

THE FEASIBILITY OF TASK-BASED LEARNING METHOD IMPLEMENTATION DURING ENGLISH CLASSES FOR NON-PHILOLOGICAL FACULTIES STUDENTS

Svitlana Riabovol 

lecturer of the department of the English language
for non-philological specialities,
Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Ukraine

Abstract

The research is devoted to exploring the features, the functions and the implementation of task-based learning. Task-based learning fosters creativity and innovation as far as the students must be able to think creatively and innovatively to solve complicated problems. Task-based learning encourages the learners to think creatively and explore different solutions to problems, which can help them to develop their creativity and innovation skills. Furthermore, task-based learning improves team work and collaboration skills because collaboration and teamwork are the main 21st century skills. Task-based learning provides opportunities for students to work in groups, which helps them to work on their communication and leadership skills.

Moreover, task-based learning promotes critical thinking since the students need to be able to analyse and evaluate information to make decisions. Additionally, task-based learning contributes into preparation of the students for the workplace by providing them with practical skills and experiences which they can apply in their future careers.

The advantages of task-based learning implementation at higher educational institution include the opportunity to move the focus of the learning process from the teacher to the student, to provide the students of non-philological faculties a different way of understanding language as a tool instead of as a specific goal, as well as to meet the students' needs of being prepared for the real world challenges with the help of real word tasks.

INTRODUCTION

The studies by such scientists as M. Long, D. Nunan, N. Prabhu, R. Ellis, P. Skehan, D. Willis, J. Willis are devoted to the theoretical and practical aspects of the application of the task-based learning method (TBL) during the study of foreign languages. The task-based learning method is actively being developed and implemented in the process of teaching foreign languages in Ukrainian higher education institutions.

The work of Jane and David Willis, reflected in numerous books and articles, played a significant role in popularizing the task-based method. In 1997, J. Willis proposed and described this model in her book "A Framework of Task-Based Learning" [26]. N. Prabhu is the most prominent person in the development of targeted educational literature. His main effort was promotion awareness of the TBL approach [18]. The effectiveness of implementing the method of communicative tasks in foreign language classes was popularized by such scientists as T. Bowen [2], R. Ellis [6], D. Nunan [16], Willis J. and Willis D. [28] and others.

The analysis of scientific sources on the researched issue shows that the main attention is paid to the interaction of communication participants. Therefore, task-based learning method is gradually becoming a part of many curricula today, but it is still a new concept for most English language teachers. Therefore, teachers of foreign languages are constantly in a creative search for new and effective techniques that would give an opportunity to interest students in limited classroom time, encourage them to work and be creative, improve and multiply the knowledge they have acquired. The desire of teachers to modernize the process of teaching foreign languages leads to a deeper study and improvement of the latest technologies.

R. Ellis distinguishes a task as a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. Consequently, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources. However, the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is meant to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes [7, p. 16].

M. Trevarton in the article "Remixing a grammatical syllabus" suggests that in a grammatical syllabus learners will learn the grammar and then use it.

A task-based syllabus simply reverses this. They start by using grammar, trying to say what they really mean and then refining it where necessary [25].

D. Willis and J. Willis in their work “Doing Task-based Teaching” offer the following criteria for identifying tasks for task-based learning in the form of questions. The more confidently you can answer yes to each of these questions, the more task-like the activity:

- 1) Will the activity engage learners’ interest?
- 2) Is there a primary focus on meaning?
- 3) Is there a goal or an outcome?
- 4) Is success judged in terms of outcome?
- 5) Is completion a priority?
- 6) Does the activity relate to real world activities? [27].

The tasks can have various forms. In different textbooks they are presented with discussions, writing a blog or a comment, comparing ideas, work in pairs and teams, etc. According to the criteria for identifying tasks for TBL there are several types of tasks:

- 1) listing and/or brainstorming;
- 2) ordering and sorting;
- 3) matching;
- 4) comparison;
- 5) problem-solving;
- 6) sharing personal experiences and storytelling [27].

The TBL method fully justifies itself in the modern conditions of education in non-language higher education institutions, where a foreign language is not an end in itself, but only one of the tools in solving life and professional tasks. The presence of specific goals, clear to each student, contributes to the formation of their motivation. It is of utmost importance to combine this method with a systematic grammatical and lexical approach harmoniously, adapting it to the needs and capabilities of students as much as possible. Under this condition, the learning process will be not only exciting, but also as effective as possible. In TBL tasks, the emphasis is always on spontaneity, not on language accuracy.

It is necessary for the teacher not to focus on mistakes during the task; you can take notes, give feedback after, but in no case do not interfere with completing the task by correcting errors. Task-based learning appropriately shifts the focus from the mechanical repetition of learned language units to the conscious use of language.

If the teacher has noticed that the classes have become routine and the students lack incentives to use the language, it is appropriate to apply tasks

created by the TBL method, which, without a doubt, will activate students and increase their interest in the learning process.

