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TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AS AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES

The article deals with the task-based approach in teaching foreign languages. This approach has been widely discussed since 1980-s and considered to be an effective method that gives good results. The two main approaches in foreign language teaching – Present-Practice-Produce and Task-Based Language Teaching – are compared from different perspectives: describing procedures, teacher and learner role, developing language and communicative competence; strong and weak points of the two are pointed out. Special attention is given to the basic element of TBLT – task. Various definitions of «task» are presented in the article that helps better and deeper understand its meaning in TBLT and the approach itself. Different kinds of tasks used in TBLT are briefly described in the article. The analysis helps the authors highlight both advantages and disadvantages of TBLT and define on what condition this approach can be effective and give good results. It has been proved by research and practice that TBLT can be successfully applied at all the levels of language studies. It is stressed that applying TBLT helps develop language competence of students and such important personal features as creativity and responsibility. For language instructors this method gives a wide range of opportunities to work out creative and communicatively aimed practical tasks.

Key words: task-based language teaching, present – practice – produce approach, task, teacher (instructor), student.

МЕТОД ТВОРЧОГО ЗАВДАННЯ ЯК ЕФЕКТИВНИЙ ШЛЯХ ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

У статті проаналізовано два широко використані підходи у навчанні іноземних мов – традиційний «презентація – практика – продукування» та відносно новий, який є орієнтованим на виконання комунікативно-творчої задачі. Порівняння цих двох підходів дає можливість визначити переваги та недоліки кожного.

Ключові слова: підхід, який базується на виконанні творчо-комунікативного завдання, традиційний підхід, завдання, викладач, студент.

МЕТОД ТВОРЧЕСКОГО ЗАДАНИЯ КАК ЭФФЕКТИВНЫЙ ПУТЬ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА

В статье проанализированы два широко используемых подхода в изучении иностранных языков – традиционный «презентация – репродукция – построение» и относительно новый, который основан на выполнении творческо-коммуникативной задачи. Сравнение этих двух подходов дает возможность определить преимущества и недостатки каждого.

Ключевые слова: традиционный подход, подход, основанный на выполнении творческо-коммуникативной задачи, задача, учитель (преподаватель), студент.

Learning foreign languages seems to become more and more increasing requirement of modern life. Issue of effective teaching methods have always been widely discussed in educational world community as finding the effective ones is the task of primary importance. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been discussed, developed and applied for the last two-decade period and proved to be more resultful and productive tool of teaching foreign languages than Present – Practice – Produce (PPP) approach.

PPP paradigm is well-known to all foreign language teachers as they become familiar with this approach during their initial training course. This commonly used system of teaching a foreign language, that is considered to be a classic one, consists of three stages, each of them well-described in textbooks in teaching methods. The staged are logically connected and make a coherent succession that is aimed at developing language and communicative skills.

The first stage called «present» consists in introducing a language item in a clear context to get across its meaning. This presentation can be done in various ways: through a dialogue, a text, a situation etc.

The second stage known as «practice» includes different kinds of reproductive drills and demands that the student uses the language correctly. The common types of exercises at this stage are filling gaps, matching halves of sentences, using the appropriate forms of verbs or other parts of speech, etc. Coming through this stage and doing practice helps students to become more comfortable with language items that are studied during the course.

The final stage of PPP approach is «production» stage, sometimes called «free practice» stage. It is supposed that at this stage students are able to produce certain language items (a grammar structure, thematic vocabulary) on their own and show both language and communicative competence.

Though the PPP approach seems to be quite effective researchers and language instructors (Ellis, Nunan, Prabhu) point out that many students have considerable difficulties in appropriate usage of studied language items after a while. At the second stage «practice» students usually give impression of being comfortable with the language item while doing exercises but a few lessons later they are not able to produce the language correctly.

One more obstacle in developing good language and communicative competence is in overusing the target structure so that it can sound completely unnatural. In addition to these flaws it often happens that students avoid producing the target language during the free practice stage because they find it easier to use existing language resources to complete the task.

The procedure of TBLT lesson consists of three main stages: pre-task, task cycle and language focus [5, 56-57]. At the pre-task stage the teacher introduces the topic, explores it with the class, highlights useful vocabulary and helps students understand task instructions.

The second stage – task cycle – includes three successive steps: task, planning and report. Performing the first step begins with carrying out a communication task. In the process of doing the task students can use whatever language they already have. At this step the teacher monitors the pair or group work but doesn't correct mistakes.

Having completed the first step, students move on to planning how to report on the outcome. While doing the planning step the emphasis shifts to the organization and accuracy. Now the teacher advises students on the language and helps them correct mistakes.

The second stage is finished with its final step – report – when some or all the groups report briefly to the whole class about the outcome they got having done the task. The others listen in order to compare findings or conduct a survey. The teacher may rephrase but not correct the language.

