



Universitetet
i Stavanger

FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

MASTER'S THESIS

Programme of study: Master in Literacy Studies	Spring semester, 2011 Open
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Thesis title: Implementing task-based learning of English as L2 at private courses for adult false-beginners in Russia	
Keywords: task-based learning (TBL), PPP-approach (Presentation-Practice-Production), false-beginners, accuracy, fluency, motivation	No. of pages: 98 + appendices/other: 29 Stavanger, 20 th of May, 2011

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comparative study between the Presentation-Practice-Production method (PPP) and the task-based language learning (TBL) approach. The context of the study is a private language school in Russia where the students who took part in the study were learning English as a second language (L2). The aim group of the research is adult false beginners.

The research study compares the TBL approach to the PPP method through an analytical literature review. Then the action research study is described and evaluated before finally conclusions are drawn. This research study focuses particularly on three aspects of false beginner language learning: accuracy, fluency and learner motivation.

The given thesis represents an attempt to validate TBL framework through implementing it in Russian classrooms for adult false beginners.

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1. Introduction

This thesis is a comparative study between the Presentation-Practice-Production method (PPP) which is traditionally used in Russia and the task-based language learning (TBL) approach. This is contextualized within a private language school in Russia where the students who took part in the study were learning English as a second language (L2). These students were all adult false beginners.

Firstly, the research study will compare the TBL approach to the PPP method through an analytical literature review. Then the action research study will be described and evaluated before finally conclusions which can be made from this study will be drawn. It should be noted that this research study will focus particularly on three aspects of false beginner language learning: accuracy, fluency and learner motivation.

The method used for the research study is action research. According to Elliott (1991:69), action research can be defined as “the study of social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it”. In action research theories are not “validated independently and then applied to practice”, they are validated “*through practice*” (Elliott, 1991:69). The given thesis represents an attempt to validate TBL framework through implementing it in Russian classrooms for adult false beginners.

Context of English language teaching in Russia

The teaching of English in Russia must first be set in its historical context. According to Millrood (2003), during the Cold War, the international environment was considered hostile and as a result the focus in English didactics in Russia was towards accuracy in reading comprehension and writing; there being little need to teach English for the purpose of spoken communication with foreigners.

With globalization in politics, economy and culture, English is becoming the language most often used within business and international communication; however due to this historical bias, Russians’ inability to be able to speak and understand the spoken word in English could be seen to act as a barrier for the country’s international cooperation and trade. In order that Russians can communicate better in English it could be suggested that it will be necessary to move from academic learning aims which focus on reading and writing to more communicative English aims with an emphasis on speaking and listening.

This historical bias also affects the abilities of the adult students who attend private language schools in Russia, many of whom can be considered false beginners; learners, who despite a limited amount of previous instruction in a language, have such a low level of language proficiency that they are classified as at the beginner level of language instruction (Longman Dictionary of Language teaching and Applied Linguistics, 1992).

Traditionally, Russian teachers of English have used a didactic method such as the PPP method. However, according to recent research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), this method has proved to produce unimpressive results and the underlying theory upon which it is based has been “discredited” (Skehan, 1996:18). Having been exposed to this method, Russian learners tend to appear to be more accurate rather than fluent in their language abilities, (e.g. they might remember grammatical rules, but they tend to struggle when applying them in speech), which is undesirable in the current global marketplace.

As an alternative to the PPP method research, SLA research suggests that TBL shows more potential, as according to Willis (1996:52), TBL offers a “holistic experience of language in use”, including both productive and receptive language skills. Therefore, it seems reasonable to research whether a new approach would be better suited to these particular Russian learners language needs.

The research question

Bearing in mind the arguments above, *the research question* of the given action research is to validate whether the TBL approach is more beneficial for adult false beginners than the PPP-method in terms of achieving three aspects of language learning: accuracy, fluency and learner motivation.

The aim of the present thesis is to contribute to the research, by discussing whether implementing the TBL as a teaching approach in Russian classrooms would have a positive effect on the learning achievement (in accuracy & fluency) and motivation of adult students, so improving the quality of English teaching in this context.

The expectations from the given research study are that the TBL approach might be more effective for adult false beginners than the PPP-method. However there is a further question as to whether better communication skills and motivation may be at the expense of accuracy.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into five sections. The first section is an introduction, which frames the context of study, the used methods, the research question, the aim and expectations from the research. The second section represents a literature review, which compares the traditional PPP method used in Russian system of teaching English to the TBL-approach in terms of three aspects: accuracy, fluency and learner motivation. The third section presents the action research report, and discusses the action research methodology and the action research stages and results. The fourth section provides an interpretation of the results of the given action research. Finally the fifth section presents conclusions on whether TBL is more beneficial than the PPP method for false beginners studying English as L2 in Russian classrooms and makes suggestions for further research in the given area.

2. Literature review

The given literature review consists of three sections. The first section describes the PPP-method. The second section describes the TBL approach. The third section provides their contrastive analysis from the perspective of accuracy, fluency and learner motivation.

In this study accuracy, fluency and learner motivation are defined as follows:

Accuracy is correctness¹. It concerns how well language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language (TL), a language other than one's native language that is being learned² (Skehan, 1996:22). In this research study the researcher limited the study of accuracy/correctness to the students' ability to use the Present Simple.

The term fluency implies "good information processing speed, i.e. very little average time between generated messages", which must be understood by listeners³. In this study, the criteria for measuring learners' fluency in the PPP and TBL were:

- 1) tempo of speech (also called speech rate),
- 2) pauses between generated messages
- 3) understandable and meaningful speech.

The fluency in this study is measured in learners' talk on studied topics.

Motivation is a state of cognitive arousal, which provokes a decision to act, as a result of which the person can achieve some previously set goal (Williams and Burden, 1997:120, cited in Harmer, 2007:98). The motivation model used in the presented thesis implies five parts (Harmer, 2007:100), which were tested in both the PPP and TBL:

- 1) affect (students' feelings about learning process),
- 2) achievements (success),
- 3) attitude (confidence in teacher's abilities),
- 4) activities (which students enjoy doing and can see the point of)
- 5) agency (students' ability to do things by themselves).

Richards and Rodgers' descriptive framework of approaches and methods (2001) was used as the basis for describing PPP and TBL, as it highlights similarities and differences

¹ www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/accuracy

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/target%20language>

³ <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Fluency>

between PPP and TBL. It describes the PPP method and the TBL approach according to their underlying theories of language and language learning; design including the learning objectives and the syllabus model used, the roles of teachers, learners, materials and classroom procedures.

Description of the PPP method

Theory of language

The PPP method is a variation of Audiolingualism and a traditional method of language teaching. The term “method” in SLA refers to a practical realization of an approach (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:20; Harmer, 2007:62), in this case – of structural-situational teaching (Harmer, 2007:64).

The PPP stands for presentation, practice and production and is a clearly structured lesson method. The new language is presented and described and is followed by controlled practice activities designed to enable learners to produce the language under supervision; both of these activity types focus on accurate reproduction of the new language aim (Skehan, 1996:17). In the later production stage learners are given opportunities to consolidate and use the language in more open and personal ways.

There are several assumptions about the nature of language, which underlie the PPP method. Firstly, language should be placed in clear situational contexts (Harmer, 2007:64). The manifestation of this assumption can be seen, for example, in the PPP lesson structure (presentation-practice-production). The teacher introduces the situation which contextualizes the language to be taught at this particular lesson. Afterwards the language is presented. A focused presentation stage is followed by practice activities in order to enable learners to produce the language presented earlier. Finally, the production stage provides opportunity for learners to use language freely in the expectation that this will consolidate the language structure, which has been contextualized, presented and practiced at previous stages.

Secondly, language is a system of rule-governed structures hierarchically arranged (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:55; Nunan, 2004:182). The TL can be learned by a series of grammatical rules, presented according to notions of simplicity and complexity.

The impact of this assumption can be seen in a straight-line learning the PPP method offers. Within the PPP it is assumed that following a certain language acquisition pattern will

guarantee the required results (Skrivener, 1996; Willis, 1996), i.e. learning chosen language elements. Learning is assumed to happen in a linear manner: at first a series of discrete items are learned through rules and practice and only then they are brought together in communication (Skehan, 1996:20), which in the given research refers to speaking and listening skills. The described linear manner of learning is reflected in the PPP lesson model, which introduces a neat lesson plan, with neat and distinct phases to the lesson (Lewis, 1996:13; Skehan, 1996:17). These phases are reflected in the name of the approach itself: presentation – practice – production (PPP).

Thirdly, grammar is an essential resource in making meaning (Halliday, 1994). The PPP method suggests that grammar instruction and focus on form has a positive effect on language development, especially on the early stages of the learning process (Nunan, 2004:22). It is accepted by the PPP that “instruction which focuses on form can speed up the rate of language development” (Willis, 1996:15). By processing grammatical and lexical patterns, learners form the idea of how to use them. It might have the impact on later stages of language acquisition, where learners will be able to recognize these patterns in the input they are exposed to.

However, the PPP method is not simply based on a theory of language. A method in general needs to refer also to the psychology of learning and to learning theory (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:55), which is described further in this section.

Theory of learning

The PPP method suggests a number of hypotheses about language learning and teaching. One of them is Krashen’s input hypotheses which suggests that one acquires language in only one way – “by exposure to comprehensible input” (cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999:39). Krashen insists that comprehensible input is a necessary and sufficient criterion for successful language acquisition (in Richards and Rodgers; 2001:228). The PPP method is concerned with giving learners high quality exposure to language input (Skehan, 1996:19). Nevertheless, along with providing learners with comprehensible input, the PPP limits it. It suggests that languages are best learned by “limiting the language to which learners are exposed and practicing it intensively” (Lewis, 1996:16). Exposure is also limited

at the PPP lessons due to that each PPP lesson has clearly defined and limited lesson aims. In the interests to preserve lesson goals teachers restrict the language input (Willis, 1996:49).

Another hypothesis about language learning is that out of accuracy comes fluency. The PPP method is a form-focused method. It shares the belief that a precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996) i.e. out of accuracy comes fluency. It could be suggested therefore that fluency is automatized accuracy within the PPP method. In this way, isolation of a particular language form and its presentation to learners in a way, that it should become a part of their communicative performance, has become an indistinguishable feature of the PPP method. The PPP lesson model encourages learners to practice and produce the TL with a concern for this specific target form and gives opportunities to use this form in a communicative context on the last – productive stage (Willis, 1996).

The PPP method also shares the hypothesis that language learning is a process of mechanical habit formation (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:57). The PPP method proposes the “Get it right from the very beginning” approach. This view suggests that good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:57). Therefore, errors could become habits, so it is better to prevent them (Lightbown and Spada, 1999:118). In order to do that, the teacher uses extensive correction of errors in the practice and production stages. Extensive corrective feedback within the method is supposed to support accuracy. One of the most widely used types of corrective feedback within the PPP, which is also used for explanation of grammatical rules, is meta-language feedback, which refers to teacher and students’ talk *about* language, in addition to using it to transmit information (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). During the meta-language focus students do not actually learn language, they learn rather *about* language.

Design

The main objectives within the PPP can be divided into short-range and long-range objectives (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:58). Short-range objectives include training in listening comprehension, pronunciation, control of grammatical structures and acquaintance with vocabulary items, which bring content into these structures, while long-range objective is “language as the native speaker uses it” (Brooks, 1964, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:58).

In practice this means that the focus on form/accuracy is primary and meaning is secondary. The focus on accuracy is performed through drill and practice in the basic structures and sentence patterns of the TL. The teaching of speaking and comprehension skills is all related to development of fluency and accuracy in the use of the key grammatical patterns in the TL.

When it comes to the syllabus, it specifies content and learning outcomes. A conventional syllabus can specify the content of a course from among these two categories (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:230): linguistic syllabus and language macro-skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking).

The key items of the PPP linguistic syllabus are learned through grammatical rules, presented according to the degree of complexity. Content of the PPP syllabus can consist of discrete sentences, yes/no and wh-questions, articles, prepositions, conditionals, and relative clauses, plus inductively or deductively presented pedagogic "grammar points", with structures being generally presented one at a time or in contrasting pairs (Breen, 1987:81-91). The syllabus can start with "simple" structures and work its way through increasingly difficult structures. Each lesson introduces only one language structure, which should be mastered before moving to the next. The PPP anticipates that a learner will gradually acquire and synthesize the various parts of components of the new system.

The PPP method proposes that the skills are to be worked upon in a sequence from the receptive (reading and listening) to the productive (writing and speaking). This sequence is also reflected in the PPP lesson model, where production stage is the last one. The PPP method also makes an attempt to minimize the possibilities for making mistakes in productive skills, due to its hypothesis of theory of learning "Get it right from the beginning", described previously in the thesis.

Types of learning and teaching activities

Dialogues and drill exercises form the basis of the PPP classroom activities (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:59; Nunan, 2004). Dialogues help to contextualize the language structures, which are to be learned. Use of dialogues in the PPP lesson activities reflects one of the assumptions on the theory of language, described earlier. Besides, dialogues help to illustrate situations in which structures can be used and provide some cultural aspects of the TL

(Richards and Rodgers, 2001:59). In this way, dialogues can be used on the presentation stage as means of contextualizing the structure of the day.

After the dialogue has been presented and specific language structures are selected as the focus of practice in this particular PPP lesson, these structures are usually practiced by drills. The use of drill exercises is a distinctive feature of the PPP method, which is concerned with the concept of controlled activities, due to “Get it right from the beginning” hypothesis. Therefore drills constitute a significant part of controlled activities, which are assumed to be concerned with accuracy. There are several types of drills (Brooks, 1964, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:60). Some of them are:

- replacement - a drill exercise, where one word in the utterance is replaced by another.

For example: Kate is a student – *She* is a student

- restatement - a drill exercise, where the student rephrases an utterance and addresses it to someone else, according to instructions. For example: Ask him what his name is – What is your name?

- completion - a drill exercise, where the student should complete the sentence. Example: She is from ...

- restoration - a drill exercise, where the student should restore the sentence out of sequence of words. Example: I/homework/day/do/every – I do my homework every day

- transformation - a drill exercise, where the student should transform a sentence into a negative/interrogative or through changes in tense, mood, voice, aspect or modality. For example: I know her name – I don't know her name, etc

Teacher - learner roles

The PPP method is described as a “teacher-focused” method (Skehan, 1996:18). The entire sequence of classroom events within the PPP lesson model is described from the teacher’s perspective (Scrivener, 1996; Lewis, 1996; Skehan, 1996). In the PPP method the teacher has control over what is being taught. The PPP lesson model requires from the teacher to take “the structure of the day” and “do whatever is necessary to ensure that the structure is learned” (Skehan, 1996:17). In doing so, the PPP lesson model involves active teacher activity.

The first stage – presentation - is “exclusively about teacher-activity” (Lewis, 1996:13), where the teacher is to present a rule/item. The practice stage involves teacher-

controlled practice activities, the examples of which were described in the previous sub-section. The production stage, although refers to learner-activity, still does not exclude reference to the teacher, whose role is to produce extensive corrective feedback.

In this way, active teacher role throughout the lesson can suggest reactive learner-roles. The role of students is to react to stimuli, which can be manifested in controlled activities or teacher's requests. According to Nunan (2004:184), learner role is the role of a participant who can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses. Therefore, learners have little control over the learning process, which puts them into a passive position.

Role of materials

Most materials used at the PPP lessons are primarily teacher-oriented (Nunan, 2004; Richards and Rodgers, 2001:63). Instructional materials assist in this way the teacher to develop language mastery in the learner. Tape recorders and audiovisual equipment are often used, as they provide accurate models for such classroom activities, as dialogues and drills. Language laboratories can be also considered important and used for further follow-up activities.

Procedure

Since the PPP method is primarily a form-focused method, the teaching process involves extensive grammar instruction, but for the purpose of producing oral speech on the production stage of the lesson. Therefore, focus of instruction is on accurate use of language structures, chosen for a particular lesson, in speech. In a typical PPP lesson, the following procedures could be observed:

- presentation of the new material

The new material can be presented by teacher through dialogues or rule explanation. Presentation stage focuses on discrete language items, which are to become the structure of the day

- practice of the new language structures

The basis of the practice stage is formed by controlled activities, which help to consolidate the presented structures. The examples of controlled activities were given in the previous sub-section.

- production of the TL at the third stage of the PPP-cycle

The production stage involves activities, where students have the opportunity to display what they acquired during the lesson. Students may write compositions on given topics with the help of framing questions (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:65) or adapt and reproduce dialogues, etc. The focus of the production stage is on speech and producing a form in accordance with the rule in speech.

- follow up activities can be used. Students can work in language laboratory with follow up exercises

Description of the TBL approach

Theory of language

The TBL is one of many approaches in language learning. The term **approach** refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serves as the source of practices and principles in language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:20).

The TBL approach is presented by some of its proponents (Willis, 1996) as a logical development of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Task-based learning is a learning approach based on activities/tasks, where learners use the TL for a communicative purpose in order to achieve a real outcome (Willis, 1996).

There are several assumptions about the nature of language, which underlie the TBL approach. They are the following:

Firstly, language is primarily a means of making meaning. TBL is a meaning-focused approach, which views a language primarily as a means of making meaning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:226). When learners try to express themselves in the TL, they seem to be concerned mostly with transferring meaning. Therefore, meaning is primary within the TBL approach (Skehan, 1998).

Secondly, lexical units are central in language use and language learning. According to Richards and Rogers (2001:227), lexical units are central in language use and language learning as in recent years, vocabulary has been considered to play “a more central role in second language learning, than was traditionally assumed”. Many recent proposals concerning teaching and learning paradigms incorporate this view; for example, Skehan (1996) claims

that speech processing is based on the production and reception of whole phrase units, which are larger than a word. It can be concluded therefore that exposure, including a rich variety of lexical units, is likely to benefit learners. TBL considers rich and comprehensible exposure with variety of lexical units to be one of the four conditions of successful language teaching (Willis, 1996).

Thirdly, communication is the central focus of language and language acquisition. The TBL approach suggests that out of fluency comes accuracy. Thus, meaningful communicative tasks with a real outcome are primary in TBL. Speaking and trying to communicate with others through speaking and listening is considered to form the basis for the TL acquisition in TBL (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:228). The impact of this assumption can be seen in that the majority of tasks proposed by TBL involve conversation.

Theory of learning

The TBL shares the general assumptions about language learning and teaching with CLT (assumptions 1-2, which are described above), since TBL is a logical development of CLT, and suggests some additional learning principles (3-4), which play a central role in TBL theory of learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:228).

However, all the assumptions are connected with the conditions for successful language learning.

Conditions for successful language learning are summarized by Willis and Willis (1996) in Figure 1:

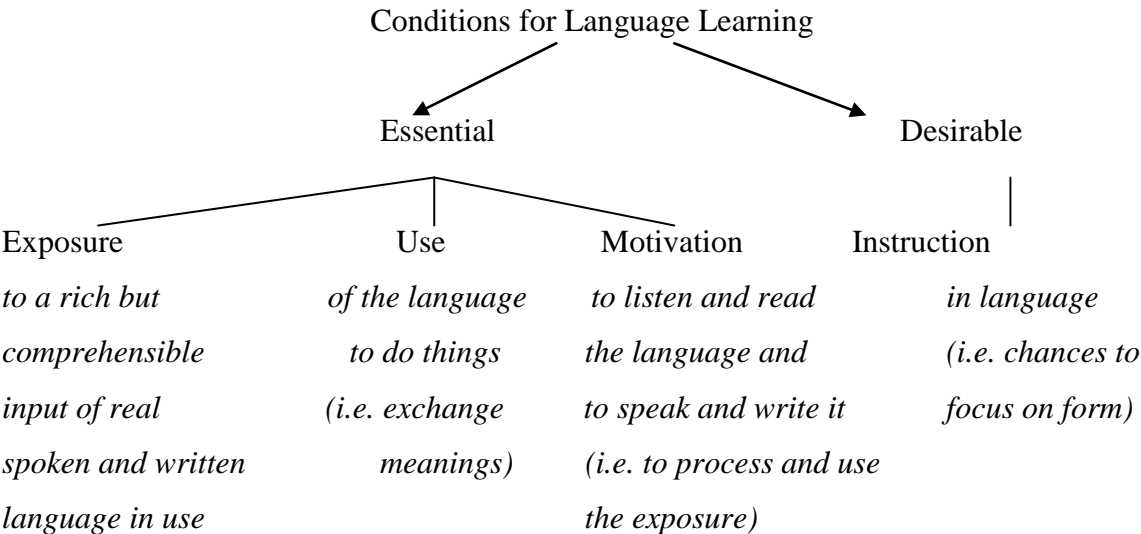


Figure 1. Willis & Willis scheme of conditions for successful language learning

These assumptions are:

Firstly, activities that involve real communication and real language in use are essential for language learning. One of the essential conditions of learning a TL is free and meaningful *use* of this TL (Willis, 1996; Harmer, 2007). Opportunities for real communication in the TL are critical for language development. Moreover, these opportunities should promote “genuine communication” (Willis, 1996:49). TBL stimulates learners to communicate in the TL on the every stage of the lesson. Learners get opportunities to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings, as there is evidence that the learners who are encouraged to communicate are likely to acquire a language quickly and efficiently (Willis, 1996:14).

It is also essential that learners should be exposed to real language, which they can use outside the classroom depending on their purposes. In this way, classroom activities would parallel the “real world” (Clark and Silberstein, 1977, cited in Nunan, 2004:53). Willis (1996:12) gives the following examples of real language in use: language, which learners need to use at work, to write reports, to make spontaneous conversations, etc.

Secondly, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning. The *use* and performance of meaningful communicative tasks with a real outcome is considered to be central and primary to the learning process within the TBL approach (Harmer, 2007; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). It has been proved by SLA research (Willis, 1996) that meaning-focused practice activities can promote learning. This assumption is closely connected with the previously described TBL assumption about the nature of language; that language is primarily a means of making meaning. This assumption emphasizes the central role of meaning in language use. When learners try to express themselves in the TL, they seem to be concerned mostly with getting meaning across. Therefore, TBL considers it essential to make use of meaning-focused activities in the language classroom.

Thirdly, tasks provide both the *exposure* to input and output necessary for language acquisition. The role of the exposure to the input in language acquisition has been stressed in many research findings in SLA. *Exposure* to a rich and comprehensible input of real spoken and written language in use is one of the key conditions for language learning (Willis, 1996:59).

Comprehensible input refers to “utterances that the learner understands based on the context in which they are used as well as the language in which they are phrased” (Richards

and Rodgers, 2007:182). Richards and Rodgers (2007) and Willis (1996) underline the necessity of *rich* and *comprehensible* input. The TBL approach considers it important that learners are exposed to language, which is varied in form and comprehensible. At the same time learners need exposure to as much language as they can handle (Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1996:19). Therefore, it can be concluded that it is *both* the quality and quantity of the input to which learners are exposed which can be considered to be important factors in their progress (Lewis, 1996:16).

However, exposure to rich and comprehensible input is not the only one condition for successful language learning. The hypothesis about *use* of language or the so-called “output” is considered to be essential in language development, especially when it comes to the productive skills of speaking and writing (Swain 1985, cited in Nunan, 2004:80). Students need to activate their language knowledge. This activation in TBL is achieved when they try to use the language they know either to produce spoken or written language or to read or listen for meaning (Harmer, 2007:79). Willis (1996:13) agrees and adds that learners will pay more attention to what they hear and read if they know that they are expected to use the TL themselves. In this case they will process the input more analytically. It can be suggested therefore that there is direct dependence between output and intake, where output encourages learners’ intake.

The forth assumption about language learning within TBL is that noticing can promote language development. Noticing is the process, when some language features are “noticed” by learners in language input. It involves isolating small “chunks of language”, discovering what they mean and noting how they are used (Willis, 1996:11). As the result of this process, learners are able to gain a new insight into the use of noticed features/patterns or to find evidence, which disconfirms a hypothesis about their use and meaning. This leads to a restructuring of learners’ current system of language and “drives their language development forward” (Willis, 1996:16).

The fifth assumption is that processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing and experimentation can promote learning of the TL. Plough and Gass (1993) suggest that “negotiation of meaning” is a necessary element for SLA. Meaning-focused and communicative-oriented tasks are believed to foster processes of negotiation. That is why negotiation of meaning is viewed as the trigger for acquisition (Plough and Gass, 1993, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:228).

Negotiation, modification, rephrasing and experimentation are the processes which are believed to be “the heart of second language learning” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:228). It can be suggested therefore that fostering these processes can lead to fostering TL learning.

The last assumption about language learning within TBL framework is that tasks activity and achievement are motivational. *Motivation* is one of the conditions for successful language learning (Figure 1). Success in performing tasks and satisfaction with achievements are believed to be key factors in sustaining motivation (Willis, 1996:14). Therefore, the TBL approach suggests that learners should experience success in tasks activities which support using language for real purposes and communication (Willis, 1996; Richards and Rodgers, 2001:229). By using the TL to get things done learners are able to recall and use the language they already have at their disposal. Following Willis’s logic it can be suggested therefore that knowing that they can manage to fix things without help can be motivating and can provide further risk-taking and use of creativity. In this way, students begin to take control of their own learning. Willis (1996) and Nunan (2004), underline the importance of students being in control of their own learning. It will help them to promote agency or, as it is called, autonomy which is a part of the motivation model used in the given thesis.

For learners whose motivation is low, it might be beneficial if the teacher selects simple activities that they can fulfill with success. If learners know that they have made an effort and achieved some result, they are more likely to participate in activities next time. Students’ motivation might increase as the result of active participation in task performance. Therefore, there is a need for teachers “to set achievable goals” and “to highlight students’ success” (Willis, 1996:14).

Design

As with other communicative approaches, objectives in the TBL approach are ideally to be determined by the specific needs of particular learners (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:230). In this way, selection of tasks in its turn should be also based on a careful analysis of the needs of learners (Long and Crookes, 1993, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:230).

When it comes to the syllabus, a conventional syllabus differs from a TBL syllabus. A conventional syllabus, as described, specifies content and learning outcomes, while a TBL syllabus is more concerned with the process dimensions of learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:231). A TBL syllabus specifies the tasks that should be carried out by learners within

the program. For example, Nunan (2004:19) describes two types of tasks. Firstly, real world tasks (or target tasks), which are designed to practice or rehearse tasks that can be useful in the real world. Secondly, pedagogical tasks, which are designed to involve learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the TL, while their attention is focused on their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form (Nunan, 2004:4)

According to Nunan (2004, 25-29) tasks can be sequenced topically through macrofunctions (for example, exchanging services and socializing), microfunctions (for example, asking for directions, asking about time and exchanging personal information) or grammatical elements they express (for example, WH-questions and Yes/no questions).

