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UNIVERSITY ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: A KAZAKHSTANI AND AMERICAN CO-TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Abstract

The co-teaching experience of Kazakhstani and American university English as a Foreign Language Instructors is described. The instructors taught intermediate level integrated English at Zhangir Khan West Kazakhstan Agrarian-Technical University in Uralsk, Kazakhstan using communicative language methodology. The two teachers were able to tap into each other's expertise. The students benefited by having two instructional professionals who could bring different perspectives and backgrounds to the classroom. Since Ms. Irgaliyeva was closer in age to the students and more in touch with their particular interests and concerns, she selected specific material to attract their attention. Dr. Bantel, as a native English speaker, could teach American idioms, provide pronunciation instruction and offer cultural information and a global perspective gleaned from having taught English at universities in the US and 10 other countries abroad.

Key words: communicative language teaching in Kazakhstan, student-centered classroom, co-teaching, English as a Foreign Language

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УНИВЕРСИТЕТТЕ КОММУНИКАТИВТІ ТІЛГЕ ҮЙРЕТУ: ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ЖӘНЕ АМЕРИКАНДЫҚ ОҚЫТУ ТӘЖІРИБЕСІ

Аңдатпа

Қазақстандық және американдық университет оқытушыларының ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде бірлесіп оқыту тәжірибесі сипатталған. Оқытушылар Орал қаласындағы Жәңгір хан атындағы Батыс Қазақстан аграрлық-техникалық университетінде коммуникативтік тіл әдіснамасын қолдана отырып, орта деңгейлі студенттерге ағылшын тілін оқытты. Екі оқытушы бір-бірінің тәжірибесін біле алды. Оқытушыларға екі түрлі кәсіби маманның қатысуы үлкен пайда әкелді, олар сабаққа әртүрлі көзқарастар бере алады. Оқытушы Иргалиева Г.Х. студенттерге жасы жақын болғандықтан және олардың қызығушылықтары мен мәселелеріне байланысты болғандықтан, олардың назарын аудару үшін арнайы материал таңдады. Доктор PhD Бантел Р. АҚШ пен басқа шет елдердің университеттерінде сабақтарда қолданған американдық идиомаларды үйрете алады, айтылым бойынша нұсқау беріп, мәдени ақпараттар бере алды.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақстанда коммуникативті тілге оқыту, студенттерге бағытталған аудиория, бірлесіп оқыту, ағылшын тілі шет тілі ретінде.

Западно – Казахстанский аграрно-технический университет имени Жангир хана

ОБУЧЕНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНОМУ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ В УНИВЕРСИТЕТЕ: КАЗАХСТАНСКИЙ И АМЕРИКАНСКИЙ ОПЫТ ОБУЧЕНИЯ

Аннотация

Описан опыт совместного обучения английскому языку преподавателями иностранного языка казахстанского и американского университета. Используя методику коммуникативного языка, преподавание велось студентам среднего уровня знания английского языка на базе Западного-Казахстанского аграрно-технического университета имени Жангир хана в Уральске, Казахстан. Два преподавателя смогли воспользоваться опытом друг друга. Студенты извлекли пользу из двух преподавателей, которые могли привнести в занятие разные точки зрения и опыт. Поскольку преподаватель Иргалиева Г.Х. была ближе по возрасту к ученикам и больше общалась с их конкретными интересами и проблемами, она выбрала конкретные материалы, чтобы привлечь их внимание. Доктор PhD Бантел Р., как носитель английского языка, смогла преподавать американские идиомы, давать инструкции по произношению и предлагать культурную информацию и глобальную перспективу, основанную на том, что она преподавала в университетах США и 10 других странах за рубежом.

Ключевые слова: преподавание коммуникативному языку в Казахстане, аудитория, ориентированная на студентов, совместное обучение, английский как иностранный язык.

1.Introduction. This article describes how two English as Foreign Language instructors, one a Kazakh national and the other a visiting American, co-taught intermediate, integrated skills courses at Zhangir Khan West Kazakhstan Agrarian-Technical University in Uralsk, Kazakhstan during the fall semester of 2019.

The courses, B1 (intermediate) and B2 (high intermediate), were comprised of 15 and 19 students, respectively. The students specialized in agricultural and technical subjects and needed a basic foundation of English for their future study and careers.

The two instructors were Gulzhamal Irgaliyeva, M.A., a full-time instructor of the university, and Robyn Bantel, Ph.D. a visiting volunteer of Go-Nomads, a part of the national Bolashak teaching program that sends foreigners to Kazakh universities and high schools to assist in teaching, conduct speaking clubs and engage in extracurricular activities with students.

