

УДК 378.147

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.33272/2522-9729-2023-3\(210\)-83-88](https://doi.org/10.33272/2522-9729-2023-3(210)-83-88)**Serhiienko Tetiana,**

*Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Assistant Professor
of Foreign Languages and Military Translation Department,
Hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi National Army Academy, Ukraine*

Сергієнко Тетяна Миколаївна,

*кандидатка педагогічних наук, доцентка кафедри
іноземних мов та військового перекладу,
Національна академія сухопутних військ
імені гетьмана Петра Сагайдачного, Україна*

E-mail: tanyasergh@gmail.com**ORCID iD** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5680-994X>**Lysenko Olena,**

*Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Assistant Professor
of the English language and Translation Department,
Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ukraine*

Лисенко Олена Анатоліївна,

*кандидатка педагогічних наук, доцентка кафедри
англійської мови і перекладу,
Київський національний лінгвістичний університет, Україна*

E-mail: elena02041996@ukr.net**ORCID iD** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2919-9343>

THE PROBLEM-BASED METHOD AS A MODERN MEANS OF TEACHING ENGLISH: FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF FORMING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS OF UKRAINIAN FOREIGN LANGUAGES HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

S English becomes inseparable and crucial in the Ukrainian Higher Education system; it faces the challenge of using a teaching method, that has major advantages in developing the skills in all four types of language activity, namely: reading, writing, listening and speaking; a method, that assists in teaching foreign language students to react quickly in communicative situations and makes the use of basic grammatical phenomena automatic.

The authors consider the problem-based teaching method as one of the novelty methods in which foreign language students' communication skills are improved more effectively than in traditional methods. The central concept of the problem-based teaching method is the problem itself. Students are offered problem situations that have a communicative focus.

The authors show the practical usage of this method at each stage (presentation, practice, and production), introducing examples from textbooks for foreign language students of higher education institutions.

The role of a teacher in solving problem situations is considered. A critical aspect in the use of problem learning is the cognitive aspect, the relevance of knowledge, information, and sources of information to solving a particular problem situation.

Key words: method; problem-based; teaching method; problem situation; presentation; practice and production stages

Проблемний метод як сучасний засіб навчання англійської мови: з досвіду формування англомовної комунікативної компетенції у студентів мовних закладів вищої освіти України

A Визначено актуальність використання методу проблемного навчання, як методу, що має значні переваги у розвитку навичок усіх чотирьох видів мовленнєвої діяльності, а саме: читання, письма, аудіювання та говоріння; методу, який учить студентів швидко та адекватно реагувати в комунікативних ситуаціях і доводить до автоматизму використання основних граматичних явищ.

Обґрунтовано ефективне використання методу проблемного викладання як одного із новітніх методів, за допомогою якого комунікативні навички студентів удосконалюються ефективніше, ніж за допомогою традиційних методів. Акцентовано увагу на понятті «проблемна ситуація» як ключовому понятті проблемного методу навчання.

Пропонуються варіанти практичного застосування методу вирішення проблемних ситуацій на кожному етапі заняття (введення, практика, представлення) на основі дієвих підручників з іноземних мов для студентів закладів вищої освіти.

Проаналізовано місце викладача у проблемному методі навчання.

Ключові слова: метод; проблемний метод навчання; проблемна ситуація, презентація; відпрацювання та етап представлення

Actuality of the problem. We can't but agree that language proficiency is the key to new opportunities that open up before a person and make his physical and spiritual world much brighter and more interesting. In the context of globalization processes in today's world society, it is an essential component of the professional activity of a specialist at any level in any field.

The interest of young people in learning foreign languages creates challenges for foreign language teachers. First of all, it increases the requirements for using new and effective methods of teaching English. For a teacher this means creating one's own or adapting existing models of teaching English, which will be effective in the context of the youth environment and will allow to solve multifaceted problems, making the process of learning a foreign language interactive, interesting and creative.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recently, the methods, forms, and ways of organizing successful interactions in the course of learning a foreign language in the higher education system have undergone significant changes. First of all, this is reflected in the transition from teacher-centered teaching methods to methods focused on the student's active participation in this process. It should help to actualize a specific set of knowledge that should be learned to solve a particularly challenging task.

One of the most effective methods of stimulating teaching is the method of situation analysis. It is focused on the development of students' interest in the process of acquiring knowledge through solving problem-communication situations. This raises the relevance of our research, namely, to analyze the application of the problem-based teaching method as an interactive method and to determine whether it is effective for use in Ukrainian foreign languages higher education institutions as a reliable means of the successful formation of students' communicative competence.