1. The principles of task-based learning

The task-based learning model is task performance. A task is understood as a task with a clearly set goal to obtain a result. The topic for the task is related to the real needs of the students and has practical significance for them. J. Willis and D. Willis organize a huge range of various communicative tasks. Based on the criterion of dominance of the cognitive process, the researchers identified the following types of tasks:

- listing and/or brainstorming;
- ordering and sorting;
- matching;
- comparison;
- solving problems;
- projects and creative tasks;
- sharing personal experiences and story telling [27].

At the same time, the educational process is usually built not on the basis of separate tasks, but on interconnected and mutually determined sequences of tasks with a progressive increase in their complexity [27].

J. Harmer insists that Task-based Learning puts the focus of learning on the progress of specific tasks. Task-based Learning is an approach aimed at encouraging students to act at their speed and for processing and reorganizing their inter-language within their degree and field of interest [12, p. 71].

Meanwhile, J. Richards and T. Rodgers identify Task-based Learning as an approach that focused on using tasks as the center planning units and language teaching. TBL is a framework for language teaching that concentrated on the students' allocated tasks. It is the focal point of language teaching activities that tasks are given. Generally, students' tasks can be assumed the basic principles of task-based learning. For this situation, however, the students' task toward the beginning of the material/meeting turns into this approach's sign. When a new type of material is given, the teacher can create a great deal of elaboration from various interactions that teachers sometimes insert an idea in the students' minds. In TBL, students will be expected to get a handle on the information to be transmitted initially in any case. Afterward, the teacher's draft will be restricted to false or true conclusions or maybe pure improvement. This approach will more enhance the role of teachers as supervisors [19, p. 223].

According to M. Swan, there are some peculiar characteristics of task-based learning. First, the real-world language. Task-based learning is a teaching approach that fundamentally handles language as a communication device instead of a study or subject. TBL relies on real-world language use. It underscores the activities of the real world. It means that TBL concentrates on communication and interaction between the students who perform the task at the correct time using the appropriate language. Task-based learning also offers students chances to talk in the target language and the opportunity to rehearse the language before using it outside the classroom in a real circumstance. Second, it is learner-centered. TBL allows the teaching-learning cycle to be more learner-centered. The teacher opens up the possibility for the students to prepare and track their own learning by utilizing task as the essential unit of learning. It is up to the teacher to create and give various tasks that will allow the students to practice the foreign language naturally, independently, and originally. Third, the focus on meaning. Task-based learning is an approach that emphasizes on meaning rather than form. That is, instead of doing discrete form-based exercises, students perform a group of communication tasks. Students are encouraged to convey their thoughts on the lesson's theme, both orally and written. Such ideas should be the basis of a meaning analysis from a communication operation. Last, completion of the task. Task-based Learning lets students complete a task. The emphasis of the classroom activities is the task. Language is the tool that students use to achieve to accomplish the task. The task is an activity that uses language to get a specific result [22, p. 282].

It is worth noting that D. Nunan highlights the following task-based learning principles:

- a. scaffolding: students should get support from the lessons and materials;
- b. task chains: every activity and task will build on the previous task;
- c. recycling: the language recycling will maximize the learning opportunities;
- d. organic learning: language skills gradually “grow”;
- e. active learning: students learn best through the constructive use of the language they are using;
- f. integration: the teachers will explain the grammatical structure and how to the fabric for communication purposes;
- g. reflection: students should have the ability to reflect on what they know and how well they do;
- h. copying to creation: students should not only learn and practice what was written for them, but they should also be able to use their imagination and creativity to solve real-world problems [15].

The main idea of the task-based learning method is to create a communicative situation for the student and ask him to perform a communicative task. In fact, a communicative situation is any life situation in which language is used, including small talks with former classmates, a discussion on teaching methods, etc. Vocabulary and grammar are not always the focus of the assignment. It is about the fact that the students have already learned grammatical constructions and vocabulary with the help of the textbook, and now they will improve their practical skills.

M. Lewis reckons that teachers must take the responsibility of the consciousness raising process, which must follow the experimenting task activities. The consciousness raising part of the TBL method is a crucial for the success of TBL, it is here that the teacher must help learners to recognize differences and similarities, help them to “correct, clarify and deepen” their perceptions of the foreign language. M. Lewis sums up that TBL is language learning by doing [14].

The task-based learning approach, developed and updated within the framework of the communicative foreign language teaching approach, offers an alternative way of presenting new language material. With this approach, the teacher does not determine in advance which constructions will be studied. The lesson is based on the performance of communicative tasks, which imply the performance of a certain task, and those language forms that will be needed by students for their performance are considered. Therefore, task-based classes resemble the reverse nature of the class (presentation-practice-production) and offer much more opportunities for language fluency than the typical “Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP)” class format.

The task-based learning method has gained more and more respect in recent years and is still a recommended approach in educational practice. Teaching with the help of the method of communicative tasks gives students the opportunity to use language more naturally and consciously, and this leads to better memorization.

Since the English language is a tool that students use to complete a task and achieve a specific result, the main focus of this approach is on the task itself. That is why the creators of TBL set themselves the goal of creating a pedagogical approach in harmony with the language learning process [28].

Task-based language teaching is an approach to English language learning that places the student at the centre of the process. TBL activities encourage students to use the target language in authentic contexts, for instance, by working with real-world situations or other project-based assignments.

