

Original Paper

Research on Online Task-Based Teaching in English Class

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Abstract

In numerous countries, the COVID-19 epidemic has interrupted school, impacting tens of billions of students. As a result, in the early phases of COVID-19, the educational reaction centred on developing distant learning options as an emergency solution. Teachers are more vital than ever before, regardless of the learning methods or technology available, they play a critical role. Teachers must receive regular and effective pre-service and continuous professional development. Support the development of digital and pedagogical tools for successful distance and face-to-face teaching and learning. Distance learning must allow for meaningful two-way contact between students and teachers for it to be successful. This may be accomplished by employing the technology that is most suited to the local environment. TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) is task-cantered, prioritising meaning-centred communication rather than putting it at the end of the course (as PPP does)—important for anyone who considers themselves a teacher of the language of communication; tasks can mimic what students have to do outside the classroom informal professional and educational situations, either directly through “target tasks” or indirectly by engaging learners in the functions necessary for everyday communication.

This article uses the TBLT approach as a basis to help teachers implement English language teaching using online education in the context of the epidemic and is also critical of the disadvantages of online education and improvements.

Keywords

TBLT, English language teaching and Teacher role

1. Introduction

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a technique of teaching second/foreign languages that focus on engaging students in interactive real-world language usage to increase language acquisition. A task

is a lesson arrangement that offers learners with the tools they need to accomplish the desired communication goals rather than linguistic results. For the past several years, educationists have been engaged in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). It's a communicative language teaching method that prioritises communicative language education in the curriculum and teaching outcomes (Littlewood, 2004). According to TBLT, the communicative task is the only part in the teaching cycle whose relevance comes initially. Learners are expected to have an educational experience in which they construct meaning using the target language, and this negotiated language utilisation process will stimulate and encourage language (Samuda & Bygate, 2008).

1.1 Teacher and Learners' Roles

When it comes to accomplishing learning activities, the notion of role outlines the roles that learners and teachers must play, as well as the interpersonal and social links that exist between them (Nunan, 1989). Teachers have been criticised for being downgraded or abandoned as administrators or supervisors of activities as a result of TBLT's emphasis on student-centred interaction and learning. However, past research has underlined the relevance of instructors in TBLT. Teachers' roles in TBLT are typically defined as guides, facilitators, or interactive collaborators (Willis, 1996). They give possibilities for meaning negotiation, communicative input and output, and also pay attention to form when it's needed. The function of instructors in TBLT, according to Samuda (2001), is to guide from behind, and to describe the connection between tasks and teachers as complimentary, with the teacher acting as a spectator. Teachers who adopt the TBLT technique, as Long (1996) pointed out in response to typical complaints, must employ more creativity and decision-making to adapt input and correct feedback for specific learners. Teachers play a critical role in the learner centered TBLT class because they disseminate learners' needs analyses and decide the activities that learners must complete and what success entails. In addition, teachers should adapt to individual learners' courses in the formative assessment, input, and forms they offer, as well as pay attention to other individual distinctions and deliver individualised instruction properly (Van den Branden, 2016).

1.2 Rationale

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasises on task or activity performance, although there is no distinct language structure taught (Rahimpour, 2008). Some argue that this technique creates a more conducive and favourable environment for the development of second language competence than a system that solely focuses on specific linguistic teaching and learning (Long, 1985). TBLT rationale originate from a variety of sources. Three reasons were presented by Ellis (2003) in favour of a task-based teaching curriculum. To begin with, it is founded on the theoretical notion that education should be tailored to the cognitive second language acquisition procedure. Second, stress the significance of students' "participation." Finally, as a useful unit, the task may be used to describe learners' needs in order to create courses tailored to certain goals. Robinson (2003b) believes that task-based teaching methods could increase cognitive functions in second language composition (expressiveness) and obtainment (development), as well as the link between them, which is compatible

with the conceptual approach to language learning. Similarly, Prabhu (1987) believed that language development was a natural process rather than an emphasis on language form, which would obstruct language acquisition.

Among the key benefits of task-based learning is that well-designed activities may help students pay attention to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, which may be overlooked or forgotten in an unsupervised discussion context due to a lack of perceptive and mental significance (Schmidt, 1990). Prabhu's procedural syllabus may be the greatest example of task-based teaching (Willis and Willis, 2001). It is primarily predicated on the idea that language structures may be learnt in class by paying attention to meaning, and that learners' grammar creation is an unconscious process (Prabhu, 1987).