Types of learning and teaching activities

The task has been described previously as the core element in TBL lesson model. Therefore a task constitutes the main type of learning and activity within TBL lesson. In the literature on TBL several attempts are made to group tasks into categories. Different classifications are suggested by Pattison (1987), Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993), Willis (1996) and Nunan (2004).

Willis's classification is used in performing the given action research. Willis (1996) lists the following tasks: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience and creative tasks.

Teacher-learner roles

TBL has an active approach towards students' learning (Nunan, 2004:67). In TBL students can perform the following roles: 1) a group participant, since many tasks are done in pairs or small groups 2) a monitor of how language is used in communication and 3) a risk-taker as many tasks can require learners to create and interpret messages, for which they lack prior experience (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:235). Students are active at every stage of the TBL lesson.

At the same time TBL does not deny the role of a teacher in the process of learning. TBL views *instruction* as "a highly desirable, though not totally essential condition for language learning" (Willis, 1996:14). The reason for that is that instruction does not seem to

change the learner's developmental sequence (Willis, 1996:14). However, instruction can benefit learners in the way it draws their attention to specific features/forms in the TL. Instruction can help to notice them, to process grammatical forms and "form hypotheses about their meaning" (Willis, 1996:16).

The TBL view on instruction as a desirable, though not essential condition for language learning, has its impact on teacher roles within the TBL approach. The teacher should 1) select and sequence tasks 2) prepare learners for tasks and 3) perform consciousness-raising activities (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:236), during which learners will have opportunities to focus and notice forms, as previously described.

Role of materials

Tasks may require considerable time and resources to develop (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:236). However, materials that can be exploited for TBL lessons are not limited in any way. Many contemporary study-books already have "task-based activities" sections. Besides, a wide variety of realia can also be used as a resource for TBL, for example newspapers, TV episodes and the Internet.

Procedure

The broad definition of "task" presupposes a significant variety in types of tasks. In this way, TBL lesson model is mostly dependent on the type of a task.

The Willis TBL framework (Willis, 1996:52) describes three stages within TBL lesson model. The first stage is a "pre-task", which functions as an introduction to the topic and task. The pre-task activities can include brainstorming, problem solving or reading a dialogue on a related topic (Willis, 1996; Richards and Rodgers, 2001:238). The pre-task stage is followed by the second stage - a task-cycle.

A task cycle consists of three steps: 1) the task itself, which is usually done by students in pairs or groups, 2) planning to report how they did the task and what the outcome was and 3) report to the whole class. The task gives students the chance to use whatever language they already have to express themselves. The emphasis is on spontaneous talk. During planning students draft and rehearse what they intend to say or write, while the teacher advises students on language. Afterwards, students report to the whole class, so everyone can compare findings or make a survey – it depends on the purpose of public report.

The task cycle is followed by the third stage, which is called language focus. Language focus aims at analysis of language patterns/forms that already appeared in the task and practice activities, based on the language analysis (Willis, 1996:58). The last stage represents a call for accuracy and gives students opportunities for noticing.

A TBL lesson can consist of several tasks. Besides, some stages could be omitted, depending on the type of the task, or the components of the framework can be “weighted differently”, depending on the need and backgrounds of students (Willis, 1996:58). In this way, the whole framework for TBL is flexible (Willis, 1996:58) and can be adjusted to students’ needs, according to their level of knowledge. Thus, TBL can be adjusted to suit the needs of false beginners, who constitute the aim group of the given action research.

Contrastive analysis of the PPP and TBL from the perspective of accuracy, fluency and learner motivation

Using the same framework for the description of the PPP method and the TBL approach allows for comparison and contrastive analysis in relation to accuracy, fluency and learner motivation.

The main difference between the PPP method and TBL is in the assumption about the nature of the learning process. The PPP method suggests that out of accuracy comes fluency. In this way, accuracy is primary for the PPP. TBL, on the contrary, claims that out of fluency comes accuracy. In this case fluency is primary. This assumption about the nature of learning determines the rest of the differences, for example, the focus of the PPP and TBL: the PPP is a form-focused method, while TBL is a meaning-focused approach. Further, the main differences between the PPP and TBL are described along with the main points of critique and relation to accuracy, fluency and learner motivation.

PPP focuses on form as TBL focuses on meaning

One of the differences between the PPP method and the TBL approach is in their focus: the PPP method focuses on form, while TBL considers meaning primary.

The role of a focus on form remains controversial. It has been described previously in the PPP theory of language that learners might benefit from grammar instruction and focus on form and accuracy especially in the early stages of learning. However, this method has also

been criticized, as, although it provides focus on form, it does not seem to promote accuracy in the way it is believed to do (Wills, 1996:44).

TBL, as opposed to the PPP, is a meaning-focused approach. Learners communicate meaningfully at both the pre-task stage and the task-cycle, which can promote their fluency. At the same time TBL does not deny focus on form as such (Nunan, 2004:4), although some researchers like Willis and Willis (2001:173) reject the notion of “focused” tasks. This does not mean that an instructional sequence should not include a form-focused exercise. It means only that it should not be called a “task” (Nunan, 2004:97). Along with the PPP, TBL provides learners with opportunities to focus on form, i.e. accuracy. However, focus on form is not present at all stages of the lesson, like in the PPP lesson model, but only on the language focus stage, which functions, as it was described, as a call for accuracy.

Summarizing the above, it can be concluded that TBL promotes focus on meaning and fluency with a call for accuracy, while the PPP considers that sufficient amount of work at using the right forms would lead to accuracy, which in its turn will lead to fluency.

The PPP and TBL differ not only in their focus, but also in their lesson models.

Models of lesson organisation

The PPP method offers only one type of lesson model (Ellis, 1994, Skehan 1996, Willis, 1996). The reason being the belief that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught (Skehan, 1996:17). However, some researchers (Brumfit and Lohson 1979; Ellis, 1994; Skehan, 1996) argue that following a certain routine in learning a form manifested in a clearly structured lesson model does not necessarily result in acquiring either accuracy or fluency in use of this form.

The structure of the lesson components in TBL, as opposed to the PPP, is flexible. It does not offer a single structure of the lesson, as it is dependent on the type of the task used at a particular lesson. Moreover, as it was described, the learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes, including different levels of students.

Exposure and type of language input

As suggested the PPP method offers a limited exposure to comprehensible input throughout the lesson. During all stages of the lesson exposure to input comes from teacher’s

explanations of the particular chosen structure of the day, the study materials used and from the teacher's feedback and corrections. This limiting of input is both in order that all input should be comprehensible and that the lesson aim should be highlighted intensively.

Like the PPP method, TBL framework provides comprehensible exposure to real language in use at every phase of the lesson. The difference is that TBL provides rich input without limiting it (Willis, 1996:60). Although teacher talk is important the variety of tasks and use of authentic materials encourage by the approach give more exposure to language input when compared to the PPP method.

A view of how language should be broken up for teaching purposes

The PPP method focuses on learning lexical items which can be considered as advantage, as lexical items are central in language use and language learning. However, the PPP focuses on *discrete* items with the purpose of promoting accuracy which might be considered as disadvantage. The main critique is that learners do not acquire one item perfectly at a time, in a linear fashion (Nunan, 2004:11).

Whereas the PPP method focuses on product (display of form or discrete language items), TBL focuses on process (holistic experience of language in use). As long as TBL focuses on process, it is not concerned with teaching separate items. In contrast with the PPP, TBL allows for a "great deal of naturalistic recycling" (Nunan, 2004:30). It means that grammatical and lexical items will reappear numerous times in diverse examples of real language in use. It allows learners to develop an "elaborated understanding" of the items by noticing them, but still concentrating on meaning. TBL provides "organic view of acquisition" in which various items are acquired simultaneously, although possibly imperfectly.

Teacher and Learner roles

The PPP method is a teacher-centered method, as described before. The PPP method considers that learning is amenable to teacher control (Skehan, 1996).

Unlike PPP, all modern learning paradigms, including TBL, try to exclude reference to the teacher (Lewis, 1996:13), and reduce teacher-talking time.

TBL is a learner-centered approach. SLA research findings show that learner-centered approaches are more effective when compared to teacher-centered approaches in terms of achieving accuracy, fluency and agency as part of learner motivation (Willis, 1996).

Learner output

Within the PPP lesson model, learners are aware that they are to use the TL at both practice and production stages. At the practice stage, the PPP seems to pay more attention to controlled activities and practicing target items in exercises, while the third stage of the PPP-cycle – the production stage – is claimed to provide opportunities for use of language in a free context. Communicative tasks are not widely used in the PPP-method. Lack of communicative tasks might be explained by the assumption that the speaking skill will *arise* naturally out of sufficient work on discrete items (Willis, 1996).

While learners taught within the PPP method have opportunities for producing output at the two stages of the lesson out of the three, learners taught within TBL are provided with opportunities to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings during all stages of TBL-lesson: the pre-task stage, task-cycle and even language analysis stage. TBL provides more opportunities for real communication, compared to the PPP, which can influence fluency and learner motivation.

PPP extensive corrective feedback vs. TBL language focus

PPP implies the proposal “Get it right from the very beginning” which is to promote accuracy. To serve this purpose, the PPP method provides its students with extensive corrective feedback at the every stage of the lesson.

TBL as well as the PPP tries to prevent fossilization of mistakes. However, TBL does not provide students with extensive feedback from the teacher. The only stage where teacher’s feedback has the right to take place is the language focus stage. At this stage students have an opportunity to reflect on language they have already worked with and to try to systematize what they already know. There is a natural focus on language form as students prepare to “go public” for the report on the report sub-stage within the task cycle, and therefore strive for accuracy improvement. Students participate in analysis activities; they are free to make their own discoveries, which they will be able to apply at some later time (Willis, 1994).

Conclusion

As stated above, the PPP method has proved to produce unimpressive results. Having been exposed to this method, Russian learners tend to appear to be more accurate rather than fluent in their language abilities.

Since SLA research suggests TBL as an alternative approach to the PPP method, it seemed reasonable to research whether TBL would be better suited to these particular Russian learners language needs.

3. Action research methodology

Focus and context for action research

The particular focus of the present action research is in validating whether the TBL approach is more beneficial for adult false beginners than the PPP-method in terms of achieving three aspects of language learning: accuracy (namely, in using the verb-forms of the Present Simple and the conjugation of the verb “to be”), fluency in speech on studied topics and learner motivation.

The action research and data collection took place in a language center for adult learners in Arkhangelsk, Russia. The language center specializes in teaching foreign languages to adult learners, the most popular language being English. The language center provides English as L2 courses at different levels, from beginner to proficiency levels.

Before the action research started, the six research groups were defined: Five groups which would take part in testing the ‘new’ language learning approach and one control group taught by a colleague using a PPP methodology. All the students had studied previously at this language center before they joined these courses and observations, (aimed at finding out the current teaching practices used in the education center) showed that most of the adults taking part in the research had been taught English traditionally using the PPP method in earlier classes.

From conversations with the students, it was established that many of them could easily recall language which they had practiced using controlled activities and drills, but their productive skills in general unscripted conversation was very limited. This is in agreement with Helgesen (1987:24), who claims: “false beginners are able to engage in controlled, form-based (accuracy) activities, but their skills are very limited when they get into meaning-focused (fluency) situations”.

Moreover the language abilities of this group of false beginners varied; some could recall more vocabulary or grammatical rules than their fellow students. However all of the students shared the common feature that they were unable to use this vocabulary and grammar in conversation. Bearing this in mind it seemed to be relevant to use the TBL approach in order to recycle their previous knowledge in a way that would also encourage their fluency.

The TBL course lasted for nine weeks (January 11, 2010 -March 15, 2010), where each cycle of the action research took three weeks. The classes were held three times a week, the duration of each class being 90 minutes.

Ethical issues

This action research followed the procedures and principles, described by Trochim⁴ as necessary to protect the rights of its research participants. This was done by:

- the principle of voluntary participation. The principle of voluntary participation requires that people must not be forced into participating in research. All the subjects taking part in the present research volunteered to participate in it.
- the principle of informed consent. The principle of informed consent is closely related to the previous principle of voluntary participation. This means that research subjects must be fully informed about the procedures involved in the action research. For this purpose, the researcher arranged a special meeting for all the participants of the action research, where the researcher informed participants about the essence of the research and procedures connected with it.
- the privacy of the research participants. All the research subjects were assured that no identifying information would be made available to anyone who is not directly involved into the study.

Action research model

The aims of an action research in foreign language teaching include the following:

- 1) to gain insights into one's own teaching (Wallace, 1998:44),
- 2) to give practical judgment in particular problems in specific teaching and learning situations (Edge, 2001; Hadley, 2003, cited in Burns, 2009:291)
- 3) to underpin and investigate curriculum innovation and to understand the processes as occur as a part of educational change (Burns, 2009:291).

The model of action research used in the given action research is that suggested by Kemmis (Kemmis, 1988:10, cited in Burns, 2009:290). This is composed of a number of steps:

- define the general idea
- develop a plan of action to improve what is already happening,
- implement the action,

⁴ <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/ethics.php>

- observe the effect of action and reflect on it as the basis for further planning and so on, through a succession of cycles

The general idea in the given model refers to a state in the education process one wishes to change or improve (Elliott, 1991). The general idea of the given action research is as follows: *Students do not seem to produce good results in English in terms of accuracy and fluency. Will implementation of the TBL approach result in better performance (accuracy and fluency) and increase their motivation?*

The plan of action in the given model contains: a statement of the factors one is going to change, actions one will undertake in order to improve the situation and a statement of the ethical framework (Kemmis, 1980, Elliot, 1991:75).

In this action research project, the researcher worked on improving three factors:

- accuracy in use of the Present Simple and conjugation of the verb “to be”,
- fluency in speech on studied topics
- motivation

However, before starting the action research a baseline of current practices and student knowledge needed to be established in order that future comparisons could be made.

Having established the baseline three cycles of change within the classroom practices took place:

In Cycle 1: the number of communicative activities was increased.

In Cycle 2: the focus on language form was moved towards the end of the task

In Cycle 3: grammar was brought to the ‘notice’ of the students and taught implicitly.

The implementation and evaluation of these action cycles was supported by an evaluation test for the students and a teacher’s log for the researcher.

Placing this research design into the Russian context:

The General idea: Russian false beginners do not seem to produce good results in English in terms of accuracy and fluency. Will implementation of the TBL approach result in better performance (accuracy and fluency) and increase their motivation?

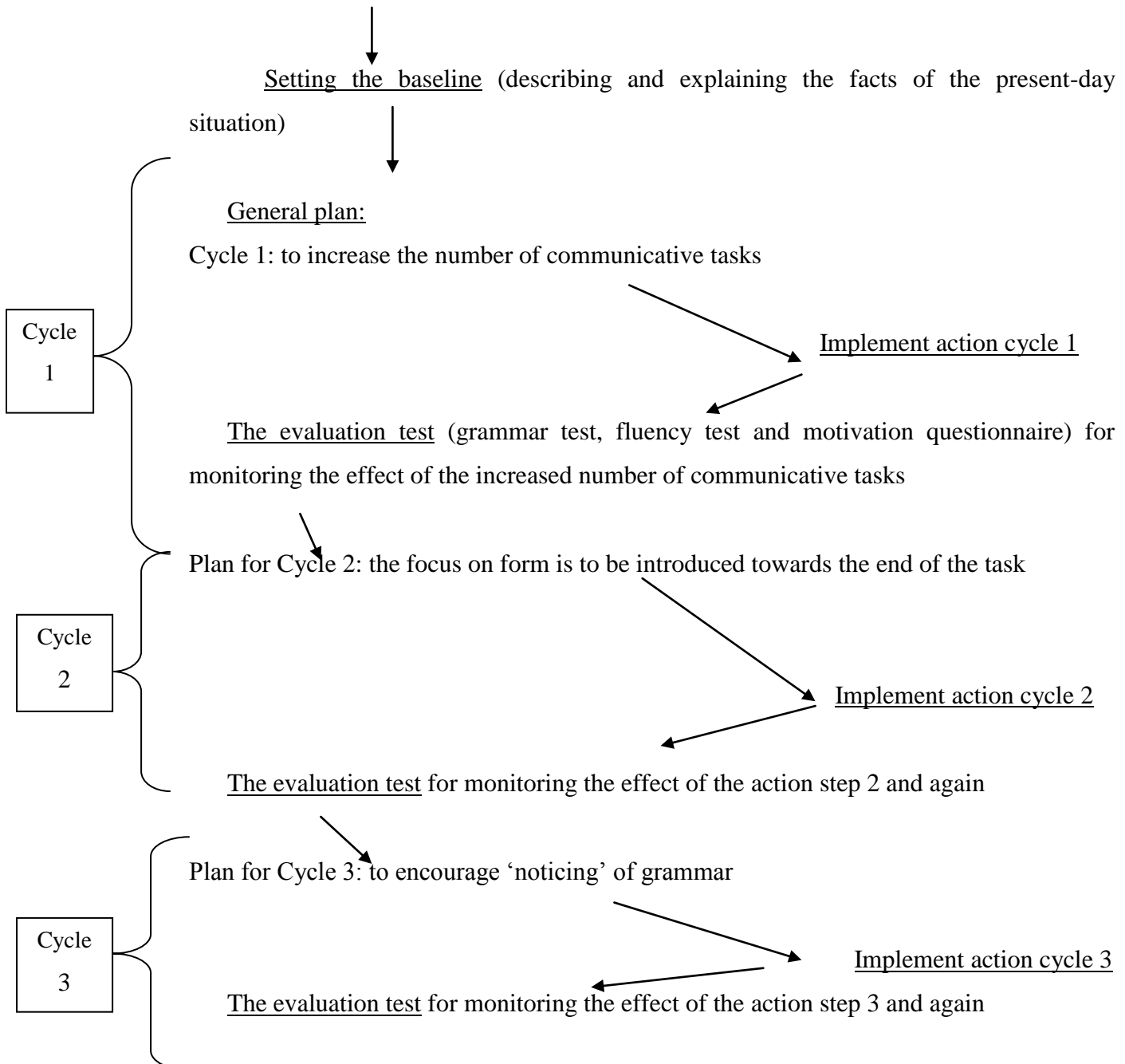


Figure 2. Model of the given action research

The action research process has been characterized as a spiral of movements between action and research (Kemmis, 1980; Elliott, 1991; Burns 2009). Each cycle is reflective; observations and analysis of the results of each action cycle determining the way that the next cycle will be designed (Burns, 2009:290). This method allows for unpredictable and fluid changes in the design of the research. Because of this design format each action cycle will be described in full within chapter 4.

Further research design considerations

As noted earlier, participants of the action research were divided into two sections: one section included five test groups (5-6 students in each) who participated in the TBL course, while another section constituted a control group (6 students), who were taught using the PPP-method. After discussion it was decided that in order that the control group should remain free from researcher bias that this class would be taught by a separate colleague.

Learners were introduced to TBL learning through a transition from the PPP method to the TBL approach. In order to make the transition smooth and so offer the best chance that students would accept the changes in classroom practices, the nine-week course was divided into three cycles.

Before starting the course, both the control and the research groups took the initial evaluation test on accuracy, fluency and motivation in order to establish the baseline. The test was designed and piloted before the research began and consisted of a grammar test in the Present Simple (to test accuracy), a fluency test in the form of a controlled interview on studied topics and a motivation questionnaire.

This test was adapted and repeated at the end of each cycle in order to establish whether there had been any changes to the learners' language ability throughout each cycle in the research groups. Besides, the test content was chosen in the way to suit both the control and the research groups. The content of the test (lexical items, grammatical structures) was changed according to the learning aims and materials used during each cycle. The results were analyzed and it became possible to assess whether the TBL framework had had any effect on students' accuracy, fluency and motivation.

4. Action research stages and results

4.1. Setting the baseline

The baseline was set by means of two types of data collection:

1. Focused observations, which aimed at discovering current language teaching practices in Russian classrooms.
2. The student evaluation test

In order to discover what current language teaching practices are used in Russian classrooms and how effective they are, two series of focused observations were performed. For this purpose two observation schemes were developed.

Observation 1: discovering the current language teaching practice

Observation design

The first series of observations was aimed at discovering the current language teaching practice, used in Russian classrooms. The purpose of the observation in the first case was to find out whether the approach used in the classroom resembles the PPP method.

For this purpose, the checklist “Features of the PPP method” (Appendix 1) was developed on the basis of the contrastive analysis of PPP and TBL, presented in the literature review.

Items typical for structure of a PPP lesson, such as:

- Clear lesson model
- Focused presentation stage and practice activities
- Need to display required language forms at the production stage

Items typical for content of a PPP lesson, such as:

- Language input as the key factor
- Limited exposure to language
- Focus on discrete language items
- Focus on form and rules
- Controlled activities (drill of chosen patterns; controlled repetition, etc) at practice stage

- Meta-language focus
- Few opportunities to use the language for communication
- Extensive correction of errors

Items typical for teacher-learner roles in a PPP lesson, such as:

- Teacher-centered method.

Piloting

The observation checklist was piloted in order to test its effectiveness in October 2009. The researcher observed two groups of adult second-language learners during four 90 minute English classes. The researcher remained passive in the back of the classroom and checked off on the checklist those features found to occur during the lessons.

The trial observations did not seem to reveal any features which had not been included and was therefore considered fit for purpose.

Observation and results

After the checklist was piloted, the first series of observations aimed at defining current language teaching practices in Russian classrooms, were performed.

The results of the first series of observations and their analysis were grouped according to the correspondent features in the checklist (“Features of the PPP method”, Appendix 1):

Structure of the lesson

All the observed lessons had a very clear structure: the beginning of the lesson involved a short warm up in the form of proverbs or games, designed to repeat and activate the material studied before and the homework was checked. The teacher then presented the new language, which were often new rules with a model/example of how the rule could be applied. All the examples were taken from real-life situations. After the rules and examples were introduced and explained, the students moved to the practice stage. At this stage they practiced the new items by means of “controlled” activities, such as “repeat-after-me-tasks”,

“fill the gap with the suggested items” and “open-the-brackets-tasks”. When they made mistakes, they received corrective feedback immediately. The most frequent feedback types appeared to be recasts⁵, metalinguistic feedback⁶ and clarification requests⁷. After the practice stage, students moved to productive activities, such as acting out dialogues or role-plays. These tasks aimed at use of the studied items. However, the teacher did not correct learners when they managed to express themselves, using other items.

The structure of the lesson resembled the structure suggested by the PPP method in many ways. As it can be seen from the observation scheme (“Features of the PPP method”, Appendix 1), two points out of the three coincide with the PPP method. Although the teacher tried to make the production stage more variable and did not attempt to make the students reproduce the practiced items, the presence of these items was still anticipated by the teacher. Every time the practiced item occurred in learner’s speech, the teacher gave remarks such as “Very good!”, “Well done!” and “Good expression”. When the learner managed to substitute the studied phrase or form by a different item, the teacher’s comment on it was either “Ok” or “Let it be”.

Content of the lesson

Features, included into the group “content of the lesson”, are the following:

Language input.

All the observed lessons focused on language input. Teacher’s talking time took approximately 75% (45 minutes) of all the lesson-time, while students’ talk took 25% (15 minutes) of the lesson-time. The important task for the teacher during the lesson was to

⁵ **Recasts** – a type of feedback, which involves the teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance, but without the error (Lightbown and Spada, 1999:104)

⁶ **Metalinguistic feedback** – feedback, which contains comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of the student’s utterance, without explicitly providing he correct form (Lightbown and Spada, 1999:104)

⁷ **Clarification requests** – requests, which indicate to students either their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way and that reformulation is required (Lightbown and Spada, 1999:104)

provide language input of high quality. To make input comprehensible the teacher used repetitions, rephrasing and sometimes gestures, trying to avoid the mother tongue with the exception of explaining grammatical rules.

Exposure to language

All the observed lessons had a very clear structure and specific goals, set for every lesson. For each lesson some particular items were chosen which were to be practiced and “automatized” as habits later at the practice stage. These chosen items and the context, in which they occurred, formed/tuned the exposure to language within each lesson.

Due to the fact that lesson goals were pre-defined (for example, practicing the verb “to be” in the third person singular or learning the greeting phrases), the exposure to language seemed to be limited as well.

Discrete language items

Each lesson introduced a discrete language item, depending on the goals set for that lesson. The items were introduced at the presentation stage and then practiced by means of controlled activities. From time to time, the items occurred in learner’s speech at the production stage.

Focus on form

All the observed lessons were focused on form. At first the selected form was presented in some dialogue and then practiced in various kinds of drill-exercises (replacement⁸, restatement⁹, completion¹⁰, restoration¹¹ and transformation¹²) and pattern-

⁸ **Replacement** – a drill exercise, where one word in the utterance is replaced by another (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:60). Example: Kate is a student – *She* is a student

⁹ **Restatement** - a drill exercise, where the student rephrases an utterance and addresses it to someone else, according to instructions (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:60). Example: Ask him what his name is – What is your name?

¹⁰ **Completion** - a drill exercise, where the student should complete the sentence. Example: She is from ...

practice exercises. On the production stage the tasks were to give a speech on some topic, *using the key phrases*, which appeared to be the studied items or particular grammatical forms.

Controlled activities

The language-items, which formed the “lesson structure of the day”, were practiced by means of controlled activities, such as “drill” tasks/controlled repetition/etc. Other structures/forms/items were unlikely to appear at the same lesson. However, if the learners asked the teacher “how to say....” they always got the answer. Communicative tasks were rarely used during the lessons and took less time than practicing the studied items (practice stage took ca. 25-30 minutes, while communicative tasks lasted not more than 10-15 minutes).

Corrective feedback

Both the practice and productive stages included error corrections, although the teacher’s control during production activities was much less than at the practice stage. As it has been described, learners received corrective feedback in the form of recasts, clarification requests and metalinguistic explanations, the latter one being most frequent.

The analysis of feedback types described in Lightbown and Spada, (1999:106) have shown that “student uptake is least likely to occur after recasts” and much more likely to occur after clarification requests and metalinguistic feedback. Taking into consideration that observed groups were adult groups, metalinguistic feedback and focus might be beneficial for them. Some of the students even required metalinguistic explanation if they had failed to understand the rule.