2. The challenges of task-based learning

One of the key characteristics of task-based learning is that learners are actively engaged in the learning process. They are encouraged to use the language they know to complete tasks, rather than simply memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. J. Willis and D. Willis state that TBL “promotes learners’ confidence by providing them with plenty of opportunities to use language in the classroom without being constantly afraid of making mistakes” [27, p. 2].

Subsequently, TBL is an effective approach to language teaching that promotes active engagement, learner autonomy, and the integration of language skills. By incorporating TBL into their teaching practice, university teachers can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that supports students’ success. J. Willis and D. Willis declare that “there are golden moments in a language classroom. There is a real personal involvement, with an accompanying increase in confidence and fluency” [27, p. 9].

J. Tailor in the work “PPP, TTT, Dogme” comparing these methods, observes that in TBL practice, the central focus is on task performance as opposed to learning grammatical or lexical topics, and the goals are not to “learn the structure” but to “do the task”. In order to achieve this goal successfully, it is assumed that students master certain grammatical and lexical material in order to communicate their ideas. In this case, language becomes not a goal, but a means of accomplishing the given task. The choice of language constructions in order to achieve the set goal depends on them – there is no right or wrong set of vocabulary or grammar for this. Students make their own decisions about how to complete the task and what language is appropriate for it [23].

The tasks here can be as simple as placing objects in order from fastest/most expensive/most popular and later agreeing the correct order with a partner. The more difficult ones are how to find out where this or that event is taking place and make a map to get there, or a role-playing game – a meeting of those who are interested in the issue of opening and developing a new shopping center at the cost of demolishing a home for the elderly and a youth center. Whatever the task, its result should be the main one for the whole group – the use of the language that is needed to complete it [1].

The advantage of TBL over traditional methods, D. Petrie insists, is that it allows students to focus on real communication, and the analysis of their own speech can be done a little later. This way of learning places students in authentic language situations and allows them to use all their language

resources to cope with them. It allows students to understand what information they need to repeat and what to master. Thanks to this, they independently see and understand their needs, which encourages them to take responsibility for own learning. TBL is a good solution for groups with students of different skill levels; tasks can be performed successfully by weaker or stronger students. The teacher emphasizes that it is important that they all receive the same communicative experience and information about their own needs in language learning [17].

Another advantage of this approach is that students are exposed to a wide variety of linguistic means. Lexical units are constant word combinations and phrases, something that is often omitted in the program, naturally appears in classes of this type. Nevertheless, the British teacher-practitioner R. Frost notes that this can also be a disadvantage. One of the negative points is arbitrariness/randomness, because often this type of classes do not correspond to the program and the textbook, where the material is presented according to a clear principle of gradualness. It is often difficult for both teachers and students to deviate from the usual order. This type of activity, as determined, is not a good way to work with beginners, because they have too limited language resources to complete the tasks successfully [9].

The method of PPP (presentation-practice-production) offers a much-simplified approach to language learning. It is based on the idea of presenting language material in clear blocks, from simpler to more complex. However, research shows that it is impossible to predict or guarantee how students will master the material. Moreover, working with the language in general is a better way of learning, as opposed to unnaturally limiting it to individual structures. Although this method seems logical, Frost emphasizes that teachers who work according to the traditional method often face the following challenges:

- Students can speak easily during class, but after a short break, they sometimes cannot speak as well or even cannot express themselves at all.
- Students too often use the structures that are under the study, which sounds unnatural.
- Students often try to express their opinion using already familiar language means, without using new learned material [9].

TBL is an alternative for language teachers - in such a lesson, they do not determine in advance what material will be covered, because the lesson is based on the performance of the main task, and the use of language structures is determined by what happens during the performance of the main task. Frost calls the advantages of this method that:

- Unlike PPP, students are not subject to teacher control. At all stages of the lesson, they use all their language resources, and do not practice one thing specifically chosen by the teacher or the program.

- Natural context arises from practical experience. In PPP, the context for studying certain structures must be created, and often it can be quite artificial.

- The linguistic structures under consideration appear during the students' conversation. It is based on the needs that the course of the lesson is determined, and not according to the textbook or the teacher's decision.

- TBL is much more communicative than the teacher-defined PPP. Most of the communication takes place during the execution of the task [9].

The effectiveness of the task is evaluated by the obtained result – whether the goal of communication has been achieved or not. The use of this methodology revealed that the individual needs and characteristics of each student are not always taken into account during the teaching of theory and practice; the textbook or the curriculum usually determines the content of the lesson. Teachers rarely give their students the task to complete an exercise in the classroom, the content of which corresponds to situations from everyday life in which the native language is used [3].

H. Dulay and M. Burt believe that only if teachers make learning foreign language meaningful, and therefore memorable, students will be able to naturally memorize the language and apply it in different situations. Studying using the task-based learning or the method of communicative tasks provides the student with just such an opportunity [5].

