

УДК 378.147:811

DOI: 10.31499/2307-4906.1.2021.228727

THE ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO NON-LINGUISTIC STUDENTS

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The article analyzes the current stage of foreign language study in higher educational establishments. Student interaction and collaboration are considered as essential elements in the development of communication skills. Principal approaches to the definition of collaborative learning are analyzed in the article.

The author analyzes advantages of collaborative learning in the process of foreign language study, including development of students' communicative abilities and active participation in the learning process, fostering learners' autonomy and creative thinking skills, development of students' self-learning and cooperation abilities.

A detailed description of collaborative learning activities in the process of teaching English to non-linguistic students is presented in the article.

Keywords: collaborative learning, collaboration learning activities, student interaction, teaching a foreign language, non-linguistic students, teaching strategies, learning in cooperation, work in group, educational technology.

РОЛЬ НАВЧАННЯ У СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВІ В ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ СТУДЕНТАМИ НЕМОВНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

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У статті проаналізовано сучасний етап викладання іноземної мови у закладах вищої освіти. Взаємодія та співпраця студентів окреслені як важливі елементи розвитку ініціативних комунікативних здібностей студентів. У статті проаналізовано різні наукові підходи до визначення навчання у співробітництві.

Автор аналізує переваги навчання у співробітництві в процесі вивчення іноземної мови, включно з розвитком комунікативних здібностей, активною участю студентів у процесі навчання, розвитком автономії та творчого мислення студентів, здатністю майбутніх фахівців до самонавчання та співпраці. У статті розглядаються основні характеристики навчання у співробітництві в процесі вивчення іноземної мови. Розкрито спеціальні принципи, етапи та особливості впровадження навчання у співробітництві під час вивчення іноземної мови студентами нелінгвістичних спеціальностей. Особлива увага приділяється розвитку комунікативних навичок, активній участі студентів у мовленнєвій діяльності, практичному опануванню професійної термінології, розвитку творчих здібностей студентів.

Представлено детальний опис видів діяльності у малих групах у процесі викладання англійської

мови студентам нелінгвістичних спеціальностей. Розв'язання проблем, групові проєкти, дискусії в малих групах спрямовані на розвиток критичного мислення, навичок діалогічного мовлення, творчих здібностей майбутніх фахівців.

У статті наведено рекомендації для викладачів та студентів щодо успішного впровадження навчання у співробітництві в процесі вивчення іноземної мови. Доцільно використовувати новітні технології та методи викладання англійської мови, застосовувати інформаційні технології під час навчання, створити творчу атмосферу на заняттях та сприятливе для студентів іншомовне середовище для успішної реалізації навчання у співробітництві.

Ключові слова: *навчання у співробітництві, інтеракція студентів, викладання іноземної мови, студенти нелінгвістичних спеціальностей, навчальні стратегії, навчання у співпраці, робота в групі, педагогічні технології.*

The field of foreign language teaching and learning has undergone great changes at the present stage. The process of learning foreign languages has become learner-centered, where students play an active role. Thus interaction and collaboration are considered as significant elements for improving language learning. Instead of being knowledge consumers, who passively acquire knowledge, students are now seen as active participants of the learning process. They develop communicative ability directly and apply knowledge in practical situations. Moreover, they actively take part in the process of knowledge production, express their own ideas, discuss and brainstorm, generate creative ideas.

In scientific research it is rightly stressed that “the teachers have to implement various effective teaching strategies to inspire the learners during classroom teaching” [7]. Collaborative learning strategies in their turn aim to “develop interdependence among group members, active participation, interactive dialogue, and co-creation of academic products” [11]. Therefore, building a creative atmosphere during the learning process is of great importance, as students feel more comfortable, collaborate, express ideas and take responsibility for their decisions. So, collaborative learning can be viewed as an effective means of students’ autonomy development, students’ interaction and mastering of foreign language competence.

Student collaborative activity is one of the central issues of modern scientific researches. Thus, the main features of collaborative learning and student interaction are investigated by M. Bevilacqua, R. Ellis, S. Ghodsi, M. Laal, J. MacGregor, R. Parupalli, L. Sousa, F. Tiraboschi, N. do Lago, F. de Figueiredo, Y. Zhang etc. Principles, stages, types of collaborative activities have been studied by such Ukrainian scientists as M. Hladun, L. Pinchuk, H. Prystai, M. Sablina, S. Sysoieva etc. Main characteristics, benefits, rules and factors that positively influence successful collaborative learning usage have been explored by M. Bevilacqua, S. Kozhushko, M. Laal, L. Lebedik, R. Parupalli, I. Chepurko and others.

Thus, S. Sysoieva pays special attention to collaborative learning as interactive technology which corresponds to the ideology of personality-oriented learning. She investigated the main principles and types (different variants) of training in a team (group), including collaboration learning in small groups, team and game activities, individual work in teams, jigsaw, “learning together” and students’ research work in groups [3]. Cooperative learning as a component of personality-oriented approach and an effective pedagogical technology has been studied by M. Hladun, L. Pinchuk and M. Sablina. Thus, M. Hladun and M. Sablina also viewed pedagogical technology of “learning in cooperation” as an integral part of the personality-oriented approach, which is aimed to foster students’ motivation, develop the necessary competencies by students’ active interaction in the educational process.

