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## APPLICATION OF INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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**Abstract:** The world we live in is extremely technological. The children who grow up in this world need to receive information in different ways, to communicate, to socialize and be taught through new methods, to participate more actively in the learning process, to apply different ways for increasing their motivation to work, to discover for themselves a large percentage of the solutions to the set problem situations, and not to receive ready knowledge. In general, their training should be organized innovatively.

One of the possibilities for this to happen is the application of interactive models and methods. They allow for a union between practice, tradition and innovation, help in the learning process to emphasize the experiences that become a source of experience for children and help them solve problem situations in a real-life environment. They also give students the opportunity to participate on an equal footing with teachers in the learning process, to give suggestions and opinions about its organization and course, as well as to interact much more actively with other participants in it. The socialization that provides interactive learning is extremely valuable in a situation where students grow up surrounded by technology and increasingly reduce their face-to-face contacts.

This report presents the results of an online survey conducted immediately after the end of the state of emergency declared in the Republic of Bulgaria in March 2020. 18 English language teachers took part in the survey, mainly from basic institutions of SWU "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad.

The included questions were focused on the application of interactive methods in teaching specifically in English. Respondents also had the opportunity to comment on the positive aspects of this type of methods that they found, the effectiveness and need for the application of such innovative methods, their applicability in the learning process, according to the type of subjects, and emerging problems that they themselves observed when using interactive methods in English classes.

**Keywords:** interactive methods, English language training

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The need for continuous updating, modernization, and the use of innovative factors and technologies in education, according to Bogdanov & Simov (2018), is determined by the need for education to meet current social necessities and the need to stop ignoring the future. „Teaching young learners is always a challenge and requires new sophisticated approaches and solutions in terms of developing speaking skills“. (Korovina, Pushkina & Krivoshlykova, 2019, p. 327) Part of the challenge that teachers face is also the level of their creativity, because as Vlaicu & Neacsu, (2018) share, the more creative the personality and teaching methods of teachers, the more creative their students become.

One of the most effective ways to implement the necessary updating is the application of interactive methods. Several authors point out their positive aspects: such as the facilitation of the perception and comprehension of linguistic and artistic information by students (Ivanova, 2018), “it transforms the reciprocal actions of teacher and student” (Bulvinska & Khanykina, 2019, p. 69), they “are based on communication, which is not characterized by the exchange of thoughts or knowledge, but on the basis of such exchange the intellectual activity is stimulated” (Symonenko, Zaitseva, Osadchyi & Vynogradova, 2020, p. 2). “It is important to note that interactive learning methods are based on communication, which is not characterized by the exchange of thoughts or knowledge, but on the basis of such exchange the intellectual activity is stimulated” (Symonenko, Zaitseva, Osadchyi & Vynogradova, 2020, p. 2).

To achieve this effectiveness, however, a large number of prerequisites are needed: good time planning, finding their place in the lesson, to take into account all the specifics of the lesson, curriculum and content, the level of skills of students for individual and group work. (Gyurova, Bozhilova, Valkanova & Dermendzhieva, 2006), the practical efforts of pedagogues should not be limited to the application of these methods in teaching, but also to "providing other organizational conditions to realize the full potential of this training" (Kovachka, 2018, p. 113).