2. Literature Review

A form of communicative language teaching, TBLT is a language teaching approach that encourages learners to complete tasks in the target language. Scholars in the field of language training have diverse perspectives on what defines a task. Any language learning effort that is structured, which has a definite purpose, proper material, specific working processes and contents, working approaches that are specific, and a sequence of learning outcomes of the person who conducts the assignment, according to Breen (1987). Nunan (1989) focuses on tasks through the lens of communication, defining communicative tasks as a time of classroom assignments during which students engage in comprehending, operating, producing, or communicating with the target language. At the same time, they are more concerned with meaning than with other features, and they are more concerned with meaning than with form. There are also differing viewpoints on the task's components. The main components of a task, according to Candlin (1987), are input, role, environment, action, monitoring, and result. According to Nunan, the goals might be language-related, expressive, societal, procedure, or culture. The programme is the learner's actual input operation; the teacher's function and the learner's function refer to the instructors' and learners' functions in the task completion process. Input is the spoken, written, and visual information utilised by students while accomplishing tasks. Creating a task-oriented classroom setup (Nunan, 2011). Pattison (1987) divides assignments into seven categories: responses to questions, dialogue and role-playing, matching exercises, communication techniques, pictures and picture stories, riddles and questions, debate and conclusion. Richards (2001) devised a new classification system, categorising activities as riddles, information gaps, problem solving, decision-making, and opinion exchange.

3. Application

Task-based online teaching strategies differ from those used in face-to-face classrooms. Both online synchronous and on-demand TBLT programmes need preparation prior to class. The following is an example of a TBLT method that was applied online. For a listening and reading lesson, instructions and learning exercises were carried out. Students will replicate and record a vacationing tourist as the

lesson's final exercise.

3.1 Participants

Assessing the circumstances of the students aids in the implementation of TBLT. Students in the first year of junior high school have some listening and reading abilities. They are able to express their opinions on a variety of themes. To accomplish a learning experience, completely comprehend the substance of the text, and reach the desired teaching objectives, TBLT needs the teacher to regard the students as the primary audience and to leverage their passion to aid them in the reading and comprehension process.

3.2 Online TBLT Class Application

Lesson Outline

Objective:

- (1) Learn compounding nouns about travel.*
- (2) Use the vocabulary to make sentences related to travel.*
- (3) In real-life settings, listen for and recognise the use of the same compound nouns.*
- (4) Read and respond to the following questions regarding travelling alone.*

Materials:

- (1) In the assigned textbook with a travel course.*
- (2) At each stage of the course, a video recording of the mission statement was published.*

Technologies that can be used:

Web conferencing platform – MS Teams.

Procedures:

Pre-Task

Step 1

Task: Recognize the meanings of compound nouns with travel-related connotations and employ them in sentences.

The key to conducting TBLT through online video interactive tutorials is the preparation before the online session. This is done at the pre-task stage. At this stage, there will greatly assist the teacher in preparing the learners by sending detailed task instructions. Have students start preparing compound nouns on the topic of travel and learn to make sentences using the words they have learnt. The teacher instructs students to switch to a pre-designated private channel on MS Teams and then hands out practice sheets to students for word matching, allowing them to complete the task individually.

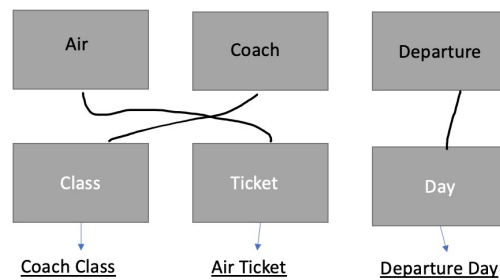


Figure 1. Pre-Task Activity for Word Matching

Teacher: here list some word, match it appropriately to form compound nouns about train travel and write down the word in the blank.

Student: student based on their experiences match the word.

Analysis

At the beginning, the students operated on their own. The instruction at this stage is video recorded. Students are instructed on the amount of time needed to complete each task. After completing the time allotted for this task, they go to a pre-designated channel in the online learning platform (MS Teams) used for this course and start a video conference to check their answers with the group.

Task Cycle

Step 2

Task: Listen to a realistic travel discussion to reinforce vocabulary usage and comprehension from Task 1 and to learn new terms (country names) and related travel terminology.

The teacher asks students to return to the main TEAMS classroom from their private rooms to play a listening recording where students will listen to and understand the general meaning of a conversation during a trip. Students will infer information by answering questions about what the speaker meant in the listening text, how he said it, and to whom the words were addressed. Feedback is given to the teacher by completing the gaps in the exercise booklet while the student shares the story what they heard through their notes.

