Developing Students' Communicative Competence in Business English

Studentų verslo anglų kalbos komunikacinės kompetencijos ugdymas

STUDIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES / KALBŲ STUDIJOS

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Abstract

The ability to communicate in Business English (BE) is a great advantage for young specialists to become successful in the global market. The fact that students lack accuracy and fluency in speaking BE encouraged the authors of this study to carry out the research at Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU) from February 2014 to June 2014. The target students were 62 first year learners of the Faculty of Economics and Management who had BE as a compulsory subject. The research aims to investigate and suggest an appropriate system of effective factors, strategies, and active methods allowing students to develop the ability to produce BE terms, lexical phrases, and word combinations in impromptu situations. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been used as the main teaching strategy supported by active imitative and non-imitative methods based on team work.

The study reveals that a creative use of imitative and non-imitative methods affects long-term memory. Consequently, learners acquire the ability to retain and recycle the necessary BE vocabulary and grammar structures, and start producing them spontaneously in speech. By involving learners in creative activities we get them to practise an important sub-skill of using a language: thinking creatively. It leads to genuine communication and prepares learners for using BE instrumentally outside the classroom. The research has confirmed that teamwork provides students with the instruments of effective self-direction as well as with the necessary skills of collaborating, cooperating, sharing, and socializing. Thus, teamwork creates safe and student-friendly environment which is an important prerequisite to develop BE communicative competence.

KEY WORDS: communicative language teaching, competence, active imitative and non-imitative methods, teamwork, questionnaire, interviews, assessment.

Introduction

In the past decades the influence of English is evident. It is fast becoming the language of global communication. Multinational companies, internet communication, studies and research abroad, and future employers demand good spoken commands of English.

Unfortunately, only a limited number of the first year students at Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU) are capable of using English in a meaningful and comprehensive way. The results of preliminary testing at the university in the years of 2012, 2013 and 2014 revealed that only 20 % of the first year learners were able to speak English with sufficient degree of competence. The reason for that might lie in the fact that state and school exams in English are not aimed at checking school learners' spoken English skills but are focused on checking their reading, listening and writing abilities. Therefore, teachers in the English classrooms don't inspire learners to be more willing to communicate in the target language. It is a regretful fact that in the classroom, students spend much time mastering grammar rules, doing various tests, memorizing vocabulary. This means that they are learning language rules, but not learning to use the target language. Consequently, the majority of school graduates who have studied English for over 9 years are not able to use it as a means of communication. Besides, teacher-centered model that is still prevailing in the foreign language classrooms may be another reason for learners' insufficient degree of speaking English. Therefore, activation of students' performance by making teaching/ learning attractive and useful for helping learners to speak accurately and fluently on Business English (BE) topics becomes the main goal of this research.

The research aim is to determine a framework in which effective factors, strategies and active imitative and non-imitative methods could be used appropriately for helping students to acquire BE communicative competence.

The research objectives are as follows:

_ To analyse the reasons of students' anxiety in the classroom;

_ To determine the essential factors and effective active imitative and non-imitative methods of learning aimed to develop BE communication skills;

_ To develop a motivated system of strategies and active team-based methods appropriate for acquiring BE communicative competence;

_ To estimate the efficiency of applied methods on students' BE spoken skills.

The research methodology refers to the active educational theory developed by J. Piaget (cited in Butkienė, Kepalaitė, 1996), the basic principles of which are the following:

_ The student is the subject of the learning process.

_ The student gains experience through active communication and cooperation and develops, thus, his/ her personal style of experience accumulation.

The active educational theory was closely related to the confluent teaching (Grendstad, 1996), i.e. the rational and emotional powers of the student, his/ her feelings and imagination were joined to serve one end – to acquire knowledge, ensure its durability, and gain communication skills.

The research methods: the analysis of related scientific literature, questionnaire, interviews, observation, statistical and comparative analysis of the obtained data.

Novelty: the development of BE communication skills has not been researched in Lithuania yet. The authors elaborated the technique that enables to introduce BE terms into long-term memory effectively by working in teams as well as applying active imitative and non-imitative methods. As the number of contact hours for foreign language at university is being

reduced, this technique proved to be especially effective for the development of BE communication skills. Students are strongly encouraged to be creative and get used to flexible usage of BE terminology in diverse business situations impromptu.

