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## **ROLE PLAYS AND BUSINESS GAMES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**Abstract.** The article considers the role of role-playing and business games in the formation of communication competence as the key element in foreign language learning, highlights the importance of games in the process of teaching and shows the educational impact of games on the development of students' cognitive skills and personality qualities.

**Key words:** role plays/role-playing games, business games, communication skills, game methods, communicative competence.

**Introduction.** The main goal of teaching a foreign language in a non-linguistic university is the development of communicative competence of future specialists. The introduction of interactive learning methods for the purpose of forming a competence approach can be implemented quite promisingly through classes with the use and application of business or role-playing games. Role-playing is just one part of the learning strategy known as the communicative approach, which guides students to build and put into practice their own knowledge and language skills.

The implementation of the communicative approach means that the formation of foreign language speech skills and abilities occurs through and thanks to the students' foreign language speech activity, and the process of learning a foreign language is built adequately to the real process of speech communication. The communicative approach determines the goals, principles, content and methods of teaching a foreign language, and teaching methods, in turn, are implemented in methodological techniques. One of the most effective and appropriate techniques when working with students is the use of a role play in teaching and learning. The educational value of the game lies in its very nature. The game always involves emotions, active thinking, attention and imagination. The use of the game method of learning contributes to the development of students' cognitive activity in language learning. The very name

"role-playing game" indicates that in this game students get a certain role that they have to play. The role-playing game orients students to planning personal speech behavior and predicting the behavior of the interlocutor. The role-playing game involves the element of reincarnation of the student as a representative of a certain social group, profession, etc. Because of this, role-playing games are often perceived by students as a real reality: students get opportunities for self-expression carried out while performing such roles. Role-playing is an effective means of simulating various communicative situations that may arise in real life. Each player acts as part of a social environment of others and exhibits a pattern within which he/she can try out his/her own or group behavior. The ultimate goal of the role play is to practice communication skills and abilities.

The communicative approach includes the following aspects: knowledge of how to use the language depending on various purposes and functions; knowledge of how the language changes in one or another communicative situation (e.g., knowledge of differences between the formal and informal language, oral and written language); the ability to create, read and understand texts of various types and nature (e.g., stories, interviews, dialogues, reports); the ability to maintain a conversation in a foreign language even under the conditions of a rather limited lexical and grammatical base of students. Game-based learning methods are aimed at the formation and awareness of the students' personal motivation for learning, their behavior in the game and in life, i.e., the ability to form goals and programs of their own independent activity and predict the immediate results. The use of game methods allows artificially reproducing communication situations, immersing the student in intercultural communication, creating the necessary conditions for communication in a foreign language, and making the learning process more attractive and interesting. Moreover, it is the role play that creates favorable psychological conditions for students in the classroom, when they are able to overcome their fears of communicating in a foreign language with their friends in situations close to real every-day and professional communication. In this way, we consider the game as a situational-variant exercise, where an opportunity is created for multiple repetition of

a linguistic image in conditions as close as possible to real linguistic communication with its main features: emotionality, spontaneity, purposefulness of linguistic influence. In this connection, the need to design educational role-playing games, which stimulate various interpersonal interactions of all subjects of the educational process, and which are a means of forming professional communicative competence. This explains the relevance of choosing this topic.

Therefore, the **purpose of the article** is to reveal the place of the role play in the methodology of teaching English.

**Presentation of the main material.** It has been found that communicative games, which usually use communicative methods, are highly effective in learning a foreign language. Participants of such games solve communicative and cognitive tasks by means of a foreign language. From this point of view, the core purpose of communicative games is the organization of foreign language communication in the process of revealing a specific communicative problem. After all, communicative games have a high degree of visibility and provide an opportunity to activate the studied language material in speech situations.

In the methodological sense, the communicative game appears as an educational task that includes linguistic, communicative and activity components. Solving a language task involves the formation or improvement of speech skills through the purposeful use of the given language material in speech activity. In turn, the communicative task determines the exchange of information between the participants of the game in the process of joint speech activity. Instead, the activity task models the way of such joint activity of speech partners. Thus, the communicative game is introduced into the educational process as a creative educational task with the aim of creating real conditions for the manifestation of students' thinking activity. This contributes to the formation and development of their intellectual and communicative skills, and hence the basis for realizing the personal potential of students.

In this context, it is appropriate to emphasize that role-playing and business games belong to communicative games of a higher order, as they have increased effectiveness at the level of receiving intercultural communication training. Role-

playing and business games have a number of properties, so it is not surprising that in modern methodical literature they are given considerable attention. This gives reason to conclude that the analyzed type of work is important for improving oral communication, especially when imitating real interpersonal communication in a foreign language.

