

# A Review of Task-Based Language Teaching Approaches

Pritam Ramesh Tekade<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Deepak Kumar Shrivastava<sup>2</sup>

Research Scholar, Department of English<sup>1</sup>

Research Guide, Department of English<sup>2</sup>

Sunrise University, Alwar, Rajasthan

**Abstract:** *Task-based Language Teaching emerged in Western education in the 1980s. Task-based Language Teaching is a simple method that uses focused language and communication tasks throughout the learning process. Its ease of use and focused content make it a popular teaching method today. Many distinguished academics have studied Task-based Language Teaching, and this study summarizes their definitions and classifications. It lists the two paradigms Willis and Ellis recommend for Task-based Language Teaching. This article also uses three prior writers' English classroom studies to illustrate this teaching method's success. The article discusses the pros and cons of task-based language teaching and how teachers might develop assignments to avoid these challenges and improve their efficacy.*

**Keywords:** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Language Acquisition

## I. INTRODUCTION

English, the most widely taught and worldwide language, is considered the key to success in many fields [1]. English is spoken and appreciated worldwide, making it important to learn anywhere. English is becoming more popular internationally owing to its effectiveness and development potential. Teaching English has become a unique discipline, with instructors constantly upgrading their methods [2]. English language education has shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered. This change recognizes students' needs and language use in genuine circumstances [3].

The popular task-based method originated in the 1980s US constructivist school of education. Prabhu suggests that learning activities rather than language structures speeds up learning [4]. Relevant tasks may help students improve their English naturally. This strategy promotes discussion and allows students apply their knowledge [4]. Brown defines task-based learning as a set of tasks that complement curricular objectives. The teaching approach emphasizes tasks. Language is not its only goal [5]. Second language acquisition research show that task-based language teaching (TBLT) works. Second language acquisition research led to this paradigm of learning foreign languages. It views particular activities as the catalyst for learning, task completion as the learning process, and task outputs as a sign of successful teaching [6]. Task-Based Language Training (TBLT) is defined, categorised, and used by academics in this article. This article summarizes the pros and cons of TBLT as a teaching method and discusses how relevant specialists have employed it in English language classrooms recently.

## II. TBLT

### A. Definition of Task in TBLT

Nunan describes a communicative task as a teaching activity that prioritizes target language meaning above form or structure. Communicative assignments encourage student participation. Communication should be detailed and meaningful. This means the project should be a complete, real-world communication act. Role-playing might require pupils to negotiate or speak [7].

Additional academics have specified roles from different views. In A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning, Skehan examined task-based schooling. He considers it a "task" if it meets these conditions. A task's meaning is primary, it improves students' communication skills without encouraging any particular linguistic form, tasks and comparable activities in the real world have a specific link, it solves a communication problem, and completing tasks is

the main focus, according to Skehan [8]. Ellis believes “tasks are language use activities that primarily aim to express meaning [9].” According to Bygate&Swain, an activity is meaningful when students utilize language to solve an issue, accomplish a task, or attain a goal [10].

Although scholars define tasks differently, many highlight their relevance to actual life. Learners should employ their cognitive skills by doing, speaking, and cooperating with others. Identify and employ target language information in activities or learning by doing.

### **B. Classification of Task in TBLT**

Nunan classifies tasks as real-life and instructional [7]. The former is real-life language usage, the latter language study. Students must learn to ask for instructions and communicate ideas outside the classroom to mimic the real world. Writing resumes, complaint letters, requesting information over the phone, reserving rooms, and filling out registration forms, study abroad application forms, hotel accommodation registration forms, etc. are genuine language communication activities [11]. Real-life exercises imitate real-life duties in the classroom, enhancing foreign language abilities.

Students seldom complete pedagogical work outside the class. These educational tasks are unrelated to actual life. Learning and applying knowledge via pedagogical tasks develops language abilities. Fu said psycholinguistics and pedagogy dictate teaching obligations. Since it allows students to engage in events unlikely to happen outside the classroom, this activity is academically acceptable, meaning-focused, and employs language but has limited real-world significance [12]. Based on activity and communication aim, Pica defined activities as jigsaw, information-gap, problem-solving, decision-making, and opinion-exchanging [13].