Classroom Research: *Theoretical and Methodological Background for Developing Students' BE Communicative Competence.* Though today almost every career requires a sound knowledge of English, the first year students of Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU) who entered the university in the years of 2012, 2013 and 2014 possessed a low level of spoken English proficiency. Young people especially from small towns and rural regions displayed very poor reproductive thinking and speaking. A lot of them showed high-anxiety of communicating with groupmates and preferred to be silent throughout all classroom activities. There are numerous anxiety-provoking sources in the classroom, such as speaking activities, negative classroom experience, a harsh teaching manner, inability to comprehend, the learners' learning style, the learning context (Samimy, 1994; Reid, 1995; Oxford, 1999; Phillips, 1999; Nascente, 2001). To overcome learners' unwillingness to communicate in the classroom it is necessary to decrease language anxiety during practical language classes by creating a more relaxed, enjoyable learning environment. To accept this challenge the authors of this paper decided to carry out the research at ASU from February 2014 to June 2014. The target students were 62 first year learners of the Faculty of Economics and Management who had BE as compulsory subject. The students had 3 hours a week which amounted to 44 contact hours of instruction. They were taught by 3 teachers.

The first stage of the research. An attempt was made to clarify the reasons that caused anxiety to communicate in the classroom at school. For this reason in a questionnaire survey students were asked to reflect what factors made them feel anxious and unwilling to speak English in the classroom. The answers to the given statements are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Factors Causing Learners' Anxiety in the Classroom

No.	Statements characterizing the reasons for learners' anxiety to speak English	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
		yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
1.	Poor knowledge of grammar and vocabulary	36	26														
2.	Lack of oral practice in the class			56	6												
3.	Lack of confidence					43	19										
4.	Fear of negative evaluation							38	24								
5.	A harsh teaching manner									40	22						
6.	Fear of tests											45	17				
7.	Lack of teachers tolerance and patience													38	24		
8.	Unfriendly classmates' attitude															14	48

To get more exhaustive explanations concerning the reasons for the learners' anxiety and unwillingness to speak BE in the classroom, the students were invited to participate in the interview and provide information on what classroom activities the learners were engaged to acquire vocabulary and master grammar at school. The traditional method appeared to be memorizing the words offered in the manual. Moreover, the learners were given lists of words they were expected to memorize and then they were tested on a weekly basis. In this way, vocabulary for all topics was covered, and learners were supposed to have learned the necessary lexis to speak in impromptu situations on a suggested topic.

It is not surprising at all that because of lack of oral practice 56 learners experienced emotional stress. The interview revealed that teachers didn't offer techniques that could aid vocabulary and grammar retention and recycling, that is, "the word or grammar unit didn't pass from receptive to productive status" (Read, 2000). Besides, the learners were not engaged into various communication activities that could ensure oral skills development. Consequently, 36 respondents felt emotional discomfort and preferred to be passive during classroom activities. 38 students had fear of negative evaluation. In the interviews they claimed that most of the teachers didn't assess the results objectively, didn't praise them for the efforts in task performance. Therefore, to diminish stress we applied sometimes informal assessment and were particularly attentive to assessment methods because there are students who study more for marks but not for acquiring knowledge and gaining skills. It should be mentioned that 43 students out of 62 pointed out that they lacked confidence. This means that learners possess a very low self-esteem level, i.e. feelings of self-worth that are dependent upon the achievement of necessary outcomes of speaking English. 45 students indicated that they possessed fear of tests. This can be related to the lack of teacher's tolerance and patience while providing feedback, which perhaps, was not clear, detailed, or specifically tailored for slow-paced students who usually experience high-level anxiety. It is not surprising that 38 learners pointed out that their teachers lacked tolerance and patience to give the time to improve, show initiative and take interest in their achievements. 14 students claimed that they were anxious to receive classmates' negative attitude.

The analysis of both questionnaire and interview data allow us to affirm that traditional teacher-centred teaching is not an effective way to develop students academically and socially. Thus, the further step of the research was to find a common ground for success in developing learners' BE communicative competence by creating the most suitable and efficient teaching/ learning environment.

The second stage of the research. Undoubtedly, the success of developing BE communicative competence much depends on appropriately chosen pedagogical environment. The idea that a foreign language could be learned by memorizing lists of vocabulary and grammar rules and by continuous reference to one's native tongue has been rejected by the majority of foreign language teachers. We share the views of Canale and Swain (1980), Savignon (1997), Breen and Candlin (2001), Ohta (2001), Cook (2008), Alcon and Safont (2007), Mehisto *et al* (2008), Pachler (2009), Richards and Rodgers (2014), who consider Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the most helpful for learners to start using BE correctly as well as appropriately, i.e. in accordance with the socio-cultural code of the target language. The reason for CLT success lies in the fact that it is based on integrated approach. It means that linguistic skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, phonetics are being taught and mastered alongside with communicative skills.

