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**КЕЙС СТАДИ КАК ОСНОВНОЙ МЕТОД  
ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ  
ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ ИНОЯЗЫЧНОЙ  
КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ**

*В статье обосновывается целесообразность использования кейс стади как одного из наиболее важных методов формирования делового и профессионального английского языка. Преимущества данного метода обучения состоят в том, что он позволяет осуществлять не только профессиональную иноязычную подготовку, но и способствует формированию профессиональных навыков, критического и аналитического мышления, умению*

*аргументировать и опровергать точку зрения, выявлять проблемы и находить их решения. Метод кейс-стади играет важную роль в формировании культуры делового общения, знаний в области этики деловых отношений и межкультурной коммуникации.*

*Ключевые слова: неязыковая вуз, кейс-стади, профессиональное иноязычное общение, лингвистическая компетенция, профессиональная компетенция, навыки принятия решений, критическое мышление, профессиональное мышление.*

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### **CASE STUDY AS THE KEY TO DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE PROFESSIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE**

*The article aims at analysing the advantages of the case study method as an important tool of developing learners' communicative professional foreign language competence. Based on the communicative approach cases are an effective method in teaching the English language to future specialists since they empower learners not only with the skills of using the language naturally, but also contribute to developing critical thinking and professional mentality. The article considers some methodological issues of teaching financial English to the students of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation using case studies. Students acquire skills how to present their point of view, discuss its importance, suggest a course of action, develop problem solving and decision making skills demonstrating their analytical and managerial skills. Cases have a great potential in teaching business culture and ethics,*

*extending intercultural awareness.*

*Key words: non-linguistic university, case study, professional communication, linguistic competence, non-linguistic competence, decision making skills, critical thinking, professional mentality.*

### **Introduction**

In compliance with the modern educational paradigm the system of foreign language (L2) teaching in a higher educational institution should be based on the competence model of training a professional. Within this new learning paradigm the aims and outcomes of the educational process are defined in terms of competences, the two groups of which (general and professional) are listed in the “Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Professional Education”. Together with the “Sample Syllabus for the Discipline “Foreign Language” for Teaching Bachelors (Non-Linguistic Universities)”, 2011, it serves as the basis for developing communicative competence of future professionals in different areas of specialization.

The concept of communicative competence is a complex phenomenon, including a lot of aspects of language knowledge and skills: being able to use a language for a range of different purposes and functions, being aware when to use formal and informal speech, written or spoken communication, being able to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., reports, lectures, interviews, conversations), knowing how to maintain communication in case of the lack of appropriate vocabulary (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies) (Common European...).

Communicative approach has brought a lot of changes in the methodology of teaching L2: an instruction paradigm which was dominant in the area of teaching English for a number of years has been changed for a learning paradigm where the central figure is a learner [1, p.16]. Student-centered teaching approach has shifted the focus of activity from the teacher to the

learners making use of active learning methods, in which students are central participants solving problems, answering questions, formulating questions of their own, discussing, explaining, debating or brainstorming in classes. Student-centered teaching is also based on cooperative learning, in which students acquire skills of working in teams on problems and projects under conditions that require both collaboration and individuality.

Communicative student-centered approach yields best results when teaching professional English to future specialists using a case study. Case method is a powerful teaching strategy that can build communication and interpersonal skills in addition to imparting to students specialist knowledge and hard skills.

Case studies are very helpful in developing critical thinking. There are no cases without a lot of thinking, analyzing details, inferring, comparing, contrasting. Case studies presuppose digging a lot of information and organizing it in a logic way. The contents and structure of a case may vary but the protagonist is always the same: a problem in a company.

#### **Advantages of case studies in teaching L2**

One of the greatest advantages for students involved in case studies is that the language produced while analysing a problem can be immediately relevant. The language is learned via the interaction; the learners learn by doing the task (Frendo, 2005).

Another favourable effect of doing a case is training and improving skills of giving a presentation, developing confidence and art of public speaking. On the one hand, to present the results of a case analysis in English learners should possess basic skills of giving a short, well-structured talk. On the other hand, every time being involved in a case study they improve and polish their linguistic and communicative abilities with particular reference to presentation skills.

