

Project-Based Learning at the University of Bihać

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ABSTRACT – *According to Jeremy Harmer lack of connected speech might be result of language drills. It seems by the book, lack of connected speech manifested as lack of spoken fluency is obvious among 3rd year students at the Department of English Language and Literature. They need to pass demanding grammar test. Therefore, language drills are used frequently. They are used to this type of activities going through various sets of exercises during the session. However, we don't speak enough. Problem of lack of connected speech is manifested as lack of spoken fluency. This skill is usually developed by an ELF. However, some changes will be made. Therefore presentations and project-based learning will be introduced. I would like to prevent side effects of my work. Therefore, I plan to introduce PBL (Project-Based Learning). In this paper I will present Class issue or challenge to be resolved, Innovation(s), Plan of action, Timeline for making the change, Expected benefits of presented innovations, Challenges, Solution to challenges, Plan of assessing success of innovation(s). Project presented in this paper is made during the tuition scholarship from U. S. Department of State as part of the E-Teacher Scholarship Program organized at the University of Oregon. The purpose of the paper is to analyse implementation of Project-Based Learning at the University of Bihać.*

Keywords-- project-based learning, spoken fluency, language drills, innovations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina was part of former Yugoslavia. Most people used to learn Russian which is similar to Bosnian and much easier than other languages. When they had to use language to communicate they always used to say that they know how to speak Russian.

Some of them used to learn German because they had to know language to find better job in Germany, Austria, etc. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina international forces had to cooperate with local people. They didn't know how to speak. Only several among majority used to work as interpreters.

If we take into account that English is global language we can hardly find educated person who is not able to speak. Due to peer pressure student do not want to be different nowadays.

Ability to speak is very important and very much advocated. Goal of language is communication. Writing is important, accuracy is important, grammar is important...

When I was head of Department of English Language and Literature British Council didn't send ELF at the University of Bihać. Students who were exposed to American English speak strange mixture of Bilingual with strong accent. They tend to speak fast making mistakes as if they are not able to process language as fast as they would like to. Competence is maybe better than performance.

My job is to teach students grammar. After long sessions and language drills they eventually pass the test. If they don't pass the test they ask their parents, who studied Russian and cannot understand why they didn't get point for tiny mistake such as present simple, past participle, etc., to complain.

However, speaking skill should be developed. In the past semester I had been teaching English 5. Teaching goal was to enable advanced C1 students to pass Cambridge Proficiency Test. We used to meet twice a week and deal with various issues. However, we did not speak enough. Most of these students prefer to remain passive during the communication activities. Their interest is placed on passing the test which is currently extremely important. Speaking skills are usually developed by native speakers, usually from US. Native speakers from England usually stay in Sarajevo and do not teach at the University of Bihać.

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND CLASS ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED

Table 1: Course description and class issue or challenge to be resolved

1. Course title:	Savremeni engleski jezik V PFEJK 503 Modern English 5
2. Course Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of this course students will be able to speak fluently.
3. Age/number of students:	Two groups of 12 male and female students at the age of 20 and 21.
4. Linguistic level of students:	Advanced/C1
5. Number of class hours per week and duration of course:	Two sessions: 1 hour and 30 minutes; 2 hours and 15 minutes. Duration of the course: 1 semester/spring-term/15 weeks.
6. Classroom set up:	Large air-conditioned classroom with movable desks, blackboard and map of the USA.
7. Access to materials and technology:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom is equipped with computer, projector and CD player. <u>N. B. List of sources available at the library or at the American Corner, scanned (available at request) or available at the Internet</u> Capel, A. & Aspinall, T. <i>Masterclass CAD</i>, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010. Gude, K. <i>Advanced Listening and Speaking CAD</i>, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010. Jones, L. <i>New Cambridge Advanced English</i>, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003. <u>Flower, J. <i>Phrasal Verb Organiser</i>, LTP: London, 2001.</u> =PRIMARY SOURCES <i>Macmillan English Dictionary</i>, Macmillan Education, Oxford, 2006. <u>O'Connell, S. <i>Proficiency</i>, Longman, Edinburgh, 1996</u> <i>The Penguin Pocket Thesaurus</i>, Penguin books, London, 2004. <u>Vince, M. <i>Advanced Language Practice</i>. Macmillan, Oxford 2007.</u> <u>Wilson, J.& Newbrook, J. <i>Proficiency Gold</i>, Longman, Edinburgh, 2000.</u> <u>Wright, J. <i>Idioms Organiser</i>, LTP, London, 1999.</u> Bailey, Stephen (2007). <i>Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students</i>. New York: Routledge. Jordan, R.R. (2004). <i>Academic Writing Course</i>. Essex: Longman. <u>King, Stephen (2000). <i>On Writing</i>. New York: Scribner.</u> Morley, David (2007). <i>The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Oshima, Alice and Hogue, Ann (1999). <i>Writing Academic English</i>. New York: Pearson. <u>Strunk, William Jr. and White, E.B. (2000). <i>The Elements of Style</i>. London: Longman.</u> Zinsser, William (1994). <i>On Writing Well</i>. New York: HarperCollins. Internet sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.better-english.com/exerciselist.html http://owlenglish.purdue.edu/handsouts/grammar www.grammarbook.com www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar Vocabulary Instruction and Reading comprehension - From the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication http://www1.aucegypt.edu/academic/writers/ http://www.howtowriteanessay.com/
8. Other important information about students or setting:	Students meet an ELF once a week at the American Corner.
9. Class issue or challenge to be resolved:	Course is mainly focused on language drills with problem of lack of connected speech manifested as lack of spoken fluency. This skill is usually developed by an ELF. However, some changes will be made. Therefore presentations and project-based be introduced.

