METHODS OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING FOR DEVELOPING FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS OBTAINING MASTER’S DEGREE

Abstract. The article focuses on the issue of implementing the problem-based method of learning into the course of “Business English” for developing and improving students’ foreign language communicative competence. The authors state that problem-based learning (PBL) can be determined as a teaching method in which students are taught by solving complicated and open-ended problems. It is defined that the problem situations and tasks should be real-world issues developed to encourage students’ comprehension of concepts and principles. The article reveals that PBL comprises a teaching technique and a curricular design. It may be beneficial to enhance critical thinking abilities, problem-solving abilities, skills for communication, and continuing education throughout their lives. The purpose of this research is to provide an overall overview of PBL in the context of language acquisition since PBL is now integrated into the fields of law, education, finance, economics, social studies, and engineering. It facilitates students' ability to develop competencies that will be useful in the future and daily interactions in an environment requiring collaboration. The authors proved that PBL may be highly effective in the language classroom in Ukrainian universities. Experienced instructors might generate challenges to match the demands of their students, which should assist them boost their English effectively in social environments. The research paper provides the theoretical and methodological foundations for the development of intercultural communicative competence and its constituent competencies in a Business English course.

It has been identified that students' responsibility for learning, interdisciplinary materials, and teacher engagement as an advisor and guide are key components of a problem-based approach. This approach has been proven to assist students by providing them with the confidence and skills needed to communicate...
and compete successfully in their future professional endeavors. Additionally, this technique offers a crucial mechanism for attaining cross-functional curricular integration as well as developing oral, written, and team communication skills. 

**Keywords:** problem-based learning (PBL), approach, technique, communicative competence, problem training, problem tasks, collaborative learning, teamwork.

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**МЕТОДИКА ПРОБЛЕМНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ СТУДЕНТІВ МАГІСТРАТУРИ**

Анотація. У статті представлені результати дослідження методу проблемно-орієнтованого навчання англійської мови на заняттях курсу «Ділова англійська мова». Автори стверджують, що проблемне навчання (PBL) можна визначити як метод навчання, за якого студенти навчаються шляхом вирішення складних і відкритих завдань. Це завдання, що пов’язані із реальними повсякденними та професійними ситуаціями, розроблені для сприяння розумінню учнями концепцій і принципів. PBL містить методику навчання та розробки навчального плану. Зазначається, що використання цього методу може бути корисним для підвищення здібностей критичного мислення, здатності вирішувати проблеми, навичок до спілкування та безперервної освіти протягом усього життя. Мета цього дослідження полягає в тому, щоб надати загальний огляд PBL в контексті оволодіння мовою. Застосування PBL сприяє розвитку компетенції, які будуть корисні в майбутній професійній діяльності і для щоденної взаємодії в середовищі, яке потребує співпраці. PBL може бути дуже ефективним на курсах Ділової англійської мови в університетах України. Досвідчені викладачі можуть створювати завдання відповідно до потреб студентів і фахових компетентностей, зазначених в освітніх програмах, що має допомогти їм покращити рівень володіння англійською мовою в соціумі. У статті подано теоретико-методологічні основи розвитку іншомовної комунікативної компетенції у курсі ділової англійської мови за допомогою окремих компонент PBL. Крім того, автори визначають, що
Statement of the problem. A shift in the priorities of contemporary education was necessitated by modern times and entirely completely novel circumstances of job involvement. The primary goal of the current educational process is to develop an innovative personality that not only possesses specified competencies and knowledge but also knows how to put forward and resolve essential and professionally relevant challenges. The aims of the educational process have been comprehended by identifying the components of its organization, which implies the search for such methods of teaching that would most fully correspond to to the given goals.

On December 9, 2022 Ukraine's Minister of Education and Science introduced the "Education 4.0: Ukrainian Dawn" Programme. The Program describes a major transformation in the Ukrainian educational system, based on the fundamental concepts and principles of the Ukraine Recovery Plan. It is stated that modern requirements of occupational endeavor define the necessity for modifying current education's priority goals. “The primary objective of contemporary education is to generate creative personalities and competitive experts capable of presenting and resolving vital and professionally relevant challenges” [1].

