

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING CLASSES WITH NATIVE SPEAKER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES TEACHING

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Summary. Over the past decades an opportunity of cooperating with native speakers in foreign language training, has become a reality. The given article considers the possible versions of interaction in this direction, discusses effectiveness, productivity and prospects of foreign languages for special purposes classes with native speakers' participation. The authors also share their experience and ideas, offering already approved scenarios which can be applied in today's conditions, working out a dialogue with a foreign language speaker.

Key words: native speaker; foreign language for special purposes; intercultural interaction; planning of foreign language classes.

Nowadays the role of intercultural training in teaching foreign languages for special purposes is justifiably recognized. No one would argue that an expert in any professional field is to be ready to interact with his/ her counterparts from other cultures. To ensure successful in such interaction, the individual must understand the part that culture plays in communication, be aware of the differences existing between national cultures, be ready to break down the prejudices and stereotypes about representatives of other countries.

We see teacher's role in intercultural training within professional language teaching not only in providing his/ her students with abundant knowledge of various cultures' peculiarities but also in helping the learners to work out and develop the strategies that can be used to get ready for cultural interaction and cope with cultural diversity in order to succeed in communication [2, p. 112 - 115]. And we consider classes with participation of a native speaker to be one of the most fruitful sources of learning and practicing such intercultural communication strategies so crucial for future professional activity.

Nowadays due to globalization and democratization processes, Russia's entering worldwide business and political community fields, in our country there exist plenty of opportunities for improving one's language skills. A native speaker is no longer a wonder in our parts as it used to be in the beginning of the 1990th after the Iron Curtain vanished. However, the **issue** of *foreign language teaching by a native speaker* is still being debated and teaching and learning communities, in private conversations and on-line internet forum discussions.

Oxford's Dictionary defines a **native speaker** as '*a person who speaks a language as their first language and has not learned it as a foreign language*'. An idea of a native speaker teacher is rather popular in modern language teaching as he/ she can accomplish the following missions as demonstrating authentic language speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar use, identifying and correcting errors in learner's written and oral speech, providing valuable and actual information on the culture of the country he/ she is from [4]. But with the passage of time, the following weak points of a native speaker teacher have become evident: scant knowledge of grammar, lack of language awareness, difficulty of comparing the taught language structure with the mother tongue of the audience [4; 1].

Obviously, much depends on teacher's proficiency and experience, proved by certificates or references. Nevertheless, we do believe that any native speaker of the taught language can contribute much to learning process. In this article we would like to explain what kind of contribution it can be. In addition we are going to tell about several key factors needed to consider while planning a class with a native speaker's participation. Several activities that can animate such a class and involve students into active participation will be described. Working on this article, we drew on our experience of conducting numerous classes with invited foreigners, positive feedback received from our students, and ideas and secrets of language lesson planning provided by Tessa Woodward, an ELT teacher trainer, writer, consultant, in her book *Planning Lessons and Courses*.

As it has been mentioned above, we regard any native speaker as a potential source for planning and holding an interesting, motivating, work- and thought-provoking lesson. Presuming that any person is a valuable source of information connected with his/ her life and working experience, cultural background, we suggest the first step of planning a class with a native speaker's participants – focusing on the topic. What will your guest be speaking about? His/ her family? National holidays? University education in his/ her country? His/ her cultural shock on arriving in Russia? His/ her working experiences? The scope of topics to discuss is limitless. Teacher's choice should be determined by various factors such as students' interests, their study needs, their level of language skills developed, native speaker's eagerness to talk about a particular topic, how a prospective topic corresponds to the curriculum, etc [6, p. 34].

After the topic has been chosen, a thorough conversation with your guest regarding the future lesson needs to take place. We usually ask a visitor to come up with a presentation on the chosen topic. That will help him/ her to work through the material, realize the structure of the talk, think about possible questions the audience can ask. This presentation will also facilitate the students' comprehension of a foreigner's speech [6, p. 102].

