

TASK-BASED LEARNING IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSROOM: WHAT, HOW AND WHY?

Muhammad Badrus Sholeh^{*1}, Kisman Salija, dan Sahril Nur
^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Makassar

Abstract

Task-based Learning is increasingly prevalent worldwide. It emphasizes on authentic language use and asks students to perform meaningful tasks. English teaching by tasks is considered useful in a language classroom because the students are expected to learn better the target language when tasks are used in language teaching. The tasks are designed to establish a real language use objectives and to create a natural language acquisition setting. Task-based Learning, often considered being the powerful Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) version, gradually becoming second-language learning. This article describes the Task-based Learning definition, to recognize the principles and characteristics of Task-based Learning, to examine how to implement Task-based Learning in the English classroom, and to clarify the advantages of this approach.

Keywords: Task-Based Teaching, English Teaching, EFL Classroom

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1980s, the term Task Based Learning (TBL) has increased in popularity in the language acquisition because the Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) implementation has highlighted the learners' communicative skills in recent decades. According to (Jeon & Hahn, 2006), Task-based Learning has been used not only because of its strong assumptions, concepts and second language acquisition theories but also because of the exact reasoning behind the implementation of this approach. Hui (2004) explains that the implementation of TBL represents a better meaning interpretation and EFL learning processes as well as other approaches, including the Presentation Practice Product or PPP. The implementation effect of the PPP model is that students cannot implement the framework properly while taking care of grammatical rules (Ritchie, 2003). Moreover, Yen (2016) compared TBLT to PPP in teaching writing, also dealt with the encouragement of students to learn after finding that they needed to rewrite their texts many times.

Task-based Learning is a powerful and advanced learning approach. This approach encourages both language and skills learning during the execution of the task. In Task-based Learning, teachers are not only as instructors but also guides. Likewise, students are both as

*correspondence Address
E-mail: badrus2011@gmail.com

main agents and receivers. Through TBL, students can learn how they use their own communication skills to switch from their first language to their target language. It allows them to learn in partnership and unlocks their likely ability to hire and work with the language of goal professionally (Lin, 2009). Larsen-Freeman (2000) says that students have a great chance to communicate with their peers because they aspire to accomplish a task. This interaction aims to promote the learning of language by attempting to understand and present their meaning.

Task-based Learning gives students an active task and therefore increases learning opportunity by participating and creating tasks. It gives the students more space for critical thinking creativity through activity. In that capacity, it assumes an essential part of the pedagogy of contemporary languages (Solares, 2006). Task-based Learning activities impose a realistic target for the students; by completing the task. TBL can theoretically use the language to associate sense, and thereby, it also increases language standards (Skehan, 1998). It often promotes input from peers. Students should present or evaluate their own thoughts. All should take part in identifying the strengths and shortcomings that emerge from work in the classroom. It generates vital knowledge among students (Ki, 2000).

In Task-based Learning, the central role is taken by the student. It gives them a reasonable share of independence and responsibility in the negotiation of course material, selects linguistic forms from their linguistic repertoire in the exercise of the task, explores various task success and evaluates task results (Breen & Candlin, 1980). Task-based Learning, incorporating the best ideas from communication teaching, provides a shift from the conventional approach where students may not have learned to communicate. This approach will eventually inspire and motivate students to develop fluency, accuracy and acceptable pronunciation of the target language (Guerrero and others, 2020). It offers a real reason for linguistic usage and a natural context for linguistic research. Tasks are an essential component in Task-based Learning as they provide a framework to promote processes of learning. In this way, the cognitive demands of the learner are one of the deciding factors of task difficulty in a task-based approach (Robinson, 2001).

This paper briefly discusses the concept of Task-based Learning, describes Task-based Learning's definitions and features, examines how Task-based Learning applied in the classroom of English as a foreign language and explains the advantages of this approach.