R. Gardner and W. Lambert pay attention to the fact that the application of the specified method aims to help to polish the skills of practical use of the language by creating communicative situations that exist in the real world; situations where oral communication is essential to the performance of a specific task. In this case, the focus is on communication, achieving a specific result, and not on grammatical or lexical substitution exercises [10].

The purpose of such tasks is not to study the structure of the language, but to achieve communicative goals. However, in order to cope successfully with the task, students must use language correctly and share their ideas. Thus, language becomes a communication tool aimed at helping the student successfully cope with the task. Thanks to this, immersion in the language environment occurs and students begin to communicate in a foreign language with a practical purpose. The main thing is the achievement of this goal [10].

As a rule, there is no single correct solution to such tasks. Playing a game, solving any problem, sharing information or experience – all these can be

considered as relevant and authentic tasks. However, an assignment in which students are given a list of words to use cannot be considered authentic. The same applies to an ordinary role-playing game, if it does not contain elements of solving a certain problem or the students have not been given a goal to achieve [11].

In many role-playing games, students only play their role. However, a role-playing game in which students have to play the roles of business leaders but must reach an agreement or find the right solution to an urgent problem within a certain period, write a report on the results of the discussion, a business letter, etc., can be considered a task created with the help of TBL. The role of the teacher is significantly different from the traditional central role of the mentor to which we are accustomed. This means that the teacher has to loosen some control over the learning process, admit that he cannot control what each student learned during, for example, two foreign language lessons [5].

It is recommended that students be exposed to the foreign language as much as possible when studying with the application of communicative tasks. This should then be followed by the formulation of hypotheses and subsequent experimentation. One of the principal objectives when selecting tasks is to enhance the level of activity among the students. Communicative tasks are centred on the activities of the students, rather than the teacher (a student-centred class, as opposed to a teacher-centred one). The teacher should provide students with specific tasks that will afford them the opportunity to engage in spontaneous, individual and original experimentation with the foreign language [5].

Because of completing each of such tasks, the student will have a certain personal experience of using a foreign language, and at this stage, the teacher will play a very important role. It should help the student to become aware of the activity being performed, which follows the experiment. The awareness or conscious performance of the task is crucial for the success of the method of communicative tasks, it is at this stage that the teacher should help students understand the differences and similarities, help them adjust, clarify and deepen their ideas about the foreign language.

In consideration of the theoretical context and practical aspect of task-based learning, it can be posited that TBL is a superior pedagogical approach to the conventional teaching method, as it engages students in the communicative classroom. The implementation of TBL has the potential to transform students from a passive to an active learning status. Students will have the opportunity to learn a specific language through the utilisation of authentic materials. The

learner's language and communication skills will be developed through task-based learning. TBL can assist language students in utilising their linguistic abilities to communicate meaning fluently and accurately over the course of a long-term project. In summary, TBL represents a pragmatic approach to fostering foreign language learning among L2 learners and enhancing their language and communication skills. It is acknowledged that implementing TBL in a foreign language classroom, particularly in the secondary school context, may present challenges for teachers. However, its benefits may outweigh the potential drawbacks.

3. The efficiency of task-based learning

R. Ellis emphasizes that task-based language teaching is a form of learning that treats language primarily as a tool for communication, not as an object for research or manipulation [6, p. 198].

F. Hashim states that learning a foreign language flourishes most when students are in a positive environment and are given opportunities to communicate in authentic situations [13]. Accordingly, it was suggested that lecturers abandon the traditional approach to teaching and replace it with communicative language teaching.

D. Nunan suggests that task-based learning encourages to learning, helps students develop individual differences and supports independence in learning [16, p. 161–181].

Task refers to the language learning effort required of students understanding to manipulate and produce the target language as they perform task, involving the real world of language [21, p. 57].

From the point of view of TBL, a real communicative task can be considered a role-play in which you need to find the right solution to a problem or reach an agreement on certain issues. However, conducting a game and exchanging information is possible as an actual task for TBL only if it moves away from a total focus on structures and forms. Tasks should have an appropriate level of complexity, and their implementation should require the use of all acquired knowledge and skills in a foreign language and give students full freedom of choice of language means.

A TBL-based class is described by various authors as a class that consists of three stages. J. Willis and D. Willis suggest the following three stages:

- 1) preparatory stage (Pre-task),
- 2) stage of task performance (Task cycle), which consists of work on a task (Task), preparation of a message about work results (Planning) and notification of work results (Report);

3) the language stage (Language focus), which consists of the analysis of the used language means (Analysis) and their development (Practice) [27].

The usage of the TBL technique includes several stages that reflect the chronology of the practical session. During the first stage (called «Pre-task» by foreign researchers), the teacher defines the topic of the communicative task, presents the students with a problem or task that should be solved during the discussion, and gives clear instructions for completing the task. The teacher can also recall with the students the lexical and grammatical material necessary for the implementation of this task. This stage can also include listening to a recording of other people doing a similar task, which will provide students with a visual example of what is expected of them.