3. INNOVATION(S)

Course Modern English 5 is mainly focused on language drills. The issue of lack of connected speech is manifested as lack of spoken fluency. Therefore oral presentations and projects will be introduced.

Fillmore (1979) identifies four categories of fluent speakers. The first one is the speaker who speaks fast, that is, who fills time with talk such as a disk jockey. The second is the speaker whose speech is coherent, complex and dense. The third type of fluent speaker is one who knows how to use language appropriately, and in a variety of contexts. The fourth type of fluent speaker controls aesthetic functions of language, being creative and imaginative.

For Lennon (1990), there is a “broad sense” and a “narrow sense” for fluency. The broad sense is represented by “the highest point on a scale that measures spoken command of a foreign language” (p.389). The narrow sense refers to “isolatable components of fluency such as correctness, idiomaticness, relevance, appropriateness, pronunciation, lexical range, and so on” (p.389).

Faerch, Haastруп, and Phillipson (1984) include fluency as a component of communicative competence, and define it as “the speaker’s ability to make use of whatever linguistic and pragmatic competence they have.”

According to Jeremy Harmer lack of connected speech might be result of language drills. As I’ve already said, and it seems by the book, lack of connected speech manifested as lack of spoken fluency is obvious among 3rd year students at the Department of English Language and Literature. They need to pass demanding grammar test. Therefore, language drills are used frequently. They are used to this type of activities going through various sets of exercises during the session. However, we don't speak enough. Also, I would like to prevent side effects of my work.

3.1 Innovation #1: Oral presentation(s)

At the beginning of semester various topics will be suggested to students. They need to select one topic and prepare oral presentation on Subjunctive, Relative clauses, Emphasis, etc. They will present individually before mid-term and end-term test. Criteria for assessment will be presented in rubric.

During oral presentations they will achieve confidence to speak in front of their peers. This will enable them to speak in front of the public. They will also develop spoken fluency as their colleagues are rather demanding. Though adolescents they still like to show off which might motivate them to present successfully. This activity will be similar to English across the curriculum. I will ask students to prepare presentation on Subjunctive, Emphasis, Preparatory it, etc. This will be helpful for mid and end term test. They will present these features in an acceptable manner allowing their peers to ask questions. This will be useful as they behave differently towards their peers. They are not inhibited to ask questions and discuss ambiguous issues. This activity will help me not to work as much as I used to.

3.2 Innovation #2: Project-based learning

After each unit students will be divided into 4 groups. Working with their peers they will make poster on each theme we've discussed. They should use L2 while working on the project. When they finish, the poster will be presented by all group members. Members of other groups will do assessment.

According to Bloomfield's taxonomy creativity is the most important. Presenting each theme in unique way they will be able to develop their potentials to the maximum. Ability to work as a member of team will be useful for LLL and social development. Presentation of each project will enhance spoken fluency, develop confidence and critical thinking and create sense of achievement.

4. PLAN OF ACTION

Ability to speak fluently is complicated mental process. I cannot say that I can make those students, who had other courses before coming to 3rd year, fluent, but I can try.

We plan to introduce presentations which will include developing speaking skills and enhancing knowledge of grammar. This task will be prepared in several stages.

Stage 1: Video Presentation

Video presentations will be used to illustrate presentation skills. (Presentation will be retrieved from You Tube.

You Tube: How to Do a Presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEDcc0aCjaA>

(retrieved on 17th August 2014)

Stage 2: Comparison

Students will watch several presentations. They will compare presentations. (Presentations will be retrieved from You Tube.

