

THE EVOLUTION OF A TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD THE SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD

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Abstract: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a communicative language teaching method that emphasizes learners' engagement in accomplishing practical, real-world tasks. This study explores the theoretical foundations of TBLT, discussing its strengths and weaknesses. It also examines strategies for designing effective tasks and seamlessly incorporating them into language curricula. Findings reveal a positive link between TBLT and enhanced language acquisition. The study includes real-life examples of TBLT applications and provides actionable advice for educators.

Annotatsiya: Vazifaga asoslangan tilni o'rgatish (TBLT) kommunikativ tilni o'rgatish usuli bo'lib, o'quvchilarning amaliy, real vazifalarni bajarishda faolligini ta'kidlaydi. Ushbu tadqiqot TBLT ning nazariy asoslarini o'rganadi, uning kuchli va zaif tomonlarini muhokama qiladi. Shuningdek, u samarali vazifalarni ishlab chiqish va ularni til o'quv dasturlariga muammosiz kiritish strategiyalarini ko'rib chiqadi. Topilmalar TBLT va rivojlangan tilni o'zlashtirish o'rtasidagi ijobiy bog'liqlikni ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot TBLT ilovalarining hayotiy misollarini o'z ichiga oladi va o'qituvchilar uchun amaliy maslahatlar beradi.

Абстракт: Обучение языку на основе задач (TBLT) — это коммуникативный метод обучения языку, который подчеркивает участие учащихся в выполнении практических задач из реальной жизни. В этом исследовании исследуются теоретические основы TBLT, обсуждаются его сильные и слабые стороны. В нем также рассматриваются стратегии разработки эффективных задач и их плавного включения в языковые учебные программы. Результаты указывают на положительную связь между TBLT и углубленным изучением языка. Исследование включает реальные примеры применения TBLT и дает практические советы учителям.

Key words: language learning theory, communicative competence, task based language teaching, language acquisition.

Introduction: In recent decades, there has been an increasing focus on communicative teaching in modern language instruction. Whereas traditional approaches emphasize grammar and explicit instruction, communicative approaches

prioritize fluency and using language in real-life situations. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a significant communicative approach, structuring learning around the completion of meaningful tasks. TBLT posits that learners acquire language most effectively by actively participating in tasks that mirror real-world scenarios. These tasks enable learners to encounter and apply various language features, enhancing their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, ultimately boosting their communicative competence. This paper examines the theoretical foundations of TBLT, evaluates its strengths and limitations, and explores methods to optimize its effectiveness. It also provides practical advice on designing and implementing diverse learning tasks within a TBLT framework.

Literature review: Task based language teaching has emerged as a prominent communicative language teaching approach, shifting the focus from grammatical accuracy to communicative fluency and the ability to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a prominent communicative language teaching perform real-world language tasks (Willis, 1996). This approach contrasts sharply with traditional grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, which often prioritize explicit grammar instruction tasjupon various perspectives within second language acquisition (SLA) research.

Several theoretical frameworks inform the design and implementation of TBLT. One key influence is the communicative competence model proposed by Hymes (1972), which emphasizes the importance of learners' ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. TBLT aligns with this model by providing learners with opportunities to develop their communicative competence through authentic task completion.

Another influential perspective is interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996), which posits that interactional modifications during communication play a crucial role in language acquisition. TBLT facilitates this interaction through collaborative task activities, where learners negotiate meaning, provide feedback, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. The focus on negotiation of meaning in TBLT is also supported by Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, which suggests that producing language is essential for language development.

Furthermore, the cognitive perspective emphasizes the role of mental processes in language acquisition (Skehan, 1998). TBLT tasks encourage learners to actively process information, plan their language use, and monitor their own performance, thereby contributing to cognitive development and language learning.

The literature reveals a diversity of tasks used in TBLT, ranging from simple information-gap activities to complex problem-solving tasks. Willis (1996) categorizes tasks based on their complexity and the type of language they elicit. Other researchers (e.g., Nunan, 2004) have explored the importance of task design principles, such as

clarity of task objectives, authenticity of context, and the opportunity for learner interaction. The selection of appropriate tasks is critical, aligning with learners' proficiency levels and learning objectives.

Empirical research on the effectiveness of TBLT has yielded mixed results (Nunan, 2004; Lee, 2000). Some studies have demonstrated significant improvements in learners' communicative fluency and accuracy (e.g., Loschky, 1994), while others have found less conclusive evidence. These inconsistencies may be attributed to variations in task design, implementation, and research methodologies. Factors such as teacher training, learner motivation, and the overall classroom context play a significant role in determining the success of TBLT.

Despite its popularity, TBLT faces some challenges. One common criticism is the difficulty in assessing learner performance on complex tasks (Willis, 1996). Traditional assessment methods may not adequately capture the multifaceted nature of communicative competence. Furthermore, the implementation of TBLT can be demanding for teachers, requiring careful task design, effective classroom management, and the ability to provide appropriate support and feedback.

