

MODULE 1

1.3 - INTERVIEW WITH A LANGUAGE TEACHER

Question: What is TBLT, task-based language teaching?

TBLT is a **teaching method based on communicative tasks**, which are called **tasks**. The task is the centre of the language lesson.

This method places the students at the centre, who must use the language to solve the task, the communicative task. Students usually work in pairs or groups. But they can also work alone.

Question: What are the differences between TBLT and other teaching methods?

There are many differences.

The **first difference** is the **way students learn the language**. In TBLT, students learn the foreign language through **communication**, written or oral. In other teaching methods, conversation is used to learn the rules of the language.

The **second difference** is the organisation of the lesson.

TBLT is a communicative teaching method. Usually, lessons based on the **communicative approach** (= *theory*) are divided into **3 moments**, which we can call the 3 P's:

1. **Presentation** > The teacher presents a structure (= a rule) of the foreign language to the students. She can do this with different materials: a text, listening, a song, etc. In these materials is the structure for the students to study
2. **Practice** > students practise the structure that the teacher has presented;
3. **Production** > students demonstrate that they have understood the structure through speaking or writing.

In **TBLT**, however, **the 3 P's have a different order:**

1. **Production** > The students have to solve the task and thus have to communicate with a conversation or writing;
2. **Presentation** > The teacher presents a structure (= a rule) of the foreign language to the students. She can do this with different materials: a text, listening, a song, etc. In these materials is the structure for the students to study;
3. **Practice** > students do a lot of practice on the structure that the teacher has presented.

Thus, in TBLT, students start with communication. Students talk to each other, work together to solve the task. And that's when they realise that they need a language structure to be able to communicate.

The **third difference** is the students' **level of motivation**. In TBLT, students are more motivated because they have to solve the task.

The **fourth difference** is the **role of the teacher**. In TBLT, the teacher is only a guide, because the students have to solve the task by themselves, without his or her help. In the other methods, the teacher is more of a protagonist.

The **fifth difference** is the **presence of unexpected events** (= *student behaviour that the teacher does not expect*). In the other teaching methods, the teacher plans the lesson and everything goes smoothly. In contrast, in TBLT there can be unforeseen events. Let's take an example:

If you ask a student to describe the class, the student may say many different things. He can say:

In this classroom there is a blackboard
or

This class has a blackboard

Both options are fine. The student is communicating with you. In one case, however, the student has used 'there is', while in the other he has used 'has'.

Let's imagine that you had prepared the lesson to teach your students the word "there is", but the student uses "has". What do you do to resolve this snag?

Question: What are the benefits of TBLT for students?

1. TBLT uses a lot of "**learning by doing**", i.e. practical activities that serve the purpose of learning. This is very important because it simulates what happens in real life, where we learn new words by doing practical activities.
2. In TBLT, the important thing is the **meaning and NOT the form**, so students have to start from the words and languages they know to solve the task. This

is a very good aspect, because it makes the students realise that they are already good at it.

3. In TBLT, students have to **communicate a message** to each other. It means that they have to collaborate with other students, and this is also very important outside the classroom.

Question: What are the benefits of TBLT for teachers?

1. TBLT creates a **calm atmosphere** in the classroom;
2. TBLT also uses **authentic materials**, which come from the outside world. So, we can prepare materials, but we can also help ourselves with postcards, flyers, etc.
3. TBLT is **easy to use**: you can use language and everyday situations.

Question: What should a teacher who wants to use TBLT do?

1. It is important to have a **good relationship with the class**. If the relationship is not good, some students may feel embarrassed;
2. The students must have the **same level**, because otherwise students with lower levels may feel embarrassed;
3. It is important to **have a lot of time** because TBLT is a slow method.