Teacher-learner relations

¹¹ **Restoration** - a drill exercise, where the student should restore the sentence out of sequence of words. Example: I/homework/day/do/every – I do my homework every day

¹² **Transformation** - a drill exercise, where the student should transform a sentence into a negative/interrogative or through changes in tense, mood, voice, aspect or modality (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:61). Example: I know her name – I don’t know her name, etc

The results of a series of observations revealed that the balance of communicative tasks to teacher led activities were low; teacher led discourse took about forty minutes and student led discourse about ten to fifteen minutes. The teacher held a presentation of some language item/rule, explained the examples/models, controlled the activities during the practice stage and gave corrective feedback.

Conclusion

Summing up, according to the observation scheme (“Features of the PPP method”, Appendix 1), eleven features typical for the PPP method out of twelve were present in the observed English lessons. The features present were as follows: “limited exposure”, choosing particular items and “structures of the day”, the focus on form, use of controlled activities, metalinguistic focus and the feedback types typical for the PPP method. It could be suggested therefore, that the method used in the class was the PPP method.

Observation 2: effectiveness of the current language teaching practice

The second series of observations was aimed at measuring the effectiveness of the current language teaching practice used in Russian classrooms. The purpose of the second series of observations was to discover whether the approach used in the classroom was effective and how it possibly could be improved.

For this purpose, the checklist “Essential conditions for successful language learning” (Appendix 2) was developed which was adapted from Willis and Willis’ (1996:11) scheme of conditions for language learning, presented earlier in the literature review, in the sub-section “Description of the TBL approach” (Figure 1).

In order to develop the observation checklist, Willis and Willis’ scheme was extended to make it fit with the requirements of this particular observation. The features were grouped accordingly:

The essential condition “Exposure” included the following features (“Essential conditions for successful language learning”, Appendix 2) -

- rich and comprehensible input
- real language in use

- lexical units
- noticing

The essential condition “Use” included the following features (“Essential conditions for successful language learning”, Appendix 2):

- stimulation of real communication in TL
- opportunities for real language use
- real purpose for language use
- meaning-focused activities
- processes of negotiation
- processes of modification
- processes of rephrasing
- processes of experimentation

The essential condition “Motivation” included the following features (“Essential conditions for successful language learning”, Appendix 2):

- success
- satisfaction

The desirable condition “Instruction” included the following features (“Essential conditions for successful language learning”, Appendix 2):

- chances to focus on form
- call for accuracy
- noticing

As a result, the checklist represents a more detailed version of Willis and Willis’ scheme. After the observation scheme (Appendix 2) was developed, it was piloted in the same way as observation scheme for observation 1.

Having completed the observations as before the results and their analysis were grouped, according to the correspondent features in the checklist (Appendix 2):

Exposure

Rich and comprehensible language input.

The series of observations showed that classroom language input was comprehensible for the learners, who were exposed to real language through teacher talk, written texts and audio/video recordings.

As in the first observation, teacher's talk took approximately 70% (50-60 minutes) of all the lesson-time and was used in the following ways:

- for language rule explanation,
- for giving instructions,
- for the correction of mistakes
- for feedback during controlled activities.

In order to make the language input comprehensible the teacher used repetitions, rephrasing, modifications and sometimes gestures, trying to avoid the mother tongue, except when explaining grammatical rules and focusing on meta-language aspects. All these means of making input comprehensible were described previously in the section on conditions for successful language learning.

All the texts and audio/video recordings used in the classroom contained approximately 10% of the vocabulary which was new for learners. New language forms and phrases were explained by the teacher and practiced by the learners afterwards. The students seemed to understand the new language input and did not hesitate to ask the teacher if they did not understand, who then modified or rephrased the explanation in English or used a metalinguistic explanation in Russian.

The series of observations showed, that the teacher provided the students with rich input. However, the language input, as observed, came mostly from a single source – namely, the teacher. According to Willis (1996), it is important to pay attention not only to amount of language input, but also to its quality. Therefore, it can be suggested that observed teacher's talk for 50 minutes of the lesson time alone was unlikely to benefit learners, although it was comprehensible. It can be suggested that learners would benefit more, if the language input was as variable as possible. Besides teacher's talk language input can be provided through extensive use of texts or audio/video recordings of fluent speakers. Texts and audio recordings were used at the classes as well, but these activities still were followed by teacher's talk, taking the major time given for doing the exercise.

According to Krashen's Input Hypotheses, described previously in the literature review, people acquire language best by understanding input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence". This condition was well illustrated in the observed classes. All

the input provided in the form of written texts and audio/video recordings was on the “edge” of learners understanding. As described earlier, new forms/vocabulary constituted approximately ten percent of the whole text. Learners were able to guess or predict the meaning of new words/phrases from the context or background knowledge. In this way, they “noticed” these new features and managed to explore their meaning without help from the teacher. They seemed to benefit from it in terms of motivation and effective acquisition of new items.

Real language in use.

For the classes the teacher selected a wide range of materials, which could give learners various experience in language use. All the materials in the textbook and additional teacher’s copies contained real language in use. The textbook is a new edition. The same can be said about teacher’s materials, which are relatively new and can be used as an example of real language in use. Audio and video recordings are taken from the same study-complex as the textbooks and contain the speech of native speakers. In this way, the teacher exposed the learners to the variety of language they needed to understand and use both in and outside the classroom, which is essential for language learning, according to Willis (1996:12) and Nunan (2004:20). It can be concluded, therefore, that learners were exposed to real language in use; they were given samples of real language.

However, since the focus of the observed classes was on input rather than output, as it had been observed during the first series of observations, the learners were involved into real-world productive activities only occasionally. During the observed classes they rarely “rehearsed” something they would need outside the classroom. This shows that language output had second priority at the observed classes, while language input, including real language in use, was primary. It can be suggested therefore that the feature “real language in use” should be present in both language input and output. However, language output refers to “use” as the condition for successful language learning, rather than to “exposure”. Thus, this point will be discussed later in this section.

Lexical units.

During the observed classes the teacher exposed learners to a rich variety of units which were larger than word, i.e. lexical units. The exposure took place mostly on the presentation stage, when the teacher explained new lexical structures or did preparation vocabulary work and on practice stages, when students performed various exercises under the teacher's control. The teacher used functional phrases ("by the way", "first of all", "for example", etc), fixed expressions ("close relative", "an only child", etc) and verbal expressions ("cannot help", "don't mind", etc). The students were also given the chance to receive whole phrase units, while reading and doing comprehension tasks. However, the learners did not display knowledge of the units which they were exposed to. It seemed to be reasonable, as it is impossible to incorporate all the new lexical units within one lesson.

The exposure to a rich variety of lexical units is one of the means of providing effective learning. The teacher provided rich exposure to the lexical units. However, no observations showed that the students were actually using the lexical phrases provided at the lesson in the form of the teacher's talk, reading materials or audio/video recordings. The possible reason might be the limitation for the observation process itself: the researcher performed limited series of observations and the students might have displayed the lexical items under discussion on the later stages, when the observations were over. Thus, the presence of lexical items at the observed classes is not classified as either effective or ineffective.

Noticing.

Opportunities to focus on form can lead to "noticing" (Ellis, 1997, described in Brown, 2007:276), as described earlier. However, it did not happen in the observed lessons, although students were provided with opportunities to do so. The teacher was active during focus-on-form stages, which did not leave the time for students to notice structures themselves and ask about them. Students seemed to get used to this style of teaching and took a passive role, which could not allow noticing, which requires active participation on the student's behalf. They did not focus on the language because they needed it or because they noticed it as it was relevant for them at that period of time. None of the chances to focus on form manifested in "noticing".

Use/output:

Stimulation of communication in the TL, opportunities and real purpose for language use.

The second series of observations showed that students were given opportunities to communicate in TL. The teacher stimulated communication in TL in the production stage. The activities, providing communication, were for example acting out dialogues in pairs, similar to the dialogue given in the example, retelling a story for the class or information gap tasks.

The observations showed that a number of exercises in the production stage did not provide opportunities for genuine communication, as acting out similar dialogues can hardly be called genuine communication. The students did not have a real purpose for language use in this case. Moreover, they tended to do tasks like acting out similar dialogues automatically, almost without thinking. On the other hand, information gap tasks could serve as tasks which could give real purposes for language use. However, students were focused on correct form use in the language. The observations showed that they paused, trying to remember the “right” form or waiting for the teacher to give them a hint, which form should be used. They did not seem to be concerned with getting information across, which was the purpose of the production stage, but rather with expression of their thoughts through use of the “right forms”. Thus, although the teacher stimulated communication in the TL and gave opportunities for language use on the production stage, it did not prove to be effective. The possible explanation to that is that 1) the production stage took less time, than the rest of the stages 2) there was no real purpose for language use and 3) students either performed exercises automatically or were more preoccupied with the form, rather than meaning.

Meaning-focused activities.

The second series of observations showed that the teacher used meaning-focused activities usually one or two times per lesson. The meaning-focused activities, such as information-gap tasks, were usually performed in the production stage of the lesson, when the teacher diverted attention from the form, practiced during the lesson, to meaning in communicative tasks. Along with information-gap tasks the teacher also used “make a survey”-tasks with the question, for example, “Have you been to....”. The task was a combination of a meaning-focused activity and a drill.

These meaning-focused activities aimed at promoting fluency. However, it was not obvious, as the teacher constantly gave corrective feedback with reference to the “expected” form. However, drill exercise in combination with meaning-focused activity represented a form of fluency practice: the activity had meaning and at the same time was repetitive and supported memorization of the grammatical structure under focus.

Processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing and experimentation.

During the observed classes, negotiation, and experimentation were rarely involved, although meaning-focused tasks gave opportunities to involve both of the processes. Learners neither experimented with the TL and nor took risk in expressing themselves, but rather relied on the teacher to give them a hint of what is expected from them.

Modifications and rephrasing were used only by the teacher. They were used as a means of making input comprehensible. The example of such modification was when learners tried to predict meaning of the word and, failing in doing so, they had to ask the question “What does it mean?”. The teacher modified his speech that time in the way that students would understand. This modified exposure became comprehensible and helped understanding.

Another way of making language input comprehensible, which was observed during the classes, was rephrasing. The teacher rephrased some of his explanations, if the learners failed to understand them. It helped learners to understand the TL better and at the same time rephrasing looked natural. However, the students did not use rephrasing in their speech, which could suggest that they did not learn how to use it. It might be considered as disadvantage, as rephrasing is a part of “natural communication process” (Willis, 1996:12) and it often helps learners to understand the TL better.

From the observation scheme (Appendix 2), it can be seen that students themselves did not use processes such negotiation, modification, rephrasing and experimentation in their TL language. This could suggest that their learning might not be as effective, as it could be, as these are the processes which are believed to be “the heart of second language learning” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:228).

Motivation: Success and satisfaction

From the observations of classes and my talk with the students, participating in these classes, it was discovered that learners were motivated to study English. Taking into consideration that they were adults and each of them had a specific purpose for studying English (for business or tourist purposes, for example), as could be expected. However, the purpose of the observation in this case was to find out whether they are motivated by the methods used in class. Here there are two factors for consideration: success and satisfaction. Clear goals of chosen structures to be taught made students feel secure and made the goal of each lesson appear achievable. When they achieved this goal at the production stage and got a positive feedback from the teacher, they experienced success and seemed to be satisfied with the lesson.

However, Willis (1996:48) claims that successful repetition and drill (which were also part of the observed lessons) created the comforting illusion that learning had actually taken place. This point of view was supported by the observations of the following classes, where students express dissatisfaction with themselves, as they could not either remember or use the structure presented on the previous lesson.

Summarizing the above-said, it can be pointed out that learners did not experience long-term success and satisfaction with their results. They seemed to experience these two aspects of motivation on a short-term basis.

Instruction

Call for accuracy: chances to focus on form.

As it was established by the previous series of observations, the method used in the observed classes resembled the PPP-method, which is a form-focused method. Therefore, it was natural to observe that the students had opportunities to focus on form on all the stages throughout the lesson.

This aspect (“Chances to focus on form”) of the second series of observation coincide with the aspect (“Focus on form”) of the first series of observations “Features of the PPP method”, which was discussed previously in the thesis.

Conclusion

In summing up, according to the observation scheme (Appendix 2), seven conditions out of fifteen necessary for successful language learning were present in the observed English lessons. It could be suggested therefore, that the method used in the class was mostly ineffective, as only less than half-part of all the conditions were present at the classes.

The second series of observations proved the conclusion of the first series of observations: the method used in teaching English as TL at courses for Russian adult learners (the PPP) was ineffective from the perspective of the research. The observed classes lacked:

- real purpose for language in use
 - noticing
 - processes of processes of negotiation
 - processes of modification
 - processes of rephrasing
 - processes of experimentation
 - success
 - satisfaction
- } as sub-conditions of motivation

All these aspects are essential conditions for language learning. Therefore, since it was established that the PPP method used in the classroom was ineffective, it could be suggested to implement the TBL approach, which is based on all the fifteen conditions for successful language learning (Willis, 1996).

Initial evaluation test

The second part of the baseline study is to discover the learners' ability in English through initial evaluation test before the action research intervention proceeded.

The test aimed to check three aspects of learner language and motivation and was divided into 3 parts:

Part one: checked knowledge of the verb-forms of the Present Simple tense by means of a paper-and-pencil language test ("Initial evaluation test for defining the baseline before the experimental stage: Multiple choice on the Present Simple", Appendix 3);

Part two: checked learners' fluency during short interviews based on everyday topics ("Initial evaluation test for defining the baseline before the experimental stage: Controlled interview", Appendix 4);

Part three: aimed at finding out about the learners' motivation by using a questionnaire, i.e. whether they enjoyed the methods used at the courses they have previously attended ("Initial evaluation test for defining the baseline before the experimental stage: Motivation questionnaire", Appendix 5).

Considerations involved in designing the tests

The test method described in the given action research was used not only as the test method for establishing the baseline before the action research started, but also as the test method for establishing whether there had been any changes in the learners' language ability after the performed cycle.

The grammar test included a multiple-choice test on the Present Simple, as it seemed to be suitable for both the control-group and the research groups. The control-group was already used to controlled activities, aimed at drilling particular forms. Thus, the multiple-choice task would seem a natural type of test for them. This type of test would also suit the research groups, who would receive instruction in English in TBL-approach, as this type of tests could be used on Language focus stage in order to help students to notice and practice language items.

The fluency test included a controlled interview. It suited the control-group, as they were used to teacher-controlled activities in their study process. The controlled interview, where the teacher asks questions, could also function as a communicative task, which made it relevant for the research groups.

Under piloting there were not found any limitations in use of motivation questionnaires in the PPP-method or the TBL approach. Therefore, the motivation survey could be suggested to be functional for both the research groups and the control group.

Designing the grammar test

Designing a test involves establishing test content and test method (McNamara, 2000). Test content refers to what the test contains, while the test method is the form in which the test will appear to the test-taker, i.e. the format, in which responses will be required, and how these responses will be scored (McNamara, 2000:25).

One of the ways to establish test content is sampling from tasks (McNamara, 2000). The given grammar test involved sampling from the set of tasks, aimed at practicing the Present Simple, from the textbook used in the class. The test content sampled from a range of most frequent grammatical structures in the Present Simple (negative sentences, double negation etc) and basic vocabulary at the beginner level, taken from the textbook used in the classroom. The result of sampling, i.e. the content of the test is represented in Appendix 3 (“Initial evaluation test for defining the baseline before the experimental stage: Multiple-choice on the Present Simple”).

Besides establishing the test content, the important thing for consideration was test method, i.e. response format. The response format is “the way in which the candidate is required to respond to the materials” (McNamara, 2000:26). Since the described grammar test tested knowledge of discrete points of grammar, namely - the verb forms of the Present Simple, the researcher used fixed-response format, as it is often used for this type of tests (McNamara; 2000:30). One of the most popular tests in a fixed format is a multiple-choice test, which was used for the given grammar test. It was chosen to be the part of the initial evaluation grammar test, because it allows learners to concentrate on grammatical form and this is what they had been doing at PPP lessons before. The test was developed by the researcher on the basis of description of multiple-choice format by McNamara (2000:5).

According to McNamara (2000:6), multiple-choice tests usually consist of sentences with omitted language items, which are presented below each sentence. They present a range of anticipated likely responses, where only one of the given alternatives is correct and the rest are distracters.

The multiple-choice test on the Present Simple (“Initial evaluation test for defining the baseline before the experimental stage: Multiple choice on the Present Simple”, Appendix 3) consisted of twenty sentences with omitted verbs, both notional and auxiliary. The responses presented three alternatives. The distracters were based on confusions of grammatical rules on the Present Simple. The learners’ task was to choose the best alternative among the presented ones.

The procedure for scoring was the following: for example, Student 1 in research group № 1 had given nine correct answers out of twenty. 20 correct answers represent 100% of the right answers. Therefore, nine correct answers could be calculated as $9 \cdot 100 / 20$, which equals 45%. Results for each student are given in the following table (Table 1) and included into a personal profile for each learner, used for the purpose of marking their progress. The example of the profile is given in Appendix 6 (“Example of the personal profile”). After the results for each particular learner in each group were scored, it was possible to score the average mean of the correct answers for each group in order to mark progress of learners as a group. The average mean was scored by the following formula: $(N_{\text{St1}} + N_{\text{St2}} + \dots + N_{\text{StN}}) / \text{number of students in the group}$, where N_{St1} stands for the number of the correct answers given by Student 1, N_{StN} - number of the correct answers given by Student N (where N represents the last student in the group, i.e. either Student 5 or Student 6, depending on the group). Afterwards, the following formula was used for scoring the average mean of the correct answers in percent: $\text{the average mean of the number of the correct answers} / 20 \cdot 100$.

However, the multiple-choice test on the Present Simple could not cover all areas of assessment, since the test required choosing one item from a set of given alternatives. In this way, this test could not test students’ productive skills, namely speaking as well as fluency. For this purpose, a performance test was chosen, as in performance-based tests language skills are assessed in an act of communication (McNamara, 2000:6).

Designing the fluency test

The aim of the performance test as a part of the initial evaluation test was to find out how fluent learners were in speaking on basic topics and use of chosen grammatical features (verb-forms of the Present Simple).

As described previously, the given research deals with three aspects of fluency which define fluency as a term:

- 1) tempo of speech or, in other words, speech rate,
- 2) pauses between generated messages and
- 3) understandable and meaningful speech (Appendix 4).

According to Weir (2005:142), one of the techniques for testing speaking is face-to-face interview. Therefore, learners were suggested to take a face-to-face interview for assessment of fluency.

In the controlled interview the interviewer took the initiative in selecting and developing the topics. The participants were supposed to speak in response to stimuli from the interviewer. The interview started with the simple personal questions, so that the participant could feel at ease (the first three questions in Appendix 4). Then, the participants were asked the questions, which let them speak at length about more or less familiar topics, such as the aim of studying English and their future plans (questions 4, 5 and 6 in Appendix 4).

Students' performance and fluency was measured using the three criteria defined earlier. Tempo of speech or, as it is also called "speech rate", was measured traditionally by determining syllables per minute (SPM)¹³. All the interviews with the students were recorded and transcribed in order to count the syllables and determine the number of SPM. When counting student's SPM, the researcher excluded the teacher's speech from this minute. As students could talk for more than 1 minute during the interview, the researcher scored the average mean of SPM. For this purpose the following equation was used: $ASPM = (SPM_1 + SPM_2 + SPM_n) / \text{number of minutes}$, where ASPM is the average mean of SPM, SPM1 – syllables per the first minute. The figures for the average mean of SPM were rounded.

The number of pauses was counted and checked once again using the recordings. Afterwards, the average mean of number of pauses was calculated and the figures were rounded. Besides, all the pauses were measured in seconds. Afterwards, the arithmetical mean time for pause (AMTP) was calculated, using the following equation: $AMTP = (TP_1 + TP_2 + TP_3 + TP_{...}) : TN_p$, where TP refers to "time for pause" and TN_p is the total number of pauses.

¹³ <http://www.showmemsha.org/handouts/SP18.pdf>

The criterion “understandable speech” was simply measured by “yes” or “no”, based on the judgment of the interviewer. The results will be shown further in this section.

Designing the motivation survey

The last part of the initial evaluation test is motivation survey. As described previously five aspects constituting the term “motivation” had been chosen for this research:

- 1) affect - students’ feelings about learning process (questions 1-10),
- 2) achievements – success (questions 7, 11, 12),
- 3) attitude - confidence in teacher’s abilities (questions 2, 3),
- 4) activities - which students enjoy doing and can see the point of (questions 1,6,11),
- 5) agency - students’ ability to do things by themselves (11-12).

Questions given in the motivation survey aimed at testing one or more aspects, constituting the term motivation. Students were asked to answer how much they were satisfied with various aspects of English classes, such as communicative activities, the teacher, grammar instruction, purpose of each class, variety of exercises, materials for the classes, achieved results, structure of the lesson, the course itself and students’ abilities for communication (Appendix 4). Suggested answers were “*Satisfied*”, “*Not satisfied*” and “*Don’t know*”. Taking into consideration that each question refers to one of the five aspects constituting the term motivation, it was possible to discover which particular motivation aspect students were satisfied/not satisfied with.

Piloting the tests

McNamara (2000:23) notes that before a test can be considered operational the test materials and methods must be piloted.

For this purpose two pilot groups with five learners in each were chosen. The groups were attending English courses at the same education center, where the action research took place. These two pilot groups were neither the five research groups, chosen for the TBL course, nor the control group. The researcher chose other groups from the same center in

order to collect more accurate data, as piloting the tests could influence the results of the initial evaluation test if students had done the same test twice. However, these pilot groups resembled the research groups in learning background (they received instruction using the PPP-method) and general proficiency (false-beginners).

The test trials did not reveal any features, which had not been taken into consideration. The test materials and methods could be considered to be operational.

The results of the grammar test, the fluency test and the motivation survey were then calibrated into a personal profile for each learner. The purpose of the personal profile was to follow whether the student had made progress over the course of the research study or not. The results of the initial evaluation test defined the levels of English knowledge among false-beginners and established the baseline (the present day knowledge of English). Knowing the various levels within the class/the baseline was necessary when planning lessons.

Results of the initial evaluation test:

Results of the grammar test.

Five research groups and one control group took part in the grammar test. The research groups № 1, 3, 4 and the control group had five students in each, while the research groups № 2 and 5 had six students in each. The results of the grammar test are summarized in Table 2, where the figures represent the percentage of the right answers.

Table 1. Summarized results of the initial grammar test for all groups

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Average mean of the correct answers for the group
Research group № 1	45%	40%	35%	45%	50%	—	45%
Research group № 2	45%	35%	45%	45%	25%	40%	35%
Research group № 3	55%	40%	45%	50%	45%	—	40%
Research group № 4	50%	45%	25%	45%	35%	—	45%
Research group № 5	50%	40%	40%	45%	55%	40%	45%
Control group	65%	45%	40%	50%	40%	—	45%

From Table 1 it can be seen that results of each particular student varied greatly, the lowest score within the initial grammar test being 25% (Student 5, research group №2 and Student 3,

research group №4) and the highest score being 65% (Student 1, the control group). The figures became a part of the personal profile for each learner (“Example of the personal profile”, Appendix 6).

The average mean of correct answers varied as well: from 35% (research group №2) to 45% (research groups №1, 4, 5 and the control group). The figures of the average mean became a part of the group profile (“Example of the group profile”, Appendix 7).

The results suggest therefore that false beginners can differ in their knowledge of grammar and it is important to make allowances for different levels of false beginners.

Results of the fluency test

Five research groups and one control group took part in the fluency test. The fluency test was held individually for each learner. The researcher recorded the interviews and transcribed the recordings (“Example of the transcription of the controlled interview performed within the initial fluency test”, Appendix 8). After the transcriptions were ready, it was possible to fill in the interview observation scheme (“Initial evaluation test for defining the baseline before the experimental stage: Controlled interview”, Appendix 4) for the five research groups and the control group. Table 2 represents the example of the filled interview observation scheme:

Table 2. Interview observation scheme for research group №1

	SPEECH RATE/ ASPM – the average mean of syllables per minute. Figures are rounded	PAUSES BETWEEN GENERATED UTTERANCES		Understandable speech (Yes/No)
		Number of pauses per minute – the average mean. Figures are rounded	Time of the pause (sec) – the average mean	
Student 1	73	18	1,39	yes
Student 2	65	20	1	yes
Student 3	62	25	1,6	yes
Student 4	71	15	1,67	yes
Student 5	70	10	1,5	yes
The average mean results of the group	68	18	1,4	

The same table was prepared for research groups № 2, 3, 4, 5 and the control group. The data gathered in Table 2 represents the results for each learner in particular as well as the average mean results of the group. The results given for each learner were used in Personal Profiles (“Example of the personal profile”, Appendix 6), developed to mark the progress of each learner, whereas the average mean results were used in Table 3, showing summarized results of the initial fluency test of all groups.

Table 3. Summarized results of the initial fluency test for all groups

	Average speech rate in SPM, figures are rounded	Average number of pauses between generated utterances per minute, figures are rounded	Average time of pauses between generated utterances (in sec)	Understandable speech (yes/no)
Research group №1	68	18	1,4	yes
Research group № 2	73	17	2,2	yes
Research group № 3	75	19	2,1	yes
Research group № 4	69	20	1,9	yes
Research group № 5	80	17	1,8	yes
Control group	83	16	1,8	yes

From Table 3 it can be seen that students in all groups produced understandable speech during the interview. The researcher did not observe one case, where the speech of the student was not comprehensible. Otherwise, the results of groups as a whole varied significantly. The lowest score in speech rate within the initial fluency test was observed in research group №1 (68 SPM), while the highest score being 83 SPM (the control group). The average number of pauses between generated utterances varied from 16 (the control group) to 20 (research group №4) per minute. Pauses between generated utterances lasted at the average from 1,4 seconds (research group №1) to 2,2 seconds (research group №2). The figures became a part of the group profile (Appendix 7).

The results of the fluency test, like the results of the grammar test, suggest that false beginners can differ in their level of knowledge of English. In this case, the results of the fluency test suggest that all false beginners differ in their level of fluency.

Results of the motivation survey

Five research groups and the control group took part in the motivation survey. The researcher processed the forms for motivation survey (Appendix 5) and summarized the results for each learner, which were included into personal profiles (“Example of the personal profile”, Appendix 6). The results for each learner were given as a percentage of positive answers (“Satisfied”). Therefore, the table (Appendix 6) shows how much the learner is satisfied with the five aspects of motivation as a percentage. The same tables were prepared for each learner of each group and all the five research groups and the control group.

