

THE BENEFITS OF INTERACTIVE LECTURES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The article will discuss the advantages of interactive lectures in the teaching of foreign language to learners in higher learning institutions. The proposed study will examine how interactive lecture-based learning could lead to high student engagement, better communicative competence, and better learning outcomes than conventional lecture-based learning methods. A qualitative study design was used, which entailed the use of questionnaires and semi structured interviews of 40 undergraduate students who were pursuing foreign language studies in various universities in Uzbekistan. The results show that interactive lectures assist in encouraging students to be active, enhance critical thinking, become more motivated, and leave more opportunities to have meaningful practice with the language. The findings imply that the application of interactive methods to the lecture-based teaching approach can bring considerable advantage into the quality of foreign language instruction in institutions of higher learning.

Keywords: *interactive lectures, motivation, student engagement, active learning, communicative competence, professional development programs, technology-enhanced activities, interactive instruction*

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqolada oliy ta’lim muassasalarida xorijiy tillarni o’qitishda interaktiv ma’ruzalarning afzalliklari yoritiladi. Tadqiqotda interaktiv ma’ruza asosidagi ta’lim an’anaviy ma’ruza usullariga nisbatan talabalarning faolligi, kommunikativ kompetensiyasi hamda o’quv natijalarini qanday yaxshilashi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot sifat (qualitative) metodologiyasiga asoslangan bo’lib, O’zbekistonning turli universitetlarida xorijiy tillarni o’rganayotgan 40 nafar bakalavr talabalar o’rtasida so’rovnomda va yarim tuzilgan intervylar o’tkazilgan. Natijalar interaktiv ma’ruzalar talabalarni faol ishtirok etishga undashi, tanqidiy fikrlashni rivojlantirishi, o’rganishga bo’lgan motivatsiyani oshirishi hamda tilni mazmunli amaliy qo’llash uchun keng imkoniyatlar yaratishini ko’rsatdi. Tadqiqot xulosalariga ko’ra, ma’ruza asosidagi ta’lim jarayoniga interaktiv usullarni joriy

etish oliv ta'lim muassasalarida xorijiy tillarni o'qitish sifatini sezilarli darajada oshirishi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: *interaktiv ma'ruzalar, motivatsiya, talabalar ishtiroki, faol o'rganish, kommunikativ kompetentsiya, kasbiy rivojlanish dasturlari, texnologiya yordamida boyitilgan faoliyatlar, interaktiv ta'lim.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются преимущества интерактивных лекций в преподавании иностранных языков студентам высших учебных заведений. В предлагаемом исследовании анализируется, каким образом интерактивное лекционное обучение способствует повышению вовлеченности студентов, развитию коммуникативной компетенции и улучшению результатов обучения по сравнению с традиционными лекционными методами. В исследовании использован качественный дизайн, включающий анкетирование и полуструктурированные интервью с 40 студентами бакалавриата, изучающими иностранные языки в различных университетах Узбекистана. Результаты исследования показывают, что интерактивные лекции способствуют активному участию студентов, развитию критического мышления, повышению мотивации и созданию большего количества возможностей для осмысленной языковой практики. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что внедрение интерактивных методов в лекционное обучение может значительно повысить качество преподавания иностранных языков в учреждениях высшего образования.

Ключевые слова: *интерактивные лекции, мотивация, вовлеченность студентов, активное обучение, коммуникативная компетенция, программы профессионального развития, мероприятия с использованием технологий, интерактивное обучение*

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, institutions of higher education globally have been experiencing tremendous changes in the face of globalization, technological progress and evolving student demands. The education of foreign languages and especially the teaching of the English language needs to be practiced in ways that encourage communication, critical thinking, and autonomy of the learner. In spite of these requirements, traditional lecture-style teaching is still one of the prevailing forms of teaching in many universities, including the ones in Uzbekistan. Interactive lectures offer some challenges such as inadequate teacher training, large classes, and lack of enough time to teach. Also, there is a possibility of some students being not willing to participate initially because of lack of confidence or poor language proficiency. These drawbacks indicate the necessity of a gradual integration and institutional reinforcement. Traditional lectures are usually defined by teacher-centered learning,

restricted interaction with students, and passive learning. This kind of learning is appropriate to the transmission of theoretical knowledge, but it is not relevant to the development of practical language skills: speaking, listening, and interaction. Consequently, low motivation, low engagement and lack of meaningful use of the target language have become common issues among students in higher education due to the implementation of interactive lectures instead of conventional lectures. Students become active participants rather than passive listeners through the application of interactive lectures, discussions, problem-solving activities, group-based tasks, technology-enhanced activities, and lectures. This article explores the advantages of interactive lectures to higher education students and to highlight their role in improving teaching and learning processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though interactive method of teaching has been identified to be effective in many studies, very little research has been done on application of interactive lectures in higher education in EFL settings, especially in developing countries. In most higher learning institutions, classroom sizes, insufficient time to teach, and conventional methods of teaching prevail. As a result, there is a necessity to explore the possibility of incorporating interactive lectures into teaching foreign languages at the tertiary level and what advantages they can bring to the students in that situation. There are numerous education theories that interactive lectures are based on. Constructivist theory of learning is a theory of learning that was proposed by Vygotsky and it focuses on the fact that knowledge is constructed through socialization and the process of learning. Also, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes the significance of meaningful communication and interaction between learners in the process of language development. The student-centered learning theory also advocates interactive lectures as it encourages active participation of learners, autonomy and critical thinking. These theoretical approaches combined give an excellent basis to use interactive lectures in teaching foreign languages because Bligh (2015) highlights that the lectures are effective in the provision of information but not in the development of high-order thinking. On the same note, Biggs and Tang (2018) state that passive learning conditions usually lead to superficial learning as opposed to profound learning. Active learning theories assert the significance of the student engagement of the learning process. According to Prince (2004), active learning involves instructional strategies that help students get involved in serious activities and make them reflect on what they are engaged in. Freeman et al. (2014) offer a piece of empirical evidence that active learning can be an effective way to enhance the performance of students and decrease the rates of failures in higher education, as well as in the process of teaching a foreign language, communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasizes the importance of interaction as a method and the target of learning a foreign language (Richards, 2017). Interactive