### **C. How to Implement TBLT**

Willis separates task execution into pre-task, task cycle, and post-task stages. Periodic emphasis changes [14]. The pre-task stage introduces activities, encourages student engagement, and provides realistic language resources to warm up. By completing activities, comprehending the text, and preparing for the second stage of communication tasks, students get background knowledge. Teachers and students use paired or group talks, role-playing, and arguments to complete assignments. Task, planning, and reporting comprise task implementation. The post-task stage, sometimes called Language Focus or Language Teaching, involves language analysis and practice. The exercise goes from meaning to form to help students reinforce their language skills and execute the strategy. Bula-Villalobos and Murillo-Miranda concluded that TBLT is based on the idea that tasks are vital for language education and planning [15].

Based on this, Ellis ordered pre-task, during-task, and post-task. Pre-task decides result, and pupils do a comparable job. During-task has a deadline and participant count. The post-task requires the student to report their results and repeat the activity [9].

### **D. Overview of the Effectiveness of TBLT in English Teaching**

Experimental TBLT has been examined in language programs worldwide. TBLT promotes real-life interaction above grammar-translation or product-pedagogy. Three more recent meta-analyses on task-based processing and L2 acquisition are included below.

Ahmed and Bidin examined Malaysian undergraduate writing abilities after task-based language instruction [16]. The research included 30 international students from various countries. Everyone took English proficiency and higher education exams. In 2015, the experimental group received TBLT in "Types of Articles" lesson to enhance descriptive writing. Post-TBLT testing was done on experimental group members. The control group had TBLT-free pre- and post-tests. To determine whether TBLT helped writing, the investigator examined experimental and control group students before and after therapy. The evidence reveals most students believe TBLT works. Complexity, fluency, and accuracy increased dramatically among the experimental language learners. This demonstrates that the experimental group's methods boost language acquisition.

Kafipour, Mahmoudi, and Khojasteh studied Iranian English learners' writing abilities after task-based training [17]. The study randomly allocated 69 intermediate EFL learners to control and experimental groups. Experimental pupils

wrote using TBLT. The control group practiced writing using usual activities. To obtain data, researchers offered TOEFL pre- and post-test writing portions. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA in social science. Iranian English learners who received task-based writing instruction improved dramatically, according to studies. This suggests task-based language training enhances writing. Task-based writing instruction enhances beautiful language structures, expressiveness, and grammatical accuracy.

PPP and TBLT were compared for learning by Noroozi and Taheri. Iranian English learners' learning results were investigated utilizing these two teaching strategies [18]. The study included 18 female and 16 male English learners from a private Iranian language school. It had two phases: pre-evaluation, education and treatment, and immediate post-evaluation. The two teaching methods were assessed using assessment tasks, GJTs, and prompted imitation tests. GJT and EIT tests tested declarative and automated knowledge, while assessment tasks tested students' target language usage in real-world circumstances. The study indicated that TBLT outperformed PPP and controls. This suggests that TBLT taught language traits and meanings better. A detailed review of Noroozi and Taheri's testing demonstrates that TBLT's form-focused approach improves students' grammar. The study showed TBLT students valued language-based teacher feedback. Concentrated exercises in TBLT help students focus on meaning and linguistic aspects. Students concentrate on and absorb language traits via this interaction. Nassaji and Fotos found that tasks and activities help learners recognize and grasp language features in future communicative input. Linguistic attention helps learners reconstruct latent information and acquire the target language [19].

### **III. EVALUATION OF TBLT**

#### **A. Advantages**

In contrast to other teaching methods, task-based teaching offers significant advantages in terms of students' subjectivity, communicative abilities, and veracity [20]. Initially, the development of authentic communication scenarios that are tailored to the age and characteristics of students can serve to pique their interest in learning throughout the execution of a variety of tasks. Students will find it simpler to engage in the tasks, such as purchasing tickets, given that they are likely to be accustomed with them [21]. This can serve as an incentive for them to continue their language acquisition. Secondly, students develop their comprehensive abilities, including communication skills, cooperation, and problem-solving, by closely integrating knowledge and skills during the completion of tasks. Thirdly, students are the executors of duties in TBLT instruction. Each student is able to participate in the classroom and has their own assignments through group collaboration and partner work, which is conducive to playing a dominant role in the learning process. Fourthly, Yan contends that students are afforded the opportunity to engage in discussions and think independently under the guidance and inspiration of educators. This environment is conducive to the development of logical and critical thinking skills, the stimulation of learning enthusiasm, and the development of positive learning habits [22].