The researcher did not divide the results of the research groups and the control group, as the experiment on implementing the TBL approach has not started yet and the initial motivation survey aimed at establishing how much the current teaching practice used in classrooms of all the groups, the PPP method, motivated students. In this way, scoring was performed differently. 32 students participated in the motivation survey. The researcher scored students answers in percents and grouped the answers in accordance with the correspondent aspect of motivation.

As it was described previously, affect – the aspect of motivation, referring to students’ feelings about learning process - was tested in questions 1-10 (Appendix 5). Figure 3 represents the results of this part of the motivation survey:

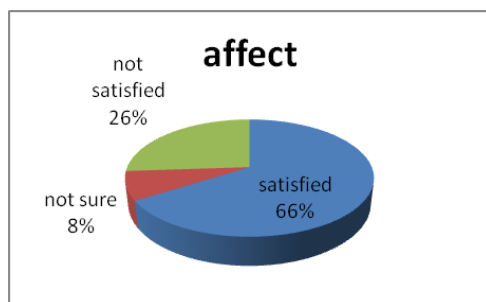


Figure 3. Affect

Figure 3 shows that the majority of students (66% of those asked) were satisfied with the learning process – namely with classroom activities, the teacher, grammar instruction, exercises, materials, the lesson structure and the PPP course in general. 26% of students were not satisfied with the learning process and 8% students were not sure about their feelings about it.

The next aspect of motivation – achievement - was tested in questions 7, 11 and 12 of the motivation questionnaire (Appendix 5). Figure 4 summarizes the result of testing this aspect:

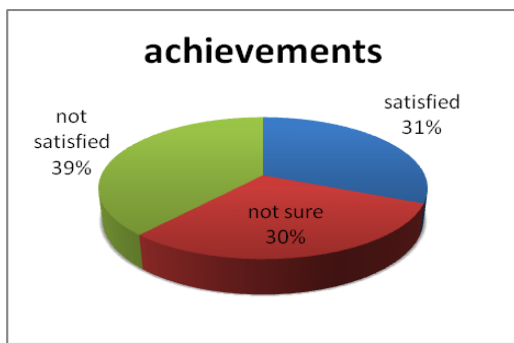


Figure 4. Achievements

Figure 4 shows that the percentage of students who were not satisfied with their results in English exceeds the percentage of those who were satisfied with their achievements (39% vs. 31% correspondently). However, the difference in percentage of satisfied students and those who were not sure about their results, is not significant (1% difference in favor of students satisfied with their results)

Figure 5 represents students' confidence in teacher's abilities – i.e. attitude, which was tested in questions 2 and 3 (Appendix 5)

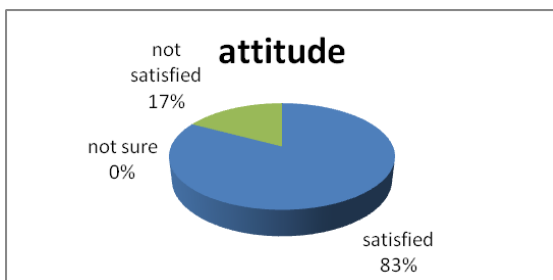


Figure 5. Attitude

Most of the students were satisfied with the teacher and felt confident about the teacher's abilities (83%). However, 17% of those asked were not confident about the teacher's abilities.

The next aspect tested was the activities within the PPP lesson. The questionnaire (questions 1,6 and 11) tested whether the students enjoyed the activities and understood the learning aim in them. The results are presented in Figure 6.

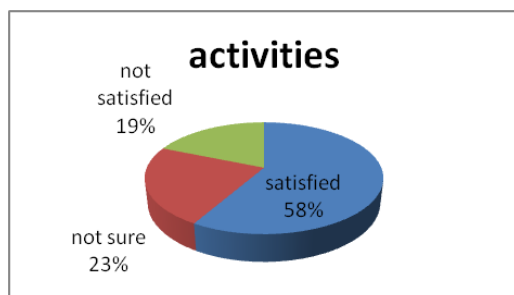


Figure 6. Activities

As can be seen from Figure 6, the percentage of students satisfied with activities used within the PPP-lesson (58%) exceeds those who did not enjoy them (19%) or were not sure (19%) about that.

The last aspect tested in the motivation questionnaire was agency, i.e. students' ability to do things by themselves (tested in questions 11-12). Figure 7 provides the results on agency:

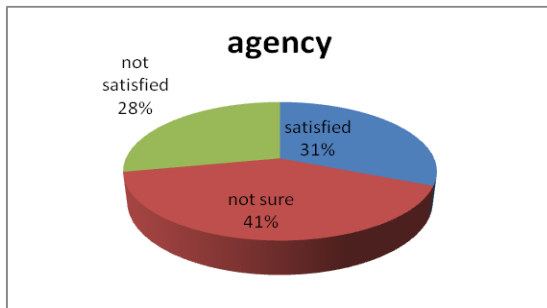


Figure 7. Agency

As it is shown in Figure 7, most students (41%) were not sure if they had abilities to do things by themselves (for example, communicate in English). However, 31% of students were satisfied and confident about their abilities to manage by themselves. The percentage of those who were not satisfied with their abilities (28%) did not differ significantly from the percentage of those satisfied (31%).

Summarizing the results of the motivation questionnaire, it can be concluded therefore, that most students were satisfied with the PPP learning process and activities and felt confident about the teacher's abilities. In other words, they were positive about the three aspects of motivation out of five – affect, attitude and activities. The only aspect of motivation they were not satisfied with was achievements and agency: most students were not satisfied with their results and did not feel confident in their abilities to do things by themselves.

Description of the baseline – conclusion

In order to set the baseline, the researcher performed two series of observations and the initial evaluation test.

The initial evaluation test taken before the experiment stage showed that students differed greatly in the level of English knowledge. The students differed significantly in their

grammar knowledge and fluency. Whilst some students remembered very little from their previous English studies, which put them closer to the absolute beginner level, others had some knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary. For this reason they will be defined in this study as false beginners (FB) and “experienced” false beginners (EFB). Most students were satisfied with the learning process. However, they showed dissatisfaction with their achievements and abilities to do things by themselves, which produced a negative impact on their motivation.

Using the information gained from the evaluation test the students were grouped into five groups: three groups of FB and two groups of EFB. However, due to certain reasons (time for classes, desire to “study with a friend”, etc), some groups still had one or two students at different levels. Thus, some extra work was prepared beforehand for more “experienced students” in case they finished their tasks more quickly than the rest of the group. Also, while doing pair work, more EFBs were grouped with weaker students, so that they could help them.

After the baseline was set, it was possible to start the experiment research study. The essence of the experiment research study was to test the TBL approach through implementing it among adult false beginners. The subjects (FBs and EFBs) were introduced to the new TBL framework via a gradual transition from the PPP method. The experiment research study aimed to show whether TBL instruction was more beneficial than the PPP method in terms of accuracy, fluency and motivation. The model for the given action research has been shown previously (Figure 2) and the method of the experiment was described previously as a part of the action research model used in the given thesis (see 3.1. Action research model)

4.2. First cycle

4.2.1. Methods

The particular methods used during the first cycle were as follows:

- Sampling communicative tasks, as the first change was increasing the number of communicative tasks
- Taping and analysis of the lesson
- The test in the end of the cycle for establishing whether there had been any changes in the learners’ language ability after the first cycle

Sampling communicative tasks

The first cycle introduced increased number of communicative activities into the studying process. In sampling tasks there were many principles and factors to be considered. They were as follows:

1) Comprehensible and authentic input

All the tasks included comprehensible input. The importance of the input and its quality was already discussed in the literature review. Besides, only the authentic input was used, as it is a central characteristic of TB language teaching (Nunan, 2004:176). The researcher was cautious when choosing the authentic input, as many low-level learners might have lost confidence, when first exposed to authentic samples of language. Therefore, they were taught, that it is not necessary to understand every word in order to make communication successful (Nunan, 2004:176).

2) Structure of the lesson:

- Long pre-task phase and a short task-cycle

False beginners had some knowledge of English, but as described earlier, they could not use it for communicative purposes. Thus, they might need a longer pre-task phase and a shorter task cycle, as the main focus with false beginners is on exposure.

- Planning and report stages should be either omitted or very short.

According to Willis (1996:119), these stages can be either omitted or short, because there is less emphasis on public use until learners have gained confidence. Making students talk without getting enough of exposure might undermine their confidence and motivation.

- Succession-principle and task dependency

The succession principle is based on the idea that teacher should “build” the tasks on what students already know. The principle of task dependency lies in the idea that one task should grow out of, and build upon, the ones that have gone before (Nunan, 2004:35). It is highly motivating, as it can provide “situation of success”. Besides, it is one of the principles of TBL learning, where students should manage the tasks using what they already have at their disposal (Willis, 1996).

3) Linguistical factors

Willis (1996) suggests that it is beneficial for beginners, if the language focus stage should concentrate on words and phrases and only gradually progress towards grammar. The possible reason for it can be that meaning comes before form for false beginners. It is important for beginners in general to be able to express themselves and to transfer meaning. Therefore,

tasks should help false beginners build up a stock of useful words and phrases (Willis, 1996). It seems also to be reasonable to start with the tasks with minimal syntax, which can be achieved successfully by learners using just words and phrases as it might help to boost their confidence.

4) Affective factors

- Learn by doing-principle

The learning by doing principle claims that learning is part of the task itself (Willis, 1996). Nunan (2004:36) also underlines the importance of this principle and calls it “active learning”. Learners learn best by actively using the target language and through actively constructing their own system of knowledge. The teacher transmitting this knowledge may not be enough for them to learn. Thus, it is crucial that most class time should be devoted to using the language for communication, which leads to the next principle.

- “Situations of success”

False beginners have studied English before, they might have attempted to learn it for many times, but they never succeeded in it. Thus, they need a feeling of success and to see that their work brings results. In this way, the “situation of success” can help. “Situation of success” is a situation/task where the student **is sure** to achieve the result and succeed (Slattenin, 2002).

- Work in pairs and smaller groups.

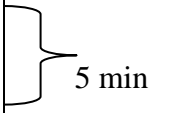
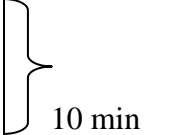
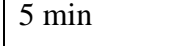
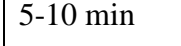
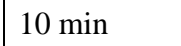
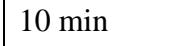
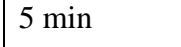
It is necessary to remember that false beginners may feel uncomfortable and shy when using English in front of others, whose language may be better than theirs. It has been already pointed out when discussing FB and EFB. Work in pairs and smaller groups can help to reduce this fear (Willis, 1996:118).

All the communicative tasks used in TBL course were based on the above-described principles. Some of the communicative activities were taken from the textbook used in the center, (“Enterprise” by Virginia Evans), while others were designed by the researcher in accordance with Willis’ classification of task types, described in the literature review of the given thesis, in the section Description of the TBL approach or Nunan’s examples (2004) of communicative activities. The examples of the tasks, designed by the researcher for TBL course, are given in Appendix 9 (“Examples of communicative activities introduced during the first cycle”).

Taping and analysis of the lesson

The general description of a typical lesson of the first cycle, where the first change was introduced (increased number of communicative tasks), was prepared on the basis of teacher's journal and taped lessons. The detailed example of one of the lessons of the first cycle is given in Appendix 10 ("Plan of the lesson performed during the first cycle"). The general plan of the lesson of the first cycle can be described as follows:

Table 4: general plan of the lesson of the first cycle (for research groups)

Description of activities	Duration
Warm up activities	5 min
<p>Pre-task stage may include several of the activities, described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction to the topic of the lesson, • using pictures to introduce the topic • introduction to the task • brainstorming ideas relevant for the topic/task to be completed • putting down these ideas on the blackboard • the teacher may add some ideas, phrases to those pointed out during brainstorming • pre-task games (odd-one-out) • introducing an example of a similar task being done (transcript, audio-recordings) • introducing necessary grammar for task completion. Language focus. Giving examples, related to the task 	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <div>  </div> </div>
<p>The task cycle:</p> <p>Task: the communicative task is done by students either in pairs or groups. Students use the language they already have at their disposal. The teacher goes around, monitors and gives advice, but does not correct mistakes</p> <p>Planning: can be omitted. If present, students prepare to report for the whole class the results of their task. They can rehearse in pairs or groups. The teacher goes around and monitors, suggesting help to students and "polishing" their language</p>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <div>  </div> </div>

<p>Report: can be omitted. If present, each pair of students makes a report to the class; the content of the report depends on the task.</p>	5-10 min
<p>Post-task activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feedback from the teacher • students can listen to a recording of fluent speakers doing the same task or work with the transcript, comparing the ways in which they completed the task themselves to those given in the audio recording/transcript • students may repeat a similar communicative task but this time with a different partner 	<p>5 min</p> <p>10 min</p> <p>10 min</p>

4.2.2. Results

After the three weeks of the course, the five test groups and the control group took the test procedure. The test procedure for establishing whether there had been any changes in the learners' language ability after the first cycle and scoring of the particular tests was performed in the same way, as the piloted procedure for the initial evaluation test. The content of the grammar test and fluency test was based on the studied topics - "Appearance and Character" and "Home, sweet home" ("The test procedure between the first and the second cycles", Appendix 11); the motivation questionnaire remained the same.

Grammar test results

The results of the grammar test are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Summarized results of the grammar test after the first cycle

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Average mean of the correct answers for the group
Research group 1	75%	65%	70%	60%	50%		65%
Research group 2	70%	60%	65%	50%	55%	70%	75%
Research group 3	70%	75%	80%	60%	50%		65%
Research group 4	65%	60%	45%	55%	50%		55%
Research group 5	70%	80%	60%	85%	70%	60%	70%
Control group	65%	70%	75%	65%	55%		65%

From Table 5 it can be seen that results of each particular student differ greatly, as was similar in the initial evaluation test, the lowest score within the grammar test after the first cycle being 45% (Student 3, research group №4) and the highest score being 80% (Student 3, research group №3). The figures became a part of the personal profile for each learner (“Example of the personal profile”, Appendix 6).

The average of correct answers varied as well: from 55% (research group №4) to 75% (research group №2). The figures of the average mean became a part of the group profile (“Example of the group profile”, Appendix 7).

In order to compare the results of the test taken after the first cycle and the initial evaluation test, the following figure was developed (Figure 8):

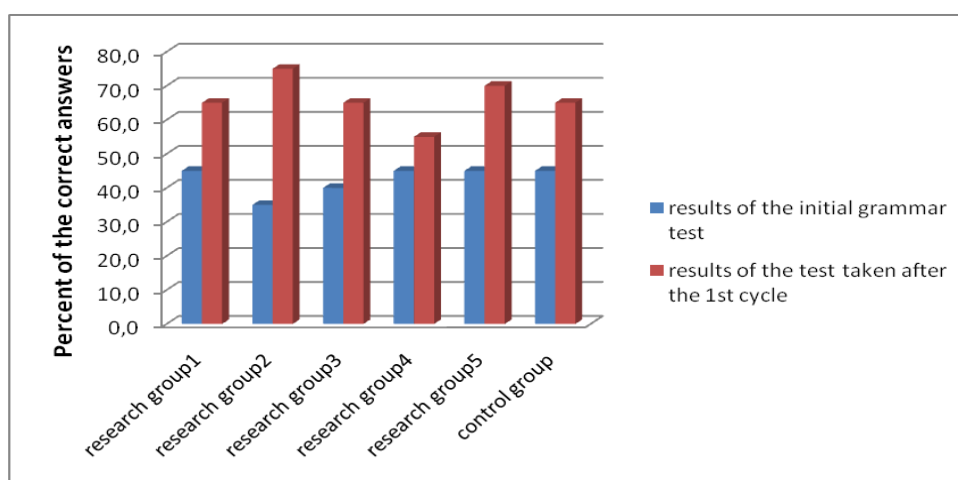


Figure 8: Students' progress in grammar after completing the first cycle of the action research

Figure 8 compares the results of the initial grammar test to the results of the test taken after the 1st cycle. The criterion for measuring the difference was the average mean of the correct answers for the whole group, given in percent. The data was given in the correspondent column in Table 1 (the initial grammar test) and Table 5 (the test taken after the first cycle).

From Figure 8 it can be seen that both the research groups and the control group made progress in understanding the use of verb forms in the Present Simple within three weeks. The biggest progress was achieved by research group №2. The control group also made progress, giving 20% of the correct answers more than during the initial grammar test.

Interpretation of the grammar test results

All the groups, including the control group, showed the progress in use of the verb forms in the Present Simple during the grammar test, taken after the 1st cycle.

Although no special focus had been put on grammar instruction among the research groups (as the first cycle introduced the change only in number of communicative activities), they achieved better results in the grammar test, compared to the results of the initial grammar test. The possible explanation can be that learners encountered the verbs in the Present Simple in communicative tasks in every lesson. Since the number of communicative tasks increased, students got more opportunities to encounter these forms and use them. Frequent occurrence of the verb form in the Present Simple and their repetition might have helped students to consolidate the material.

The progress of the controlled group might be explained by extensive grammar instruction. Students had been introduced to rules of use of verb forms in the Present Simple and practiced them intensively in drill exercises, repetitions and written exercises. The progress of the controlled group in use of verb forms in the Present Simple can be an example how learners can benefit from grammar instruction and focus on form especially on early staged of learning the TL – the view, described in the literature review of the given thesis.

The results of the fluency test

The following table (Table 6) is an example of the filled interview observation scheme for a particular group:

Table 6. Interview observation scheme for research group №1

	Speech rate/ ASPM – the average mean of syllables per minute. Figures are rounded	Pauses between generated messages		Understandable speech (Yes/No)
		Number of pauses per minute – the average mean. Figures are rounded	Time of the pause (sec) – the average mean	
Student 1	80	16	1,2	yes
Student 2	70	17	1	yes
Student 3	68	22	1,5	yes
Student 4	75	17	1,4	yes
Student 5	70	15	2	yes
The average mean results of the group	72,6	17	1,2	

Similar tables were prepared for research groups № 2, 3, 4, 5 and the control group. The data gathered in Table 6 represents the results for each learner in particular as well as the average mean results of the group. The results given for each learner were used in Personal Profiles (“Example of the personal profile”, Appendix 6), whereas the average mean results were used in Table 7, showing summarized results of the fluency test.

Table 7. Summarized results of the fluency test taken after the first cycle

	Average speech rate in SPM, figures are rounded	Average number of pauses between generated utterances per minute, figures are rounded	Average time of pauses between generated utterances (in sec)	Understandable speech (yes/no)
Research group 1	74	17	1,2	yes
Research group 2	73	19	2	yes
Research group 3	79	15	1,8	yes
Research group 4	75	16	1,7	yes
Research group 5	83	17	1,8	yes
Control group	80	18	1,7	yes

From Table 7 it can be seen that students in all groups produced understandable speech during the interview, like in the previous test. The average speech rate of groups as a whole varied within the range between 73 SPM (research group №2) and 83SPM (research group №5). The number of pauses varied from 15 (research group №3) till 19 (research group №2) pauses per minute, the time of pauses being 1,2 (research group №1) – 2 sec (research group №2). The figures became a part of the group profile (“Example of the group profile”, Appendix 7).

The following figures (Figure 9, 10 and 11) were developed to compare the results of the initial fluency test and the fluency test taken after the first cycle:

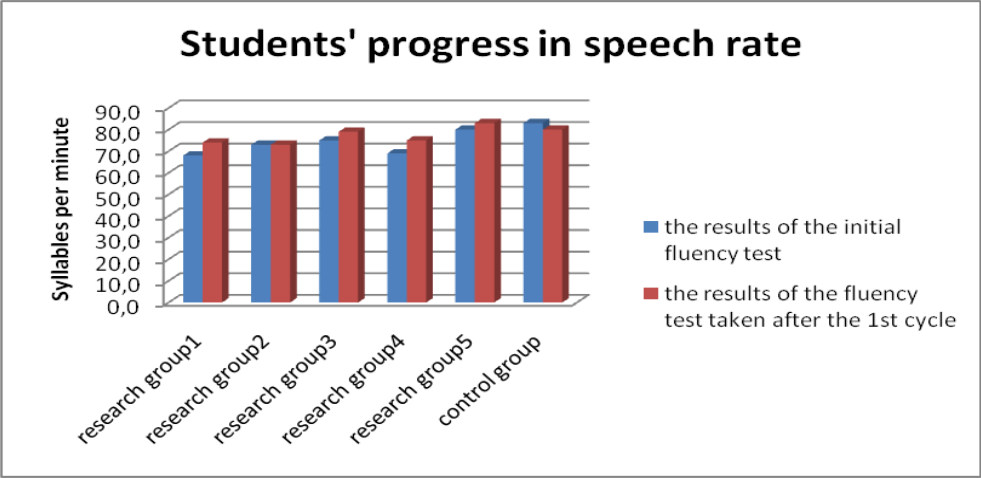


Figure 9: Students' progress in speech rate

From Figure 9 it can be seen that research groups №1, №3, №4 №5 slightly improved their speech rate. The speech rate of research group №2 did not change, while the speech rate of the control group slightly decreased.

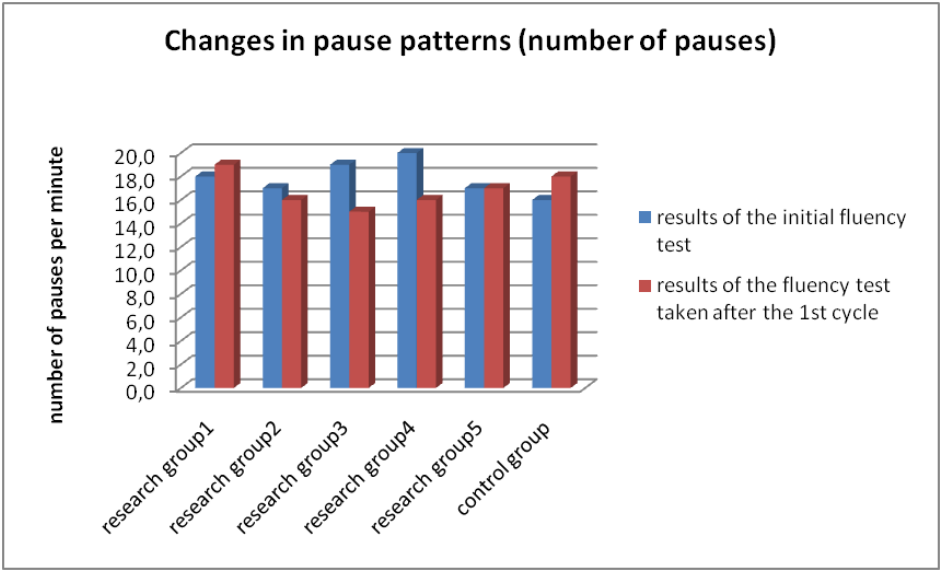


Figure 10: Changes in pause patterns (number of pauses)

Some changes were observed in the number of pauses per minute as well: the number of pauses per minute significantly reduced among research groups №2, №3 and №4. The number of pauses per minute made by research group №5 did not change, while research group № 1 and the control group made more pauses during this interview than during the interview before the 1st cycle was performed.

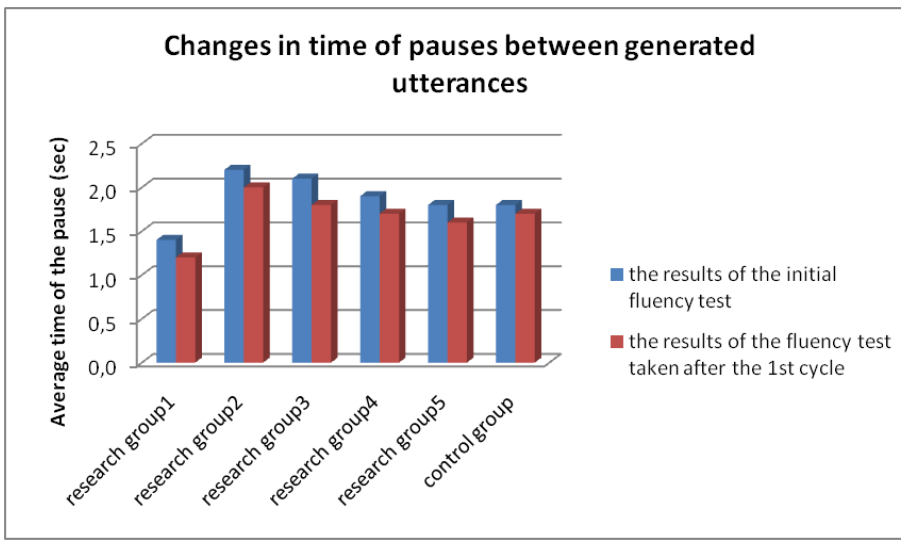


Figure 11: Changes in duration of pauses between generated utterances

Changes were observed not only in number of pauses per minute, but also in duration of pauses between generated utterances. From Figure 11 it can be seen that there was a common tendency for both the research groups and the control group: the scores of the average time of pause between the generated utterances reduced in all groups. However, the biggest change (reduction) in pause duration was observed in the research groups. The reduction in number of pauses was smaller in the control group, compared to the research groups

Interpretation of the fluency test results

The fluency test revealed a slight improvement in fluency aspects (SPM, number of pauses per minute and duration of pause between the generated utterances) among most research groups. The scores of most research groups improved, which suggests that this improvement can be a consequence of increased number of communicative activities performed in the classroom during the first cycle.

However, in some cases the scores either did not change (for example, the index of number of pauses per minute for research group №5 and the index of speech rate for research group №2) or showed “worse” results (for example, increased number of pauses per minute in research group №1. Absence of progress in these groups, despite increased number of communicative activities, can be explained by that these groups had more FB than EFB. FB had less experience than EFB, which suggests that they might find it more difficult to perform some activities.

The control group showed less progress in test performance. The possible reason to that can be fewer opportunities to perform communicative tasks within the PPP lesson, which suggests that they had less experience in performing the tasks, included into the fluency test.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the fluency test results showed improvement among most research groups, which suggests that increased number of communicative tasks influenced students' fluency in a positive way.

The results of the motivation survey

The results of the motivation survey, taken after the first cycle and comparison of its results to the results of the motivation survey, taken before the first cycle are presented in the following figures (Figure 12 and 13). Figure 12 represents changes in motivation of students from research groups 1-5, while Figure 13 represents changes in motivation of students from the control group.

