

Using tv news in the context of content-based teaching

In the recent past a lot has been said about content-based approach to teaching and this content-based teaching (CBT) method has been considered to be one of the most useful and perspective methods in teaching EFL. CBT supporters stress that it is impossible 'to teach language as if it were a set of patterns or rules or interactions apart from the content' (Crandall 1997). Key questions arisen from this approach are 'What content?' and 'How much content?' CBT supporters say, 'Don't teach a second language, teach content in a second language' (Rodgers 2003).

The necessity of content-based teaching and learning is especially acute for ESP students. The shortage of class-hours and requirements of professional-oriented language skills make it obligatory. All our syllabi and manuals are professional-oriented. No doubt language teachers cannot compete with the academic curriculum, and language lessons content is far from being as profound as traditional academic content. At language classes ESP students deal with ideas and concepts of their future profession but it is impossible to comprise entire scientific courses in content blocks. Much shorter blocks of interesting, meaning-structured units are highly productive in language learning. Even separate sentences used for teaching grammar 'can be useful, interesting, and content-rich' (Rodgers 2003).

In order to increase students' interest to the content studied and to demonstrate its practical importance for improving communication skills it is of particular interest to use TV news and news from the Internet. The students of the environmental department, for instance, can easily find news concerning topics having learnt at the previous classes. In the course of discussion of up-to date information they have opportunity both to use professional vocabulary and grammar patterns and play games aimed to combine language studies with attempts to solve problems existing in real life. Such tasks and discussions can be considered as preparation for their future activity. Thus, learning materials chosen by teachers 'need to be interestingly content-rich' (Rodgers 2003).