TBLL on the NET

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A traditional model for the organization of language lessons, both in the classroom and in course-books, has long been the ***PPP approach*** (presentation, practice, production). With this model individual language items (for example, the past continuous) are presented by the teacher, then practiced in the form of spoken and written exercises (often pattern drills), and then used by the learners in less controlled speaking or writing activities. Although the grammar point presented at the beginning of this procedure may well fit neatly into a grammatical syllabus, a frequent criticism of this approach is the apparent arbitrariness of the selected grammar point, which may or may not meet the linguistic needs of the learners, and the fact that the production stage is often based on a rather inauthentic emphasis on the chosen structure.

An alternative to the PPP model is the ***Test-Teach-Test approach (TTT)***, in which the production stage comes first and the learners are "thrown in at the deep end" and required to perform a particular task (a role play, for example). This is followed by the teacher dealing with some of the grammatical or lexical problems that arose in the first stage and the learners then being required either to perform the initial task again or to perform a similar task. The language presented in the „teach” stage can be predicted if the initial production task is carefully chosen but there is a danger of randomness in this model.

Jane Willis (1996), in her book „A Framework for Task-Based Learning”, outlines a third model for organizing lessons. While this is not a radical departure from TTT, it does present a model that is based on sound theoretical foundations and one which takes account of the need for authentic communication. ***Task-based learning (TBL)*** is typically based on ***three stages***. ***The first of these is the pre-task stage***, during which the teacher introduces and defines the topic and the learners engage in activities that either help them to recall words and phrases that will be

useful during the performance of the main task or to learn new words and phrases that are essential to the task. ***This stage is followed by*** what Willis calls the ***„task cycle”.*** Here the learners perform the task (typically a reading or listening exercise or a problem-solving exercise) in pairs or small groups. ***They then prepare a report for the whole class*** on how they did the task and what conclusions they reached. Finally, they present their findings to the class in spoken or written form. The final stage is the language focus stage, during which specific language features from the task and highlighted and worked on. Feedback on the learners' performance at the reporting stage may also be appropriate at this point.

Let's have a more attentive look at every of these stages. Before the task, the teacher explores the topic with the class. Useful (relevant) lexical items may be given. Also, the learners may be given further input, such as a recording of someone doing a similar task or part of an authentic text as a lead in. During the pre-task stage the learners will have their schemata activated, and given the opportunity to become personally involved in the lesson.

The task cycle can be broken down into three stages: task, in which the learners do the task; planning, when the learners prepare to report to the whole class (usually orally or in writing) how they did the task; and report, when the reports are presented to the class and results compared.

During the task, the teacher monitors and encourages all attempts at communication without correcting. Willis suggests that this harbours a free environment in whish learners are willing to experiment (as mistakes aren't important). At this stage in a PPP lesson the focus would be very much on accuracy, with all mistakes corrected. During the planning stage, the learners are aware that their output will be 'made public' and will consequently aim for accuracy. The role of the teacher here is therefore to provide assistance with regard to language advice. The teacher then chairs the report, and comments on the content. At this stage, the focus is on both fluency and accuracy. Also, the learners may hear a recording or read a text of a similar task, in order to compare how they did it.

The language focus consists of analysis and practice. In the analysis learners examine the recording or text for new lexical items or structures, which they then record. The teacher conducts a practice of the new items either during the analysis or after. The learners are given the opportunity to reflect on how they performed the task and on the new language they used in this final part of the lesson.

The main advantages of TBL are that language is used for a genuine purpose meaning that real communication should take place, and that at the stage where the learners are preparing their report for the whole class, they are forced to consider language form in general rather than concentrating on a single form (as in the PPP model). Whereas the aim of the PPP model is to lead from accuracy to fluency, the aim of TBL is to integrate all four skills and to move from fluency to accuracy plus fluency. The range of tasks available (reading texts, listening texts, problem-solving, role-plays, questionnaires, etc) offers a great deal of flexibility in this model and should lead to more motivating activities for the learners.

Learners who are used to a more traditional approach based on a grammatical syllabus may find it difficult to come to terms with the apparent randomness of TBL, but if TBL is integrated with a systematic approach to grammar and lexis, the outcome can be a comprehensive, all round approach that can be adapted to meet the needs of all learners.

TBL offers a structured approach to learning, and supports the notion that learning occurs most effectively when related to the real-life tasks undertaken by an individual. TBL encourages the development of the reflective learner, and accommodates a wide range of learning styles. TBL offers an attractive combination of pragmatism and idealism: pragmatism in the sense that learning with an explicit sense of purpose is an important source of student motivation and satisfaction; idealism in that it is consistent with current theories of education.

