TASK-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO OLDER ADULTS

Pardaeva Mokhinbonu Fazliddinovna

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

ABSTRACT

A wide range of academic fields, including social work, design, language acquisition, and medical training, have embraced task-based teaching methodologies. The task-based approach to second language learning, which has recently seen an increase in adoption and experimentation in many language classrooms throughout the world, will be discussed in this article. The influence of task-based language learning will be examined in this research with particular attention to adult learners, whose unique qualities make task-based techniques more conceivable and advantageous.

Key words. *Task-based approach, adult learners, language classroom, language acquisition, methodology.*

INTRODUCTION

Task-based teaching approaches, also known as problem-based learning, contextual learning, and case-based learning, have emerged over the past ten years. Despite having a variety of labels, they all appear to have one thing in common: they engage students in tasks or issues as opposed to more conventional topic-centered curriculum approaches (Merrill, 2007). Task-based learning proponents contend that as students work cooperatively to solve issues and reflect on their experiences, they develop appropriate mental models and schema. Task-based training is a new but quickly spreading approach in the teaching of second languages today. As an illustration, the ERIC database lists more than 120 papers on this topic published since the year 2000. Understanding what the word "task" means is crucial to properly discussing task-based learning. A task is a piece of classroom work that engages students in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or engaging in the target language, according to Nunan (2004, p. 9). Jane Willis (1996), who came before Nunan, described a task as "an activity where the learner uses the target language for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p. 23). While different scholars' definitions of pedagogy differ significantly, they all stress that it entails "communicative language use where users' attention is focused on meaning rather than grammatical form." (Nunan, 2006, p.17). Task-based education, which has its roots in the constructivist theory of learning, has developed in reaction to the drawbacks of the conventional PPP (presentation, practice, and performance)

paradigm (Ellis, 2003). The PPP approach has received a lot of criticism for being very teacher-focused and tightly controlled, despite being fairly simple and well-structured to be easily understood by both students and novice teachers. Furthermore, the PPP strategy has not been successful in achieving the goal of improving communicative competence among second language learners, which has been forced upon educators and governments by the trend of globalization.

Task-based Approach. It is well known that using a task-based approach helps pupils improve their language production and interaction. A more student-centered learning environment encourages language use flexibility, fluency development, and meaningful communication among learners. Learners will remain interested and motivated more easily with authentic tasks carefully derived from real-world circumstances, which will lead to improved learning. More contextualized exercises, as opposed to academic and decontextualized vacuum, will provide a learning environment where learners are involved in problem solving within real-world settings, as Harrington, Oliver, and Reeves (2003) have noted. The strategy ultimately aids teachers in bridging the gap between language used in the actual world and unnatural language used in the context of the classroom. Despite mounting evidence of its effectiveness, task-based training has several drawbacks. The method is not as effective or acceptable for lower level language learners with less prior linguistic expertise as it is for higher level pupils, according to one of the most important and frequently voiced complaints. Beginning language learners who are required to accomplish a difficult activity in the target language frequently find the situation frustrating and, as a result, develop resistance to the learning technique because of the large amount of cognitive strain it places on learners. Beginning language learners who are unfamiliar with the learning context may not feel comfortable or productive when forced to utilize all the words they can manage to express themselves, similar to being thrown into a deep sea when they cannot swim (Willis, 1996). Teachers and students alike might become frustrated in task-based learning environments. Littlewood (2007) performed a study of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in East Asian nations and discovered that the main barriers to implementing task-based education in their classes were: 1) difficulties getting unmotivated students participate in tasks that usually require a higher level of motivation and enthusiasm from learners, and 2) inability to manage classroom as students get easily distracted and become noisy as they engage in group interaction to complete tasks collaboratively. While these issues frequently surface in classes with younger students, task-based learning may be more beneficial for adult learners. Adult learners generally exhibit distinguishing traits that separate them differently

