

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
WORLD LANGUAGES

ДОБРЕДОЈДОВТЕ WĒLLKOMM स्वागत छ
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International Journal of World Languages

Volume 1, No. 3, August 2021

Internet address: <http://ejournals.id/index.php/IJWL/issue/archive>

E-mail: info@ejournals.id

Published by ejournals PVT LTD

Issued Bimonthly

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THE EFFICIENCY OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH IN ESL TEACHING PROCESSES .

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Abstract.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) represents an approach to language learning and teaching grounded in the expanding database of second language acquisition (SLA) research. Having grown out of the communicative approach to language teaching (CLT), TBLT proposes task as the unit of analysis in SLA research and language pedagogy. While there are several proposals for understanding and implementing TBLT, these have in common an experiential 'learning by doing' philosophy, informed by analyses of real-world tasks, and the design, staging and implementation of related pedagogic tasks. Identifiable challenges exist in implementing TBLT, as shown by investigations in various contexts, but it is argued that the shared unit of analysis provides an improved potential for synergies among theory, research and contextualised practice in language learning and teaching.

Аннотация.

Обучение языку на основе задач (TBLT) представляет собой подход к изучению и преподаванию языка, основанный на расширяющейся базе данных исследований по изучению второго языка (SLA). TBLT, выросший из коммуникативного подхода к обучению языку (CLT), предлагает задачу как единое целое. анализа в исследованиях SLA и языковой педагогике. Несмотря на то, что существует несколько предложений по пониманию и реализации TBLT, их объединяет философия "обучения на собственном опыте", основанная на анализе реальных задач, а также на разработке, постановке и реализации связанных педагогических задач. Как показывают исследования в различных контекстах, существуют определенные проблемы при реализации TBLT, но утверждается, что общая единица анализа обеспечивает улучшенный потенциал для синергии между теорией, исследованиями и контекстуализированной практикой в изучении языка и преподавании.

INTRODUCTION

Task-based language teaching is a student -centered approach to second language instruction. It is an offshoot of the communicative approach, where in activities focus on having students use authentic target language in order to complete meaningful tasks, i.e. situations they might encounter in the real world and other project-based assignments. These project could include visiting the doctor, making a phone call, conducting an interview in order to find answers to specific questions or gathering information to make a poster or advertisement. In task-based teaching the focus is not on grammar ,you have already introduced your students to necessary constructions earlier in the chapter or unit, as well as to the vocabulary they will need to complete the task, but rather on helping students develop linguistic strategies for completing the assigned tasks within the constraints of what they know of the target language. Because the emphasis is on spontaneous, creative language use, whether spoken or written, rather than on absolute accuracy, assessment is based on task outcome.

Types of Task-based Teaching.

In the book "Second language pedagogy " N. S. Prabhu cites three basic types of tasks: Information gap, reasoning gap and opinion gap.

Information gap activities are those that involve the transfer of information from one person to another, from one form to another or from one place to another. For example, two students might have different schedules, but they want to find time to get together to have tea. They need to get relevant information from each other to determine when they are both free, as well as when the available times coincide with when a tea house is open. This type of activity allows students to request information, ask for clarification and negotiate both meaning, particularly when misunderstandings occur, and appropriate conclusions to the task.

Reasoning gap activities are those in which you ask your students to derive some information from that which you give them. They are required to comprehend and convey information, much as in an information gap activity, but the information that they are asked to convey is not exactly the same that they comprehend. They are asked to use reason and logic to decide what information to convey and what resolution to make for the problem at hand. For example, you might ask your students to make a decision between speed and cost or cost and quality, given a certain situation and various constraints.

Opinion gap activities are those that ask students to convey their own personal preferences, feelings or ideas about a particular situation. On a higher level, you might ask them to take part in a discussion or debate about a political or social issue. On a lower level, you might ask them to complete a story. In these types of activities, there is no right or wrong answer, and, therefore, there is no objective means by which to judge outcomes, outside of whether what the students do or say addresses the task at hand. You might require them to speak or write for a certain amount (words or time) and you might ask them to use certain constructions. Otherwise, assessment is subjective rather than objective.

MAIN PRINCIPLES OF TASK-BASED TEACHING APPROACHES:

What steps do you need to take there in order for your students to succeed?

1. Start with a pre-task activity.

This stage starts with the instructor explaining to her students what will be expected in the task cycle and post-task review stages. In a lower-level class, it will likely include an introduction or review of key vocabulary or grammatical concepts the students will need to accomplish the assigned task.

This is very much in line with the PPP (presentation, practice, performance) approach to instructional design. In a higher-level class, where the grammar and vocabulary have already been introduced, the students might be asked to brainstorm as to what language and linguistic features they would expect to need in order to complete the task successfully.

2. Follow the actual task cycle.

In this stage, the students complete the task either in pairs or small groups. The instructor is generally reduced to the role of observer, stepping in only when the students seem to be going too far astray from the assignment at hand.

3. Classroom work ends with the post-task review.

This is where the students present their work in some fashion. They might report their findings to the class as a whole. They might perform a dialog or skit. They might share

their written story or video or poster with their classmates.

Depending on your goals and the time available, you can ask your students to perform some type of peer assessment at this point. This also assures you that your students pay attention to the presentations of their classmates!

4. Give a relevant homework assignment.

Unless the activity is the culmination of a unit, chapter or class, you will likely need to come up with an appropriate homework assignment and a logical follow-up to the activity just completed in class. This too can take a number of forms.

You might want to ask your students to write an essay based on their in-class work. They might write a reflective piece, a self-critique about what they accomplished and learned. They might write an assessment of the others in their group, of the other groups or of the project as a useful learning mechanism. They might turn in their own version of the project, as they would have done it if they could have worked independently, explaining why they would have done things differently had they had the opportunity.

