

SOME ASPECTS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN MALE GENDER CLASSROOMS

Summary. The article deals with the peculiarities of male gender students, with teaching English in male gender classrooms implementing the communicative approach. The teaching in modern communicative approach is to make students acquire the communicative competency. The author leans on investigations of gender in different spheres of sciences. The article suggests the importance of looking through the lens of gender in teaching English in single-gender classrooms and in male gender classrooms in particular. The author sees the gender as a social concept. The author insists that importance of understanding gender and its peculiarities should not be diminished in general and in teaching in particular and taking into account the perspectives of neuroscience in the field of gender, which may affect the ideas of teaching and learning. Some significant aspects of teaching are covered in the current article. Choosing the appropriate activities in the male classroom for promoting the four communicative skills, the peculiarities of instructions while facilitating a lesson, the discipline issues and peculiarities of e-learning for male students are suggested.

Keywords: gender, male students, male gender classroom, teaching English, communicative approach.

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ДЕЯКІ АСПЕКТИ ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ У ЧОЛОВІЧИХ ГРУПАХ

Анотація. У статті звертається увага на особливості студентів чоловічого гендеру, на навчання англійської мови у чоловічих групах в умовах комунікативного навчання. Комунікативний підхід базується на тому, що мова є інструментом навчання, мова вивчається шляхом активного її використання у контексті, і, що важливо, студенти активно залучені, а також у центрі навчального процесу – студент. Викладач, використовуючи комунікативний підхід, має на меті набуття комунікативної компетенції кожним студентом. Гендер є складовою стилю навчання кожного студента. Автор розглядає гендер як соціальний концепт, а також бере до уваги дослідження гендеру у різних сферах науки. Відмічається важливість звертання уваги викладачів на особливості гендеру студентів, особливо у групах одного гендеру в цілому та на групи чоловічого гендеру зокрема. Наголошується важливість розуміння особливостей гендеру взагалі, та у навчанні зокрема, беручи до уваги відкриття у нейронауках у цій сфері, відмінностях у гендерах та перспективи включення цих знань задля поліпшення процесів викладання та навчання. Деякі важливі аспекти викладання англійської у чоловічих групах висвітлені у статті: наведені приклади відповідних вправ, що можуть мати успіх у розвитку комунікативних умінь (аудіювання, говоріння, читання і письмо) при викладанні у чоловічих групах. Також висвітлені особливості інструктування під час заняття. Звернена увага на питання навчальної дисципліни як безумовного фактору набуття необхідних компетенцій. Наведені методи покращення дисципліни, запобігання порушенням дисципліни та покращення демократичного клімату у групі. Відмічена важливість впровадження елементів електронного навчання на прикладі платформи MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) та його особливості серед студентів чоловічого гендеру.

Ключові слова: гендер, студенти чоловічого гендеру, чоловіча група, викладання англійської мови, комунікативний підхід.

Problem statement. Gender differences have been found in many areas of human social and cognitive development. We use the term gender (not sex), because this term is of social nature. Learning styles of students may vary with:

- global versus analytic brain processing;
- achievement level;
- culture;
- age;
- gender;
- age;
- gender [7, p. 65].

Considering the fact that language-learning strategies can promote language achievement and that knowledge about these strategies may progress instruction, it is important to study how learners use learning strategies and to choose adequate methods of teaching. The article deals with the peculiarities of male gender and their exploitation in a male classroom.

Taking into consideration that the cadets of Maritime College Kherson State Maritime Academy are of the same age, gender and cultural back-

ground the peculiarities of cognition, behavior of the cadets should be born the facilitators' minds in order to heighten the results and communicative competencies.

Recent research and publications. The question of gender differences is old. Numbers of scientists from different spheres were engaged with the topic. Nowadays the study of gender differences plays a crucial role in neurosciences, which with the development of electronics brings more research data. The questions of gender differences in education and language acquisition and communication were raised by many western scientists (T. Bidjerano, D. Tannen [6], L. Fergusson and others).

The purpose of the article is to distinguish the facilitator's instruments of teaching and peculiarities of teaching in male gender communicative English classrooms which is aimed at heightening the results of the English language acquisition and communicative competency.

Presentation of the main material. A communicative lesson usually takes its part in a classroom. In order to create the most engaging and

useful learning environment for male students the traditional classroom layout with fixed rows of desks – for quiet and individual work – is not suitable for modern communicative task-based learning. There is a number of variations possible: semi-circle, tipped U, one table, zones, full circle, rectangular, curved rows, arrowhead, diagonal, reverse, facing, islands [5, p. 7]. Facing layout is to be a beneficial variant, leaving enough space for games including motor activity and competitiveness. Individual desks are more preferable.

Tymson [8, p. 8] classifies differences on men and women communication. The characteristics of Male Style of communication by Tymson:

- Focus on information;
- Report style of speaking;
- Goal driven;
- Single-task approach;
- Succinct language;
- Working towards a destination;
- Need to know the answers.

Learners need to be competent in each language skills, which refer to four communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in order to combine and utilize the language systems effectively and be able to communicate [9, p. 178].

Communicative **speaking** activities give purpose to speak. Most male students often learn and remember new language well if they have to do some work to get it, if they themselves have to go and look for it in discover activities, also information-gap activities would be good, it is also corresponds to many characteristics of male communication.

Among different types of discussions (buzz groups, from sentence to discussion, prompt cards, formal debate, panel discussion) formal debate and panel discussions are more relevant for male students, arising competition, where they should support their or any proposed opinion.

