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## THE ROLE OF CASE METHOD IN TEACHING FUTURE MANAGERS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

### РОЛЬ КЕЙС-МЕТОДУ В НАВЧАННІ МАЙБУТНІХ МЕНЕДЖЕРІВ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

The article aims at researching the role and expediency of using the case method while teaching future managers a foreign language. The research is based on the work of the scientists who contributed to studying the topic of implementation the method and its effect on developing the students' both language and soft skills during the educational process. During the research, it was found that there were many different opinions on the feasibility of introducing case technology into the educational process of Ukrainian higher education. Some scientists deny such feasibility, motivating this by the fact that a student is not able to work using several types of educational activities at the same time or working simultaneously with a whole package of educational materials. Others argue that this type of training motivates students' educational activities, forms a positive interest in learning in them. Therefore, the main objectives of the article are revealing the essence of case technology; and development of the main provisions for the implementation of case technology in the process of educational and cognitive activity in the training of future managers in the humanitarian disciplines, in particular foreign languages, as a means of forming the professional competence of the above-mentioned subjects of the educational process. As a result, it is concluded that the case method is by its nature an intensive method, has good prospects for application in the process of teaching a foreign language to students of higher education, at the same time, requires thorough creative training of both teachers and students. Students of different levels can be involved in cases, but the most effective work occurs at the average and high levels of foreign language proficiency. Among the shortcomings, one can note the situation of insufficient professional training of junior students, who are usually taught a professional foreign language course.

**Key words:** case method, teaching a foreign language, teaching future managers, forming foreign language competence, developing soft skills.

Метою статті є дослідження ролі та доцільності використання кейс-методу під час навчання майбутніх менеджерів іноземній мові. Дослідження базується на роботі вчених, які зробили внесок у вивчення теми впровадження методу та його впливу на розвиток як мови, так і навичок спілкування студентів під час навчального процесу. У ході дослідження виявилось, що існує багато різних думок щодо доцільності впровадження кейс-технологій у навчальний процес української вищої школи. Деякі вчені заперечують таку доцільність, мотивуючи це тим, що студент не може працювати, використовуючи декілька видів навчальної діяльності одночасно або працюючи одночасно з цілим пакетом навчальних матеріалів. Інші стверджують, що такий вид навчання мотивує навчальну діяльність студентів, формує в них позитивний інтерес до навчання. Тому основними завданнями статті є розкриття сутності кейс-технології; та розробка основних положень щодо впровадження кейс-технології в процес навчально-пізнавальної діяльності під час підготовки майбутніх менеджерів з гуманітарних дисциплін, зокрема іноземних мов, як засобу формування професійної компетентності вищезазначених суб'єктів. навчального процесу. У результаті зроблено висновок, що кейс-метод за своєю природою є інтенсивним методом, має добрі перспективи застосування в процесі навчання іноземної мови студентів вищої освіти, водночас потребує ґрунтовної творчої підготовки обох викладачів. та студентів. До кейсів можуть залучатися студенти різного рівня, але найбільш ефективна робота відбувається на середньому та високому рівнях володіння іноземною мовою. Серед недоліків можна відзначити ситуацію з недостатньою професійною підготовкою здобувачів молодших курсів, яким, як правило, викладається професійний курс іноземної мови.

**Ключові слова:** кейс-метод, навчання іноземної мови, навчання майбутніх менеджерів, формування іншомовної компетенції, розвиток soft skills.

**Problem statement.** The list of components of education of a modern person necessarily includes the ability to speak a foreign language. Therefore, teaching English to students of higher education institutions remains a relevant issue at the moment. The concept of the development of the English language in the sphere of higher education notes that «Ukraine recognizes... English as a key competence in the conditions of integration and globalization of the economy, a tool of international communication, a means of joining the European educational, scientific and professional space, a condition for effective integration and a factor of economic growth of the country». The need to obtain knowledge and practical skills in this area is understood not only by university teachers, but also by students themselves, who today expect to receive as a result of their studies such knowledge that will really help them in future employment. This goal increases the motivation of future specialists to study foreign languages, and especially English, and at the same time increases their requirements. Teachers need to use modern methods that help to connect academic learning with practice.

Modern development of the higher education system requires the relevant institutions to radically change their curricula. Ukraine's accession to the Bologna Convention necessitates the transition of higher education from theoretical-practical to practical-theoretical aspects of training future specialists. Society's requirements for the ability of young specialists to make decisions quickly, navigate in any situations, act unconventionally and actively determine the reorientation of education from general to more specialized. The relevance of applying the latest methods and technologies for training students, future managers, also lies in the fact that many new subjects, mainly specialized, appear.

