The Social Task for Future FL Teachers:
A Case Method for English in High Schools of Kazakhstan

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Abstract: The given article is devoted to the peculiarities of the case-method as one of the conditions for forming the preparedness for social activity of future teachers in the sphere of foreign languages. The structure of the case is given in the article as well as its theoretical basis. The author views the stages of solving quasi-professional situations, as well as their solving algorithm. The author includes an example of a case to be used at the lessons of Psychology of teaching foreign languages and practical lessons of English for Special Purposes.

Key words: Quasi-situation · Kase-study method · Pedagogical objective · Readiness · Upbringing activity

INTRODUCTION

The social activity is a part of education. Teachers of Higher Educational Institutions devote their time to teaching the language only forgetting the goal of the learner-centered education that is the sequence of “study- social activity-development”. Consequently, the social activity includes not only the conditions the student is exposed to, but also the changeable system of human interaction. Accordingly, the system of social activity in HEI (Higher Educational Institutions) aimed at pre-service teachers’ training must be based on active methods of education.

One of those methods that help the future teacher of English adapt to school is the method of solving pedagogical quasi-situations or case method. This method is aimed at analysing typical situations of interaction of the teacher and a pupil in the process of study.

Definition of a Case Method: The definition of “pedagogical quasi-situation” implies the modeling of the situation that could take place in the real educational process at school but solved and analysed by students during their training in HEIs. The great number of dictionaries and encyclopedias give more or less precise definitions of the word “quasi”. Summing up all of them, we have pointed out the following features of this word:

- It is similar to the object of reflection;
- It carries its own intrinsic features;
- It is simulated and controlled.

Modern education research points out that “pedagogical quasi-situation” incorporates the features of case-method previously and preferably used in law studies. Nowadays the case-study is implemented in all fields where it is prominent, including anthropology, business, communications, economics, political science and what is more important-in education, medicine, social work, sociology and psychology [1].

Case-study method was elaborately studied applied to various studies as human geography course [2]; ecology [3]; industrial marketing [4]; even the case of Internet software [5], etc.

The given research is concerned with the use of case-study method in educational surrounding. It is considered that COC (communicative-oriented curriculum) based on case-studies enables the students to master the English Language in primary education [6], so, undoubtedly, COC must be applied to modern design of any English lessons within the High School standards.
One of the primary researches shows the ways of implementing the experience of the Harvard Business School into the process of teaching Business English [7]. The model, therefore, cannot be fully applied to teaching English as the foreign language (EFL) in Higher Educational Institutions.

Consequently, judging by existing typology of case-study methods, it includes Harvard’s type (based on the homogenous approach to case study) and Manchester’s type (heterogenous approach to case study).

So, judging by the features stated above it must be mentioned that a pedagogical quasi-situation is a form of case method that is a modulated, controlled situation that can occur at school but purposefully created for training future teachers and implies heterogenous approach.

The Case Can Include:

- Analysing the real pedagogical situation;
- Setting an aim of the pedagogical interaction;
- Designing possible pedagogical situations;
- Developing creative thinking of teacher trainees when simulating the pedagogical situations.

Educational books contain various definitions of the term “pedagogical objective” that is the core of a pedagogical quasi-situation/case. A pedagogical objective represents the abstract component of the pedagogical situation.

A pedagogical objective is characterized by the following features:

- The presence of a problem;
- The systematic character of the objective;
- The goal-centered character of the objective when implied to certain conditions;
- The development of competences of a teacher trainee (key, basic and special).

Many scientists single out various types of pedagogical objectives. For instance, N.V. Bordovskaya, A.A. Rean [8] give the following types:

- Objectives aimed at educational diagnosing;
- Objectives aimed at design and selection of pupils’ types of activity;
- Objectives aimed at selection of techniques and methods for pupils’ facilitation;
- Objectives aimed at changing the attitude to study, etc.

In all the research the authors give the stages of diagnosing the problem, selecting the means necessary for solving the problem as well as decision making and reflection [9].

The given article is devoted to the solving of quasi-professional situations whose core is the educational objective functioning within one educational process, alongside, in the framework of a certain educational subsystem.

