

ON SOME ASPECTS OF A JIGSAW LISTENING AND SPEAKING METHOD IN AN EFL CLASSROOM FOR THE HUMANITIES

The purpose of any foreign language course is to develop all four skills so that students can communicate and generate their own thoughts in the target language. Mastering listening skills and learning to speak a foreign language require more than knowing mere basic grammatical rules and having a certain stock of active vocabulary. Assigning general or specialty topics for listening and speaking in the classroom is perhaps one of the most widely practised ways. Development of listening and oral communicative skills is rather a complicated task for instructors. There are some objective factors that affect the process such as age, sociocultural, emotional (self-doubt, new surrounding etc.) and others. Besides as Tewksbury mentions in one of the articles devoted to specific strategies of the jigsaw method “The aims of in-class group work cannot be met if students do not come to class or participate” [/http://nagt.org//nagt/jgr/](http://nagt.org//nagt/jgr/). Moreover, nowadays language instructors cope with larger classes comprising more than 15 students quite frequently which affects student-teacher communicative interaction in general. This factor in its turn plays a negative role in foreign language acquisition.

The idea of a jigsaw activity is not new. The history of the method goes back to the second half of the XX century. In 1971 psychologist Dr. Elliot Aronson (University of Texas at Austin) was asked to advise schools to fix the problems connected with hyperactivity of the students and discrimination. “Aronson created assignments that made every member of the group equally important. The students had to pay attention and obtain much information from other group members. This allows each member of the group to add a small piece of the larger picture so that they are all important to the group. This teaches the students to rely on each other and reduces their competitive attitudes toward each other because they need everyone in their group to do well because their grade

depends on the other students” /<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jigsaw/>. Experts in foreign language teaching methods tend to believe that a jigsaw classroom is likely to be one of the most efficient methods to liven up and encourage students for more active participation in the class and get higher scores. “Students act as researchers, taking responsibility for learning about various aspects of a larger topic so that they can then teach the rest of the class” /<http://www.jstor.org/stable/>. Generally speaking a jigsaw classroom is considered to be one of the effective methods of a learner/student-centered class. This is especially true for a foreign language class when cooperation among students increases positive outcomes.

This paper is an attempt to highlight intertwined classroom activities, i.e. listening and speaking. So, a jigsaw classroom offers a cooperative learning technique to foster them. Just as in a puzzle each student’s part is essential to get a final product. For this purpose the class is divided into groups of 3-4 students. While forming a group for a jigsaw class the instructor should always bear in mind that the teammates in the groups must be academically stronger and comparatively weaker students equally. In this respect Colosi and Zales believe that “as with all styles of learning, there are some points one must be conscious of if it is to succeed. Absent and academically weak students can pose a problem in this style of learning” /<http://nagt.org/files/nagt/>. On the other hand this gives a chance for a weaker student to make an attempt to participate more actively and rely on a stronger one for assistance. In one of their works Cohen and Lotan defined this kind of grouping in terms of “assigning competence” /<http://www.stanford.edu/>.

So, a jigsaw listening and speaking activity in an EFL classroom can be described as follows: firstly, each group listens to different pieces of the story. At the next stage one or two teammates from each group are sent to the other ones. They are asked questions and have to respond them and give information from the piece they have listened to. Then the groups try to collect the missing parts of the story. And at the final stage of the activity they present the whole story and have to speculate on the essential aspects of the story.

Although this activity is quite challenging and motivating, there are still some obstacles for its implementation. First of all, the teachers need to make multiple recordings of the parts of the listening material, so as the students could listen to them simultaneously in different classrooms. Otherwise the groups would have to wait their turn to listen to their part and will make it almost impossible for the instructor to manage the class in terms of students' concentration and noise.

One of the solutions, though not an ideal one, is as follows. The students are divided into two or three groups and listen to the part of a piece of authentic information in the same classroom. The students of the Department of International Relations and Political Sciences and Journalism, in particular, can be set a task that involves making predictions on what will happen in the nearest future connected with the issue considered in the part of the material they have listened to. At the next stage each group presents its own version of the coming events and gives reasons for it.

There are certainly some more ideas for a successful jigsaw class. One of them supposes that the students listen to different parts of a piece of information in different classrooms. Then groups can work out together the logical order of the passage and discuss the whole material and present their stance.

Another method implies that students listen to different pieces of information in different classrooms and choose which issue or aspect interests them most. Then using Q&A technique the teammates of one group can find out which group listened to the same or similar piece. Then the instructor should assign a particular task to all the groups.

When applying one of the methods mentioned it is advisable to do some pre-listening work. As far as students of International Relations and Political Sciences and Journalism have been mentioned this work may include a discussion of the current events and essential issues speculated by the world leading media. It will encourage the students to recall the latest and current events, to give reasons for this or that particular

happening and get tuned into the subject and be involved in the team-work. To be successful a jigsaw listening class should be finished with a quick review of the issues presented in the material and clearing up of a possible misunderstanding and skipped information and, if there is some time available, extend a discussion.

Summing up, it should be said that a jigsaw listening and speaking is still one of the beneficial methods of a student-centered class. It encourages and motivates students to be engaged in an opinion exchange activity. In addition it emboldens them to view one another as contributors to the task and to realize that they play a fundamental role in the team-work for successful accomplishment of the goal. Furthermore, it is an excellent way of developing such skills as listening to authentic material, reasonable speaking and at last they practise the culture of listening to their classmates.

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Ա. ՊԱՊՈՅԱՆ – Անգլերեն դասընթացում լսելու և խոսելու Jigsaw մեթոդի որոշ առանձնահատկությունների մասին. – Սույն հոդվածում քննության են առնվում անգլերենով բնագիր նյութը լսելու և դրա շուրջ խոսելու հմտությունների՝ Jigsaw մեթոդով զարգացնելու որոշ առանձնահատկություններ: Այս մեթոդը համարվում է օտար լեզվի դասավանդման ամենաարդյունավետ մեթոդներից մեկը: Այն խթանում է լսելու և խոսելու, քիմային աշխատանք կատարելու, բանավիճելու, ինչպես նաև անգլերենով կապակցված խոսք ներկայացնելու կարողությունների զարգացումը:

А. ПАПОЯН – О некоторых аспектах применения метода Jigsaw во время аудирования и говорения в рамках английского как иностранного. – В статье рассматриваются некоторые аспекты развития навыков аудирования и устной речи методом Jigsaw, который является одним из наиболее эффективных методов преподавания иностранного языка. Он не только развивает навыки аудирования оригинального материала, но и способствует развитию связанной речи на английском.