There can also be the fourth optional step of the second stage that is called «optional post-task listening». This phase consists in listening to native speakers to do the same task and in comparing the language [3, p. 25–38].

The content and the main goal of the third stage of TBLT can be easily guessed from its name – «language focus» which means that the central point of this stage is analysis of language items that were used for completing the task. At this stage students ask questions about the language features and the teacher conducts the activities that are aimed at mastering language skills [3, p. 38].

TBLT approach for teaching English as a foreign language was developed by professor N. Prabhu in Bangalore, Southern India at the end of 1980-s. He believed that students can learn more effectively when they are focused on the task, rather than on the language they use. Prabhu defined the task as «an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process» [4, p. 24].

Other definitions of the task highlight its important characteristics that are of great practical value in terms of effective foreign language teaching. Willis defines task as a process «where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome» [5, p. 14]. Longman English Dictionary defines task as «a piece of work that must be done, especially one that is difficult or that must be done regularly»; and as a verb this word means «to give someone responsibility for doing something» [6]. William and Burden stress that task is «any activity that learners engage into process of learning a language» [3, p. 15]. In his definition Breen underlines that «a task is a range of learning activities from the simple and brief exercises to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making» [3, p. 16].

To sum up, all the definitions stress that task is a process, an instrument, a piece of work that must be done regularly and systematically, with conscious responsibility and results in outcome. Getting the outcome is the main goal of carrying out the task and shows objectively the language progress.

We believe that pointing out the main kinds of tasks is important in terms of comparing the two approaches to foreign language teaching. Willis distinguishes six types of tasks that are used in TBLT paradigm [5]:

- ordering and sorting that requires sequencing, ranking, categorizing and classifying;
- listing that can be done by brainstorming and fact-finding;
- comparing that helps develop skills of matching, finding similarities and differences;
- problem solving which is aimed at analyzing real or hypothetical situations, reasoning and decision-making;
- sharing personal experience that is very helpful for teaching students narrating, describing and explaining attitudes, opinions and reactions;
- creative tasks that include brainstorming, fact-finding, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving techniques [5].

It is evident that wide variety of tasks and different techniques and methods applied for their completing allow to use TBLT at different levels of language studies starting from A1. In PPP different kinds of tasks are also widely used at all levels but they normally focus on a particular form of the language or its function. In TBLT task is the main component and instrument of teaching that is viewed as a means of engaging students, who usually work in pairs or in small groups, in interactive authentic language use. The teacher uses a wide variety of linguistic forms, the meaning of which is made clear by the context. The main focus is on the task completion and the focus on language form comes at the end.

Tasks can be designed to develop any of the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening); many tasks are often integrative, involving more than one skill. The task is directly connected with real life and students can use the knowledge they gain and the skills they develop while performing the task.

Essential features of TBLT like role of the teacher and students are worth attention. As Ellis and Willis point out the role of the teacher is on cooperating, listening and responding to student needs, deciding what tasks to work on and when to try a new task. An important part of the teacher work is to correct language, keep feedback, and help students monitor outcome of their activity [1; 5].

Ellis remarks that teacher's dominant authority turns into teacher's guidance in TBLT, so comparing to PPP that is teacher-centered, TBLT is learner-centered approach [1, ix]. Revealing this significant feature of the teacher's role Larsen-Freeman underlines that the main objective for the teacher lies in facilitating students' language learning by engaging them in a variety of tasks that have clear outcome [2, p. 156].

Students in their turn should work individually or with the groups equally, gather and organize information, present results to other students and instructors and are highly motivated to gain new knowledge of language and improve their language performance. Thus learners' role includes three main functions: group participant, monitor, risk-taker and innovator. By incorporating a focus on carrying out the task and by using the task as a basic unit of learning students become involved into planning and monitoring their own learning [3, p. 14]. It is necessary to add that students' readiness to be responsible for the results of their work and high level of their motivation is a sufficient condition of successful applying of TBLT.

Reflecting on the relationship between Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, D. Nunan defines the first as a broad philosophical approach to language studies that draws on theory and research in linguistics, psychology, sociology and anthropology. TBLT represents realization of this philosophy at the level of working out syllabus and methodology (other realizations of CLT include content-based instructions, text-based syllabuses, problem-based learning and immersion education) [3, p. 15].

Though TBLT combines developing of language and communicative competence as a unity, where these two essential components are inalienable, as any phenomenon this approach has its pluses and minuses. Among advantages of this approach researchers point out the following ones: it is suitable and applicable for students of all ages and different backgrounds; it allows meaningful communication and encourages students to be more ambitious in the language; students are exposed to a whole range of lexical phrases, collocations, patterns and language forms; they are free to use whatever vocabulary and grammar they know rather than just certain and restricted forms that are supposed to be studied in the lesson. The list of TBLT disadvantages includes requirement of a high level of creativity, individual and group responsibility on the part of students; it requires resources beyond textbooks and related materials usually found in language classrooms and there is a risk for learners to achieve fluency at the expense of accuracy.

