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DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PRESENTATION SKILLS AS THE WAY OF MONOLOGUE SPEECH IMPROVEMENT

РОЗВИТОК ПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЙНИХ НАВИЧОК СТУДЕНТІВ ЯК СПОСІБ УДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ МОНОЛОГІЧНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ

РАЗВИТИЕ ПРЕЗЕНТАЦИОННЫХ НАВЫКОВ СТУДЕНТОВ КАК СПОСОБ СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЯ МОНОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ РЕЧИ

Summary. The article considers the issue of teaching monologue speech to engineering students simultaneously with developing their presentation skills in order to improve fluency and accuracy of speech and break down barriers in presenting the information.

Key words: students, foreign language, monologue speech, presentation skills.

Анотація. У статті розглядається питання навчання монологічному мовленню студентів-інженерів одночасно із розвитком їх презентаційних навичок з метою підвищення рівня володіння мовою, а також подолання бар'єрів при передачі інформації.

Ключові слова: студенти, іноземна мова, монологічне мовлення, презентаційні навички.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается вопрос обучения монологической речи студентов-инженеров одновременно с развитием их презентационных навыков с целью повышения уровня владения языком, а также преодоление барьеров при передаче информации.

Ключевые слова: студенты, иностранный язык, монологическая речь, презентационные навыки.

The achievement of a high level of students' speaking skills in English guarantees the readiness of future professionals to use the acquired knowledge and skills in their professional activity. Sufficient English speaking skills are one of the main requirements for a qualified employee almost in every profession due to international integration in technology and science which put forward advanced requirements for a foreign language proficiency of technical specialists.

The aim of this research is to study the peculiarities of teaching prepared monologue speech to university students of engineering specialities, specify

the challenges and the ways to overcome them and to offer a methodology of developing students' skills of monologue speech.

Evan Frenedo claims that nearly every time a person speaks, they give a presentation as a presentation is a communicative situation when one person speaks while others listen [1, p. 69]. Thus, teaching students to use monologue speech, we actually teach them to give presentations.

Engineering students will have to use their skills of monologue speech in a range of situations starting from informal or semi-formal talks, aimed at persuad-

ing a colleague, to formal presentations in front of dozens or even hundreds of people. Hence, a learner of a language needs to learn not just words, grammar, pronunciation, etc., but also about appropriate ways of speaking in different situations [3, p. 231]. An English teacher has to predict the situations and contexts where English can be used by students in the future and set such kinds of tasks which will train students to plan the language which is appropriate for particular situations and with certain audiences.

Regarding the quality of a speech act, we have to mention that it directly depends on teacher's requirements and expectations: either it will be a word by word retelling with the focus on accuracy or it will be a kind of presentation of certain material aimed at reporting the information to listeners. In our opinion, the primary purpose of teaching students monologue speech must be training them to use the skills of conveying the information to a listener, how to be persuasive and articulate, how to keep the attention of the audience as these skills are among main demands of the modern labour market. So, for reaching this purpose fluency is more important than accuracy.

Working with engineering students in National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" during last school year we stepped aside from the traditional approach to the development of monologue speech, when the focus is on retelling the text to a teacher or another student and concentrated on the development of presentation skills (mainly presenting the material to the audience effectively), gradually increasing the requirements.

To increase the motivation and to form the conscious approach to performing the tasks, all tasks to the students were given in a certain context: they had to prepare a speech for a conference, a report or a short talk for schoolchildren, to express their own opinion to the colleagues or students-participants of an international project, etc.

As we can often observe, one of the main challenges in teaching speaking is the unwillingness of students to speak connected with their shyness and lack of confidence. To eliminate this problem a teacher has to create a positive atmosphere at the lesson, give enough time for preparation and develop the positive constructive attitude to mistakes and failures- explaining that it is a study process where mistakes are natural and inevitable for future improvement. We also need to find the topics which are relevant and interesting for students as, if a student knows something about the subject or has been provided with enough information about it if he or she feels motivated to talk about it, they will feel motivated to talk about it [3, p. 211]. Thus, as students have to speak in different contexts connected with their future professional activity, sometimes they can be offered to choose a topic which is familiar for them and in other cases they are provided with some information on the topic and have to

prepare a speech using it but in a certain context to a certain audience.

Another challenge is that students tend to read the text but not to speak to the audience. Talking about "traditional" presentation- a long monologue aimed at a group of people, we have to mention that sometimes the focus of a presentation is on visual aids such as a PowerPoint presentation. In this case, the role of a presenter is to comment on the visual information being presented. Common interest to information technologies and the desire to try new and progressive methods of presenting have shifted the focus from a speech act itself to its visual representation. Not to mention, that quite often speakers read the text from the slides turning the act of communication into reading and listening practice. That was the reason why this school year we tried to practice giving presentations without a PowerPoint presentation which reversed the situation the students became more interested in speech preparation and practising effective techniques of keeping the attention of the audience, using gestures properly, rehearsing in advance but not in the technical side of their presentation.

As it was mentioned before, the requirements to the performance gradually increased from an elementary visual contact with the audience or a listener to the use of expressions typical for every separate part of a presentation and correct intonating. The students were informed about each new requirement before the preparation of a speech, so they had an opportunity to practice their monologue in advance taking into account all the aspects they had to focus on.

In our work, we based on the order of aspects of presentation preparation outlined in the textbook English for Presentations published by Oxford [2]. Undoubtedly, a lot of time and efforts were put into developing separate aspects of giving a presentation but, as a result, all kinds of monologue speech benefited from this practice as the students got used to giving a stricture to their speech, keeping eye contact, using appropriate body language, intonating and making pauses where necessary.

As students mainly gave a speech to other students working in groups and pairs, the task for listeners was to fill a checklist — a list of statements connected with the quality of a presentation developed by the teacher which was gradually supplemented with new points. After the speech was given (either a short report or a longer presentation) the students had time to discuss the quality of it, look through checklists ticking all the requirements satisfied.

The teacher's role was to organize and monitor the work of students and to write down mistakes in order to discuss them later. When students' speeches were given and discussed in groups or pairs and students got checklists with other students' feedback on their performance, the teacher gave a general feedback on the quality of students' presentations, focusing, first of all, on positive aspects and the progress done by

students underlining good examples of language use and in the way of presenting material in general. After that, the teacher conducted the analysis of typical mistakes, in the presentation of the material as well as in phonetics, grammar and use of words.

Changing the approach to developing monologue speech from focusing on accuracy to the preparation of a speech in a certain context and using checklists for every speaking act we were able to notice more responsible attitude of students towards the tasks performance, better preparation and, as the result, higher accuracy as students spent much more time on preparing the task paying attention to a number of different aspects connected with delivering the information than when they spent when they just had to retell the text.

Thus, it is worth mentioning that developing presentation skills and practicing them while students present

any piece of a monologue irrespective of its genre and size, prepare students for the communication in real-life situations during their studies as well as on their future workplace, increase their value as employees at the labour market, break down barriers in presenting information in a foreign language since they have to talk to different partners and groups of people in different contexts following different aims. Checklists used for estimating the students' speeches highlight important aspects of any speech act they have to pay attention to, teach them to be critical about others and themselves. The necessity to practice a prepared monologue several times to meet all requirements improves not only fluency but accuracy as well and leads to a better presentation of unprepared monologues. Taking into account all the benefits mentioned above, we do recommend to teach students presentation skills simultaneously with teaching them monologue speech.

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