2.Research methodology. Historical Background and Literature Regarding Communicative Language Teaching

CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) became popular in the UK and North America in the 1960s. The approach stressed interaction with classmates and instructors by using activities with natural situations and contexts. It focused on real communication between people, with the goal of more fluent speaking. Over time, CLT began to replace former methods of teaching English such as audio-lingual, translation, memorization, and repeated drilling of, for example, grammatical structures.

In the mid-1960s, Noam Chomsky used the term “competence” as mastery of the rules of a linguistic system and was not as interested in “performance” or how the learner actually used the language [1]. However, Hymes and other linguists maintained that knowing the rules alone was not enough to be able to use a language and communicate competently, and that it is necessary to understand the social context of conversation [2]. Later in the 1980s, a number of linguists such as Canale and Swain pointed out the importance of not only using linguistic rules correctly but also knowing how to express something in different ways depending on the situation [3]. These expressions need to be appropriate given the situation, sometimes demanding creativity on the part of the speaker. English instruction that depends on rote memorization and drills cannot help students develop the fluency they need to communicate well in social or cross-cultural situations. Instead, English as a second or foreign language teachers began to create lessons that centered around real life situations and had their students engage in a variety of tasks where they had to use the language to discover information or get something done.

Linguist David Nunan has probably done the most to popularize CLT today with his emphasis on learning to communicate by interacting using authentic texts and personal experience, and linking classroom learning with learning outside of the classroom [4]. His English language methods have been studied and

adopted by teachers around the world. He writes widely about the use of role plays, surveys, interviews, and games to help students learn language more quickly and with more enjoyment.

In the 1980s and 90s, thousands of CLT-trained English teachers from the UK and North America working abroad introduced the communicative/interactive approach at all levels of education in different countries, some of which have adopted national education policies which mandate curriculum changes aimed at improving the teaching of English through adopting teaching methods that improve students' communicative competence rather than just having a particular type of knowledge to pass a test. Fostering this type of language use has become a prominent area of discussion in Central Asian TESOL meetings and a number of academic journal articles from Kazakhstan.

At the university level in Kazakhstan, administrations are hiring native English instructors and training its instructors in CLT. It is true that even if teachers and administrators accept the efficacy of CLT, certain practical factors inhibit adoption of the approach, namely, large class size, low proficiency of students, and the need to prepare students for exams. This is a problem that the English educators and university administrators must work together to resolve. However, CLT can help cultivate problem-solving or critical thinking skills which are especially important for students in countries that are transitioning politically or economically because they need these skills to enhance their ability to compete in the rapidly changing globally connected world. Our University has recognized that need and has taken steps to prepare its students for the future.

3. Results of the research. Description of the Courses.

Each course consisted of two 50-minute segments with a 10-minute break in between. For each course, Ms. Irgaliyeva taught for the first 50 minutes, and Dr. Bantel taught for the second 50 minutes. Ms. Irgaliyeva was considered to be the primary instructor and responsible for ensuring curricular objectives were met and assessing performance, and Dr. Bantel was classified as an assistant. However, each taught a full class, and each was responsible for creating her own lessons. The students appeared to consider their two teachers as equals.

The two teachers were able to tap into each other's expertise. The students benefited by having two instructional professionals who could bring different perspectives and backgrounds to the classroom. Since Ms. Irgaliyeva was closer in age to the students and more in touch with their particular interests and concerns, she selected specific material to attract their attention. She also occasionally explained difficult concepts in the Kazakh language. Additionally, Dr. Bantel, as a native English speaker, could teach American idioms, provide pronunciation instruction and offer cultural information and a global perspective gleaned from having taught English at universities in the US and 10 other countries abroad.

Following a curriculum established by the Language Department of the University, the two instructors shared responsibility for developing appropriate materials to meet the curricular objectives. Since each class had struggling learners as well as high achievers, the instructors always worked to ensure that the needs of these students were met. They communicated with each other daily about students, lesson ideas, teaching strategies, and supplementary materials. They frequently provided each other with many different language activities that they had successfully used in other universities and language schools.

Teaching Methodology

Fortunately, the two instructors agreed about the type of teaching approach that would most benefit these students, mostly 17-year olds new to university. Since most had come from local high schools whose English courses did not stress oral communication practice, they were at first hesitant to speak in class and afraid of making mistakes. But the instructors are both proponents of communicative language teaching (CLT), and both have years of experience using this methodology.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan has introduced a new aim of English language teaching that stresses communicative competence, especially in areas of science, technology and engineering [5]. This was what the instructors stressed in every lesson. CLT is a method that gives special attention to the use and practice of English in clear and realistic situations in which the students have a personal involvement with the language. In this functional approach, the focus of every lesson is to learn how to do something. Therefore, the teachers chose interesting activities that required their students to use English to discover information or complete a project.