lectures are in line with the principles of CLT as they provide chances of real communication, group learning, and instant feedback.

According to Felder and Brent (2016), interactive learning methods support the different types of learning styles and encourage learner autonomy. Studies that have been carried out in developing and post-Soviet education sectors show that the higher education is still dominated by conventional instructional methods because of the institutional restrictions and insufficient pedagogical education (Altbach, 2017). In Uzbekistan, research indicates that the combination of interactive and student-oriented methods is critical in enhancing foreign language proficiency in students of universities (Ismailova, 2021). Nevertheless, there is little empirical study on interactive lectures as an education method with specific regard to the foreign language, which points to the necessity of conducting further research.

METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative research study aimed at analyzing the perceptions of students through interactive lectures in classes where learning a foreign language was taught. The sample size consisted of 40 undergraduate students who are learning English in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used in the collection of data. The survey was composed of unstructured questions that addressed the learning experience of the students and levels of their interaction, level of their motivation, and perceived benefits of interactive lectures. To obtain a more in-depth insight on the views and experiences of students, 12 students were interviewed using semi-structured. The data were collected and analyzed thematically. Similarities in the themes of student engagement, motivation, language practice, and learning effectiveness were determined and reflected. This method enabled the overall view of the advantages of interactive lectures as looked at by the learners.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study display some important advantages of the interactive lectures in the teaching of foreign languages in the higher educational institutions. Among the most outstanding benefits that were found among the students was an improved engagement. Respondents indicated that interactive learning, discussions, role-plays and problem-solving exercises made them attentive and engaged in the lecture. The given result aligns with the earlier research that has shown that the active learning strategies can contribute to the student attention and engagement in the classroom environment of the university (Prince, 2004; Freeman et al., 2014).

The other most significant advantage was the enhancement of communicative competence. Students have mentioned that interactive lectures gave them more chances to exercise speaking and listening skills on the spot. The activities that involved groups and pairs encouraged cooperation and lowered anxiety levels especially among those students who were fearful to address the entire classroom.

Such findings can be linked to the concept of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that considers meaningful interaction as one of the key elements of language learning (Richards, 2006; Littlewood, 2004). Interactive lectures also had a positive effect on motivation. A large number of the students reported that interactive activities made the lessons more interesting and meaningful, which made them more willing to attend classes and prepare. This observation confirms self-determination theory which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and engagement in improving intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2017). The same was found by Dörnyei, Z (2001) who supported the significance of motivation strategies in learning a second language.

Also, interactive lectures were involved, and it helped in the ability to think critically. Learners claimed that problem tasks, discussions, and reflections helped them to analyze data, share their views, and explain their concepts in the target language. These activities facilitate the development of higher-order thinking skills as suggested in Bloom taxonomy and are critical to the academic accomplishments and professional communication (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). The studied results, in general, are in line with the existing studies on the effectiveness of active learning and interactive instruction in the context of higher education (Bonwell and Eison, 1991; Felder and Brent, 2009). Nevertheless, there were certain difficulties as well: time constraints, the enormous size of classes, and the necessity of systematic training of the teachers were observed. These restrictions indicate that interactive lectures can only be successfully implemented when the lesson is properly planned, supported by the universities, and all instructors are provided with a chance to develop as professionals. The interactive lectures involve the use of diverse methods that aim at involving the students in the learning process. The most popular are Think-Pair-Share activities, brief group discussions, mini-debates, live poll with the help of digital tools, and problem-based questions. Such methods enable learners to train speaking, listening, and thinking skills, keeping a lesson structured as a lecture.

CONCLUSION

The current paper has discussed the advantages of interactive lectures in teaching the foreign language to students in higher educational institutions. The results prove that interactive lectures assist in maximizing student involvement, drive, communicative proficiency, and critical thinking functionality. Interactive instruction has a dynamic and learner-focused learning environment compared to traditional lecture-based learning. The research recommends that institutions of higher education ought to advise foreign language teachers to incorporate interactive technique in their lectures. Teachers can be assisted in this process by means of professional development programs that pay attention to active learning and instructional innovation. Through interactive lectures, the universities can enhance the quality of the foreign language teaching and equip students with the necessary academic and

professional challenges. The long-term effect of interactive lectures on language proficiency and the comparison of various interactive strategies in various educational settings may show the benefits in near future.

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