You Tube: Presentation Bad/Good Examples <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5c1susCPAE>

(retrieved on 17th August 2014)

Stage 3: Production

3.1 Students will be asked to choose one theme and make power point presentation. Themes are the following:

- 1) Past and perfect tenses (p. 10/11)
- 2) as versus like (p. 16)
- 3) Conditional: basic patterns (p. 24)
- 4) wish/if only (p. 24)
- 5) Unreal versus real tenses (p. 25)
- 6) Inversion after negative adverbials (p. 38)
- 7) Participle clauses (p. 42/43)
- 8) Preparatory it (p. 55)
- 9) Gerund and infinitive nominal (p. 55)
- 10) Modal verbs (ability, obligation, advice) (p. 66)
- 11) Modal verbs (degrees of likelihood) (p. 70)

References: Newbrook, J. and Wilson, J. *Proficiency Gold Coursebook*. London, Longman, 2000.

Rubric will be introduced to students who will be asked to prepare handouts and questions.

Stage 4: Presentation

Students will present every week during Monday sessions. Professor will write down mistakes made during the presentation. Criteria presented in the rubric will be used. After 10 minutes long presentation, students will ask questions.

Using presentations during language drills will be innovation and useful change. On the other hand, it will help me not to work as much as I used to. Moreover, students prefer to see presentations made by their colleagues. In this way they focus on presentation indirectly.

I would also like to introduce project-based learning. As I've already said it's difficult to motivate students to speak. Therefore, I will ask students divided into four groups to make poster and present it to other group members. I didn't use this activity because I teach adult students. However, I will try to introduce this change. I will divide students into four groups and asks to make poster. Poster will be done after each unit. Themes are the following:

- 1) People and relationships;
- 2) Education and ways of learning;

- 3) Cinema and television;
- 4) Advertising and consumerism.

Members of other groups will do assessment. Presented innovations are connected to class and syllabus.

Resources:

Newbrook, J. and Wilson, J. *Proficiency Gold Coursebook*. London, Longman, 2000.

Authentic materials:

You Tube: How to Do a Presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEDcc0aCjaA>

(retrieved on 17th August 2014)

You Tube: Presentation Bad/Good Examples <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5c1susCPAE>

(retrieved on 17th August 2014)

You Tube: How to make an Academic Poster - Introduction (Tutorial part 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLuMRqcZhrI> (retrieved on 17th August 2014)

5. TIMELINE FOR MAKING THE CHANGE

Presented innovations will be introduced during fall-term 2014/2015.

Students will be asked to present according to the following schedule:

6th October 2014 - Past and perfect tenses (p. 10/11)

13th October 2014 - as versus like (p. 16)

20th October 2014- wish/if only (p. 24)

27th October 2014 - Unreal versus real tenses (p. 25)

3rd November 2014 - Inversion after negative adverbials (p. 38)

3rd November 2014 - Participle clauses (p. 42/43)

10th November 2014 - Preparatory it (p. 55)

17th November 2014 - Gerund and infinitive nominal (p. 55)

24th November 2014 - Modal verbs (ability, obligation, advice) (p. 66)

1st December 2014 - Modal verbs (degrees of likelihood) (p. 70)

On 6th October students will be divided into four groups. There will be probably 3 students in each group (group 1, group 2, group 3, and group 4). Rubric for assessment will be presented to students. Students will be asked to make poster after revision of each unit e.g. after 1st Unit "Friend in need" members of group 1 will present poster on "People and relationships."

Students will present their posters according to the following schedule:

27th October 2014 – group 1 "People and relationships"

27th November 2014 – group 2 "Education and ways of learning"

8th December 2014 – group 3 "Cinema and television"

22nd December 2014 group 4 "Advertising and consumerism"

6. EXPECTED BENEFITS OF PRESENTED INNOVATION(S)

6.1 Presentation workshop students will develop confidence to speak in front of the public. Students will develop ability to speak fluently. Shy students will be motivated to express themselves.

6.2 After poster presentation student will develop socially, working as member of one team. Group member will get the same grade which should motivate equal participation. Students will get opportunity to express their creativity. Speaking skills will be developed during the presentation prepared by each group member. Critical thinking will be developed through peer assessment.

7. CHALLENGES

7.1 Students tend to use L1: Therefore, this might be anticipated problem. Another problem which might occur is lack of motivation to ask questions and participate in discussion after presentation.

7.2 Adults are not as motivated as young learners to make poster. Anticipated problem is lack of motivation. We anticipate that student will not evaluate their colleagues fairly.

8. SOLUTION TO CHALLENGES

8.1 Students will be asked to use L2. Course participants will be asked to prepare questions and participate in discussion after the presentation.

8.2 Lack of motivation will be prevented using competition of group members with members of other groups which will hopefully motivate each group member to work hard.

8.3 Rubric for poster assessment will be used to prevent anticipated problems during peer feedback.

9. PLAN OF ASSESSING SUCCESS OF INNOVATION(S)

9.1 Clear plan for assessment success of the innovation will be shown in Rubric presented in the appendix of this project. It is important to say that professor will write down mistakes made during the presentation. Though evident errors may occur during the oral presentation evaluation and error analysis will be done after the presentation in order to prevent language anxiety. Rubric for oral presentation will be used as a tool for presentation assessment. Criteria used in the rubric will be presented to students after selection of themes for presentations.