Text-based language teaching isn't a single method with a clear inventor but a broad approach evolving over time. Early methods like grammar-translation heavily used texts but focused on grammar, not communication. Later, reading-based approaches prioritized comprehension. The communicative approach shifted focus to fluency, though texts remained a resource. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) both utilize texts within broader communicative or content-focused activities. Technological advances have added multimedia elements to modern text-based learning. Key figures like Widdowson and Nunan contributed significantly to the theoretical underpinnings, but the development of text-based language teaching reflects a continuous evolution influenced by numerous researchers and evolving pedagogical principles. Specific details about historical implementation and experimentation are found in academic research using databases like ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar.

Methodology

TBLT is rooted in communicative language teaching (CLT), which emerged in the 1970s. CLT prioritized interaction as the means and goal of learning a language. The theoretical groundwork for TBLT was influenced by cognitive and sociocultural theories of language learning, especially those proposed by scholars like Lev Vygotsky and Stephen Krashen.

The first major experiment associated with TBLT was conducted by N. S. Prabhu in schools in Bangalore, India. This project demonstrated that students learned English more effectively through engaging in tasks such as problem-solving, reasoning, and information-gap activities rather than through traditional grammar-

focused instruction. (N. S. Prabhu's "Bangalore project" India 1979-1984). The Bangalore Project, initiated by N. S. Prabhu in the late 1970s and early 1980s, is one of the most influential experiments in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Its objective is to test whether students could learn English more effectively through meaning-focused tasks rather than traditional grammar-based instruction. The Bangalore Project was conducted in South India under the auspices of the Regional Institute of English, with N. S. Prabhu as the principal investigator. Prabhu believed that traditional methods of teaching English, which emphasized grammar rules and rote memorization, were insufficient for developing communicative competence. He proposed an alternative approach: learning by doing through engaging in tasks that replicate real-world situations. If I say key features of task-based approach of this project, firstly tasks were designed to involve learners in solving problems, making decisions, or sharing information, secondly the focus was on completing the task meaningfully, not on the accuracy of language use. Three types of tasks were used:

1. Information-gap tasks: Students exchanged information to complete an activity (e.g., finding the missing details in a timetable).
2. Reasoning-gap tasks: Tasks requiring logical reasoning to arrive at a conclusion (e.g., solving a math problem or planning a journey).
3. Opinion-gap tasks: Activities encouraging personal opinions (e.g., discussing a topic or debating).

Language use was also taken into account and it was really efficient for children's speaking skills. For example, grammar and vocabulary were not pre-taught. Instead, students learned them as needed while performing tasks. The belief was that focusing on meaning naturally led to language acquisition, even if errors occurred initially.

Additionally, in this language teaching project teachers' role was somehow different, they were like much more facilitators than traditional instructors. Teachers guided learners in understanding and completing tasks, but they did not explicitly correct language errors unless they hindered communication. As teachers' role were changed, the system of assessment was changed. Traditional exams were avoided. Instead, the project's success were measured by observing learner's ability to use English for communication during and after tasks.

In Indian scientist's task-based language teaching method experiment, there were minimal native English speakers and they were divided into small groups with learners collaborating to complete the given tasks. After experimentation, this project was analyzed by critics. Main successful outcomes were that participants of the project improved their fluency in English, effective communication without formal focus on grammar use. They demonstrated increased confidence and fluency in using the language in real-life situations. Conversely, critics found some challenges that the

method required highly skilled teachers who could manage task-based activities effectively. It was difficult to standardize assessments, as traditional grammar-focused exams were not aligned with the TBLT philosophy.

The project validated the task-based approach and inspired the development of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as a mainstream methodology. It highlighted the importance of interaction, meaningful input, and contextualized language learning. He argued that learners acquire a language not by studying its structure explicitly but by focusing on meaning and problem-solving. The Bangalore project was among the first to prioritize communicative competence over grammatical accuracy in language instruction. The experiment laid the foundation for modern task-based teaching methods and influenced language education worldwide.

Conclusion

The evolution of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) demonstrates its significant impact on modern language education. By prioritizing meaningful communication and learner engagement, TBLT addresses the limitations of traditional grammar-based methods. Grounded in robust theoretical frameworks such as the communicative competence model, interaction hypothesis, and cognitive theories, TBLT provides a holistic approach to language learning. Practical applications, like the Bangalore Project, have proven its effectiveness in fostering fluency, confidence, and real-world communicative competence.

Despite its challenges, such as the demand for skilled teachers and the difficulty of standardized assessments, TBLT has gained recognition as a transformative methodology. It encourages learners to actively use language in diverse, meaningful contexts, facilitating both cognitive and linguistic development. This study emphasizes the need for ongoing research and innovation in task design, teacher training, and assessment strategies to maximize the potential of TBLT in language education. Educators are encouraged to adapt and refine the approach to align with their specific teaching contexts, ensuring its sustained relevance and effectiveness.

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