

## USING CASE STUDY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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### Abstract

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, the case study technique is a successful teaching strategy that promotes problem-solving abilities and communicative ability. The advantages of using case studies in EFL training are examined in this article, with a focus on how they can improve student engagement, contextual language acquisition, and the practical application of language abilities. The study looks at several case study kinds, how they are implemented, and how they affect language proficiency and student motivation.

**Key words:** pedagogical techniques, communicative competence, student engagement, problem-solving, case study and language acquisition.

### Introduction

In order to increase the effectiveness of foreign language education, we need to take advantage of the advantages of new technologies and introduce advanced technologies into the teaching process. After all, one of the main problems of modern education is the search for and application of methods for introducing innovations into the content of education from a socio-pedagogical and organizational point of view.

Interactive learning technology is considered to be one of the types of innovative technologies in the modern education system. Interactive learning technology is widely used in modern foreign language education methodology, that is, its effectiveness as a teaching technology that forms communicative competence in students in the system of continuous learning is increasing day by day.

Studying pedagogical, psychological, methodological works, we can single out the following types of innovative learning technologies: game technology, modular learning, problem-based learning, multimedia technology, humanistic-personal learning, case technology, distance learning, developmental learning, etc. Among the mentioned teaching methodologies, case technology also occupies a special place. The word “Case” is translated from English as “situation” and “technology” is a set of intellectual tools, methods and approaches used in some science [1, p. 23]. If we turn to foreign literature and works, they refer to this technology as “case study method”, which literally translates as “situation-study method”.

This article aims to analyze the importance of using the case study method in English language teaching. In particular, it examines how this method contributes to the development of students' language skills and communication skills.

### Materials and methods of research.

This study used various materials and research methods to determine the effectiveness of using the case study method in English lessons. The study used English language curricula and textbooks, case study-based learning materials, students' written and oral work samples, as well as questionnaires and interview questions for teachers and students. In addition, audio and video materials used during the lesson were also considered as the main sources of research.

As for the research methods, first of all, a questionnaire and interview were conducted to determine the attitude of teachers and students to the case study method. Secondly, the method of monitoring the level of student activity and participation in the lessons studied was used. Thirdly, an experimental part of the study was organized, and one group used the traditional teaching method, and the other group used the case study method. The effectiveness of this method was assessed by comparing the experimental results. Fourthly, the written and oral tasks of students were studied using the content analysis method, and changes in their language skills were analyzed.

Using these materials and research methods, the effectiveness of using the case study method in English lessons was comprehensively analyzed.

### **Research results and discussion.**

The case study method originated in the 1920s. This technology was first used in management disciplines, that is, economics and management, at Harvard University, which is famous for its innovative innovations. At the beginning of the 20th century, Harvard University teachers began to organize student discussions and debates as an addition to lectures. The first collection of case studies was published in 1921 under the leadership of Copeland and Volos Donam. And it came to the world and the territory of the Soviet Union only in the 70s-80s of the last century. During this period, this technology began to be implemented in economics majors of universities as a “methodology of teaching decision-making”.

A new wave of interest in the case study method began in the 90s. Economic reform led to a demand for specialists who could act in situations of risk and uncertainty, analyze and make decisions. A radical change and modernization of courses and disciplines taught in universities began. The replacement of traditional directions with new ones led to a change in the goals and values of education. The reason for the widespread use of the case study method is not only the requirements for methodological renewal, but also its changing current conditions in education. The focus of this method is not only the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills, but also the development of intellectual and communicative skills of pupils, students and teachers [2, p. 466].

Over time, the case method began to be used in teaching other disciplines. Most often, this method is used in the PBL (Project-Based Learning) system. The key features of the system are:

- Priority of creative/game activities;
- Group form of organization of educational activities;
- Achieving a common result to solve a problem (within the framework of project activities);
- The educational material examines current topics and issues;
- The principle of "Practice before theory". It consists in the practical application of knowledge and skills already known to students in order to practice practical skills. Missing knowledge, skills and abilities are developed in the course of practical activities.

In pedagogy, the following types of cases are distinguished:

1. Practical. Here real life situations are considered. The educational value can be reduced to training students, consolidating their knowledge, skills and abilities in a given specific situation.
2. Educational. Reflect typical situations that are most often encountered in life. The situation, problem and plot are not real, but only close to the real. The main task of such cases is training.
3. Research. They act as models for obtaining new knowledge about the situation and behavior in it. The educational function is expressed in involving students in research activities.

The most favorable type of cases for teaching a foreign language are educational cases, since in the modern education system a foreign language is considered, first of all, as a communication tool, both interpersonal and intercultural. The proximity of situations to typical ones contributes to the development of universal communication skills, which can then be applied in atypical real situations.

Case technology can also be called the methodology of analyzing real situations. The essence of this methodology is quite simple: to organize learning, it is necessary to depict real situations. Students are given a real-life situation to analyze. This situation not only reflects a practical problem, but also determines the knowledge complex that will be used to solve it. Being an interactive teaching method by nature, this method allows students to have their own perspective. This is because students see the opportunity to show their enthusiasm, master theoretical knowledge and acquire practical skills on their own. It is also worth noting that case analysis contributes to the professional preparation of students, their growth, and arouses interest and positive motivation for learning.

The effective use of case technology in the process of teaching a foreign language depends, first of all, on the professional competence of the foreign language teacher, that is, on his sufficient mastery of the methodology for using such technology. Because in this technology, the teacher is not only a language teacher, but also a mentor who guides the way to solving the situation presented in the case text; he is the author who has well covered the content of the case, has mastered it well, and has created the case. Secondly, there is a lack or absence of ready-made teaching materials for this technology. The teacher has to compose the case taking into account the level of language proficiency of the students, taking into account their level of cognitive thinking [3, p. 65]. The case study method is a cognitive image of the teacher, a special paradigm that develops creative power, thinks and acts differently.

