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**ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ
МЕТОДА ДОГМИ
НА УРОКАХ
ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА
КАК СПОСОБ
ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО
РАЗВИТИЯ УЧИТЕЛЯ**

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются основные принципы метода обучения иностранным языкам Догми, а также дается ретроспективное описание, план и анализ урока английского языка, проведенного по методу Догми.

Ключевые слова: *иностраннный язык, метод обучения, экспериментальный урок, метод Догми.*

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**USING DOGME
APPROACH IN A
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM
AS A WAY FOR A
TEACHERS
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Abstract. The article deals with the main principles of Dogme approach and presents the retrospective lesson observation and evaluation as well as the lesson plan of a lesson conducted within the Dogme format.

Keywords: *foreign language, teaching approach, experimental lesson. Dogme approach.*

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Introduction

It was only two years ago that I heard the name of Dogme in connection to English language teaching for the first time. As it seemed completely new to me, I naturally got interested in finding

out more about this approach and was surprised to realise that it is very close to what any teacher of English may have to do at least from time to time either following and responding to their students' interests and needs or trying to compensate for the lack of materials and resources. Although there have been bits of «magic moments» (Harmer) in my lessons, it was not until this year that I considered the possibility of teaching a whole lesson within the Dogme format.

I decided to choose Dogme approach for my experimental practice for several reasons. Firstly, it was a good opportunity to read about the theoretical background and practical applications of the approach I'd been fascinated by for some time already. Secondly, it could give a start to a discussion with the peers who I was going to ask to observe my lesson and with the tutors who gave me an idea to conduct it. Neither my colleagues nor me had ever encountered Dogme in real life, the more interesting it could be to compare our ideas and impressions. Finally, I believed that this approach would make me more conscious of my students' needs, interests and goals.

Background

It was the manifesto of the Dogme 95 Film-makers' Collective with the Danish director Lars Von Trier as their leader that prompted Scott Thornbury to write an article which he himself later called «uncharacteristically provocative». (Thornbury 2005) The film-makers called for production of films using no special effects, artificial lightning, etc. In line with that, Scott Thornbury introduced the idea of returning to «a materials- and technology-free classroom in which language emerges as teachers and students engage in a dialogic relationship.» (Harmer 2007:75)

According to Scott Thornbury himself, «there is nothing very original in Dogme» (Thornbury 2005). The main principles of the new approach to EFL teaching may be traced back to educational theories of John Dewey and Paolo Friere who believed that the skills acquired by the learner could be transferred for use in real-life situations outside the classroom. It is not surprising that the article provoked a heated discussion within the teaching community as it questioned the long-

established principles of EFL teaching: not only the use of course books and handouts, but lesson planning in general. The idea was bound to find both true supporters and outspoken opponents.

Dogme principles

Since the time it was first introduced, there has been an ongoing «debate as to what Dogme is and what it isn't» (Thornbury, S In Marxist EFL 2010). There is only one book, *Teaching Unplugged*, to address in an attempt to find out more about the approach. The key features laid down by Thornbury and Meddings include:

- Dogme has its roots in communicative language teaching.
- Conversation is seen as central to language learning.
- Dogme places more emphasis on a discourse-level (rather than sentence-level) approach to language.
- Dogme considers that the learning of a skill is co-constructed within the interaction between the learner and the teacher.
- The Dogme approach considers that student-produced material is preferable to published materials and textbooks, to the extent of inviting teachers to take a 'vow of chastity' and not use textbooks
- Like task-based approach, Dogme considers language learning to be a process where language emerges rather than one where it is acquired.
- Scaffolded learning where learning is assisted by the teacher through conversations makes effective learning possible.
- The teacher's role is to optimise language-learning affordances, the environment where learners can potentially learn and direct their attention to emergent language.
- The learners' voice, beliefs and knowledge are accepted.

Source: <http://www.myenglishpages.com/blog/the-dogme-approach-to-language-teaching/>.

In close connection with these key features are the three underlying principles of the approach:

Teaching should be

- conversation-driven
- materials light
- focused on emergent language.