In the process of forming students' foreign language competence, among various teaching methods, the case method is highlighted, which, is considered to be one of those methods that helps achieve the set goal.

Among modern Ukrainian developments in the methods of training future managers, one of the leading places is occupied by the implementation of case technology. There are many different opinions on the feasibility of introducing case technology into the educational process of Ukrainian higher education. Some scientists deny such feasibility, motivating this by the fact that a student is not able to work using several types of educational activities

at the same time or working simultaneously with a whole package of educational materials. Others argue that this type of training motivates students' educational activities, forms a positive interest in learning in them. Therefore, it is expedient to set the goal of substantiating the feasibility of introducing case methods into the training of Ukrainian managers based on the similar experience of American teachers and researchers.

**Literature Analysis.** For the first time, the method of situational analysis, or cases, was developed by Harvard Business School. Later, it spread both abroad and in Ukrainian higher education institutions, but was associated with business management methods. These issues were covered by A. James, R.K. Jean and M.R. Linders. P. Dale in his work in *The Internet TESL Journal* [3, p. 37] analyzes different types of cases. General concepts, methodology, types of cases and the process of formation of this method in Ukraine are considered by Yu. Surmin and E. Mikhailova. O. Burba, N. Denisova, T. Smolyanska develop catalogs of educational cases and situational exercises in the field of "Public Administration" [7, p. 20].

**The objectives of the article** are to research and analyse the role of case method implementation while teaching future managers to master a foreign language and its effect on both improving their language level and developing their soft skills. The article also aims at revealing the essence of case technology; and development of the main provisions for the implementation of case technology in the process of educational and cognitive activity in the training of future managers in the humanitarian disciplines, in particular foreign languages, as a means of forming the professional competence of the above-mentioned subjects of the educational process.

**Discussion of the main material.** The concept of "case technology" came to our pedagogy from American. Case (from English case – box, case, bag) means "comprehensive active study of the material, both under the guidance of a teacher and in group, in order to obtain as much information as possible from the problem being studied, for analysis and adoption of the optimal solution to the practical situation" [1]. It should be noted that neither in Ukrainian nor in Western pedagogy there is a clear definition of case technology, although the model itself is developed quite well. In American pedagogy, two types of case tasks are distinguished: "small case" (tasks arranged on one page, containing a description of the situation with a minimum of qualitative and quantitative

information on the problem) and “general case” (tasks containing extended and detailed information). Some scientists also include such a type of work as jigsaw (from the English jigsaw – puzzle) as case tasks. This is a task that contains confusing information about the research problem and which students must solve, based on the previous database, their own experience and practical intuition.

Case technology has been developed for at least two centuries. Although jigsaws began to be introduced in 1762 by the English artist John Spilsbury for the study of geography and graphics, now jigsaws are also used in the study of foreign languages, in particular English. Western teachings have contributed to the development of case studies: J. Erskine, M. Linders, P. Hutchings, R. Lewis, R. Merry, J. Reynolds, M. Stanford and many others. Among domestic teachers, M. Smetansky, V. Galuziak, V. Korol and some others have addressed this problem at one time. All scientists argue that any case task should develop students’ creative abilities, be professionally oriented, have a scientific basis and connections with other subjects studied by the student. Case methods, when used correctly, are closely intertwined with problem-based learning, small group learning, and independent work of students [3, p. 38].

The first stage of implementing case methods is to identify conditional typological groups of students according to their independent learning skills. In further work, this will allow us to prepare tasks of appropriate complexity for each such group. As a rule, it is customary to divide students into three conditional typological groups: “strong” (students with formed and developed skills and abilities for independent learning), “average” (students with formed but undeveloped skills and abilities to learn independently) and “weak” (students in whom such skills and abilities are not formed). For the first group, we prepare tasks of a creative and inventive nature, for the second – of a partially exploratory nature, and for the third – of a reproductive and familiarization nature. This is how we individualize learning, orient the educational process to a specific individual, with their individual abilities and skills. The second stage of combining case methods and independent work of students is determining the goals of introducing this type of work into the educational process. At this stage, each teacher determines what goal he plans to achieve as a result of the work. The general goal is to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and practical skills when working on a particular

topic or section. The next stage is the preparation of material, technical and methodological and informational support for students’ educational activities. For the latter, appropriate workplaces should be created, methodological instructions and guidelines for completing case tasks should be developed. Then a schedule and forms of a system for monitoring students’ independent educational activities are developed, the organization and nature of consultations are planned.

