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**Boichevska Ilona Borysivna**

Ph.D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor of the Foreign Languages Chair

Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University

Uman, Ukraine

**Veremiuk Liudmyla Leonidivna**

Ph.D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor of the Foreign Languages Chair

Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University

Uman, Ukraine

## SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING – AN OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES

*Abstract. The article investigates the use of different approach within foreign language teaching. The concept and peculiarities of communicative approach have been characterized. Moreover, such approaches as PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production), TBL (Task Based Learning) and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), the use of which makes foreign language learning successful, have been analyzed.*

*Key words: approach, communicative approach, task-based learning, content and language integrated learning, foreign language.*

An approach is a way of looking at teaching and learning. Underlying any language teaching approach is a theoretical view of what language is, and of how it can be learnt. An approach gives rise to methods, the way of teaching something, which uses classroom activities or techniques to help learners learn.

The process of learning a foreign language must be similar to learning the first language, where listening goes before speaking. In this way, communicative skills are developed in a natural, spontaneous way. Today, more and more attention is given to

communicative approach in foreign language teaching. With the emergence of universal education, and the extremely rapid development of ICT, communication became the primary goal for foreign language learners. We live in time when information technologies play a very important role in education: their use in foreign language teaching raises motivation, facilitates students' cognitive abilities and helps to create a favourable psychological atmosphere in the classroom. This approach gives greater flexibility for language acquisition [1]. Speaking about the communicative approach, it is worth admitting that it is based on the idea that learning a language successfully comes through having to communicate in real circumstances. In the communicative approach, the main objective is to present a topic in context as natural as possible. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language [2]. It is essential to emphasize on some peculiarities of the Communicative Approach.

1.      Language learning is learning to communicate using the target language.

2.      The language used to communicate must be appropriate to the situation, the roles of the speakers, the setting. The learner needs to differentiate between a formal and an informal style.

3.      Communicative activities are essential. Activities should be presented in a situation or context and have a communicative purpose. Typical activities of this approach are: games, problem-solving tasks, and role-play. There should be information gap, choice and feedback involved in the activities.

4.      Learners must have constant interaction with and exposure to the target language.

5.      Development of the four macroskills – speaking, listening, reading and writing – is integrated from the beginning, since communication integrates the different skills.

6.      The topics are selected and graded regarding age, needs, level, and students' interest.

7. Motivation is central. Teachers should raise students' interest from the beginning of the lesson.

8. The role of the teacher is that of a guide, a facilitator or an instructor.

9. Trial and error is considered part of the learning process.

10. Evaluation concerns not only the learners' accuracy but also their fluency **[3]**.

In order to plan for different approaches within the communicative approach, it might be a good idea to revise three different approaches: *PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production), TBL (Task Based Learning) and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).*

Presentation – Practice – Production, or PPP, is a method for teaching structures (e.g. grammar or vocabulary) in a foreign language. As its name suggests, PPP is divided into three phases, moving from tight teacher control towards greater learner freedom. Some writers use this name to refer to a specific method that focuses on oral skills, but it can also be applied more broadly to a family of related methods which rely on the progression from presentation, through controlled practice, to free production. Presentation – Practice – Production (PPP) is sometimes seen as a weak version of communicative language teaching, the communicative approach or a deductive approach. The teacher presents the target language and then gives students the opportunity to practise it through controlled activities. The final stage of the lesson gives the students the opportunity to practise the target language in free activities which bring in other language elements [4].

In the stage of ***presentation*** the teacher presents the new language in a meaningful context. This stage is controlled by the teacher. The teacher might use a text, an audio tape or visual aids to demonstrate a situation. From this, he will extract the required language forms. Building up stories on the board, using real facts or flashcards and miming are fun ways to present the language. When you are satisfied that your students understand the form and the meaning, move on to the practice stage of the lesson. During this stage of it is important to correct phonological and grammar mistakes.

There are numerous activities which can be used for the ***practice*** stage including gap fill exercises, substitution drills, sentence transformations, split sentences, picture dictations, class questionnaires, reordering sentences and matching sentences to pictures. It is important that the activities are fairly controlled at this stage as students have only just met the new language. Many students' books and workbooks have exercises and activities which can be used at this stage. When teaching the present simple, you may use split sentences as a controlled practice activity. Try to give students lots of sentence halves and in pairs so that they match the beginnings and ends of the sentences. Example: "When I forget my homework, "….".

Again there are numerous activities for the ***production*** stage and what you choose will depend on the language you are teaching and on the level of your students. However, information gaps, role plays, interviews, simulations, spot the differences between two pictures, picture cues, problem solving, board games are all meaningful activities which give students the opportunity to practise the language more freely. When teaching the present simple, try to personalize the lesson at this stage by giving students a list of question prompts to ask others in the class. Although the questions are controlled, the students are given the opportunity to answer more spontaneously using other language items and thus the activity becomes much less predictable. It is important to monitor and make a note of any errors so that you can build in class feedback and error analysis at the end of the lesson.

It could be said that PPP is an effective way to teach, since it makes planning easy and it can be implemented by relatively inexperienced teachers. However, this is not the same as saying that it is an effective way to learn. Some critics have suggested that it rests on a simplistic view of language learning as it often involves more than mechanical practice. In addition, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that learners who do well in the practice phase fail to transfer this ability to the production phase, and – even if they do successfully manage the production phase – they often fail to transfer this ability outside the classroom [4].

Sometimes different types of tasks of the kind found in coursebooks are used to replace teaching strategies, but, however useful and effective these may be, they are only tasks. They can help consolidate teaching, help with the learning process, but only after the teaching has taken place. They are never substitutes for teaching. Therefore, scientists define **task-based language learning** as "an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite them to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes". In other words, TBL refers to an approach of teaching and learning which views the completion of meaningful tasks through authentic communication as an effective way to improve language proficiency in the natural, practical, and functional use. Task-based language learning and teaching give students something real to do using the language they are learning. Such tasks can include visiting a doctor, planning a tour, conducting an interview. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome rather than on accuracy of prescribed language forms, therefore there is no prior focus on language. This makes TBLT especially popular for developing target language fluency and student confidence [5].

Originally developed in Europe for Europe, **content and language integrated learning** (CLIL), established itself 'as an umbrella term for any teaching context in which at least part of the instruction is given in another language than the L1 of the learners'. It refers to educational settings where other than the students' mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction. In this light, CLIL operates within a framework which facilitates the interrelationship between subject-matter knowledge and language knowledge through communication, culture and cognition. Any CLIL curriculum must be tailored to each educational system and different educational traditions. Such a view calls for an active and independent involvement of students, teachers and school authorities interested in developing an adaptable curriculum for the integration of content and language locally [6].

Some of the basic principles of CLIL are that in the CLIL classroom language is used to learn as well as to communicate. It is the subject matter which determines the language needed to learn. A CLIL lesson is therefore not a language lesson

neither is it a subject lesson transmitted in a foreign language. A successful CLIL lesson should combine elements of the following: content, communication, cognition, culture. In a CLIL lesson, all four language skills should be combined. The skills are seen thus: listening is a normal input activity, vital for language learning; reading, using meaningful material, is the major source of input; speaking focuses on fluency; writing is a series of lexical activities through which grammar is recycled.

In such a way all the above mentioned approaches are worthy and important, therefore it is necessary to use them all or some of them in order to make foreign language teaching successful. The use of the approach depends on the age of your students, the level of their foreign language proficiency, the aim of the task.

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