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## **DISCUSSION AS THE MEANS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE FORMATION**

*The paper presents the analysis of the contemporary approaches to determine stages that are essential for teaching discussion and argues the necessity of distinguishing stages in the discussion teaching grounded on the problem-based situation; constitutes requirements for the discussion exercises which develop students' mental activity, appeal to various types of the memory, encourage students' unprompted speaking; proves the idea of considering discussion as the one of most significant means to develop English language communicative competence; presents an original set of assignments developed on the authentic video and reading materials to teach discussion grounded on the problem-based situation.*

**Key words:** *discussion, English language communicative competence, problem-based teaching, requirements to the discussion exercises, stages of discussion teaching.*

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Finding ways to involve students actively in what they are learning is the central goal of the discussion method teaching.  
W. Welty "Discussion Method Teaching"

### **Introduction**

The main purpose of the communicative teaching is fostering learner's ability to communicate in the foreign language for private, general and professional purposes rather than acquiring their skills in constructing correct sentences. It is, however, worth mentioning that communication practice is both one of the most important and one of the most challenging matters. The main aim of the English language acquisition is efficient fluency practice on the one hand, and language applying for achieving an objective or to perform a function: to persuade, inform, inquire, warn on the other hand. Therefore, in our opinion discussion is one of the most significant means to develop English language communicative competence.

### **The aim of the paper**

The aim of the paper is to constitute general requirements to the discussion exercises taking into account practical stages of discussion teaching in the process of the English language communicative competence formation.

### **Latest scientific research and publications analysis**

Educational process based on the discussion aims to active learning applying for reflexive thinking formation due to the group work, their interaction, ideas sharing, determination and educational purpose fulfillment. The most popular discussion forms are:

round table, brain storm, aquarium technique, forum, court hearing, etc. (I. Lerner, 1981, p. 46–48).

Experts in teaching methodology suggest discussion teaching on the basis of the real situations. Thus, M. Schleppegrell in her article "English for Specific Purposes: A Program Design Model Teacher Development: Making the Right Moves" emphasizes the link of the foreign language and a future profession. Such an approach is relevant for the students of non-linguistic qualifications, whose aim in studying a foreign language is to communicate in different situations (M. Schleppegrell, 1994, p. 25). Therefore, other scientists believe that problem-based English teaching raises importance on professional language. The role and place of the problem-based situation, thought-provoking teaching have been in focus of the scholars (N. Othman, M. Ismail, 2013, p. 127), yet the practical stages of the discussion teaching and a subsystem of exercises for discussion teaching has not been studied profoundly yet.

### **Discussion**

Discussion teaching stages comprise components of the preliminary and basic stages. Preliminary stage may comprise concept and outline of the discussion, venue (W. Welty, 2010, p. 41–43), topic, activities, meticulous planning, timing and stand-by timing or extra assignments. Basic stage — conducting the discussion: presentation by the discussion members, debates, project discussion and summarizing.

E. de Bono's distinction of six stages for discussion teaching is worth mentioning due to the fact of six multicolored hats which correspond to various types of mental activity. The scientist believes that such methodology alleviates the process of conducting a discussion. Multicolored hats set an algorithm of the speaking and states the type of the activity

students have to do at a certain stage (E. de Bono, 2005, p. 22–103).

However, four most effective stages (I. Zaytseva, 2013, p. 31–36) for discussion teaching have been distinguished, inter alia:

1. *Arrangement and motivation stage* which expects certain tasks accomplishment: setting problem-based situation; aim of the discussion; distribution students into groups according to their foreign language level and personal interactions; electing a moderator; setting the discussion agenda. One of the most important conditions at this stage is students' comprehension of the task. Teacher's role at this stage is to arrange the discussion mode.

2. *Information and preliminary stage* which is essential for the analysis of the problem-based situation, search of the necessary information and determination of the group's opinion concerning the problem of the discussion. The problem-based situation may be presented via watching the video episode, reading articles, listening to the news. Student's individual work for getting extra information is of great importance, since we are looking for the ways to communicate, to enliven, to bring home the content; we want to find ways to help students to internalize the theory (W. Welty, 2010, p. 43). At this stage teacher's role is rather limited, he is regarded as an advisor to the situation.