Several researchers have attempted to define the elements of communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980) have identified four components, Breen and Candlin (2001) have defined three "knowledge systems" that contribute to communicative competence, Savignon (1997) has described five components of communicative curriculum (see Table 2).

Table 2

Definitions of Communicative Competence.

Canale and Swain (1980)	Breen and Candlin (2001)	Savignon (1997)
Communicative competence covers:	**Communicative competence** covers:	**Communicative competence** covers:
Grammatical competence – knowledge of the rules of the language and skills in using them.	**Ideational knowledge system** – factual knowledge of the world (concepts, purposes for language).	**Language arts** – reinforces the rules of the language through systematic practice.
Socio-linguistic competence – using the correct language level for a given situation.	**Interpersonal knowledge system** – knowledge of social behaviours, relationships (communicative strategies – gestures, tone of voice, etc.).	**Language for a purpose** – emphasizes message rather than the form/ structure (students use the language to achieve goal).
Discourse competence – linking thoughts logically and correctly.	**Textual knowledge system** – knowledge of the form of the language (grammar, vocabulary, etc.).	**Language for personal use** – highlights the affective domain as well as cognitive abilities.
Strategic competence – using any number of strategies to overcome gaps in language knowledge.		**Theatre arts** – includes role playing and simulation activities.
		Beyond the classroom – involves real interaction.

As it is reflected in the definitions the authors define the concept of communicative competence as a synergic combination of personal qualities, skills of various types and subject understanding. The common feature that runs through all definitions of communicative competence and CLT requires linguistic skills to be gained alongside with communication skills paying special attention to the activation of students' performance.

In our research we support Canale's and Swain's (1980) point of view that classroom activities should give ample opportunities for learners to acquire grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic competences. To achieve this goal, classroom activities were organized by engaging students into active participation and interaction.

The previous research based on hard and soft skills development (Klimovienė, Statkevičienė, Barzdžiukienė, 2012) and the current study suggest that the below mentioned factors can influence the development of communicative competence.

1   **The use of both left and right cerebral hemispheres** because, as neuroscientists claim, they determine different actions of the learner. The left hemisphere fulfils the requirements of logical laws, controls analytical thought and verbal information, while the right brain deals more holistically with imagery and generalizations. Therefore, general understanding of the whole can be achieved only by their mutual operation.

2   **Structural approach to subject matter.** With this purpose in mind, grammar rules were expressed by means of generalized tables and figures related to illustrative language exercises. The exercises included recognition of grammatical phenomena, filling in gaps, structure formation, etc. Such a system allowed to consciously apprehend language laws.

3   **Information transmission from short duration memory to that of long duration.** This is partly determined by the learner's personal interests, abilities, views, values and previous learning experience. On the other hand, man's ability to receive information as well as hold attention is limited: adults can hold attention for 20–30 minutes. This was the main reason why learning methods were being varied every 30 minutes. This activity variation served as a stimulus to arouse curiosity and develop imagination. Imagination is a great power – it adds meaning to presented material. By employing imagination consciously and purposeful-

ly learners can apprehend the subject matter more profoundly. More than that, imagination sharpens the learner's perception and, consequently, allows better concentration.

4   **Connecting of the subject matter with young man's feelings**, because the only way to make knowledge personally important is to relate it with real life.

5   **Differentiation and individualization of the learning process.**

6   **Assurance of the feedback.** Feedback encompasses not only correcting the learners but also assessing them. It should be noted that error correction can have not only positive but also negative impact on students' confidence and motivation, especially in oral production (Sakai, 2004). Therefore, during communicative activities, such as making Power Point presentations, participating in class discussions, meetings or negotiations we haven't interrupted students to point out their errors. They were corrected after the activity ended. This helped us not to undermine the learners' self-esteem.

7   **Favourable relations between educators and students.**

8   **Creative implementation of active teaching methods.** The latter factor received utmost attention, for only active teaching methods containing numerous game elements and offering possibilities for imagination development can encourage analysis, synthesis, evaluation and implementation of the knowledge acquired and the skills gained.

