

PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS OF USING PROJECT METHODS IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The following article examines the suitability of using project methods in teaching foreign languages and looks at various methods of projects which can be applied in language classrooms, expected results that can be achieved by using project methods. Moreover, it uses several specific terms and special terminologies in this field. The author strives to point out several advantages of using project methods in teaching foreign languages.

Keywords: Projects, methods, correlation, consultative and corresponding functions of teaching.

INTRODUCTION, LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

It is considered the subject matter of the speech act in making use of the project methods in lessons of foreign languages. Language is a means of forming thought. From here we elicit the methodological conclusions for the topic of our discussion.

Teachers should have all the necessary skills of speech act, as well, active spoken practice for each of the students in forming the linguistic competence assigned in curriculum and the subjects comprising a course of study in higher educational establishments.

It is imperative that students be introduced into the subject of country studying, knowing that language can be used in new cultural settings in order to accept language as a means of intercultural partnership. The main idea of approaching teaching a foreign language is to direct one's focus from various exercises to the activity of thinking required for formalizing students' acquisition of certain linguistic means.

The essence of any teaching methods is elucidated by means of its principles. We shall examine a number of project methods. The most important ones can be listed here as follows:

1. The correlation between the principles of the project with real life. This is the main requirement for reconstructing the correlation between practice and theory and applying it for the project methods.

2. All the participants' interest to the accomplishment of the project. The existence of this interest is considered as one of the important conditions of efficiency and teachers are required to use this project with a high level of proficiency. However, finding an interesting topic for participants is one of the difficult tasks of the project technique.

3. The leading role of the consultative and corresponding functions of teaching. The teacher's role can change in different stages of accomplishing this project. The initiating the idea of the project or creating conditions for the evolution of ideas, that is managerial and organizational functions, is prevalent in the preparatory stage. In the main process of the project a teacher participates as a consultant or assistance. A special attention is paid to coordinate with participants and small groups of students.

4. Self-organization and a more responsible attitude of participants of the project. Organization of the project in a small group means the organization of the lesson without a teacher's participation. For instance, the distribution of responsibilities among the members of a small group, appointing the order and forms of accounts and the exact date of performing this or that type assignments are also requirements of project methods. In order to carry out the project successfully it is very important to pay a particular attention to a high sense of responsibility taken on by a separate participant of the project. The practice of using projects in class shows that the higher sense of responsibility is shown, the better results can be achieved. When working with a comparatively smaller group, more burden of responsibility lies with more active students. Even though the main part of the class is conducted without the participation of the teacher, he or she should not stand aside from the whole process of the lesson because there might cause several unexpected or unprecedented problems.

5. Striving for creating certain linguistic atmosphere in class. The intention of performing any kinds of project is create a certain product which stands out for its uniqueness and unusualness depending on real life as a traditional and conventional result of teaching. Various types of carrying out projects are using schedules, photocopies, audio materials, video materials, collage, comics, scenario, scientific journals, articles, wall newspapers, class exhibition or the like. The problem of being independence is thoroughly outlined when using the elements of project methods. For instance, A.A.Mirolyubov¹ states that any academic course or subject shares its contribution to form a creative and independent person. Teaching foreign languages serves to develop the intellectual and creative competences of students in the process of learning languages and cultures.

6. Mono-subject and multi-subject peculiarities of projects. Mono-subject projects are normally drawn up within one course of study. Multi-subject projects are usually carried out as part of extracurricular activities. They are related to two or three subjects, sizeable, continuous and can be in a form of smaller projects that are directed to tackle some sort of problems and should be methodically informative to participants.

7. Structurally and temporally perfectness of projects. Projects can be divided into the categories of small projects, medium-sized and large projects according to the time by which they are carried out. Small projects last from 2 hours to 6 hours. Medium-sized projects can go up to 40 hours. Large projects can continue up to from a week to one month. It should be noted that aesthetically motivation should not be forgotten. These types of projects are normally carried out by transmissions, programmes, plays or performances, posters, newspapers prepared by students in view of presenting or working on them and especially, audio cassettes, audio materials, the mass media, and assignments related to culture and literature of various countries.

In project methodology forming the skills in language and country studies and students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills develop in parallel.

Working on projects not only enables us to be able to work on projects in terms of teaching process, analysing the findings achieved using at the level of real communication, but also teaches us to improve separate aspects of language and gives an opportunity to improve communicative etiquette.

¹ Миролюбов А.А.1989.Изучение иностранных языков: средство развития личности ученика. *Советская педагогика*. pp.13-19.

Project methods require preparedness on students' part that is they require students to gain practice and knowledge through indirect communication in real life and refer to improvement, reflection, initiative, freedom of speech and independence.

Carrying out independent academic activities is characterized by several interdependent structural parts:

- psychological structural part (motivation, attitude towards this activity, intellectual capabilities and abilities, willpower and self-management);
- communicative structural part (communicative competence);
- methodological structural part (acquiring the methods of main communicative activity/independent activity, understanding this method and knowing the peculiarities of implementing it).