from younger learners, and some of these traits make task-based learning more conceivable and suitable for adult learners. On the following premise, Knowles (1990) established the adult learning theory of andragogy: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something, (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults are life-centered (or task- or problemcentered) in their orientation to learning, (4) Adults become ready to learn when their life situation create a need to learn, (5) Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, and (6) Adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones. These presumptions state that adult learners have clearer goals and demands than younger learners, who frequently study a language merely because it is necessary and don't take responsibility for their own learning. Adult learners are also more motivated and eager to learn than younger learners. They are also focused on problem-solving learning, and they absorb information best when it is applied to actual situations. Constructivist task-based instruction and andragogy obviously have a lot in common because they both place a strong emphasis on student ownership of the learning process, experiential learning, and a problem-solving approach to learning. Task-based learning is therefore a perfect fit for adult learners, who are generally less inclined to raise the issues raised by teachers above. Task-based instruction places greater expectations on teachers than traditional pedagogy does, and these demands are crucial to the success of task-centered language learning. To make their pupils active learners who are willing to take chances, teachers must foster an adventurous attitude in the classroom. Additionally, teachers must give students the time they need to gradually acclimate to the new teaching style, offer the support they need, and help them develop confidence. Effective task-based learning instructors should also be able to adjust the difficulty of the tasks to meet the needs of novice or lower-level students in their classes. More than just a basic comprehension of the importance of communication skills is needed to develop effective language classroom education tactics. Teachers should be able to use instructional strategies that enable and promote sufficient practice of the language students have learned in order to help them become active communicators. An environment where students can freely explore communicative skills and take charge of their own education is created via a task-based instructional strategy, which centers on assignments that are taken from genuine real-world contexts. The task-based approach is still a popular strategy for language learning despite certain drawbacks. Since adult students' unique learning qualities fit the constructivist components of task-based learning, the technique can be especially helpful in those settings. The number of classrooms with adult learners has greatly expanded in recent years thanks to the vast range of

learning choices, including remote learning, that are readily available to today's adult learners. The task-based approach appears to be a highly realistic choice, especially for adult language learners, despite the fact that no single strategy works in all classrooms and with all students in all settings. As more language classrooms switch from traditional teacher-centered learning activities to student-centered learning environments, instructors now have even more responsibility for developing effective instructional strategies that will help students learn the language.

Some advantages of TBL. There are a lot of obvious benefits, but I'll only mention a few.

In a TBL atmosphere, students typically participate actively and with high motivation in tasks and activities. It provides a platform for students to demonstrate their abilities and boost their development. As they collaborate and work together in groups, language learners forge ties with one another. They can demonstrate and develop meaningful interaction on a particular subject when working in groups. Additionally, the class collaborates and evaluates the overall success of the course.

In all three phases of a TBL lesson, students draw on prior language, knowledge, and experience rather than focusing on just one component of a specific language feature. The students are able to investigate both old and new linguistic aspects thanks to this method. According to Nunan (2004), TBL emphasizes communication through interaction in the target language, brings authentic texts into the classroom, has students concentrate on both language acquisition and the learning process itself, and gives students the opportunity to share their own personal experiences as significant teaching resources.

Some disadvantages of TBL. I'll again simply list a few drawbacks even though many people have criticized elements of the TBL structure and teaching methodology. As with any model, there will inevitably be flaws that weaken it in the eyes of its critics. According to Seedhouse (1999), it might be claimed that TBL places an undue emphasis on tasks and transmitting meaning, which could affect how to utilize the language in the right form. Additionally, it's critical to understand that communication involves much more than just carrying out responsibilities. According to Skehan (1996), if TBL is not implemented properly, it could pose some risks and have an adverse effect on the development and evolution of language learners' interlanguage. Therefore, from this perspective, it is clear that some kind of fossilization among the students may take place and present obstacles to their continued learning. TBL is still not able to convince others that it is a better teaching strategy; it is still just an opinion rather than a fact. Rodgers and Richards (2001). According to Swan (2005: 376), TBI is widely marketed as a successful teaching

**Oriental Renaissance: Innovative,
educational, natural and social sciences**

SJIF 2023 = 6.131 / ASI Factor = 1.7

(E)ISSN:2181-1784

www.oriens.uz

3(7), July, 2023

strategy that is superior to "traditional" approaches and firmly grounded in theory and research. The method is frequently supported by the idea that language regularities are learned through "noticing" when engaging in communicative action, and should therefore be primarily addressed by incidental "focus on form" while carrying out task-related activities. However, there is no strong empirical support for the model's validity, and this claim is dependent on unproven premises. I've briefly discussed various important terms in this section of the study, including "interlanguage," "fossilization," and "noticing." These crucial words will be discussed in more detail later, along with their effects, relationships to language learners, and perceptions when connected to TBL.

Types of tasks. What does the word "task" in TBL actually mean, and how should we interpret this crucial term?

The word "task" has been used to refer to role plays, grammar drills, and other tasks in a variety of publications. However, in respect to TBL, the word "task" has a different interpretation and meaning than it does in the general sense.

Willis (1996: 23) states that tasks are "activities where the target language is used by the learner for the communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome". Stern (1992: 195) defines a task as "realistic language use.....focuses on a learners' attention on a task, problem, activity, and topic and not on a particular language point". Foster and Skehan (1996: 300) explain tasks as "activities that are meaning-focused and outcome-evaluated and have some real world relationship". Nunan (1989) clarifies that a task is "A piece of work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form". Evidently there are many varieties and opinions of what a task actually is, but overall, what is apparent is the fact that a task is an important component towards the establishment of learning a language especially related to TBL.