The main concepts used in the case study method are “situation” and “analysis”. The case study method involves the use of several types of analytical activity when analyzing a situation. The case has a source from which it emerges as an intellectual product. The first source is life. Public life, with its own specifics, can be a situational network, the root of the problem. As the basis of the case, the second is considered the educational system. It determines the goals and objectives of other methods integrated into the case study method. Moreover, the third basis of the case is science, which is implemented in two methodological directions, namely, analytical action and systematic approach, as well as through various scientific methods integrated into the case and its analysis process [4]. Here we can highlight the following types: practical cases – describing real situations in life; educational cases – the main task of which is to provide education; scientific research cases - cases aimed at carrying out research activities. The main sources of case construction: life, science, education. We have already mentioned that the main task of a practical case is to fully and adequately describe a life situation. Such cases should be detailed and illustrative. Because on the basis of the situation presented in the case, certain qualifications and skills are formed, and if a situation similar to the one presented in the case is repeated in real life, the student will know in advance how to act and manage his actions and the situation in real life. In training cases, typical situations that often occur in life and that a specialist will encounter in his future professional field are often given. Since the tasks of education and training are at the forefront in such cases, they often do not fully convey life elements, that is, in such cases the problem, plot, situation are artificial. A research case is a model for acquiring new knowledge about a situation, that is, teaching scientific research skills through the modeling method. Sources for obtaining a good case: fiction, journalism; experience, history; article, monograph; Internet. In the case study method, the main emphasis is on students' analysis of the presented real or imaginary

situations and their own assessment of this situation, expressing their thoughts in a clear and complete manner. The focus is on improving the student's personal abilities.

The following main stages can be distinguished in the development of cases: defining goals, critical selection of situations, collecting necessary sources of information, preparing source materials for the case, analysis, and preparation of training materials on its use.

What are the requirements for a case? Since this technology has appeared in the field of economic education, it is worth paying attention to the main requirements for a case in the field of foreign language teaching:

- 1) the content of the case must clearly and precisely correspond to the purpose of its development;
- 2) the presence of an appropriate level of complexity;
- 3) the presence of an example of some of its aspects related to the future profession;
- 4) not becoming outdated very quickly;
- 5) the presence of a national image;
- 6) relevance to today;
- 7) the development of analytical thinking;
- 8) the ability to provoke debate;
- 9) the ability to come to several solutions;
- 10) the presence of a unified information complex that helps to understand the situation;
- 11) the presence of a set of questions that motivate the solution of the proposed problem;
- 12) a well-constructed case is the basis for the formation of a certain set of skills or their further development [5].

In the process of teaching a foreign language using case study technology, work with the context, performing various exercises, storytelling, discussion, etc. types of work are carried out. In order to develop students' cognitive critical thinking skills, we can use summarizing, synthesizing information, reacting to various opinions, and test tasks. Through such tasks, students' language learning skills develop. As teaching methods, creative tasks such as guessing, identifying the main idea, and presentation expand students' oral communication capabilities. They enrich their vocabulary and supplement their written and oral communication skills. As tasks for consolidating the mastered material, tasks are given to write an essay, message, and research using the passed grammar, vocabulary, and text content. These tasks create ample opportunities for the student's comprehensive development.

The organization of work with the case method in English lessons involves two stages – the preparatory stage and the implementation stage.

At the preparatory stage, the task is formulated, a real situation or a training one (close to real) is recorded. A list of tasks for the case and a visual base used by students to solve the situation are created. The main forms of student activity are determined, combining individual and group forms of work. A clear plan of the teacher's activities is created, consisting of a competent presentation of the situation and tasks, and an assessment of the students' work.

At the implementation stage, students work with the case. At this stage, students are divided into groups, the groups work with the proposed visual material, discuss it and develop a common solution, most often presented in the form of a speech or presentation. In order for each group to have a different answer, it is necessary that the case material differ in content, but be identical in form. This will allow the teacher to use the same criteria for assessing the activities of students in each group.

The use of the case method in foreign language lessons has a number of advantages and disadvantages. Among the "pluses" are:

- Creative activity (under clear conditions and tasks), the main goal of which is to present the results of group activity;
- Use of all types of speech activity;
- The relevance of case topics and active group discussion generate high
- Absence of "wrong answer". Situations do not have a clear, single solution, which provokes the activation of creative thinking;
- Minimal role of the teacher (mainly participation at the early stage of educational activity);
- Strengthening meta-subject connections depending on visual material.

Among the disadvantages are:

1. Long discussion time. Usually 45 minutes of a standard lesson may not be enough for a long and productive discussion;
2. Difficulty in maintaining the relevance of cases. Active and constant work is required on the part of the teacher to maintain the integrity and relevance of situations in cases.
3. Difficulties in assessing the activities of students. It may be difficult for the teacher to objectively assess the contribution of a particular student to the product of group activity;
4. Mandatory availability of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for productive discussion, both subject and meta-subject. In view of this, the case method cannot be successfully applied in primary school.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we have determined that using case study technology as a teaching tool is one of the most effective ways to develop intercultural communication skills in students, both as a goal and as a result of foreign language education. It is based on creative activity, group work and the use of all types of speech activity. The relevance of the educational material allows achieving high interest on the part of students. The disadvantages of the method are due to maintaining the relevance of cases and some limitations in the modern educational system.

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