3. *Situational and argumentative stage*, the aim of which is to conduct a discussion through setting guidelines, individual search for the problematic situation solutions, and discussing advantages and disadvantages of student's decisions. Such deliberations are regulated by the students' roles prearranged by the teacher in advance. The deliberations close with the group representatives' speeches, here the representatives act out certain roles and prove the solution of the problematic situation. This stage is very important for developing students' skills of entering a discussion, conducting a discussion, give examples for agreeing or disagreeing, looking for the compromise and giving feedback on dialogue partner's comments. The teacher's role is observing the discussion.

4. *Concluding and interpreting stage* which deals with presenting conclusions, inference and discussion analysis. Students together with their teacher summarize the discussion, deliberate its advantages and disadvantages, and the teacher considers students' work and linguistic performance, furthermore students' skills to conduct the discussion and abilities to persuade and react at dialogue partners' comments are of great importance for assessment as well.

On the whole the outcome of the lesson depends on its sound and logical arrangement, and one of the requirements is applying of wide range of exercises. Exercises of diverse types involving different processes of students' mental activity, thus motivate students and foster their interest at studying English.

Exercises of varied types encourage deemed-communicative unprompted speaking, however, a key requirement for the exercises is to arrange the interaction of the discussion partners. Exercises for the discussion based on the problem-based situation may be developed under the classification devised by N. Sklyarenko:

— *practical aim* — to develop certain skills of dialogue communication;

— *professional aim* — to form professional linguistic competence;

— *developing aim* — to develop scholastic habits and skills;

— basic criteria for exercises' types:

- communicative degree (non-communicative, quasi-communicative, communicative);
- type of the exercise: receptive; receptive and productive; receptive-reproductive and productive;
- completion mode: individual, pair, group;
- venue: linguistic laboratory, classroom, library;
- instruction (N. Sklyarenko, 1999, p. 3–7).

Pedagogical experience of teaching English at higher educational institution and theoretical analysis of the practical stages of discussion teaching, general requirements for the discussion exercises and English language communicative competence formation has encouraged us to develop a set of communicative assignments for the module "US Police" (see exercises 1–4). The exercises comply with such requirements: appeal to various types of the memory, aim-based, motivated, activate students' mental activity, problem-based and include authentic video and reading materials that suggest motivating opportunities to develop the elements of the communicative competence: linguistic, communicative, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic and other; the context presents some kind of novelty or surprise.

### **Arrangement and motivation stage**

#### **Exercise 1**

*Practical aim:* to introduce students with the topic of the discussion, develop listening skills.

*Professional aims:* formation of the professional linguistic competence.

*Developing aims:* to develop mechanisms of the auidal and visual memory, and skills to interpret the information.

*Type of the exercise:* receptive and communicative.

*Venue:* linguistic laboratory.

*Completion mode:* individual work.

*Instruction:* You will watch the video episode: Camden is the Poorest US City (URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD\\_DSYr7OyQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD_DSYr7OyQ)).

In pairs discuss the following questions:

1. Why does the priest consider Camden as the best visual in America?
2. What kind of city was it fifty years ago and what dramatic changes happened?
3. Why doesn't the chief of the Police Department give up?

### Information and preliminary stage

#### Exercise 2

*Practical aim:* to develop dialogue communication skills.

*Professional aims:* to develop administrative skills, to initiate a conversation, to develop motivational skills, to apply verbal and non-verbal means of communication, to develop self-control skills in speaking.

*Developing aims:* to develop systematic thinking, information summarizing habits, and making conclusions.

*Type of the exercise:* quasi-communicative.

*Venue:* linguistic laboratory.

*Completion mode:* pair work.

*Instruction:* Work in pairs. Describe your neighborhoods to each other. Speak on the crime rate there and why it is high or low and suggest your reasons.

#### Exercise 3

*Practical aim:* to develop reading critical skills.

*Professional aims:* formation of the professional communicative and analytical competence.

*Developing skills:* to develop systematic thinking, make conclusions.

*Type of the exercise:* receptive and reproductive, communicative.

*Venue:* linguistic laboratory.

*Completion mode:* individual work.

*Instruction:* Read the following extract on the US inner-city crime rate solution and comment on the text.

