English for Border Guards by Means of Problem-Based Technology

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Abstract

The current study deals with Problem Based Learning technology, its methods and procedure of its implementation into the ESL teaching process. The topicality of the research is grounded on the idea that the majority of universities are aimed at problem-based and research approach towards learning and teaching and there is a fair ground for that. Being a system of methods PBL technology is based on the principles of purposefulness and binarity, with situationally and problematization, connections of theory and practice, consciousness and activity, accessibility and autonomy. The focus of the research was made on essential functions of a problem situation such as communicative, modality-related, cognitive, emotional and volitional, motivational, competency-based etc.

The key advantages were taken from the unquestioning benefits of the PBL introduction in the ESP class at Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine. PBL connects language content to real-life situations. Moreover, situations require
not only knowledge but also skills to be used as well as prepare cadets for solving career-related problems that can be replicated in a new context. For that reason, problem situations that model real-career experience have been incorporated into the learning process. To verify PBL expediency in the future border guards learning environment, 45 cadets were involved in the experiment. The practical value of the experiment is supported with the highly improved level of the cadets’ academic performance in PBL class. The average scores in the experimental groups (A1, A2) is 8.63 and 6.7 higher at the final stage of the experiment in comparison with the initial stage. Such outcome gives us ground to implement this experience into a wider audience of instructors and cadets.

Consequently, the research should be extended, as more attention must be paid to the linguistic career-oriented content of the problem situations.

**Key words**: PBL technology, methods, problem-solving skills, border-guards, English

1. **Introduction**

In the twentieth century, such educators as J. Dewey, G. Kerschensteiner, M. Montessori and A. Makarenko determined the crucial pedagogical thinking paradigm. They were convinced that the focus of the educational process should be aimed at learning through conscious practical training, acquiring knowledge in actions consequently using skills in problem-solving or performing true-to-life tasks (John Dewey); developing independent and logical reasoning skills (Georg Michael Kerschensteiner); implementing theory and practice principle based on students’ future careers (Maria Montessori) and fostering collaboration (Anton Makarenko).

Today, having crossed the threshold of the 21st century, Ukrainian and foreign scholars and teachers have been still looking for the ways of putting these topical ideas into practice of teaching activity. The National Doctrine of Educational Development in Ukraine, responding to the contemporary life realities, puts before educators the task of forming competent, independent, initiative and responsible members of society who are able to act consciously, solve the problems, make their own decisions, and adapt quickly to any current changes. The solution to this problem will be considered as the best result of any pedagogical technology and will determine the way of pedagogical thinking in the 21st century. Due to the contemporary scholars, it should be problem-based learning (PBL) technology and there are good reasons for it. The major reason is that it helps create a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, where everyone’s opinion is considered, and everyone’s contribution is
appriciated, where all learners are confronted with real-world scenarios and get prepared for the dynamic world, in which they will live. Eman Alblooshi (2021) debates that students should be equipped with 21st century skills. Those skills consist of the “domain of Traditional Core Subjects Skills supported by the three essential 21st century skills domains: the Learning and Innovation Skills domain, the Career and Life Skills domain, and the Digital Literacy Skills domain”. In its turn the learning and innovation skills domain includes critical thinking and problem solving collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation. Therefore, teaching has to be focused on the “vital skills for success such as problem solving and flexibility skills”.

1.1. The Aim

The objective of this research is to verify the hypothesis: regular simulations of problem-based situations in training cadets of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine make positive impact on their academic results in performing their speaking skills concerning such language aspects as an insight into a problem, sufficiency, fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary pertinent to professional needs.