Directly, case tasks for the educational and cognitive activities of future economists in English can be theoretical (provisions of language grammar), theoretical-practical (study of language aspects and their application in practice), purely practical (solving certain practical language situations) and interdisciplinary (combining the study of a foreign language with professional training of future specialists). Currently, all but the first are used due to the fact that no theory can be separated from practice, otherwise it will be knowledge that is “hanging in the air”. Case tasks should be designed for careful study and processing by an individual student, then comparison of results in a small group (6–8 students) and a final “plenary” discussion in a large group (academic group or specialty stream). As we can see, the main work is done individually, hence independently. Therefore, it is important that the student, working independently, manages to achieve the result that is closest to the correct one. To do this, in addition to attending consultations and lectures by the teacher, it is necessary to constantly improve the theoretical and practical level by studying the main and additional literature, to conduct constant searches on the Internet, comparing the knowledge gained in printed sources with the latest knowledge of the world wide web. According to R. Merry, when using the case method, the student focuses his educational activities on a joint or individual search for a solution to the task, and not on perceiving and reproducing the knowledge already prepared and transmitted by the teacher.

As noted in the European recommendations on language education, in terms of communicative competence, this type of learning focuses on certain lexical fields of the linguistic component (for example, presentation and description) and some sociolinguistic norms. Case method in foreign language teaching is used to place students in simulated situations related to their main subject of study. The goal is to motivate them to speak a foreign language while solving problems that interest the students or are related to their future profession.

The teacher using this method must carry out some preparatory work, which is complicated by the need to involve purely professional material from other specialties, but brings the work to related professional facets that the student needs in his future profession. First, the necessary lexical material is provided and the problem as a whole is introduced, the main question is highlighted and proposals are formed, which are put forward by groups of students. The proposed solutions are analyzed and the most optimal one is selected. And in the end, the activity is evaluated by students and the teacher.

This type of work is the most effective with students with intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency in a foreign language. However, since it is possible to use home-made materials, students of different levels can participate in the work.

Researchers of the case method note the importance of maintaining team spirit during the case – this can increase the level of the final result. It is also necessary to clearly outline the plan for the case, distribute roles. During the presentation, the need to involve as many participants as possible is justified, and diagrams of the distribution of roles in the presentation are provided [2, p. 391].

To combine the case method and independent work of students, it is only necessary to provide the latter with opportunities for individual creativity, without limiting them to the framework of the program material. The teacher only needs to direct the students' activities in the right direction, correct mistakes in a timely manner, warn against making false steps in research, and promptly, without delay, carry out control and evaluation of the results of student work.

In order to achieve positive results in the educational process and to activate student activity, the tasks should contain real or close to real professional tasks related to a foreign language. For example, we offer the following case tasks to 4th-year students: “You work as an international relations consultant at a company that manufactures agricultural machinery units. Your company received a fax from an American corporation that would like to purchase some of your company's products (specify specific types of products). The director has set you the task of preparing a fax response with price lists

and terms of cooperation using Incoterm data. To complete the task, you are given... (indicate the time for completing the task)”; or “Representatives from... (indicate the name of the corporation, company) are coming to a company that deals with export-import trade operations. You have been invited to translate at a meeting of delegations. Your task is to prepare a 15–20 minute report on the export-import legislative situation in Ukraine in English and a 15–20 minute report on the import-export laws of... (name of the country whose representatives are part of the foreign delegation). The report should be ready for approval by the representatives of the parties meeting during... (indicate the time for preparation)”. This type of task develops the professional competence skills of future economists, encourages them to search for additional information on the Internet, in the library, expands their dictionary of foreign words of professional vocabulary, develops skills in grammar and business English.

**Conclusions and possibility of the future research.** Therefore, case technology, as a universal means of developing students' creative abilities, can be safely used in organizing and planning the educational training of future managers, and it will also contribute to the development of independence in learning; case tasks in this case should be scientifically sound, professionally interesting, have an individual character (be complex, simple), encourage students to search for additional sources of information, and have interdisciplinary connections.

Thus, it can be concluded that the case method is by its nature an intensive method, has good prospects for application in the process of teaching a foreign language to students of higher education, at the same time, requires thorough creative training of both teachers and students. Students of different levels can be involved in cases, but the most effective work occurs at the average and high levels of foreign language proficiency. Among the shortcomings, one can note the situation of insufficient professional training of junior students, who are usually taught a professional foreign language course.

Obviously, the issue of using the method and developing interesting cases for students of various specialties requires further theoretical and practical developments.

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