The activities employing the idea of sequence may be used, for example, the activity of story reconstruction where the students arrange hints or pictures to create an ordered sequence.

Male students find interest in simulation and role play, especially where there is a collision, drama or conflict of interests employing the idea of hierarchy, students simulate a situation or play roles.

Among **reading** activities the attention must be paid to top-down processing/reading for gist (getting general idea of meaning) or reading for specific information (looking for particular things). Jigsaw reading can lead to a formal debate, or free role-play – where students prepare their own information for a role-play based on an authentic text.

Also activities of data interpretation from the text, that contains a lot of factual data, can be used for developing reading for detail skills of students by finding and interpreting specific information, because students are interested in statistical knowledge and syllogistic reasoning [1, p. 37]. The task could require them to produce a chart, graph, diagram that represents the information in the text.

We can encourage the students to review what they or their groupmates wrote. Also we can give them a plan on what they are going to say.

Among the varieties of listening (conversational, analytical, supportive) the analytical, goal driven, listening where the students should reply by giving

comments or the choice of vocabulary is to be practiced in a male group, for example, when a student answers the others listen to note mistakes, add some important/missed information.

Listening activities are especially productive among male students with visual aids, for example, students look at a picture and have to predict what they will hear the students listen to a picture description and have to choose which one of four pictures is being talked about.

Listening to specific items, where the facilitator provides the students with the questions which relate to specific details of the text, for example, times, dates, numbers, names, places. Variations of activities, where students are seeking for factual data interest male students.

Using music might be also fruitful, but the music of The Beatles (their tracks are by no means a treasury of language) should not be overused. The facilitator should be acknowledged with the musical preferences of the group.

Facilitator should minimize his or her talking time, sometimes up to giving instructions and giving feedback. It is highly recommended to give instructions as simple as possible, logical and coherent. The language should be succinct (sentences are short and simple). Only in logical order. Teachers should follow single-task approach. If an activity has several steps, the teacher should not give all instructions at once, but instructions at once but break them into logical chunks. If the last but one activity finishes, but the lesson's going to over soon, it is better to extend the current activity: give short instruction.

All male groups tend to be hierichial organizations, where males are seen as more dominant, assertive and competitive than females especially at the beginning of a group's formation [4, p. 108]. Therefore male students prefer inequality in status and power, moreover, in the same gender-settings. Thus distractible and restless behavior aggressiveness or inattentiveness may be seen more often in a male classroom comparing to a female classroom. And the lesson's path can be greatly distracted.

Switching in the students into routine procedures may be of great help to the teacher and to development of the group's discipline and it is another reason to use the target language (for example, the students may distributing handouts, books, worksheets organizing seating changes, help to the facilitator to give instructions, collect phones at the start of each lesson and hand back at the end) These appointments may be long and short (on a rota, changing lesson by lesson) [3, p. 159; 5, p. 232].

This contributes to development of democracy, which is crucial for communicative classroom environment, and reduces discipline problems. A troublemaker having acquired some legitimate authority may become an advocate for order and good behavior.

In strong groups with a responsible and respectful leader or a formed active, it is possible to draw attention to the behavior of some students. The misbehave could be discussed in class to get the students to the point of importance of the English language in their career and to agree how they will behave in future. Males have socialization experience in hierarchical, status-oriented, and competitive relation-

ships [6, p. 112]: if it is a strong group – it is better to lead the discussion in English (not in L1).

During the last years, the Maritime College introduces elements of e-learning. Cadets must have accounts on MOODLE where they can attend online courses. System of modules contributes to the implementation of the competence approach. After each module, the cadets pass the "Stop & Check" tests, after studying three or two thematic modules (there are 5 of them), the cadets pass the Progress tests. Passing tests contributes to the development of receptive skills.

Cadets pass tests, have ratings, so they know what competencies or tests to be passed, what competencies to achieve. The essential competencies include the clearly defined language competencies of each module. These competencies reflect the required productive skills of a cadet.

The example of the topic «Deck electrical machines»:

Competency: *to describe the procedure of troubleshooting of deck electrical machines taking into consideration their type and construction.*

The hierarchal spirit and step-by-step idea have positive influence and promote the cadets' interest. But even on the Internet the subject-matter of gender arises. There male students usually participate less and contribute less in computer mediated communication [2, p. 21]. They post and read less messages on the course bulletin board. Therefore the facilitator should not lessen the mark of a male student for poor participation in development (posting on forum, etc.) of the course on MOODLE.

Conclusion. By providing students with a variety of learning opportunities the students can contribute from it, but the communicative competency and high results in acquisition of English can be achieved by taking into consideration the gender peculiarities, especially in so called single-gender classrooms and in male gender classrooms in particular. Seeing teaching through the lens of gender can help teachers to reconsider and examine their current practices in the classroom, teachers should pay attention to adequate activities and procedures that students can benefit from.

Special attention in a male gender classroom should be paid to discipline, especially at the beginning of a group's formation, which contributes to effective learning. The facilitator should know the peculiarities of the male group dynamics and peculiarities in order to employ the adequate methods of keeping the positive atmosphere and avoiding any misconduct.

Peculiarities of a gender should be taken into consideration not only in the classroom or while preparing for the lesson but also in the process of e-learning.

The perspectives of gender study in general and in teaching and learning English in particular with the development of neuroscience appear to be broad. Another interesting topic is acceptance of the teacher's gender in a single-gender classroom, its acceptance by the students and effectiveness of one or another gender in the role of a teacher.

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