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THE USE OF THE CASE METHOD IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES TO APPLICANTS OF ECONOMIC SPECIALITIES

In the current international business environment, the ability to communicate in foreign language in written form and orally is extremely important. The paper tackles the issue of case study method as a type of educational technology in developing higher education applicants' speaking skills. The main focus of this article is to define and substantiate the effectiveness of the case study method use in foreign language teaching to students of economic specialities at higher educational establishments. The case method is seen as a technique based on analysis, discussion, and decision-making. Having discussion as the core element, the case study method becomes an invaluable tool for developing and improving students' speaking skills. Case studies in professional training build language fluency and essential soft skills, such as strategic thinking, problem-solving, and decisive communication. This approach fosters a sense of accountability in decision-making and refines interpersonal communication.

The authors systematise the main characteristic features and integral components of the case study technology. The main reasons that motivate teachers to implement the case study technology into their practice have been mentioned. Much attention is devoted to the description of the case study organising process. The paradigm of the case design has been presented and the main case types have been outlined that include problems, decisions and evaluations. The authors present the main principles of adapting the existing case to one's teaching needs. The authors analyse the conditions which are required for the successful implementation of the case study method and stress the importance of necessary training for teachers who plan to use the given educational technology. The difficulties that teachers encounter during case method application have been studied in the research. The authors emphasise the necessary steps that students should take within case method application.

Key words: *the use of case study method, case study method in foreign language teaching, case study method in professional foreign language teaching, case method in teaching students of economic specialities, case method for improving foreign language speaking skills.*

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ КЕЙС-МЕТОДУ ПРИ ВИКЛАДАННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ФАХОВОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ ДЛЯ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ЕКОНОМІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

У сучасному міжнародному бізнес-середовищі здатність спілкуватись іноземною мовою у письмовій та усній формах є надзвичайно важливою. У статті розглядається питання методу кейсів як виду освітньої технології для розвитку навичок говоріння здобувачів вищої освіти. Основна увага цієї статті полягає у визначенні та обґрунтуванні ефективності використання методу кейсів у викладанні іноземних мов студентам економічних спеціальностей у закладах вищої освіти. Метод дослідження кейсів розглядається як технологія, заснована на аналізі, обговоренні та прийнятті рішень. Оскільки дискусія є основним елементом, метод дослідження кейсів стає цінним інструментом для розвитку та удосконалення навичок говоріння студентів. Використання методу кейсів у фаховій підготовці розвиває вільне володіння мовою та важливі м'які навички, такі, як стратегічне мислення, здатність вирішувати проблеми та рішучість у спілкуванні. Такий підхід сприяє розвитку почуття відповідальності у прийнятті рішень та вдосконалює міжособистісну комунікацію.

Автори систематизовують основні характерні риси та невід'ємні компоненти технології кейс-стаді. Перелічено основні причини, що мотивують викладачів впроваджувати технологію дослідження кейсів у свою практику. Значна увага приділяється опису процесу організації заняття з використанням методу кейсів. Представлено парадигму розробки кейсів та окреслено основні типи кейсів, що включають проблеми, рішення та оцінювання. Автори представляють основні принципи адаптації існуючого кейсу до власних навчальних потреб. Автори аналізують умови, необхідні для успішного впровадження методу кейсів та наголошують на важливості необхідного навчання для викладачів, які планують використовувати дану освітню технологію. У дослідженні вивчено труднощі, з якими викладачі мають справу під час застосування методу кейсів. Автори наголошують на необхідних кроках, які повинні зробити студенти під час застосування методу дослідження кейсів.

Ключові слова: *використання кейс-методу, кейс-метод у викладанні іноземних мов, кейс-метод у викладанні іноземної мови фахового спрямування, кейс метод у викладанні здобувачам економічних спеціальностей, кейс-метод для покращення навичок говоріння іноземною мовою.*

Problem statement. One of the main tasks of the discipline “English for Specific Purposes” is to train students’ ability to discuss and solve problems in the professional context. Teachers are in constant search of different methods and approaches that help to create educational environment which reflects real-life working situations and give the possibility to dive into the authentic environment of the world of work. The case study method is widely recognized as a useful tool for improving speaking skills in the classes devoted to professional communication and it is extensively used by foreign language teachers, who

always try to find interesting topics to provoke classroom interaction. Case study method is seen as part of problem-based method where the teacher presents the problem to students and suggests them to find possible solutions to it in the process of discussion, and at the same time students obtain knowledge through active learning. The case study method is content-based, skill-integrated, task-oriented, problem-based and learner-centered or student-led (to certain extent students are responsible for the direction of discussion), where the approach of learning by doing is applied. (Grosse, 1988: 131-132)

