



## A REVIEW OF STUDIES ON TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Abdullayeva Shahzoda Narzillayevna  
assistant teacher

Department of Uzbek and Foreign Languages  
Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry

shahzodanarzullaqizi@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10927487>

### ARTICLE INFO

Qabul qilindi: 11-mart 2024 yil

Ma'qullandi: 15-mart 2024 yil

Nashr qilindi: 17-mart 2024 yil

### KEYWORDS

*task-based language teaching,  
task, English teaching*

### ABSTRACT

*During the 1980s, a novel pedagogical approach known as Task-based Language Teaching gained prominence within Western education. This methodology is characterized by its pragmatic application, emphasizing the integration of specific communication and language-oriented tasks throughout the instructional process. Distinguished by its clear content and operational simplicity, Task-based Language Teaching has garnered widespread popularity within contemporary educational spheres. This review paper critically examines and consolidates the definitions and classifications of tasks inherent in Task-based Language Teaching, drawing insights from various scholarly perspectives and previous research on the subject. Additionally, the article outlines two implementation models proposed by Willis and Ellis for the execution of Task-based Language Teaching. Furthermore, the paper underscores the practical efficacy of Task-based Language Teaching by citing the empirical studies of three forerunners in the field, exemplifying its application in authentic English classrooms. In elucidating the method's strengths and weaknesses, the article delves into an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages associated with Task-based Language Teaching. It concludes by providing recommendations on how educators can adeptly design tasks to mitigate potential drawbacks and enhance teaching efficiency when employing this pedagogical approach.*

### Introduction

English stands prominently as the preeminent language for success across diverse industries, being universally recognized as the most widely learned and taught language globally [1].

Its unparalleled significance arises from its widespread use worldwide, making it an indispensable skill in every corner of the globe. Given its proven effectiveness and potential for future opportunities, the global population of English learners continues to grow steadily. Consequently, English teaching has evolved into an autonomous discipline, with educators continuously refining their instructional methodologies [2].

In recent years, English classrooms have experienced a paradigm shift in language teaching methods, transitioning from a teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered one. This evolution acknowledges the importance of addressing learners' needs and enhancing their ability to use language proficiently in real-life scenarios [3].

A notable pedagogical approach that has gained traction is the task-based methodology, originating in the United States during the 1980s and rooted in the constructivist school of teaching methods. According to Prabhu, this approach advocates for learners to focus on tasks rather than language forms, facilitating a more accessible learning process [4]. Engaging learners in meaningful tasks enables them to develop their English proficiency in a natural and practical manner, fostering communication and real-world language application [4]. Brown emphasizes the centrality of tasks in the learning process, considering them as integral to and supportive of curricular objectives, extending beyond mere language practice for its own sake [5].

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), grounded in research on second language acquisition, is posited as an effective language teaching method. This model considers specific tasks as catalysts for learning, perceives task completion as the learning process, and regards task outputs as indicative of teaching success [6].

This article elucidates the concept of TBLT across three dimensions: the definition, classification, and implementation of tasks in TBLT by diverse scholars. Additionally, it scrutinizes the efficacy of TBLT application in English teaching classrooms through the perspectives of relevant scholars in recent years. The article concludes with a comprehensive analysis of the advantages and disadvantages associated with TBLT as a teaching model.

### **Definition of Task in TBLT**

Nunan defines a communicative task as a classroom activity that necessitates learners' engagement with the target language, prioritizing meaning over the mere form or structure of the language. The core objective of a communicative task is to facilitate meaningful communication and interaction among learners. Beyond emphasizing meaning, a communicative task should possess a sense of completeness, representing a standalone communication act that makes sense in authentic communicative contexts. For instance, a role-play where learners simulate a specific situation and engage in a conversation or negotiation exemplifies such a task [7].

Other scholars offer distinct perspectives on task definitions. Skehan, in his influential work "A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning," delineates five characteristics defining a task: the primary focus on the meaning of the task activity, enhancement of students' communication skills without promoting a specific linguistic form, a specific link between tasks and comparable real-world activities, a communication issue to resolve, and the prioritization of task completion [8]. Ellis asserts that tasks are language use activities primarily aimed at expressing meaning [9]. Bygate and Swain posit that a task is purposeful and meaningful, encouraging learners to apply language to achieve a goal, whether solving a problem, completing a task, or

accomplishing a specific objective, thereby emphasizing the expression of meaning in the process [10].

While scholars may offer varying task definitions, a common thread emerges from their perspectives, highlighting the importance of tasks being associated with real-life scenarios. Throughout task completion, learners are encouraged to fully utilize their cognitive abilities, experiencing and participating in tasks, and if necessary, interacting, communicating, and cooperating with each other. Furthermore, learners should mobilize their existing knowledge of the target language, recognizing and employing the language through practical exercises, encapsulating the essence of learning by doing.

