Uma entrevista importante em inglês: e agora?

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The project titled *Uma entrevista importante em inglês: e agora?* was developed at *Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Sul-Rio-Grandense*, a federal school located in Sapucaia do Sul (RS), with a group from the second year of high school. The project was a requirement for *Estágio de Docência em Língua Inglesa I* and, in order to develop it, we needed twenty hours in class, totalizing two and a half months of practice. There were 24 students enrolled, but around 20 attended the classes during this period.

Throughout the observation period we could notice that the students were really concerned about their future in terms of going to university and finding a job, which could be justified by the fact that they were around 16 years old and they were enrolled in a technical program – half of the group was taking a Technical Course in Events and the other half was taking a Technical Course in Plastics. Furthermore, studying abroad was also one of their interests. On top of that, the regular teacher of the class asked us to work with linguistic resources such as present perfect, expressing habits in the past (*When I was... I used to...*) and modal verbs. In an attempt to unite the students’ interests and the planned linguistic contents, we designed a project with the objective of preparing the students for a job interview in English. Considering that one of the purposes of the project was to interact in English – and make the students realize that they were able to do it –, the final product planned and accomplished was a job interview in English conducted by a native English speaker. The opportunity to participate in an interaction with a native speaker made the students see themselves as real users of the English language.

To put the project into practice, classroom activities were divided in four steps: a) presenting the project; b) developing the project; c) preparing for the final product and d) producing the final product. Each step is explained below.
a) Presenting the project

In order to introduce the project, we created some questions (Figure 1) to be discussed in class with the objective of bringing up the subject interview and activating the students’ previous knowledge about it.

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Introducing the project

In small groups, discuss the following questions:

a) Você já participou de alguma entrevista? Qual? Comente sobre a experiência.
b) Liste cinco perguntas que você ache possível de ocorrerem em uma entrevista de emprego.
c) Quais seriam as suas respostas para as perguntas mencionadas acima?
d) Você acha importante analisar outras entrevistas antes de participar de uma? Por quais motivos?
e) Você ficaria nervoso (ou já ficou) se tivesse que fazer uma entrevista para alguma seleção importante? Por quê?
f) Muitas oportunidades no mercado de trabalho e em seleções de bolsas de estudo requerem o conhecimento de uma segunda língua como o inglês. Você acha importante aprender inglês para conseguir aquela vaga almejada?
g) De quais seleções você gostaria de participar? Você se sente preparado?
h) Se você visse uma vaga de trabalho ou bolsa de estudos no exterior que fosse muito interessante e a entrevista da seleção fosse em inglês e estivesse marcada para o final de junho de 2016, como você se prepararia para essa oportunidade?
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Figure 1

b) Developing the project

After having discussed the questions in small groups and with the whole class as well, we proposed a game in small groups. The idea was to give each group a set of scrambled questions and answers (Picture 1) that are common in interviews, and to have students match them considering the context of an interview. Also, there were some answers with grammar mistakes with the purpose of checking the students’ previous knowledge of the linguistic contents that were to be taught. During this activity the students could use their cell phones in case they felt the needing to search for words in a dictionary. After they finished matching questions and answers, the
mistakes were discussed and corrected. This activity had the objective of preparing the students for the reading that was coming next and for the grammar classes that were going to be part of the project.

In the next step, the students had to watch a video of an interview in English and pay attention to it, answering the following questions:

Pay attention to the video and answer the following questions:

a) Qual o nome do entrevistador? E da entrevistada?
b) Para qual área de trabalho essa entrevista está sendo realizada?
c) Quais palavras são utilizadas pela entrevistada para se descrever?
d) Como o entrevistador encerra a entrevista?

The students shared their answers and then checked them reading the transcription of the video, which is presented below (Figure 3).
Figure 3

After this, the students answered some questions concerning the genre interview (Figure 4).
Thinking about the genre “interview”

After watching the video, discuss the following questions in small groups:

a) Quais tipos de seleção envolvem a aplicação de uma entrevista?
b) Após ter assistido à entrevista, quais são as etapas de uma entrevista?
c) Você considera essa entrevista formal? Por quê?
d) Que tipo de linguagem é adequada para uma entrevista de emprego ou bolsa de estudos?
e) Na sua opinião, quais aspectos de apresentação podem ser decisivos em uma entrevista?

Figure 4

From then on, the transcription of the interview was divided in different parts in order to focus on the practice of specific linguistic resources. For example, we worked with present perfect using the following excerpt:

Interviewer: Have you worked in groups before?
Student: Yes, *I have*.

Interviewer: What experience do you have with this?
Student: Well, *I have worked* in groups many times in my previous jobs and I don’t have problems in dealing with people.

Interviewer: Fantastic... *Have you done* any work in this area before?
Student: Yes, *I have worked* in a similar company some years ago.