D. Willis suggests that the teacher (facilitator) “explores the topic with the group and highlights useful words and phrases”. For facilitators wishing to exploit materials, it is at this stage that the chosen material will need to relate to the task. In preparing for the task fulfilment, the facilitator will need to consider how the chosen piece of material will be exploited. Exploring the topic with the group could be by exploitation of a picture, by watching a video clip, or by looking at a text. The material that is going to be exploited can be used for topic content as a springboard or to highlight useful words and phrases. It is up to the facilitator to decide how much language work he/she thinks will be needed by the learners but it is necessary to remember that the purpose of using a piece of material is as a pre-task lead-in, for example:

- material exploitation: using a picture/text etc. to lead into the topic;
- brainstorming: making a list; comparing ideas; sharing experiences;
- activating language: eliciting and providing vocabulary [27].

This has been separated from the Pre-Task phase used by Willis to highlight the importance of preparing learners thoroughly, where necessary rehearsing the task in order to recycle the language and familiarise learners with the context as much as possible. If the previous stage involved brainstorming words connected with the topic, this stage could involve learners in a discussion of their attitudes to it, and preparing their arguments for a debate, or their ideas for a leaflet to draw peoples’ attention to the issue the students prepare their own input for tasks such as:

- planning a report;
- practising role-play;
- writing a questionnaire to be administered;
- thinking of issues in a debate;

- brainstorming necessary language;
- activating language: eliciting and providing the necessary language [27].

The second stage (the so-called “During task”) involves the implementation of the assigned task in pairs or small groups using appropriate language forms, while the teacher only observes, guiding the discussion process. At this stage, students develop a plan for completing the task, selecting the necessary language tools, and then practice reproducing their ideas in groups or pairs. They can turn to the teacher for advice or help if there are any difficulties.

The two previous stages will have been leading up to this stage by fully preparing learners both ideologically and linguistically for the task. This part of the task cycle will mirror as closely as possible an authentic undertaking, which participants in European youth work will have to carry out. Whether the task is performed, displayed, recorded, conducted as a group, or carried out in small groups the focus will be on successful realisation of the task. The students produce/perform/present their tasks, for instance:

- producing a poster;
- performing a role-play;
- having a debate;
- producing a leaflet;
- giving a presentation [27].

The third stage (“Post-task”) involves students presenting their solution to a problem or task in front of the whole group. The teacher can immediately provide feedback and evaluate the content of their speech. The final stage involves the analysis of those linguistic means that were selected by the students to perform the task, and the discussion of the correctness of their use, as well as further consolidation and practice of the used language constructions [28, p.12].

While the task is being carried out, the facilitator may wish to make notes on the language:

- Could any vocabulary be added?
- Were there any structures that caused misunderstanding or confusion?
- Were there any phrases that could have been expressed differently?
- Could any of the language have been used to better effect e.g. made less abrupt, more persuasive etc.?

After the task has been completed, participants may wish to look at the material again to gain a better understanding of the language: to look at structures, difficult/unusual vocabulary etc.

The facilitator may wish to conduct a feedback session to discuss the success of the task and consider suggestions for improving it. Participants may wish to discuss such issues as working together, performing in a group, reactions to the topic, amount of language input, things they enjoyed doing, things they did not enjoy and so on. Evaluation of the task will provide useful information for facilitators when planning further tasks.

The lecturer might have reflection upon task realization after the class or at the end of the class selecting on the following questions:

- Was it useful?
- Was it enjoyable? Language reflection, possible further input.
- Further exploitation of material for language.
- Error correction.
- Reflection by learners [28].

To ensure the active participation of students, it is important to choose an interesting topic for discussion that motivates them, causes an internal need for communication, and therefore will contribute to the most effective development of speech. Therefore, the key requirement of the task-based learning technology is the setting of a goal that must be achieved in the process of communication. At the same time, the language is acquired not as a set of linguistic phenomena, but as if in a “social context”, that is, it is associated with a communication situation in which certain lexical and grammatical units are considered typical carriers language learning takes place in the process of communication and interaction, which contributes to the development of students’ language competence [2].

At the last stage, the teacher can use both implicit and explicit methods of focusing on the language form. Implicit techniques refer to so-called requests for clarification, when the participants of the communicative task turn to each other with a request to clarify their opinion, thus offering to paraphrase an incomprehensible linguistic statement. Explicit methods include: explicit correction (explicit correction), when participants notice errors in each other’s speech and correct them; a question (query), when during the discussion a question is asked directly about the correct use of language forms; advice, which can be used mainly by the teacher, as a recommendation or reminder about the need to use one or another construction, characteristic of the given language context [26, p. 17].

It is possible to permit different students to produce their own results in accordance with the format displayed on the blackboard. It is imperative that the blackboard is not occupied by a single student at any given time. It is

imperative that the delivery of examples for consciousness-raising activities is conducted by more than one student. It is always beneficial to observe the responses of your fellow students, particularly when you have selected specific answers based on careful consideration and effort. It is imperative that this feeling be leveraged as a motivational factor in the classroom.

Furthermore, the same activity can be conducted orally, wherein students are requested to recite their written responses in the designated format. It is then necessary for the instructor to provide some relevant examples on the blackboard.

