

PAIR WORK AS THE WAY OF DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS ПАРНА РОБОТА ЯК ЗАСІБ РОЗВИТКУ КОМУНІКАТИВНИХ НАВИЧОК

The article is devoted to the analysis of the pair work as the teaching format used for motivating students and developing their communicative skills.

It is stated that pair work being flexible by nature can be used for developing all language skills regardless of proficiency level. It is shown that the material used for pair work can be divided into several groups according to a number of principles. It is proved that the activities designed for the learners with elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency levels, done in pairs can be a good way of practicing new grammar structures and using newly-introduced lexical units in a small role plays containing acting component. Pair work on this stage requires constant teacher's help and advice. The material presented can be connected with everyday communicative situations in which language seems to be useful and meaningful. Working in closed pairs, students feel more relaxed and confident. Communicative skills developed at this stage can lead to greater success in mastering English. It is stated that using interactive games can help the teacher to motivate students and encourage them to sustain their interest in study. Picture games appear to be advisable for pair work of the students with elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency levels as they respond best of all to the information which is seen.

It is shown that the interactive activities, designed for pair work of students with intermediate and advanced proficiency levels are aimed at getting the students to talk as well as stimulating their imagination and creative thinking. The activities are built as game-like discussion. The outcome of the game is open and can be presented to the whole class.

Pair work can be the part of the simulation, enacted around the everyday situation or the topical problem. Being highly structured and containing a lot of diverse elements in their content, simulations can be easily adapted to different teaching goals and different students' needs. Aimed at developing communicative skills and based on dramatizing simulations can help each student to get relaxed and to enjoy learning. The activities offered in the article involve fun and can be easily adapted to any language material or teaching format.

Key words: *pair work, communicative skills, simulation, interactive games, game-like discussions, teaching format.*

Стаття присвячена аналізу парної роботи як навчального формату, який використовується для мотивації студентів та розвитку комунікативних навичок.

У статті зазначено, що парна робота, гнучка за своєю природою, використовується для розвитку усіх

мовних навичок, незалежно від рівня володіння мовою. Показано, що матеріал, який використовується для парної роботи, може бути розподілений на кілька груп за низкою принципів. Доведено, що вправи, призначені для студентів з початковим та середнім рівнями володіння мовою, які виконуються в парах, можуть бути хорошим способом відпрацювання нових граматичних структур та використання нововведених лексичних одиниць у невеликих рольових іграх, що містять акторську складову. Парна робота на цьому етапі потребує постійної допомоги та консультації викладача. Наданий матеріал може бути пов'язаний з повсякденними комунікативними ситуаціями, у яких мова вбачається корисною та значущою. Працюючи у закритих парах, студенти почуватимуться більш розкуто та впевнено. Комунікативні навички, розвинуті на цьому етапі, можуть сприяти більшому успіху в опануванні англійської мови. Зазначено, що використання інтерактивних ігор може допомогти викладачеві мотивувати студентів та заохочувати їх підтримувати інтерес до навчання. Ігри з зоровою опорою доцільно використовувати для парної роботи студентів початкового та середнього рівня володіння мовою, оскільки вони краще реагують на інформацію, яку бачать.

Показано, що інтерактивні вправи, розроблені для студентів з середнім та просунутим рівнями володіння мовою, спрямовані на те, щоб спонукати студентів до спілкування, а також стимулювати їхню уяву та творче мислення. Вправи побудовано у формі ігрової дискусії. Результати гри є відкритими та можуть бути презентовані усьому класу.

Парна робота може бути частиною симуляції, яка інсценується навколо повсякденної ситуації або актуальної проблеми. Симуляції, які є добре структурованими та містять багато різноманітних елементів, можуть бути легко адаптованими до різних навчальних цілей та різних потреб студентів. Спрямовані на розвиток комунікативних навичок та засновані на драматизації, симуляції допоможуть кожному студенту отримати мотивацію та задоволення від навчання.

Інтерактивні ігри, запропоновані у статті, містять розважальну складову та легко адаптуються до будь-якого мовного матеріалу та формату навчання.