#### **B. Disadvantages**

TBLT is not without its disadvantages, in addition to its benefits. Willis is of the opinion that the task arrangement at TBLT is inadequately resourced. In fact, educators frequently encounter time constraints when it comes to the development of assignments and their integration into their classrooms.

Relying on conventional exams rather than task-based assessment methods merely enables students to recite information that has been memorized, rather than showcasing their language abilities in real-world scenarios. Furthermore, the utilization of vocabulary and grammar can result in unpredictable outcomes, particularly during the task execution phase, which can create a sense of unpredictability. This presents a significant obstacle to a more conventional learning environment [14]. Sholeh also notes that excessive class sizes may result in certain complications. TBLT may necessitate additional time to complete the tasks, and teachers may encounter difficulties in allocating adequate time to closely supervise the individual learning process and development of students, and to provide individualized guidance and support as needed [23].

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

Each instructional method has its own set of constraints. Consequently, educators should select suitable teaching methods that are tailored to the unique teaching content, teaching scenarios, and teaching objects. In the teaching process, educators must alter the conventional teaching philosophy and prioritize students, which is also the fundamental concept of the task-based teaching method. Teachers must ensure that they are well-prepared prior to the class, identify suitable tasks, and effectively incorporate the teaching content and objectives into the tasks. This is in accordance with task-based teaching methods. Teachers should offer suitable direction to students as they complete assignments. It is imperative that students assess the task's completion and engage in introspection subsequent to its completion. The task may be repeated if necessary. This is how TBLT becomes effective in English classrooms.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1]. Rahman, T. (2006). Language policy, multilingualism and language vitality in Pakistan. *Lesser-known languages of South Asia: Status and policies, case studies and applications of information technology*, 73-106.
- [2]. Pishghadam, R. (2011). Introducing applied ELT as a new paradigm. *Iranian EFL Journal*, 7.
- [3]. Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4]. Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [5]. Brown, H.D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: an interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- [6]. Cheng Jie & Ma Yuhong (2005). The Application of Task-Based Teaching Method in College English Teaching. *Journal of Mudanjiang Education College*, (03), 32-33.
- [7]. Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- [8]. Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford University Press.
- [9]. Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- [10]. Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (2013). *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing*. Routledge.
- [11]. Xu Yiliang (2006). Reflections on the Application of Task-Based Teaching Method in College English Teaching. *Heilongjiang Higher Education Research*, (03), 171-174.
- [12]. Fu Dongyan (2004). *Application of Task-Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Teaching in China* (Master's Thesis, Guangxi Normal University).
- [13]. Pica, T. (1994). Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second-language learning conditions, processes, and outcomes?. *Language learning*, 44(3), 493-527.
- [14]. Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [15]. Bula-Villalobos, O., & Murillo-Miranda, C. (2019). Task-based Language Teaching: Definition, Characteristics, Purpose and Scope. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 4(6).
- [16]. Ahmed, R. Z., & Bidin, S. J. B. (2016). The effect of task-based language teaching on writing skills of EFL learners in Malaysia. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 6(03), 207.
- [17]. Kafipour, R., Mahmoudi, E., & Khojasteh, L. (2018). The effect of task-based language teaching on analytic writing in EFL classrooms. *Cogent Education*, 5(1), 1496627.
- [18]. Noroozi, M., & Taheri, S. (2022). Task-based language assessment: a compatible approach to assess the efficacy of task-based language teaching vs. present, practice, produce. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2105775.
- [19]. Nassaji, H., & Fotos, S. S. (2011). *Teaching grammar in second language classrooms: Integrating form-focused instruction in communicative context*. Routledge.
- [20]. Li Xiaohui. (2006). *Research on Teaching Chinese Culture as a Foreign Language*. The Commercial Press.
- [21]. Malihah, N. (2010). The effectiveness of speaking instruction through task-based language teaching. *Register Journal*, 3(1), 85-101.

- [22]. Yan Juan (2013). A review of research on task-based teaching methods. China Science and Education Innovation Guide, (2), 14-15.
- [23]. Sholeh, M. B. (2020). Implementation of task-based learning in teaching English in Indonesia: Benefits and problems. Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature, 15(1), 1-9.