Poster Assessment Rubric will be given as appendix of this project. Rubric assessment criteria will be presented to students when they select theme of poster presentation. They will use printed rubric to give feedback after each presentation.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my very great appreciation to the tuition scholarship from U. S. Department of State as part of the E-Teacher Scholarship Program organized at the University of Oregon and the anonymous referees of this paper for their favourable evaluation.

11. REFERENCES

Works cited:

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Resources:

[1] Newbrook, J. and Wilson, J. *Proficiency Gold Course book*. London, Longman, 2000.

Authentic materials:

[1] You Tube: How to Do a Presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEDcc0aCjaA>

(retrieved on 17th August 2014)

[2] You Tube: Presentation Bad/Good Examples <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5c1susCPAE>

(retrieved on 17th August 2014)

[3] You Tube: How to make an Academic Poster - Introduction (Tutorial part 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLuMRqcZhrI> (retrieved on 17th August 2014)

Appendix 1

(Marking Scheme for evaluation of the Presentation at the University of Bihać/Department of English Language and Literature and Department of English Language and Pedagogy/academic 2014/2015.)

CRITERIA	Outstanding realization of the task set 5	Good realization of the task set 4	Inadequate realization of the task set 2	Poor attempt at the task set 0	Score
Visual aids	Sophisticated use of visual aids, entirely appropriate to the task set.	Use of visual aids successfully meeting the requirement of the task set.	Limited and/or inadequate use of visual aids.	Severely limited and use of visual aids.	
Stylistic devices • Register and format	Effective use of stylistic devices, register and format wholly appropriate.	Good use of stylistic devices register and format wholly appropriate.	Little evidence of stylistic devices; some attempt at register and format.	No evidence of stylistic devices; little or no attempt at register and format.	
Structure 1. Organization	Skillfully organized and coherent.	Well organized and coherent.	Some attempt at organization, but lacks coherence.	Poorly organized, leading to incoherence.	
Content • Clarity • Originality	Excellent development of topic. Impresses the audience and has a very positive effect.	Good development of topic. Has a positive effect on the audience.	Inadequate development of topic. Has a negative effect on the audience.	Little relevance to topic, and/or too short. Has a negative effect on the audience.	
Language • Presentation skills. • Language presented on slide.	Minimal error in grammar, structure and pronunciation. Speaker is laud enough.	Minor error in grammar, structure and pronunciation. Speaker is sometimes too laud or not laud enough.	A number of errors in grammar, structure and pronunciation which sometimes impede clarity. Speaker is sometimes too laud or not laud enough which sometimes impede clarity.	Numerous errors in grammar, structure and pronunciation which often impede clarity. Speaker is too laud or not laud enough which often impede clarity.	

Written by Senka Majetić. Last updated 17/8/14.

Appendix 2

(Marking Scheme for evaluation of the Poster Presentation at the University of Bihać/Department of English Language and Literature and Department of English Language and Pedagogy/academic 2014/2015.)

Peer Feedback

STUDENT: _____ DATE: _____

CRITERIA	Outstanding realization of the task set 5	Good realization of the task set 4	Inadequate realization of the task set 2	Poor attempt at the task set 0	Score
Layout of poster	Excellent visibility with adequate font size.	Average visibility meeting the requirement of the task.	Limited and/or inadequate visibility.	Severely limited visibility.	
Stylistic devices <ul style="list-style-type: none">Register and format	Effective use of stylistic devices, register and format wholly appropriate.	Good use of stylistic devices register and format wholly appropriate.	Little evidence of stylistic devices; some attempt at register and format.	No evidence of stylistic devices; little or no attempt at register and format.	
Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none">Organization	Skillfully organized and coherent.	Well organized and coherent.	Some attempt at organization, but lacks coherence.	Poorly organized, leading to incoherence.	
Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">ClarityOriginality	Excellent development of topic. Impresses the audience and has a very positive effect.	Good development of topic. Has a positive effect on the audience.	Inadequate development of topic. Has a negative effect on the audience.	Little relevance to topic, and/or too short. Has a negative effect on the audience.	
Language <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presentation skills.Language presented on slide.	Minimal error in grammar, structure and pronunciation. Speaker is laud enough.	Minor error in grammar, structure and pronunciation. Speaker is sometimes too laud or not laud enough.	A number of errors in grammar, structure and pronunciation which sometimes impede clarity. Speaker is sometimes too laud or not laud enough which sometimes impede clarity.	Numerous errors in grammar, structure and pronunciation which often impede clarity. Speaker is too laud or not laud enough which often impede clarity.	

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