Ключові слова: *парна робота, комунікативні навички, симуляція, інтерактивні ігри, ігрові дискусії, навчальний формат.*

UDK 811.11:378.147.091.33–027.22:796
DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2023/61.2.8>

Shcherbyna V.V.,
PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor
at the Department of Philology, Translation
and Communicative Strategies
The National Academy of the National
Guard of Ukraine

Problem statement. The class teaching format appears to be basic for organizing the process of learning properly. The potentially boring and unexciting procedure of teacher's telling something standing in front of the class seems to be old-fashioned as well as absolutely incompatible with modern

communicative approach to foreign language teaching. Pair work appears to be the simplest way of changing teaching format. As soon as students learn the first grammar structures and are able to ask and answer yes/no questions, they can be organized into pairs. The researcher A. Wright points out, that

“pair work is of especial value in ensuring that each and every learner has optimum opportunity for oral practice in using language” [8, p. 3]. As developing communicative skills is viewed as the main teacher’s objective, pair work represents a certain form of communication that can be used in close-to-reality situations. We learn and teach English in a non-English setting, so foreign language teachers have to create language situations in which communication appears to be real and natural. The first small dialogues, made up and dramatized by a pair of students in class, prove to be the first step in forming their communicative skills. While working in pairs and imitating foreign language communication students start creating the link between the foreign language and the learners themselves. Well-arranged pair work on the elementary and intermediate levels of learning as a rule contributes a lot to the students’ making progress in developing communicative fluency. Pair work is believed to be the first step to cooperation and team work. Answering or asking simple questions, expressing opinion or personal attitude the learners are trying to understand their partners as well as to be understood. It gives the learners the sense of achievement, encourages and motivates them.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The concept of pair work has been the object of research in the studies of many both native and foreign linguists. The work by G.Thompson is devoted to the analysis of the communicative language teaching. The researcher takes into consideration the role of pair work and the ways it can be used in a foreign language class. Pair work may be seen as “role play at simpler level” [6, p.33]. G. Thompson points out to the disadvantage in the way pair work can be used, when “learners work out how to say what they are told to say” [6, p. 33]. In the researcher’s opinion, pair work should be seen “as a potential preliminary stage to any contribution from the learners” [6, p. 34].

In the article “How do I organize my students into groups” the researcher N.Mclver emphasizes the necessity to change teaching format every twenty minutes and works out original ways of group work, which require the active involvement of the learners. The researcher points out that pair work “can help the teacher to change the focus of a lesson as well as get every student involved in work” [3, p. 71].

Analyzing traditional pair work, N.Mclver recommends changing partners as a method which may help “to get more variety into the pair work” [3, p. 71]. In the researcher’s opinion, pair work can be also seen as preparatory format for forming groups. Pairs can be gradually transformed into *triads*, *pyramids* and *mingles*. Pair work is viewed as less chaotic and easier to monitor and check.

Highlighting the importance of pair work “as the efficient class management strategy”, T. Pushpanathan and S. Satheesh [4, p. 207] pay special attention

to the increase of “students’ language productivity in terms of speaking tasks” and their achieving “a better performance in a collaborative environment” if they work in pairs. The researchers consider the learner’s confidence to be the important advantage of pair work as this teaching format can help the teacher to solve certain psychological problems which often appear in the group. Timid or extremely shy students “feel more comfortable when they speak to one person, than to the whole class” [4, p. 208]. In T. Pushpanathan and S. Satheesh’s opinion, pair work is beneficial for the teacher as well. It is viewed as “a good way of saving time and checking students’ progress in learning” [4, p. 209]. Students’ cooperation and getting involved in the activity can be seen as the most important feature of pair work.

A. Wright’s book “Games for Language Learning” [8] offers a great number of communicative activities which can be used by foreign language teachers for making their classes informative as well as exciting and enjoyable. Characterizing the games introduced in his book, the researcher points out that pair work as a teaching format “can provide intense and meaningful practice of language” [8, p. 2]. In A.Wright’s opinion, pair work is easy and fast to organize but it shouldn’t be merely “a way of passing the time” [8, p. 3]. Working in pairs can be more suitable if in the groups there are discipline problems.