In this phase of the TBL cycle, it is vital to identify the relevant grammatical points that require attention. This is a pivotal moment to document the necessity of additional work with specific grammatical elements for students at this level. The students are fully engaged, as they have directly contributed the examples used in the joint language consciousness-raising activities in the classroom.

As for report, P. Skehan argues that it is a way to avoid the development of fluency at the expense of accuracy. Knowing that they will have to speak in front of the audience, students start thinking about the language they are using, seek for advice and correction. Report stage challenges students and that's why develops their interlanguage system. However, the teacher needs to be careful with setting up the report stage: if students do not have a reason for listening to each other, or if they repeat the same information again and again, the report stage will turn into the most tedious part of a lesson and will not be of any use for students. Students will neither listen to each other nor will they care about what they are saying and how [21].

A facilitator while using the TBL methodology often:

- acts as a language consultant; steps back and lets the learners be more active, without interrupting them, in order not to disrupt the learning dynamic.
- interacts with and reacts to the learners' behaviour and needs, keeping them engaged and helping them to understand the concepts.
- empowers the learners to learn and be engaged and motivated; multimedia resources like images, songs, movies, and games are often used in the learning process.
- motivates the learners to speak, focusing on authentic situations rather than the grammar; the facilitator will follow the topics that interest the learners.
- creates a safe atmosphere in which students feel good and are ready to take risks (e.g., using their existing language skills to talk and solve a problem).
- guides, advises, and supports when learners ask for it.
- provides indirect feedback [24].

The main idea of the task-based learning method is to involve the student in a communicative situation and ask him to perform a communicative task or task. A communicative situation is any life situation in which speech is used, therefore, this also includes small tasks.

Before using TBL approach, teachers should be familiarized with the types of tasks that will be presented to students. D. Willis classified them into six types of tasks, namely:

- Listening: brainstorming, establishing facts;
- Ordering and sorting: sequence, arrangement, classification;
- Comparing: agreement, search for similarities and differences;
- Problem solving: analysis of real or hypothetical problems/situations;
- Sharing personal experiences: stories, description, research and explanation of thoughts, reactions;
- Creative tasks: brainstorming, establishing facts, ordering and sorting, comparing problem solving, etc. [27].

According to M. Bygate and P. Skehan, the most famous forms of work in pairs and groups comprise:

- inside/outside circles;
- brain torming;
- jigsaw reading;
- think-pair-share;
- pair-interviews and others [4].

J. Willis insists that the most important thing is to choose a meaningful task, which is related to real activity. It should provide an opportunity to share information with an emphasis on meaning and have a clear purpose (students know the result they expect). Students perform tasks in pairs or groups. In practice, the effectiveness of such forms of work as individual work, work in pairs, groups, and team work has been found to be quite high. Work in groups and pairs – this is a necessary condition when using a learning-based approach tasks: creates a favorable climate for communication, frees students from the anxiety that they have to speak in front of the group, makes students more responsible and autonomous, because each of them bears the same responsibility for completing the tasks. In addition, working in groups and pairs also increases communication time for each student [28].

Some examples of tasks for different faculties based on TBL method may be the following:

1) *To plan a trip* – for students majoring in Geography. During the course of the task, the class is divided into groups. The group should be prompted to

engage in a brainstorming session to identify the information they require from the traveller, and to pose questions pertaining to this information. For example, they should consider the types of sites and activities that would be of interest to you, the prevailing weather conditions at this time of year, the availability of suitable dining establishments, the most appropriate mode of transportation, the estimated time required to reach your destination, and the most convenient place to stay. Inform the students of the time allotted for planning and allow them to devise an optimal itinerary. Once the designated period for planning has elapsed, each group should present their proposed itinerary to the class. It is also recommended that other groups be encouraged to pose questions.

Once each group has presented their itinerary, the class should vote on which trip is the most appealing. It may be more diplomatic to phrase this as a question, for example, "Which trip should I take first?" Students may also provide reasons for their selections, which can be particularly enlightening when they have voted for a group other than their own [8].

2) *Department of tourism* – for students majoring in Tourism. The lecturer may divide the students into groups and request that they propose ideas for countries, cities, or specific travel destinations. When students are compiling a list of locations, they should consider their existing knowledge about each of these places. Have they observed any advertisements on television or in other media outlets that have prompted them to consider travelling to this destination? Has this location been the subject of recent news coverage? It is recommended that students be permitted to generate as much information as possible independently.

Subsequently, each group should select one destination and identify its key selling points. What are the reasons for the appeal of this destination to potential visitors? What activities and cuisine might they engage in and consume? In consideration of the aforementioned factors, which locations might be suitable for accommodation? The groups should then devise a poster campaign and a one-page newspaper article to advertise their chosen destination. This encompasses the utilisation of linguistic elements, including words, sentences, and images.

Upon completion, each group shall present their proposal to the Department of Tourism (teacher and the rest of the class). The class should then proceed to vote on the most convincing presentation [8].

3) *Jury duty* – for students majoring in Law. The lecturer may present a crime story from the news media (it is advisable to avoid excessive gore) or alternatively, identify a mystery story that can be adapted for use in this lesson.