Implications for teaching

The purpose of Dogme ELT is to lighten the lessons in terms of materials and make the students the centre of what is going on in the classroom where the students and «the teacher are fully present and not playing roles» (Meddings, L 2000), to increase the engagement and autonomy of students.

In his article «Dogme is still able to divide ELT» which was published in the Guardian, Luke Meddings claims that a lesson can be a Dogme one to different extent, «from Dogme-light to Dogme-heavy." It can be «Talk Dogme» if the teacher just talks to the learners in a natural way on the topic suggested by the course book, or it can be «total emersion" (Full Dogme) if the teacher doesn't plan anything before the lesson and only relies on the emerging language of the students to provide an opportunity for natural conversation. (Meddings, L 2003) However, having no plan doesn't automatically mean having no aim. The teacher may have an aim of the lesson and use all the instruments at their disposal (interaction patterns and different activities) to provide a material-light way to achieving this aim. The teacher may also use the emerging language of the students for a language focus and work towards meeting the needs of this particular group of learners in this particular teaching context.

Worries about Dogme

The blog of «ELT Dogme» Yahoo Group founded in March 2000 has 1521 members now, which clearly shows that the interest in «pedagogy of essentials» is deep enough to keep the conversation going for more than 13 years. The arguments in this blog include a number of worries about the practical implementation of the Dogme principles:

- it can be a real challenge for teachers;
- the appropriateness of Dogme is questionable in the examination context;
- it can create problems for non-native and novice teachers who consider course books a safe guide and rely on them in their work;

- is it an appropriate approach for beginner classes where the students do not have enough language to rely on.

Source: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/dogme/info>.

One more consideration is that of the cultural background. Some members of the blog suggest that Dogme has better chances with Italian and Spanish students who are generally more open to free conversation in the classroom, and it can be inappropriate for Chinese or Korean students who tend to struggle with free-conversation activities and traditionally view the teacher as an «authority" rather than a participant.

Experimental lesson

Research hypothesis

Dogme approach can help develop speaking skills and raise language awareness of as well as building up confidence with lower level learners.

Research Instruments

Two colleagues of mine observed the lesson. They were given Peer Observation Questionnaire which involved looking at how and to what extent the key features and main principles of the Dogme approach were observed.

After the lesson, the students were asked to fill in Learner Questionnaire with the purpose of finding out what their general attitude to the approach taken in this lesson is and what their preferences in terms of teaching and learning are.

My observers and I had a post-lesson discussion in order to analyse the experimental lesson in terms of learners' and teacher's objectives to enable me to better evaluate the outcomes.

Retrospective lesson aims

Main aim: to provide students with the opportunity to enlarge their vocabulary related to the topic of travelling and use this lexis in speaking activities.

Sub-aim: to enable students to practice their speaking skills in pairs, small groups and as a whole class

Retrospective learner objectives:

- By the end of the lesson, the learners
- had been introduced to a number of collocations related to the topic of travelling
 - had been provided with an opportunity to use this lexis in speaking activities
 - had practiced their speaking skills in pairs, small groups and as a whole class
 - had become better aware of the differences in meaning and use, form, and the features of pronunciation of the present perfect and past simple.

Retrospective teacher objectives:

- By the end of the lesson, the teacher
- had got an opportunity to decide to what extent the Dogme approach is applicable to teaching lower-level learners (a)
 - had got an opportunity to see if using the Dogme approach is sufficient to satisfy the learners' needs at this level (b)
 - had got an opportunity to see if the students found the lesson interesting and useful (c)
 - had got an opportunity to see how high the pressure on the teacher is with no support in terms of plan and materials and with the necessity to deal with whatever happens in the lesson (d)
 - had got an opportunity to successfully implement some of the Dogme principles making the lesson more effective for the learners, (e).