### **Classification of Task in TBLT**

Nunan classifies tasks into two distinct categories: real-life tasks and pedagogical tasks [7]. Real-life tasks involve using language in daily, authentic scenarios, requiring learners to perform or simulate real-world communicative activities beyond the classroom context. Examples of real-life tasks encompass seeking directions, expressing opinions, writing resumes, composing complaint letters, making phone inquiries, booking accommodations, and completing various real-life language usage situations such as registration forms, study abroad applications, and hotel accommodation forms. These tasks aim to engage students in authentic language communication, creating real-life scenarios within the classroom setting and fostering their ability to utilize foreign languages effectively [11].

On the other hand, pedagogical tasks are activities that students are unlikely to encounter outside the classroom. These tasks, not directly linked to real-life situations, emerge as specific contexts within the classroom and are designed for instructional purposes. The primary goal of pedagogical tasks is to contribute to achieving teaching objectives, aiding students in comprehending and applying acquired knowledge to enhance their language proficiency. As Fu noted, the selection of pedagogical tasks is influenced by pedagogy and psycholinguistics. Although these tasks may lack real-world relevance, they possess intellectual validity and a focus on meaning, providing learners with opportunities to participate in activities less likely to occur outside the classroom [12].

In terms of activity characteristics and communication purposes, Pica categorizes tasks into five types: jigsaw tasks, information-gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks, and opinion-exchanging tasks [13].

### **How to Implement TBLT**

Willis delineates the execution of tasks into three distinct phases: the pre-task phase, the task cycle phase, and the post-task phase, with each phase emphasizing different aspects [14]. The pre-task stage functions as an introductory phase to warm up, encompassing tasks' introduction, encouraging active student participation, and providing authentic language materials. During this stage, students familiarize themselves with pertinent background information by completing tasks, gaining a basic understanding of passage content, and preparing for the successful completion of the subsequent communication tasks. In the task implementation phase, various interactive methods, such as paired or group discussions, role-playing, and debates, are employed by teachers and students to propel the completion of the assignment. This phase consists of three sections: task, planning, and reporting. The post-task stage, also known as the Language Focus or Language Teaching stage, involves language analysis and practice. The focus shifts from the meaning of language to its form, aiding students

in solidifying basic language points and ensuring the successful execution of the plan. Bula-Villalobos and Murillo-Miranda assert that TBLT is grounded in the notion that tasks are essential conditions for language teaching and planning [15].

Ellis, building on this concept, establishes a sequential order for task execution: pre-task, during-task, and post-task. The pre-task phase determines the task's outcome, and students engage in a similar task. During-task involves a specific deadline and participant count, while in the post-task phase, learners are tasked with reporting their findings, and the task is reiterated [9].

### **Advantages**

In contrast to other teaching methodologies, the primary advantages of task-based teaching are evident in students' subjectivity, communicative abilities, and authenticity [20]. Firstly, crafting realistic communication scenarios aligned with students' age and characteristics serves to pique their interest throughout various task execution processes. Tasks designed to be familiar, such as purchasing tickets, facilitate student participation, thereby motivating language learning [21]. Secondly, as students engage in task completion, they integrate knowledge and skills, fostering comprehensive abilities like communication skills, cooperation, and problem-solving. Thirdly, in TBLT teaching, students assume the role of task executors. Through pair work and group collaboration, each student is assigned individual tasks, promoting active participation in the classroom and empowering them in the learning process. Fourthly, Yan contends that, guided by educators, students have the opportunity to think independently and actively engage in discussions, fostering their logical and critical thinking abilities. This approach stimulates learning enthusiasm and cultivates positive learning habits [22].

### **Disadvantages**

Despite its advantages, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is not without its drawbacks. Willis points out that TBLT's task setup often encounters time constraints. Teachers may find it challenging to design tasks and seamlessly integrate them into their classrooms given the limitations of time.

The use of traditional exams, rather than embracing task-based assessment methods, can lead to students regurgitating memorized information without effectively demonstrating their language skills in practical, real-world situations. Moreover, the incorporation of vocabulary and grammar in task execution may yield unpredictable results, introducing a sense of uncontrollability, which poses a genuine challenge in more traditional learning environments [14].

Sholeh further notes that large class sizes can exacerbate these challenges. TBLT may necessitate additional time for task completion, and teachers may struggle to allocate sufficient time to closely monitor individual students' learning processes and development. This can impede the ability to provide personalized guidance and support to each student [23].

### **Conclusions**

Indeed, every teaching method has its inherent limitations, underscoring the importance for educators to select suitable approaches based on diverse teaching content, scenarios, and objectives. Within the teaching process, a shift from traditional teaching philosophies to a student-centric focus becomes imperative, aligning with the fundamental principle of the task-based teaching method. When employing task-based teaching methods, educators should meticulously prepare before classes, ascertain appropriate tasks, and seamlessly integrate

teaching content and objectives into these tasks. During task execution, teachers play a pivotal role in offering pertinent guidance. Equally important is the evaluation of task completion by students, encouraging reflection upon the process. If deemed necessary, tasks can be repeated, fostering effectiveness within English classrooms through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). This adaptive and reflective approach allows for the optimization of the learning experience, acknowledging the dynamic nature of language acquisition and the diverse needs of learners.

#### 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 Xiaoqi. (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.