Nevertheless, teachers wishing to branch out and develop through the use of alternative methodologies should be careful not to jump on the latest language learning bandwagon. Michael McCarthy, the eminent applied linguist, suggests that TBL figures high on such a list of latest fads, and in its strongest forms risks

relegating learning about the language system to a secondary place, subservient to some real-world task. TBL, as a practical and pedagogically sound alternative, should not exclude grammar and vocabulary learning via a systematic syllabus, as systematic progression is a key psychological concept for learners.

Taking into consideration what is said above, we can define ***TBLL (Task-Based Language Leaning)*** as an approach to teaching and leaning the language when the learners acquire the language while solving a real problem and making a material outcome. The most effective, in our opinion, way to organize TBLL is online services that offer us a lot of platforms to construct web-quests. Such a framework theoretically provides the learner with an opportunity to use the language they need for genuine communication on the Net.

There is another widespread term for TBLL on the Net – it is ***Webquest. Webquest's elements are:***

1.   ***Title*** (decide about the title of your webquest, it should be interesting and motivating). On this stage you are to describe such elements as: ***Description*** (what your students will get after working in this webquest); ***Grade Level*** (age or language level)***, Curriculum*** (school subject or subjects)***, Keywords*** (other teachers and students will want to find and use your webquest).

2.   ***Introduction*** (you should put your students into the atmosphere of the topic, tell them why it is important and interesting to study this very topic). ***The Introduction*** stage is normally used to introduce the overall theme of the webquest. It involves giving background information on the topic and, in the language learning context, often introduces key vocabulary and concepts which learners will need to understand in order to complete the tasks involved.

3.   ***Task*** (define the task clearly and precisely: to prepare a public speech, computer presentation, poster, concert, role-play, web-site, write a composition, publish a book, etc). On this stage you should not describe the process of students' work, just tell them about the tangible result they should get. ***The task*** should obviously be highly motivating and intrinsically interesting for the learners, and should be firmly anchored in a real-life situation. This often involves the learners in a

certain amount of role-play within a given scenario (e.g. you are the school social organizer and have to organize a trip for your class to an English-speaking country...)

4. ***Process*** (webquest is an independent students' work, so you should describe the process and every step of it clearly: to organize groups, decide the duties of every participant, visit certain websites, do different tests, read concrete articles or texts, download definite files, etc).

5. ***Evaluation*** (the most complicated element, because you are to describe the levels and evaluation criteria of the result and process of working in the webquest). ***The Evaluation*** stage can involve learners in self-evaluation, comparing and contrasting what they have produced with other learners and giving feedback on what they feel they have learnt, achieved, etc.

6. ***Conclusion*** (when your students finish working in the webquest you can publish their results, photos, reports in this section and certainly you should congratulate them on the completion of their work).

7. ***Teacher Page*** (here you should give recommendations to other teachers if they want to use your webquest with their students).

8. ***About Authors*** (don't be shy and publish information about yourself, it's a great chance to find new friends and get in touch with teachers around the world).

Until the Web, this kind of activity was very difficult for the average teacher to create because collecting such a breadth of resources was next to impossible. Nowadays a lot of modern course books are based on combining different approaches with TBLL, for example, Macmillan offers webquests to all its courses for different levels. But every teacher today should be able to make his/her own webquests. There are a lot of services that can be used as a platform of webquesting, such as: http://webquest.org/, Filamentality (http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/), Zunal (http://www.zunal.com/), Create a WebQuesr (http://createwebquest.com/), where you will find examples of webquests and help how to make your own quest.

Summary. The article deals with a problem of using TBLL (Task-Based Language Learning) approach in a language classroom and a very actual question

how to organize project work on the Net; some advice how to make your own webquest is given, the examples of Webquest platforms are specified.

Key words: Task-based learning, Task-based language learning, project work, using Internet in language learning and teaching, webquest.

Резюме: У статті розглядається питання організації проектної діяльності з англійської мови в Інтернеті, даються поради щодо розробки власних вебквтів, наводяться приклади електронних платформ для розробки власних вебквестів онлайн.

Ключові слова: проектна діяльність, вебквест, використання Інтернету у викладанні англійської мови.

Резюме: В статье рассматривается вопрос об организации проектной деятельности по английскому языку в Интернете, даются советы, как организовать проектную деятельность, приводятся примеры платформ для разработки собственных вебквестов.

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