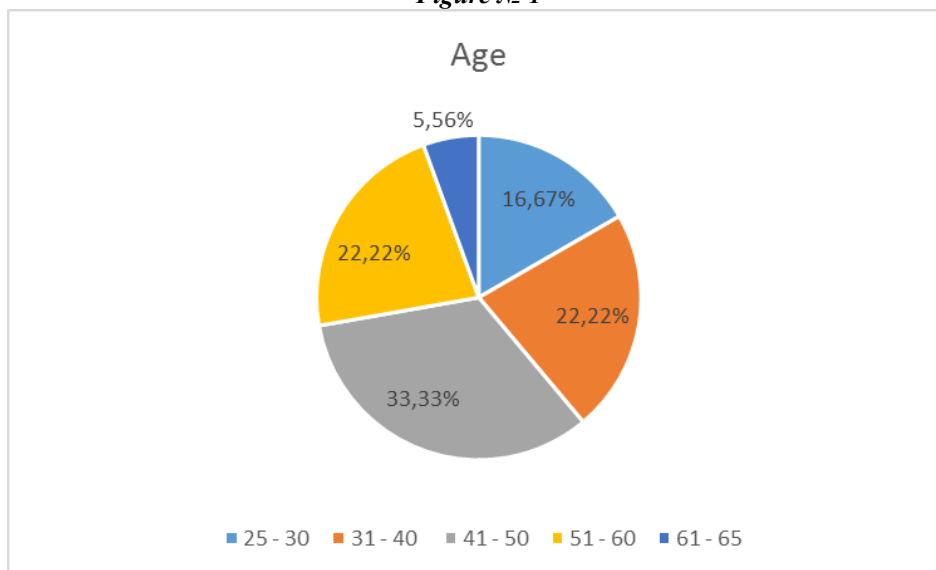
Which prevails more in teachers - the need for change or lack of time for preparation? This is one of the many questions we asked ourselves when conducting the current survey. Its purpose was to test the applicability of interactive methods specifically in foreign language teaching (English). The survey was conducted online in April

2020, with the participation of 22 English teachers. By conducting it, we wanted to test our hypothesis that despite the need for additional organizational efforts, foreign language teachers actively apply interactive methods in teaching their students.

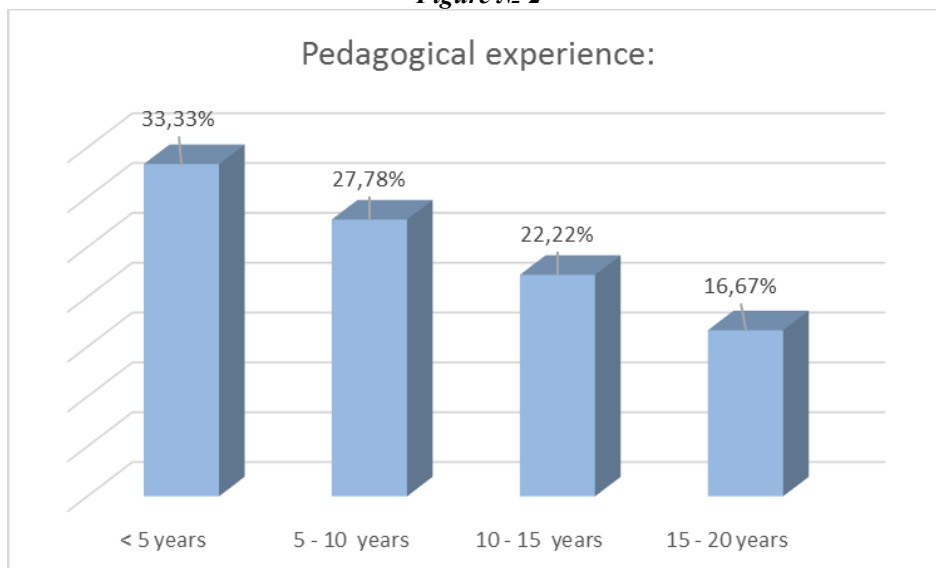
## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first questions in the survey aimed to obtain statistical information about the respondents, namely: their age (Figure № 1: the highest percentage of people between 41 and 50 years), gender (only 38.89% are male, which is normal, given the feminization of the teaching profession in Bulgaria), as well as pedagogical experience (Figure № 2: People with serious pedagogical experience predominate, only one third are engaged in teaching for less than five years).

