APPLYING CLUSTERS AND KWL CHARTS TO IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF LEARNERS IN EFL CLASS IN ARMENIAN SCHOOLS: RESULTS OF APPLYING THE CASE STUDY METHOD IN EFL CLASS IN THE ARMENIAN SETTING: RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING

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The given paper presents the results of the experimental teaching with the use of the case study method. The cases were developed by us and experimentally validated during our experiment which was delivered with the 8th grade students of Sevan secondary school #1.

Our overall goal was to check experimentally the possibilities of using different types of cases in order to develop the learners' English communicative competence. The results of the experimental teaching show that cases help to enhance the communicative competence of students. Cases suppose a lot of interaction in class, therefore, they improve the communicative skills of the students as well. And though the application of cases requires a certain amount of time (developing cases by the teacher, preparatory stage before implementing them, etc.) they can be a highly efficient tool while teaching/learning EFL.

Keywords: case-study method, EFL (English as a foreign language), experimental teaching.

Introduction

English plays a crucial role in the present era of globalization. A lot of people in the world currently want to acquire the English language proficiency. One option for teaching a foreign language is applying the case study technology. It is an active method widely used in learning/teaching foreign languages. For learners who have been accustomed to the traditional strategy of teaching, this calls for a global change in their approach to learning. This method can be successfully performed at all educational institutions including schools and HEIs.

The given paper is devoted to the study of the Case study method for the improvement of English communicative competence in Armenian schools. The method is connected directly with action and based on the philosophy of student-centred education

The relevance of the research is determined by the reforms in the sphere of school education in Armenia which demand modernization of the teaching methods as well as the contents of teaching. It is important to use student-centered activities while teaching English. The Case technology can develop students' productive, interactive and receptive skills that are necessary for communication.

The overall goal of the research is to develop a set of case-tasks which will promote better communication between the teacher and the learner and among learners in the process of teaching/learning English. We have attempted to highlight the effectiveness of the meaningful use of a foreign language by applying the Case study method.

In accordance with the goal the following **specific objectives** were put forward:

➢ to give the general overview of the Case study method;

➢ to study the potential of the Case study method from the perspective of teaching/learning English;

➢ to justify the importance of applying the Case study method as a classroom activity;

➢ to study the opportunities provided by the Case study method that can be implemented in the Armenian context;

➢ to identify the real influence of the Case study method on the motivation of learning English;

➢ to describe in which way the Case study method can be applied productively;

➢ to develop various cases which can be used during the process of teaching/learning EFL in the Armenian setting;

➢ to validate the effectiveness of the proposed methodology and analyze the results of the experimental teaching.

A challenge any professional school faces is preparing its learners to become actors in the real world situations. Students should be able to diagnose the real world situation correctly, make the right decision making choices and act accordingly. In this effort, schools which have adopted this method (led by Harvard) have found teaching via the case method to be the best. Any subject being taught is based around a case study followed by a question and answer session similar to the Socratic Method. Christopher Columbus Langdell, dean of Harvard Law School in 1870 is well known in academic circles as the pioneer of the case method. The case method was introduced in law school by him in 1870. By 1922, cases had been widely adopted in business schools and found acceptance in medical schools as well [1]. Later case methods largely widened their sphere of application and today are used in any field of study.

Case study is an effective technology to explore and understand complex issues in real world settings. The Case study method has been used particularly in fields such as social sciences, education, business, law and health, to name just a few, in order to address a wide range of research questions. Therefore, over the last 40 years, case study technology has undergone great development. Change and progress have stemmed from parallel influences from historical approaches to research and individual researcher's preferences, perspectives on, and interpretations of case study research. Central to these variations is the underpinning ontological and epistemological orientations of those involved in the evolution of case study research [2]. Researchers who have contributed to the development of case study research come from various disciplines and fields of study and their philosophical underpinnings have created diversity in approaches used. Thus, various designs have been suggested for preparing, planning, and conducting case study research with advice on key considerations for achieving success. As a result, while case study research has evolved to be a pragmatic, flexible research approach, the variation in definition, application, validity, and purposefulness can create a confusing platform for its use [3].

There is a wide range of definitions of the case study method. Simply put, it is a student-centered activity based on a description of a certain situation, it often involves a problem, a challenge or an opportunity faced by students. It is also important to note that case is not a problem. The problem in general has only one possible solution. When we use the case study method, a decision-maker can choose between different alternative courses of action, and each of them may be supported by a solid evidence and logical argument.