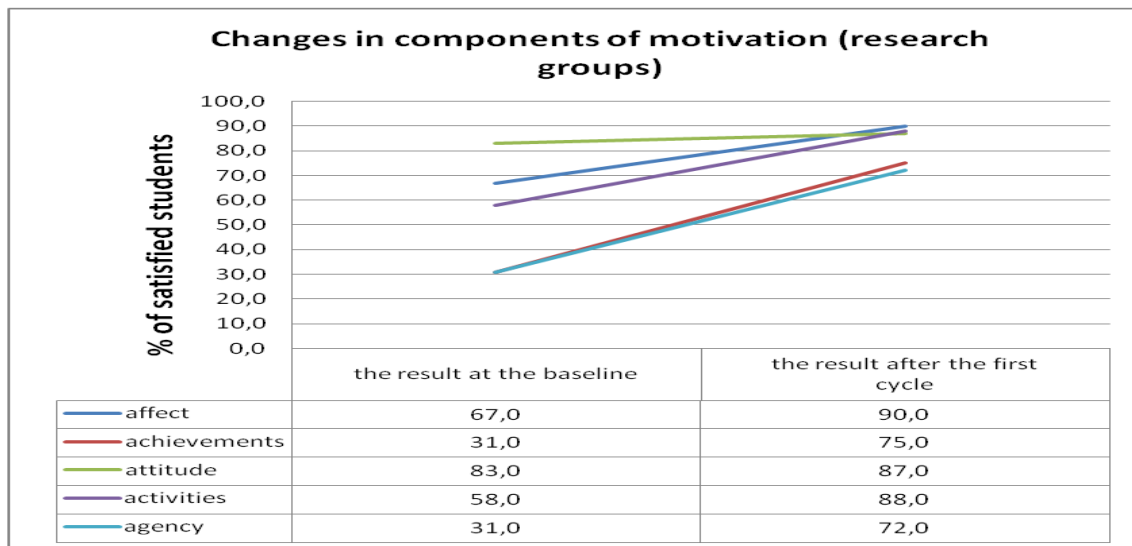


Figure 12: Changes in students' motivation after the first cycle (research groups 1-5, the percentage of satisfied students was scored on the basis of the number of students in all research groups).

As it can be seen in Figure 12, number of students from the research groups satisfied with all the five components of motivation increased significantly after the first cycle of the given action research.

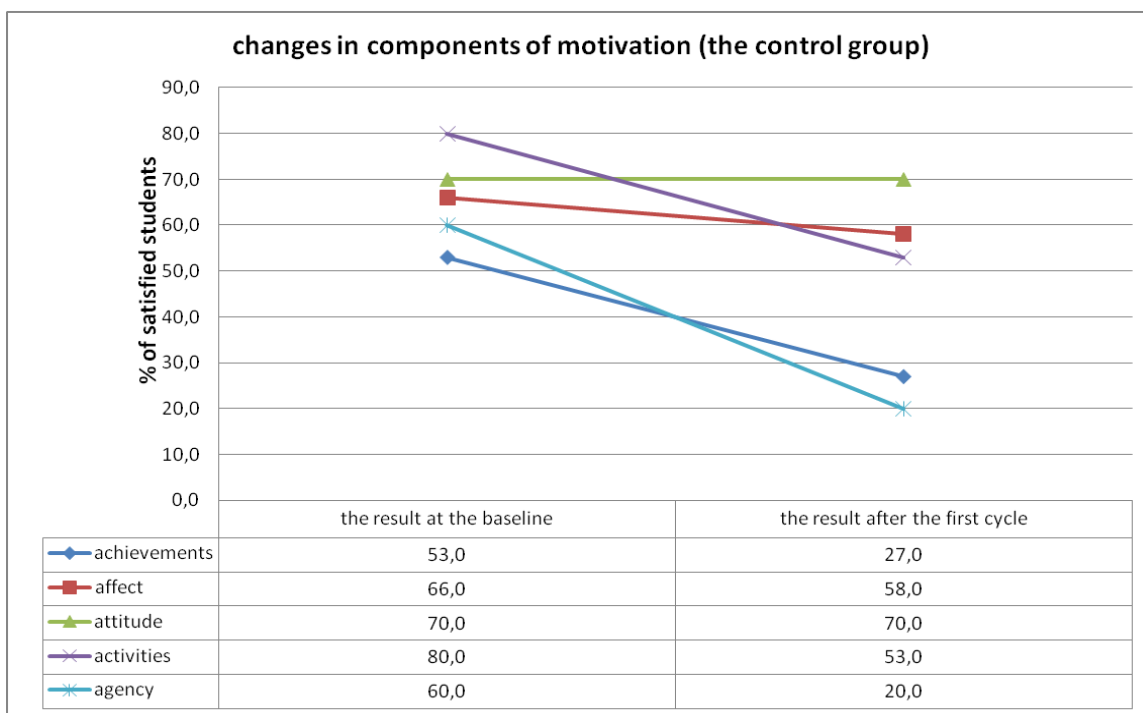


Figure 13: Changes in students' motivation after the first cycle (the control group)

Figure 13 shows that the percentage of students satisfied with various aspects of learning became decreased after 3 weeks of the experiment. The only parameter, which did not change, was confidence in teacher's abilities (i.e. attitude).

Interpretation of the results of the motivation survey

The results of the motivation survey taken after the first cycle suggest that increased number of communicative abilities in research groups had a positive effect on all aspects of motivation:

- students became more satisfied with learning process (affect),
- their achievements, as they started to communicate in pairs or groups and could see the result of it (talk)
- they became more confident in teacher's abilities, which might have been stimulated by their achievements
- students were satisfied with the increased number of communicative activities
- and felt more confident in their own abilities, as they experienced success during task-performance

While students were encouraged by the change in the type of learning activities, fewer students of the control group seemed to be satisfied with the PPP classes. Some of them were

discouraged by the learning process. From talking with the students the researcher could conclude that one potential reason for this was that the students wanted to have more communicative activities, but were involved into grammar-focused activities instead. However, students were satisfied with the proper grammar instruction itself and did not doubt their teacher's abilities.

All in all, the whole test procedure suggests that increased number of communicative tasks introduced among the research groups, had a positive impact on students' knowledge of grammatical forms of verbs in the Present Simple, their fluency and motivation. The control group benefited from the PPP instruction in the way that their grammar abilities improved. Nevertheless, their fluency and motivation regressed after the first three weeks.

Taking into consideration, that increased number of communicative abilities had a desirable effect, no corrections were made in the general plan of the action research. Therefore, it was possible to proceed to the second cycle.

4.3. Second cycle

4.3.1. Methods

During the second cycle of the given action research the following methods were used:

- A change in the lesson structure so that the focus on form was introduced towards the end of the task. In other words – introduction of Language focus stage into the task framework.
- Test procedure

Change in the lesson structure

The researcher also continued to use communicative tasks. In order to implement this change, the structure of the lesson was changed. The general plan for the lesson was as follows:

Table 8: general plan of the lesson of the second cycle

Description of activities	Duration
Warm up activities	5 min
<p>Pre-task stage included the same activities, as described in the first cycle, with the only exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing necessary grammar for task completion and language focus 	25-30 min
<p>The task cycle: is the same as described for the first cycle</p>	15-25 min
<p>Language focus stage included the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language-focused tasks, based on texts used in the tasks or transcripts of recordings, which students already heard either on pre-task stage or the task cycle (For example: find all the questions in the text. How are they formed? What occupies the first place? The second?/Find all the verbs in the Present Simple. Explain the verb-form/Find phrases you can use to introduce yourself or your friend). Students worked either in pairs or as a group • the teacher summarized what students discovered, added relevant information, students may take notes • practice activities, based on the previous analysis work. For example: memory games, progressive deletion based on notes on the blackboard, Kim's game, sentence completion etc. <p>Optional post-task activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the same as described for the first cycle <p>Summary of what was achieved during the lesson. Explanation of the homework</p>	<p>10 min</p> <p>10 min</p> <p>5-10 min</p> <p>If there is any time left.</p> <p>10 – 15 min</p> <p>5 min</p>

In the first cycle students received grammar instruction and focused on form before the task-cycle. Focus on form served in this way as a tool for completing the task. The second cycle introduced language focus in the end of the task. The purpose of it was to alter the structure of the lesson so it will be closer to TBL framework and to establish opportunities for noticing.

4.3.2. Results

After the three weeks of the course, the five test groups and the control group took the test procedure. The test procedure for establishing whether there had been any changes in the learners' language ability after the second cycle and scoring of the particular tests was performed in the same way, as the piloted procedure for the initial evaluation test. The content of the grammar test and fluency test was based on the studied topics - "Holidays and Travelling", "In the airport" and "Shop till you drop!" ("The test procedure between the second and the third cycles", Appendix 12); the motivation questionnaire remained the same.

Grammar test results

The results of the grammar test are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Summarized results of the grammar test after the second cycle

Research group	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Average mean of the correct answers for the group
Research group1	100%	75%	75%	70%	65%		75%
Research group2	80%	75%	70%	55%	55%	65%	65%
Research group3	65%	85%	100%	65%	50%		75%
Research group4	65%	65%	55%	55%	60%		60%
Research group5	70%	80%	60%	85%	65%	60%	70%
Control group	75%	70%	70%	65%	65%		70%

From Table 9 it can be seen that results of each particular student varied from 50% of the correct answers (Student 5, research group №3) till 100% of the correct answers (Student 3, research group №3). The figures became a part of the personal profile for each learner ("Example of the personal profile", Appendix 6).

The average mean of correct answers varied as well: from 60% (research group №4) to 75% (research group №1 and 3). The figures of the average mean became a part of the group profile (“Example of the group profile”, Appendix 7).

In order to compare the results of the test taken after the second cycle to those after the first cycle and results at the baseline, the following figure was developed (Figure 14):

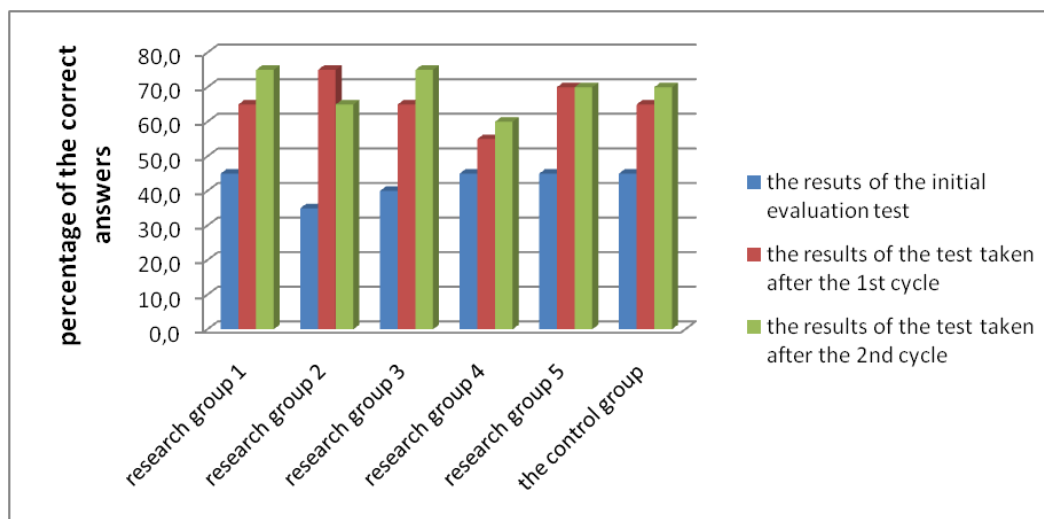


Figure 14: Students’ progress in grammar after completing the second cycle of the action research

Figure 14 compares the results of the initial grammar test to the results of the test taken after the first cycle and the second cycle. The criterion for measuring the difference was the average mean of the correct answers for the whole group, given in percent. The data on percentage of the correct answers for the correspondent tests were given in the correspondent columns in Table 1 (the initial grammar test), Table 5 (the test taken after the first cycle) and Table 9 (the test, taken after the second cycle).

From Figure 14 it can be seen that research groups №1, 3 and 4 and the control group made a progress in understanding the use of verb forms in the Present Simple since the first cycle. Research group №2 did not make any progress during the second cycle and gave 10% correct answers less than after the first cycle. The scores for research group №2, however, were still higher compared to the scores calculated during the initial grammar test. The results of research group №5 after the second cycle compared to the previous one remained the same.

Interpretation of the grammar test results

Most research groups (1, 3, and 4) and the control group, showed the progress in use of the verb forms in the Present Simple during the grammar test, taken after the second cycle.

Progress of the research groups suggests that students benefited from the change in the lesson structure. Lesson structure used in classes of the second cycle was TBL lesson structure, developed by Willis (1996). Placing the language focus stage in the end of the task performance might have improved students' knowledge of verb-forms in the Present Simple and triggered the process of noticing, as activities used in the Language focus suggested students' active participation, where they were asked to find/notice some particular features and explain them. Besides, TBL lessons of the second cycle still included communicative tasks, giving students opportunities to notice features previously discussed on Language focus stage and use them if they became part of students' language system.

Absence of progress in use of the Present Simple in research groups № 2 and 5, despite the change introduced during the second cycle, can be explained in the same way, as absence of their progress in fluency after the first cycle was completed. There were more FBs, than EFBs, unlike in other research groups. FBs in these groups found it more difficult to get used to focus on language in the end of the task and felt uncomfortable, when they were not suggested any grammatical rules as a tool to complete the tasks. Nevertheless, the scores showing the percentage of the correct answers given during the test after the second cycle was still higher than the scores of the initial evaluation test. This suggests that students progressed and benefited from TBL framework introduced into the studying process.

The progress of the controlled group might be explained in the same way, as previously. However, their scores do not exceed those of the research groups, which suggests that by the end of the second cycle the PPP-method was as effective in promoting students' accuracy in use of verb-forms in the Present Simple as TBL framework used in the research groups.

Fluency test

The following figures (Figure 15, 16 and 17) were developed to compare the results of the initial fluency test, the fluency test taken after the first cycle and the fluency test taken after the second cycle:

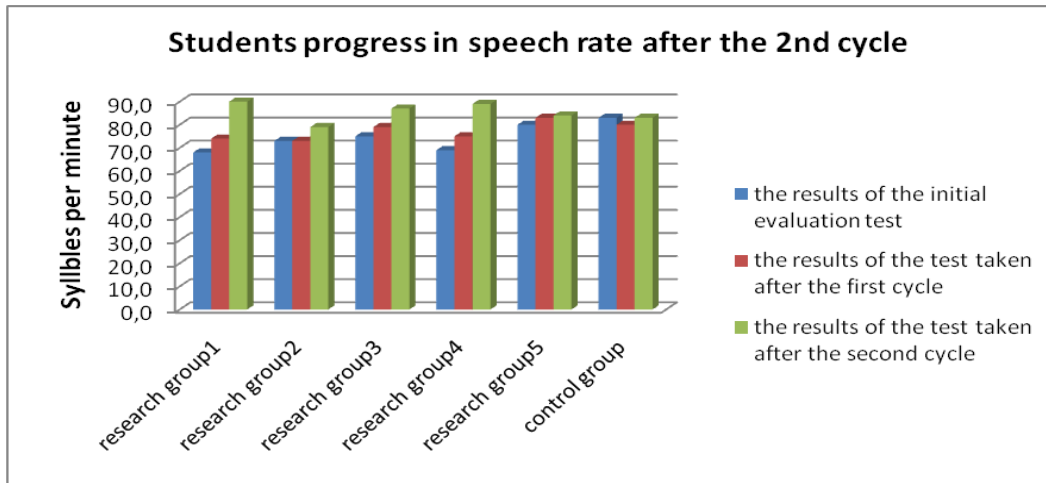


Figure 15: Students progress in speech rate after the second cycle

From Figure 15 it can be seen that all the research groups considerably improved their speech rate. The largest progress was observed in research group №1 (they improved their results by 16 SPM since the first cycle). The speech rate of the control group also increased in comparison to the first cycle. However, their index of SPM after the second cycle did not exceed the index of SPM at the baseline.

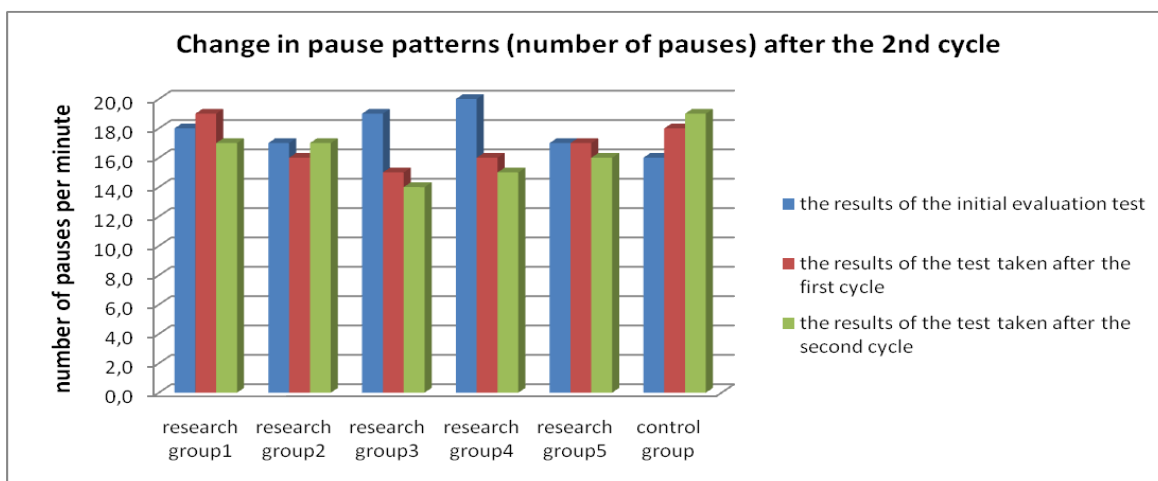


Figure 16: Change in pause patterns (number of pauses per minute) after the second cycle

From Figure 16 it can be seen that all research groups with the exception of research group 2 made less pauses per minute in speech, if compared to the previous cycle. The number of pauses per minute in research groups varied from 17 (research groups №1 and 2) to 14 (research group №3). The largest difference in number of pauses per minute was observed in research group №1; they made two pauses per minute less, than in previous cycle. The rest of the research groups, excluding research group №2, reduced their index of the number of pauses per minute by 1.

The index of the number of pauses per minute in the control group increased in comparison to both the initial evaluation test (by 3 pauses) and the test taken after the first cycle (by 1 pause).

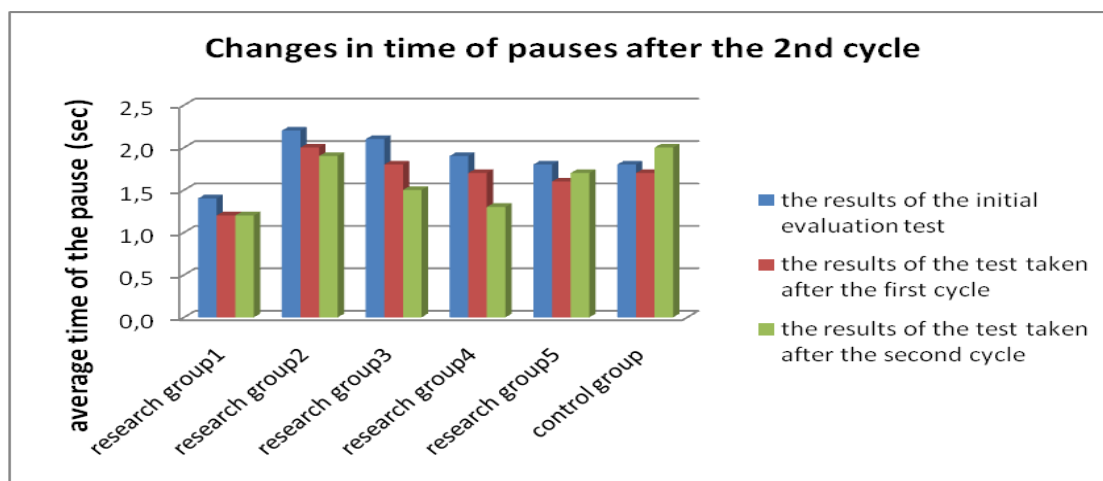


Figure 17: Change in time of pauses after the second cycle

Figure 17 shows decreased time of pauses in research groups №2, 3 and 4. The average time of a pause in these groups varied from 1,3 sec (research group №4) to 1,9 (research group №2). The index of the average time of a pause in research group №1 did not change since the first cycle, but nevertheless the average time of a pause in this group is least (1,2 sec), compared to other research groups.

The time of a pause slightly increased in research group 5 after the second cycle, compared to the results of the test taken after the first cycle (the difference is 0,1 sec), but decreased compared to the initial evaluation test (0,1 sec difference)

The average time of a pause in the control group increased by 0,3 sec since the first cycle.

All the research groups produced understandable speech.

Interpretation of the results of the fluency test

The fluency test conducted after the second cycle revealed improvement in all aspects of fluency - speech rate and pause patterns (number of pauses per minute and average time of a pause) - in most of the research groups. Some scores decreased in research groups №2 and 5, as shown previously in result section. However, it was not unexpected; hence the described difference of these groups from the rest of the research groups.

Increased scores of fluency in the research groups could be the consequence of the continuous use of communicative activities during the classes or the new change introduced during the second cycle – shift of Language focus stage to the end of the task or both of them. Since language focus stage involved also practicing of the revealed forms and items in oral exercises, it could promote students' speech rate as well.

The control group showed the same speech rate, as was observed during the initial evaluation test. However, they improved their results since the first cycle, where the results were lower compared to the established baseline. This suggests that the progress of the control group is unstable: at one time they show better results, at another, worse results. Besides, the comparison of the initial evaluation test and the test taken after the second cycle suggest that the control group had not progressed in their fluency since the beginning of the course. Therefore, the PPP instruction did not seem to promote fluency of the control group.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the fluency test results showed improvement among most research groups, which suggests that increased number of communicative tasks and shifting of Language focus stage to the end of tasks, i.e. TBL lesson model, influenced students' fluency in a positive way, while the use of the PPP lesson model did not show improvement in students' fluency.

The results of the motivation survey

The results of the motivation survey, taken after the second cycle and comparison of the results to the baseline results and the results of the motivation survey, taken after the first cycle, are presented in the following figures (Figure 18 and 19). Figure 18 represents changes in motivation of students from research groups 1-5 during the two cycles of the action research, while Figure 19 represents changes in motivation of students from the control group.

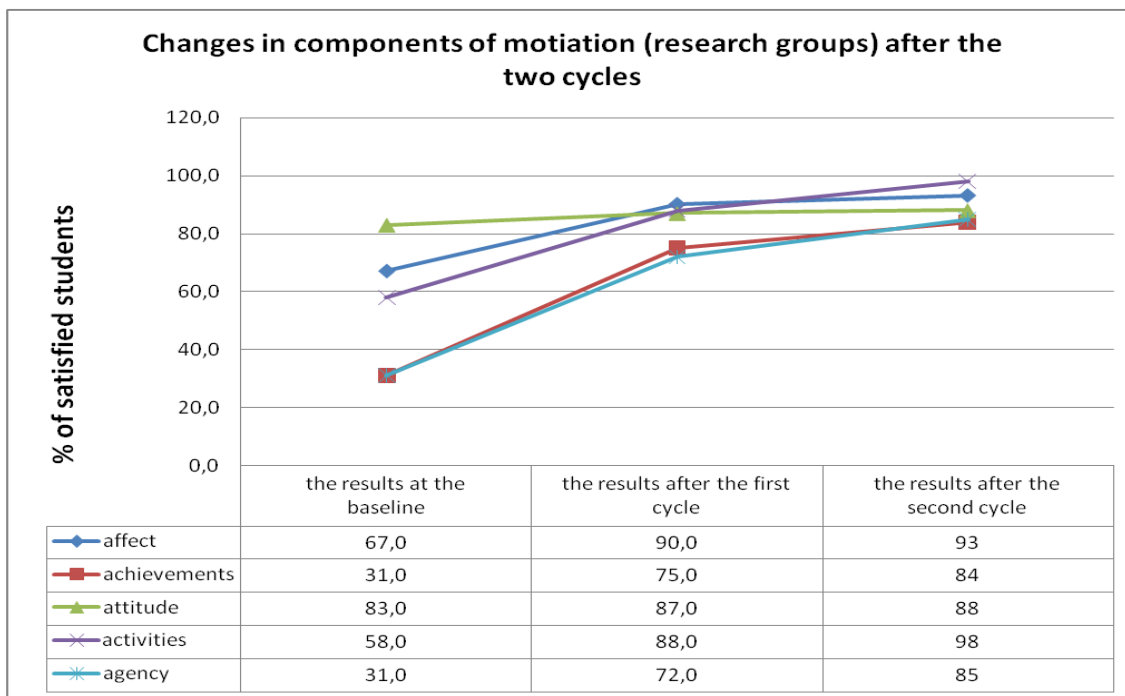


Figure 18: Changes in students' motivation during the first and the second cycles (research groups 1-5).

As can be seen in Figure 18, the number of students from the research groups satisfied with all the five components of motivation increased gradually during the first and the second cycles of the given action research. It can also be seen that students from the research groups were satisfied with activities used in the classroom and the learning process (affect) most of all. "Achievements" is the aspect students were satisfied less than with other aspects of motivation after the second cycle. However, the number of students satisfied with their achievements increased by 53% since they started the TBL course and by 9% since the previous cycle.

