

Task Based Learning for School Learners to Increase Learners Speaking and Writing Skills

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Abstract: The introduction provides the rationale for the topic focusing on the challenges and solutions in TBL and especially working with students to increase their speaking and listening skills.

Keywords: Communication, language acquisition, modification, fluency, accuracy, motivation, reliability.

Introduction: Task-based learning (TBL) encourages language learners to complete meaningful interactive tasks which, in turn, encourages communication between learners and between the learner and the teacher (Wills and Willis, 2007). TBL requires learners to use the target language with a specific objective in mind, for example writing a letter, planning a trip to a specific destination or designing a project in a team-based situation (Wills and Willis, 2007).

The communication that TBL encourages enables discussions of the target language and the ways in which the language should be used which encourages deeper learning and the acquisition of a larger vocabulary (Wills and Willis, 2007). Task-based teaching presents various challenges for teachers in terms of how to develop the tasks that are specified in a task-based syllabus into specific lessons (Skehan, 2018) and how to encourage participation of all learners in TBL and task-based lessons (Ellis, 2020).

The rationale for this choice of topic is that whilst TBL is highly effective method for language learning because it encourages the learner to acquire/use the target language as a tool and not simply as a goal (Dorathy, 2018), TBL presents key challenges for both teachers and learners. The aim of the essay is to highlight the main challenges and possible ways of overcoming these challenges so that the multiple benefits of this learning approach can be harnessed.

Concept of TBL and effect on Learners Performance

“Learning a second or foreign language may be facilitated using a teaching strategy known as Task-based learning (Ellis et al., 2019). Tasks assigned in class are oriented at fostering language acquisition and development (Tan, 2021). Within the context of the TBL curriculum, a focus on grammatical and lexical norm is reduced in preference of a strategy that is more realistically practical and interactive (Rachayon & Soontornwipast, 2019)”.

The ability to communicate effectively is essential for learning a new language. This feedback loop allows learners to revise their dialogue in consultation with their language partners, resulting in clear and understandable information (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). By negotiating, students are more likely to be conscious of the formal aspects of the target language. This can be done by emphasizing the shape of the language, which students may not always be aware of (González-Lloret, 2019). In order to acquire a second language, it is necessary for students to concentrate on the forms of the target language. In consideration of this, it may be deduced that value consistency and input modification are both significant (Fang, et al., 2021).

According to this point of view, tasks provide students with a beneficial opportunity to analyze the significance of the material, make modifications to the content, and focus on the formal aspects of the language they are attempting to acquire (Bhandari, 2020).

Learner outcomes are regarded as being of the utmost significance in the process of education because they assist learners in transitioning from an understanding of the semantics of the target language to an understanding of how to interpret it, in addition they assist students in testing hypotheses regarding the target language. For these reasons, learner outcomes are considered to be of the utmost significance (Nassaji, 2020). Students are able to identify the gap between what they intend to express in their second language and what they are really capable of communicating due to this technique. This allows students to develop on the “linguistic abilities they already possess, enabling them to overcome the gap” (Chong & Reinders, 2020). In other words, production provides students with a unique opportunity to actively apply their cognitive resources. Student output is not only an indication of acquired data but also of learning on the job. Research has revealed that assignments offer competent opportunities for students for modifying their production to make it more comprehensible (Namaziandost, Nasri & Esfahani, 2019).

“Fluency, accuracy, and criticality are considered to be the three most important aspects of learning a second language. The ability of a student to speak a language clearly and correctly is referred to as fluency, while accuracy refers to the learner's capacity to use the language in the manner in which it should be used in accordance with the expectations of the culture. The term “criticality” relates to the extent to which a student is able to make use of increasingly complicated linguistic structures and patterns” (Ali, 2019). Learners may enhance their fluency, accuracy, and complexity by engaging in task-based learning activities. For instance, if a teacher wants to boost the students' fluency, they may have had them participate in a task that focuses on the meaning of the words (Liu, Mishan & Chambers, 2021); If the purpose is to raise the degree of or the amount of reliability of a task, the teacher may give the students with extra activities that are task-based in order to accomplish this objective.

According to Vygotsky, the main source of cognitive and mental activity for students is the external activity they participate in. When students are actively engaged in this activity, their cognitive processes are activated. This can occur at a psychological level, including cognitive and language development (Motlhaka, 2020). The belief that what is born on the interpsychic level would eventually show itself in the whole person drives the growth of language from the interpsychic to the intracardiac level. This is accomplished by converting mental activity from external to internal, which is then followed by a process of self - reflection and estimation

(Lukas & Yunus, 2021). This indicates that for second language learning, students build knowledge together cooperatively as a mutual activity.