In F. Klippel’s opinion, pair work properly organized can help the teacher to increase learners’ interest and motivation. F. Klippel’s book “Keep Talking” [2] contains a great number of games and activities, designed for working in pairs. The role plays and simulations, introduced in the book, are aimed at developing students’ communicative skills. The ability to dramatize is the main feature of such activities. The researcher emphasizes the necessity of “linguistic creativity in making up and dramatizing the dialogue” [2, p. 8]. Pair work, based upon spontaneously developed communicative situations, can help students to exercise their creative capacities, to improve their self-esteem and confidence. Many of the pair work activities can be easily transformed into group work. If pair work appears to be productive and successful, the students will cooperate better working in groups.

N. Storch classified pair work groups into “the following four categories: collaborative, dominant-dominant, dominant-passive and expert-novice” [5, p. 36]. Storch’s classification is based upon the type of interaction between the learners. Collaborative group appears to be perfect and desirable in any foreign language class. In such groups a lot of activities will run themselves as soon as they get under way. The teacher may observe the work of the collaborative group or even join in the activity as an equal member. Expert-novice pair work group is especially efficient in a mixed-ability class. This type of interaction seems to be “beneficial as the transfer of knowledge

from expert to novice takes place" [5, p. 37]. In such pairs one student performs the role of a teacher while the other is doing his best to gain new information, to analyze and systemize it. Dominant-dominant and dominant-passive types are regarded as the least productive. In such groups interaction doesn't occur properly and as a result students neither make progress nor develop their communicative skills.

The activities, offered in P. Watcyn-Jones's book [7], are worked out for pair work and are designed for students' interaction. Role plays and simulations are viewed as efficient ways of achieving classroom goals to improve language skills. In researcher's opinion, such activities "can make the learning process more dynamic and enjoyable and may also help make traditionally serious subjects more *user-friendly*" [7, p. 2].

J. Hadfield classifies interactive games into "memorizing, personalizing and communicating" [1, p. 4]. The games make use of a variety of techniques, variety being important in language teaching. Personalizing games, designed for pair work can be seen as preparatory activity for group work. "Sorting, ordering and arranging games are usually played in pairs. Exchanging and collecting card games can be played on a board. Such activities are suitable for open pair work groups, as students can circulate around the class freely and look for the necessary cards another pair of learners may have" [1, p. 5]. All the above activities may include elements of role play and simulation. The cards on the board can be used as the stimuli to provoke communication exchange.

The aim of the article is to define the role of pair work in organizing and motivating students and to offer a set of exercises which can be used for pair work teaching formats at different stages of the English lesson, aimed at forming and developing students' communicative fluency.

Presenting the main material. Pair work appears to be versatile by nature as it can be used for developing all language skills regardless of proficiency level. "Learners can work in pairs to do a grammatical exercise, solve a problem, analyze the new language structures in a text, prepare a questionnaire for other pairs of students or agree on the opinion they want to present to the class" [6, p. 33]. Taken creatively pair work can help the teacher to increase the range of possibilities considerably.

The material used for pair work can be divided into several groups according to a number of principles. The first type of activities is designed for the learners with elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency levels. Such exercises done in pairs can be a good way of practicing new grammar structures following given models. Gradually they can be organized as a short role plays containing acting component or small creative task which can teach students to help each other. Pair work on this stage requires constant

teacher's help and advice. The material presented in this group is connected with everyday communicative situations in which language seems to be useful and meaningful. The students learn to express their attitudes, opinions, try to formulate ideas and share them with a partner. In this teaching format each pair of students works independently from others concentrating on practicing certain phrases or completing the project. The activities presented in this group can be viewed as *preliminary* as the learners are only getting ready to launch or express their ideas before the whole class. Working in *closed pairs*, students feel more relaxed and confident. Communicative skills developed at this stage can lead to greater success in mastering English. Let's have a closer look at the communicative activities designed for pair work of students with elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency levels.

The students in a group have different emphases in the way of perceiving, processing and analyzing new information. Therefore everyone has the most preferable learning styles. The teacher's task is to take into account the learners' preferences and offer a range of different approaches to successful learning. Using interactive games can help the teacher to motivate students and encourage them to sustain their interest and work. The beginners, the students with elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency levels respond best of all to the information which is seen. Picture games appear to be advisable for pair work teaching format on this stage of learning. The idea of the game is probably easier for students to grasp from seeing the pictures or the cards, prepared by the teacher beforehand.