Post Lesson Evaluation

a) I feel that this approach worked well with these learners and in this context. The learners generally enjoyed the lesson and many of them commented that they liked speaking for the most part of the lesson. I think that this approach would certainly be a valuable addition to teaching lower level learners. It can definitely be applied when for one reason or another there is no access to course books and copies. Dogme time can be increased in the lesson with the focus on the emerging language and needs of the learners.

b) Most of the students commented that speaking is their priority in learning English. Four students out of seven added that the grammar focus was helpful, too. One student stated that he started

using the language more consciously. On the other hand, three students think that having a course book is a more systematic basis for the lessons. I think that the students would benefit from having instances of Dogme in their lessons but it is hardly possible to set up a course based on the Dogme approach only in the university context.

c) Judging by the answers and comments from Learner Questionnaire, most of the students found the topic of the lesson interesting, felt comfortable in the lesson due to the positive atmosphere and found the lesson generally useful. Many of them underlined they really felt motivated to speak.

d) Generally, I found the lesson format comfortable and motivating. I managed to take on different teacher roles, those of a «participant», «peer», and «interested listener» and was happy to see that the learners appreciated my interest in what they were speaking about and the way they tried to express their ideas and opinions. On the other hand, it was quite challenging to decide on the spot what tasks and activities to organise so that the learners would practice the emerging language and benefit from this or that stage of the lesson. I also managed to use a variety of interaction patterns, which helped the learners sustain their motivation throughout the lesson.

e) Judging by the notes and comments from Peer Observation Questionnaire, I managed to implement the following Dogme principles:

- Rewarding — by encouraging the students to make themselves understood and giving examples;
- Retrieving — by providing prompts on the board and focusing on the language;
- Repeating — by drilling contracted forms (I've, he's, she's)
- Recasting — by paraphrasing using the language the learners were likely to understand (jewellery — «a lot of nice expensive things»)
- Recording — by boarding the grammar forms
- Reviewing — by addressing the differences in meaning and use, form, and the features of pronunciation of the present perfect and past simple.

My colleagues noted that the language focus was teacher-led. It is the area to work on.

My research instruments were appropriate and useful allowing me to view the lesson with some extent of objectivity.

Retrospective Lesson Plan

Timing	Stage Procedure	Interaction patterns	Outcomes
17.00-17.10 (0"10)	<p>T asks Ss what they are going to do in August when the English course is over and they don't have to come to the university every day.</p> <p>Some Ss say they are planning a holiday.</p> <p>W/B: When? Why? Where? T asks Ss to discuss their travelling habits and interests.</p> <p>To fuel the discussion: Are there any more places you'd like to visit?</p>	T-Ss PW	<p>Ss have suggested the topic for discussion.</p> <p>T has identified if the topic is interesting for the group as a whole.</p>
17.10-17.17 (0"17)	<p>T focuses on the language item:</p> <p>Present Perfect v Past Simple.</p> <p>Rationale: The error was made by the strongest student in the group; T assumed that to revise this area would be beneficial for most of the Ss</p>	Ss-T-Ss OC	Ss have revised the differences in meaning and use, form, and the features of pronunciation of the present perfect and past simple
17.17-17.27	T asks Ss to find in their groups of three and four students one thing that they	GW	Ss have discussed their general likes

Timing	Stage Procedure	Interaction patterns	Outcomes
(0"27)	all like doing when they are on holiday. Ss come with the ideas of <i>sleeping a lot</i> and <i>shopping</i> .		and dislikes in relation to travelling and being on holiday, and have agreed on one thing that all of them like doing.
17.27-17.35 (0"35)	T tells Ss they have won competitions for the heaviest sleepers and best shoppers → now two groups have \$ 1000000 and can spend the money but cannot divide it in halves —* they should design the best tour for all seven Ss to spend all the money. Ss discuss their ideas in groups.	GW	Ss have had speaking practice in the context of travelling. Ss have had a natural and spontaneous discussion.
17.35-17.45 (0"45)	Groups present their plans to each other "Round the world trip" "Half a year on the Matdives"	OC	Ss have presented different travel opportunities to spend the money.
17.45-17.50 (0"50)	Ss discuss the plans of both groups, try to persuade each other but find it impossible to agree to change their plans as their interests are		Ss have discussed both ideas and decided to ask for the

Timing	Stage Procedure	Interaction patterns	Outcomes
	absolutely different.		permission to divide the money in halves.

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