Throughout this process they learned the necessary vocabulary and structures. Specific types of activities included language games, role-playing, songs, dialogue creations, interviews, surveys and problem solving tasks. The students appeared to learn English faster with this approach because they became relaxed, less fearful, and more creative and willing to take risks with the language. It was obvious from the smiles and

laughter in every class that they enjoyed learning English. Ms. Irgaliyevaknew what topics appealed to a teenager's interest, and she and Dr. Bantelworked to weave those topics into novel activities that got the students on their feet, moving around the room, and interacting and cooperating with each other and the teachers. As a result, they began to function independently in English.

Students in a CLT classroom are not passive. This was a student-centered classroom. In this type of classroom, the teacher gives instruction not just by lecturing but by using a lot of interesting visuals (pictures, charts, drawings, videos, and other projected material) and eliciting answers and feedback from students. Teachers help students to relate whatever is being taught to something in their own experience. They also help students to express themselves, ask questions and collaborate with others to complete tasks. Thus, in a student-centered class, students speak more and teachers speak less. This is the methodology that has been used for some years in the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools. Research has indicated that it accelerates language learning by increasing the pleasure and motivation to learn.

Ms. Irgaliyeva began each class with a warmup and review followed by presentation of, for example, the lesson's main grammatical structure. Her style was not to lecture but to show by using interesting audio or visual material. She always tried to relate the new information to what the students already knew. Students then practiced the new structure in a controlled way and progressed to free expression, giving their own opinions using the structure. Dr. Bantel'sfollow-up 50 minutes built on what her partner had taught. She often gave the students a game or activity that exploited the structure in a new context. Her goal was to have the students speak as much as possible during this limited time.

4. Discussion. Description of the Classroom.

The classroom maximized student and teacher interaction. It was large enough to accommodate 20 students at a long oval seminar table with moveable chairs. The room had a whiteboard, laptop, and projector. Ms. Irgaliyeva supplied a portable speaker to boost volume for listening exercises. There was enough space around the seminar table for students to circulate when speaking activities called for interacting with all class members, and for chairs to be placed in a circle for small group discussions. The teachers could also circulate easily to interact with students individually and monitor their work. Thus, the classroom was not quiet; the students were not passive. There was often noise and seeming chaos, but the students were clearly focused on the work at hand and enjoying it.

Lesson Plans

A. Ms. Irgaliyeva's typical lesson approach

Making an effective lesson plan takes time, diligence, and an understanding of students' goals and abilities. Without one, the lesson may not reach its goal, and the students may detect lack of organization and care on the part of the teacher.

For the fall semester, the curriculum focused on speaking and listening, grammar and vocabulary development. The second semester of the academic year has more of a writing for communication focus. Ms. Irgaliyeva believes that it is important to develop a basic structure for every lesson. This starts with a clear goal for the lesson, which should also be very simple. The goal with a step-by-step plan was written down and included an approximate time line for each step. Since her portion of the class was only 50 minutes, she knew that she must make every minute count and tried to ensure that most of the students in the class had ample opportunity to speak and use the English that she was teaching.

Ms. Irgaliyeva also stressed the importance of getting to know the students and their various learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile or a combination). She determined what they already knew and the areas in which they might be deficient. Her lesson plan fit the overall group in class, but she made modifications as necessary to account for students who were struggling as well as those who were more proficient.

She used multiple student interaction patterns, for example, pair work with frequent partner changes; small groups; and whole class. Doing this adds variety, allows stronger students to work with weaker students, varies the pace of activities, and adds physical movement. An example of a guided small group activity to help reinforce her teaching of the grammatical structure "conditional 1" was to give a small group of three or four students a colorful pack of illustrated cards (found on the Internet) divided into "if" cards and "result" cards. The students worked to match the cards to make a sentence, and afterwards each student read a sentence. For freer practice, the students then made up their own sentences to prompts such as "If you were invisible for one day, what would you do and why?"

Materials used were exercises and activities drawn from the Internet; the British integrated text English File, which includes interesting and humorous audio and visual supplements; and self-created games and

activities relevant to their teenage lives with Kazakh cultural content that fit the needs and interests of her students. Her lesson plan generally followed these steps:

1. Warm up
2. Presentation of information—She first elicited from the students what they already knew about the structure to be taught. Then she might play an interesting audio dialogue, show an interesting video or project interesting photos, drawings or cartoons illustrating the structure being taught.
3. Guided practice using the structure.
4. Check of their work to assess progress
5. Free practice
6. Question time
7. Conclusion

Ms. Irgaliyeva effectively combined form and function in her lessons. While presentation of a structure focused on form, the structure was always presented in an interesting way and followed by guided practice and then free practice. Exercises to learn proper form were mainly given as home tasks so class time could be spent on usage. It was important for students to learn how to use the grammar, for example, so that they could be more relaxed in class the next day practicing it in activities with others.