The third stage of the research. 62 learners of the faculty of Management and Economics formed 4 homogeneous groups. Group 1 consisted of 17 learners, group 2, 3 and 4 of 15 learners.

To foster more effective classroom activities the students were informed during the first session that a significant portion of their final grade for the course would be based on how effectively they participate in class activities, both in terms of the number of times they contribute and in the quality of their contributions. Besides, there was established a class rule not allowing the students to say 'I don't know'. The students were not required to know, but they were expected to think. So, if a student was asked a question and he/ she didn't know the answer, he/ she was to think, to guess, to speculate, and to wonder aloud (Klimovienė, Urbonienė, Barzdžiukienė, 2010).

The teaching strategies and methods applied depended on the students' knowledge acquired, skills gained, goals to be attained and material to be covered. The final assignment of class activities was a team based project. In fact, we cannot expect obvious results and fast improvement in oral performance. It requires patience, creativity and a lot of preparatory work in the class. Therefore, classroom activities were organized by the following steps:

Step 1. In BE field learners' spoken fluency is predetermined by BE active lexis as well as a vast number of lexical phrases and word combinations. In order to foster the students' learning of BE lexis we applied rehearsal techniques based on repeating and combining strategies. For this reason the students were engaged in the following classroom activities:

_ contextualized vocabulary practice,

_ matching exercises,

_ personalized writing using a pre-taught BE lexis, followed by peer-discussion enhancing oral skills (Janulevičienė and Kavaliauskienė, 2001).

_ recording discussions or presentations on BE topics, followed by detailed analysis of the recordings.

Rehearsal techniques are useful for BE lexis acquisition but they do not lead to a sufficient level of lexical fluency. Undoubtedly, learners need more language development practice that will provide ample opportunities to acquire not only linguistic competence but also socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic competences, the development of which is a prerequisite to achieve communicative competence in BE.

Step 2. An effort was made to activate the students' potential of oral communication. For this reason CLT was applied because it creates conditions to facilitate realistic communication. Students have different learning experiences, learning styles, varied attitudes and expectations. Therefore, we were flexible and employed different active non-imitative and imitative methods that helped the learners acquire a certain strategy for conducting the conversation and gaining skills in interacting with other groupmates' strategies.

In BE classes we used such active non-imitative methods as:

1. Discussion.

2. Debate.

3. Meetings.

Among widely employed active imitative methods the following ones can be mentioned:

1. Role-play – to imagine that you are somebody else in an offered situation and consciously copy the behaviour and views of this "somebody".

2. Improvisation – to create and play a situation employing one's own ideas.

3. Spontaneous improvisation – improvisation of any previous thinking over.

4. Portrayal – focus on a particular aspect of a topic.

The above mentioned classroom activities helped the students review BE lexis and lexical phrases and retain them in long-term memory. By involving the learners in creative activities we got them to practise an important sub-skill of using a language: thinking creatively (Tsai and Feher, 2003). This led the students towards greater communicative ability and prepared them for teamwork activities.

Step 3. Business requires teamwork skills to meet the challenges of the global market. In the response to this demand the learning design of BE classes at a more advanced communicative stage incorporated mini team based projects. For this reason each group was subdivided into 4 teams. The size of teams was from 3 to 5 learners. Every team represented a chosen company (e.g. Group 1 team A – Girteka, team B – CM logistics, team C – Achema Group, team D – Vitara, etc.). The teams worked on problems important to the related companies within the general topics linked to the syllabus requirements. Some of the analysed issues – "How to launch a successful advertising campaign", "How to run a franchise successfully", "How to win customers' loyalty", "What should be done to open subsidiary abroad", "What should be done to make a company competitive in the global market".

Successful teamwork depends on a number of attributes. Tarricone and Luca (2002) have provided the following ones:

‗ Commitment to team success and shared goals – team members understand their purpose and share their goals, they enjoy regular interaction with each other and, therefore, are satisfied with their work.

‗ Interdependence – teammates interact to help each other accomplish the tasks. They realize that they cannot succeed unless the other members of the team are successful.

‗ Interpersonal skills – team members discuss issues openly. They are respectful and supportive of one another, and realistic in mutual expectations.

- Open communication and positive feedback – teammates maintain open, non-threatening communication based on constructive criticism and open dialogue.
- Appropriate team composition - teammates need to be fully aware of their specific team role and understand what is expected from them in terms of their contribution to the team and the task.
- Commitment to team processes, leadership and accountability – team members need to be accountable for their contribution to the team. Therefore, effective leadership is needed. Team leaders should divide workload fairly among members, and make decisions by consensus.