The educational situation is always concrete; it appears during the lesson or after it. Consequently, being aware of mechanisms of the problem solving in a simulated classroom, the future teacher will be able to face these problems in a real environment.

The Stages of Solving Quasi-situations/case:

- Problem and goal setting,
- Perception of the problem by students,
- Analysis for identification of contradictions,
- Analysis for revealing knowledge/absence of knowledge,
- Hypothesizing,
- Solving as a means of verification of the problem,
- Reconsidering the result [10].
- Further collaboration with students

Note: The stage of collaboration is of paramount importance due to the fact that future teachers will be able to “contribute to the decision-making process” when being engaged on the “voluntary basis in dialogues” [11, p.71].

Solving of quasi-situations/cases undergoes the main stages that are:

Model: Model is aimed at creating the simplified version of reality. It includes an aim and possible ways of problem solution. This stage is favourable for various situations:
Situation-illustration, Situation-exercise, Situation-evaluation, Situation-problem.

Situation-illustration is given as an example of a possible solution of the problem.

The purpose of situation-exercise is to train specific skills and behavior patterns when solving the situation. Situation-evaluation is designed to help students analyse the existing reality via communication and further assessment. Situation-problem does not contain any ways of solving the situation but is given as an abstract of reality [12].

**Project:** Pedagogical project is the further elaboration of the model aimed at practical implementation. Pedagogical construct or design includes real conditions, participants and relations. The use of the given method facilitates skill formation as goal-setting, analysing, project-making, communicative skills as well as helps to acquire new information in the field of social activity.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

One of the ways of pre-service training of FL students is the method of solving pedagogical quasi-situations. This method incorporates practical and theoretical aspects of training. Pedagogical exercises used in HEI tend to be oriented to rules of a teacher behavior and a set of regular answers. Pedagogical situations, otherwise, are considered to develop a student's creative thinking and spontaneous reaction.

Once included into the High School Curriculum, the case method is aimed at training future FL teachers to solve pedagogical problems. Consequently, each exercise constituting the case must be thoroughly elaborated and analysed. Requirements to the cases are the following:

- Scientific and practical training must be based on managing the education process as a whole avoiding segregation of its components;
- The case method must provide a real opportunity to display the creativity of students;
- The system of exercises constituting the case must correspond to the specialty of future teachers;
- The system of exercises must orient future teachers to pedagogical profession, not to the subject to be taught.

The methodology of implying case-method aims the following:

- Checking the level of English;
- Identifying the means of choice when solving the case;
- Determining the level of mastering the methods of group work;
- Identifying the position of future teachers in the process of case-solving;
- Developing pedagogical qualities of future teachers.

This methodology was based on existing methodologies [13, 14].

The given article is devoted to the use of the case method in the lessons of the Psychology of teaching foreign languages in Kostanay State Pedagogical Institute, Kazakhstan based on pedagogical situations elaborated by A.F.Daiker [15], L.N. Kondrashova [16].

The practical course contains the cases solved according to the given algorithm. The necessity of using algorithm is visible due to the presence of difficulty in solving the cases at the very beginning of the lessons. During the first 3-5 lessons it is highly recommended to use algorithms to avoid misunderstanding and errors in case solving. Provided the student acquires the algorithm, he will be able to implement it in various situations involving creativity.

**Analysis of the Case Implies:**

- Analyzing the condition (Where? What?),
- Identifying the subjects of the case (Who?),
- Setting goals and defining objectives.

**Solution of the Case Incorporates the Following Stages:**

- Hypothesizing,
- Choosing appropriate actions of the teacher,
- Decomposition and specification,
- Predictive analysis [17].
Table 1: The scheme for analyzing a pedagogical situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description of given facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Analyzing the condition</td>
<td>Formulating the concepts (upbringing, study, communication theories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Identifying the source of the conflict (subject and object of upbringing, contradiction, stage of the group development, individual personality peculiarities)</td>
<td>Goal setting (operational, tactic, strategic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Goal setting (operational, tactic, strategic)</td>
<td>Presentation of errors in the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Possible development of the situation/predictive analysis</td>
<td>The case example [text]:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The case example [text]:

**Note:** The stage of predictive analysis is important due to the presence of possible change in pedagogical environment. This supposition is proved by the point of view of Pennington (1992) who stated that the person cannot be expected to perform the work that doesn’t imply any alternations of a thing or state [18, p. 200].