The authors analyzed the growing role of information technologies in the process of training in cooperation [1].

The importance of collaborative learning approach in English classes is studied by F. de Figueiredo, N. Ibrahim, N. do Lago, L. Pinchuk, H. Prystai, R. Parupalli, L. Sousa, F. Tiraboschi. This approach allows to learn through activities based on group work (learning cells, buzz groups, clusters, fishbowl debates, round robin). The authors singled out benefits of the approach, including open communication, mutual cooperation and self-management skills development. Peculiarities of cooperative learning in teaching English as a second foreign language has been studied by L. Pinchuk. The author described such innovative technologies as project method and Language Portfolio [2].

In spite of the numerous scientific studies devoted to collaborative learning, the specific peculiarities of its implementation in the process of learning a foreign language for specific purposes by non-linguistic students is not fully highlighted.

The purpose of the proposed study is to analyze the role and main characteristics of collaborative learning in teaching a foreign language to non-linguistic students at the present stage.

The collaborative learning strategy makes the learning process active and meaningful for learners themselves. Students work together in groups to achieve the learning goals, provide the academic support to each other, brainstorm and co-operate, share responsibility for the decisions taken and reflect on the learning result.

In scientific studies *collaborative learning* is defined as “an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by either the learners or the learners and teachers together” [7]; technology which “aims to co-construct knowledge, and that might result in linguistic changes” [6]; an integral part of the personality-oriented approach in teaching [1; 2].

Collaborative learning has the following *characteristics*: a) focus on the learning process and on students and their interaction; b) implementation of activities that allow students to perform different roles during foreign language study; c) students’ active roles in the learning process; d) the learning process is viewed as a shared experience among its participants; e) the development of social and cognitive skills, f) creation of an environment, in which learners’ interdependence is supported, g) promotion of students’ autonomy, self-regulation and self-esteem [10].

M. Bevilacqua suggests such *rules of a successful collaboration* as designing specific roles, making students responsible for their activity and learning results, monitoring the process of group progress etc [4].

Among the *advantages of collaborative learning in English language environment* the researchers underline the learners’ ability to participate actively in conversations and dialogues, decrease of dependence on teachers, development of students’ communicative abilities, promotion of more active and responsible role of students in obtaining knowledge [5]; a possibility to meet the learners’ individual needs and purposes [7]; providing mutual support, the opportunity to generate numerous creative ideas [10]; development of problem-solving skills and social relationships among the students, promotion of learners’ self-learning abilities and cooperation within the groups, turning more difficult tasks into simple ones, stimulation of learners’ motivation, expressing and clarifying students’ ideas through debates and discussions, development of students’ leadership qualities and rational thinking

enrichment, improving learners' mental ability and students' practical knowledge [8]. Moreover, collaboration fosters creating a positive atmosphere for practicing learners' cooperation, reduces learners' anxiety and stress, eliminates the fear to get a wrong answer, and develops critical thinking skills.

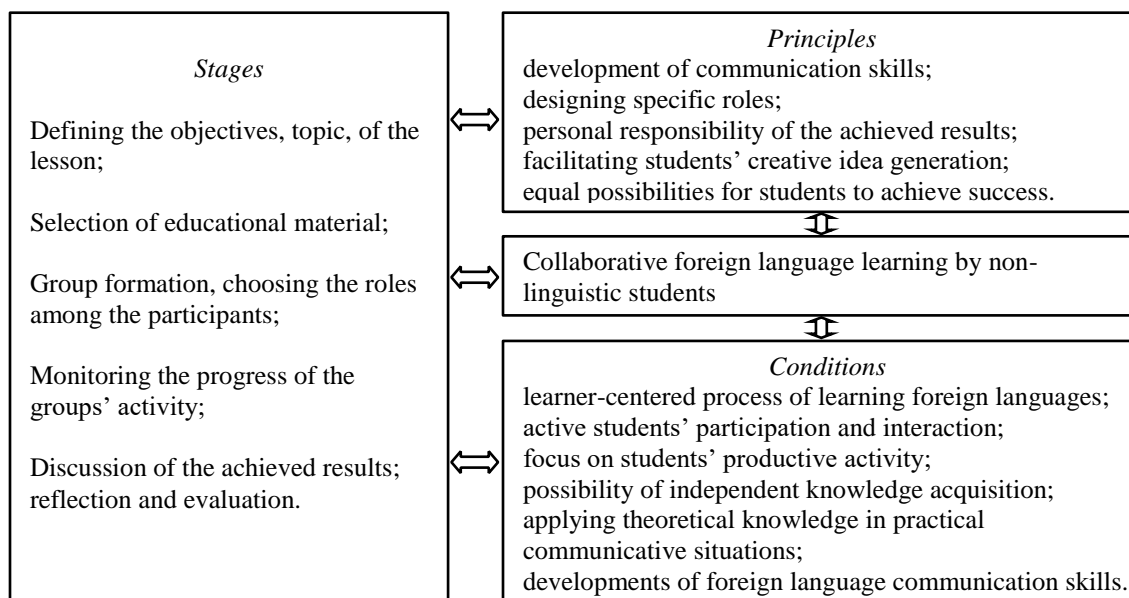
M. Laal and S. M. Ghodsi underlined such *benefits of collaborative learning* as: social benefits (creation of a friendly atmosphere for modelling and practicing cooperation, support for learners); psychological benefits (positive influence on students' self-esteem, reduction of anxiety); academic benefits (development of critical thinking skills; active students' participation) [6].

