

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

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## Abstract

This article deals with the significance of task-based language teaching in an English classroom for second language learners. In this article, the origin of this teaching method is outlined and a detailed definition for this approach is provided to explain its use. Also, this paper highlights the sequence of the tasks that could be employed in an English classroom and showcases its main benefits for improving language skills. To improve the reliability of this article, some experiment results are analyzed and practical examples are given.

**Keywords:** task-based language teaching, second language, English classroom, pre-task, task cycle, post-task, evaluation, feedback.

## Introduction

Throughout many years second language instructors are using various teaching methods to help language learners and make the process of learning more engaging. One of the most effective ones is the task-based language teaching, known as TBLT, which is considered as the most interactive and useful one among students and teachers. This teaching method focuses on the use of authentic and real tasks to improve language proficiency. It creates a lively environment in a class, since an active participation of students is encouraged, that may involve teamwork, collaboration and communication in a class. The students in TBLT classes are encouraged to use the target language to complete assignments and tasks successfully. The main objective of this teaching method is making the learning easier and more interactive for ESL students. The efficacy of TBLT in an English classroom is outlined in this article and the information about the sequence as well as types of tasks is provided.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this article, the data from different methodological books and articles is provided enhance the reliability of the given information. One of the most significant sources has been “Task-based Language Learning and Teaching” by Ellis, R. (2003). This book provided a great deal of information about a task-based language teaching and provided definitions to this method. It is stated that this teaching method is important in engaging ESL students in different activities that direct their focus toward linguistic structure and provide them with opportunities to engage actively in authentic language use [1]. The additional source has been “Task-based Language Teaching” by Nunan, David (2004). In this book, he suggests that task-based learning creates student-centered learning environment, supporting independence in the class

and making the process easier for learners with different levels [2]. Additional sources are “Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning: An Overview” by Rebecca L. Oxford, “Language Teaching Methodology: A textbook for teacher” by Nunan, David (1991), “A Framework for Task-Based Learning” by Willis, Jane (1996) and others. All of these sources have been useful to support my views and explain the data.

The analysis of the importance of the TBLT in an English classroom for ELS students can be studied with a variety of methods, such as descriptive, comparing-contrasting, the use of the clear results of specific researches and lastly reaching conclusions. Firstly, the descriptive method is employed by definitions for this teaching method that is crucial to learn more about its origins, advantages and its use in academic classroom. Subsequently, the main order of the tasks and their types are analyzed with comparisons. As a main source of the data, the results from one experiment are given and analyzed in a detailed way. This paper is analyzed by making relevant comparisons and explanations. In this article, the presented data is clarified based on observing the final results of studies and making accurate conclusions. The participants in this study are SEEU undergraduate students, aged between of 18-25. The total number included 60 students, male and female, all in the multicultural classroom setting. Their level of proficiency is pre-intermediate and intermediate [6].

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Task-based language teaching is an effective approach that creates a natural context for improving the second language. The reason why is that students are engaged in completing tasks by making interactions with others. It is necessary to aid language acquisition, since expressing meaning would be easier and understanding between language learners is easily facilitated. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) considers tasks as the most important factor in the second language learning. The types of activities may differ and the sequence should be in order. Instead of teaching vocabularies and grammar structures in an isolated way, this teaching method makes students to make connections between these aspects, making the communication easier. Activities mostly relate to the students' experiences. The TBLT classes are often student-centered and teachers give guidance as a supporter. TBL is mostly employed by foreign-language teachers. Language teachers originally adopted Task-Based Learning for a variety of reasons such as making their classrooms more student-centered and collaborative by using more tasks.

There should be a sequence in employing the tasks in this method. It should follow the order and there are three basic phases: Pre-task, Task cycle and Post task stage [6].

Pre-task: The topic is introduced by the teacher and all instructions are explained. This stage gives students an understanding of important details that are necessary to know. Pre-task also may include brainstorming or asking questions about the theme. The visual and audio materials can be used to further explain and give additional information.

Task cycle: it is the main phase of this method and learners are expected to use the target language based on their previous knowledge according to the instructor's guidance. Also, three components are involved in a task cycle:

**Task:** Students are provided with handouts and other instructions and then they should work in pairs or small groups. The teacher's can be considered as a facilitator.

**Planning:** the reports are planned in an effective way. The students may make decisions on their way of presentation and give each student in the group a part of the task, therefore, responsibility and work are divided in an equal measure. The teacher observes the class and guides students if necessary.

**Report:** the students give information about their findings in the form of a presentation. Other students should listen and take notes. Short questions can be asked during the process. The teacher's main function also includes providing with feedback on the organization of the presentation.

**Post-task stage:** it is also significant in this method, since reflections on the tasks are made in this phase which is important to for improving some parts and correcting mistakes.

According to Willis (1996), there are six different types of tasks [5]:

Listening – note taking, fact finding, brainstorming;
Comparing or matching –finding the same or different features, match statements;
Ordering and sorting – categorizing, ranking, classifying;
Share personal experiences – describing, explaining ideas, narration;
Problem solving – a real or hypothetical situation will be given and it is analyzed;
Creative tasks – it is based on finding new ideas and designing.

In terms of its benefits, there are many important ones to mention. The students are in the center and have a leading role in the classes. They work on the material that are familiar to them which makes the process of learning more engaging. Additionally, collaboration is fostered among language learners, which promotes exchanging ideas and improves speaking skills. Overall, the classroom environment would be more enjoyable and interactive that makes many students to be involved the learning process.

The research conducted at South East European University (SEEU) on developing students' speaking skills reveals that task-based language teaching has many benefits to ELS students [6]. The study is done by asking students' and teachers' personal opinions about task-based teaching that involved using questionnaires. The questionnaires had options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". In this study, six English teachers and 60 students participated. These students are divided into two groups: an experimental group where the task- based program is used and a control group who are taught in a traditional way. It took 8 weeks period of time (2012).

The results were impressive, since teachers reported that this TBLT had a positive influence on students learning process. It created more meaningful academic environment in the class. Also, students had positive attitudes, as they were encouraged to do the tasks because of their authenticity. Overall, the proficiency in the target language was enhanced to a certain level.

## CONCLUSION

It is certainly clear that task-based language teaching has many interpretations and it can be employed in an adaptive way in teaching ELS students. Today there are many teaching methods for second language learners, but this method is completely different from them with

its content and efficacy. The reason why is that it has many clear stages, which facilitates the language learners to adapt the learning environment in an easier way. Also, different types of the tasks are aimed at different language features, that is necessary for developing various aspects of the language. In the class, where task-based language teaching is employed, students can engage in tasks that are related to the real life or their experiences, thereby they find it easy to comprehend and follow.

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