

18th PCSF 2018
Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

**PRESENTATION AS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF TEACHING LSP
AT UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

This paper focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of presentation work practiced while teaching the Language for Specific Purposes as part of the Professionally-oriented English language course and suggests some practical ideas how this teaching method can be implemented in classroom conditions. First, the aspect of motivation as a driving force in studying LSP is studied. Then, presentation work as the most effective method of modern interactive technologies is brought into the foreground, its advantages and challenges are discussed and, finally, the conclusion is made of presentation work to be an effective instrument of teaching LSP in Polytechnic University according to our research and results of the students' opinion. This article focuses on teachers and students attitude to this kind of work at university during the course, advantages and disadvantages and difficulties among students. And the result shows that there are more pros than cons in this work and this work is interesting to students.

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Keywords: Communication skills, learning activity, motivation, Project method, presentation, professionally-oriented language training.



1. Introduction

Professionally-oriented foreign language training as an educational approach and essential part of language-training course in Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University is based on two approaches: integrating the subject of study and a foreign language – Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The term CLIL was coined at the end of the 20th century due to collaborative efforts of European researchers and lecturers, realizing principles of integrated study in their practical work and as a response to the growing need of educating a specialist competent in both: his profession and the English language thereby meeting the demands of the global fast-changing environment.

1.1. Motivation as a driving learning factor.

Learning activities invariably have a lot of motives. Among them we can point out intrinsic (inside motivation) (Myers, 2010) and extrinsic (motivation arises from outside) types. The researchers explain this the following way: Extrinsic motivation involves engaging in certain activities or behaviors that either reduce biological needs or help us obtain incentives or external rewards. Intrinsic motivation involves engaging in certain activities or behaviors because the behaviors themselves are personally rewarding or because engaging in these activities fulfills our beliefs or expectations (Plotnik & Kouyoumjian, 2011).

With this respect motivational aspects come into the foreground as the foreign language learner who has achieved some basic knowledge in his specialty is willing to be able to express and share this knowledge with his colleagues in real life situations with the help of a second language (intrinsic motivation) (Almazova, Eremin, & Rubtsova, 2016; Popova, Almazova, Khalyapina, & Tret'jakova, 2017; Popova & Vdovina, 2016). To prove the point, some figures from the students' questionnaire conducted among the 3rd year students of the Civil Engineering Institute, can be submitted: 84,3% of them agreed that their motivation increased while studying ESP as compared to Basic English course. Also, almost 2/3 of them supposed their future professional activity would definitely require the use of professionally-oriented language (Vatin, Kolosova, & Tokareva, 2017).

1.2. LSP course as a method based on the learner's reason for learning.

Thus, the LSP course is immensely actual for teaching foreign languages at all technical institutes of Polytechnic University and is and has been effectively used for a couple of years as part of the English language teaching course in most departments. In fact, once the 2nd year students complete the 1,5 year course of Basic English, where they master their basic skills of grammar, vocabulary and communication, they proceed to take LSP course, which is aimed at achieving the main target of professionally-oriented language study – the ability of foreign language communication in professional situations. Hutchinson and Waters emphasize LSP to be an approach, not result, which means language learning, not language use is the focus. They draw the attention to a “learning centered approach”, in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner' s reason for learning.

Richards states that LSP aims are preparing non-native speaking students who have mastered general English, but now need English for specific usage in employment, such as engineers, scientists, etc. (Richards, 2008).

2. Problem Statement

2.1. The main problems in teaching LSP.

In this vein as LSP practitioners we have identified two main problems: how to teach effectively and how to help students be prepared to be taught. Here specific skills and competences of a learner should be revealed: the ability of self-study, the necessity of acquiring communication skills (i.e. groupwork), the ability to use research methods (i.e. find and analyze information, sum up knowledge obtained, make conclusions).

As Richards points out, a second language acquisition theorists typically stress that language learning comes about through using language communicatively, rather than through practicing language skills (Richards, 2008).

3. Research Questions

Practical experience has proved project method to be the most effective way to solve both above mentioned problems of teaching LSP. Needless to say, modern interactive teaching technologies are on the cutting edge of the teaching process in which mutual cooperative efforts of a teacher and a learner are joined, among them being a case study, a mind map, a jig-saw, clusters, brainstorming.

Project method as an effective way of teaching LSP.

Project work comprises several steps: defining the problem, planning the activity, searching for information, getting the result and communicating the product which can be realized in a variety of ways: presentation, video, conference, report, advertisement, role-play, lecture, but with an invariably positive outcome, which is essential.

In the educational process of the University the English studying curriculum assumes the organization of various types of speech activities, among which we can highlight the oral report, the subject of which varies depending on the course, direction or specialization of a group of students. Currently, thanks to the development of modern technologies, the presentation is actively used as a visual expression of the material under study. It is widely known that the report is an oral presentation, the content of which provides information and reflects the essence of the issue. Presentation (from lat. Praesentatio-presentation) is a visual addition to the report in the classroom (Ivanova & Kry'lova, 2018).