If Ms. Irgaliyeva happened to end her lesson five minutes early, she was always armed with backup material such as riddles for the students. On occasion, during the 10-minute break between her class and Dr. Bantel's, she projected YouTube pop songs in English for students to sing along to, and the classes enjoyed this very much.

B. Dr. Bantel's typical lesson approach

Since Ms. Irgaliyeva was responsible for presenting structures, Dr. Bantel's 50 minutes of class time could be devoted fully to language use. She did, however, check to make sure at the start of her class that students understood how to use the structure(s) that had been taught earlier. Since the students were freshmen and most had never been exposed to CLT methodology, she was alert to any display of unease among the students. In order to reduce anxiety, she kept the language activities at a rather simple level at first. All students appeared to be willing to participate and communicate albeit with varying degrees of fluency and accuracy, and they always appeared to be having fun. She attributed this to Ms. Irgaliyeva's "setting the stage" with her relaxed and pleasant demeanor and supportive attitude toward the students during the first half of the class.

Dr. Bantel's main language activity was pair work since this motivates shyer students and provides more chances to speak during the 50 minutes. After a weekend, she sometimes had pairs of students use past tense verbs to talk about what they did over the weekend for one minute. After a partner change, they tried it again, adding details or becoming more fluent. If the activity was going well, they tried it a third time with a new partner. She allowed the students time after the one minute for free conversation and to ask their partner questions or make comments, and she constantly circulated to encourage the students to stay in English or answer questions.

In a relatively small class, the teacher can circulate and easily monitor the students to ensure English use and, without interrupting, record errors to later be written on the board to remind students of the correct form of the past tense verbs. Although fluency was certainly emphasized in lessons, accuracy was always an essential part of the activity. Peers at times were able to correct one another, but teacher feedback after the lesson was important. Another way she corrected students was by simply repeating what a student had said but in the correct form.

An example of a full-class activity that helped students reinforce grammar learned and overcome fear of speaking was the popular "find someone who" game, where all students move around the room to ask their peers questions from a handout. If the first 50-minute lesson by Ms. Irgaliyeva focused on the past tense vs. present perfect verb tense, the questions, on the handout might be "Find someone who has found more than 100 Tenge on the sidewalk" or "Find someone who swam in the Ural River last summer." If the student finds a peer who answers "yes", he/she then records the name and asks for details, necessitating past tense questions such as "Where did you find the money?" "How much money did you find?" At the end of the activity, which can take as much as 30 minutes, the teacher can ask different students to relate interesting answers they wrote down.

5. Conclusion. Kazakhstan's former and current Presidents have stressed the importance of English education to facilitate the country's successful integration into the global economy. University students today need to be well-prepared not only for academic English-medium courses but also for general participation in

a modern knowledge-based society. Thus, they need to learn new skills needed to communicate effectively in English, which enables them to compete on the world stage and deal with the demands of globalization. This means that EFL classes need new types of teaching methods for new types of students, and that means creating an active student-centered class. Students need interesting, current, authentic and relevant lesson content, and teachers who stimulate their curiosity and encourage them to ask questions, express their own ideas and views and begin to think critically.

Indeed, at the recent Davos Economic Forum on the future of work, a session leader stated, “When adults practice what they have learned, retention and ownership of the content increases significantly. In a corporate environment, this is the holy grail of learning – encouraging people to own, retain and apply what they have learned” [6]. The session participants listed the top work skills in demand for the 2020s as critical thinking, active learning, and creativity [7].

Ms. Irgaliyeva and Dr. Bantel worked very hard to help their students not only become more fluent speakers but also to become active and independent learners with the valuable skills they need for the future.

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FORMATION OF PROFESSIONALLY-ORIENTED COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES FOR CHEMISTRY - BIOLOGY STUDENTS

Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is categorized into two main classification areas English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). In this article authors briefly describe the differences between these two sub-branches of ESP. At the same time this article deals with the implementing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in teaching Combined Major Program 6B015002 ‘Chemistry and Biology’ at Suleyman Demirel University (SDU). Some of higher-leveled students like to enhance their comprehension of Academic English. Thus, EAP course was introduced to meet higher-leveled students’ academic and professional interests. The main purpose of the EAP course was to provide learners with all basic abilities to conduct research and generate a piece of extended writing in their own subject-specific area. Students not only needed to work on their study skills such as techniques, note-taking, and compiling bibliography, but also on acquiring study competencies which involved development of critical questioning, allocating the tasks, compiling an abstract book, and organizing conference skills.

Key words: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), chemistry and biology students, compiling abstract book, and organizing lesson - conference