While showing them this part of the dialogue, the students were asked to get in pairs and to try to find out the meaning of the sentences. Then, each pair presented their conclusions to the class. This activity was the starting point for the presentation of the use of present perfect. In order to practice the structure of present perfect using what they had learned so far, we proposed an exercise (Figure 5), in which, in pairs, the students had to complete and then to roleplay an interview, acting as the interviewer and the interviewee. They handed in the written version of the interview.
Now is your turn to practice! In pairs, simulate a job interview using the following questions:

Interviewer: What is your name?
Student:

Interviewer: How are you?
Student:

Interviewer: Nice to meet you.
Student:

Interviewer: How old are you?
Student:

Interviewer: Have you worked in groups before?
Student:

Interviewer: Have you done any work in this area before?
Student:

Figure 5

To work with the use of *When I was... I used to...*, the following part of the dialogue was used, and the students were again asked to study it in detail.

Interviewer: Fantastic... Have you done any work in this area before?
Student: Yes, I have worked in a similar company some years ago... and *when I was working there, I used to work with events as well*. I was in charge of promoting the events in the communication department.

After discussing their findings and explaining the use of *When I was... I used to...* and how it could appear in the context of an interview, we asked the students to sit in a circle in order to play a game. The objective was to make up sentences using the prompts given on a *Power Point* presentation we brought to class (Figure 6 shows...
some examples of the prompts used). The prompts were shown randomly, one at a time, to each student in his/her turn, and he/she would choose the next player by throwing a small ball to him/her.

![Figure 6]

The next excerpt worked in class focused on modal verbs. After having discussed the meaning of the excerpt, we explained the use of the modal verbs *can*, *would*, *should*, and *will*. Also, we debated with the students how modal verbs can appear in the context of an interview.
Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about yourself. What four words would you use to best describe you?
Student: Well, let me think... I’m responsible, committed, organized and friendly.
Interviewer: Oh, fantastic. And why should we hire you?
Student: Well, you should hire me because I have what it takes to work with you and I’m sure I’m going to be a great acquisition to your company.
Interviewer: Oh, fantastic! That’s exactly what we are looking for. When can you start?
Student: I can start as soon as possible.
Interviewer: Perfect! Would you sign here, please?
Student: Yes, I would.
Interviewer: That’s it. You will receive an email about your classification. Thank you very much!
Student: Thank you.

c) Preparing for the final product

Since the final product was an interview in English, the students received a list of ten questions which would be asked by the interviewer. They answered them in written form using everything they had learned in the previous classes. We corrected their answers, and in the following class they had some time to rewrite their answers, reflecting on their mistakes and the adequacy of what they had written. This opportunity to answer the questions again was important to solve doubts and review key aspects about the genre ‘interview’, which we had studied in previous classes. Concerning the preparation in terms of oral skills, we proposed an activity in which the students were asked to get in pairs and roleplay an interview, using the same questions they had already answered in written form. In this moment they could practice their pronunciation and also develop their communication skills.
d) Producing the final product

The students’ names were raffled in order to form pairs for the final interview, which occurred in another classroom with an American interviewer. One of us was present during the interview to help the students in case they needed, and the other stayed with the remaining students. Five out of the ten questions that the students had already answered were chosen by the interviewer. The students were evaluated according to four aspects:

1) pronunciation;
2) coherence of answers;
3) completion of answers;
4) attitude in the context of an interview.

The evaluation done during the production of the final product was essential to provide the students with constructive feedback. Therefore, the following class was focused on that: we talked to each student in private to show them their results, and then everyone wrote a self-evaluation in which they reflected about their own performance during the project. Besides, in this evaluation they had the chance to point out good and bad aspects of the classes, highlighting what they had enjoyed the most and giving suggestion of improvements.

Final considerations

The project Uma entrevista importante em inglês: e agora? was very productive considering the students’ motivation and confidence in relation to using English in an interaction with a native speaker. They participated a lot, asking questions and trying to make up examples of what was being discussed in class. Also, throughout the classes and during the preparation for the final product, it was possible to observe their improvements in terms of speaking, reading and writing. Studying linguistic resources in a meaningful context, rewriting their written answers when preparing for the interview and practicing in pairs promoted enriching opportunities for learning. Instead of giving the students the correct answers, we proposed to make them reflect
by themselves on what could be improved in their productions. Consequently, they learned not only about grammar and appropriate language in the specific context of an interview but also to search for explanations and to help each other find solutions to be prepared to face the common challenge of interacting in English.

Another important outcome of the project was that the students realized that they were capable of having a conversation with a native English speaker, since all of them were successful in doing the interview in English. Moreover, after the final interview, the students had an opportunity to learn about American culture, since the American interviewer did a small lecture to the class and explained curiosities about the United States. This moment was special because the students realized that what they had learned could also be used in new situations: they could ask questions and talk about themselves, interacting with a native speaker in English to exchange ideas and get to know one another. Considering these facts, the project certainly contributed to their lives, making the students feel more confident to face future opportunities that demand interviews in English (when applying for a job or for an exchange program) and to engage in conversations about their lives and interests with speakers of English.
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