K. Scager et al. distinguished two groups of "factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the collaboration: 1) design factors: the design of the course and the assignment (students' autonomy, task characteristics, teacher expectations, group size); 2) process factors: the way students interact (team and task regulation, interdependence, interaction, mutual support, motivation)" [9].

On the other hand, the participants of the learning process may face a number of *disadvantages*, such as "disagreements and conflicts they had to handle during the interactions" [10].

R. Parupalli offers to use various activities, such as role plays, think-pair-share, group projects, debates, group and pair activities, case-based learning, classroom problems as examples of collaborative activities [8].

In our research we singled out *specific features of collaborative learning implementation in the process of learning a foreign language for specific purpose by non-linguistic students*: focus on communicative skills development, students' participation in foreign language speaking activities, practical usage of professional (business) terminology, facilitation of students' motivation to learn foreign languages, development of students' creative abilities.



Picture 1. Collaborative learning in the process of learning foreign languages by non-linguistic students

Collaborative learning activities have been successfully implemented in English classes at State University of Economics and Technology. Such types of activities as brainstorming, group problem-solving, team-based learning (learning in teams), group projects, and discussions in small groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Collaborative learning activities of non-linguistic students
in the process of foreign language study*

Types of collaborative learning activities	Level of English	Stages of organization of collaborative activity in the group	Skills to be developed
Brainstorming	Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A teacher presents a lexical unit of professionally oriented vocabulary (franchising, corporation, royalty payment, business plan etc.). 2. Students present as many verbal associations with the word combination as possible. 3. A teacher formulates an educational problem connected with the given lexical unit. 4. Students generate ideas on how to solve a problem and estimate the best possible variants. 	critical thinking skills, lexical skills, creative idea generation, rational thinking skills
Group problem-solving	Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are presented with a problem and given guidance (minimal instructions) toward solving the problem. 2. Students brainstorm in groups and present their solutions. 3. Peer written or oral activities. 4. Students prepare (write or discuss orally) appropriate responses in small groups (three or four members) and share them with others. 5. A member of the group tries to convince other group members to accept the decision of his/her group. 6. Student responses are discussed within larger teams. 	idea generation, the ability to solve problems, analytical skills, cooperation within the groups and leadership qualities
Team-based learning	Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are given a reading task with an open ending that is to be completed in a team. 2. Students discuss their possible variants with group members to find a proper solution. 3. Student teams can be given a challenging task, such as solving a problem or applying theoretical knowledge in a real-life or professional situation. 	ability to give arguments, usage of theoretical knowledge in practical situations, imagination, communicative abilities
Discussions in small groups	Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A teacher presents a problematic question to students. 2. Students discuss, generate ideas, analyze in groups of five within a certain period of time (15 minutes). 3. Students share their ideas, present their analysis and resolutions. 	critical thinking, public speaking, and active listening skills
Group projects	Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student groups prepare projects in professionally oriented topics. 2. Projects are presented to other groups. 2. Projects are peer reviewed (according to the speaking abilities, use of media, presentation of the material, originality of ideas). 	creative abilities, elaboration, presentation skills, self-management skills

Furthermore, it is advisable to change the seating arrangements, use the latest technology, apply modern methods of teaching English [8], and create a comfortable atmosphere and a learner-friendly environment at the lessons. For such purposes it is possible to use discussion forums/boards for asynchronous discussions, Skype, Zoom, online chats for synchronous collaboration, web-based language learning programs etc.

Collaborative learning is beneficial for the modern foreign language learning environment. Collaborative foreign language learning involves students into active participation in the learning process, making them active knowledge builders and autonomous learners. Moreover, usefulness of collaborative learning is that it turns learning into a truly active process, develops critical thinking, public speaking and active listening skills and provides peer interaction and support in learning. Through peer interaction students improve their foreign language competence, cooperation and problem-solving abilities, share their ideas and responsibility, elevate foreign language learning skills, and reflect on the learning results.

The teacher has to implement modern collaborative approaches and strategies which are the most appropriate for a certain group of students. In English classroom environment it is useful to implement such collaborative learning activities as group problem-solving, team-based learning, group projects, brainstorming and others. It is also important to create a learner-friendly environment for successful collaborative learning.

Further researches are connected with the study of future economists' cooperation and collaborative learning via informational technology usage in the process of foreign language training.

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