Having analyzed the main characteristics of TBLT we can conclude that TBLT as an effective realization of CLT can be successfully applied for university students of both language and non-language specialties. What is more – using TBLT paradigm

can help students master not only their language skills but also such positive personal characteristics as creativity, responsibility, ability to cooperate and work in a group. Though at the reproductive stage of language learning and teaching PPP approach can be also used effectively and give good results on condition that students are hard-working, motivated and are aware of the role of reproductive language drills.

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BASICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The article analyzes the notion of communication as a means of general understanding between people. The characterizes common principles of communication. The essence of cross-cultural communication has been defined.

Intercultural communication is defined as situated communication between individuals or groups of different linguistic and cultural origins. This is derived from the following fundamental definitions: communication is the active relationship established between people through language, and intercultural means that this communicative relationship is between people of different cultures, where culture is the structured manifestation of human behavior in social life within specific national and local contexts, such as political, linguistic, economic, institutional and professional. The authors note that in the communication carriers of different cultures quite likely is the appearance some confusion and problems whose solution is possible by studying the characteristics of intercultural communication.

Key words: *the principles of communication, intercultural communication, verbal and nonverbal communication components.*

ОСНОВИ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

У статті проаналізовані принципи комунікації в цілому та охарактеризовано поняття міжкультурної комунікації зокрема. Визначено найбільш характерні її риси. Названі можливі причини виникнення проблем та непорозумінь під час міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: *принципи комунікації, міжкультурна комунікація, вербальні та невербальні компоненти комунікації.*

ОСНОВЫ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ

В статье проанализированы принципы коммуникации в целом и охарактеризовано понятие межкультурной коммуникации в частности. Определены наиболее характерные ее черты. Названы возможные причины возникновения проблем во время межкультурной коммуникации

Ключевые слова: *принципы коммуникации, межкультурная коммуникация, вербальные и невербальные компоненты коммуникации.*

Der vorliegende Artikel stellt ein allgemeines Verständnis vom Sammelbegriff Kommunikation, eine kurze Untersuchung zu den Fragen der Interkulturellen Kommunikation sowie deren Rolle für die Verständigung der Menschen aus verschiedenen Kulturen vor.

Kommunikation ist ein Teil der Naturgeschichte des Menschen. Sie ist das alltäglichste, verbindlichste und treffendste Element menschlichen Miteinanders, das aufgrund von Nichtverstehen oder Missverstehen schnell und oft völlig unbemerkt den Anlass zu Unbehagen, Ablehnung, Aggression in der Begegnung gibt. Das Wissen über unsere Kommunikation ermöglicht eine bessere Kommunikation. Wenn man weiß, wie Kommunikationsstörungen und Konflikte entstehen, kann man diesen vorbeugen bzw. besser damit umgehen.

Die Internationalisierung des Berufslebens, die Globalisierung moderner Gesellschaft, die weltweiten Migrationsbewegungen, die notwendige Zusammenarbeit in verschiedenen internationalen Projekten, die Mitarbeit in den internationalen Gruppen erfordern ein Wissen um Prozesse und Probleme der interkulturellen Kommunikation. Dabei sind nicht das Wissen um unterschiedliche Terminologien oder Grammatiken von zentraler Bedeutung für das gute Funktionieren der Kooperation, sondern gerade das Wissen um generelle pragmatische Unterschiede im kommunikativen Verhalten.

Kommunikation ist vielfach untersucht worden und vielfach definiert worden. Mit den Fragen der Kommunikation beschäftigten sich Wolfgang Bergsdorf, Geert Hofstede, Rudi Keller, Sigfried Maser, Paul Watzlawick u.a. Die Vielfalt des Kommunikationsphänomens erschwert es, eine generelle bzw. spezifische Definition von Kommunikation zu geben. In meisten Untersuchungen wird menschliche Kommunikation als Abfolge von Nachrichtenübermittlungen zwischen Kommunikationspartner gefasst. Die Kommunikationspartner nehmen dabei abwechselnd die Rolle von SenderIn und EmpfängerIn ein, die Auffassung lässt sich charakterisieren als das technische Transportmodell von mir zu dir, bei dem Laute oder Schriftzeichen transportiert werden. Entscheidend aber bei der menschlichen Kommunikation ist das Verstehen.

Zu den gängigen Verwendungsweisen des Wortes *verstehen* gehören:

- verstehen, was jemand meint (seine Intentionen erkennen);
- einen Text verstehen (seinen Sinn erfassen);
- einen Satz verstehen (seine Bedeutung verstehen);
- ein Wort verstehen (wissen, was es heißt);
- eine Sprache verstehen (sie können);
- eine Handlung verstehen;
- eine (z.B. eine physikalische) Theorie verstehen;