The objective of the present research is to analyse and substantiate the effectiveness of the case study method use in developing speaking skills of students of economic specialities at higher education establishments.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Case study method has been attractive for a long time for national and foreign teachers who train specialists in different areas. Surmin Yu. P. investigated the formation and development of the case method in Ukraine. S. M. Kovalova, O. I. Zhupanik, A. M. Guz, Forostiuk I. V., Pustovoit B. A., Fediai I. O. studied the peculiarities of applying the case method in the professional training of specialists. Bechko Ya., Komisarenko N. presented the research on the use of the case study method in foreign languages teaching. Foreign scientists Grosse, Lyu E., C. U., Bridgman T., Cummings S., McLaughlin C., R. Yin studied the main principles of the case study method and the ways of its application in the classroom. T. K. Sari, S. M. Hutagalung, I. Aini, S. Kudriyah investigated the benefits of the case study for the development of students' speaking skills.

Presentation of the main material. The case method is seen as a technique based on analysis, discussion, and decision-making (Esteban, 2004:138).

Case study method is an in-depth investigation of a single entity or small number of entities, which could be an individual, family, group, institution, community or other social unit. Students are offered to analyse history, development, or circumstances of the entity under study. It is a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest.

R. Yin suggests the six elements of case study research: the plan, design, preparation, data collection, analysis and reporting (Yin, 2014).

The case study must be significant, complete, consider alternative perspectives, display sufficient evidence, must be composed in an engaging manner (Bridgman, 2016 et al).

Case technologies include: situational analysis method; incident method; business correspondence analysis method; game design; situational role-playing method; discussion method.

The main function of the case method is to teach students to think creatively and solve complex unstructured problems that cannot be solved analytically (Zhupanyk, 2024: 171).

The integral components of the case study technology are as follows: the existence of the problem to solve, the case is inspired by real facts or presents them, the pedagogical purpose of the case, different formats of presentation of the case (oral form, written

form, closed form, or open form) (Lyu, 2023: 308). Case study materials typically fall into three categories: authentic, modified, or custom-designed to fit educational goals. Beyond the materials themselves, the "authenticity" of the assignment lies in its ability to mirror the real-world analytical and decision-making challenges students will eventually face in their careers.

S. M. Kovaliova notes the following key component of the case method: goal-oriented, content-oriented, organizational, activity-oriented, and evaluation-oriented. Within the target component, the main tasks of creating cases are: defining the objectives of creating cases; selecting situations and necessary sources of information based on criteria; preparing primary material for the case; and preparing methodological materials for its use. Effective use of case studies requires careful planning by teachers. Such preparation includes content, which means selecting issues (problems) that will be emphasized through the application of selected procedural technologies. The organizational component includes preparation (before class), familiarization (during class), analysis (discussion of the case in a group), and conclusions (presentation of group decisions). The essence of the activity component of the case method technology is the implementation of knowledge, i.e., a set of specific actions. The assessment and performance component is linked to the results achieved in the learning process, which is an important incentive for learning. (Kovaliova, 2017: 102).

A case study for developing economic competence has the following features: it refers to problems from the perspective of economic reality; it highlights both positive and negative examples of solving economic problems; it outlines problems of economic nature; it is related to the future professional activities of students; combines production problems with economic consequences and vice versa; contains the necessary amount of statistical or other verified information (Prystupa, 2011: 310).

To use the case study method a teacher should possess good knowledge of the phenomenon, good listening skills, adaptability and flexibility. Data collection may include: documentation, interviews, observations, physical artefacts. The main aspects are: 1) the use of real-world situations as the bases; 2) interactive discussion; 3) requires students to be prepared and engaged in a class discussion to have a meaningful discussion.

The main reasons for using the case study method in the classroom:

– This method is an example of active learning (if you actively participate, you remember more). It's a kind of discovery learning.

– The teachers observe fast feedback of student comprehension in the classroom.

– This is the way to teach critical thinking and how to exercise judgement. Focusing in the classroom on discussion and testing ideas, teachers ask them questions and make them think and come up with their own views. The possibility to simulate business situations and assess pros and cons.

– It helps to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world.

– It teaches students to find the most important fact in great volume of information.

– Different topics can be interconnected in the case touching different subjects.