1.2. Tasks

1. To analyze the program-normative documents concerning border guards’ competencies required to perform their duties;
2. To study the content of the potential problems pertinent to border guards’ future professional activities;
3. To conceptualize the necessity of using PBL in the training process of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (NASBGSU) cadets;
4. To find out the level of the cadets’ academic performance of speaking activities at the beginning of the experiment;
5. To determine the level of academic progress of the cadets’ achievements at the end of the experiment.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Literature Review
Many scholars appeal to problem-based learning as they still find it a great potential for the learners. A group of researchers including Kostikova, I., Holubnycha, L., Girich, Z., & Movmyga, N. (2021) emphasize a crucial role of soft skills that are characterized as key skills and skills of the 21st century that should be imparted to the students through using role-playing games in the classroom, through characters’ roles in a fictional scenery (I. Kostikova, et al., 2019), as well as through problem based and task-based scenarios. Problem solving along with critical thinking, logical thinking, creativity, team management, intercultural competence, interpersonal skills, customer service, dealing with difficult situations, managing difficult conversations, conflict management, decision making are considered soft skills. Hiba Y. Abuzagha and Ahmad A.S. Tabieh study how the 20 soft skills ranking has been recently changing according to the level of their priority. They have found out that problem solving takes the fifteenth position among the soft skills from the perspective of educational experts. However, from the perspective of newly-hired EFL graduates “problem solving has come in the third place”. The researchers conclude that “embedding elements of soft skills” has to be done by integrating them through “task-based and problem-solving activities through which learners use the target language and get involved in meaningful activities that mimic the real-life situations”. C. Lindvang and B. Beck (2015) claim that PBL is a process of common creation and composing, a kind of learning that necessitates creative thinking and a “journey” where students experience “new landscapes” and learn new skills. Other researchers are convinced that PBL facilitates an experience-based learning cycle, as the learning happen through the activities in projects: experiences, reflection, knowledge production that can result in new experiments and experiences (L. M. B. Jespersen, 2018). There is also an opinion that PBL is a pedagogical approach that encourages those, who take part in its processes, to act both as supportive change agents working in collaboration with colleagues, and also as individuals to use their creativity in finding solutions to practical problems (A. Armitage, O. Pihl, T. Ryberg, 2015). Therefore, the whole point is that PBL involves problem orientation activity, group work, and personal creativity development. The group learning aspect underpins the learning process as a social act, where learning takes place through dialogue and communication (Kolmos, Du, Holmgaard, & Jensen, 2008) and everyone acts as a contributor to the problem-solving process. Hussien Mohamad Alakrash and Norizan Abdul Razak (2020) state that learning environment, which relies on students’ engagement can help them “improve and master the new learning skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills…”
James Bury defines PBL as a method in which: “students are divided into small groups; real-life scenarios or problems are introduced; students work together to find solutions they report on their discussions and provide feedback on other groups’ reports” (Bury, 2018). A contradictory viewpoint reveals a deeper nature of PBL, it says that being involved in PBL students acquire skills in analyzing, formulating, “identifying, describing, evaluating, selecting, and applying appropriate technologies and construction methods” (L. M. B. Jespersen, 2018). Furthermore, PBL is also considered as a kind of learning, the distinctive features of which are cooperative learning rather than competitive learning, creating new knowledge in the process of fulfilling collaborative tasks that is a learning type, which depends on the capability to learn through experience and participation in creative and open-minded groups. In addition, PBL group work is connected to the dynamics that exerts a beneficial atmosphere of positive emotions and feelings as well as raises the creative spirits of every participant (A. Armitage, O. Pihl, T. Ryberg, 2015). Since PBL involves problem-oriented activity, a problem is the central driver for learning (H. Huttel, D. Gnaur, 2017), it fosters individual and collaborative efforts to challenge conventional thinking to look for ideas and find solutions. In institutional fields a “problem is known and experienced as a conflict, a contrast, a need or a wish of those who are working with it” (L. M. B. Jespersen, 2018).

To increase the students “motives to learn SL, the teaching strategies envisage creation of a „kind“ class-room environment, interesting learning materials and involving a variety of students’ skills in the learning process including personal experience, offering students tasks requiring problem-solving; providing continuous feedback to them; considering such important factor as difficulty of exercises offered to the students (O. Lahodynskyi, I. Semeniako, 2018).

The analysis of a number of scientific resources still does not give clear answers but poses some fundamental questions.

2.2 Theoretical Analysis of the Problem

In the activity of border guards, problems involve professional situations and experiences, reflect genuine reality of their everyday service, that is border checks, border surveillance etc., what makes border guard officers recognize a need for a solution. This is the way, which suggests a “positive link between intrinsic motivation for a learning task and creative output in the learning process” (Runco, M. A., & Chand, I.,1995). Motivation plays a particularly important role in language acquisition. In fact, problems involve natural abilities of learners to play: to play with words, thoughts, ideas, things, to brainstorm and combine them
and create a new product. Moreover, professional situations encompass problems that need transdisciplinary knowledge to be solved. As a result, not only cadets but teachers as well should develop transdisciplinary competencies, which can provide both parties with necessary skills, including professional and social.

The principle of a transdisciplinary approach involves taking into account multifaceted links in solving problems of the professional content, does not violate the logic of each discipline and at the same time provides potential interaction between them, and thus, integration through merging elements of different disciplines in one problem situation, topic or curriculum. An effective means of forming integrative skills and abilities are various transdisciplinary connections, which are "short occasional inclusions" in the material of other disciplines, which contributes to a deeper perception and understanding of the concept or phenomenon being studied. Such inclusions in the foreign language (FL) curriculum are tasks from the Border Checks course. The question is how to integrate those “inclusions” into the FL curriculum, in other words how to flood the curriculum with the professional content and create a meaningful FL environment in the class. There is a strong belief (Sakamoto, F., Toland, S.H. & Cripps, T., 2021) that an inter-disciplinary activity requires “engagement from ESP practitioners of linguistics in partnership with faculty of specific disciplines”.