Below you will find the example of the case algorithm (Table 1) as well as its message provided with questions. The type of the case is semi-creative due to presence of suggestive questions.

**Situation 1:** It is the first of September. The teacher of English is just a beginner—this day is her/his first day. She/he meets the class-7 “a” but instead of the smile she/he sees the angry faces. One of the pupils says, “Where is our previous teacher?” and sits down with utter disappointment. The teacher answers hotly, “I don’t know. I was asked to teach you. It is my first day and you have spoilt it”.

**Answer the Questions:**

- Analyze the environment. Do you remember the first of September? Did you like it? What could make it unhappy?

Ask your group mates and fill in the table (Table 2):

- Give the psychological characteristics of the teenager (7th grade).
- What were the teacher’s expectations? Prove it.
- Why was the reaction of dissatisfied pupils so weird for the teacher?
- Why were the pupils so upset?
- Why did the teacher answer back with the same anger?
- Who was wrong in the situation?
- How could the teacher react back to avoid the conflict?
- Act out possible decisions of the situation (group work).

**Experimental Procedure:** The experiment was carried out in KSPI. The stages of the experiment are the following:

- 2007-2009-data collection, preliminary analysis, diagnosing the level of readiness for social activity
- 2009-2011-forming experiment (case-study method implementation)
- 2011-2013-final testing, comparison of results.

78 students of the 3rd course of the faculty of FL participated in this experiment. The experiment was based on using the case study method in the lessons of Psychology of teaching FL as well as during the lessons of ESP (English for special purposes). The experimental group-39 students of the 3rd course underwent the effect of the case method. The reference group-other 39 students of the 3rd course didn’t have such an effect.

The experimental group includes groups 31EK, 33ER and 35ER (39 students), β the control group includes 32EK, 34ER and 36ER (39 students).

In the lessons of ESP participants of the experimental group solve cases (total semester hours-75, case-solving-25 hours (every third lesson). During the lessons of the Psychology of teaching foreign languages (total-30 hours per semester, case-solving-10 hours (every third lesson).

**Stages of the Experiment:**

- Diagnosing the level of readiness for social activity;
- Forming the experiment (case method implementing);
Table 3: Diagnosing the results of the experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Control group</th>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>76.67%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>18.67%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>39.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.66%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Final testing (comparing the results in the experimental and control groups.

Mathematical case for calculation is the chi-square L-test.

For diagnosing the level of readiness for social activity we elaborated the survey to be answered by students of 1–4 th courses (Faculty of Foreign Languages). 155 students have given their answers. The use of this survey applied to in-service teachers shows the reflection on social activity to be formed in HEIs. Respondent working in other spheres formed the social opinion for this question. The survey was carried out among:

- Freshmen and sophomores of the faculty of Foreign Languages (80 people);
- Juniors and seniors of the faculty of Foreign Languages (75 people);
- Graduates of the Faculty not serving in school (54 people);
- Graduates of the Faculty serving in school for less than 3 years (27 people);
- Graduates of the Faculty serving in school for more than 3 years (23 people)
- Those not connected with teaching (45 people).

For the next stage we used the case-method for teaching English according to elaborated procedure.

Final testing was based on comparison of control and experimental groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A comparison of the two groups shows the following result (Table 3):

Consequently, the increase of percentage is observed on the high level (7.14 per cent discrepancy in EG compared to 4.66 in CG) as well as on the medium level (25.42 per cent discrepancy in EG compared to 5.34 in CG).

The given article is devoted to the doubtful problem of training future teachers of FL using the case method.

The experiment shows the necessity of using practical situations in the process of training future teachers of FL.

The algorithm of case solving is of paramount importance. It helps the students and reduces the errors in analysis. Alongside, creativity must be achieved through solving the series of creative cases followed by semi-creative ones. The case study method is considered to be one of the influential practical methods in the educational process before real practice.

Therefore, this method must not be used separately; discussions, disputes, role plays and other active methods will enrich the personality of future teachers of FL.

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