*Figure № 1*



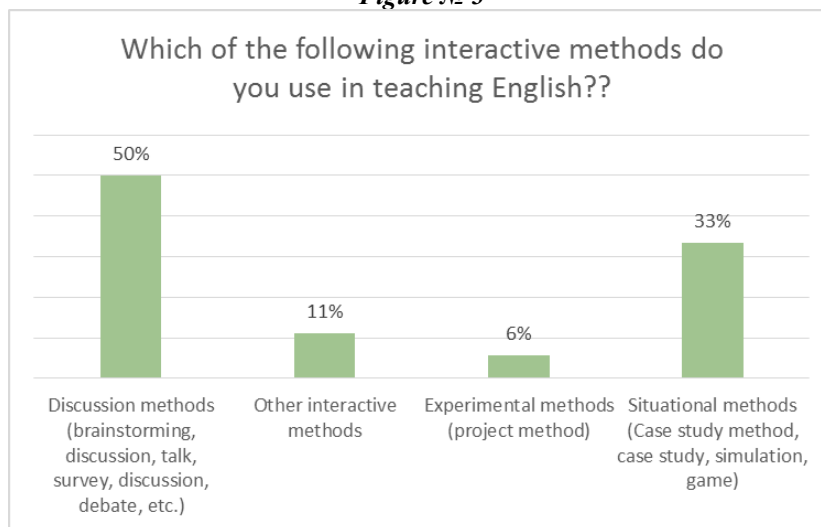
*Figure № 2*



A large number of interactive methods with different characteristics can be found in the pedagogical literature, for example: „general discussion, educational discussion, group discussions; practical works; various forms of mutually training and mutually control; laboratory and research works / protection of projects is a form at which the student conducts an independent research of various subjects during the long period of time at the end of which he provides and protects the work; problem and search training; distance learning; presentations (as evident option of lecture and practical material); work in small groups and couples of replaceable (dynamic)/constant (closed) structure – a form of dialogue interaction; seminars, etc.” (Mamedova & Grib, 2020, p. 1014).

This is the reason why the following question should be included in the survey, with which we aim to check which methods are more attractive for teachers and respectively are applied more often specifically in English language teaching (Figure № 3).

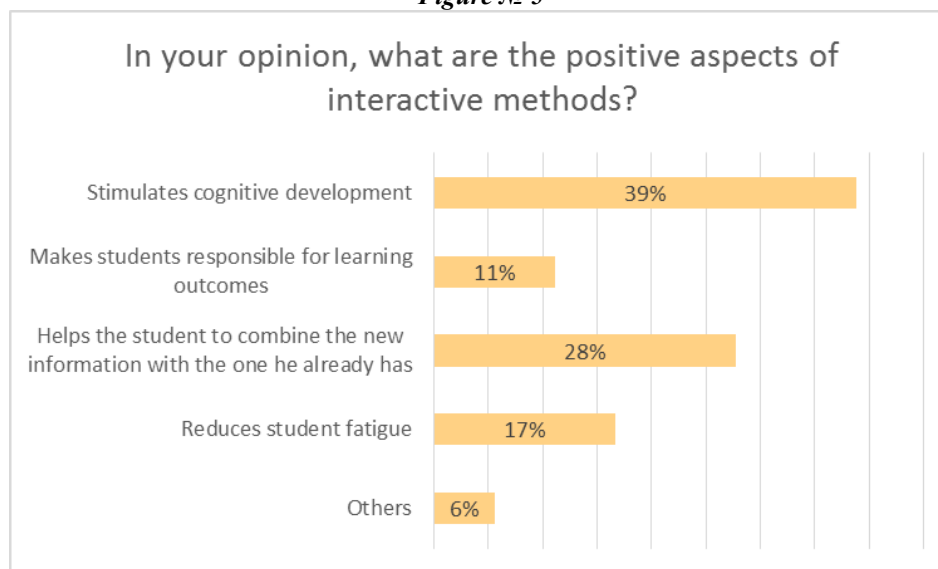
*Figure № 3*



The next question was to check whether the application of interactive methods in the English learning process increases the motivation of students. Here 67% of respondents answered "definitely yes", and the rest answered, "rather yes". This positive attitude towards motivation does not surprise us, because usually the different approaches appeal to students and they are actively involved in innovation. The determination of the teachers also shows us that this type of method has a place in the English classroom, supporting the quality of the learning process. As Bakhreddinovna (2020) writes: "The process of teaching in the classroom is to bring into full play both the initiative of teachers and students, through dialogue, discussion, and so on in order to achieve a variety of ways of the exchange of thought, emotion and information, thus to achieve the best learning effects" (Bakhreddinovna, 2020, p. 79).