Ways to update the vocational learning content and educational technologies, harmonize them with current needs, and integrate them into the world educational space include a systematic analysis of the situation at the border, monitoring the official site of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, having meetings with the experienced officers, taking advantage of peer teaching, peer learning, peer instruction, studying sites of border guard agencies of other countries and English-speaking ones in particular. The above measures enable content-based learning, which is a powerful tool for language acquisition and training some career-oriented things that is learning through language in problem situations. It becomes related to the latest requirements of the future professional activity and provides cadets with all necessary skills.

Learning patterns by means of problem situations are closely connected with the educational principles. Those patterns reflect learning strategy and conformity to principles. Based on general didactic principles, we specified the principles of learning a foreign language for special purposes, taking into account its features. Problem-based training is implemented by a set of principles. A competency-oriented approach to learning involves the applicable principles and the organization of educational materials that interact with each other and satisfy a common goal.
The principle of problem/goal awareness drives cadets to problem comprehension as a professional and personal one. It allows them to understand the real purpose of problem solving by means of a foreign language and realize that FL communication helps acquire the necessary skills in professional international contacts. However, the first step to solving a problem is an action, while the first step to an action is awareness of the problem. Being aware of something means giving full attention to it and realizing it. That is why the first action involve putting into pieces the problem and discussing every detail of it. What we really consider to be useful at this step is graphic organizers, which help analyze all the details and brainstorm the necessary language to discuss all possible solutions.

The principle of professional and personal FL communication ensures the integration of interdisciplinary competencies. Taking into account the unique character of a language as a means of cognition and lateral thinking, the appropriateness of introducing PBL into training of a wider range of law enforcement professionals, including future border guards, should be considered. There is no doubt that FL communicative competency should become a component of professional competence and, accordingly, professional activity. While solving problems by means of a foreign language, cadets achieve real subject-object-subject interaction, as a result of which language learning becomes an emotional and semantic activity, provides intellectual activity of cadets and promotes the use of real professional knowledge and skills for decision making.

The principle of concretization of educational material provides for the selection of language material taking into account the features, current challenges and threats to operational and service activities by analyzing the situation at the border and clarifying possible areas of communication in a foreign language in their future activities. In addition, it accounts the scope of topics to study and their representation in the ESP syllabuses. It also foresees selection of texts for reading and listening that meet current requirements; selection of vocabulary and typical for the professional activity phrases intended for active learning and use in speech.

Connecting theory to practice principle sets out a number of requirements to the content, methods, forms of training and intends application of theoretical knowledge for the performance of practically important tasks. That is a way to contextualize disciplinary and job position issues and at the same time to solve problems and to promote the development of problem-solving skills.

Systematicity, consistency and transparency as a didactic principle serves to draw knowledge systematically while observing a logic of the educational process. It is based on the fact that gaining knowledge begins with the simplest, elementary patterns. It presupposes a
system and sequence of the studied material and teaching methods and requires learned with new information connection. For one thing, the systematic refreshment of knowledge allows cadets to keep information in memory for a longer period; for another – it depends on knowledge-to-knowledge communication. Undoubtedly, new knowledge should be based on the previously acquired, that is, the process of knowing and learning is a “sequence of real-time moves by individuals as they interact with interlocutors, learning environments, and the world around them” (DiSessa A., Levin M., Brown N., 2016). In addition, knowledge and interaction analyses contribute to each individual mindset as well as to problem-solving skills formation. And in every way, language appears to be a means of solution.

The balance of an invariant component coupled with professional and individual one is the principle that aims at effective use of PBL. The one allows the instructors not to take educational process apart, but to complement it with a sense of proportion. It is closely related to the problem-solving principle; that is situation and problem-based organization of vocational training in foreign language classes. Experience shows that a theme or situation-oriented approach alone does not translate into the skills formation and, consequently, the effective mastery of a foreign language and profession within its foreign language competency. In the professional activity, actions are generated by a situation and a problem that needs to be solved, not by themes that are taught in a particular subject. The problem and cut-and-paste mode, as well as maintaining contacts in order to solve the problem allow to take a theme not as a dominant category that exists outside the subject, but because of coincidence or interaction of basic components of a professional and individual problem situation.