According to this, we might presume that one of the most successful approaches for developing and improving higher education students' foreign language communicative skills along with their professional competence is problem-based learning. Implementing problem-based learning technology in the Business English classes is the approach to studying a foreign language that, in our opinion, significantly improves students' motivation for studying, communicative competence, professional activity skills, and higher outcomes of learning English. It facilitates students' ability to develop competencies that will be useful in the future and daily interactions in an environment requiring collaboration. Thus, Business English instructors should handle a wide range of advanced, up-to-date teaching methods and techniques, concepts, and organizations.

We suggest, that problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered method of education that strives to promote problem-solving abilities as a lifetime habit and collaboration skills via self-directed learning. This approach of using real-world...
problems as an initial basis for acquiring and integrating new knowledge is suggested to be a proper approach or an alternative method to be implemented in higher education courses especially “Business English” to improve both the instruction and the learning of English as well as to develop foreign language communicative competence. Students are given unorganized, sloppy, ill-structured situations in which they perform the role of situation manager. PBL has numerous advantages over traditional lecture-based learning since students perceive the problem and gain knowledge of the solution. Some of the advantages include making learning relevant to the real world, encouraging and inspiring students to study, and engaging them in learning that is relevant to the real world. PBL is responsible not only for problem-solving but also for the development of other skills and abilities as well.

**Analysis of the recent researches and publications.** Having examined theoretical and methodological works on the given issue, we can state that problem-based learning was introduced for the first time in higher education establishments in Canada and Australia. Later on – in the Netherlands as well.

Problem-based learning (PBL) originates from the so-called research method, the key rules and categorical apparatus of which were developed by the American philosopher and educator John Dewey (John Dewey, 1859–1952), "combining" cognition and activity [2]. He challenged traditional dogmatic teaching and compares it with learners' active autonomous practical problem-solving activity. The concept of problem-based learning appeared in the 1950s. and, according to its authors J. Dewey and J. Brunner, it had to compensate for the shortcomings of traditional (explanatory and illustrative) teaching.

Problem-based learning is the subject of thorough studies by both foreign and domestic scientists. In the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of problem-based learning was put forward by T. Atroschenko [3], A. M. Aleksiuk, I. Ya. Lerner, M. M. Skatkin, A. M. Matyushkin, M. I. Makhmutov, M. I. Kruglyak, T. V. Kudryavtsev, S. F. Zhuykov, N. G. Dairi, V. V. Zabotin, L.S. Aizerman and others, in Poland – V. Okon [4], Ch. Kupysevych [14-18].

Teachers from Poland, Bulgaria, Germany, and other countries have made significant contributions to the notion of problem-based learning development. Thus, working with Ch. Kupisewicz, and Vincent Oikoń a Polish scholar and prominent theorists and practitioners of problem-based learning investigated the circumstances for the creation of issue situations examining the content of many educational courses and showed the benefits of learning by solving problems for the development of students' mental capacities [4].

Vincent Oikoń stated that "Problem-based learning is not based on the transfer of ready-made information to students, but on their obtaining certain knowledge and skills by solving theoretical and practical problems. An essential characteristic of this education is the research activity of students, which appears in a certain situation
and forces them to ask questions-problems, formulate hypotheses and test them during mental and practical actions" (Okoń, 1997). He also noted that “the teacher's mastery primarily manifests itself in organizational problem situations, so the teacher should be a delicate, but attentive to everything director who introduces students imperceptibly to the worlds of science, technology, and art - to the world of human culture [4]”.

According to a well-known Ukrainian pedagogical researcher Nellia Nychkalo (2020) “… task-based vocabulary learning is a powerful tool for improvement of students’ communication skills and their ability to use the acquired knowledge. It prepares students to be both listeners and team players and bridges the gap between theory and practice” [5]. Additionally, the scholar states that “there are some difficulties due to the fact that sometimes students lacked language means to express themselves and sometimes the real business tasks, being professionally specific, were too difficult for them since they had little or no job experience in business” [5]. And in our research, we pay special attention to these “difficulties” as well as to the “advantages” of PBL.