– Complexity of the real world problems is the part of the analysis, unstructured problems, ambiguity and incomplete information.

– The case raises issues in student's minds, it makes them think about it. The answers are not obvious.

– The task of an instructor is to set the stage where the students can come up with their own ideas and learn.

As the cases are sometimes built on real situations, it is vital not to tell the students how the situation was solved (for example, what the company finally did) at the beginning of discussion, because students begin to think that it was the right decision, but it is not always correct. It just happened in the given situation.

The process of organising has the following features:

1) The teacher must have a plan. Teachers have to care about students' learning.

2) The teacher should get to know the students. If the instructor understands their backgrounds, what their weaknesses are or there are some sensitive places in their backgrounds. When managing the discussion the teacher knows who to call at different moments of discussion, who can contribute on the certain issue, who is likely to be confused by the question so that every participant could learn as much as he/she can do. If students have certain experience in the field, they share ideas and as a result, it enhances everybody's learning (Sari, 2021 et al).

3) The teacher sets expectations for students, encourage students to share their experiences and knowledge. It enriches the discussion not just from facts that they know but from different perspectives, technical backgrounds.

The teacher is asking students to learn how to take a stand. It's not a passive process, as management is not a passive process. The students are taught the courage to act under uncertainty.

A case method is a dynamic and engaging discussion led by students' comments instead of lectures.

Students learn through the diversity of talent, thought in the room. Case discussion is dynamic, fast pace, there's the ton of energy, they listen actively as they are trying to capture what the people are really saying, and how do they think about this issue, and it's important to articulate yourself very clearly.

The case method prepares students to be in leadership position where student face time-sensitive decision with limited information. Reflecting on these situations will prepare students to act better in the future roles. Cases test students' creative and analytic skills (Huz, 2023: 36).

By engaging in case-based learning, students refine their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills through constant peer interaction. This holistic environment does more than language teaching; it boosts student motivation and curiosity while sharpening memory and general learning attitudes.

As for students' attitudes towards personal feelings and professional skills related to case studies, they consider it interesting, students think that it increases their self-confidence, represents a process of life-long learning, improves managerial skills, negotiation skills, project coordination, problem-solving abilities, developing ideas (Basta, 2017: 559). According to E. Basta's research towards students' attitudes towards linguistic competences developed by case studies, it should be mentioned that the majority of students agree that it improves presentation skills, professional vocabulary, grammar, reading, speaking, writing, listening skills and pronunciation (Basta, 2017: 560).

What does it mean "getting the most out of a business case"?

Students learn to identify and assess issues and to better solve problems based on the data available to them. There are several ways to get the most from the case: 1) prepare (2-6 hours of preparation); 2) participate in the conversation. Plan to bring your ideas forward; 3) share – be prepared to share your thoughts and to listen to the ideas of others. Sharing with each other is an invaluable way to learn about business case problems from multiple perspectives; 4) relate what you are learning to what you do or have done in your career. The goal is to transfer the learning to a new context and build your memory of the ideas. 5) better understand and enhance you decision-making. Focus on how you are making decisions to learn how you can improve even more. Effective discussion requires a non-traditional setting; using a boardroom instead of a classroom ensures the instructor has enough space to move and engage with students naturally.

Steps for students' approach the case:

– Read the case quickly like a magazine article. The goal is to get the initial idea what the case is about.

– Read the appendices. What data are provided? How will the data be useful? Case writers usually include information that is useful. Identify how each item in the appendix can help you.

– Identify the type of case – the problem, decision or evaluation?

– Read carefully and take notes. Get the sense of the situation you are facing. Describe the exact problem decision or evaluation.

– Begin to develop hypotheses. Propose the causes behind the situation.

– Proof and action. Then build support for your hypotheses. Extract and analyse the data throughout the case. Identify what you are going to do about the situation.

– Evaluate the alternatives. Evaluate the options you've considered and make your recommendation. State which option is most likely to succeed? Identify the potential weaknesses and how to overcome them.

The initial steps in case analysis discussion: 1) state the conclusion first; 2) support the case with data; 3) provide the action plan.

While preparing case-study material the teacher should take into consideration the main case types:

- Problems. A significant outcome or performance has no explanation. Something happened but it is not clear why. Define the problem, search for the cause using tools, frameworks (for example, the 4 Ps, the 4Cs in marketing)

- Decisions (focused primarily on explicit decision that must be made (for example, build versus buy. Define options and decision criteria, assemble the evidence). The evidence should be applied to the criteria.