2.3. Participants

Cadets of the Foreign Languages Department, who gain Bachelor’s Degrees in specialty 035 Philology (30 males and 15 females) were involved in the experiment. For this purpose, the experimental and control groups were set up. The experiment was conducted in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 at Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (NASBGSU) to test the effect of the PBL technology on the future border guard officers’ training and the levels of problem-solving skills acquisition that are critical and sometimes life-saving for them.
2.4. Research Methodology

The methodology encompassed a systematic theoretical analysis of the methods applied to the field of study, needs analysis, future job content materials’ selection, experimental design and combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques that makes use of the most valuable features of each and enables to evaluate the level of acquiring problem-solving skills. The main concerns in our methodology included the establishment of validity, reliability, and replicability.

The particular value of this scientific research is that it may enable the instructors to develop the kind of sound knowledge on the interdisciplinary subjects as well as relevant skills necessary to perform duties in the future professional activity and ensure a sense of progression in the process of training.

Based on the program-normative documents analysis it is established that future border guard officers’ training should include problem-solving skills, which is determined by the specific nature of their professional activity and covers theoretical knowledge, practical skills and methods of interactive, problem-based and content-based learning. This approach envisages acquisition of the decision-making skills in the different problem situations occurring in border guards’ operational and service activities. Border guards’ personal attributes and behaviours required in their workplace include aptitudes to identify, pose, and solve problems; to freely, flexibly and effectively use the language being studied in oral and written form, in various genre-style varieties and registers of communication (official, unofficial, neutral), to solve problems in various spheres of life.

Before starting the experiment, we analyzed the content of the border guards’ professional activities in order to select such training materials, situational tasks and problem situations, which would reflect not only the border guard officers’ professional functions, but also contribute to mastering necessary knowledge and skills. Following the policy saying that the research should come closer to the requirement of practitioners, we analyzed the syllabuses of such disciplines as "Foreign Language", "Documents Verification", "Border Checks", "Border Surveillance", and traced the sequence of mastering knowledge and skills in both foreign languages and professional subjects to establish the logic in teaching ESP.

The results of our research have shown that problem-solving skills formation is impossible within one subject and without implementing integrated knowledge and skills into a problem situation.
Therefore, the instructors of the vocational training were experts in specifying the professional component of the "Foreign Language" syllabus and shared typical problem situations with the instructors of the FL Department as well as consulted them on how to solve the problems. NASBGSU alumni, who know true-to-service problems from real life situations, shared their practical experience with FL instructors during their extension courses on the arrival at the academy. Additional sources for the FL syllabus were the departmental press, the NASBGSU official website, website of other countries’ border guard agencies and world news, which have been constantly monitoring by the instructors, to study current threats and challenges of operational and service activities, to update systematically the information, current terminology and authentic vocabulary. We also have systematically studied modern foreign researches in the field of linguistics and methods of teaching English for special purposes. The reason for this lies in the very nature of language for special purposes, which has no boundaries, is interdisciplinary, and relates to many aspects of FL teaching: both linguistic and methodological.

2.5. Research Procedure

The main goal of the Foreign Languages department is to train a highly educated border guard officer who has foreign language communication and translation competencies at a level sufficient to perform professional tasks in interviewing foreign nationals during passport control, conducting negotiations and having meetings with representatives of foreign border guard agencies, performing written translation of reports, articles and other materials on border protection and border management issues.

Having the main goal in mind as well as the nature of PBL, we built our research on the two subjects: English and Border Checks. According to Ye. Passov’s theory any problem, or conflict, which violates the system of relationships, is the content (Ye.I. Passov, 1991), which requires a speech act. Speech actions express a person's attitude to the problem and become an organizing element in any situation (Ye.I. Passov 1989) or task.

This idea made us believe that

– Every specialist needs a language as a means of solving problems.
– The professional competence of border guards should include foreign language communicative competency, of which language and strategic competencies are integral parts.
– A foreign language has to be and is an integral part of all NASBGSU syllabuses.
Teaching a foreign language for professional purposes should be considered in a transdisciplinary plane, covering various modes of philological sciences, the theory of language communication, the use of information and communication technologies, background knowledge as well as professional content.

A foreign language involves solving problems related to border checks, border surveillance, border management, border protection, etc., which becomes possible due to knowledge integration of several vocational subjects by means of a language and replication of problem-solving experience. N. Akimova and K. Oleksandrenko (2019) state that experience contributes to the accuracy of predicting the content of Internet texts by 15.0% (N. Akimova, N., & Oleksandrenko, K., 2019). It also works well in case of performing interviews and interrogations. The more experienced cadets are, the more accuracy they demonstrate in oral discourse.