The game "What's the difference" is aimed at developing speaking skills, practicing questions structures as well as checking students' knowledge of the topics "Appearance" and "Everyday Life". The game consists of several steps.

Step 1: Prepare two pictures for each pair of learners. You will need two pictures which are very similar but contain several differences, which the learners will be able to describe.

Step 2: Provide each student with one picture and warn everyone not to look at their partner's picture.

Step 3: Tell learners that everyone should ask questions about their partner's picture with the aim of finding the differences between the two pictures.

Step 4: Finally, let the learners look at each other's picture, compare and discuss their answers.

The outcome of the game is closed. Successful completion of the game will involve finding more differences as well as producing correct questions.

The game "What are they saying?" contains some creative components as the students have to use their imagination and artistic abilities.

Step 1: Prepare the picture of people interacting for each pair of students.

Step 2: Ask the students to make up and write out the conversation people on the picture are having.

Step 3: Ask the students to perform the conversation they have made up.

The game "What do they feel?" can be a variation of the previous game but will require more preparation.

Step 1: Prepare the set of pictures of people expressing various emotions and feelings for each pair of students.

Step 2: Prepare the list of words naming emotions and feelings.

Step 3: Ask the students to match each picture with corresponding emotion.

Step 4: Ask the students to choose which of the people they would like to see as a friend, a boss, a groupmate, a teacher and then comment on their choice.

Both games are aimed at revising the topics "Character", "Feelings and Emotions". They help the teacher to create contexts in which language is useful and meaningful. The games provide as much practice as traditional exercises and give the opportunity for real communication, creating the bridge between the classroom and the real world.

The interactive activities, belonging to the second group, are designed for pair work of students with intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. The main aim of all the exercises represented is to get the students to talk as well as to stimulate their imagination and creative thinking. The activities are built as game-like discussion. Students work in open pairs which can be easily transformed into *triads* or big groups. The outcome of the game is open and can be presented to the whole class. The game "What is being advertised" is a good example of a game-like discussion in which every student is given a turn to speak about his / her values and priorities and to give reasons for their views.

Step 1: Prepare a number of different advertisements from which all names and pictures of products have been removed.

Step 2: Provide each pair of students with one advertisement. The partners discuss what product could be advertised and give the reasons why they think so. After about five minutes the advertisements are exchanged and each pair of students discusses another advertisement in the same way. Taking turns, each pair of students shows their second advertisement to the rest of the group and reports their ideas on the product being advertised.

Step 3: The two students who discussed this particular advertisement in the first round say if they agree or disagree with the ideas expressed by the pair of students which were the second to work with the same advertisement.

Step 4: When all the advertisements have been discussed the teacher gives the solutions.

The activity is especially beneficial for providing the opportunity for each learner to practice the language of persuasion.

The discussion game "Secret topic" demands a certain degree of flexibility in the foreign language and can maximize challenge creativity and motivation. The activity can be organized as a competition. Students start by working in pairs.

Step 1: Each pair of students agrees on a topic they want to talk about without telling the others what it is.

Step 2: The first pair of students starts discussing their topic without mentioning it. The partners are to speak for one minute. The others listen and try to guess the topic.

Step 3: Students who think they know the secret topic have to write it on a piece of paper and show it to the class and to the pair of students who are discussing it before the group. If the students don't manage to guess the topic within one minute, the pair of students goes on discussing for one more minute. The first pair is followed by the next pairs. The pair of students, whose topic remains secret for the group, becomes winners.

This discussion game is aimed at developing students' spontaneous speech as they are to speak without preparation. If the students have a good command of English and acting ability, the discussion, presented before class, may become a real performance which will motivate students and encourage them to do their best in the process. Such activities can help the teacher to foster learners' creativity and "to achieve the affective and cognitive engagement vital for language acquisition as well as understand language used for natural communication" [p. 11].