As evidenced by the experience of teaching Business English and English for Professional Purposes at Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics students appreciate and rank very high game methods of learning emphasising their real practical value. Actually, role-playing and business games contribute to the active involvement of students in the communication process, create a natural atmosphere in class closely related to life situations and make students use active vocabulary in the most appropriate way. Students perceive it, first of all, as a game activity where they try on different roles in different situations. At the same time, they often do not realize the educational nature of the role-playing game. Instead, the teacher consciously considers the role-playing game as a form of teaching communication, therefore, for the teacher, the purpose of the game is primarily the development of students' speaking skills and abilities. Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that role-playing is not an uncontrolled action, although it is accompanied by the realization of important educational opportunities.

There are six main goals of using games in class:

- development of necessary abilities and mental functions;
- development of language skills;
- formation of different additional skills;
- development of the ability to communicate;
- knowledge of cultural facts;
- involuntary memorization of new vocabulary.

The structure of the game includes several stages: the preparatory stage, the stage of conducting the game and the stage of summing up the results. Mandatory components of a role-playing game include roles, plot, initial situation and relations between players. The key role in organising and conducting the role-playing game

belongs to the teacher. The teacher must be able to develop the plot of the game, assign roles taking into account the individual characteristics of those involved, and control the game process. During the role-playing game, each participant is given general information about the role to play. Role cards can also be used. The participant is not free to present his/her own opinion or view on the problem. He/she must play the role of a certain person. Role cards should not contain a lot of information. As a rule, a role-playing game is conducted at the final stage of studying a certain topic in order to consolidate or improve speaking skills. It, in turn, is preceded by consistent work on lexical material, its activation and transformation to the level of speech.

Role-playing can be considered as a technique and means of a student-centred approach. During the role-playing game, students act as subjects of the game process, its active creators. Not only do they make messages on a certain topic but also casually join the conversation, try to support it. They are interested in the opinion of others, agree, argue, defend their position. The game takes place in a lively creative atmosphere and, eventually, the conversation becomes spontaneous and natural, which is the main purpose of the communicative approach. When playing a role even an intellectually passive student is able to perform different tasks that might seem difficult for him to perform in ordinary life. The feeling of equality, the atmosphere of enthusiasm give students the opportunity to overcome their fear and remove the language barrier. The use of role-playing games in foreign language classes allows students to develop the following communicative and intellectual competencies: the ability to flexibly adapt to various social and interpersonal situations; the ability to effectively interact in a team when making collective decisions; the ability to listen to someone else's point of view and argue one's position; ability to analyze received information, select necessary facts, compare, analyze, make decisions; the ability to build the logic of the evidence base when making a decision; the ability to predict possible consequences of their decisions.

A business game as one of the varieties of the role-playing game is also widely used in teaching foreign languages at Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of

Economics. Business games are used for teaching both language and professional skills and concepts related to economics or the business world. This could include contents on corporate or business management, finances, human resources, negotiations, etc. Business games are aimed at developing professional competencies, the ability to make the right decisions in difficult situations, overcoming psychological barriers during communication in a foreign language. This is the fundamental difference between a role-playing game and a business game. The method of organizing a business game also includes three stages: preparatory, conducting the game itself and controlling or analyzing the results of the game.

The business game is based on general game elements, in particular, the presence of roles and situations in which they are implemented. It also models real business situations that students may come across in their future professional activity. Students learn to demonstrate their own position, learn about the opinions of others, tolerantly intervene in the course of the conversation, specify and generalize the arguments expressed, etc. Effective problem solving strategies include the so-called "brainstorming" when the team members offer various options for solving the problem, and after analyzing and assessing all the options, the most meaningful and appropriate are eventually selected.

Business games focus their attention on the most significant aspects of the studied material and help to creatively rethink and assimilate the educational material in the context of its professional significance. They also lead to the activation of students' mental activity, positively influencing their creativity as future professionals. As a result, the principles of professional ethics and etiquette are formed, and hence the basis for acquiring practical skills and experience. It is worth noting that the business game as a methodical technique is multifunctional, because, firstly, it educates the ability to think and make decisions independently; secondly, it enriches linguistic and country studies knowledge; thirdly, trains and consolidates professional knowledge; fourth, forms speech, intercultural and communicative competence. In addition, the business game not only forms, improves and consolidates professional skills, but also ensures the development of professional

thinking. It is noted that in the process of the business game students acquire knowledge both at the level of mental processing of received information and at the level of mastering professional activities and the art of communication in a foreign language.

**Conclusion.** The use of role-playing games and business games in a foreign language class turns out to be quite an effective and motivating method in the process of forming students' communication skills in different professional situations. Thus, role-playing and business games, being important forms of foreign language learning in higher education institutions, are implemented according to a given scenario, which requires not only familiarization with the material, but also entering into a specific image. In most cases, students' starting level of foreign language proficiency is not high enough and, therefore, the active use of game methods is designed to stimulate students' interest in learning a foreign language which contributes to the formation of sustainable motivation.

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