Transcript:

D This is an announcement for passengers travelling to **Amsterdam** on flight KL1050. Will all passengers with express **boarding tickets** and passengers travelling with young children please go to gate 6 for boarding. That's all passengers with express boarding tickets and passengers travelling with young children go to **gate 6** for **boarding**. Thank you.

Student Sheet

The flight number of the plane going to _____ is _____.
It will leave from gate _____ for _____.
passengers s with express _____ with their children

Figure 2. Activity for Listening Exercise

Analysis

Students are now on the designated private channel on MS Teams. First of all, they will listen to the dialogue recorded by the video uploaded to their channel and complete all listening tasks. Please note that this new video recording material also includes instructions on how students should complete their tasks. Then, they will start the video conference again and check the answers with the team members. These answers are verified by teachers.

In many cases, students can answer tasks correctly. However, in TBLT method, teachers need to investigate the answers to confirm them, and make any amendments or clarifications to the form and understanding.

Step 3

Task: Read a short authentic article about travelling alone to further consolidate the main topic of this lesson - travelling and tell a story by themselves travel experience.

Students will read the text and identify the main points relating to travelling alone, while students will provide supporting details for the ideas, they have identified in Objective 1. The teacher will divide the students into 3 groups of 4 for a group discussion Students will individually choose a type of holiday from the textbook. As a group, they will gather information about their choice. They will be ready to share these ideas in the next webcast lesson. Students will complete this task as a group assignment. At the end the teacher asks one of the group members to talk about their travel experience and they take turns presenting their report to the whole group. The teacher guides the turn and pays attention to the language used to give corrective feedback at the next stage.

Student: I would like to describe a pleasant travel that I have had. It happened a long time ago, when I was still in high school. I remember it was a rainy afternoon and one of my classmates' jack and I went on a trip to the countryside on our bicycles. To be honest, it was a long journey, and it took us over an hour to reach our destination. Along the way, we talked and laughed loudly and even sang together. I can say that all of us managed to let our hair down. When we got there, we were too wet to fly kites, so we found a small supermarket and bought some food to eat. Then we went back. Finally, let me explain why it was an enjoyable trip. Well, I have to say that the experience itself was not something that one might consider pleasant. I mean, after all, we spent most of our time in the rain. But the trip did reflect the impulsiveness and carefree life of a teenager. On the trip, we were able to leave all our worries behind and just live in the moment. Looking back, you may find that you will never have the same experience again!

Teacher:

Language Function	Examples of Language Forms
Expressing needs and likes	I <i>would like</i> to describe a <i>pleasant travel</i> that
Describing people, places, and things	one of my <i>classmates</i> (Nouns) <i>jack</i> I went on a <i>trip to the countryside</i> (Nouns) on our bicycles.
Describing spatial and temporal relations Prepositional phrases	Prepositional phrases <i>went on</i> ...
Describing actions	Present progressive tense, adverbs
Retelling/relating past eventstravel that I <i>have had</i> (Past tense verbs). It <i>happened</i> (Past tense verbs) a long time ago....

Figure 4. Activity for Report

Step 4

Language Focus

At this stage, teachers ask students to repeat tasks to increase their awareness of language use. Teachers may conduct interactive online quizzes to reinforce vocabulary. Students know their own errors in the use of new words and the forms/errors in reports made by their peers and themselves and correct them. Teachers review new words and forms/errors that occur during the report stage. These will be shared orally and typed out at the same time. The teacher will elicit the correct answers/forms through a variety of techniques. For example, the instructor may start asking pupils questions based on the TEAMS board's topic phrases. Finally, students will require time in their language notebooks to record relevant words, phrases, and patterns. The same is done to encourage learners to compare their performance on the task, discuss with other groups and students will tell why their story is better than others', negotiate and agree.

Evaluation

The course evaluation should include four open-ended questions about what they liked and disliked about the synchronous course, their perceptions of the synchronous course, and their willingness to continue with the course in the next semester, as well as Likert scale questions about their enjoyment of the course and learning outcomes. The course assessment item was utilised as an assignment at the end of the course, and students completed it in English.