It should be mentioned, that the case study method is a very effective way of teaching and learning. It has a decisive role in developing some key abilities and skills of learners.

Methodology

The methodology of our research was determined by the overall goal and the specific objectives put forward and hence included the following steps:

▪ To explore the case study method: the origin of the method and its further development, the application procedure of the method, the challenges of the method, etc.;

▪ To analyze the English textbooks for Armenian schools in order to reveal their didactic potential in the perspective of applying the case study method;

▪ To develop cases for a particular topic so that they can be used in the teaching/learning process;

▪ To deliver a series of classes in order to verify the suggested methodology;

▪ To analyze the results of the experimental teaching with the use of cases and draw conclusions.

Results of the experimental teaching: applying case study

The Case study method is an interactive one. The student should have an opportunity to move freely in the class in order to participate in case discussion. The traditional arrangement of furniture is not productive for the implementation of interactive methods. Therefore, the following types of students' sitting can be suggested: horse-shoe, flower-bed, pairs, soloists, net.

There are two basic beneficial points of case study:

1. When students learn through their own struggle, they can teach each other and grasp the material in a better way.

2. Many of the most important types of judgment and understanding cannot be taught but must be learned through practical experience.

Cases provide the basis of a class conversation led by a teacher. The Case study method includes a special type of educational material and special ways of using this material in the learning process.

The Case study method also represents some role-playing system, a game-based learning After the description the actions need to be interpreted (consequences, effectiveness), or the solution of the problem should be proposed. Students should solve the problem and get the reaction of others to their actions. However, they should understand that various solutions to the problem are possible. Therefore, the teacher should help students to reason, argue, and not impose his/her opinion on them.

The role of the teacher is to lead the conversation or discussion, as well as time management. The teacher should encourage students to avoid superficial thinking, to involve all students in the case analysis process.

The Case study method also teaches the students to observe the norms and rules of communication.

The teacher can use this technology at different stages of learning.

In order to verify the didactic potential of the case study method we decided to deliver a few teaching sessions.

Our teaching session was delivered with the 8th grade students of Sevan secondary school #1.

Unit 7 from the textbook by Lusine Grigoryan [4] was chosen for the experimental teaching.

The lesson "TRAVELLING IS MY DREAM" with the corresponding talking points and vocabulary was chosen for the experimental teaching [4, p.91]. This particular topic was

chosen since it has a great didactic potential in terms of developing and using various cases. Before the implementation of the case study method a set of cases had been developed.

Learning outcomes:

✓ By the end of the lesson students will be able to communicate using the lesson vocabulary concerning travelling;

✓ They will be able to work in pairs/small groups and enhance communicative competence; etc.

Teacher's objectives:

1. To get students motivated and involved in the case study process; to move learners gradually up the cognitive skills ladder from the low skill's level of comprehension, knowledge and application to the better and more effective skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation (according to B. Bloom's well-known taxonomy).

2. To engage learners in decision making, investigative, creative and communicative activities.

3. To develop peer collaboration: while cooperating learners can instinctively and cognitively help each other and find a solution to a problem.

In total, 19 students were involved in the experimental teaching. As we know, large class can be handled better by dividing it into smaller groups. Several groups can work at the same time, therefore, instead of only one or two people practicing the language and the others just listening, everyone is active. Group work is excellent for speaking and listening. Students can work in small groups if case study is applied.

Before starting studying the cases we should give the learners a clear objective for the case study activity, it is necessary to speak about case study method generally, explain how they can act and what the possible outcomes of this method are.

The application of the case study method was not carried out at the very first lesson. First of all, we had to prepare the students for the cases. Thus, it was decided to organize a group work to get the students involved in the topic of the lesson and then test the cases we had developed for the lesson.

Each student was given a number one or two. The students were asked to raise their hands to check that everyone knows which number they are. All the number ones made a group, all the number twos made another group. Then each group selected a secretary and a spokesperson to take notes. During the lesson the teacher can leave the front part of the class and move around, listening to the students, helping them if needed.

During the teaching each group had to select one foreign country and represent the popular sights of that country. The group had to select a soloist to act as a guide, while the other students were tourists who had to ask disputable questions to the guide. One of the groups had chosen England and the other had chosen Germany. The students were free

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to move and talk. The students were assessed with the help of the list of questions which had been developed before the lesson. The students' answers were graded on a scale of one to three.

