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INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

This article examines a creative approach to foreign language teaching known as the case method. It involves learners engaging independently in a foreign language within a simulated professional environment. Cases are rich in content and provide opportunities to build on students' existing knowledge while developing discipline-specific language skills and managerial competences. The case method can be an effective way of achieving the objectives of professional foreign language instruction and fostering intercultural communication.

Keywords: foreign language teaching methodology, case method, case study, professional communication, intercultural communication.

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается творческий подход к преподаванию иностранного языка - «метод кейсов», смысл которого заключается в самостоятельной иноязычной деятельности обучаемых в искусственно созданной профессиональной среде. Нужно отметить, что кейсы чрезвычайно богаты по содержанию и обладают потенциалом, позволяющим учитывать уже приобретенные студентом знания для изучения языка специальности и развития управленческих навыков. «Метод кейс» может использоваться как эффективный метод для достижения целей обучения профессиональному иностранному языку и межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: методика преподавания иностранных языков, кейс-метод, кейс-стади.

The study of foreign languages has become an integral part of the professional training of specialists in a wide range of fields. Their future career development may depend, to a considerable extent, on their level of language proficiency. Learning a foreign language promotes the development of communicative competence and enables students to use the language as a tool for communication. The success of instruction largely depends on the appropriate selection of teaching methods.

The variety of methods and approaches used to acquire a foreign language in higher education makes it necessary to select the most suitable method or to combine complementary methods and technologies. This, in turn, highlights the need to systematise knowledge about the methods and techniques used to organise communication in a foreign language. At present, intensive foreign language

instruction is implemented through a range of developing, newly established, and established methodological systems. This diversity reflects the different learning objectives of various groups of students, as well as the range of teaching and learning contexts.

The case method, also known as the method of specific situations, is an active approach to problem- and situation-based learning. It is based on learning through the analysis and resolution of concrete problems. Its immediate objective is for a group of students to discuss and analyse a case—a situation or event arising in a particular area of professional activity—and to develop a practical solution. The proposed solutions or procedures are then evaluated, and the most appropriate one is selected in light of the problem under consideration.

By developing students' ability to perform a range of communicative functions, the case method can help them acquire subject-specific knowledge through a foreign language, improve their professional competence, and strengthen their confidence as learners. The teaching objectives traditionally identified in foreign language methodology—including communicative, linguistic, cognitive, and educational objectives—remain relevant. Research in applied linguistics has demonstrated the value of case-based approaches for examining language learning and use, while studies of Business English have shown how cases can be adapted to the needs of learners in professional settings [1–3].

M. Dolgorukov describes the case study as an advanced active learning method. As students analyse a growing number of cases, they become more likely to draw on previously developed approaches when faced with new situations and to acquire strategies for addressing increasingly complex problems. Situation-based learning encourages learners to identify and apply knowledge in changing circumstances, thereby developing flexibility of thought.

The use of the case method in English language classes for professional purposes serves two complementary aims: further development of communicative competence, including its linguistic and sociocultural dimensions, and the development of students' professional qualities. The process begins with becoming familiar with the case: students read a professionally oriented text presenting a problem related to their field, either in its original form or with limited abridgement and adaptation, and may translate it where appropriate. They then search independently for a solution, engaging in internal monologue in English. During the classroom analysis, they use both monologue and dialogue, in prepared and spontaneous forms of speech. Each of these stages involves communicative tasks.

Classroom interaction during case work may involve disagreement, discussion, argumentation, description, comparison, persuasion, and other speech acts. Such interaction helps students develop appropriate communication strategies and observe the conventions and norms of English-language communication. The teacher can evaluate students' contributions to the case discussion in terms of several abilities: analytical thinking, management skills, decision-making, interpersonal

communication, creativity, and oral and written communication in English, including lexical and grammatical accuracy. Thus, the case method combines a particular type of learning material with specific ways of using that material in English language teaching. Research on case-based instruction in language education also highlights its potential to connect theoretical knowledge with the analysis of authentic or realistic teaching and professional situations [1,4].

Applied research suggests that the case method can be highly effective in supporting professional foreign language learning and intercultural adaptation. However, its use in language teaching needs to be methodologically justified and properly planned. This requirement applies both to the organisation of the educational programme as a whole and to the planning of individual lessons by the teacher. One potential limitation is the difficulty of ensuring that every student completes all tasks independently, particularly when work is undertaken individually.

The case method is recommended for foreign language classes in groups whose members have an adequate foundation of subject-specific knowledge and a sufficient level of foreign language proficiency. Moreover, although it is a challenging and potentially effective teaching approach, it is not universal. It works best in combination with other foreign language teaching methods because, on its own, it does not ensure the systematic acquisition of all the language knowledge and skills students are expected to master. Nevertheless, the use of cases can contribute to the overall development of students' foreign language proficiency.

The method develops creative thinking and presentation skills, strengthens students' ability to participate in discussions and justify their opinions, and improves their professional reading and information-processing skills in a foreign language. It also teaches students to work in teams and formulate collective solutions. In an interactive learning environment, students tend to feel more personally involved in the educational process and become more responsible for their own learning outcomes. Discussion, the analysis of real-life situations, brainstorming, business simulations, and project tasks can create a supportive classroom atmosphere, increase learners' verbal and intellectual engagement, strengthen their self-confidence, and provide meaningful contexts for communication.

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