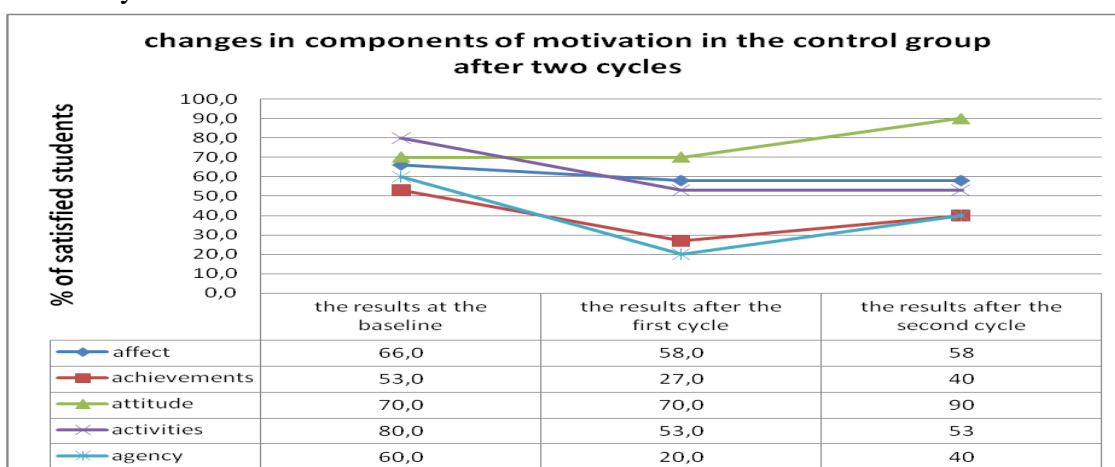


Figure 19: Changes in students' motivation after the first and the second cycles (the control group)

Figure 19 shows that the percentage of students in the control group satisfied with various aspects of learning decreased after the first cycle of the experiment. However, after the second cycle the scores of aspects of motivation, where the percentage of satisfied students decreased after the first cycle, either increased again or remained the same. These aspects were: affect, achievements, activities and agency. Although the percentage of students satisfied with the described aspects of motivation increased after the second cycle, these scores did not exceed the corresponding scores of the baseline.

The only aspect of motivation, where the percentage of satisfied students gradually increased was attitude. The number of students satisfied with the teacher's abilities increased from 70% up to 90%.

Interpretation of the results of the motivation survey

The results of the motivation survey taken after the second cycle suggest that increased number of communicative abilities, accompanied by introducing TBL lesson model in research groups had a positive effect on all aspects of motivation:

- students were satisfied with the learning process (affect), which included a new lesson model – TBL lesson model
- more students were satisfied with their achievements, as they continued to communicate in pairs or groups during tasks and started to communicate and participate actively on Language focus stage, presenting their own “discoveries” about the language
- motivated by their own achievements, students were likely to become more confident in the teacher's abilities as well (hence increase in such aspect of motivation as “attitude”). Therefore, increased percentage of students satisfied with the teacher's abilities could be the consequence of increased percentage of students satisfied with their achievements
- the figure suggests that students were satisfied with the activities, performed during the lesson, including the shift of Language focus stage to the end of the task
- More students felt that they became aware of their own learning (agency), as they participated actively during the classes.

While students of research groups were encouraged by the change, which happened in the learning process, students in the control group continued with the PPP-classes. After the second cycle, the scores of all the aspects of motivation either did not change or increased. However, these scores did not reach those at the baseline. Decrease of the scores of all the aspects of motivation, excluding attitude, in comparison with the initial evaluation test could suggest that students might be discouraged by absence of results for a long time, although they could be satisfied with the learning process, teacher's abilities and activities performed during the classes.

The results of the whole test procedure suggest that the TBL lesson model, which placed the Language focus stage at the end of the task, and continued to use communicative tasks introduced among the research groups, had a positive impact on students' accuracy in the use of verb forms in the Present Simple, their fluency and motivation.

The control group also made progress in achieving accuracy in their use of verb forms in the Present Simple, but their fluency and motivation did not benefit from the PPP-instruction. Since figures of the control group in the grammar test did not exceed those of the research groups, but scores of fluency and motivation were lower than those of the research groups', it could be suggested therefore that the PPP-method is less preferable than the TBL approach.

Taking into consideration, that the introduced change during the second cycle had a positive effect in the research groups, no corrections were made in the general plan of the action research. Therefore, it was possible to proceed to the third cycle.

4.3. The third cycle

4.3.1. Methods

The intention of the third cycle was to develop 'noticing' of grammar, since noticing is an essential process in fostering L2 acquisition, as it was pointed before. For this purpose the following methods were used:

- Setting consciousness-raising activities - activities aimed at promoting awareness of specific aspects of language. These activities should make students conscious of particular language features and encourage them to think about them (Willis, 1996:16)
- Test procedure

Setting consciousness-raising activities

Consciousness-raising activities are tasks that focus explicitly on language form and use (Willis, 1996:102). These tasks followed the task cycle and formed part of the Language focus stage. These activities involved focus on language forms that were already used during the task cycle. The example of such task could be:

In the studied text circle the verbs in the Present Simple. What endings do these verbs have? What words do they follow? Try to formulate the rule of verb-forms in the Present Simple. Or

In the transcript circle all the questions. How can you classify them? What is the difference between them? What wh-question words can you find here? What follows wh-question words? Can you make a formula for Yes/No questions? For wh-questions?

The plan for performing consciousness-raising activities within the language focus stage and its explanation is given in the following table (Table 10):

Table 10. The plan for performing consciousness-raising activities at focus stage

Activity	Comments
<p>Setting up the consciousness-raising activity: the teacher gave instructions on what should be done or students read them aloud</p> <p>Work in pairs or individual work.</p> <p>Monitoring</p>	<p>The example of such instructions was described above</p> <p>Students tried to make hypotheses on the required language forms or use of language features. Sometimes they asked the teacher individual questions and shared with other students what they had noticed. The role of the teacher was to monitor and help to form hypotheses on language features if asked. The role of students was to be active, form and test their own hypotheses. Since all the students in research groups were false beginners, sometimes the teacher allowed them to perform analysis activities in Russian, but students were to give examples in the TL anyway.</p>

Review of consciousness-raising activities	When students finished the activity, the teacher went through students' hypotheses together with the class. The teacher could ask students to give examples if necessary, write them on the board or provide further examples, which could fit the same rule/classification, etc
Extending students' personal vocabulary	After the review, students could focus on phrases or words, which occurred previously. Students could take notes, check them up in a dictionary and give examples of how they can be used
Practice of items occurred during consciousness-raising activities	Example of such practice activity could be progressive deletion

4.3.2. Results

After the third cycle of the action research, the five test groups and the control group again followed the test procedure. The test procedure for establishing whether there had been any changes in the learners' language ability after the third cycle and scoring of the particular tests was performed in the same way, as the piloted procedure for the initial evaluation test. The content of the grammar test and fluency test was based on the studied topics - "Glorious food", "In the restaurant" and "Hobbies" ("The test procedure after the third cycle", Appendix 13); the motivation questionnaire remained the same.

Grammar test results

The results of the grammar test are given in Table 11.

Table 11: Summarized results of the grammar test after the third cycle

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Average mean of the correct answers for the group
Research group1	90%	75%	75%	70%	70%		75%
Research group2	80%	75%	70%	65%	65%	70%	70%
Research group3	75%	85%	80%	70%	65%		75%
Research group4	70%	75%	70%	65%	70%		70%
Research group5	75%	80%	65%	85%	70%	80%	75%
Control group	75%	70%	75%	70%	75%		75%

From Table 11 it can be seen that results of each particular student varied from 65% of the correct answers (Student 4 and 5, research group №2; Student 5, research group №3 and Student 3, research group №5) till 90% of the correct answers (Student 1, research group №1). The figures became a part of the personal profile for each learner (“Example of the personal profile”, Appendix 6).

The average mean of correct answers did not vary much this time: the difference between groups was from 70% (research group №2 and 4) to 75% (research group №1, 3 and the control group). The figures of the average mean became a part of the group profile (“Example of the group profile”, Appendix 7).

In order to mark students’ progress after the third cycle was completed the following figure was developed (Figure 20):

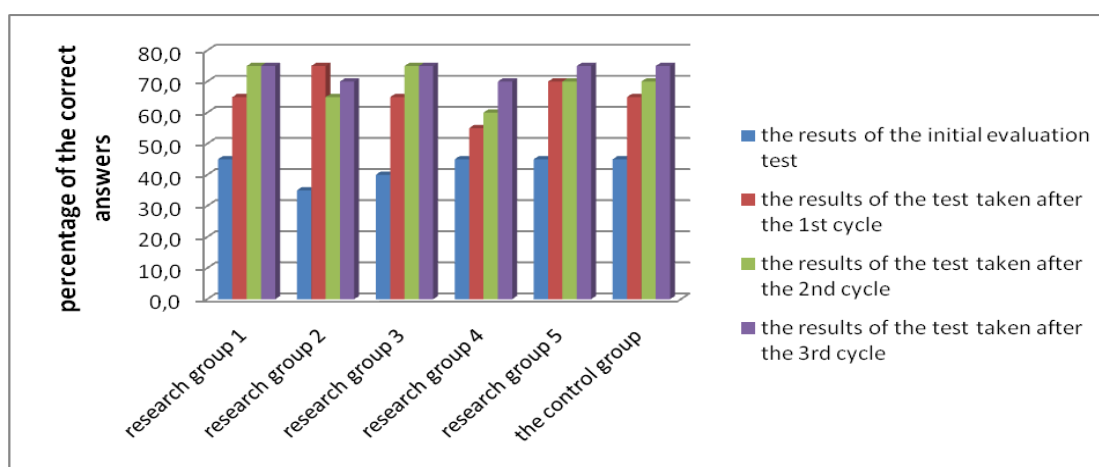


Figure 20: Students’ progress in grammar after completing the third cycle of the action research

Figure 20 compares the results of the initial grammar test to the results of the tests taken after the first, second and third cycles. The criterion for measuring the difference was the average mean of the correct answers for the whole group, given in percent. The data on percentage of the correct answers for the correspondent tests were given in the correspondent columns in Table 1 (the initial grammar test), Table 5 (the test taken after the first cycle), Table 9 (the test, taken after the second cycle) and Table 11 (the test, taken after the third cycle).

From Figure 20 it can be seen that research groups №1, 3 and 5 and the control group achieved the same results (75% of the correct answers) in use of verb forms in the Present Simple by the end of the action research. Results of research groups №2 and №4 did not differ considerably from rest of the groups (70% of the correct answers), the difference being only 5% of the correct answers.

Interpretation of the grammar test results

As has been described all the research groups and the control group achieved the same results in the grammar test after the third cycle.

Progress of the research groups might be the result of consciousness-raising activities introduced in Language focus stage. However, it seems to be difficult to relate students' progress only to this new change introduced on the third cycle, it could also be the result of the changes introduced during the previous cycles: it could be the result of TBL lesson model used in the course or communicative exercises, which exposed students to rich language input.

Research groups № 2 and 5, where most FBs were concentrated, improved their results considerably and showed results at the same level as the rest of the research groups. Improvement of their results could be explained by developing process of noticing, supported by extensive use of communicative activities, as only after these changes in studying process there was observed some progress in use of verb-forms in the Present Simple.

The progress of the controlled group might be explained in the same way, as previously – focus on form on most stages of the PPP lesson. As it can be seen from Figure 20, the control group achieved the same results as the research group. This proved the assumption that extensive grammar instruction and focus on form can be beneficial for beginners. However, the same results of both the research groups and the control group

suggest that extensive focus of form, suggested by the PPP-method is not the only way of acquiring this form. The same goal can be achieved through implementing TBL

Fluency test

The following figures (Figure 21, 22 and 23) were developed to compare the results of the initial fluency test, the fluency test taken after the first, second and the third cycles:

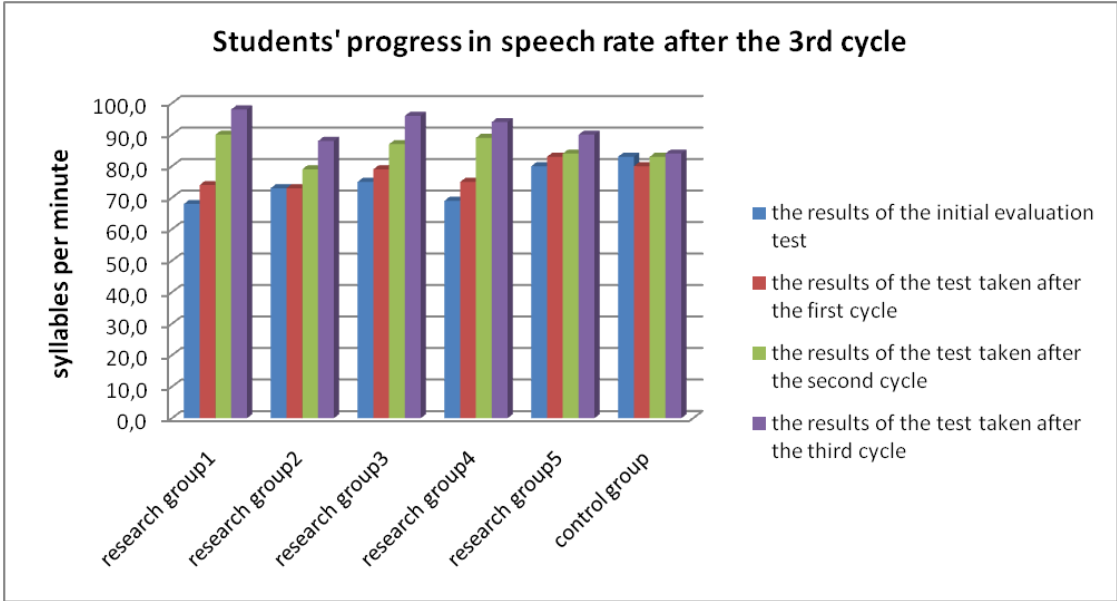


Figure 21: Students progress in speech rate after the third cycle

From Figure 21 it can be seen that all the research groups had improved their speech rate since the previous cycle. The largest progress was observed in research groups №2 and №3 (they improved their results by 9 SPM since the previous cycle). The speech rate of the control group also increased, though not considerably in comparison to the research groups (by 1 SPM).

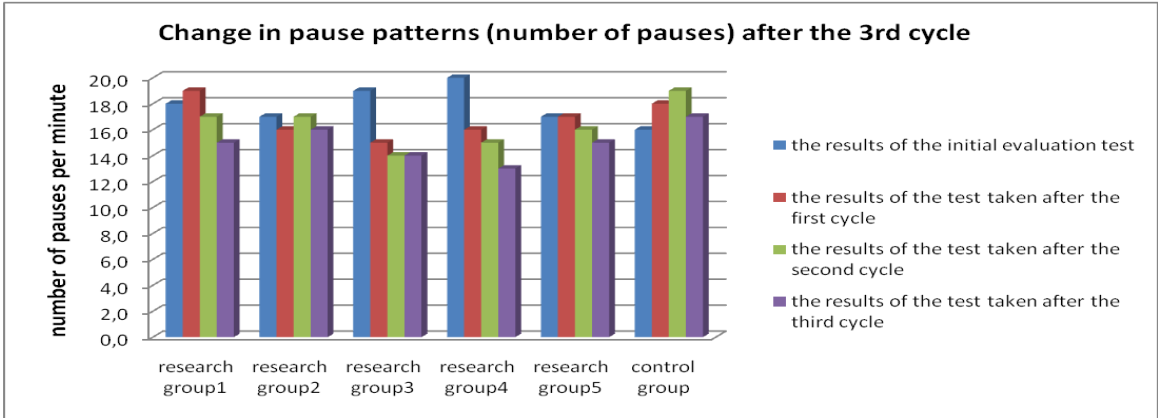


Figure 22: Change in pause patterns (number of pauses per minute) after the third cycle

From Figure 22 it can be seen that all research groups with the exception of research group №3 and the control made less pauses per minute in speech, if compared to the second cycle. Research group №3 produced the same number of pauses per minute as after the second cycle. The number of pauses per minute in the groups varied from 17 (the control group) to 13 (research group №4).

When comparing the results from the baseline to the results of the test taken after the third cycle, the largest progress was observed in research group №4: after completing the course, students made seven pauses per minute less than at the baseline (20 vs 13 pauses per minute correspondently). The rest of the research groups improved their results during the course making 1-5 pauses per minute less than at the baseline. The control group increased the number of pauses per minute by 1 pause, compared to the results at the baseline.

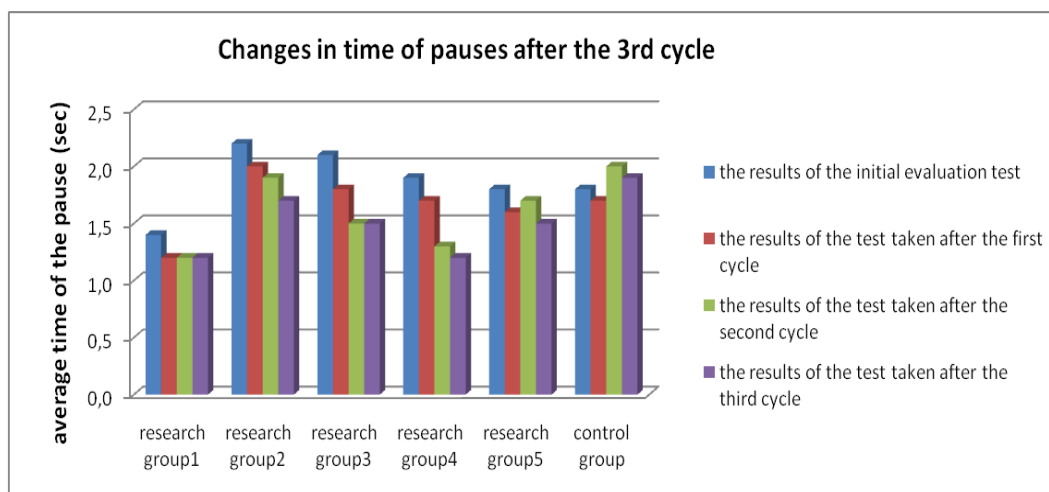


Figure 23: Change in time of pauses after the third cycle

Figure 23 shows decreased time of pauses in research groups №2, 4 and 5 and the control group. The average time of a pause in these groups varied from 1,2 sec (research group №4) to 1,9 (the control group). The index of the average time of a pause in research group №1 and 3 did not change since the second cycle.

Comparing the results of the third cycle to those at the baseline, it can be seen that all the research groups used less time for a pause in the end of the course. The research groups reduced their time for a pause by 0,2 sec (research group №1) – 0,7 sec (research group №4). The control group increased the time for a pause by 0,1 sec in the average.

Besides, all students in both the research groups and the control group produced understandable speech.

Interpretation of the results of the fluency test

The fluency test conducted after the third cycle revealed improvement in all aspects of fluency - speech rate and pause patterns (number of pauses per minute and average time of a pause) - in most of the research groups, while the results of the control group had not changed considerably since the first cycle.

The tendency for gradual improvement of fluency in the research groups can be explained by all the three changes introduced during the three task cycles, i.e. transition to the TBL approach.

The control group showed almost the same results in speech rate and pause patterns as during the initial evaluation test. This suggests that the control group did not progress in their fluency since the beginning of the course, which means that the PPP-method did not promote fluency in students' speech in this case.

The results of the motivation survey

The results of the motivation survey, taken after the third cycle and comparison of its results to the baseline results and the results of the motivation survey, taken after the first and the second cycles, are presented in the following figures (Figure 24 and 25). Figure 24 represents changes in motivation of students from research groups 1-5 during the three cycles of the action research, while Figure 25 represents changes in motivation of students from the control group.

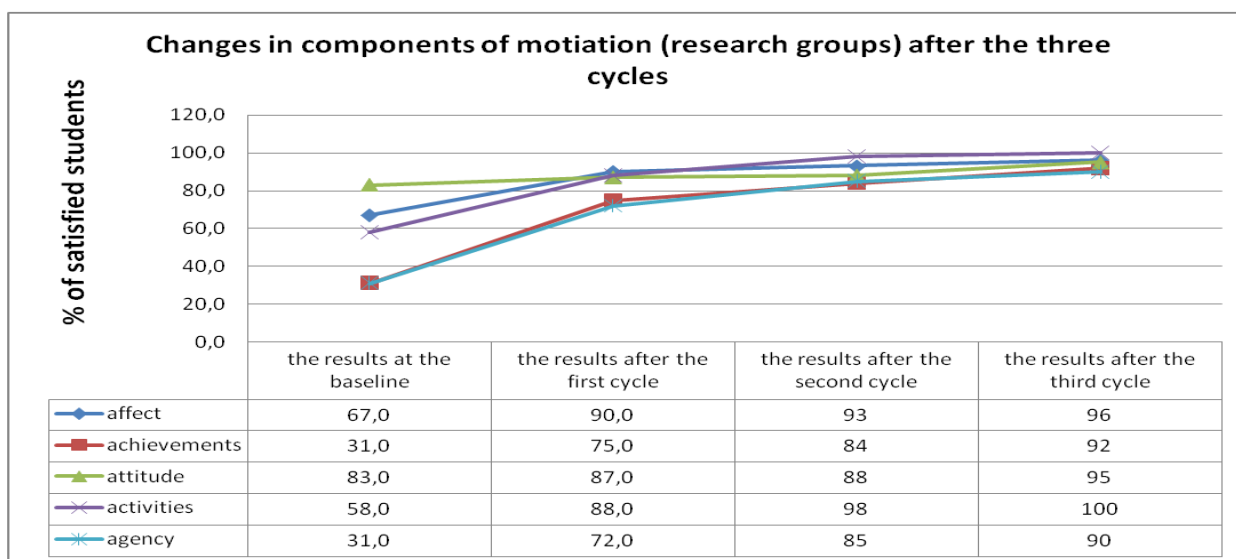


Figure 24: Changes in students' motivation during the three cycles (research groups 1-5)

As it can be seen from Figure 24, the number of students from the research groups satisfied with all the five components of motivation continued to increase during the third cycle of the action research. The biggest changes, compared to the results at the baseline, happened in the following aspects of motivation: achievements and agency. The number of students satisfied with their achievements and agency tripled after the TBL course. Considerable changes happened in students' attitude towards the learning process and activities. As it can be seen 100% of students from the research groups were satisfied with activities used in the classroom and 96% of students were satisfied with the learning process in general. Before the course started there were 58% and 67% respectively.

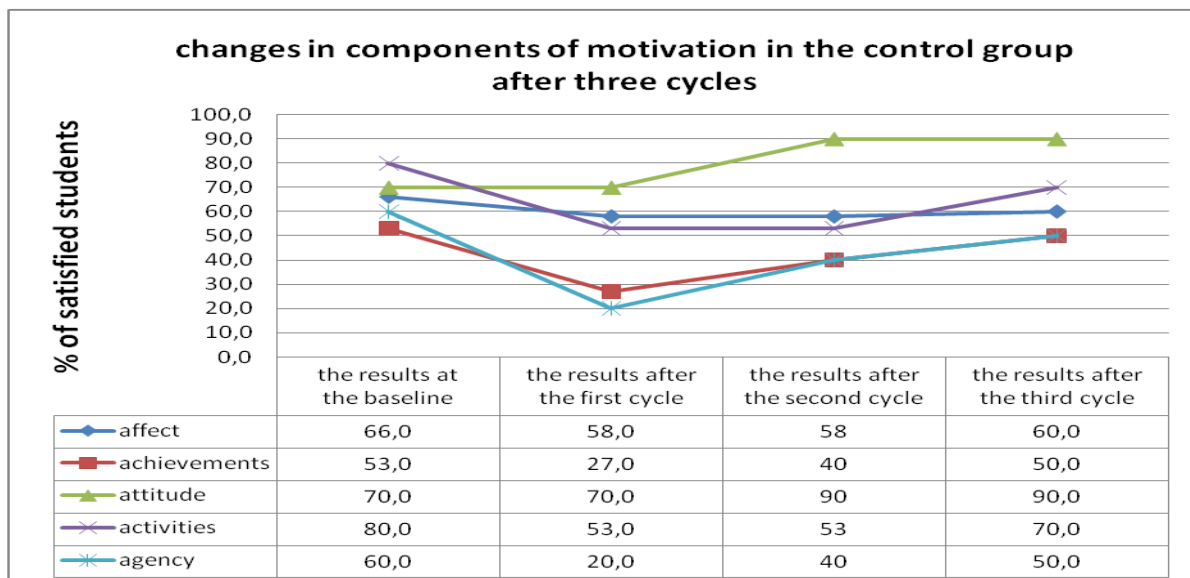


Figure 25: Changes in students' motivation after the three cycles (the control group)

Figure 25 shows that the percentage of students in the control group satisfied with various aspects of learning either increased after the second cycle of the research (affect, achievements, activities and agency) or remained the same (attitude).

Looking at the whole picture of progress during the three cycles of the experiment, it can be pointed out that the most even progression was observed only in students' attitude to the teacher and their confidence in his abilities: attitude figures increased gradually from 70% up to 90%. Attitude was the only aspect of motivation where the number of satisfied students increased by the end of the course. The rest of the aspects showed a decrease in the number of satisfied students at the end of the course.

Interpretation of the results of the motivation survey

The results of the motivation survey taken after the third cycle suggest that, introducing a new plan of Language focus stage and noticing within TBL lesson in the research groups had a positive effect on all aspects of motivation:

- 100% students were satisfied with activities used in the classroom, which suggests that they liked the TBL lesson plan, which incorporated use of communicative tasks and language focus stage activities for development of noticing.
- Most students (92%) were satisfied with their achievements, as they could see results of their work – completed task in form of oral report or written report. Visible effect of their work stimulated students even more, so they were eager to participate in other tasks and contribute to other students' reports in all possible ways.
- The score for “achievements” and “attitude” did not differ much (92% vs 95% correspondently). It can be explained by the assumption, suggested after the second cycle, that there was a direct dependence between students' satisfaction with their achievements and their attitude towards the teacher: the higher the satisfaction with the achievements, the more students are confident in teacher's abilities.
- Increased number of students felt that they became more autonomous (the scores for agency increased up to 90%). The reason to that might be both the TBL lesson model which presupposed students' active participation and the process of noticing, which started to develop, as the result of consciousness-raising activities at language focus stage

All in all, number of students satisfied with different components of motivation varied from 90% to 100%.

While students of research groups became even more motivated by the change, which happened in the learning process during the third cycle, students in the control group continued with the PPP-classes. After the third cycle, the scores of all the aspects of motivation either did not change or increased, never exceeding the baseline scores with the exception of one aspect – attitude to the teacher. Students were still confident in the teacher and his professionalism, as they made progress as much as the research groups. At the same time the rest of motivation scores in the control group are considerably lower than in the research groups, which can be explained by absence of results in speaking and fluency. This

might have discouraged students, but at the same time they did not doubt the teacher's abilities and supposed that they would progress after some time

The results of the whole test procedure suggested that TBL lesson model, involving specially structured language focus stages and continued use of communicative tasks introduced among the research groups, had a positive impact on students' accuracy in use of verb forms in the Present Simple, their fluency and motivation.