Here are the questions:

- *What do you think the aim of travelling is?*
- *What do people gain from travelling?*
- *What jobs require a lot of travelling?*
- *What is the main idea of taking photos of different places you visit?*
- *What is your idea of an ideal holiday?*
- *What countries and/or cities/towns would you like to visit and why?*
- *Which city do you think is the pearl of Europe?*
- *What forms of travelling do you know?*
- *What are the most necessary things that you should take with you when travelling?*
- *What kind of holiday would you recommend to a student with little money?*
- *Describe an ideal beach holiday.*
- *What do you like doing when you are on holiday?*
- *Which is the safest/fastest/most comfortable means of travelling?*
- *Describe the most interesting trip in your life.*
- *Which are some of the problems connected with air travel?*
- *What do you like/dislike about travelling by car?*
- *Do you prefer travelling business or economy class? Why?*
- *What is exciting about travelling on one's own?*
- *What does the travel agent usually arrange for your trip?*

Then the outcomes were discussed. At the same time, participants of the opposite team summarized what they had learned about the countries.

Two days later, when they had their next English class, the following cases were tested:

Case #1

Imagine that you want to travel to Russia and try to talk to the travel agent on this topic (you can have either face-to-face or a telephone conversation).

Case #2

Imagine that you have arrived at the airport and found out that your flight had been delayed. Try to call and inform your friend about the reason your flight had been delayed for.

Case #3

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of travelling by train and by plane (the class is divided into two groups and each of them discusses pros and cons of travelling by train and by plane).

Case #4

You have dreamed about visiting Rome all your life, you have booked airtickets and the hotel, you have applied for your visa, but news about the coronavirus have changed your plans. Phone your travel agent and cancel your flight and hotel reservation (another option here can be: *E-mail your travel agent and cancel your flight and hotel booking.*)

Case #5

An information gap technique was used as a case as well. One group possesses information which the other group does not have. One group has the bus timetable for odd numbers, the other group has the bus timetable for even numbers. They need to communicate to find out the complete information on how the buses run. The gap is filled by means of active communication.

After having learned the whole material about travelling, another case was tested with the same class.

Case #6

You have a travel agency in Armenia and you have a task – to invite tourists to your motherland. What kind of advertising will you use? How to attract the attention of a potential tourist?

The class was divided into 3 groups. There were six students in each group. One of them was the director and the others were the employees. They had to think about the name for their agency as well as to create a slogan (motto). The teacher in this case usually acts as a supervisor. The groups discussed their viewpoints, then the spokesperson – the director of the agency, presented their opinions and the solution. This case, besides improving the communicative competence of learners is also aimed at the enhancing of their creative thinking skills.

Results of the experimental teaching

The Case study method really helps to improve the communicative competence of students. They communicate in English, new words and certain communicative patterns are incorporated into their active vocabulary. The students usually automatically learn words and phrases by heart, for example *flight-թռիչք, չվերթ, airline-օդանավ, check in-գրանցվել,* etc., but they cannot use this vocabulary in the real life situation as a

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correlated phenomenon. The Case study method helps train their mind, challenges their critical thinking skills and develops speaking skills. Therefore, the application of the case study method is productive, interesting, beneficial and challenging at the same time. Besides, students participate in teaching/learning willingly and with great pleasure, the process is not boring at all. Being combined with other methods, the case study method proves to be even more productive and efficient.

Feedback on using the case study method

At the end of our teaching sessions the students were kindly asked to answer a few questions about the experimental teaching by just ticking the appropriate column:

1. I find the Case study method useful for developing my communicative competence.
2. I find learning via cases interesting and trendy.
3. I like learning with the use of the Case study method.
4. I would like to create my own cases and use them during the lesson.

The table below represents the results of the feedback we gained after the application of the Case study method during the experimental teaching.

Table:1 The results of the feedback on applying the Case study method.

Statement	strongly agree	agree	disagree
I find the Case study method useful for developing my communicative competence.	100%		
I find learning via cases interesting and trendy.	80%	20%	
I like learning use with the use of the Case Study method.	70%	30%	
I would like to create my own cases and use them during the lesson.	50%	30%	20%

Conclusion

According to the table presented above it is obvious that learners like using the Case Study method while studying English, they find it useful, productive, interesting and

challenging. However, our teachers mostly tend to use traditional methods, because in their opinion, they are already tested and the results are obvious. But in the contemporary world interactive teaching and student-centered activities are more trendy and efficient.