4. Purpose of the Study

4.1 The ingredients of a successful presentation.

Formats of spoken presentation mean public speaking. Spoken presentations practiced at our classes are simulations of future job specific situations like assessing the choice or delivery of a scientific finding. The fact insisted on is that spoken presentations are not just delivery of one's scientific or professional research. There are a lot of preconditions of an effective spoken presentation:

- To identify the audience correctly as different audiences are prepared for different amount and depth of information.
- To identify the aim of your presentation – whether you have to inform, or teach or persuade, or analyze the problem.
- To respect the allotted time and organize the material accordingly.
- To feel assertive consider the physical space for your presentation.
- To use visual aids (e.g. slides) which function as points clarifying the message making sure the audience remember the key ideas.
- To use the language of presentations correctly and observe the main parts of it (introduction, aim, background information, conclusion and linking phrases to ensure the flow of speech.)

Teaching principles of spoken presentations at higher education level is the crucial aspect of preparing students for a highly competitive international professional environment, the ultimate purpose of it being able to communicate professional knowledge to other professionals and to non-specialists. The fundamental purpose of professional discourse is not merely stating the facts but communicating them successfully. The content is inseparably connected with the form employed.

4.2 The role of the teacher in dealing with presentations.

The role of a teacher is also not to be undermined. He /she acts as a counsellor, a collaborator, adviser, part of the audience. According to Bracaj (2014), creating a stimulating learning environment, positive atmosphere in the classrooms is a primary step for achieving the desired goal.

5. Research Methods

The main method used while researching was questionnaire. The control groups were asked about the pros and cons of doing the presentation, then their answers were thoroughly studied and analysed. The result was transformed into the research article.

6. Findings

6.1. Problems of making an effective presentation.

Unfortunately, students meet some obstacles during preparing or presenting their project works. First of all, it is learning the text of their report by heart, more than half of our students find it difficult. Another problem is to prepare interesting and attractive slides because not everyone is familiar enough with graphic programs on computers. Some students even say they asked their friends for assistance to complete the project work or help them make this visual support. This obstacle affects about thirty

percent of the students interviewed. Few students also find difficulties even in finding relevant source of information (fig. 01).

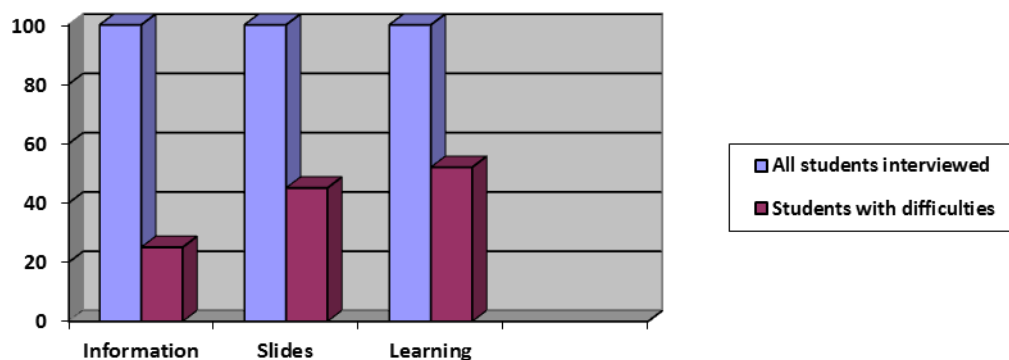


Figure 01. Difficulties in learning English

6.2. Evaluation of project work.

All our teachers have different personal approaches to evaluating project works but we try to adhere to the scale of 15 points. Points range depending on students' skills, level of preparing and presenting qualities. Students fulfill the task individually or in pairs. Preliminary the teacher provides a list of topics verifying for the works and students choose a topic they prefer. Then, the teacher sets deadlines for the project. As practice shows, it is preferable to assign the dates of performance so that every student knows the definite day for the report, in this way it is an additional incentive to be prepared. If the student knows the specific day of the speech, his responsibility makes him work more enthusiastically. Otherwise the level of task performance is reduced, because some students tend to postpone the assignment for later due to the lack of self-organization. The teacher should give the task and control its implementation, so it is better to set the action point clearly. There is an alternative way of student work control, when one or two classes are devoted to presentations, which makes them more like a conference, when everyone takes turns speaking, while others just listen and ask a few questions.

The aim of such classes is evident: to meet the specific job interests of students and ensure they can adapt to different situations and be able to present knowledge in both – academic and professional environment. Moreover, feedback from such an activity is enormous: students overcome the lack of confidence and learn to feel comfortable “on the other side of the barricade”. It is important, because there is a relationship between self-confidence and emotions. (Brown & Marshall, 2001) Thus, we assume the specific method of project work – presentation – to be one of the most effective means of teaching engineers at present.

6.3. Presentation work as an effective instrument of teaching LSP.

The fact that presentation work is an effective instrument of teaching LSP is supported by the results obtained from a few control groups of students of different institutes of Peter the Great

Polytechnic University: almost two thirds of the number of students engaged in making presentations got the highest grade for the work – 13-15 points and no student failed.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion it should be noted that teaching professionally-oriented language can be made both interesting and effective with the right choice of means and methods of instruction. Interactive means of teaching with the emphasis on presentation work are enthusiastically welcomed by students, which cannot but positively affect the learning process.

At the moment one of the key tasks of modern higher professional education is a specialist with a profound knowledge of a foreign language, competent in the sphere of his professional activity, capable of effective work at the world standards level, continuous self-improvement and self-development. Here, the introduction of one of the most effective ways of modern teaching technologies – presentation work – plays its vital role.

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