The control group progressed in achieving accuracy in use of verb forms in the Present Simple as much as the research groups. Nevertheless, their fluency and motivation did not progress from the PPP-instruction. Since scores of the control group in the grammar test were the same as those of the research groups, but scores of fluency and motivation were lower than those of the research groups', it could be suggested therefore that the PPP-method is less effective than the TBL approach.

Summary of the results

The established *baseline* was different for all the groups: some students were closer to the absolute beginner level, while others had some knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary. In the baseline study most students were satisfied with the learning process, but at the same time showed dissatisfaction with their own achievements and abilities to do things by themselves.

The test taken *after the first cycle* showed improvement in students' accuracy in use of verb forms in the Present Simple, fluency and motivation in the research groups. The control group benefited from the PPP instruction in the way that their grammar abilities improved. Nevertheless, their fluency and motivation regressed after the first cycle.

Most research groups showed progress in their use of the verb forms in the Present Simple (i.e. accuracy), as well as in all aspects of fluency (speech rate and pause patterns) and motivation *after the second cycle*. The control group showed the progress in accuracy, motivation and improved their fluency performance since the first cycle. However, the fluency and motivation scores did not exceed those registered at the baseline.

All the research groups and the control group made progress in accurate use of verb forms in the Present Simple during *the third cycle* and achieved the same results in the grammar test after the third cycle. Most of the research groups improved their results in fluency, while the results of the control group did not change considerably since the first cycle. Motivation scores progressed even more after the third cycle in the research groups,

while the scores in the control group did not differ much comparing to the scores registered at the baseline.

It can be concluded that by the end of the action research experiment the control group progressed in achieving accuracy in use of verb forms in the Present Simple as much as the research groups. However, the scores of fluency and motivation were lower than those of the research groups.

5. Discussion

The results and interpretation of the results allow consideration of the research question whether the TBL approach can be more effective than the PPP-method when applied among FBs in terms of accuracy, fluency and motivation. The key findings of the given action research are as follows:

TBL can be considered more efficient than the PPP-method from the perspective of fluency development among FBs and EFBs.

An explanation why the TBL approach was more effective than the PPP-method from the perspective of fluency within this research could be that TBL course involved extensive and continuous *use of meaningful communicative tasks* and *unlimited exposure* to real language in use, transformation of the lesson model into *TBL lesson model* and developing of *noticing*. The PPP lesson model lacked all these conditions. This could result in that fluency indexes in the control group were not as high as in the research groups.

The finding that continuous use of meaningful communicative tasks had a positive effect on students' fluency supports both the existing TBL theory of learning, claiming that language use is an essential condition for language acquisition, and the TBL assumption about the theory of learning, namely that communication is the central focus in language and language acquisition (see Literature review). A TBL course provides students with opportunities to use the TL for meaningful communication, since learners seem to be more concerned with transferring meaning rather than with language form display which is typical for the PPP method.

The given finding can support other research findings (Willis; 1996) in that practice activities which are not meaning-focused are inadequate in promoting learning. If activities are focused on practicing specific forms, as in the PPP, students tend to do them on "automatic pilot" without thinking what they mean. Use of meaning-focused communicative activities within the TBL approach resulted in better fluency indexes in the end of the course, compared to the control group taught using the PPP-method.

The finding that unlimited exposure to real language in use is more beneficial than limited exposure and can promote learning (Krashen's input hypothesis) mirrors other research findings (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996) which criticize the PPP method, which limits exposure (Skehan, 1996; Willis and Willis, 1996; Wharton, 1996).

Skehan (1996:18) argues that providing high quality input within the PPP lesson is not enough for learning, as learners do not simply acquire the language to which they are

exposed, “however carefully that exposure may be orchestrated by the teacher”. Besides, exposure to “a restricted diet” of texts and dialogues is not enough to provide successful language learning, while rich, real and comprehensible input is an obligatory condition for that (Willis, 1996). Therefore, the research finding can suggest that limiting the language to which learners are exposed and practicing it intensively does not necessarily result in acquiring accuracy and fluency.

The finding that a TBL lesson model better supports students’ fluency development than the PPP lesson model can be supported by other research findings which pronounce the PPP lesson model unsatisfactory. The PPP method has been widely criticized for offering only one type of lesson model (Ellis, 1994, Skehan 1996, Willis, 1996). As described in the literature review, the reason the PPP method suggests using one clear lesson model lies in the belief that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught (Skehan, 1996:17). However, according to Skehan (1996:18), this does not lead to actual learning. SLA research has revealed that teaching cannot determine the order in which the learners’ language will develop (Ellis, 1994). There is no sense in “choosing what is to be learned”, because the processes by which learners operate are “natural” ones (Skehan, 1996:19). Studies in psychology and linguistics (Brumfit and Johnson 1979; Ellis 1985) also reveal that the traditional PPP lesson model, i.e. a certain routine in work with the form, does not provide conversion of input into output. Thus, the belief used by the PPP has been discredited, and it can be concluded that following a certain routine in learning a form, manifested in a clearly structured lesson model, does not necessarily result in acquiring fluency in use of this form and therefore, it might be beneficial for learners to use a more flexible lesson model.

As opposed to the PPP, the structure of the lesson components in TBL is chosen on the basis of sound theoretical principles. TBL’s organic view of acquisition is more preferable than a linear fashion of acquiring an item within the PPP method. In this way, the TBL approach is more likely to promote fluency, although possibly at the expense of accuracy.

The finding, that developing of noticing promotes students’ fluency also supports the current assumption about TBL theory of learning that noticing can foster language development, in this case – fluency in speaking.

The next key finding of the given study is that TBL can be considered more efficient than the PPP-method from the perspective of sustaining motivation among FBs and EFBs

The results of the test taken after the last cycle showed that motivation in research groups gradually increased during every cycle, while motivation aspects in the control group

developed in an uneven manner never reaching the corresponding percentage of the research groups. The possible explanation to this can be the *change in teacher-learner relations* and *TBL lesson framework* itself.

The finding that giving the students an active role in the process of learning fosters language acquisition and motivation can be supported by other research findings. The contemporary view on language development is that learning is not “amendable to teacher control” (Skehan, 1996:18), as is constrained by internal processes which mean that learners *use* the language, which they experience, but one cannot control *how* it is used because the process is internal. SLA research has established that teaching cannot determine the way the learner’s language will develop and a teacher-centered approach has proved to be ineffective, due to the fact that it shows the lack of explicit concern with the learner (Ellis, 1994; Skehan, 1996). Thus, teacher control at every stage of the PPP lesson cannot influence students’ development, but giving students opportunities to participate actively in communicative activities, like in TBL course, can foster their learning and motivation.

Using a TBL lesson as before was more motivating for learners than the PPP lesson framework, as students in the research groups used the TL for real communication and used resources, which they already had at their disposal. Students could see the result/product of it in the form of oral or written report. In this way, they experienced success in performing tasks and, as described in the literature review, success in performing tasks is the key factor in sustaining motivation.

Unlike the TBL approach, the PPP method involved fewer communicative tasks with a clear outcome, which students could see. Students experienced success mostly at the practice stage, but they tended to do the exercises on “automatic pilot”. ”Learning” in this case was illusory, which later had an impact on motivation. Students taught within the PPP-method did not experience success at the production stage, as opportunities to use language freely were taken as the evidence that learners have internalized the form. It suggests that activities used within the PPP method aimed at focus on conformity rather than fluency, as “there is no communicative language use” at this stage (Willis, 1996:44). In the production stage, learners tried to “shape” their language in such a way that it “conforms” to that demanded by the teacher. The production stage seems to represent rather a further exercise in producing language expected by the teacher, which is not the same as using language for communication. According to Willis (1996:48), “it is not the stage in which learners seek to achieve a communicative purpose as best they can – a process which may *incidentally* involve the use of the target form”.

It is not proven that conformity in use of forms can lead directly to mastery. Nevertheless, “conformity activities” can serve important functions in the classroom, such as aiding correct pronunciation, especially in the early stage of learning, helping to consolidate fixed phrases and sustaining motivation, as learning appears more achievable (Willis, 1996:48). The latter could be the case in the given action research: students taught in the PPP method stayed motivated, although they could not observe significant results, as they experienced “achievable success” on the practice stage.

It could be suggested therefore, that there is direct dependence between development of fluency and sustaining motivation: the better students’ fluency, the more they are confident in their abilities and motivated. In this way, these research findings support the assumption about the theory of learning within TBL framework that motivation is one of the essential conditions for successful language learning and that the TBL approach promotes students’ motivation more than the PPP method.

The third key finding of the given action research is that the TBL approach is as effective as the PPP-method from the perspective of developing accuracy.

The results of the grammatical test, taken after the third cycle, showed that the control group achieved the same level of accuracy in use of verb-forms in the Present Simple as the research groups. Progress in the research groups could be explained by the introduction into the new plan for the *Language focus stage* within a TBL lesson and the development of noticing. Progress in the control group could be explained by *form-focused instruction*.

The finding that the TBL way of working with accuracy development at the language focus stage is more effective than the way used by PPP can be supported by other research findings (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1994). As previously described, learners receiving TBL are not forced to concentrate on one single structure pre-selected by the teacher, as in the PPP, rather they get the chance to focus on fluency and getting meaning across, whereas they can strive for accuracy development at the language focus stage. Once students are used to TBL, they develop both as learners and language users, achieving greater fluency and confidence.

The finding that form focused instruction can promote accuracy supports the PPP theory of language, namely that grammar instruction and focus on form/discrete items has a positive effect on language development especially on the early stages of the learning process.

At the same time the research findings support the critique of the PPP-method, claiming that focus on producing a form in accordance with the rule, i.e. accuracy, does not necessarily lead to fluency. The results of the grammar and fluency tests in the control group

showed that although students were concerned with producing the right form or required item, their fluency did not improve. This can be viewed as the drawback of focusing on discrete forms/items.

Every language contains thousands of separate items. Accepting the fact that learners need to be taught thousands of discrete items has “embarrassing implications for methodology” (Lewis, 1996:11). Besides, it is known that not every item needs to be formally taught in order to be learned and there is no guarantee that formally “learned” items will be available for later spontaneous use (Lewis, 1996:12), therefore promoting fluency. PPP seems to be overvalued, as SLA research “offers no evidence to suggest that any of the synthetic units are meaningful acquisition units or that they can be acquired separately” (Long and Crookes, 1993:26-7, cited in Nunan, 2004:30). This finding undermines the main assumption of the PPP-method about the learning process that extensive focus on form/separate items will lead to accuracy and that out of accuracy comes fluency. In this way, the described finding supports the criticism of the PPP-method.

Finally, this action research finding adds to the existing knowledge that the TBL approach is not superior to the PPP method from the perspective of acquiring accuracy, as is seen in the results of the last grammar test which are the same in the research groups and the control group. However, it can be argued that the time period for the experiment was too short to make such generalizations, as for example the research groups might not have enough time to develop noticing to such degree that it could foster development of accuracy and produce visible effect. The process of formation of noticing started only during the last three weeks of the experiment (the third cycle), and it could be suggested therefore, that influence of noticing on students’ accuracy might have become obvious after the experiment finished.

TBL is applicable among FBs and EFBs

The results of the given action research also support another assumption described in the literature review, that TBL is applicable among beginners and can be adjusted to student needs. Therefore TBL framework was adopted for both FBs and EFBs. The results of all tests showed that students made progress in both accuracy and fluency and were motivated by the new approach. Therefore it can be suggested that a TBL approach is also applicable among FBs and EFBs.

The action research study has validated the view that a TBL approach is more beneficial for adult false beginners than the PPP-method in terms of achieving two out of the three aspects of language learning studied (accuracy, fluency and learner motivation). The

two aspects are fluency and learner motivation. In terms of achieving accuracy the TBL approach could be considered to have the same effect as the PPP-method, when applied among FBs and EFBs.

The results of such an action research study could have a positive impact in the sphere of English didactics in Russia. The reasons why the PPP method is popular have already been noted, however, the results of this action research support other research findings (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996) that suggest that the PPP-method can limit learning so that learners do not become fluent speakers of English. This action research showed that other approaches, like TBL, could be more preferable in order to improve learners' fluency and motivation. Some major changes can therefore be recommended to the field of English language didactics in Russia:

Change 1. Teachers need to be introduced and trained in the use of newer more communicative approaches such as TBL

Training for teachers is essential as failure in doing so could undermine the implementation of any new approach. This can be seen in an implementation program in Korea which aimed to introduce newer approaches such as TBL, but failed as the teachers avoided these newer approaches as they felt they had too little understanding of how they could be used in their own classes (Jeon and Hahn, 2006).

In order to avoid such an outcome in Russia, Russian English teachers should feel comfortable and confident in introducing TBL and other communicative approaches in their classroom. In service courses which develop their teaching abilities could be a possible solution.

Change 2. There needs to be a change in the learners role in the classroom where teacher-centered methods are replaced by more learner-centered approaches

The reasons why the PPP-method is popular in Russia can be explained by its 'convenience' factor. Teachers control the whole learning process in general and the language produced by students in particular. However, teachers need to give learners opportunities for language use so that they learn and are able to express what they want to say. By removing some of the control students may be more motivated to communicate in the TL. The teacher's control pattern "initiate the topic for conversation – response of students – feedback to student's response" which is typical for the PPP method should be used less. This could result in more student to student interaction which can lead to increased fluency and natural acquisition.

Implementing this change should not be too challenging, since research shows that teachers tend to plan their work around tasks rather than methods (Swaffar et al., 1982, cited in Nunan, 2004:168). Therefore, activities used in the classroom are the major focus of the teacher's planning efforts. Consequently, if the teacher introduces students to new communicative activities and new ways to work with them within a new framework of the lesson and accepts a new role of an observer/adviser, the focus of the lesson will shift from the teacher to the learner, which is should be more effective.

Change 3. Students need a new lesson model which includes an increased number of communicative tasks, a new way of working with the materials/ tasks (for example, TBL lesson framework) and adjusts materials to it.

Changing lesson activities and frameworks can be challenging for some students and teachers need to consider carefully the best way of implementing such a change. Implementing the TBL approach in China and Korea gave negative results (Hu 2002, cited in Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005:101), as students were used to more traditional methods of teaching and relied on the teacher to give them information directly, making it very difficult to get them to participate in class activities (Li, 1998:691). Jeon and Hahn (2006:137) also suggested that for learners, who are not trained in task-based learning, one of the reasons they avoid participating in task-based activities may be related to a lack of confidence in performing tasks as such. In order to avoid the possible negative reactions and ease the way for the introduction of a new approach/framework, the teacher might include presentation and explanation of a new methodology at the beginning of the course and introduce necessary changes in cycles, providing in this way a slow adoption of the program, as it was used by the researcher in the given action research.

When it comes to choice of material and adjusting it to any new lesson plan, the teacher should especially consider beginner learners, as they are at risk of using their mother tongue if they find the task too difficult to complete in English (Carless, 2004:642).

The use of the mother tongue eliminates the purpose of the tasks, which is to provide opportunities for students to speak in the TL. However, this action research established that the TBL framework can be used among FBs, if the material was carefully chosen and "tuned" to learners' needs.

Teachers could use the same textbooks as before, since the TBL approach, for example, represents newer ways of way of working with materials (Nunan; 2004). Therefore, adjusting the material to the TBL lesson is not likely to cause difficulties, as even in systems

with clearly articulated syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, there is scope for teachers to adapt and modify the material with which they work (Nunan; 2004:166).

Finally, it should be noted that this study has examined the effect of TBL on accuracy, fluency and motivation among false beginners only and only within nine weeks. Implementing TBL among for example, advanced groups could produce different data and results. The findings of this study are restricted only to nine week course in TBL. A different period of time given for implementing TBL could give different results. For example, it could be hypothesized that the research groups might have improved their accuracy indexes if they were given more time to develop the process of noticing and get accustomed to a new lesson framework.

Another limitation of this study refers to methods of study – namely, how accuracy, fluency and motivation were measured. The methods of gathering data were based on how one defines accuracy, fluency and motivation. A different definition could lead to another choice of criteria for measuring the described aspects and as the result the gathered data might differ from the data provided by the given study.

Therefore, the results of this study cannot be taken as evidence that the TBL approach is superior to the PPP-method in general, since it addressed only one particular group of learners within limited period of time.

6. Conclusion

The research study made an attempt to evaluate whether the TBL approach is more beneficial than the PPP-method in terms of acquiring accuracy, fluency and motivation when applied among false beginners.

The study compared the TBL approach to the PPP method first through an analytical literature review and then a series of observations. Afterwards, the TBL approach was empirically tested and validated on private courses.

The method used for the research study was action research.

The present study contributed to the research, by discussing whether implementing the TBL as a teaching approach in Russian classrooms would have a positive effect on the learning achievement (in accuracy & fluency) and motivation of adult false beginners, so improving the quality of English teaching in this context.

During the action research it was found that TBL framework appeared to be more effective than the PPP-method for achieving two aspects out of three of false beginner language learning: fluency and learner motivation. In terms of achieving accuracy TBL could be considered to have the same effect as the PPP-method, when applied among FBs and EFBs. In this way, the given action research proved the expectation from the research study: it was expected that the TBL approach might be more beneficial for FBs than the PPP-method in terms of achieving two aspects out of three: fluency and motivation, where fluency might be achieved at the expense of accuracy.

Possible suggestions for further action research studies might be to extend the time for the experiment in order to see how the approach works over months rather than weeks or to focus on other aspects of learning rather than accuracy, fluency and motivation – for example, comprehension.

APPENDIX 1
OBSERVATION SCHEMES FOR OBSERVATION OF ENGLISH CLASSES
DESIGNED FOR ADULT FALSE-BEGINNERS

OBSERVATION SCHEME 1

Purpose: to find out how much of the PPP-approach is used in the classrooms and what is the “baseline”

CHECKLIST “Features of the PPP-approach”

Structure of the lesson:

- Clear lesson model
- Focused presentation stage is followed by practice activities
- Need to display required forms at production stage

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Content of the lesson:

- Language input is the key factor
- Limited exposure to language (as lesson aims are defined and limited)
- Focus on discrete language items
- Focus on form and rules, which are supposed to be automatized as habits later
- Controlled activities (drill of chosen patterns; controlled repetition, etc) at practice stage
- Meta-language focus (learning about language)
- Few opportunities to use the language for *communication*
- Extensive correction of errors

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Teacher-learner relations:

- Teacher-centered approach

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- the feature is present at Russian courses of English as L2 for adult false-beginners
 - the feature is absent from Russian courses of English as L2 for adult false-beginners

APPENDIX 2

OBSERVATION SCHEMES FOR OBSERVATION OF ENGLISH CLASSES DESIGNED FOR ADULT FALSE-BEGINNERS

OBSERVATION SCHEME 2

Purpose: to find out whether the approach used in the classroom is effective

CHECKLIST “Essential conditions for successful language learning” (based on recent research in SLA)

Essential conditions for successful language learning:

Exposure:

- rich and comprehensible input
- real language in use
- lexical units
- noticing (example: lexical units)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Use/output:

- stimulation of real communication in TL
- opportunities for real language use
- real purpose for language use
- meaning-focused activities
- processes of negotiation
- processes of modification
- processes of rephrasing
- processes of experimentation

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Motivation:

- success
- satisfaction

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Desirable conditions:

Instruction:

- call for accuracy: chances to focus on form

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- the criterion is present at Russian courses of English as L2 for adult false-beginners
- the criterion is absent from Russian courses of English as L2 for adult false-beginners

APPENDIX 3
INITIAL EVALUATION TEST FOR DEFINING THE BASELINE BEFORE
EXPERIMENTAL STAGE

Multiple-choice test on the Present Simple

Choose one correct item

1. My parents ___ in a beautiful house.

A lives B live C are live

2. The sun ___ in the East.

A rise B rises C rising

3. He ___ belong to any parties.

A isn't B don't C doesn't

4. Do you ___ where the post office is?

A know B knowing C knows

5. My mother ___ lots of money on clothes.

A is spend B spends C spend

6. Martin never ___ me text messages.

A sends B doesn't send C send

7. ___ you usually have lunch at work?

A Are B Do C Does

8. I ___ too much coffee.

A. drinking B. drinks C. drink

9. The bank always ___ on time.

A opens B. is open C. open

10. I ___ I'll show you the city.

A am promise B promise C promises

11. He _____ at work.

A. is B. are C. _____ .

12. Where ___ your books?

A are B. do C. is

13. They ___ not play volleyball on weekends.

A do B are C. does

14. My grandparents ___ going to the theatre.

A loves B loving C love

15. ___ Mary walk her dog every morning?

A Is B Does C Do

16. Ted often ___ in a restaurant.

A is eats B. eat C. eats

17. Tina ___ very happy.

A isn't B doesn't C. are not

18. ___ he have many houses?

A Does B Do C. Is

19. This train ___ at 10.30 every day.

A leaves B. does leave C leave

20. I _____agree

A. am B. _____ . C. does

APPENDIX 4

INITIAL EVALUATION TEST FOR DEFINING THE BASELINE BEFORE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE CONTROLLED INTERVIEW

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your hobby?
4. Do you have a big family? Can you describe it?
5. Why do you study English?
6. Where will you be and what will you do in 3 years? in 5 years?

INTERVIEW OBSERVATION SCHEME

CRITERIA FOR MEASURING FLUENCY				
Research group № ...	SPEECH RATE ASPM – the average mean of syllables per minute	PAUSES BETWEEN GENERATED UTTERANCES (SEC)		UNDERSTANDABLE SPEECH (YES/NO)
		Number of pauses per minute – the average mean	Time of the pause (sec) – the average mean	
Student 1		1.		
Student 2		2.		
Student		
The average mean results for the group				

APPENDIX 5

INITIAL EVALUATION TEST FOR DEFINING THE BASELINE BEFORE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

How much are you satisfied with the following aspects of you English classes?

	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know
1. Communicative activities			
2. The teacher			
3. Grammar instruction			
4. Clear purpose of each class			
5. Variety of exercises			
6. Materials for the classes			
7. Satisfaction with the results			
8. Structure of the lesson			
9. Do you like the course? – 1. Yes 2. No			
10. Would you like to continue to study English at this course in the future? - 1. Yes 2. No			
11. I understand the purpose of my work in class – 1. Yes 2. No			
12. I can use English for communication - 1. Yes 2. No			

APPENDIX 6

Example of the personal profile for student 1 from research group № 1

The baseline:

Observations

It is suggested by the series of Observations 1 and 2 that the method used in teaching English as L2 was the PPP method, which did not prove to be effective

The initial evaluation test

The grammar test – 45% correct answers

The fluency test:

- speech rate – 73 SPM
- number of pauses per minute – 18
- average time of pause – 1,39 seconds
- the speech was understandable

The motivation survey – shows the degree of satisfaction with the following aspects

Affect	Achievements	Attitude	Activities	Agency
60%	33%	100%	67%	50%

The percentage in the table shows the percentage of positive answers, i.e. where the student gave the answer “Satisfied” or “yes”

The test after the 1st cycle

The grammar test – 75% of the correct answers (improvement: by 30%)

The fluency test:

- speech rate – 80 SPM (improvement: by 7 SPM)
- number of pauses per minute – 16 (improved)
- average time of pause – 1,2 seconds (less time of the pause)
- the speech was understandable

The motivation survey: indexes for all the five aspects of motivation increased

The test after the 2nd cycle

The grammar test – 100% of the correct answers (improvement: by 25% since the previous cycle)

The fluency test -

- speech rate – 85 SPM (improvement: by 5 SPM)
- number of pauses per minute – 13 (improved)
- average time of pause – 1,2 seconds (no change)
- the speech was understandable

The motivation survey: indexes for all the five aspects of motivation increased

The test after the 3rd cycle

The grammar test – 90% of the correct answers (decrease by 10% since the previous cycle)

APPENDIX 7

Example of the group profile

Research group № 1

The baseline:

Observations

It is suggested by the series of Observations 1 and 2 that the method used in teaching English as L2 was the PPP method, which did not prove to be effective

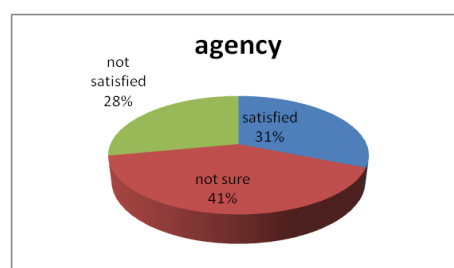
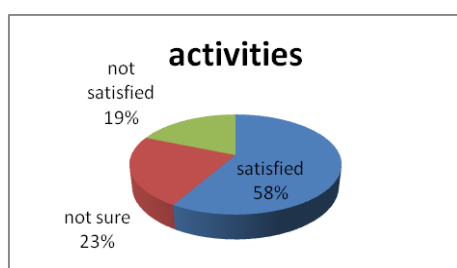
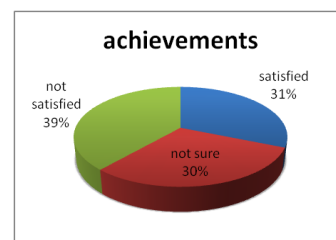
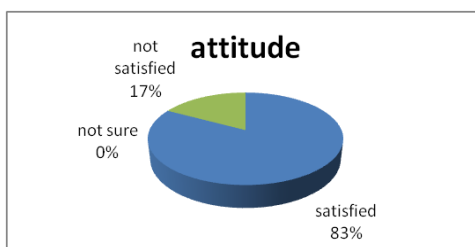
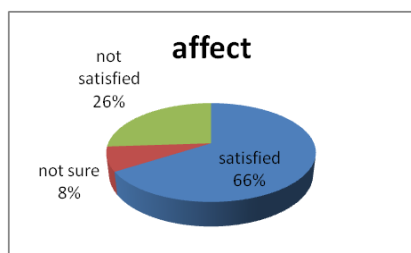
The initial evaluation test

The grammar test – 43% correct answers (the average mean of the group)

The fluency test:

- speech rate – 68 SPM
- number of pauses per minute – 18
- average time of pause – 1,4 seconds
- the speech of all five students was understandable

Motivation survey – the results for all groups:

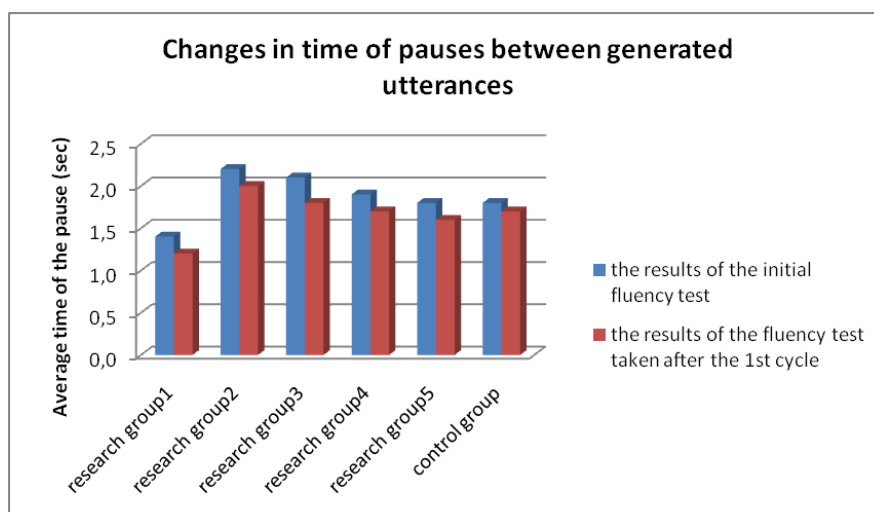
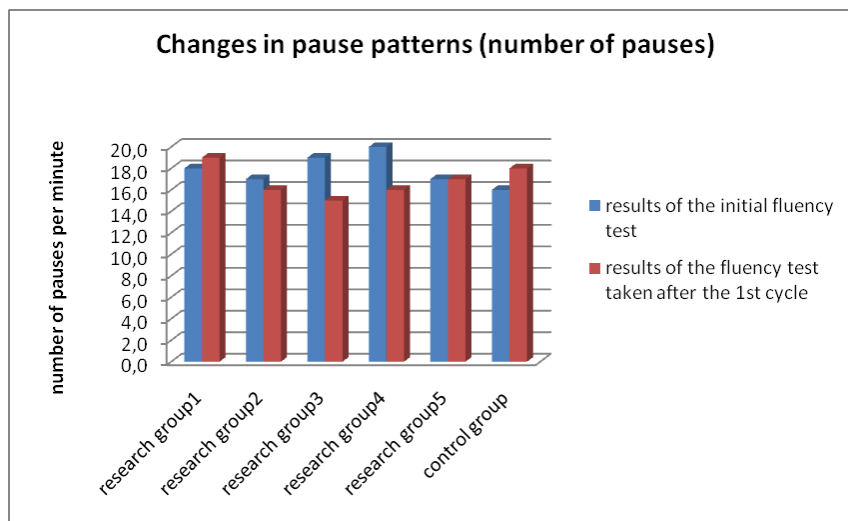
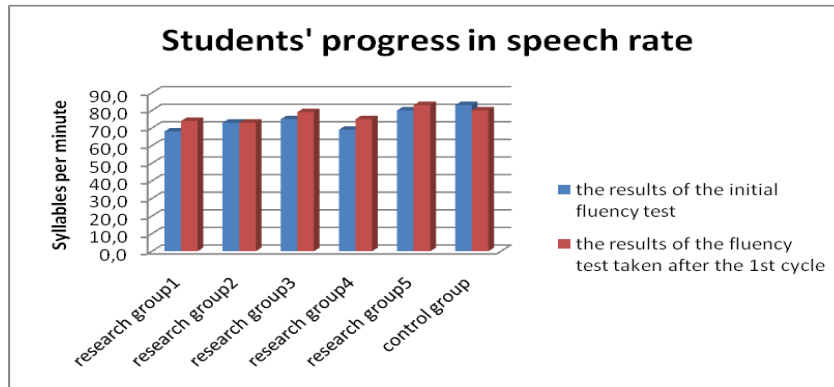


The test after the 1st cycle

The grammar test – 64% correct answers (the average mean of the group).