The Foreign Language Department graduates, without a doubt, have to be specialists in the interlingual (intercultural) communication as well as in border management. If they are not, their professional activity will be ineffective. Moreover, lack of basic professional knowledge and skills might jeopardize border security and even state integrity. That is what makes each subject contribution into the professional competence crucial. In addition, “knowledge integration is realized through integration in skills. Therefore, the process of integration takes consequential place in the structure of the problem-solving skills formation. Furthermore, globalization of the modern world has stimulated a steep rise in migration or just in travel to locations near and far, supported by many factors, because crossing borders has become much easier than ever. Such factors comprise the development of advanced modern transportation systems and networks as well as visa-free travel to many countries, higher employment, safer life and many others that pull people to different locations. To meet the demands of the traveler, border guards have to speak English, solve problems in English if necessary. The statistics says that one in two Europeans have a good command of English and border guards are the first people to meet them. Finally, thanks to language, we can trace the thinking process through external speech in a particular situation. In fact, we cannot express our thoughts without words that is without language. The implicit speech (endophasy) is made up of words as well. So, both are involved in the problem-solving activity and facilitate brainwork.

All materials selected for FL training is based on the analyses of the professional requirements of the target audience and their language wants and needs. The class activities are aimed at giving future border guards extensive listening and speaking practice as well as providing them with the tools needed to become confident in their ability to communicate in
professional situations, to bring out the problems, to find the ways of solving them and to pass a decision. In this way, they gradually become equipped with a problem-solving communication strategy. For achieving this goal, we selected a good few typical situation, which encompass true-to-life problems to be solved. The examples provided below demonstrate some that are included into FL syllabus.

− A plane from China lands at Boryspil airport. The WHO (World Health Organization) has declared a public health emergency of international concern, which requires strict precautions to be taken on all passengers arriving from abroad. In the terminal, all passengers go through a special designated corridor where medical equipment is installed. Some Asian and EU nationals present symptoms of SARS / COVID 19 and are still contagious.

− During the passport control at Lviv Airport, Martin Ottl, a German citizen and a member of the European Parliament, presented his German service passport and stated that he was going to Ukraine to take part in an extended meeting dedicated to the anniversary of Ukraine’s liberation from German invaders. At the same time, he presented an invitation issued by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine. As a senior border guard officer, report the procedure.

− During the registration of a bus that was heading for Chisinau from Odesa, a border guard noticed a man traveling with three children. The 29-year-old passenger appeared to be a Danish citizen who allegedly traveled with his children. However, during the inspection of the documents, the border guards found out that the man's passport really belonged to him, but the children traveled on someone else's documents. As it turned out, the man came to Ukraine to help a Somali citizen and her children get to European countries. To do this, he took with him several passport documents, the owners of which, in his opinion, resembled those to whom he tried to help.

− Border guards of Mostyska detachment received information that the Maserati Gran Cabrio was listed as stolen in the Interpol bases. An Italian citizen, who was driving to Ukraine in this car, was detained by border guards of Mostyska detachment and customs officers at Shehyni BCP on suspicion of car theft. 2012 release vehicle, worth over UAH 1.3 million, was confiscated. The records of evidence concerning the violations of customs rules by the foreigner were drawn up.

− There is a passenger, a woman from Egypt, about 30 years old, presenting a valid passport for the border checks. She cannot confirm the purpose of her visit, claims she is a tourist, but says she is going to stay in a hotel and roam the streets. She is accompanied by
an older woman, who she calls “Madam”. Looks very shy and timid. What will be your next steps?

To equip the cadets with the communicative strategy the following mind map (fig. 1) has been collaborated. To help cadets acquire this strategy, each topic contains a variety of activities, tasks, and communication techniques that give cadets opportunities to use the language meaningfully and in real-life situations. From start to finish each lesson is aimed at fulfilling the main tasks, practicing problem-solving communication strategy. First, lesson starters exposed students to relevant topical language, help them explore not just vocabulary but also problem-solving strategy and involve them into the topic from the very beginning. Instructors are encouraged to guide cadets through the analysis of language features (new words, phrases, and patterns) that are used or needed to accomplish the task and provide practice using those features.

**COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGY IN THE PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION OF AN OFFICER OF THE STATE BORDER GUARD SERVICE AND AN ALIEN**

![Communicative Strategy Diagram](image-url)

Figure 1. *Communicative Strategy Used By a Future Border Guard Officer in the Line of Duty*
Those activities may include different tasks. For one thing, cadets are offered to make a list of possible reasons travelers can be refused entry. To enrich a bulk of ideas concerning those reasons, cadets join their partners and work in pairs comparing their lists. Then they share their list with the whole class. And for another, cadets can also contribute more ideas to their list after having read a section of the Practical Handbook for Border Guards (Schengen Handbook, 2019). They look up new words in a dictionary, compare their list with the handbook’s list and add new reasons from the handbook to their list.