Hopefully, in the nearest future Armenian students would have the opportunity of applying the Case study method more often in their learning setting since by means of cases we can enhance critical thinking, provide reflective learning, improve problem solving skills, develop the organizational skills of students as well as their active listening, team-working and communication skills.

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ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԼՍԱՐԱՆՈՒՄ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆԻ՝ ՈՐՊԵՍ OSAR ԼԵԶՎԻ ԴԱՍԵՐԻՆ CASE STUDY ՄԵԹՈԴԻ ԿԻՐԱՌՈՒՄԸ. ՓՈՐՁԱՐԱՐԱԿԱՆ ՈՒՍՈՒՑՄԱՆ ԱՐԴՅՈՒՆՔՆԵՐԸ

ԲՐԱԳԻՆԱ ՆԵԼԼԻ

ԳՊՀ բանասիրական ֆակուլտետի «Անգլերեն լեզու և գրականություն» բաժնի
մագիստրատուրայի շրջանավարտ

ՍԱՐԳՍՅԱՆ ՌՈՒԶԱՆՆԱ

Մանկավարժական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ,
ԳՊՀ օտար լեզվի և գրականության ամբիոնի դասախոս

Հոդվածում ներկայացված են հայկական լսարանում անգլերենի ուսուցման ընթացքում քեյսերի մեթոդի կիրառմամբ փորձարարական ուսուցման արդյունքները: Մեր կողմից մշակվել էին քեյսեր, որոնք փորձարկվել են Սևանի թիվ 1 միջնակարգ դպրոցի 8-րդ դասարանում անգլերենի դասավանդման ժամանակ:

Մեր հիմնական նպատակն էր փորձարարական ուսուցման միջոցով ստուգել սովորողների անգլալեզու հաղորդակցական իրազեկությունների (կոմպետենցիաների) զարգացմանը միտված քեյսերի կիրառման հնարավորությունները: Իրականացված փորձարարական ուսուցման արդյունքները ցույց են տալիս, որ քեյսերն օգնում են զարգացնել ուսումնառողների հաղորդակցական կոմպետենցիան: Քեյսերի կիրառումը նաև ենթադրում է ակտիվ հաղորդակցում լսարանում, հետևաբար դրանք նաև նպաստում են սովորողների հաղորդակցական հմտությունների զարգացմանը: Եվ չնայած քեյսերի կիրառումը ենթադրում է որոշակի ժամանակի տրամադրում (քեյսերի մշակում ուսուցչի կողմից, քեյսերի մեթոդի ներդնումից առաջ նախապատրաստական աշխատանքների իրականացում և այլն), նրանք կարող են շատ արդյունավետ գործիք լինել անգլերենի՝ որպես օտար լեզվի ուսուցման գործընթացում:

Բանալի բառեր. *case-study մեթոդ /քեյսերի մեթոդ, անգլերենը որպես օտար լեզու, փորձարարական ուսուցում:*

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ МЕТОДА КЕЙСОВ НА УРОКЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В АРМЯНСКОЙ АУДИТОРИИ: РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ ОПЫТНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ

БРАГИНА НЕЛЛИ

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САРКИСЯН РУЗАННА

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В данной статье представлены результаты опытного обучения с использованием метода кейсов при обучении английскому языку в армянской аудитории. Нами были разработаны кейсы, которые были экспериментально протестированы во время опытного обучения среди учеников 8-го класса средней школы N1 г. Севана.

Нашей основной целью было путем опытного обучения проверить возможности использования различных видов кейсов (ситуативных задач), направленных на развитие англоязычной коммуникативной компетенции учащихся. Результаты проведенного опытного обучения показывают, что кейсы помогают развить коммуникативную компетенцию учащихся. Использование кейсов предполагает интеракцию (коммуникацию) в классе, следовательно, они также способствуют развитию коммуникативных навыков учащихся. И несмотря на то, что использование кейсов требует определенного количества времени (разработка кейсов со стороны учителя, подготовительный этап перед внедрением метода кейсов и т.д.), они могут быть весьма эффективным инструментом в процессе обучения английскому языку как иностранному.