The English Case Study method is well-known in Ukrainian education as a problem-based teaching method. It is an interactive method of learning because it makes it possible to bring the learning process

closer to the real practical activities of specialists, promotes the development of ingenuity, the ability to solve problems; develops the ability to analyze and diagnose problem tasks, communicate in a foreign language in multifaceted situations.

For the first time, the Case Study method was developed by the Harvard Business School. The teaching took place according to the scheme: students were offered a specific situation (problem) as close as possible to real everyday situations. They were provided with a whole package of documents, a list of necessary sources, studying which they had to analyze the problem that arose individually, then through working in groups, as a result of the discussion, reach a single decision regarding the variant of this problem (situation) and provide appropriate recommendations, propose ways to solve it. General concepts, methodology, and types of cases are analyzed by A. James, R. Jin, and M. Linders. P. Dale, etc. In Ukrainian institutions of higher education, it was associated with business management methods and had considerable success and gradually turned into the main teaching method of universities, which is considered by Yu. Surmin and E. Mihailova, etc. O. Burba, N. Denisova, T. Smolyanska develop catalogs of educational cases and situational exercises. Yu. Surmin distinguishes several of its types among them are case-exercise and case-situation, which are determined according to their function [5].

Let's consider each of them:

A case situation is a classical case that requires the student to analyze the situation. In it, the question is most often asked: "Why did the situation develop in such a way and how can the situation be corrected?" The case situation, as a rule, requires a lot of time for implementation, therefore, to save time; preliminary preparation at home is desirable.

A Case exercise in its turn allows a student to apply the acquired skills in practice. It is often used where it is necessary to carry out a quantitative analysis. To use this method a teacher must do some preparatory work. Firstly, the necessary lexical material is provided and an introduction to the problem as a whole is carried out, the main question is highlighted and proposals

put forward by groups of students are formed. Secondly, the proposed solutions are analyzed by the small groups, and the most optimal one is selected. And at the end, the activity is evaluated by students and a teacher.

Each of these cases is used while teaching a foreign language to place students in simulated situations in which young people are constantly faced with some problems that need to be solved in their activities. The search for their solution begins with the activation of processes that helps rationally understand the problem and find ways to solve it. And only in this case we are talking about the intensification of language learning process, and, therefore, increasing its learning efficiency with the help of a problem-based teaching method that uses problem situations and tasks.

Recent researches. In recent years, the problem-based teaching method has gained tremendous popularity. This method is the newest version of the well-known communicative approach to learning foreign languages, the goal of which is the successful completion of the educational task from the point of view of the correct use of linguistic means [8].

Such scientists as N. Zholobova, Z. Kurland, A. Vasylets, Z. Mekhtieva, S. Yablokov, G. Adamova, M. Fitsula, V. Pavlenko, M. Komogorova and others were engaged in the study of the problem-based teaching method. [1; 2; 3; 4; 7; 9; 10] Z. Kurlyand, in particular, claims that a problem situation in education is a cognitive difficulty. To overcome it successfully students must acquire new knowledge.

So, **the aim of the article is** to highlight the practical usage of this method at each stage (presentation, practice, and production) for the formation of the English language communicative competence in four types of language activities, such as: reading, speaking, listening and writing in students of Ukrainian foreign languages higher education institutions.

The results and their discussion. The purpose of the problem-based teaching method is to stimulate students' research activity. Its effectiveness depends on the teacher's ability to work out a clear logically-structured problem solution-plan.

The main features of a correctly developed problem are a connection with the real life and motivation of students; the description of interrelated events; the need for group discussion on the way to decision-making, the prudence and thoughtfulness of students in backing up their proposals, the need for detailed answers; connection with educational goals and tasks; representation in an appropriate authentic context;

stimulation of interest; integration of thinking; a final result that can be applied in real life.

Regarding the requirements for the problem situation, it should be noted the presence of novelty, obstacles on the way to its solution, and the logical sequence of the problem presentation.

Presentation of the main material. The problem-based teaching method involves three stages of learning the material: presentation, practice, and production. At the presentation stage new lexical material and new grammatical structures are introduced in the context of the presented problem. This stage is distinguished by the active participation of a teacher, his constant support, explanations, etc. This approach is fully justified since the problem situation is realized at the stage of introduction new educational material.

