judge the value of those ideas at the same time*" (12, p. 85).

It has been found that brainstorming can be an effective tool in teaching English as a foreign language and the researchers Mongeau and Morr's (1999) described this term as a "method of ideation" (8, p. 14), through which a group of language learners are motivated to generate a large number of ideas.

The need for using brainstorming in the EFL classroom was described at Parnes, S. J., & Meadow, A., Labiod, A., etc. and is considered of high importance in the field of teaching English because when ample opportunities of discussion are provided to learners in language learning contexts, learners' critical abilities concerning learners' lives, their social intelligence, novelty, problem-solving, etc. are going to be enhanced.

We use brainstorming at the EFL lessons as it is effective of achieving student interaction in developing the cognitive skills for the purpose of generating ideas (Richards J.C. and Nunan D., 1990); it is an effective tool in creative problem solving (Fernald & Nickolenko, 1993; Leclef, 1994).

Summing up the ideas regarding "brainstorming" as an interactive method of teaching English as a foreign language, we can state that brainstorming represents joint search of the ideas necessary for the solution of any problem and the main advantages of this method are that students seem to be "liberated" - the language barrier disappears, there is no fear to say something wrong, they are free to speak and every restraint goes away, etc. This method not only develops creative and associative thinking but also develops the ability to produce a maximum of ideas in a tight time, the ability to express personal opinion at the EFL

classroom. Moreover, brainstorming is a popular method of group interaction in both the educational and business environment because a person's argument is very useful in educational and business development.

We suggest our students the following questions as starting points for group work on the topic "Up-to-date brands":
- *What is the secret of IKEA/ JYSK/ METRO/ KAUFLAND?*
- *What business/ company would you open?*
- *What are the best ways of advertising of a new model of an IPAD/ a cell phone/ a router/ a smart board/ a tablet/a PC?*
- *Would you like to live in a traditional economy? Why yes/no?*
- *What new marketing technologies do you know?*

The brainstorming technique employed tried to get every student from the group involved in the generation of opinions and ideas by making them aware of what was going on. The strategies tried to activate students' background knowledge and experiences relevant to the topic of discussion without being judged or criticized that is of high importance.

Conclusions

Brainstorming, role-playing and drama activities can improve students' ability in speaking by giving more practice, more explanation about the way to use these methods and techniques in teaching speaking and ask the students to perform their ideas. The students were able to express their ideas more fluently and natural. These activities make the students be actively involved in teaching-learning process. By grouping them, giving them the roles, hints and real-life situations, the students can share their idea with their peers and the teachers. Thus, the students' fluency, accuracy covering grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and comprehension can be improved.

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