Successful and unsuccessful teams were defined taking into consideration the above mentioned attributes.

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews has indicated that 14 teams out of 16 were successful in accomplishing the chosen task. 2 teams experienced severe problems in the project because of low level of communication and collaboration both in terms of quantity and quality of contributions. Besides, the leaders of these teams didn't succeed in establishing a positive atmosphere. They failed to apply appropriate task strategies to monitor their teammates' performance. Moreover, slow-paced learners were unhappy because some of their teammates were very competitive and didn't try to help them when they were experiencing difficulties. One team had an inactive team leader. Luckily, one member informally took the lead and the team managed to complete the task. Undoubtedly, it led to dissatisfaction with team learning situation. For this reason not all the learners enjoyed working in teams. But the majority of them found teamwork activities rewarding and fascinating. The teammates enjoyed working collaboratively and valued open communication and positive feedback, as well as informal, relaxed, helpful team atmosphere that motivated them to accomplish the task and promoted one another's success. The majority of team leaders showed a continuous activity throughout the project. They consulted the team before making any major decision and offered assistance if needed. The students' answers at the interview have proved that the most successful teams were those whose team members put effort not only in the task but also in teamwork. It is evident that teamwork activities had a positive effect on BE communicative competence development because the students had a chance to find themselves in learning environments promoting real learning in real contexts (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

Results and Discussion

To achieve a more holistic picture of the situation, this study triangulated methods through the use of questionnaires, interviews and observation.

At the end of the course the students were asked to evaluate the usefulness of active-team based methods on students' BE communicative competence. The questionnaire was administrated to 62 respondents (see Figure 1).

79 % useful   13 % useless   8 % 50/50
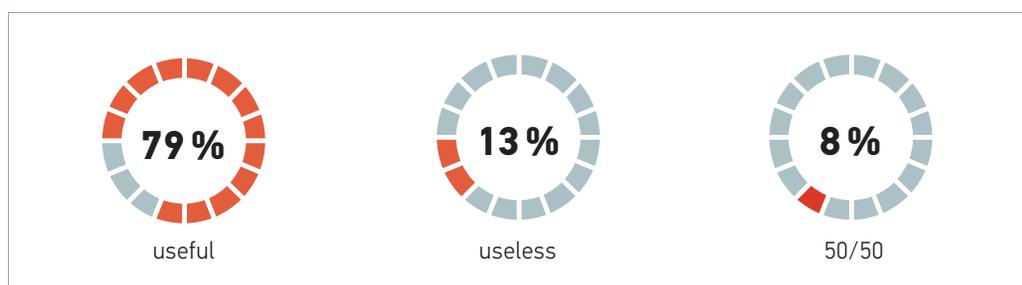
Figure 1

Students' attitude to the applied methods on BE communicative competence

49 students (79 %) valued classroom activities as useful for the development of BE communicative competence, 8 students (13 %) could say neither 'yes' or 'no', and only 5 students (8 %) gave a negative feedback. Data was also collected from focus groups interviews. 48 respondents participated in them. The learners' answers were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The students admitted the following values of the BE course:

_ opportunity to develop cooperation, negotiation, communication and interaction skills;

_ opportunity to master problem solving, decision making and leadership skills;

_ opportunity to improve questioning skills;

_ opportunity to promote tolerance, empathy and loyalty;

_ opportunity to relieve anxiety;

_ opportunity to get support from colleagues, learn a lot from each other;

_ opportunity to have freedom to make decisions, find information and show initiative,

_ opportunity to get better and faster outcomes;

_ opportunity to gain confidence;

_ opportunity to be complimented, supported and encouraged by the teacher;

_ opportunity to develop critical and creative thinking;

_ opportunity to solve problems faster than working individually.

Although modern technologies are highly appreciated nowadays, the majority of students gave preference to positive, mutual relationships among team members. The respondents' answers in focus groups show that the applied active team-based methods contributed to the development of valuable transferable skills that can ensure more effective competition in the employment market and pursue further career advancement.