Our statement about the increase in efficiency is confirmed by the answers to the question: "Does the application of interactive methods affect the effectiveness of the English language learning process?", Where 78% answer in the affirmative and the rest indicate the answer "rather yes". The lack of negative answers here also speaks of the unanimity of the pedagogues regarding the positive aspects of the interactive methods concerning the increase of the efficiency of the educational process. With the next question, we aimed to check what they think are the most significant positive effects of the application of these methods in English classes.

*Figure № 5*



The answer "Stimulates cognitive development" received the most support - 39%, followed by "Helps the student to combine the new information with the one he already has" - 28%. These results can also be attributed to the desire of modern foreign language teachers to increase the level of cognitive development of students because our cognitive skills are part of almost every awake human action.

*Figure № 6*

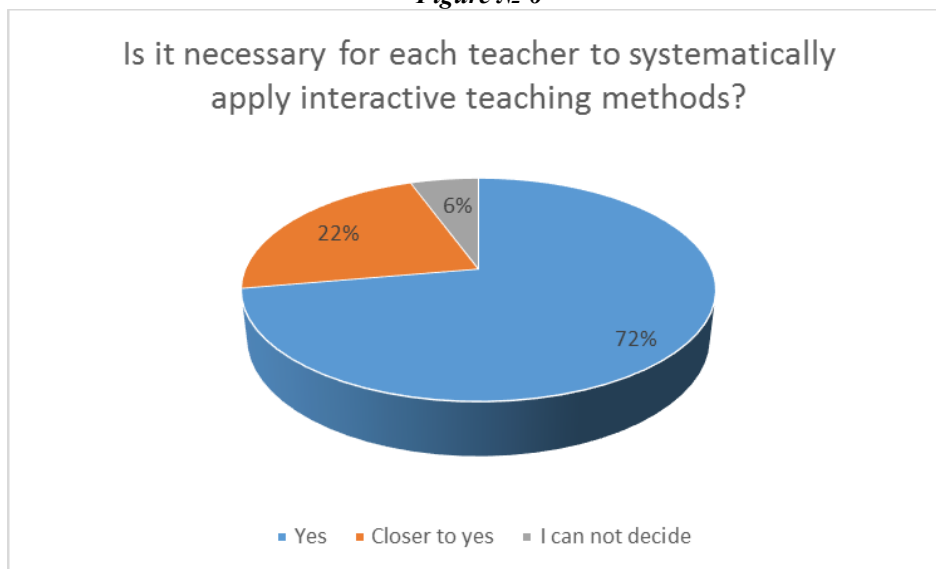
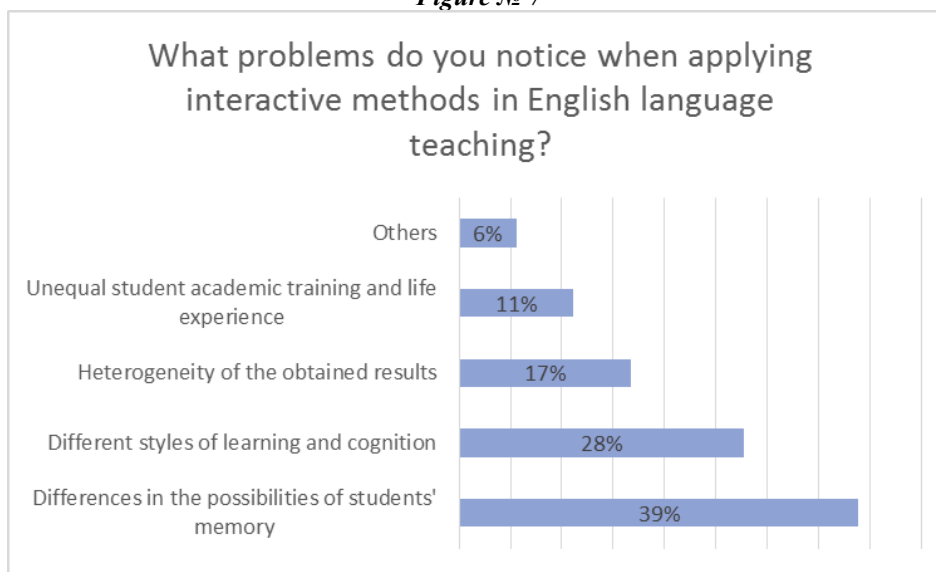