The instructors expect cadets to list the following reasons of entry refusal:

Foreigners have no valid travel documents. They have false (counterfeit/forged) travel documents. They have no valid visa or residence permit. They are in possession of false (counterfeit/forged) visas or residence permits. They do not have appropriate documentation justifying the purpose and conditions of stay. They do not have enough money for their stay, or the means to return to the country of origin or transit. There is an international (or national) alert for this person in a database. They are a threat to public policy, internal security, public health or international relations. Their travel itinerary does not match with the departure and destination points, etc.

The similar task can be done in brainstorming. Cadets work in small groups making a list of reasons to do a second-line check. Then the groups share their lists with the class and make a new list together.

Class activities depend on lesson objectives. If the purpose is to ask questions regarding a foreigner’s personal data during border crossing; understand and respond to those questions, cadets are tasked to think of the questions they would ask at a border crossing point 1) cross border workers; 2) tourists; 3) students; 4) holders of diplomatic, official or service passports and members of international organizations etc. In case the group level is elementary or pre-intermediate cadets are given a list of questions but are asked to sort out the questions into separate columns under the number 1-4. The questions may include the following:

What’s your name? Name and surname, please.
What’s your birth date? / When were you born?
What’s the place of your birth (country, city)? Where were you born?
What’s your citizenship / nationality?
What’s the purpose of your visit?
What documents do you have to confirm the purpose of your visit?
When and where did you get your passport?
When and where did you get your visa?
Who’s meeting you in Ukraine? Do you know anyone in Ukraine?
Where are you staying? Do you have any hotel reservation?
Where are you going to study?
What’s the address of your school / university?
How much money are you bringing into the country?
Why did you choose Ukraine to study?
Why are transiting through Ukraine?

These questions cadets practice while making mini dialogues and simulating a conversation during border checks. After finding out reasons for a second-line check, cadets make a second line check conversation, using some second line check questions, for instance:

What’s your parents’ nationality?
How did you get your Ukrainian visa?
Are you traveling alone or in a group?
How much money do you have with you?
What’s your profession?
Do you have a return ticket?

Cadets are also encouraged to register at FRONTEX Virtual Aula, where English language learning package has been launched to address the needs of border and coast guard students and professionals in the line of duties. The course addresses such topics as trafficking in human beings, migrant smuggling, the context of European and international border and coast guarding etc. It is supplied with a lot of listening and interactive tasks (Virtual Aula, 2021).

3. Results

The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR, 2021) has been applied to evaluate the cadets’ outcome. The ILR is a foreign language proficiency scale used by US Federal agencies and established by the federal Interagency Language Roundtable to rank an individual’s language skills. The scale has six levels from 0 to 5 – with 5 being the most proficient – for assessing an individual’s ability to speak, read, listen, and write in another language.

The ILR scale was adapted to measure a cadet’s ability to communicate in a foreign language. Proficiency requirements vary by position but tend to congregate at the second and
third levels of the scale. We map out the fifth level as it is impossible to achieve within the
time scale and resources allowed by the curriculum (See table 1.)