I.V. Romaschenko [6] points out the main differences between traditional and problem-based learning and argues that the main disadvantage of conventional education is the poor execution of the developmental function of the educational process since students' educational activity is primarily reproductive in character. The instructor does not give ready-made information during problem-based learning but rather coordinates the students' quest for it through observation, fact analysis, and active mental engagement.

We agree with the opinion of M. M. Fitzula [7] believes that problem-based learning is one method of developing activity, independence, and revealing mental abilities, which effectively affects better learning of the material and introduces elements of excitement because it teaches students to overcome obstacles and difficulties [7].

In the research, we take into consideration the study of “Personal Reflection Development as Means of Forming a Culture of Scientific Text Perception” conducted by Romanivska L., Kravchyna T., and Nagachevska O. [8]. Besides we agree with the findings in the research “Changing Nature of English Tourism Discourse” described by Koval N., Kushka B., and Nagachevska O. [9]. The results presented in these articles assisted us in our development of the programme for teaching Business English considering a problem-based approach.

Summing up, scientists' attention over the last decade has been focused on understanding and solving the following issues: the developing and educational potential of problem-based learning of foreign languages, methods of creating problem situations in a foreign language lesson, problem-based learning as a method of forming foreign language communicative competence of pupils and students, problematic learning of certain types of speech activity,
However, the issue of problem-based learning for enhancing foreign language communicative competence of students studying "Business English" hasn’t been thoroughly discussed in the writings of academics and practitioners. As a result, our research is quite relevant and influenced by the general focus of modern pedagogy on the study of the utilization of problem-based learning in the teaching of foreign languages, and it is further substantiated by the need for a more comprehensive systematization and analysis of the distinctive characteristics of problematic tasks and situations during learning in the courses "Business English".

**The purpose of the research.** Considering the relevancy of our research we define the purpose of the study: to identify the main principles and practices of using problem-based learning methods in the process of teaching Business English in the modern context of reforming Ukraine’s education system, as well as to establish the significance of this technology in improving foreign language communicative competence and the efficiency of teaching foreign languages.

**Results and Discussion.** Problem-based learning (PBL) is a form of learning which incorporates deliberate independent research activities of students with their integration of already prepared scientific conclusions, and the system of methods is constructed with the definition of the objective and the principle of problem-solving in mind; the process of interaction of teaching and learning concentrates on facilitating the development of students’ cognitive independence, reliable learning motives, and mental (in particular creative) abilities during their assimilation of scientific concepts and methods of activity, which is determined by the system of problem situations.

As P. Strevens stated in 1988 [10], Business English course strives to suit students' professional demands by teaching vocabulary, grammar, writing, and listening in various fields and professions, as well as the utilization of phrases required for business communication [10]. Despite the fact that it is primarily aimed at adults or employees, it may also be taught to undergraduates, who can start provisional activity directly after graduation (Dudley-Evans) [11]. Dudley-Evans and St John modified Strevens’ original definition of English for Specific Purposes or Business English [10], who identified its absolute (and variable characteristics).

The core principles of problem-based learning theory are "problem question", "problem task", "problem task", and "problem situation".

According to J. Larsson [12], students in PBL classrooms improve their social skills as they have more opportunities to practice using the language for authentic communication. PBL can be difficult to implement in a traditional classroom setting if students and teachers have trouble understanding active or meaningful. PBL requires to students engage in active learning strategies as a self-directed learning disposition [12]. It represents a paradigm shift from teaching in a traditional way and learning philosophy.

According to T. Bosuwen and L. Woodrow [13], the PBL technique aids in the development of relevant ESL exercises. When students work on difficult situations
or issues, the activities they engage in tend to motivate and interest them. Furthermore, the process of problem-solving in PBL demands students to search for information and continually relate what they read to what they should do with the knowledge. This allows students to connect their chosen subject knowledge with their English skills. And in Business English classes, this strategy is the most beneficial.