Figure № 6 shows the answers to the question "Is it necessary for each teacher to systematically apply interactive teaching methods?", Where again we see a high percentage of positive answers. This fact can be attributed to the need to comply with the principle of systematics, aimed at increasing the efficiency and quality of the educational process. The second part of the question is focused on the application of interactive teaching methods in general - here the categoricalness of teachers speaks of their awareness of the need to change and modernize education in the Republic of Bulgaria, which we talked about at the beginning of this report.

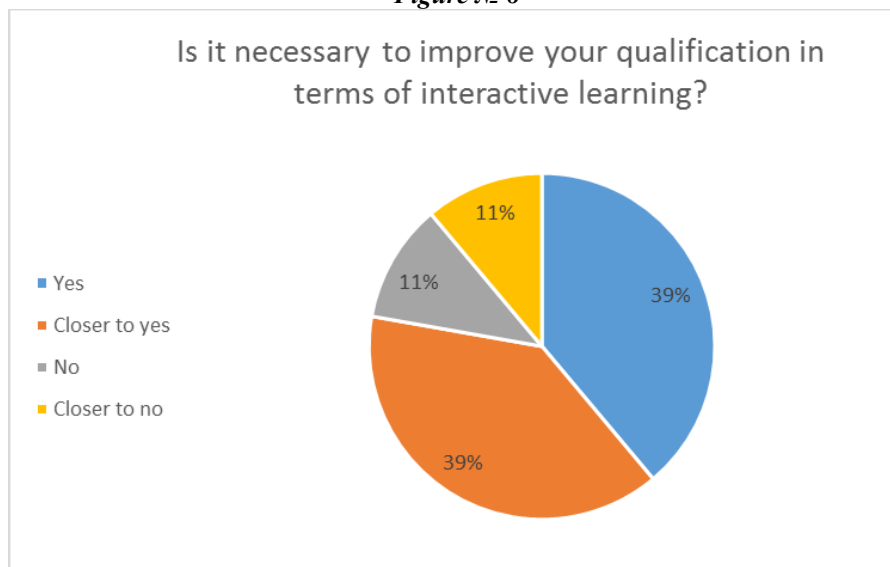
*Figure № 7*



Of course, in addition to the positive aspects of interactive methods, we need to assess the negative aspects or difficulties encountered by teachers in their application. Figure № 7 presents their problems. The largest percentage

of respondents indicated differences in the possibilities of students' memory as a serious difficulty. Probably these differences are due to the different opportunities that students have and the difference in their levels of coping with the learning process and the set learning content in different subjects. Logically, memory plays a key role in English lessons and the perception and consolidation of new vocabulary.

*Figure № 8*



The last question we included in the study was to check whether the need to improve the qualification of pedagogical specialists is as important for them as for the public. Almost 80% of the respondents positively indicate this increase as necessary for themselves. This shows their motivation and desire for change.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can summarize that despite the need for additional qualifications, prior training, provision of necessary conditions, compliance with curricula and regulations, as well as several other serious efforts by English teachers, they are willing to continue as well to actively apply the interactive methods in the classes of their students, aiming to increase their motivation, their desire to participate in a learning process led by themselves, supporting the development of their cognitive skills and memory and many others.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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