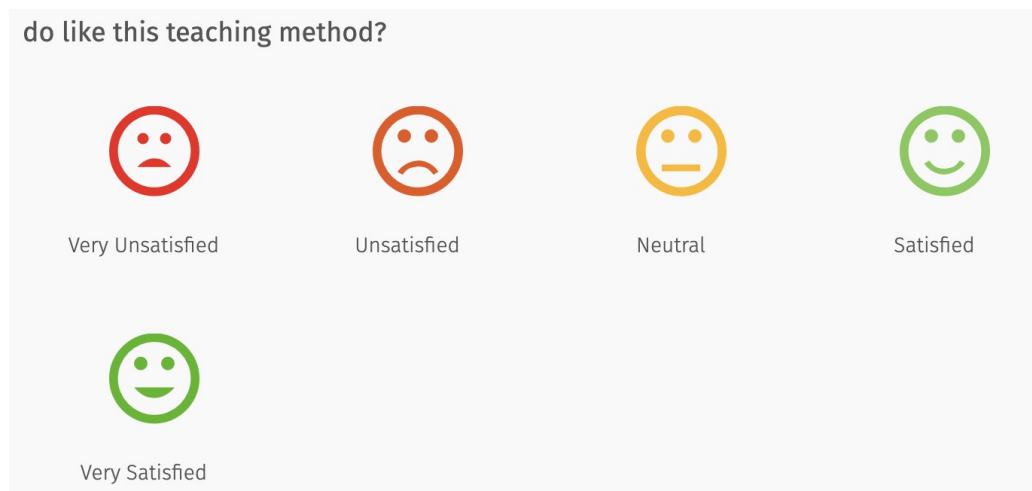


Figure 5. Likert Scale Questions

3.3 Challenges and Improvements

3.3.1 Challenges in Implementing TBLT

1) the difficulty of creating an online TBLT curriculum and action

Long (1985) proposed that the TBLT syllabus begin with a demand analysis in order to balance the functions of textbooks and TBLT curriculum in the network environment. Except for one source of the TBLT syllabus, textbooks are all sources in such a TBLT syllabus. Interaction is a vital component of student learning in most face-to-face courses, and it is simple to implement. When creating a TBLT syllabus for electronic texts, nevertheless, individuals recognise that the design of the TBLT syllabus must be determined by the electronic textbooks, because students spend the majority of their time studying electronic textbooks on their own. Students may not recognise the connection between chores and e-textbooks, despite their best efforts.

2) the difficulty of doing collaborative tasks.

Because of the inflexibility of online classroom setup, it's difficult to foster constructive group dynamics. The perceived power structure, which is fundamental to all group dynamics, is affected by the physical organisation of classrooms, the relative position of students, and the relative position of students and teachers (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997). This could be accomplished in a face-to-face classroom by rearranging seats or students. The names of all participants are listed on the list of participants in the virtual classroom, and the teachers are identified at the top with various coloured identity symbols. Teachers find it difficult to fade out in this display of conference attendees and their prominent position, as they do in face-to-face classroom group exercises. The challenge of arranging students is another issue. Students attend the virtual meeting at the allotted times since it is held in groups of 3-5 students. If one or two participants fail to show up, the intended joint work will have to be altered to individual labour, or the situation will become tough (Hampel, 2001).

3.3.2 Improvements

1) Online TBLT classrooms require learner and instructor approach training.

TBLT requires learner strategy training to increase its efficacy, but by fostering learner autonomy, it can improve the effectiveness of strategy training. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) gave some useful suggestions for teacher and student strategy training. They recommend that students acquaint themselves with TBLT methodology, teaching concepts, and assessment principles prior to attending the course. In a networked setting, this macro-level training must be supplemented with another stage. Students should be able to see the link between the TBLT syllabus and electronic textbooks or tutorial books, as well as how to receive help with online learning.

2) Improve the Target Language's Comprehensibility

The absence of spectators' recommendations in audio-based online courses is a barrier for online English classes for junior students, since junior pupils require a lot of visual help. To tackle this issue, teachers must prepare a large number of visual stimuli ahead of time in order to ensure that TBLT progresses smoothly. Teachers can create a thesaurus that contains a combination of visual information for students to use in projects. All of this makes it feasible to employ the target language to its full potential without leading pupils to get confused. When presenting task instructions, it's also crucial to develop a pattern, use consistent language, and augment visual signals to help students comprehend.

4. Conclusion

The essential ideas of TBLT, including task description and task-based theories, are covered in this article. In this context, online TBLT teaching is applied, and concerns with online TBLT teaching, such as lack of involvement and challenges with classroom activity, are highlighted. The use of the TBLT approach in a network context has several drawbacks. Students' engagement, understanding and acceptance of TBLT ideas and associated approaches, and attention to forms in the task cycle are some of the important areas. Furthermore, according to TBLT research, if learners and teachers are already familiar with the approach, these limits may be reduced. Simultaneously, it necessitates greater effort in technique training materials, particularly real-life examples, to assist instructors in implementing TBLT using technology as the medium.

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