Pair work can be the part of the simulation, aimed at developing students' communicative fluency. Being highly structured and containing a lot of diverse elements in their content, simulations can be easily adapted to different classes and different students' needs. No matter how reserved and shy the students may be, they overcome the psychological barrier and come to life, hiding behind the role they play.

The simulation "Telephoning" is enacted around the everyday situation, the learners could find themselves in. The activity consists of several stages each of which is based upon the use of pair work. The learners can be supplied with background information and necessary material before or during the simulation. The teacher prepares the role cards and the set of situations for each pair of students.

Step 1: The students are divided into pairs. Each pair gets role cards and the description of the situation they are going to enact.

Step 2: In each pair student A is to perform the role of the person who is in a hurry as he is going to be late for the meeting or the appointment. Student

B is telephoning student A and asking for help and preventing student A from leaving. The learners make up the telephone conversation. The task of student B is to be persuasive and assertive in order to keep the partner talking as long as possible. The task of student A is to finish the conversation as quickly as possible remaining polite and diplomatic.

Step 3: Each pair acts the telephone conversation before the class. The learners discuss the dialogues presented and choose the funniest or the best-performed.

The activity "Telephoning" involves fun and improvisation. Fun involvement can help the teacher to turn the classroom into the ideal place for improving students' language skills. The simulation "One day in London" is aimed at practicing topic "Travelling" as well as getting students speaking together in order to exchange opinions, express agreement and disagreement and give reasons and arguments. The teacher prepares role cards for each pair of students and describes the situation the learners are going to act out. The students in each pair are to plan how to spend a day in London together. They have a self-drive car and only £10 each. They come to the airport at 9 a.m. and have to be back at 9 p. m.

Step 1: Each pair gets the role cards. They are to perform the roles of people with different and absolutely incompatible characters.

Step 2: The students get the lists of sights they can visit in London. They have to plan the day in such a way that everyone is happy with it.

Step 3: The students work in pairs. They find out from each other what they would like to do and what they would not like to do. Both partners are trying to be insisting and persuasive but avoid arguing. Finally the students work out a timetable for the day and present them to the class.

Step 4: After the time-table has been reported before the group the other students interview the partners about their choices and differences between individual suggestions.

The emphasis of this simulation is on students speaking together, directing the conversation expressing uncertainty, hesitating and interrupting each other.

Conclusions. Learners' interest and motivation depend a lot on the language material the teacher may use as well as the way learning process is organized. Pair work properly organized can provide

the opportunity for intensive language practice. Out of various teaching formats pair work format appears to be the simplest and the quickest way of organizing students into group and adding variety to learning process. Pair work format can be seen as preparatory in the activities designed for the students of elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency levels. Picture games appear to be suitable for students working in closed pairs and the outcome of the activity is not presented before the group. The activities designed for pair work of students with intermediate and advanced proficiency levels are aimed at generating a lot of oral work. In this case pair work can be built as a game-like discussion in which students learn to argue, give reasons, agree and disagree on their choices and speculate on possible alternatives. The learners work in open pairs and the outcome of the game is presented to the whole class. The game-like discussions are beneficial for motivating students and developing their creativity and imagination.

Pair work can be the part of the simulation, enacted around the everyday situation or the topical problem. Based on dramatizing simulations can help each student to get relaxed and to enjoy learning.

The **further research** in this area is to be devoted to the analysis of grammar games as the way of encouraging and motivating students.

REFERENCES:

1. Hadfield J. Classroom Dynamics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 128 p.
2. Klippel F. Keep Talking. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. 202 p.
3. McIver N. How do I organize my students into groups. *Reading in Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. P. 70–75.
4. Pushpanathan T., S. Satheesh. Pair Work as an Effective Teaching Technique in Language Classroom. *An International Peer-reviewed Journal*. 2017. Vol. 2, Special issue-3. P. 206–211.
5. Storch N. How Collaborative is Pair Work? *Language Teaching Research*. 2001. № 5. P. 29–53.
6. Thompson G. Some Misconceptions about Communicative Language Teaching. *Reading in Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. P. 30–36.
7. Watcyn-Jones P., Howard-Williams D. Pair Work. Edinburgh Gate: Penguin English. 2002. 115 p.
8. Wright A. Games for Language Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 270 p.