RESEARCH METHOD

This library review analyzed such research, investigations and literature that discuss the concept, the principles, characteristics, the framework and benefits of Task-based Learning in the EFL classroom. Eighteen further scientific research articles obtained book readings and searches for database code. The papers have been examined to link hypotheses. They also work together with individual and reciprocal experience in the teaching and learning methods of English.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Task-based Learning

Task-based Learning is not new approach in foreign language, particularly in foreign language teaching. In the task literature, various meanings of "task" have been offered differing in both scope and formulation, are given in the literature on tasks (Van Den Branden, 2006). For instance, Richards & Rodgers (2001) describe tasks as an activity or objective which uses language, for example, to find a puzzle solution, give directions, and read a map. Edwards and Willis (2005) define a task as an operation with an exact result that has a non-linguistic objective that uses some or all of its language abilities to communicate meaning in a way that is compatible with the real-world use of language. Skehan (2014) underlines the link between tasks and real language usage. From a language acquisition perspective, Nunan (2004) notes that tasks are being used to improve linguistic development, interaction, meaning negotiation, input processing and form emphasis.

According to Ellis (2003), Task-based Learning is a communicative approach which utilizes tasks to facilitate language acquisition. Hassan (2014) says TBL is one of the most famous methods to learning the target language. TBL includes completing tasks in everyday life. Students can carry out a particular task, e.g. by consulting a doctor to use the language they are studying. Furthermore, Harmer (1998) says Task-based Learning is necessary for a successful task. It is an approach that encourages students to work quickly so that their inter-linguistic language is processed and restructured in their own field of interest. Simply, TBL is a language instruction framework that focuses on students' assignments. The tasks given are the core of language teaching.

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that Task-based Learning is an approach that enables students to carry out their tasks and use the task as a central component of unit planning, instruction and the performance of meaningful tasks.

Principles of Task-based Learning

The following are a summary of the most essential Task-based Learning principles (Skehan, 2003; Willis, 1996).

- Students need to be introduced to the real and different language of the target language speakers.
- Students must open and follow for their own needs or purposes the kind of language they want and need.
- Students must have opportunities for unspeaking and substantive use of language in targeted interaction, taking informed risks, making decisions and negotiating meaning while finding solutions for legitimate inquiries.
- Teachers ensure that lessons are interconnected and coordinated to identified goals and inspire enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers should promote self-correction, allow personalized input, and suggest creating language systems (inter language) for individual learners.
- Teachers need to develop student activities that will enable them to detect forms of language. Teachers are (explicitly) expected to instruct form within the framework of primary sense activities.
- All language should be incorporated (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- Learners assessment is done productively and to reach a target; students can measure their own success and progress.

The underlying principle in Task-based Learning is that students undertake activities to increase second-language knowledge and skills in line with how their own processes of the language learning function. Tasks serve as means to determine the language specifications needed for acquisition (Ellis, 2002). Task-based Learning means that some conventional teacher positions are modified. Teachers cannot always serve as a controller for Nunan (1989) when they want their students to exploit, detail and take on a task. According to Allwright (1984), the contact of classes must be handled and managed by everyone present and not simply by the teacher to ensure that the lessons are taken at all. Thus, the emphasis of learning does not focus on the substance or materials of the lesson but the interaction process in the classroom. The teacher's class conduct belongs to the entire school, of which only one member is a teacher (Bailey & Nunan, 1996).

Characteristics of Task-based Learning

Task-based Learning is developed to overcome certain constraints of the conventional PPP approach. This indicates that learning languages are a creative process that promotes

social contact and communication instead of a commodity combined with language experiences and that students are more successful in mastering the target language when they naturally participate in practical task-based activities. The following characteristics characterize Task-based Learning (Nunan, 1991):

- a. Focusing on figuring out how to interact in the target language through interaction.
- b. Using authentic texts for the learning situation.
- c. Students' ability concentrates both on the language and the learning process.
- d. Improving students' personal experiences as critical educational components.
- e. Trying to connect learning of language to activation of language outside the classroom.

According to Swam (2005), the characteristics of Task-based Learning are as follow:

- a. Learning of language should primarily include natural language usage and activities contributed more to meaning instead of language.
- b. Teaching and learning process should promote learner center rather than teacher center.
- c. Since the fully naturalistic learning does not produce objective precision, involvement is important to facilitate the internalization of official language components.
- d. This is best accomplished by offering the students a chance to think about the form and to focus on language components while incidentally emerging in courses that concentrate on meaning or communication.
- e. Task-based Learning is particularly suitable for communicative activities. The activities in pre-or post-task cycles will be helpful. It may help to internalize or improve the awareness of structured communication features.
- f. Conventional approaches or methods are unproductive and inappropriate, in particular, where formal instruction and practice for communicative work are needed separately.