The fact that the majority of students fostered communication and interaction skills proves that an expected synergy effect was achieved. According to Putnina (2006), synergy effect serves as a stimulus to spontaneous creativity that is an important prerequisite to achieve communicative competence in BE. Moreover, students improved questioning skills. This fact is very promising, because questions are the force that powers critical thinking. Our observations allow us to claim that the balance between critical and creative thinking leads to spontaneous speaking. A large number of students admitted that they had freedom to make decisions, find information and show initiative. No doubt, academic freedom increases students' responsibility and unlocks their motivation to prepare better for classroom activities as well as stimulates their attendance.

Many of our first-year students have had unsuccessful learning experience in speaking English at school, therefore, it was important to assess their BE oral proficiency at the end of the BE course.

The assessment of oral proficiency is one of the most problematic aspects in language teaching, especially what concerns an objective evaluation of spoken skills. It was decided to assess students' BE spoken skills taking into consideration their lexical complexity, i.e. BE active lexis, phrases, structures, strengthened emotions of simulation discourse (discussions, meetings, debates, presentations) as well as such discourse categories as topic management, self-selection of the problem, framing and sequencing the activity to achieve a desired outcome. Each category of the discourse was assessed by a numeric score from 1 to 3, where a score of 1 represents no evidence of communicative skills, 2 – demonstrates adequate communicative skills, 3 – represents communicative competence.
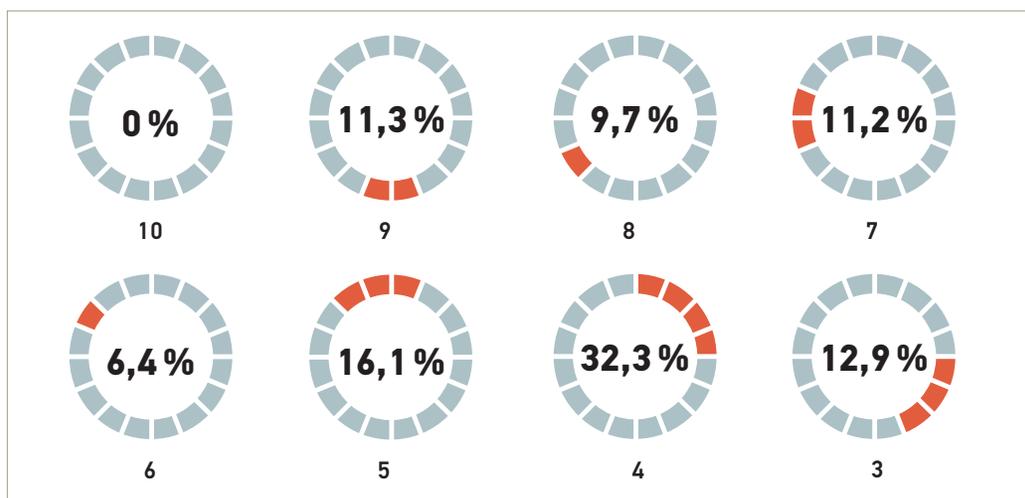
The results presented in Figure 2 reveal that only 32.2 % of 1st year students of the Faculty of Economics and Management majoring in logistics and management had sufficient skills in speaking English.

Active teaching methods based on teamwork activities have positively resulted in BE verbal skills (see Figure 3). 6 students out of 62 demonstrated spoken language skills that were evaluated as 10 (9.7 %), 13 learners received 9 (21.0 %). It means that 19 students (30.6 %) acquired BE communication competence. 18 students got 8 and 7 received 7. It shows that 25 students (40.3 %) developed BE communication skills and 18 students (29.1 %) failed to communicate in BE.
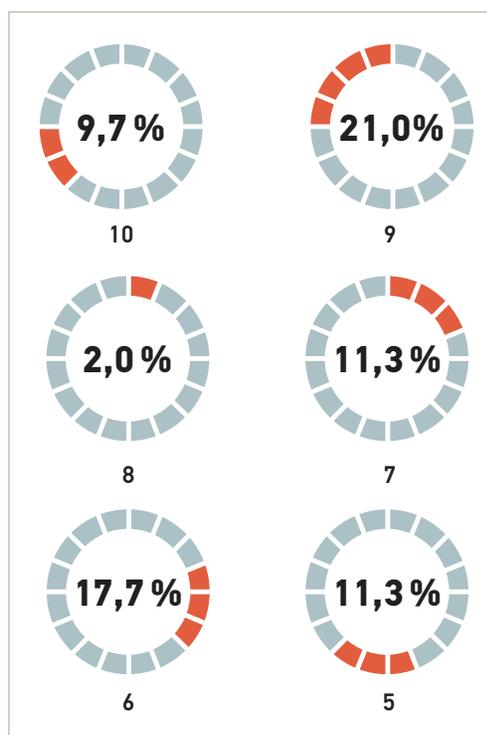
The research performed shows that the right balance of active imitative and non-imitative methods based on teamwork creates a positive and stimulating environment for students to be active in sequencing discourse in class activities. Teamwork leads to more content-driven, student-to-student interaction, more conversation-like atmosphere in the classroom and hence to a more natural intercourse. To ensure the validity of the data obtained, the classroom research has to be repeated involving more learners and teachers from different faculties of the university.