We also believe that a native speaker shouldn't be the only one to perform during the class. May your students be active participants of the learning process too. That means they are to be prepared for the class. They will complete the task given by the teacher – to prepare a list of questions related to the class topic for the guest, to find out the information about the class topic or the city/ region the native speaker comes from (what sometimes a rather experienced professionals seem to forget to do before a meeting with foreign counterparts – the damage caused by such forgetfulness sometimes is irrecoverable). Or students can come up with a list of recommendations for a foreigner regarding various everyday life situations, prepare their description of any situation in Russia (e.g., university education, job searching among graduates, public healthcare system) to compare it with the one in the foreign speaker's native country. Such contribution makes students see how fruitful the class was for them and the feeling they have played an important part in it proves to be rather motivating in the long run. Thus, personalization as one of the key factors of activating their language knowledge is created [3, p. 53]. Eventually, students themselves come with the ideas of lessons conducting demonstrating their creative potential combined with understanding how a talk can be structured to become more productive and contributing for both sides (the skill always needed in planning meetings with international partners, colleagues).

Then the lesson comes. We usually start such classes with presenting the speaker. If students master the foreign language even in the pre-intermediate level they can introduce themselves. Sometimes we start with guessing what the speaker might be, where he/ she is from. Or the guest reveals himself/ herself by answering the questions prepared by audience.

During the class teacher plays a rather crucial part though not obvious at first sight. Allowing the foreign guest to take the central stage, at the same time teacher should be at hand motivating and encouraging students to take part in class, removing obstacles in and facilitating speaker-audience communication, tracking the lesson. Though if teacher sees the native speaker feels quite an ease, the students communicate fluently and smoothly, and a special atmosphere of mutual communication and openness is being created, it is recommended to leave a classroom for some time. Our experience shows that in this case students feel completely free to communicate, thus, their conversation with the guest can be richer as all the apparent barriers vanish. Needless to say, the situation requires teacher to be in tune with audience and to be eager to facilitate students-foreign guest communication without being bossy.

When a class is over, next step is getting feedback from students. The information collected will help teacher to find out the major difficulties students encountered on communicating with the native speaker (the language used by speaker, tempo of his/ her speech, his/ her accent, etc.), the positive impact the class has had (realizing their ability to understand foreign speech, motivation raised, new knowledge about foreign culture acquired, etc.) [5, pp. 119-120]. Feedback point is vital for both students

who can see their achievements in language learning [3, pp. 118-119] and the areas of language they should work harder and teacher who can get aware of what aspects to consider in future when prepare next class with a foreigner as well as while teaching the foreign language in general [6, p. 230]. We also ask students to ponder on the output the classes with native speakers can have for their future professional activity. And we are pleased to see that the learners recognize among the results developed speaking and listening skills, abilities to build up a conversation with a foreigner, increasing knowledge of other cultures and peculiarities of language such as non-verbal communication, paralanguage, etc., rising avoidance of intercultural misunderstanding and prejudices, better understanding of their native culture and the way it differs from other cultures. There is no doubt that such skills can contribute greatly to their professional success on the international arena.

The conclusion

As it is stated in the article, holding a foreign language class with a native speaker's participation requires particular preparation, thorough planning and thoughtful moderating from a teacher. Only in this case such a class will be beneficial for language learners. Classes with foreign guests bring out the following effects crucial for language learning/ teaching process:

- learning about foreign culture in various aspects;
- demonstrating by students their language skills in communicational situation very similar to a real one;
- rising student's motivation and their interest for the foreign language which undoubtedly facilitates language learning process;
- shaping skills that enable to make up a dialog with a foreigner with consideration of his/ her language and cultural background peculiarities;
- increasing positive attitudes toward representatives of different cultures;
- increasing awareness of problems in intercultural communication caused by prejudices and counterproductive stereotypes;
- developing strategies of planning and conducting a successful communication with a foreign counterparts.

The named effects will emerge in future professional communicational domain of today's student and will definitely contribute to his/ her professional success at international level.

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