### David Kennedy, the author of "Don't Shoot" says he has a cure for inner-city.

*Finding a way to end gang violence is as easy as offering gang members a "way out". Kennedy says many gang members are "scared to death themselves, they just don't know a way out". To reduce gang violence, cities need to give gang members an alternative, he claims. They can start by identifying the gangs and bringing together communities, social service groups and law enforcement organizations.*

*Kennedy says his strategies have led to a 35 percent reduction in gang-related killings in Chicago, a drop in the citywide homicide rate of between 50 and 60 percent in Boston and a decline in homicides in the "hardest hit" neighborhoods of Minneapolis of between 60 and 70 percent (URL: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/30/david-kennedy-dont-shoot-gang-violence\\_n\\_988602.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/30/david-kennedy-dont-shoot-gang-violence_n_988602.html)).*

### Concluding and interpreting stage

#### Exercise 4

*Practical aim:* to develop dialogue speaking skills (dialogue-discussion).

*Professional aims:* to develop administrative skills, to initiate a conversation, to develop motivational skills, to apply verbal and non-verbal means of communication, to develop self-control skills in speaking.

*Developing skills:* to express the ideas logically, to make up the strategy of the speech, to respond tolerably at the opponents' comments in the discussion.

*Type of the exercise:* productive, communicative.

*Venue:* linguistic laboratory.

*Completion mode:* pair work.

*Instruction:* You are going to take part in the press conference on the inner-city criminal rate reduction. Work in groups:

Group 1 — representatives of the community and journalists;

Group 2 — the Head of the City Council, Chief of the Police Department, members of the Social Service Association, teachers from the Local Community.

*Instruction:* Discuss the inner-city criminal problems mentioned in the chart and decide on their consequences for your neighborhood, fill the chart. Prepare questions to ask the Head of the City Council, Chief of the Police Department, members of the Social Service Association, teachers from the Local Community at the press conference.

#### Hand-out for group 1

Inner-city crimes	Consequences
Rate of homicide and violence crimes	
Violence against women and children	
The flow of illegal guns	
Drug dealing	
Young men get involved in criminality	

#### Hand out for group 2

Representatives of the group 2	Solution to discuss at the conference
Head of the City Council	Create well-targeted programs
Chief of the Police Department	Focus on prevention
Members of the Social Service Group	Localize programs
Teachers	Treat violence as a public health concern

### Perspectives for future scientific works

Perspectives for future scientific works are set:

— in studying and analysis of theoretical and applied experience in our country and abroad in the issue of the English language communicative competence formation development;

— inquiry in the research literature of the assessment peculiarities and the effectiveness of the students' work and linguistic performance at the discussion lessons.

### Conclusions

The analysis of the contemporary approaches determines stages that are essential for teaching discussion and argues the necessity of distinguishing

stages in the discussion teaching grounded on the problem-based situation.

In the paper the matter of the problem-based stages determination for teaching discussion has been highlighted and the set of exercises that has been developed foresees its drafting and applying for the module "US Police". Didactical and methodological aims of the above mentioned exercises are focused at the effective English language communicative competence formation and students' rhetorical discussion dialogue.

Discussion lessons may encourage English language acquisition, motivate students' interest and foster communicative and speaking skills and habits, thus may lead to the formed English language communicative competence.

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У статті представлено аналіз сучасних підходів для визначення етапів, необхідних під час застосування навчальної дискусії на основі проблемної ситуації, а також вимоги щодо виконання дискусійних вправ, які розвивають у студентів розумову діяльність, різні типи пам'яті, заохочують «говорити без підказки». Автори доводять ідею розгляду дискусії як одного з найбільш значущих інструментів у процесі розвитку англomовної комунікативної компетентності. Запропонована авторами методика є оригінальним набором завдань, розроблених на основі відеосюжетів і матеріалів для англomовного читання, щоб ефективно застосувати дискусію як дидактичний метод на основі проблемної ситуації.

**Ключові слова:** обговорення, англomовна комунікативна компетентність, вимоги щодо дискусійних вправ, етапи навчальної дискусії.

В статье представлен анализ современных подходов для определения этапов, необходимых при применении учебной дискуссии на основе проблемной ситуации, а также требования по выполнению дискуссионных упражнений, которые развивают у студентов умственную деятельность, различные типы памяти, поощряют «говорить без подсказки». Авторы доказывают идею рассмотрения дискуссии в качестве одного из наиболее значимых инструментов в процессе развития англоязычной коммуникативной компетентности. Предложенная авторами методика является оригинальным набором задач, разработанных на основе видеосюжетов и материалов для англоязычного чтения, чтобы эффективно применять дискуссию как дидактический метод на основе проблемной ситуации.

**Ключевые слова:** обсуждение, англоязычная коммуникативная компетентность, требования к дискуссионным упражнениям, этапы учебной дискуссии.