An example of such a situation can be the discussion of the text "Househusband" from the topic "Housekeeping is not a joke" from the textbook N. Tuchyna's "A Way to Success" for students of language institutions of higher education. The main character of the text "Househusband" is dissatisfied with his position as a householder. At the same time, he is perfectly aware that at the moment he cannot find a job like his wife's one, which provides a decent standard of living for the whole family. At the same time, he wants to move forward and realize himself in the professional sphere, which cannot be done by staying at home, performing only household duties, and taking care of children.

The last paragraph from the text precisely defines the problem situation: "Lovely life if you happen to be a turnip. But I am not a turnip, mate. I am a thoughtful, sensitive, widely-read man. I'm getting depressed. At the same time, if I start looking for a job my wife will have to give up hers and I'm not sure I will be able to bring in as much money as she does. What shall I do?"

Before processing the text, the teacher introduces new words and phrases, explaining their meaning, which also removes possible difficulties with understanding the text. To implement a successful discussion of such a problem situation, the teacher uses an ordinary blackboard, on which he displays new lexical units and grammatical structures that students use, backing up their vision of the problem and offering their options for getting out of the situation, for example: "to cope with household chores

as efficiently as the wife", "to realize one's ambitions staying at home", "to take care of the house" etc.

Thus, if we talk about the stage of presenting new lexical material, it can be effectively combined with the use of the grammatical structures being studied in oral speech. Depending on the complexity of the problem developed by the teacher, the presentation stage serves to develop English communicative competence in all types of language activities.

In our opinion, problem situations are seen as an effective method that is widely used by teachers for the formation of English communicative competence in speaking, reading, listening, writing, and at the practice stage they are also used to activate and automate the lexical units and structures learned in previous classes. Let's consider an example of such a problem imaginary situation for the topic "Appearance and character". Explaining the task, the teacher informs the students that very often teenagers are not satisfied with their appearance, they suffer because of it and are in search of a solution to their problem, and they can seek help from specialists. A girl named Petra wrote a letter to a youth magazine in which she asked for help to find a way out of a difficult life situation.

Read the letter sent to a youth magazine.

Dear Agony Aunt,

I hate my body. When I look in the mirror I feel sick. Despite constant dieting – sometimes I lose three or four stones – I always put the weight back on. I also hate my face. As I get older I seem to look more like my parents, which I resent as I don't get on with them. What can I do?

Petra C.

Discussing the letter and solving her problem students should advise Petra to use a certain number of active lexical items, which the teacher must emphasize.

B). Now read the answer given by a trained counselor. Would you follow the advice if you were in Petra's place? If not why, back up your answer

Dear Petra,

First, you have to accept that you are who you are and stop focusing on what you dislike about yourself. Also, make the most of what you've got without going on faddy diets. Not only are they unsustainable, but many of them are dangerous too.

I strongly advise counseling because you say you hate seeing your parents in yourself. You need to work on your feelings about them so that in time you may forgive, or at least understand this situation. Then you

will be able to forgive yourself for who you are and how you look.

Meanwhile, try to follow healthy eating advice and think positively. Write down ten things you like about your appearance and keep them at hand for when you get an attack of self-loathing. You deserve better.

The second part of the problem-based situation mentioned above involves a discussion of the specialist's answer, expression of one's backed-up agreement / disagreement, and presentation of own way of solving the task. Again, students should practice using the new active vocabulary words, expressions, speech patterns, etc. A teacher emphasizes the lexical content of the students' piece of reflection. It would be logical to use visual support to help students to make up their own logically and grammatically correct answers. The main feature of the practical implementation of the problem-based method at the Presentation and Practice stages consists in the constant control and assistance of a teacher.

As it has already been mentioned above, the problem-based method can also be used at the stage of Practice for the formation of English language competence in listening. At the preparatory stage, the teacher removes all possible difficulties for students, focusing on new lexical and grammatical units. We consider it to be grounded to use a blackboard with a complete list of lexical items that can cause any difficulties in understanding. An example of using the problem-based method for the formation of English-speaking competence in listening can be the following task on the topic "Teenage problems".

Listen to the story of Cindy's relationship with her parents. Answer the following questions: What made her leave home? What reasons would make you leave home? What helpful pieces of advice would you give Cindy to improve her family atmosphere and relationship with her parents? While answering the questions pay attention to the list of problems, given below. Focus on any of them or tell us about the other problems you consider being of more importance.

Parents put pressure on them.

Teens need to establish their own identity and independence.