How Task-based Learning can be applied in EFL classroom

Ellis (2003) argues that developing a Task-based Learning lesson requires taking into account the phases or elements of a lesson with the main task. The researcher indicates, however, that these phases all have three key steps or stages in common, and represent the timing of a TBL lesson. The first stage is "pre-task". In this stage, the teacher and students will do different activities before they perform the task. The second stage is 'during' phase. It focuses on the task and provides other educational choices, including the need to work under time constraints. The last stage is "post-task". This stage consists of the ways for tracking task performance.

Task-based Learning framework comes under three key sections: pre-tasking, task cycle and language focus (Willis, 1996) (see Figure 1). The pre-task cycle offers the requisite background, knowledge and procedure. In this stage, students are introduced to both the topic and the task. At this point, the students grasp the task and organize ideas or knowledge on the topic. Students participate in activities to inform them of words or sentences that are useful during the entire task.

The task cycle involves task, planning and reporting stages. In this stage, the students work in groups or pairs with some required language resources. The teacher may support them, but no correction is available. The focus is on fluency and the intent of doing stuff. In the planning process, the students spend time writing or speaking reporting what they have done and what conclusions they have drawn. Teachers can help here with vocabulary, if possible, with an emphasis on communication of the results. During the reporting stage, the teacher receives input and reports orally or in writing to the classes. Again, no overt correction is available.

The language focus cycle comprises of analysis and practice stages. In the analysis stage, the teacher highlights parts of the text for student review. The teacher may then tell the students to indicate the critical characteristics of the text. It will improve learners' comprehension by focusing on the language. In the practice stage, the students practice the teacher-led language areas according to students' requirements. They may practice, dialogue or typical activities from the Present Product Practice (PPP) practice level.

Pre-task		
The teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ presents the topic and describes the task ▪ utilizes activities that allow students to remember useful words and phrases and learn them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ makes sure students comprehend the task directions ▪ can capture students performing the same task 		
The students		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ write important words or phrases the students get in the pre-task stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ may prepare the task 		
Task cycle		
Task	Planning	Report
<u>The students</u>	<u>The students</u>	<u>The students</u>

<p>do the task in a small group or in pairs. They can read/listen to texts.</p> <p><u>The teacher</u> monitors and supports students</p>	<p>make the class ready to report how they managed the task and what they found rehearse what the students are going to say or write a written class version.</p> <p><u>The teacher</u> make sure that the report's aim is clear serves as an expert in language assists students in rehearsing oral or written report.</p>	<p>present the class with their spoken reports, or circulate/show their written reports submissions to the class his spoken reports or circulates/shows their written reports present their spoken or written reports to the class</p> <p><u>The teacher</u> serves as chair, determines who the next speaker is, or makes sure all students read the most report in writing can offer content and short feedback on form can record others performing the similar or same task</p>
Language focus		
<p>Analysis</p> <p><u>The students</u> perform activities for awareness-raising to recognize identify the language features of the text.</p> <p><u>The teacher</u> reviews each class analysis activity pay attention to other useful words, phrases and patterns</p>	<p>Practice</p> <p><u>The students</u> practice different highlights in the text of the task or report process Note valuable linguistic items</p> <p><u>The teacher</u> conduct practice activities to construct the student's confidence after review activities as needed</p>	

<p>may collect linguistic items from the report stage</p>	
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Figure 1: The Framework of Task-based Learning (Willis, 1996)

Why should Task-based Learning be introduced in the EFL classroom

Son (2016) notes that Task-based Learning has several advantages. This approach is, therefore required to be followed by EFL teachers in their real English learning process. The advantages are as follows.

- a. Task-based Learning increases students' motivation.

Task-based Learning is beneficial to inspire students' motivation (Ruso, 1999; Chua et al. 2018; Hakim, 2019; Chua & Lin, 2020). It allowed students to exercise their target language receptivity in classes by posing different tasks. Akhtar, Khan & Kiran (2014) argue that Task-based Learning decreases learner tension in the classroom while also increasing its excitement as part of simulation, role-playing and other activities. In reality, three main reasons make Task-based Learning can motivate students. First, it introduces students to the world of everyday life. It has been shown that the students prefer to engage in a task that is authentic, personal and important (Voke, 2002). Second, it offers students the chance to enhance their results. Finally, students build the opportunity to cooperate or demonstrate cooperation and collaboration with their fellow students (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

- b. Task-based Learning increases unconstrained engagement.

