Task-Based Language Teaching; Enhancing English Proficiency in the Classroom

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Abstract. *The article addresses relevant issues related to the application of elements of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) methodology in teaching speaking skills in English language classes, both in general education schools and in higher educational institutions with non-linguistic profiles. The paper analyzes the extent to which this issue has been studied in the scientific and pedagogical community. It presents the specific characteristics of speaking as a form of verbal communication. The article outlines the nature of communication as a dynamic process of interaction. The goals, objectives, and methods of teaching speaking in foreign language lessons are discussed. The primary objective of teaching speaking is to develop speech skills that students can use both in academic settings and in everyday communication situations. Among the methods for developing high-level speaking skills (which should be demonstrated by senior school students and university students in non-linguistic fields), the article highlights speech exercises that teach oral language in its various forms.*

Key words: *speech activity, training, method of communicative tasks, speaking.*

INTRODUCTION

In modern educational institutions, both in general and higher education, the issue of using contemporary pedagogical methods and technologies is becoming increasingly relevant. This is due to the need for improving the educational process and introducing innovative approaches that facilitate the realization of an individual's natural potential. Karakozova E.N. and Shamov A.N. note that the development and implementation of new information and communication technologies are transforming the system of interaction between professional communities on a global scale, as well as the system for training specialists, enriching its didactic and methodological tools [4]. In this context, it is pertinent to discuss the teaching technology known as Task-Based Learning (TBL), as it enables lessons where not only the result is important, but also the process itself—providing opportunities for everyone to participate, voice their opinions, and choose the issues or situations for discussion. Task-Based Learning is a method of teaching foreign language acquisition, an approach designed for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which is developed within the framework of the communicative approach (Communicative Language Teaching) [3].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Communication is a dynamic process of exchanging information that includes the transmission of opinions, ideas, emotions, values, and worldview principles. The success of communication depends not only on the ability to correctly formulate and express thoughts but also on the skills of listening comprehension, as well as the use of appropriate non-verbal cues in accordance with the specific situation. Since the main indicator of developing communicative competence is the ability to communicate directly in a foreign language, it is essential to emphasize speaking as a form of verbal

activity.

The goal of teaching speaking in foreign language classes is to acquire speech skills for use both in academic contexts and in everyday communication situations [6, p. 140].

The main objectives for teachers when teaching speaking are:

1. To teach logical and coherent development of thoughts.

2. To teach students to express a complete thought.

3. To teach speaking with a certain pace and speed, without long pauses [4].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are certain key characteristics of a statement that determine its complexity and specificity. A statement has an inherently continuous nature; the speaking process has a specific duration if it is not interrupted by the interlocutor. This is also supported by the speaker's psychological motivation and the mentally prepared structure of the utterance. A meaningful statement should respond to a series of questions, not just be a random collection of thoughts on unrelated topics. The sequence and logical flow of the statement are expressed through elaboration, clarification, and the addition of key and subsequent ideas. The importance of a well-organized pedagogical process lies in the fact that studying and applying various methods for constructing statements, mastering their models and regularities, allows the speaker to communicate the message more fully and effectively. The comparative semantic completeness and communicative focus of a statement are reflected in the fact that each utterance must have a beginning and an end that convey information important for the interlocutor. There must be a semantic connection between different statements in the course of continuous communication [2].

Often, the communication process may fail to meet the expectations of the participants in the educational process for several reasons: limited subject-specific knowledge, fear of failure, uneven participation of interlocutors in the conversation, and so on.

The methods for developing speaking in foreign language lessons at schools and non-linguistic universities include speech exercises that teach oral speech in its various forms: dialogue, monologue, and polylogue, within the context of communicative tasks [5]. Examples of such exercises include role-playing or business games, pair or group work, conferences, discussions, conversations, presentations, debates, round tables, etc.

Role-playing games are considered a highly effective method for teaching speaking, as they allow students to practice using a foreign language in a setting that closely resembles real-life conditions [1].

Particular attention should be paid to motivation, which is one of the key factors determining success in teaching speaking in foreign language classes, as its presence or absence directly influences the outcome. Therefore, motivating students is crucial in helping them overcome the challenges associated with mastering this type of speech activity.

Various approaches involve a wide range of technologies. One such method is Task-Based Learning (TBL), which is an integral part of the communicative approach. The Task-Based Learning strategy was first developed in the 1980s by Narahari Umanath Prabhu, a teacher and researcher from Bangalore, South India. He proposed that language acquisition is an "unconscious process that can be facilitated by engaging students' attention with meaning, words, and actions." He also believed that task-based learning would activate students' natural mechanisms for acquiring a second language. Key researchers in this field include Michael Long and David Nunan. Michael Long made significant contributions to understanding age effects in second language acquisition, needs analysis, and task-based learning. According to David Nunan, the focus in TBL shifts toward teaching communication through interaction in the target language, with authentic texts being introduced into the learning situation. The TBL methodology provides students with the opportunity to focus not only on the language itself but also on the process of learning to speak in the target language, considering the learner's personal experience as an important part of the pedagogical process.

The method assumes that students already have a certain level of grammar and vocabulary on the topic, so it is important to assess how ready they are to use the language consciously and complete tasks with it. It is often recommended to introduce this method starting at the Pre-Intermediate level, which is typically reached in the middle and senior grades of general education schools and serves as a foundation for teachers in non-linguistic universities.

The focus is placed on the task itself, rather than on grammatical or lexical forms, as the goal is not to study structure, but to complete the task. Language becomes a tool for communication, aimed at helping students successfully accomplish the task at hand. Learning occurs through communication and interaction [3].

The following exercises were developed with the aim of applying communicative tasks in foreign language lessons for 9th-grade students. Communicative tasks aimed at improving speaking skills promote student independence during lessons, as well as foster closer interaction and communication with other learners. These exercises stimulate students' interest both in the language and in the culture of the target language, which, in turn, facilitates and accelerates the learning process.

Module 4 – Technology

Exercise 1 – "Tell & Ask"

Goal – To develop speaking skills, reading skills, pair work abilities, logical thinking, analysis, and generalization, as well as to foster a value-oriented attitude toward others' opinions. **Task**: Work in pairs. One of you will receive an article titled *"The Gadget Show on Five"* and the task is not to read it but to explain the topic to your partner. The partner, who does not have the article, asks questions to gather information and writes down the main points of the article. At the end of the discussion, students should have a plan.

Module 7 – Stay Safe

Exercise 2 – "List of Words"

Goal – To develop speaking skills, improve spontaneous memory recall, foster creativity, and develop logical and critical thinking skills.

Task: Based on the list of situations provided, answer the question: *"What do people feel in this/that situation?"* You are to categorize these feelings into two columns: "comfort" and "fear."

Module 3 – See It to Believe It

Exercise 3 – "Guess What It Is"

Goal – To develop speaking skills, improve pair/group work, prevent conflicts, stimulate students' thinking, and promote a value-oriented attitude toward others' opinions.

CONCLUSION

The main objectives of the exercises presented are to encourage students' participation in discussions or the presentation of their work results. When using this methodology, students are given the opportunity to draw on their own language resources to tackle the task. The approach allows students to focus on real communication before engaging in any serious analysis of the language. Task-Based Learning (TBL) is well-suited for groups with varying levels of language proficiency. The use of such tasks enables students to immerse themselves in everyday and professional communication situations by simulating real-life interactions, highlighting the practical orientation of TBL. Communicative tasks, based on interaction and the exchange of ideas, help create a favorable working atmosphere, foster not only academic but also personal qualities in students, and increase motivation to learn a foreign language.

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