But, if students, as well as educators, find it difficult to comprehend active or meaningful, PBL might be challenging to apply in a conventional educational setting context. As a self-directed learning mindset, PBL demands students participate in active learning activities. It signifies a paradigm change from traditional teaching to learning ideology.

The meaning of PBL needs some explanation. Problem-based learning is a procedure for identifying problems with a situation in order to gain knowledge and comprehension. There are some principles for considering: 1) Self-directed and independent learning; 2) Learning occurs in groups, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. 3) All organizations must participate on an equal footing. 4) Students learn about motivation, cooperation, problem-solving, and task engagement. 5) Data, images, and articles may all be used to answer the problem [14-18].

In higher education establishments we observe the most widespread forms of problem-based learning:

1. Educational content problem presentation in a monologue style of a lecture or conversational format seminars.

2. Problem presentation of educational material in lectures, in which the teacher proposes problematic situations, assigns problematic tasks, and answers them himself, while the students are only imaginatively connected to the solution search.

3. Partial research effort throughout the experimentation phase, problem seminars, and heuristic dialogues. The difficulty is predetermined by the teacher, and the answer is based on the knowledge foundation that pupils must have; that is, the questions must produce intellectual challenges in cadets and need deliberate thought.

4. Independent research activity, in which cadets individually create and answer an issue.

However, given the context of our investigation, we have to provide a description of the effective PBL framework. The following is a conceptual framework that outlines how PBL is implemented in Business English lessons: 1) As a trigger, an ill-structured real-life problem is provided to students; 2) Students who have formed the groups are expected to act as stakeholders who maintain the problem.

Teachers act just as facilitators, delivering the problem and guiding the whole problem-solving process. Students should not be provided with answers. As a result, students plan their own learning in order to resolve the problem in a self-directed
and collaborative learning environment. They generate working ideas or potential solutions, discover the data available regarding the problem and learning issues, find resources, distribute tasks to different group members, collect and exchange information within the group, and ultimately select the most viable solution before presenting it to the entire class.

The described problem-solving procedure enables students to develop novel knowledge that increases retention and comprehension. Moreover, this approach contributes to the development of skill sets namely, self-directed education skills, problem-solving, learning-to-learn, teamwork, management, and language skills.

As described, Business English students are placed in a real-world situation where they need to use the target language to obtain information, communicate information through speech and writing, express and negotiate opinions, and finally present their solutions in the forms of a written report and an oral presentation. Besides having extensive opportunities to use the language for reading, listening, writing and speaking, they also develop vocabulary and grammar through the PBL process. In short, they tend to construct an understanding of the target language as it is used in a real-world context. They gain vocabulary and grammar via the PBL process, in addition to having numerous opportunities to practice the language for comprehension, writing, reading, and speaking. In brief, they are inclined to build an awareness of the target language as it is used in everyday situations.

We should emphasize that certain requirements must also be met during the process of describing the material that makes up the content of the problem or task:

1. The lesson material is explained in response to the students' inquiries about the problem situation. In this way, they conform to the need for new information and cognitive curiosity.

2. During the presentation of the educational material, it is essential to consider the level of knowledge of the students, affirm the correct decision, or, if required, demonstrate a different pattern and method of activity if the students are unable to solve the problem situation. Students should first acquire and then apply the essential information or course of action to finish the problem assignment if the training takes the form of a practical class, a discussion seminar, or a workshop. If a problem assignment is too difficult for a specific group of students, it might be divided into a number of partial problem tasks so that its solution becomes accessible to them.

Therefore, the approach to challenging (problem-based) situations requires setting up an environment in which intellectual and ethical issues can be transformed into emotional ones. A problem situation is generated by engaging behaviors and teacher questions that highlight the distinctive features of the object of study. The teacher generates a problem situation, directs students to an acceptable solution, and coordinates the search for a solution. As a consequence, the student turns into the subject of his studies, and as a result, he acquires novel knowledge and skills, and
masters new ways of operating. The challenge in managing problem-based learning stems from the fact that the occurrence of a problematic situation is a personal act.