Parents don't care and teens lack their support.

Teens feel uncertain about their future.

Homes are cold and unhappy or there's violence in the family.

Parents' expectations are too high.

The teenager is jealous of one parent's partner.

While delivering your points of view use the following expressions:

To fix a problem.

To face a problem.

To iron out a problem.

To exaggerate a problem etc.

Using the problem-based method of language teaching, the instructor can develop students' skills in expressing their opinion, argumentation, hypothetical assumptions, forecasting the development of events, etc. The purpose of such activities is to allow students to solve life situations with the help of active lexical and grammatical units, making the process of learning the context analyzed and meaningful.

The problem-based teaching method has more advantages than disadvantages because it develops the skills of all four types of foreign language activities, namely: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Moreover, it develops fluency in pronunciation and grammatical correctness, teaches students to react quickly in communicative situations, and makes use of basic grammatical phenomena automatically.

Problem tasks can be used by a teacher at the Production stage to check students' learning of lexical and grammatical material and to conduct a final assessment on the topic. This stage differs from the previous two in not involving or involving the least amount of supervision and assistance of a teacher. In our opinion, it is possible to implement the problem-based method in different formats, depending on the type of foreign language activity evaluated by a teacher. To evaluate the level of formation of the English language competence in speaking, a teacher can give students a problem task to solve in the form of a monologue. An example of such a task is given below.

A close friend of yours is a full-time accountant, a wife, and a mother of two schoolchildren. Unfortunately, she doesn't run her household efficiently. She can't allocate the necessary time for all the tasks she needs to cope with. As a result, she has a lot of arguments with her husband and problems in her relationship with her children. To crown it all, she feels exhausted all the time and is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Give her some tips on how to fix this problem. Use as many active vocabulary words and set expressions as possible.

At the Production stage, the teacher performs the control function, evaluating the students' answers. It will also be methodologically correct to analyze students' answers to avoid duplication of mistakes.

It will help to make up well-grounded monologues, highlighting one's position.

We also consider it expedient to use the problem-based method at the Production stage to determine the level of formation of the English language competence in writing. A teacher should develop tasks aimed at conducting a thematic or semester assessment of student's skills in writing in the form of a written report or an essay. The task presented below is an example of a problem situation for assessing the level of formation of students' English communicative competence in writing.

You have recently visited a theme restaurant "Ninja New York" in Tribeca, a neighborhood in Lower Manhattan in New York City. Write a formal letter to the manager expressing your opinion of the restaurant and suggesting ways in which it could be improved (150 words). Follow the plan:

Introduction: state the reason(s) for writing.

Main body: express thanks, give your opinion of the restaurant, suggest changes and give reasons.

Conclusion: closing remarks

Use the active vocabulary: delicious dishes of Japanese cuisine, gourmet, choosy/finicky eater, chef, have a substantial/square meal, refreshment(s), buffet, main course, garnish, appetizer/starter/ hors d'oeuvre, varied menu, slow service, scary atmosphere, convenient location, settees, cushions, crockery, cutlery, stuffy, conditioning system.

Conclusions. So, having summed up all the information presented above, we should conclude that the problem-based method is one of the most effective ways of the formation of English communicative competence in all types of language activities: speaking (dialogues and monologues), reading, writing, and listening. It is implemented in three stages of teaching new educational material: Presentation, Practice, and Production. The first two stages are characterized by the active participation of a teacher, who plays the role of a facilitator, ready to provide any necessary help and clarification. The success of implementing a problem situation depends on its careful development, relevance, and connection with real life, a sufficient level of complexity that corresponds to the student's training. At the same time, we believe that at the first stage of introducing new material, it is worth focusing more on problem situations that are aimed at the formation of English communicative competence in reading and speaking. The specified approach should be followed in

cases of a low level of student knowledge to avoid difficulties that will hinder the successful completion of the task. However, if a teacher understands that a group of students can cope with the task, it seems to us quite possible to use a problem-based method for the formation of English communicative competence in listening too. We are convinced that at the stage of Practice, it will be appropriate to perform a wide range of problem tasks aimed at the formation of English communicative competence in all types of language activities. In turn at the stage of Production, a teacher can use problem situations to evaluate the educational achievements of students for the final thematic or semester control of all types of language activities.

In our further scientific research, we plan to focus our close attention on the detailed study of effectiveness of the problem-based teaching method for the formation of English communicative competence in listening.

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Дата надходження до редакції
авторського матеріалу 08.05.2023