Table 1. Foreign Language Proficiency Levels and Language capability requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency level</th>
<th>Language capability requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 0+ – Memorized</td>
<td>able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances, has sufficient comprehension to understand memorized utterances in areas of immediate needs, able to read numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 1 – Elementary</td>
<td>has sufficient capability to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy and travel requirements, able to maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics, able to understand simple questions and answers, simple statements and very simple face-to-face conversations in a standard dialect, able to read very simple connected written material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILR Level 2 - Limited working</td>
<td>has sufficient capability to meet routine social demands and limited job requirements, able to deal with concrete topics in past, present, and future tense, able to understand conversations on routine social demands and limited job requirements, able to read simple, authentic written material on subjects within a familiar context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 3 - Professional working</td>
<td>able to use the language with sufficient ability to participate in most discussions on practical, social, and professional topics, able to understand the essentials of all speech in a standard dialect including technical discussions within a special field, has sufficient capability to conceptualize and hypothesize, able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of authentic texts on unfamiliar subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 4 - Advanced Professional working</td>
<td>able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs, has range of language skills necessary for persuasion, negotiation, and counseling, able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Functionally native ILR Level 5 - Native or bilingual proficiency</td>
<td>able to use the language at a functional level equivalent to a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker. able to understand fully all forms and styles of speech intelligible to the well-educated native listener, including a number of regional and illiterate dialects, highly colloquial speech and conversations and discourse distorted by marked interference from other noise</td>
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The experiment lasted two academic years, during which cadets of the 4th year study, graduates of 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 were involved in the experiment (tables 1, 2). Each group contained eleven or twelve 21-year-old persons, who were tested before and after having studied professional topics including State Border Guard Service and National Security. The cadets were given a test and were interviewed to evaluate their speaking skills at the beginning of the experiment. To assess the cadets’ progress, they were tested at the end of their graduation academic year. Apart from the above-mentioned procedures, a mid-term control was undertaken to identify what should be changed or improved, as well as what the cadets should be focused on. An assessment task included a test and communicative situation, which, in our opinion, allowed the cadets to demonstrate their academic results. Tests included 10 descriptions of problem situations on professional subjects, which helped verify reading comprehension and ability to understand the essentials of a suggested problem that is to find out a proper decision. Whereas communicative situations were conducted by one of the examiners who helped an examinee to develop an interview according to the problem identified in the situation offered. The examinee acted as a border guard in the line of duty, checking the documents of a person who would allegedly like to cross the state border. The examiner makes notes concerning sufficiency to participate in the conversation as an interviewer, ability to understand the essentials of the problem, as well as ability to deliver their speech fluently and to speak accurately, and to use the vocabulary pertinent to professional needs. The maximum grade cadets could get for each task in a test paper is 5 points, thus the totals is 50 points. As far as a problem-based situation is concerned, it is assessed at 25 points – 5 points for each criterion – an insight into a problem, sufficiency, fluency, accuracy, and relevant vocabulary.

Table 2. Analysis of the academic results in 2019/2020

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial results</td>
<td>Final results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cadets</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 4 - Advanced Professional working (75-61)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. Analysis of the academic results in 2020/2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial results</td>
<td>Final results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cadets</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 4 - Advanced Professional working (75-61)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9,09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 3 - Professional working (60-46)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27,27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 2 - Limited working (45-31)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 1 – Elementary (30-16)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9,09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR Level 0+ – Memorized (15 – below)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average rate</td>
<td>45,45</td>
<td>49,55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presented result is an eloquent demonstration of the experiments’ success. The average scores in the experimental groups (A1, A2) is 8.63 and 6.7 higher at the end of the experiment in comparison with its beginning. The overall figures conceal wide divergences between the final scores of the compared groups (B1, A1 and B2, A2) (11,36 and 6,7), which gives us confidence to further develop PBL at SBGSU.
4. Discussion

Nominally, all teaching and learning can be divided into problem-based and non-problem-based or traditional. The difference between them is gigantic. Traditional teaching deals with transmission of new knowledge and memorizing facts, which cannot be transferred to new and not experienced yet situations. On the contrary, PBL leads to mastery of investigative skills, an effective and meaningful learning based on information processing and cognitive flexibility theories, depending on the problem. The reason for that is hidden in nature of the problem-based situations.

Problems or problem-based situations become great potentials in learning and expanding language context along with developing frame of mind due to a number of their didactic functions. The latter include communicative, modality-related, cognitive, emotional and volitional, motivational, competency-based and functioning.

The communicative function is carried out through subject-object-subject interaction. Cadets engage in dialogical interaction with the problem, learn to establish psychological contact with imaginary law enforcement participants and border control subjects, build professional relationships, conduct interviews and questioning, be convincing in the process of argumentation, receive information through conversations, provide law enforcement cooperation and exchange information with partners.

The modal function is expressed in identifying the cadet’s own attitude to the subject of discussion, agreeing or disagreeing with the point of view of an interlocutor, changing the topic of discussion or its emphasis, focusing on the key ideas of the message, using the appropriate communication register, etc.

The cognitive function is realized through a constant stimulus to the study of unknown knowledge or skills that are a permanent component of a problem situation.

The emotional and volitional function is conveyed through expressing feelings, emotions and demonstration of volitional actions, which are determined by such features as awareness, purposefulness, initiation of action, the presence of volitional effort, overcoming obstacles. The function ensures the cadets’ activity in overcoming difficulties and obstacles. This is a case when the will, on the one hand, creates supporting motivation, makes it personally meaningful, causing a special emotional state associated with the intended consequences of action, and on the other - inhibits unwanted behavior.

Any problem situation is motivation forming due to the confrontation between known and unknown knowledge, the desired and actual results of activities. What is common for both is planning goals and objectives as well as gradual acquisition of autonomy in solving problems.
and decision-making. The above gives reasons why a problem situation offers a motivational function.

Competency and activity-based function is fulfilled by means of practical application of theoretical knowledge, as any problem situation requires relevant actions, constant mental or physical participation in the process of its solution, which allows to form FL competency and, in particular, skills such as analysis, sorting, comparison, refutation, systematization etc.