The class should be presented with a suspect (which could be the instructor), an alibi, and any accompanying statements from witnesses.

The information provided should be relatively straightforward, yet sufficiently detailed to allow groups to make informed decisions. The class should be divided into groups, after which the students should be informed that they are to act as the jury, responsible for determining the fate of the accused. Within the specified timeframe, the jury must evaluate the evidence presented and reach a unanimous decision. Should you be assuming the role of the accused, it would be advisable to encourage students to pose questions should they require further information for the purposes of their deliberations.

Once the students have completed their deliberations and reached a verdict, the class should engage in a discussion to ascertain how each group reached its conclusion. Which aspects did they consider to be of greatest importance? Were there any particular elements that were deemed more significant than others? Did a member of the group highlight a particular detail or observation that had not been previously considered by the others? [8].

4) *Story comparison* – for students majoring in Art. The class is provided with a visual stimulus, typically in the form of a picture or cartoon, to facilitate discussion. The degree of information provided to the students can be tailored to suit the instructor's preferences. The main character and a few obligatory events are typically provided as a starting point. I then establish the context for the narrative and allow the students to engage in free-form planning, outlining the trajectory of the story and its eventual conclusion.

Subsequently, the students are divided into pairs and provided with the initial information. It is then necessary to instruct the students to write and illustrate how the story ends. It is essential that they listen to each other and either agree on or compromise each subsequent step. Once the designated period has elapsed, each group should present their narrative to the class orally [8].

According to D. Nunan, classroom tasks are divided into two broad categories: real-world tasks and pedagogic tasks. Real-world tasks require similar behaviour of learners as life requires outside the classroom, as for example listening to a weather forecast and estimating the temperature [15, p. 40]. In contrast, D. Nunan explains that pedagogic tasks require very different behaviour of students in comparison with their natural behaviour outside the classroom. An example of such a pedagogic task could be listening to a text with answering questions and deciding on true or false statements. While real-world tasks need to be analyzed, pedagogic tasks are selected

in relation to second language acquisition theory [15, p. 40]. D. Nunan adds that pedagogic tasks are in a way connected with real-world tasks because involvement in pedagogic tasks provides learners with skills needed for real-world tasks in order to conclude difficult tasks in advance. So, pedagogic activities could help to practice interaction skills, discourse, fluency as well as comprehension of grammar and phonology [15, p. 44].

R. Ellis compares two general types of tasks: unfocused and focused tasks. By unfocused tasks learners select from various forms but they are not created with a concrete form in mind [7, p. 16]. On the other hand, Ellis explains that by focused tasks learners are activated through a receptive and productive process such as a grammatical structure, whereas this process must fulfill all the criteria of a task.

Information gap activities are realized through communicative tasks where students explain and share their opinions, ideas, facts or instructions with other students [20, p. 152]. According to D. Nunan, "Information gap activity, which involves a transfer of given information from one person to another – generally calling for the decoding or encoding of information from or into language" [15, p. 46-47]. As mentioned above, the goal of this communicative activity is to implement learners in language use and help them to interact realistically which involves exchange of opinions as well [20, p. 152]. Examples of such activities are pair work or completing a tabular representation, which requires use of relevant information, correctness and completeness [15, p. 66]. In addition, Nunan's study provides that information gap task should include five following steps:

- Introduction: learners get basic instructions about the problem they will solve.
- Vocabulary and idioms: the teacher introduces difficult words and phrases.
- Small group listening, discussion and note taking: the teacher divides student into three groups, gives them recording and set of questions. They listen to the recording and answer the questions.
- Small group problem solving: The teacher recombines the students in groups and give them blank information table with an outline plan of a house. The students fill in the information table together and create a plan of the house.
- Feedback: Students come back to their previous groups and compare their plans with the original plan of the house [20, p. 122].

In general, information gap activities are very useful because of the involvement of all students, their motivation and possible use of these activities in the real world, such as using the telephone [20, p. 152].

R. Ellis defines jigsaw task as “a task where the input material is divided between two or more participants such that they are required to exchange information to complete the task” [7, p. 344]. In other words, jigsaw task is considered as a two-way information-gap task requiring sharing information which includes giving and receiving information of both students [7, p. 215]. R. Ellis further explains that interaction which is needed by jigsaw tasks involves all the participants who have to cooperate and finish the task with a closed outcome [7, p. 215].

To conclude, there is a slight difference between jigsaw task and information-gap task. As already mentioned, information-gap tasks require one-way interaction because only one participant is able to exchange the information he or she holds [7, p. 216].

R. Ellis states that the participants can change roles from one task to another which results in the same situation as in a jigsaw task. However, R. Ellis’s study provides that tasks differing from information-gap and jigsaw tasks are problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks and opinion-exchange tasks because it is up to the participants whether they want to take part in the interaction or not [7].

According to J. Willis and D. Willis, while learners are doing tasks, they are focusing on meaning and expressing what they really wish to say or write in order to reach the goal of the task. In addition, J. Willis explained that task as an efficient activity should include the following criteria in the form of questions. “The more confidently you can answer yes to each of these questions, the more task-like the activity.