Students will use their vocabulary and grammar if TBL is introduced in the classroom. For instance, students in a five-star hotel are expected to speak to the guest when they mislaid their baggage so that they have to communicate with one another to manage the actual situation. It gives both a chance to utilize the language the students know, pay attention to and practice the language of their friends so that they can create confidence. Students learn the language of their friends to increase their confidence. Shehadeh & Coombe (2010) concludes that tasks allow students to have meaning negotiated, to change their feedback and to concentrate more on the second language portion. Therefore, the ability to communicate impromptu is likely to be enhanced. A recent study (Nhem, 2019)

stated that Cambodian teachers and students are likely to be positively active in group/pair classroom work.

c. Task-based Learning improves language exposure.

Students are suggested to always communicate in English in Task-based Learning. Besides, they irrespective of their precision, so that the more tasks they carry out, the more language revealed. The more exposure the learners get to the language (Krashen, 1982). It implies that the disclosure will lead to improved language output for students. Lightbown and Spada (2006) also suggest that students may acquire and produce large quantities of language while collaborating in the task. Task-based Learning gives students more chances to speak English. It also improves access to English, which allows language acquisition easier. It makes language acquisition easier since the acquisition of language is a problem with exposure (Galliot, 2007). Huang (2016) says that TBL will positively affect the students' language skills. It will increase the curiosity, fun and autonomy of study and language skills of the students. This approach also improves the speaking fluency of students by optimizing their speech level, improving the accuracy of grammar, enhancing expressions and interactional language (Albino, 2017).

Kavaliauskien (2005) analyzes six Task-based Learning advantages. They are ideal for use in the teaching process.

- a. No regulation of expression in the development process. It means that when students take part in the assignment, they are free to respond spontaneously, without any influence by teachers or the host community.
- b. Students use language and resources. To complete the interview, students both have to incorporate their existing knowledge and self-generated resources.
- c. Students play with language during the completion of their assignments. With the whole project lasting for a long time, the entire class, especially the host community, has both written and spoken language experiences.
- d. Students connect and interact during work. It is not only in the official interview, but a high degree of coordination and much communication during the planning of a successful project are needed.
- e. Objective vocabulary arises from the desires of students. It is important as English is the only means of communication if students want the multi-task activity to be completed.
- f. This approach includes reflection on language use. It is seen when the host community reviews its members when students comment and teacher input. Task-based Learning

has significantly improved and considerably improved and has remained for many EFL teachers a potentially productive approach.

CONCLUSION

Over the past two decades, Task-based Learning has significantly improved and been a conceivably productive approach for numerous EFL teachers, while some researchers continue to research the Task-based Learning strengths (BüyükkarcÖ, 2009). Lin (2009) considers Task-based Learning as a trendy language teaching concept. The teaching aim is not to help students achieve planned goals, but rather to establish the framework and requirements for language acquisition. In the learning activities, the positions of the teacher are shifted from the instructor to study setting establisher, colleague, counselor and supporters. The students act as the classroom subjects demonstrating that they are the most crucial learning figures. They are no longer empty vessels for teachers to fill, but torches to be ignited by appropriate learning environments and activities.

Willis (1996) recommends three phases of Task-based Learning, i.e. pre-task, task cycle and language focus. During the pre-task cycle, the teacher describes the topic. Beside, the students are introduced with the tasks that will be done in the task-cycle. In the task-cycle, the tasks are performed by the students. The students execute the task in the target language. In language focus cycle, teacher and students talk the vocabulary used in the language field so that learners can develop their ability to make corrections for the next task.

Task based learning increases the language growth of students since it gives them the chance to play with the target language. Tasks encourage students to utilize the target language to communicate. Task-based Learning is beneficial to students since it requires four language skills. A significant trait of activities is that they contribute to encounters with others. Communication is necessary to complete the task. Task-based Learning thus helps language learners develop their communication skills. Language learners will gain trust as they have a chance to exercise their skills and simultaneously benefit from those involved in carrying out their assignments. It should be remembered that students use the vocabulary deliberately. Therefore, students are encouraged to practice with others, and learners use their language in an authentic atmosphere, which makes students become more productive and automatic users.

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