There are several theories on second language acquisition (SLA), and TBL provides a framework that enables students to use tools and materials to work toward a specific task or objective. Through interaction with tasks and subsequent usage of the target language to perform the tasks, TBL aids, enhances, and nurtures the learners' second language. Additionally, this paradigm makes the learners rely on past knowledge and engages them in a much more effective way. The students will use their prior knowledge and language abilities to complete the activities as they collaborate and exchange knowledge with one another. Additionally, this procedure will demonstrate new language and provide language learners with a range of

Oriental Renaissance: Innovative,
educational, natural and social sciences
SJIF 2023 = 6.131 / ASI Factor = 1.7

(E)ISSN:2181-1784
www.oriens.uz
3(7), July, 2023

methods for enhancing their overall language proficiency. In general, TBL can create the optimum environment for successful language acquisition.

There are many different tasks that a language learner can participate in, and each task is unique in what it demands them to complete. According to Willis (1996), there are six different tasks that students might perform to help them learn languages effectively.

The first task type is listing which involves brainstorming and fact finding. These activities could help to complete some kind of list or draft a mind map.

The second task type is ordering and sorting, which requires the students to organize, classify, rank, and sequence information. All of these actions could assist in sorting and arranging information in accordance with predetermined criteria.

Comparing is the third task type, which requires students to look for parallels and contrasts and match material correctly. The results of these tasks may include the matching or assembly of items properly or the discovery of similarities and differences. Problem solving, which can include analyzing real circumstances as well as speculative ones, as well as deliberation and reasoning, is the fourth task category. Such actions might produce answers to these problems, which might then be assessed.

Sharing personal experiences is the fifth task type, which requires students to narrate, investigate, describe, and explain attitudes, responses, and opinions. Through this activity, social and cultural distinctions are highlighted, and because the learners get insight into other cultures and experiences, they become closer as a result.

The sixth and final task category is creative tasks, which includes work like gathering information, coming up with ideas, comparing, categorizing, and solving problems. Furthermore, it is clear that TBL forces learners to concentrate on meaning rather than form. Students participate in communicative activities that aid in honing a grammar point. The students practice expressing themselves in writing and speaking on their own. It is crucial that the teacher selects assignments that will challenge and grow all of the pupils in order for them to truly appreciate and profit from them. According to Willis (1996: 23), the teacher should create assignments that "promote learners' language development as efficiently as possible" and provide "a suitable degree of intellectual and linguistic challenge".

Therefore, it is clear from the above that tasks connected to TBL are demonstrated to be significant and control a considerable portion of the lesson. At this point, the students are able to use the numerous activities to practice the target language either individually or in groups. For language learners, tasks are crucial, and it is thought that if pupils concentrate on the work rather than the language, they will

acquire the language more quickly. Additionally, all tasks basically share the same features, opening up language usage opportunities across the board.

CONCLUSION

For language learning to be successful, not just in TBL but in all learning contexts, Willis' requirements are essential. Exposure, use, motivation, and instruction are essential components and play a significant role in second language acquisition in every classroom. Students can extract the target with TBL. In order to prepare students for engagement with the outside world, this strategy removes words from tasks and focuses on meaning. Students must be motivated by the tasks, and this can only be done if the tasks and learners are connected. For their mental stimulation, exposure to a wide range of real sources and activities is important. In order for students to feel some sense of fulfillment, they must be able to use the activities to their benefit. The terms of instruction are crucial, and how they are used changes based on a number of factors. Because of the demands of the students, the practice of education, whether explicit or implicit, is constantly in demand in my classroom environment. Of course, depending on the lesson type I'm teaching, the day-to-day application of education varies. Giving instructions to my students, however, is necessary and not preferred, in my opinion.

REFERENCES

1. Brown, J. D., Hudson, T., Norris, J. & Bonk, W. J. (2002). An Investigation of Second Language Task-Based Performance Assessments. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.Google Scholar

2. Bruner, J. S. (1960). The Process of Education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.Google Scholar

3. Bruton, A. (2002a). From tasking purposes to purposing tasks. ELT Journal 56, 280–8.CrossRefGoogle Scholar

4. Foster, P. (2001). Rules and routines: A consideration of their role in the task-based language production of native and non-native speakers. In Bygate, M., Skehan, P. & Swain, M. (eds.), Researching Pedagogic Tasks: Second Language Learning, Teaching, and Testing (pp. 75–93).

5. Foster, P. & Skehan, P. (1996). The influence of planning on performance in task-based learning. Studies in Second Language Acquisition 18, 299–324.

6. Nunan, D. (1989). Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7. Nunan, D. (1990). The teacher as researcher. In Brumfit, C. & Mitchell, R. (eds.), Research in the Language Classroom. ELT Documents 133. Modern English Publications.