Participating in the discussion of a case may be considered even more beneficial because in the process of discussion students obtain skills of spontaneous speech and learn how to

express their point of view correctly, agree or disagree with their group-mates' opinion, politely interrupt speakers or invite them to talk, they learn how to show that they are willing to speak or when to start speaking and how long to speak without being dominant. They also learn how to ask someone's opinion or how to encourage, persuade and support their partners. Thus, it is the discussion of case solutions that helps our students obtain the so-called soft skills. The ability to listen to what other people are saying and hear their point of view, understand their way of thinking, compare own ideas with those of others and assess them is a great skill absolutely necessary nowadays for highly-qualified professionals in any walk of life. This can be successfully developed in L2 classes, with the help of English, specifically during case discussions.

Another plus of a case analysis is that it fosters the development of writing skills as well. Every student is obliged to submit a report in writing in addition to participating in the discussion. As we can see, in the process of case analysis all skills are honed in an integrated manner. No technique can be more useful, rewarding and giving the sense of acquiring linguistic, communicative and professional, pragmatic and intercultural competence than at the time when students are analysing the case (Golich..., 2000).

#### **Teaching English using cases in the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation.**

As a method of acquiring professional foreign language case analysis is practiced throughout the whole course of studies in our University. We find it absolutely rewarding at all levels of education as it is an inseparable part of the process of learning L2 in a higher educational institution if used properly. However, cases appear to be most useful in classes of English as a subject of choice in the third and fourth years when students work for their bachelor's degree and during their master's course.

A case study method is highly effective because it does not

only enhance developing communicative productive and receptive skills in all areas of language learning but its ultimate aim is to help students acquire professional communicative competence which is the overall purpose of learning L2 of all students.

There are different types of cases and a variety of ways to analyse them. We involve our students in doing cases from different sources: widely usable books on business “English for Business Studies” by I. MacKenzie, “Market Leader” (Pearson, Longman), on-line course “Cambridge Financial English” (CUP). These case studies are a part of topic areas presented in course books, they are content-led and presuppose in-depth knowledge of a specific subject matter. Another source is specially designed books, collections of fictitious cases (“Agenda” by D. Cotton, et al) with lots of tasks in all areas of linguistic activity.

Besides, we find cases in the Internet based on materials that are challenging and relevant for business students and make them suitable for the use in the classroom providing essential vocabulary input, elaborating the system of exercises for training specialist vocabulary, compiling a set of questions for critical understanding of the situation, preparing tasks for discussion, analysis and written home assignments.

When incorporating a case study into the process of teaching we go through several stages. The first stage is activating prior knowledge of the subject the learners have acquired during their previous course. We prepare them for learning, both in terms of linguistic and professional knowledge. The second stage is integrating and processing learning, when students engage with new information and integrate it with what they already know, adding to and revising previous knowledge, being involved in a variety of intellectual tasks. The third stage is the application of knowledge and skills for discussing professional matters and making solutions to the problems analyzed. Establishing bridges between the materials used for developing new skills and those

which the students already possess boosts the process of acquiring linguistic, communicative and professional competence.

There are different ways of using cases in teaching L2. We would like now to present some methodology issues of developing professional communicative competence using case method with particular reference to the topic “Investment Banking. Business Ethics. Obligations to Shareholders”.

Before starting case analysis the students are invited to discuss the questions directly connected to the topic. The purpose of this activity is to recollect basic ideas on the topic they have previously studied either in their majors or in English:

1. What is “IPO”? (What is the equivalent of this term in Great Britain?)
2. What is the purpose of listing? (What is the term preferably used in Great Britain?)
3. What type of bank is involved in IPO?
4. What is a prospectus? What information is included in a prospectus?
5. What is the difference between “equity financing” and “debt financing”?
6. What should a security analyst know about the company which goes public? , etc.

Within the preparatory stage students do some revision of the technical vocabulary and financial concepts via different exercises (matching, multiple choice, explaining, giving definition, etc.):

1.	The amount of money a lender receives for a loan or an investment, expressed as a percentage , is known as its return or	A.	over-the-counter market
2.	Total amount of stock a company may offer to its shareholders	B.	EPS (earnings per share)

3.	A place, whether physical or electronic, where stocks, bonds, and/or derivatives in listed companies are bought and sold	C.	authorised share capital
4.	A securities market in which dealers negotiate directly, as opposed to an organized securities exchange auction system	D.	yield
5.	A company's profit divided by its number of common outstanding shares	E.	Stock Exchange

During the second stage the students extend their knowledge on the topic reading extensively. Before analysing the case they are obliged to find and study the materials which can contribute to their detailed understanding of the case:

“dog and pony shows”, infusion pumps, road show, the FDA, debt advantages, debt disadvantages, equity advantages, equity disadvantages, wealth maximization, profit maximization, etc.

