

Chapter 6

Task-Based Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Task-based language teaching is one of the newest language teaching models and has popularity among language teachers as it brings real-life situations to the classroom. Based on main principles of communicative language teaching approach, the method provides student-centered, flexible, and authentic real-life classroom environments. Not only the output but also input and learning processes are important for the teachers using this approach. Students are in the center of teaching and learning process, while the teachers are mentor and facilitator. The TBLT uses educational tasks to teach a language. Educational tasks are duties that are structured for an educational purpose. Each task has a language focus that can be assessed. As a result, having the flexibility and being a student-centered approach, TBLT will be used and adapted by many language instructors.

INTRODUCTION

The dominant paradigm of the time shapes education and education system is also restructured in accordance with the needs of the time (Orakcı, Durnalı, & Özkan, 2018). This reality is valid for language teaching. Throughout the history, humans tried to teach language to their children with different methods. Among plenty of teaching and learning technics and implementations, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained much attention thanks to its pedagogical benefits. TBLT creates the opportunity for the learners who they can experience target-like language usages in a classroom. Supporters of this method praise it as it engages learners in real-life language use in the classroom with tasks-discussions, problems, games, etc.- which requires language learners use language for themselves (Willis & Willis, 2007).

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At the beginning of this century, the general tendency was focusing on form and languages could be learned better with grammar rules so the Grammar Translation Method and Audiolingualism were good choices for language teachers. Recently, new generation teachers have noticed these approaches were not good enough to prepare students for real-life situations and teachers now prefer Communicative Language Teaching more (Larsari, 2011). As Gonzalez- Lloret (2019, P.338) points out;

“Pragmatics is essential to establish and maintain communication and rapport, as well as to avoid negative judgment and even stereotypical opinions about a community of speakers. When L2 learners engage in interaction with a competent speaker of the target language, language errors are usually attributed to a lack of their linguistic competence. However, when the errors are of a pragmatic nature (e.g., inappropriate register, lack of hedging, breaking of the turn-taking system), they are not attributed to a lack of linguistic competence, but rather to personality traits”

The importance of input (Krashen, 1991) and output (Swain, 2005; Gass, 2015) has been recognized by scholars as an essential part of language development, especially if learners wish to speak and/or write in the target language. Learners learn a language better if they feel a need for it (Willis, 1996)

According to Lantolf & Thorne (2006), people learn a language in a sociocultural context and language develops through teacher-learner or learner-learner interaction with pedagogical tasks. These tasks are the core unit of planning and teaching in language-related pedagogical environments. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Languages are learned for transmitting messages, which can be called as content. Authenticity and association of meaning a language with real life. By giving emphasis to the meaning and authenticity of communication has gained much interest from language learners and teachers (Sanchez, 2004).

As a relatively new approach, there are a number of issues that are discussed among TBLT theorists. These discussions are both deciding main issues, even when there is a consensus on the main issue, theorists still try to settle trivia (Ellis, 2017).

BACKGROUND

Every language teacher wants his students to be good language users. In line with this, teaching practitioners should set achievable goals and highlight students' successes. Accordingly, when a student completes a task successfully s/he will want to do another task which may be harder than the previous one. Students' motivation can be increased with these achievable tasks (Nunan, 2004).

Long (2015) links TBLT's philosophical roots to “*l'education integrale*” movement whose pioneers were William Godwin, Sebastien Faure, Paul Robin, Leon Tolstoy, Peter Kropotkin, Elias Puig, Francisco Ferre y Guardia, and some others. The ideas of these writers prepared the theoretical background of modern schools established in many European countries in different names in the 1900s.

Richards & Rodgers (2001), summarizes main principles of TBLT as;

- Tasks provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition
- Task activity and achievement are motivational
- Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes.the topic.

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