

Task-based Language Teaching

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Task-based Language Teaching

- TBLT challenges mainstream views about language teaching
 - The principle that language learning will progress where learners' natural language learning capacity can be nurtured

Task-based Language Teaching

- Synthetic syllabi
 - a sequence from linguistic simplicity to linguistic complexity
- Analytic syllabi
 - Organized around the purposes for learning a language

Task-based Language Teaching

- Research shows that learners do not learn linguistic units one at a time
- They induce the linguistic information from the samples they are working on

Task-based Language Teaching

- Theories of language learning behind TBLT
- Krashen's Input Hypothesis
- Swain's Output Hypothesis
- Long's Interaction Hypothesis
- Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory

Task-based Language Teaching

- The syllabus is composed of tasks
- Many definitions of what a task is, but two elements:
 - (a) a process of working toward a goal or outcome, and
 - (b) a focus on meaning rather than form.

Task-based Language Teaching

- In general, a task is that is which:
 - Each interactant holds a different portion of information which must be exchanged and manipulated in order to reach the task outcome.

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- Both interactants are required to request and supply this information to each other.
- Interactants have the same or convergent goals.
- Only one acceptable outcome is possible from their attempts to meet the goal

Task-based Language Teaching

- Many types of tasks:
 - (a) jigsaw
 - (b) information gap activities
 - (c) problem solving
 - (d) decision making
 - (e) opinion gap

Task-based Language Teaching

- Tasks developed from pedagogic tasks, which are developed from target tasks, which are developed from real-world tasks, which are developed from needs analysis

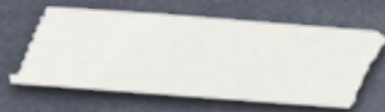
Task-based Language Teaching

- ◉ In a task sequence there is:
 - ◉ A pre-task stage
 - ◉ Learners get to know the topic and the language required for it
 - ◉ A task stage
 - ◉ Learners do the task
 - ◉ A post-task stage
 - ◉ Learners report on the task or have a final product

Task-based
Language Teaching
Some Principles:

- The class activities have a perceived purpose and a clear outcome
- The logical thinking processes to complete the task are broken down into smaller steps
- The demand on the learner speaker should be just above the learner's activity to do the task without help

- ① The teacher seeks ways of involving the students in the process
- ② The teacher uses whatever language necessary to comprehend the lesson
- ③ The teacher provides the correct target form by recasting:



1 E: when when is your birthday.

-->2 M: uh Ju- Ju::ne twenty:: one.

-->3 E: June twenty first? =

-->4 M: =first. yeah.

5 E: oh okay

A Recast

- The teacher provides good models of the target language
- The teacher does not interrupt when the students are focused on meaning
- Student receive feedback on their performance

- The students have input into the design and the way they carry out the task
- The post task public presentation makes the students focus on accuracy

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Task-based Language Teaching

- ◉ Some other task types:
- ◉ Unfocussed/Focussed
- ◉ Convergent/Divergent
- ◉ Two-way/One-way
- ◉ etc

A TBLT class sequence

Pre-task (including topic and task)

The teacher

- introduces and defines the topic
- uses activities to help students recall/learn useful words and phrases
 - ensures students understand task instructions
- may play a recording of others doing the same or a similar task

The students

- note down useful words and phrases from the pre-task activities and/or the recording
- may spend a few minutes preparing for the task individually

Task cycle

Task

The students

- do the task in pairs/small groups. It may be based on a reading/listening text

The teacher

- acts as monitor and encourages students

Planning

The students

- prepare to report to the class how they did the task and what they discovered/decided
- rehearse what they will say or draft a written version for the class to read

The teacher

- ensures the purpose of the report is clear
- acts as language adviser
- helps students rehearse oral reports or organise written ones

Report

The students

- present their spoken reports to the class, or circulate/display their written reports

The teacher

- acts as chairperson, selecting who will speak next, or ensuring all students read most of the written reports
- may give brief feedback on content and form
- may play a recording of others doing the same or a similar task

Language focus

Analysis

The students

- do consciousness-raising activities to identify and process specific language features from the task text and/or transcript
- may ask about other features they have noticed

The teacher

- reviews each analysis activity with the class
 - brings other useful words, phrases and patterns to students' attention
 - may pick up on language items from the report stage

Practice

The teacher

- conducts practice activities after analysis activities where necessary, to build confidence

The students

- practise words, phrases and patterns from the analysis activities
- practise other features occurring in the task text or report stage
- enter useful language items in their language notebooks

Arguments Against Task-Based

- Littlewood (2007)

Argument 1

Classroom Management
The need for teacher
control

Response

Focused
Tasks

Argument 2

Minimal Demands on
Competence
Students use the bare
minimum to get by

Response

Task design so that
more complex output
results
Increase motivation

Argument 3

Avoidance of English
Students may not use
English as the medium

Response

Task design so that
students are required to
use English to complete
the task

Increase motivation

Argument 4

Conflict with educational
values and traditions
Knowledge accumulation
and knowledge
transmission

Response

Learning a foreign language
is already outside the
culture
Increase motivation

Argument 5

Incompatibility with public
assessment demands
Entrance examinations

Response

None

Task-based Language Teaching

- ◉ Another criticism is that it is very difficult to sequence tasks
- ◉ A lot of research on this topic

Task-based Language Teaching #1

- ① 1. What are the goals of teachers who use this method?
 - ① To facilitate the students' language learning by engaging them in tasks that have a clear outcome

Task-based Language Teaching #2

- ② 2. What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students?
 - ② Teacher:
 - ② Choose tasks
 - ② Create tasks within the ability and needs of the students
 - ② Students
 - ② communicate effectively

Task-based Language Teaching #3

- ③ What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?
 - ③ A task sequence
 - ③ Pre-task
 - ③ Main task
 - ③ Post-task

Task-based Language Teaching #4

- ◉ 4 What is the nature of student-teacher interaction? What is the nature of student-student interaction?
- ◉ Teacher is the input provider
- ◉ Students work closely in groups

Task-based Language Teaching #5

- How are the feelings of the students dealt with?
- The tasks prepare the students for the real world

Task-based Language Teaching #6

- ⑥ How is language viewed? How is culture viewed?
- ⑥ Language is for communicating and doing
- ⑥ Culture not explicitly dealt with

Task-based Language Teaching #7

- ◉ 7 What areas of language are emphasized? What language skills are emphasized?
- ◉ The meaning dimension of language

Task-based Language Teaching #8

- ◉ 8 What is the role of the students' native language?
 - ◉ No explicit role

Task-based Language Teaching #9

- 9 How is evaluation accomplished?
 - ongoing in light of task outcomes

Task-based Language Teaching #10

- ⑩ How does the teacher respond to student errors?
- ⑩ Error correction through modeling and recasts