**Conclusion**

An essential PBL characteristic is the students’ research activity, which arises in a certain (problem) situation and encourages them to ask questions, formulate hypotheses and test them during mental and practical actions. The choice of methods is always determined by socially important goals, the content of education, and takes into account some didactic principles. PBL technology is not just one method but also a system of methods of educational influence on students at the same time they learn to use problem-based methods in the English class.

Educational program «Philology» (specialization 035.041 German languages and literatures (translation inclusive) has been analyzed in order to find out border guards’ competencies required to perform their duties. The program states that training of philologists includes possession of foreign language communicative and translation competencies at a level sufficient for the performance of official duties at the border crossing points and during border-representative meetings. The program is focused on the formation of professional abilities and skills for realization of translation activity, with a professional accent on formation of the competencies necessary for solving urgent tasks of border protection at tactical level. The program is implemented in an active research environment, focused on the implementation of real projects of specialized application, provides practical training in border guard units. Its aim is to develop the personality of a specialist who is able to master translation strategies and find optimal decisions’ when solving professional problems, applying optimal translation transformations, lexical means, clichés and expressions with the use of modern information technologies. Therefore, activity and competence-oriented technologies including problem-oriented and contextual learning are advisable to use.

The content of the potential problems pertinent to border guards’ future professional activities has been studied during joined training with "Documents Verification", "Border Checks", and "Border Surveillance" instructors. NASBGSU alumni who arrive at the academy...
every year for their postgraduate training were questioned to find out the current problems on the border. Sociolinguistic peculiarities of the border guard discourse were studied on the professionally oriented web sites/web pages that feature relevant grammar, vocabulary, language samples as well as non-verbal communication signs. Cadets were exposed to content-based videos and involved in role-play as performing documents check at a passport control booth or interviewing foreigners at the automobile border crossing points. Such kind of learning experience is reinforced later, when they pass their practical training as an interpreter/translator at the Divisions of International Cooperation and Border Representative Work of the border guard detachment. Consequently, the cadets’ internship reports are analyzed with respect to the implementation of the best practices into the ESP teaching and learning.

To conceptualize the necessity of using PBL in the training process of NASBGSU cadets the PBL theoretical and practical aspects were gone thoroughly into a question. On the basis, it is safe to say that teaching problem-solving skills entails a combination of different methods as well as learning involves different methods. To this end, PBL has to be viewed from a variety of different angles and it is a much more complex phenomenon than just one method. In our view, PBL is a technology that embraces a number of methods. Taking into account all PBL features we concluded that PBL technology is a system of methods and techniques for accomplishing a learning process, driven by a problem situation that defines appropriately integrated ways of organizing problem teaching and problem learning at all its solution stages and levels of difficulty, the purpose of which is to master problem-solving, decision-making and creative thinking skills.

PBL technology, being a system of methods, is based on situationality and problematization. For one thing, situationality is based on the provisions that learning should be based on true-to-life situations and through them. The content side of the situation should be considered problems. Learning the logic of expressing thoughts and speech, in general, is not possible outside of the situation. Vocabulary marked by a situation or a communicative task generates the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to a new situation. Each time the variability of the situation conditions sets new tasks for the cadets. Finally, the situation contributes to the development of goal commitment due to the presence of a mental task and productivity and due to the need to create a new product every time. And for another – problematization deals with many advanced tasks in the educational process. It helps identify and take into account the levels of development of the intellectual sphere of cadets; direct the educational process to the development of cadets’ creative abilities, cognitive skills and other
components of the intellectual sphere; create problem situations based on the intellectual capabilities of cadets, to solve educational and other problems; structure the interaction between the instructor and cadets in accordance with the logic of the PBL; systematically analyze the effectiveness of pedagogical influences on the development of the intellectual sphere.

At the beginning of the experiment, the level of the cadets’ academic performance of speaking activities has been tested. Consequently, the groups were even-composed in knowledge and skills. The parity principle was observed for both academic year (2020, 2021) graduate cadets for making up control and experimental groups.

The experiment, which was conducted in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, involved the cadets of their final years of study. It included program-normative documents analysis on the subject concerning future border guards’ required competencies, the study of the border guards’ professional activities content, pre-test and post-test assessments. The outcomes of the experiment demonstrated much higher cadets’ achievements in the experimental groups. Therefore, it is safe to say that regular simulations of problem-based scenarios in the English language classes of the future border guards will exert a beneficial influence on their academic performance.

Further research will concern the linguistic aspects of the problems pertinent to border guards’ career.

References


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