- Will the activity engage learners’ interest?
- Is there a primary focus on meaning?
- Is there a goal or an outcome?
- Is success judged in terms of outcome?
- Is completion a priority?
- Does the activity relate to real world activities?” [27, p. 12-14].

Besides, when designing effective task-based activities, the teacher should take into consideration all the language skills listed below and implement them into the lesson.

As R. Frost emphasises, TBL establishes learners’ freedom over language control and allows them to use a natural context evolved from their experiences with an appropriate language. Furthermore, the learners “will have a much more varied exposure to language with TBL” and “they will be exposed to a whole range of lexical phrases, collocations and patterns as well as

language forms” [9]. The language in TBL comes from the learners’ needs which determine to a great extent the content of the lesson. Finally, TBL is a creative, enjoyable and motivating type of learning focused in particular on communication between learners [9]. Thus, designing and using task-based activities in the classroom introduces a modern and effective approach in language teaching and should be definitely included in English university classes.

CONCLUSIONS

Task-based learning focuses on developing communication skills through tasks that matter in real-world situations that require critical thinking, creative approach, decision-making in complex situations and quick reaction to solve problems. The task-based method is a component of the communicative approach, which is based on students’ performance of real tasks related to their life situations and involves purposeful use of language, which promotes the development of communicative skills and ensures more effective learning.

This approach focuses on the use of language in context and promotes the development of communication skills and understanding of language in real life. The benefits of using this method include increasing students’ motivation, providing a more realistic and natural context for language use, as well as developing communication skills and practicing teamwork. Disadvantages include high demands on the teacher and students, the complexity of preparing and organizing lessons. Teachers play the role of a facilitator who skillfully develops and adapts tasks to the needs of students, which makes the learning process interesting and involves all students in cooperation, which promotes practice and skill development.

The stage of creating a speech expression in this technology is transferred to the very beginning: a speech expression is created without relying on explanation and repetition, as in the process of communication. The student is focused on the content of the statement, not on its form. Learning through communication ensures personal involvement (as participants say what they consider appropriate, meaningful), and this is a necessary condition for motivation to learn a foreign language.

Task-based learning also gives students complete freedom in choosing language means for task performance. The teacher should always have the opportunity to choose tasks and change them as the case progresses. And they should evaluate the performance of the task the students themselves. Another significant advantage of TBL is that students can apply actual knowledge from different fields.

The specificity of this technology is also the use of authentic materials taken from real life, not specially created for educational purposes. One of the disadvantages of this technology is attributed by many methodologists to a significant emphasis on speaking. Perhaps, for those students who have a lower level of the English language, this technology is not suitable, since they are more focused on learning linguistic phenomena.

The advantage of task-based learning over traditional approaches is that it allows students to focus on actual communication before doing any serious language analysis. It focuses on the needs of students by creating communicative situations for them and gives them the opportunity to use all their linguistic resources to complete the task. The methodology helps students to clearly define what they know, what they do not know and what they still need to work on. Such practice helps students better understand their weak points in language knowledge and encourages them to take responsibility for their learning.

Task-based learning is well suited for groups of students with different levels of language proficiency; weaker and stronger students can successfully complete the same task with greater or lesser accuracy and correctness. It is important that students with different levels of language proficiency develop communication skills and are aware of their individual learning needs.

Task-based learning the approach helps to increase motivation as well as arouses lively interest in learning a foreign language and allows you to maintain feedback with students. Another advantage of this approach is that students have the opportunity to practice a wide range of language skills (not just grammar). Combinations of words, phrases, parts of speech and other points that are often not used during classes according to traditional programs are actively used in classes using the TBL method.

It is essential to be mindful of certain potential issues associated with the implementation of task-based learning. As it encourages students to utilise their own linguistic resources, it is incumbent upon the teacher to facilitate the expansion of these. Otherwise, students will not learn new phrases or words autonomously, but merely enhance their existing language abilities.

This issue can be addressed by implementing a rotation system, whereby stronger students are paired with those who are at a lower level. It would be beneficial for the more proficient student to concentrate on utilising a greater range of advanced vocabulary and linguistic structures. This does not assist the more proficient students, who will require the guidance of the teacher.

Additionally, it is also crucial to recognise that the learning process does not conclude with the completion of the task cycle. The evaluation phase is of

paramount importance for students to gain insight into their learning process. In essence, the learning process of task-based learning comprises two equally important phases. The first is the completion of the tasks themselves, and the second is the reflection on the experience gained from these tasks. It is therefore crucial for educators to provide guidance and support to students in the post-task phase, as this can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the entire task-based learning process.

To conclude, the most evident objective of selecting task-based learning is to enhance university students' engagement. TBL prioritises students' activity, with the responsibility for task design and provision resting with the lecturers. This enables learners to engage in spontaneous, individual and original experimentation with the foreign language. Each task will provide the student with a novel personal experience of the foreign language, and at this juncture, the teacher assumes a pivotal role. It is incumbent upon the teacher to assume responsibility for the consciousness-raising process, which must follow the experimental task activities. The consciousness-raising aspect of the method is of paramount importance for the success of task-based teaching.

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