Preparedness can be divided into three categories according to the formation of these structural parts:

1) preparation for an imitator's role (dominance of outer motivation, low level of self-management, form of acquiring movements – imitation, imitating the teacher's movements and performing assignment under the teacher's guidance);

2) preparation for a repeater's role (dominance of outer motivation, mid-level of self-management, repetition of the acquired method of the teacher by students independently and using the acquired method in familiar situations);

3) preparation for independent activity (dominance of outer motivation, mid-level of self-management, doing both compulsory-communicative and communicative exercises and using the acquired method in unfamiliar situations).

Successfully forming the preparedness of learning and teaching refers to the following:

1) organize the teaching process specially;

2) organize the independent work/assignment as an activity of independent knowledge.

It serves as a source of psychological preparation for positive career, overcoming difficulties, forming the volitional characteristics, perfecting mentally, changing from the personal point of view in discussing the independence of learners, in generalizing, in searching for necessary information and learning foreign languages. Independent work also serves for conviction of acquired knowledge.

Projects are characteristic to strict structuralism. Mostly, projects are divided into three main stages: the initial stage, main stage and final stage. Sometimes the results and outcomes achieved from projects can be a supplementary part for implementing this practice in a teaching process. Teaching practice and surveys conducted on this field show that projects carried out on English facilitate making pronouncements on tackling problems and directed to practice and considered to be pragmatic projects having material and final products

This consistency, in the first place, shows that speech models and formats should be repeated. Moreover, students should slowly but surely go from using simple speech structures to more advanced or complicated ones and besides this, there is a need for collecting authentic materials to improve students speaking skills.

Working on projects requires the following stages:

1. Preparation. It includes working with small groups: prioritizing the projects within the framework of the curriculum, putting forward an idea in class, discussing the topic among students, ideas advanced by students, justifying one's own ideas (this stage proves to be useful when we talk about projects that last for a longer period of time).

2. Building the plot of the lesson/project: forming small groups, distributing assignments for larger groups and practical activity within a project.

3. Final stage: Midterm control (especially for projects lasting for a longer period of time), discussing the method of forming the project, formalizing the project, distribution of the project outcome and concluding the project.

4. Stage of using the outcomes of the projects as a teaching tool in other lessons. Andreas Papandreou proves that project methods are indirect, here not only results, but, mostly, process itself is worth taking into account².

A project can be in individual form, but usually each project is considered to be a result of a team work of students. Teacher's responsibility for working on projects lies in the following:

- The teacher help students to find materials for the project;
- The teacher himself or herself is considered a source of material supplies;
- The teacher coordinates the whole process;
- The teacher motivates students and supports them;
- The teacher maintains the continuous mutual understanding atmosphere.

Project methods activate students' acquisition of knowledge because they are:

- Student -directed;
- Using several didactic approaches;
- Self-motivated. This adds interest to learning and is a real challenge for stimulation;
- It supports all the pedagogical purposes at all levels;
- It enables to learn based on one's and others' experience;
- It produces satisfaction for those students who want to see outcomes of their performance during lessons.

Project teaching is an alternative variant which is useful for the academic process in class, but this should not absolutely extrude this process. According to qualified specialists in the field of project teaching, project teaching can be taken as supplementary material in teaching other subjects.

So we would like to point out several advantages of using project methods in teaching foreign languages: firstly, usually projects can be carried out among many different subjects and they require activating students' knowledge in other domains of human knowledge. In dealing with the objectives of project method of teaching, certain pronouncements of adjacent disciplines such as theory of information, literature, psychology, logic and to some extent statistics must be touched upon.

This is indispensable; for nowadays no science is entirely isolated from other domains of human knowledge; secondly, this stipulates for including the process of teaching English in other forms of activities (research, work, aesthetics and so on); thirdly, working on projects stimulate students' to work in team and put forward a solution to a problem working in group, identify ways or approaches of solving a problem, arranging necessary materials, discussing it within a group of students, systemizing materials, shaping students' ways of thinking of how to represent it and finally, preparing for presenting it.

Involving students in different forms of group project enables them to develop their integrated skills. Working on projects helps form to conceive the world individually in the process of working individually and in group, using experience subjectively in assessing and interpreting events and facts and facts about surroundings using as a means of communication and acquiring a foreign language on the basis of traditions and innermost feelings.

² Новые педагогические технологии: Пособие для учит. /Е.С. Полат, Е.Л.Катерина, Т.Н. Мазитова и др.; Под ред. Е.С. Полат; Рос. акад. образования, Ин-т общ. и сред. образования, Экономикс - мат. гимназия №1512. - М., 1997.-125с.

Working on projects, of course, is done with the help of the teacher and it gives the means of applying a student-directed teaching method in practice.

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