Favorite Task-based Activities

With some theoretical background and those practical steps in mind, let's look at some task-based activities you might want to use in your language classroom.

1. Road Trip

Have your students ever asked you where you are going to travel over winter break or summer vacation? Why not let them help plan a trip for you?

It is not important whether you take one of these proposed trips or not, but it will help your students feel like they are making an impact on your life, the same way they know that you are impacting their lives.

For this activity, you should have enough maps for each group in your class. Because your students are likely more familiar with their home country than the country whose language they are studying, you should be sure to have local maps-and everyone should work under the assumption that this is going to be a true "road trip," meaning that you will be driving.

At the beginning of the class, you should ask each group what information they need from you in order to plan the perfect trip. This might include the number of days you wish to travel, your budget and what you like to do while on the road or in your free time. Once your students have this information, set them loose with their maps and give them time to plan!

When they are done, have them present their trip to the entire class. Students

What about homework? Depending on the level of the students, there are a couple of options. If it is a lower-level class, they could write a short postcard home, telling some key points of one day of the trip.

2. The Business Mixer

If you have a class of older learners, college students or professionals, they will have to learn how to talk at mixers, parties and business functions. This means that they will need to learn to talk using a combination of small talk and job talk. Why not help prepare them for this by doing a simulation activity in the target language?

For this activity, you will need to prepare in advance a number of cards that will tell students (1) the name of their company, (2) the product they sell or represent, (3) some basic information about the company they work for and (4) what they are looking for. You should be sure that each card has at least one match for point (4). You do not

want to set your students up for failure.

Before starting, you should ensure that all students know what a mixer or networking activity is and what it entails. You might also want to have them think up a few basic introductions and small talk questions before letting them converse with each other. You might even want to demonstrate the activity-using a different set of cards!-with one of the students, with a teacher's aid, if available, or using two students in your class.

In the activity itself, students will walk around the room introducing themselves and engaging in some small talk, before discussing what it is they do and what they are looking for in a business deal or partner. At the end of the activity, they should return to their perfect pair, and each can explain why it is that they are the match for that person. For homework, as in real life, your students can follow up with a brief handwritten note or short email message thanking their partner for their time and reiterating their interesting in working together.

3. First Day of Class

How do you spend the first day of class?

Do you simply introduce what you are going to do and then send your students home? Do you ensure that they learn at least one thing, especially if it is a class of beginners? What if it is a more advanced class? Why don't we turn an introductory activity into a fact-finding mission?

The odds are pretty good that your students are in your class in order to learn how to speak and that they will want as many opportunities to speak as they can find! One way of giving them these opportunities is to have conversation partners. While you could assign partners at random, why not let them find their own potential partner(s)? Once you have agreed on a list of questions, send your students back into their groups to put these questions into a logical order. Come back together again and agree upon an order. At this point, each student should pair up with another student, preferably one from a different group. They should ask each other the questions, making note of the answers-if the class is large and time is short, you should cut the number of questions down from 20-so they can introduce their partner to the class as a whole. After your students have done this, they should then take their schedules and compare them with that of another student or students whom they might find interesting to converse with. The final step in this exercise is for the students to determine whether they have compatible schedules or not, and, if so, agree upon a time to meet for weekly or twice-monthly conversation.

4. The Farewell Party

Everyone sees friends move away at some point in their life. Maybe when that happened to you, you planned a farewell party for them. Why not turn this into a task-based activity for your classroom?

You can start by asking your students to brainstorm what type of party you would throw for a friend who is moving away and what they would need for it. That will get them thinking about parties in their own cultures.

Before class, you will need to make a shopping list and a separate stack of cards. On them will be the foods and drinks that appear on that list. Each student will get a list and a card.

The lists could be in the first language or in the target language, depending on what type of class you are teaching. The cards should be in the target language. The first task for your students is to go around and identify, in the target language, who is bringing what to the party. Once you have been assured that everyone has done this step correctly, you can divide the class into small groups and start the second stage: planning the actual

party!

For this task, you will need to assign your students a number of questions to resolve: They will need to decide when is the best time for the party, what they will do at the party, what kind of farewell present(s) to buy for your mutual friend and what other food or drinks would be appropriate to bring. At the end, each group will present its party plan and everyone will decide who has planned the best party.

What about homework? One idea is for each student to take on the role of the friend who is leaving and, the day after the party and before leaving town, writes a thank you note to his or her fellow students, thanking them for the party, reminiscing about the most pleasant moments-the food, drink and activities, being sure to be specific-and saying how much they like their present(s) and will miss everyone.

advantages of TBLT

Implicit learning

The aim of TBLT is to help learners develop implicit knowledge of the language that will enable them to participate easily and naturally in communication. The learners get the form and use of the target language without being explicitly being taught. The role of the teacher is to design tasks by replicating and creating the conditions for language learning and for communication that exists outside the confines of the classroom. The aim is that the learners' interlanguage will gain implicit language knowledge while doing tasks.

Incidental learning

Much of our everyday learning is incidental. TBLT provides opportunities for unplanned learning. Completing a real-world task allows the acquisition to take place without any deliberate intention on the part of the learner or the teacher.

Meaningful learning

TBLT allows meaningful communication to occur during the accomplishment of tasks.

Disadvantages of TBLT

- Some teachers criticize TBLT for focusing mainly on fluency at the expense of accuracy.
- TBLT requires a high level of creativity and initiative on the part of the teacher.
- TBLT requires resources beyond the textbooks and related materials usually found in language classrooms.
- Evaluation of task-based instruction can be difficult. The nature of task-based learning does not allow it to be objectively measurable.

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