The study has proved that the applied active imitative and non-imitative methods based on teamwork can be both a challenge and a success for the development of BE communicative competence if the below mentioned factors are taken into consideration:

Conclusions

_ Findings suggest that an appropriate team composition is essential in the creation of successful team. Team members should be aware of their specific role in the project or in any other classroom activity. Our observations enable us to claim that the most success-

ful teams are those whose leaders have a sense of achievement, i.e. the will to win. Due to their enthusiasm the teammates start functioning as willing performers. The learners of such teams succeed in creating a high synergy level which helps them develop ability to benefit others, feel compassion to their colleagues. It furthers development of humanistic personality because learning is based on cooperation rather than on competition.

_ The research confirms that in order to avoid conflicts students should be aware of the relation between tasks and grades. Therefore, a teacher has to be attentive to his/ her marking system and assessment methods. Undoubtedly, the wrong assessment discourages learners to fulfil the task properly, because marks influence the students' consciousness and feelings. In case of hesitation it is advisable to do the assessment in favour of the student. Assessment that rewards students' efforts, not just the result, is very beneficial. Therefore, it is reasonable to let students know on the first day of studies that a significant portion of their final grade for the course is based on how effectively they participate in class activities.

_ Creating safe and student-friendly learning environment is an important prerequisite for the development of BE communicative competence. This can be achieved by regarding for students' request for attention or information, avoiding interruptions when the student hasn't finished, showing some empathy and understanding of their feelings and fears, supporting them in idea generation. This can be achieved by complimenting students' achievement more often, by skillful questioning which strengthens students' commitment to their roles, focuses their linguistic efforts and encourages them to find the right answer rather than memorize the assigned task. Thus, it prepares students to use BE in realistic situations outside the classroom.

Summing up, we can affirm that this classroom research could be useful for teachers of English who seek perfection in developing learners' skills in speaking BE. Furthermore, it gives us insights into how we teach and how our students react to it.

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Santrauka

Giedrė Klimovienė, Raminta Barzdžiukienė, Nijolė Račkauskaitė. Komunikacinės studentų verslo anglų kalbos kompetencijos ugdymas

Gebėjimas bendrauti versle angliškai – tai didelis jauno specialisto privalumas, padedantis jam siekti karjeros globalios rinkos sąlygomis. Deja, paaiškėjo, kad spontaniško pokalbio verslo temomis metu, daugumos Aleksandro Stulginskio universiteto (ASU) studentų anglų kalbos žinios nepasižymėjo reikiamu taisyklingumu ir sklandumu bei vartojamų verslo terminų bei žodžių junginių tikslumu. Dažnai juos keisdavo geriau įvaldytais paprastesniais bendrinės anglų kalbos atitikmenimis.

Būtina padėti studentams įgyti verslo anglų kalbos komunikacinę kompetenciją. Tuo tikslu 2014 metų pavasario semestre 62 Ekonomikos ir vadybos fakulteto pirmakursiai buvo įtraukti į tyrimą. **Tyrimo tikslas** – parengti lanksčią ir dinamišką aktyviųjų imitacinių ir neimitacinių metodų bei komandinio darbo komunikacinių pratybų sistemą, teikiančią galimybę ir stipriems, ir silpniems studentams siekti verslo anglų kalbos komunikacinės kompetencijos jiems tinkamu tempu ir mokėjimo lygiu. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad tinkamai panaudoti aktyvieji imitaciniai ir neimitaciniai metodai įgalina įtvirtinti reikiamus verslo anglų kalbos terminus, posakius ir gramatines struktūras ilgalaikėje atmintyje. Todėl studentai įgyja gebėjimų spontaniškai bendrauti įvairiomis verslo temomis, t. y. išsiugdo labia svarbų kalbos įgūdį – kūrybiškai mąstyti.