- Evaluations. An evaluation is a student's judgement about how well a particular act or outcome turned out, for example, evaluating a particular decision that has already been made. Assess a performance, act, or outcome, define evaluative criteria to apply in judging the situation. Evaluate both the positive and negative sides of the situation.

R. Yin suggests the paradigm for case design:

1) the research question;

2) its propositions;

3) its unit of analysis;

4) determination of how the data are linked to the propositions;

5) criteria to interpret the findings (Yin, 2014).

The main principles of adapting the existing case to one's teaching needs are:

– exact identification of the learning purpose. It is vital to ensure that the analytical load matches the syllabus of the discipline;

– much attention should be paid to the necessary vocabulary required for discussion of the case;

– if the case is too long, it is advisable to replace three pages of background story with a one-paragraph executive summary;

– if the case is too difficult, it is important to add "guiding questions" or a glossary of terms to help students navigate the material;

– if the case is too simple, a kind of "twist" can be introduced;

– it is advisable not to include too much technical data or numbers in the case;

– avoid providing inexact information or omit significant information;

– the names of technology can be replaced for modern equivalents unless the historical context is the point. Currencies, names, or geographic locations can be localized to make the scenario feel more immediate.

The difficulties that teachers encounter during case method application:

1) it is not easy to find a case that corresponds to the topic and objectives of the lesson;

2) to maintain academic or professional quality, case studies require frequent updates or replacements to ensure they don't become outdated or lose their impact over time;

3) the complexity of a case should align with the students' current skills in both language and their field of study;

4) lengthy, complex cases add a layer of difficulty to the lesson-planning process;

5) the student-centered nature of case-based learning introduces an element of unpredictability to the classroom;

6) teachers often feel unprepared to lead case studies due to a perceived gap in their specialized training and subject expertise;

7) the process demands a significant investment of both time and effort.

Concerning the students' negative attitudes, some students find the case-study method exhausting and threatening, some students think that it induces stage-fright (Basta, 559).

Grading is based on a mix of individual and group contributions. Teachers evaluate the quality of work, participation levels, the ability to ask critical questions, and the effectiveness of both written and oral case presentations (Bechko, Komisarenko, 2024: 236). To wrap up the lesson, it is recommended that students complete a survey to gauge their perspectives on the case study method. This questionnaire typically explores their overall satisfaction with the instructional approach, the perceived value of the new information acquired, and its future relevance to their careers. Additionally, it helps identify which specific activities were the most engaging for the learners.

Conclusions. Taking everything into consideration, the authors have concluded that the benefits of the case method using in ESP teaching are as follows: it engages students into active foreign language training where all types of language activity are present, students use professional vocabulary during business topics discussions, this method improves students' presentation skills and speech organising in a logical way, it encourages students to formulate ideas in concise and clear way. The case study method is a valuable tool for developing student's listening and speaking skills, where participants of discussion should be able to understand the speech of other people, analyse it critically and respond to remarks quickly, showing their knowledge in the business area. Students are taught to respond politely, using set expressions and phrases, they practice correct question formation. At the same time, students train their ability to speak in front of the audience, substantiate their opinions and think critically in conditions of uncertainty.

However, there are some challenges for a teacher and students in the process of the case method application. The difficulties for teachers are connected with finding or creating a proper business case for analysis, it can be time-consuming in terms of additional materials preparation (for example, hand-outs with necessary vocabulary), thinking over open ques-

tions for facilitating the discussion, language teachers will have to learn more about certain business topics. It is the teacher's responsibility to keep in mind the main aim of the lesson and steer the flow of conversation in the desired direction. Creation of positive and friendly atmosphere during the lesson is also within the teacher's task to provide dynamic and constructive discussion.

Students might find it difficult to express their ideas openly due to insufficient level of language expertise, preparation for the class, lack of professional experience or fear to express their ideas openly.

The authors found that benefits of case method use in the ESP classroom clearly outweigh the drawbacks, although teachers should bear in mind that the case method application is considered to be successful if students find the topic of the lesson thought-provoking and they continue their research and exchange of ideas upon the given issue after the lesson.

Case studies in professional foreign language training build language fluency and essential soft skills, such as strategic thinking, problem-solving, and decisive communication. This approach fosters a sense of accountability in decision-making and refines interpersonal communication. Ultimately, this method serves as a bridge for acquiring new knowledge and forming broad, conceptual insights.

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