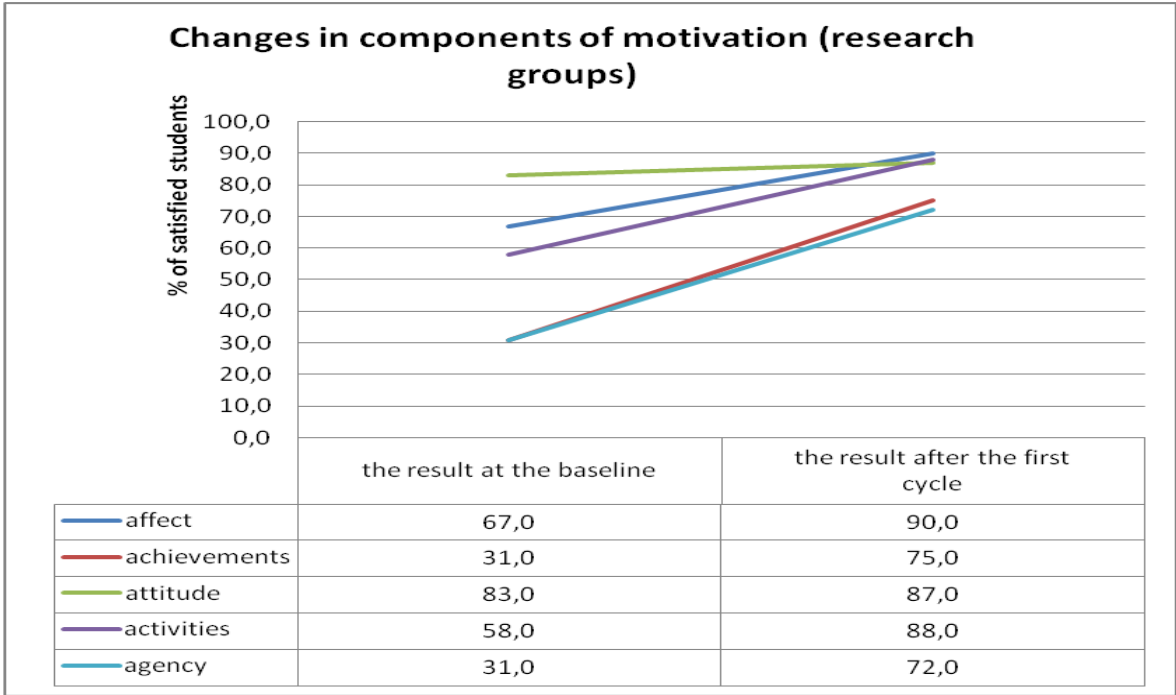
Improvement by 21%

The fluency test



The motivation survey:

The motivation survey:

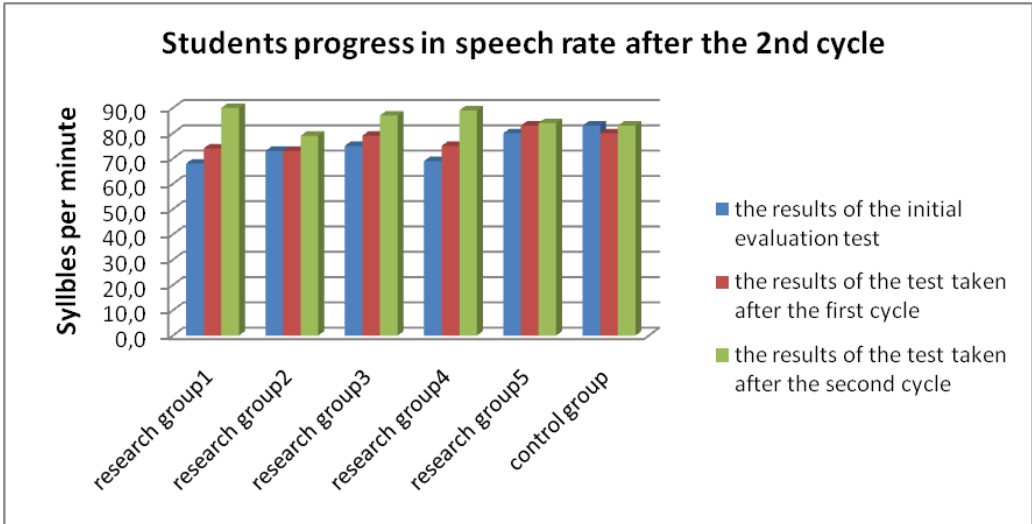


The test after the 2nd cycle

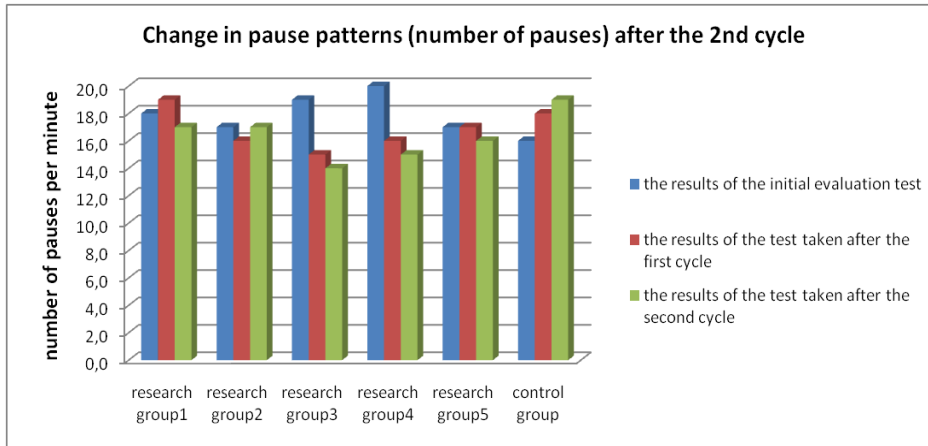
The grammar test – 75% of the correct answers. Improvement by 11% since the previous cycle

The fluency test:

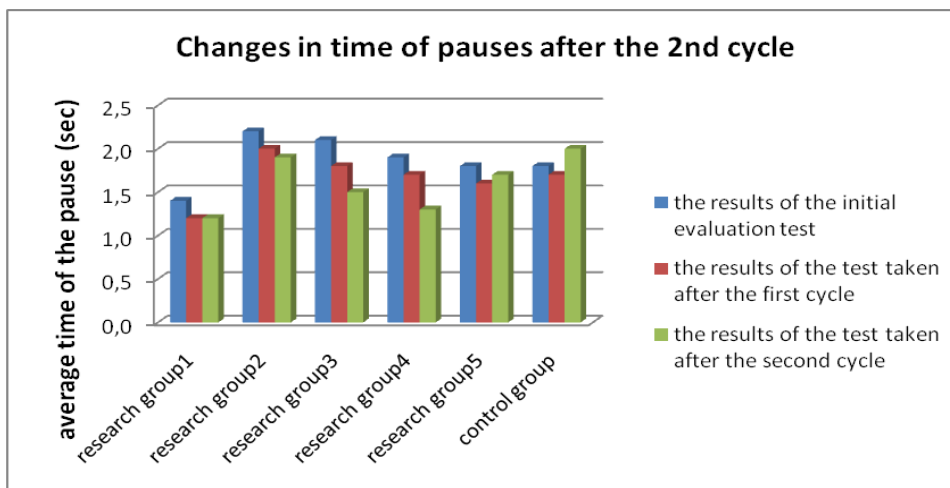
speech rate – improvement by 16 SPM



Number of pauses per minute – improvement since the first cycle: 2 pauses per minute less



Time of the pause: the same as after the 1st cycle, 1.2 sec



APPENDIX 8

Example of the transcription of the controlled interview performed within the initial fluency test

Student 1, research group 1

The researcher (R) and the Student (S).

R: Hello! Welcome. I will ask you some questions, ok? It is our first interview. So...What is your name? (13 sec)

S: *Uh..... My name isAlexander. Alex* (7 sec)

(1sec)

(2sec)

R: Ok. I am Ksenia. And how old are you, Alex? (8sec)

S: *Ehh..... I am....kak skazat'?* (= «how to say» in Russian)...*twenty five!* (8 sec)

(2 sec) (1 sec)

(1 sec)

R: And what s your hobby, Alex? (4 sec)

S: *Hobby?..... I have many hobbies...eh... I like swimming, to hunt...*

(1 sec)

(2 sec)

(1 sec)

cooking... Yes, I like cooking and...eh....going with the friends. (20 sec)

(1 sec)

(2 sec)

R: Ok, it is interesting. Do you have a big family? (5 sec)

S: *Sorry.....I..... what???* (5 sec)

(1 sec) (2 sec)

R: Do you have a big family? Is your family big? (4 sec)

S: *Oh yes....It's ...No. It is small...I have eh...my wife Vera and eh...my son – he*

(1 sec) (1 sec)

(1 sec) (2 sec)

(2 sec)

is five years old. So...three persons (20 sec)

(1 sec)

R: So nice! And I want to ask you. Why do you study English? (6 sec)

S: *I study English because...eh... tourism!* (9 sec)

(2 sec)

R: And where will you be and what will you do in three years? (5 sec)

S: *Uff... I not know...difficult question. I think I.... be here...in Arkghanesk*(13 sec)

(2 sec)

(1 sec)

(2 sec)

(1 sec)

R: Thank you, Alex! (2 sec)

APPENDIX 9

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES INTRODUCED DURING THE FIRST CYCLE

LISTING-TASK (Topic “Travelling”): 1)brainstorm activity “What names of countries do you remember in English/what countries did you visit?”. Ask your partner what names of countries he remembers in English and what countries he visited. Make notes and be prepared to report for the whole class what you found out about your partner.

2) **“yes/no game”** based on the previous activity. Work in groups. Make true and false statements about the countries your classmates visited. Present it to another group. The group with the highest number of the correct answers wins.

ORDERING AND SORTING (Topic “Travelling”):

How can you classify these countries:

the USA	Spain
Turkey	South Africa
France	Argentina
Canada	Portugal
Mexico	India
Thailand	Japan
Belgium	China
Egypt	Italy

COMPARING (Topic “Appearance and Character”):

Listen and Draw-task: Listen to the description of the girl and draw a picture of her. When the picture is ready, compare the pictures with your classmates. Are there any differences? Describe the girl in the picture to your partner.

PROBLEM-SOLVING (Topic “Home, sweet home”):

Verbal “Hide and Seek” game: Work in pairs. “Hide” an object in the picture of the room. Your partner tries to guess where it is and asks you Yes/No questions. For example: “Where is my key in this picture?” – Is it under the sofa? – “No” – etc...

Sharing personal experience (Topic “About myself”): describe your family and friends to each other. Feel free to ask your partner questions to get more information. Be prepared to talk about the family and friends of your partner in front of the class

Survey: add three items to the survey chart. Go around the class and find someone who....

This is the example of one of the charts, as all students got different charts on this assignment.

Find someone who...	Name
...has a good memory	
...can speak Dutch	
...lives in a huge house	
...is interested in fishing	
...would like to go to Thailand	
...has the birthday next week	
.....etc	

APPENDIX 10

Plan of the lesson performed during the first cycle

Duration of the lesson: 90 minutes. Topic: “Appearance and Character”

Description of the lesson	Duration (approximate time)	Rationale for doing this
<p>Greeting the students.</p> <p>Warm up activities (free talk on events of the day, how the students feel, the weather, news, possible changes of the timetable, etc.</p>	3 min	To “prepare” students for the lesson, to “switch” them into studying mood
<p>The teacher announces the topic of the lesson. Brainstorming exercise: What words do you already know? (the teacher prepares the table on the board with two columns: “Appearance” and ‘Character”. Students say aloud the words they already know, while the teacher puts them down under the corresponding heading)</p>	7 min	The pre-task stage introduces the topic of the lesson. Brainstorming exercise activates students’ previous knowledge and gives them the opportunity to see that they already something on the topic and feel more confident
<p>The teacher suggests students to make two true statements about themselves using the words written on the blackboard. Students are told to listen to the statements of the others attentively, as the next task is “true or false?”-task, based on the given information.</p> <p>Students say true statements about themselves in turn.</p>	5 min	The further work with the words gives the students opportunity to use them in the context.
<p>After everybody has presented his or her statements, the teacher gives feedback. Before starting the next task “true or false?” the teacher explains the rule of the verb form in the third person singular of Present</p>	10 min	The rule of verb in the 3 rd person singular in Present Simple is necessary for completing the next exercise. The explanation of the rule

Simple and gives examples		and examples gives the students a platform for completing the next exercise
True-or-false task: Pair work. Students should prepare two statements about their classmates on the basis of what they have heard during the previous task. They can put them down and rehearse them before producing them to the partner. The partner should say whether the statements are true or false. The teacher goes around and monitors	3 min – preparation time and 5 min for work in pairs	The task gives students the opportunity to apply the rule presented before
<p>The teacher gives instructions for the main task of the lesson - Information-exchange task. Working in pairs, fill in the profile on this woman by exchanging information about her with your partner. The exercise is described on pp.74, 75 of Enterprise textbook.</p> <p>The profile for filling in:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student A. Profile</p> <p>Name: Jessica Blake Nationality: Job: nurse Age/year of birth: Lives in: London Father's name: Mother's name: Helen</p> <p>Appearance: Free-time activities/hobby: surfs the net</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student B. Profile Profile</p> <p>Name: Nationality: British</p>	10 min	<p>Students proceed to formulation of questions in Present Simple. This task aims at activating students' former knowledge of Wh-questions in Present Simple and encourages students to use all the resources they already have at their disposal.</p> <p>Success in achieving the goals of the task helps to promote students motivation</p>

<p>Job: Age/year of birth: 1978 Lives in: Father's name: Chris Mother's name: Appearance: long black hair, blue eyes Free-time activities/hobby: The students work in pairs. The teacher goes around and monitors</p>		
<p>After the pair-work students are told to prepare to talk about Jessica Blake and rehearse in pairs. The teacher goes around, monitors and gives advice in preparing the speech. After the preparation, one student from each group "goes" public and talks about Jessica Blake for the whole class</p>	<p>3 min – preparation time 7 minutes – for presentation</p>	<p>Students have another chance to focus on the form of verbs in 3rd person singular in Present Simple. The teacher helps them to focus on, while going around and monitoring. Preparation time aims at better results in producing the "speech"</p>
<p>The teacher distributes the transcript of possible variants of doing the same task:</p> <p><i>Transcript</i></p> <p>What is her name? – Her name is Jessica Blake</p> <p>What is her nationality? – She is British</p> <p>What is her profession?/What is she?/What does she do? – She is a nurse</p> <p>What is her year of birth? - 1978</p> <p>Where does she live? – She lives in London</p> <p>What is her father's name? – His name is Chris</p> <p>What is her mother's name? – Her name is Helen</p> <p>How does she look like? – She has long black hair and blue eyes</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<p>Work with the transcript exposes students to other variants of how the same ideas can be expressed and is likely to extend their knowledge or even give the insight into how Wh-questions are formed. However, no emphasis is put on formulation of Wh-questions in Present Simple, as it is the agenda for the next lesson</p>

<p>What is her hobby/What does she do in her free-time? – She surfs the net</p> <p>Students read the transcript aloud and answer the teacher’s question of what differences students can see between this variant and their variants</p>		
<p>The next assignment is as follows: students work in pairs. They are asked to make a similar profile on their partner. The teacher distributes the profile-scheme:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Profile</p> <p>Name: Nationality: Job: Age: Lives in: Father’s name: Mother’s name: Appearance: Free-time activities/hobby:</p> <p>Students work in pairs, the teacher goes around and monitors.</p>	10 min	<p>Students have an opportunity to formulate the “Wh-questions”, but this time they can refer to the transcript distributed earlier.</p>
<p>Students prepare to present what they have learned about the partner. The teacher goes around and helps students</p>	3 min	<p>Preparation can have a positive influence on the oral presentation, which is to be produced afterwards</p>
<p>Oral presentations of all students</p>	12 min	
<p>Students and teacher summarize what have been achieved during the lesson. The teacher gives the homework</p>	3 min	

APPENDIX 11

THE TEST PROCEDURE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND CYCLES

Multiple-choice test on the Present Simple

Choose one correct item

1. She ...long black hair and beautiful eyes.

A have B has C haves

2. She ___ a nurse.

A is B work C works

3. What ___ Ann look like?

A is B do C does

4. In her free time she ___ to read

A likes B like C is liking

5. He never ___ to people.

A lie B lies C doesn't lie

6. Ben Affleck ___ very popular with fans of all ages.

A doesn't B is C are not

7. ___ he handsome?

A Are B Is C Does

8. Shedifferent with this haircut

A. looks B. look C are

9. What ___ she like?

A does B. is C. do

10. How many rooms ___ there in your apartment.

A are B is C have

11. _____you have a dining room?

A. is B. do C. _____ .

12. There ___ many shops in my neighborhood?

A are B. ---- C. is

13. We ___ so lucky!

A ---- B are C. is

14. My neighbors ___ so much noise!

A make B makes C does

15. He___ live in the countryside. He lives in the center of the city

A isn't B doesn't C. don't

16. I ___ quiet streets. Crowded streets are not for me!

A prefer B. am prefer C. am preferring

17. Living here ___ boring sometimes.

A is B can C. are

18. I like this house! What___ you think?

A Does B Do C. Is

19. He wants to ___ this flat.

A rent B. rents C renting

20. She___ want to move to another city

A. doesn't B. never C. do not

**FLUENCY TEST, TAKEN BETWEEN THE FIRST CYCLE AND THE SECOND
CYCLES
CONTROLLED INTERVIEW**

1. Can you describe your best friend? What does he/she look like? What is he/she like?
2. Can you describe yourself?
3. What traits of character you don't have?
4. Where do you live now? What is there in the neighborhood?
5. Describe the house of your dream!
6. Where would you prefer to live: in a big city or the countryside. Explain why.

INTERVIEW OBSERVATION SCHEME

CRITERIA FOR MEASURING FLUENCY				
Research group № ...	SPEECH RATE ASPM – the average mean of syllables per minute	PAUSES BETWEEN GENERATED UTTERANCES (SEC)		UNDERSTANDABLE SPEECH (YES/NO)
		Number of pauses per minute – the average mean	Time of the pause (sec) – the average mean	
Student 1		1.		
Student 2		2.		
Student		3.		
			
The average mean results for the group				

APPENDIX 12

THE TEST PROCEDURE BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THE THIRD CYCLES

Multiple-choice test on the Present Simple

Choose one correct item

1. How ...they spend most of their holidays?

A like B do C

2. Where ___ Susan and Nick?

A is B C are

3. Our train ___ at 8 sharp!

A leaves B leave C lives

4. The weather ___ cold!

A is B C be

5. How ___ I get to customs?

A B do C am

6. Im sorry! Where ___ the luggage claim?

A do B is C

7. Can I have some apples, please? – Im afraid, we___ _____ any.

A not have B don't have C haven't

8. Can shea postcard?

A. send B. sends C sending

9. In our resort you can ___ dinner by a camp fire!

A have B. C. eats

10. Can she ___ us?

A joins B join C is joining

11. Summer Splash villages _____the best places for relaxing

A. is B. are C. _____ .

12. She ___ the same hotel every year

A. books B. book C. have

13. Where is Luke? He ___ on the water slides!

A. does B. plays C. are

14. Where ___ you buy clothes?

A. do B. has C. are

15. Who ___ the biggest hotel room?

A. does have B. do have C. has

16. ___ it take a lot of time to go through customs?

A. Does B. Has C. Is

17. She doesn't ___ the ticket!

A. have B. has C. find

18. He a lot of money on holidays

A. doesn't spend B. don't' spends C. not spends

19. Where can she ___ ?

A. stay B. lives C. stays

20. She wants to something for dinner

A. buy B. buys C. has

**FLUENCY TEST, TAKEN BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THE THIRD CYCLES
CONTROLLED INTERVIEW**

1. Can you describe your best holidays?
2. What is the worst way of spending holidays for you?
3. Do you like travelling? Where do you like to travel?
4. Do you like shopping? If yes – why? If not – why?
5. Where is the best airport in your opinion? Can you describe it?
6. You have 500 000 roubles (=100 000 NOK). How would you like to spend this money? And why?

INTERVIEW OBSERVATION SCHEME

CRITERIA FOR MEASURING FLUENCY				
Research group № ...	SPEECH RATE ASPM – the average mean of syllables per minute	PAUSES BETWEEN GENERATED UTTERANCES (SEC)		UNDERSTANDABLE SPEECH (YES/NO)
		Number of pauses per minute – the average mean	Time of the pause (sec) – the average mean	
Student 1		1.		
Student 2		2.		
Student		3.		
			
The average mean results for the group				

APPENDIX 13

THE TEST PROCEDURE AFTER THE THIRD CYCLES

Multiple-choice test on the Present Simple

Choose one correct item

1. How ...she spend most of her free time?

A like B does C do

2. Where ___ Susan and Nick sit?

A is B C do

3. What ___ you like to do on Sundays!

A are B C do

4. I hate ___!

A dancing B am dancing C dance

5. What ___ you want for lunch?

A B do C am

6. Im sorry! Where ___ my burger?

A does B is C

7. Can I have some juice, please? – Im afraid, we___ _____ any.

A not have B don't have C haven't

8. Can she?

A. swimming B. swims C swim

9. My favorite dish ___ dumplings!

A is B. C. does

10. Can I ___ the bill, please?

A have B has C having

11. _____you want anything to drink?

A. do B. are C. _____.

12 I ___ the same

A take B. takes C. taking

13. He ___ dinner for us every day!

A makes B make C making

14. Where ___ you want to have dinner?

A do B C are

15. Who ___ the this sandwich?

A does want B do want C wants

16. ___ it take a lot of time to make this cake?

A Does B. Has C. Is

17. She doesn't ___ for herself!

A pay B pays C. is paying

18. He a lot of money in restaurants

A spend B spends C. spending

19. Where can she ___ ?.

A wait B. be wait C waits

20. She wants to something special for dinner

A. cook B. cooks C.

FLUENCY TEST, TAKEN AFTER THE THIRD CYCLES
CONTROLLED INTERVIEW

1. What is your favorite dish/food?
2. Can you describe your favorite restaurant?
3. Do you like eating out? What are your favorite places to eat out?
4. What is your hobby?
5. What is the best way to spend the free time?
6. You have 5 000 rubles. What would you like to order in a restaurant? Why exactly this dish

INTERVIEW OBSERVATION SCHEME

CRITERIA FOR MEASURING FLUENCY				
Research group № ...	SPEECH RATE ASPM – the average mean of syllables per minute	PAUSES BETWEEN GENERATED UTTERANCES (SEC)		UNDERSTANDABLE SPEECH (YES/NO)
		Number of pauses per minute – the average mean	Time of the pause (sec) – the average mean	
Student 1		1.		
Student 2		2.		
Student		3.		
			
The average mean results for the group				

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