This engages students' interest in cognitive procedures related to second language learning, which in turn promotes learning, as Ellis (2000) explains: “First, learners work with a partner to perform a new activity. After they have learned the skill, they are able to do it on their own.” (p. 209), a process that helps people learn new skills or techniques is called scaffolding. Collaborative activities that involve knowledge sharing are an effective way for students to learn a second language. Previous research has shown that working together on tasks helps students learn more effectively, and collaborative activities can help students overcome any language difficulties that may be beyond their own ability.

Challenges in TBL

The exploration of the specific challenges for task-based learning will be divided into these sub-sections:

Constructing lessons around TBL

This subsection will examine the difficulties teachers face in creating realistic tasks to ensure that all students achieve the class's learning objectives (Ellis, 2005), creating lessons based on TBL and thus achieving policy objectives (Tavakoli and Skehan, 2005). The willingness of the learners has the greatest influence on your choice of tasks. There is no point in taking action if the learners are not ready to take it. They might each have distinguished agendas: this should be negotiated and managed as a team. If the learners are enquired regarding their anticipations, pre-requisites and wants, courses can be agreed to meet the most reasonable requests of the learners (Nakamura, Phung & Reinders, 2021). When choosing a method, it must be kept in mind that an unacquainted method cannot be imposed on a group regardless of consultation. Facilitators should adjust decisions and approach based on group preferences and ongoing evaluation of the course (Azlan, Zakaria & Yunus, 2019). However, if the instructor feels the need to introduce a new method to the learners, this must be discussed with them. As a result, learners were sometimes surprised by how much they liked the previously unfamiliar procedure.

In most types of higher education, teachers design lessons by requesting what they think learners should know, mentioning students this information, and ultimately testing how well students absorb what is taught (Chua & Lin, 2020). On the contrary, designing TBL courses needs teachers to “think backwards”—think backwards as they plan around what they desire learners to be competent enough for doing when they complete the course; only then do teachers consider

what students should consider. Wiggins and McTighe (1998) use the term inverse design for describing this approach to curriculum development, which allows teachers to construct a curriculum that offers students with declarative and procedural knowledge (Payne, 2020). This is a significant difference, but if teachers are merely teaching with the goal of introducing the concepts, it could be very complex to decide what teachers want students to be able to do after the course is over. The following questions are a good place to start. The importance of helping students learn about different cultures is clear when considering TBL tasks and materials for language courses.

It is believed that by learning a new language, students will be more motivated to do things differently than they are used to (Ji & Pham, 2020). It is believed that students will be encouraged to become aware of themselves and their surroundings, to understand others, and to explore aspects of the culture that most people take for granted. Actions and projects will challenge preconceived notions and help students develop a greater understanding of their skills and abilities (Kang & Lee, 2019). This is a valuable activity for students who want to be aware of their own cultural backgrounds and how those backgrounds may impact their views. For example, people who belong to the same particular ethnic group might be urged to explore diverse experiences, ways of life, or social realities in order to have a deeper understanding of their fellow peers.. Additionally, attitudes can vary between different groups. For example, between ethnic groups within a country, or between different nationalities living in the same country (Erlam & Ellis, 2019). Encouraging students to explore their own beliefs and values, as well as the beliefs and values of others, can help them better understand the culture.

CONCLUSION

The TBL is designed to help teachers to evaluate their teaching effectiveness by looking at student achievement rather than just whether they have learned the information. Some people criticize the TBL because they believe that it diminishes the learning process by reducing it to test preparation. The goal of the TBL is for teachers to keep teaching as long as the content they are covering is still applicable to the students' actual learning. Task-based language learning and teaching presents many challenges, including curriculum design, equal student participation, student motivation, and achievement of learning goals, all of which can be overcome by using different techniques and approaches with language learners to ensure TBL is valid for all students. By following the four basic components of TBL: well-designed groups, liability, feedback, and assignments. It can be concluded that

teachers create an environment that encourages the quality and quantity of communication needed to turn small groups into influential learning teams. When students work in pairs or small groups, they are more likely to come up with creative solutions to problems during task-based learning activities that emphasize participation from all members of the group. This is due to the fact that students are more likely to share their ideas and feedback with their partners, which can lead to improved ideas and solutions. Possessing students liable for attendance and preparation can encourage team members for behaving in a social manner, which builds cohesion and fosters trust. It has been concluded that students develop confidence in the group to the point where they are committed and competent enough for tackling complex tasks with minimal or no outside assistance.

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