After that they receive the task to study the case, prepare the analysis of the situation and think of their own solution to the problem.

### **Case study. Pump It Up.**

***Characters:***

***Henrietta Bluefish***, investment banker at Tremper and Co.

***Mr. Peoples***, the Chief Executive Officer of Pump It Up, a manufacturer of infusion pumps

Henrietta Bluefish has been an investment banker with Tremper and Co. for our years. Since Henrietta had an undergraduate degree in biomechanical engineering and an M.B.A, degree, she was the ideal candidate to assist medical supplies companies going public for the first time. Through her contacts with her father and brother, both medical doctors, she met John Peoples, Chief Executive Officer of Pump It Up, a manufacturer of infusion pumps. Impressed by Henrietta, Mr. Peoples confided in her that he was looking for an investment



banker to take his company public. Pump It Up eventually chose Tremper as its investment banker, and the company was scheduled to go public on June 13. The initial prospectus, the “red herring,” had been released to the public. Mr. Peoples had just completed a series of meetings (“dog and pony shows”) in late May with security analysts from the underwriting group. Pump It Up is a major supplier of infusion pumps to hospitals and outpatient clinics. Its new line of infusion pumps, Vision Pump, can monitor up to 20 pumps via a computer terminal located at a nurses’ station. The FDA had approved the clinical trials of Vision Pump 60 days earlier. Vision Pump will eventually replace the company’s current line of infusion pumps, and management expects that this product will substantially increase its share of the market. On the night of June 11, Henrietta attended a dinner party at a friend’s house. She overheard a doctor, in the course of a casual conversation, complaining about his stressful life, in particular the past month. Two of his patients died quite unexpectedly in early May and both patients had been hooked up to Pump It Up’s Vision Pump system. The hospital’s medical staff investigated the cause of death in both cases and concluded “it was possible” that Vision Pump could have caused the deaths. Of course, the medical staff had notified Pump It Up in mid-May of the findings, and the company had assured the hospital that it would do its own investigation of the matter. Henrietta was surprised that Pump It Up had never mentioned this investigation to her firm or to any of the members of the underwriting group. After some reflection, she realized that, to protect himself, the doctor may have fabricated or distorted the incident. On the morning of June 12, Henrietta called Pump It Up to confirm the doctor’s story. Sure enough, the company said that these incidents had occurred. Pump It Up had investigated the matter and concluded that the doctor had used the pumps incorrectly. No other deaths had occurred, and the FDA had allowed the trials to continue. Henrietta, concerned about the initial public offering

scheduled for the next day, was puzzled about what course of action she should take.

*Author: David Seltzer, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin, 1992 (Minicase, 1992).*

To help students make their judgements reasonable and logic, we make use of a seven-step analysis suggested in the teaching notes posted on the web site of University of Wisconsin, which turned out to be very useful for us being teachers of English and not specialists in investment banking. Learners begin to approach problems in a focused, confident way that leads to well-reasoned conclusions. The questions provide careful thought and help focus attention on specific aspects of the case.

- ✓ *What are the relevant facts?*
- ✓ *What Are the Ethical Issues?*
- ✓ *Who Are the Primary Stakeholders?*
- ✓ *What Are the Possible Alternatives?*
- ✓ *What Are the Ethics of the Alternatives?*
- ✓ *What Are the Practical Constraints?*
- ✓ *What Actions Should Be Taken?*

Students analyse the case thoroughly at home and in class exchange their points of view. In fact, it is rarely that they are unanimous, more often than not the discussion becomes heated as they continue pressing their own vision of the problem. In some groups the students finish off by voting “to dot the “i’s” and cross the “t’s”. Some students present their decisions supported by power point presentation, which makes the discussion especially interesting.

It is quite evident the power of the case method lies in the active participation of the students - during discussion students occupy the centre stage, the role of the teacher is a “guide on the side”.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the case study method has a great teaching potential. Via case studies in English learners can practice various functions of

L2 and various vocabulary depending on the case matter. They acquire professional skills in business, management, finance and economics combined with topical issues of business culture and business ethics. What is probably most valuable in a case study method is the fact that learners practice the productive language skills in a natural way. They learn the language and at the same time develop their analytical, managerial and interpersonal skills necessary for their professional life.

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