Problem-solving methods are typically classified as follows [14-18]:
- issue presentation (after creating a problem scenario, the instructor not only provides a complete solution to the problem but also demonstrates how it is done);
- partial search approach (the instructor outlines the procedures to answer the issue, and the student solves it on his or her own);
- research technique (the instructor organizes the students' creative, problem-solving activity).

The teacher must also remember that problem-based learning consists of two interconnected components: problem-based teaching and problem-based learning. One of the teacher's responsibilities is to purposely create a problem scenario and urge students to solve it. Another is to manage the process of dealing with a problem situation, and a third is to correct the outcome. The student's work includes determining that applying a recognized technique and problem solution is impossible; making assumptions about how to solve the problem and assessing those assumptions; and reaching a conclusion.

Consequently, during problem-based learning, the student's cognitive activity progresses from a thorough examination of the problem and its elaboration to the analysis of circumstances, the delineation of known information from the unknown, the development of hypotheses, and the creation of a plan to resolve the problem, its execution and the finding of methods to verify the correctness of actions, and ultimately, the outcome of the applied solution. Simultaneously, the teacher creates a problem situation, determines various possibilities for its solution by students, guides the process of students' contemplation of the problem, clarifies the definition of the problem, supports the analysis of circumstances, assists in the selection of a plan to solve the problem, and advises, advises on decision-making, evaluates individual errors, and offers possible solutions.

Advanced educational technologies enable problematic lectures as well as problematic practical lessons in a foreign language, namely: 1) educational topic debate. The conversation has a distinct dynamic, with three distinct stages: opening the topic, collective discussion, and summing up; 2) the "round table" technique.

The cooperative exchange of ideas, and the collective search for knowledge at the "round table" is acknowledged as one of the most efficient forms of learning at the senior stage of education for implementing the aforementioned concept's tasks;
- the "brainstorming" method is one of the most captivating and effective in the team's use of problematic and communicative methods;
- an investigation into specific situations. At all levels of learning, the way of evaluating particular situations is the most efficient technique for accomplishing the instructive, educational, and developmental tasks associated with problem-based learning.
We prove that the following methods (technologies) as components of problem-based learning are effective and productive in Business English classes: open microphone; project execution; generating a learning situation and employing the case method, which consists in a specific learning impact to which it might lead.

When teaching a problem-based lesson, you could employ an approach called "Decision Tree," which enables learners to examine the subject step by step before summarizing their knowledge and assessing them.

However, it should be mentioned that problem-based learning has disadvantages; it "cannot always be used due to the complexity of the material being studied, the unpreparedness of the educational process subjects." Probably, the complicated use of conventional and problem-based learning, which mutually complement and compensate for deficiencies, justifies itself.

Conclusions and perspectives. Therefore, in the process of learning English in the "Business English" course, those who are studying become captivated with obtaining new information, which contributes to the development of motivation for educational and cognitive activities, due to a successful combination of problem-based learning methods, properly defined tasks in the economic field, creation of problematic situations, for example, "the problem of creating a new product and its advertising."

As a consequence, the effective organization of problem-oriented learning in "Business English" classes promotes the development of critical thinking and facilitates the optimization of the educational process's effectiveness, providing an opportunity to create such environments where every student is involved in functioning creative educational activities, the process of self-learning, self-awareness developing the ability to interact and cooperate, which meets the need state in highly qualified specialties. Furthermore, students learn how to be competitive in the labor market through well-developed foreign language communicative competence, as demonstrated by the capacity to communicate with international business partners.

Further research into this issue is expected to improve the content base of professionally-oriented English teaching for students of technological specialties, as mastering a foreign language in its subject diversity is known to be an indicator of a high level of foreign language proficiency. We suggest the further investigation of active implementation of problem situations (tasks) for development of intercultural communicative competence of students of technical and economical specialties, which gives new opportunities for the undergraduates in their professional carriers. Further investigation into the issue is expected to improve the content base of professionally-oriented English education for students of technological and economical specialties, as mastering a foreign language in its subject variety is recognized to be a sign of a high degree of foreign language competency.
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