

# Second Language Acquisition through Task Based Language Teaching



R.D.Gomathi, V.Radhakrishnan

**Abstract**— *The classroom environment plays a major part in learning. The atmosphere is more essential for a student. The Students have a different psychological stimulus when performing the activities inside the classroom. The classroom atmosphere helps the students in learning the foreign language. TBLT is being applied inside the language classroom. With the new method, the teachers try to correlate the contents and the task design of teaching closer to their profession, because student participants can find it out easy for communicating via different stages to carry out the tasks in all aspects of capabilities in second language acquisition. This paper is focused from all perspectives of Task Based Language Teaching particularly in terms of meaning and concept, certain issues of conventional language teaching and explaining the real value of execution of Tasks in language classroom.*

**Key words** – language classrooms, Task Based Language Teaching, professional teaching.

## I. INTRODUCTION

English teaching in colleges should have a specific goal in developing the level of language proficiency, particularly writing and speaking skills because they can make use of the English language in their professional growth and effective social interaction for both verbal and written communication. Written products are often the results of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally (Brown, 2001). Under the novel concept, the modern curriculum of English advocates the mode of TBLT. Since 1980s and 1990s, witnessed the evolution of communicative approach, TBLT has slowly occupied an international position in foreign language system. Many well-known expertise in research of foreign language system have written books and articles to illustrate the effectiveness on the theories of TBLT.

Foreign language curriculum in many of the regions and countries have adopted the task based method and obtained good outcomes. For second language learners, the challenges are enormous, particularly for those who go on to a university

and study in a language that is not their own (Nunan, 1999). The Ministry of Education in China has worked out and developed a curriculum which is basically depends on TBLT. More over, In the past few years, TBLT has widely been acknowledged for teaching and learning purposes. It has a significant place in promoting and developing the second language teaching and learning.

## II. TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT)

Task-based language teaching is emphasized by Prabhu in 1980s. It is a teaching tool in developing the level of language skills among college students. It highly insists on the concept of practical layout. TBLT is completely dependant on multi-tasks of teaching mode in planning and organizing the English language teaching. In other words, in this type of method, realistic and specific activities being carried out, combining the knowledge of the English language with that of the skills to make use of it and via the language classroom tasks, students do perform the tasks with the learnt language. Typically TBLT is learning by performing the tasks, learning by utilizing the language and doing the activities by learning.

As TBLT is associated with the performance of the students and it is positioned itself in an advanced level of communicative approach, arousing higher attention in learning the target language. In the recent years, this theory of teaching the language has been slowly introduced into the Indian language classrooms and has also become a creative trend in foreign language teaching. It purely believes that the mastering of a language is related to the result of English language use during the activities rather than the skills training. Thus, in teaching methods, concentrating on particular communicative and language system, teachers are in need to design actionable tasks where the student participants must complete their task via expression, negotiation, interpretation and inclusive of other language tasks in order to attain the main objective of learning and mastering the target language. TBLT also tries to absorb the advantages of the previous sorts of teaching modes and is not cordially exclusive. If the tasks are used appropriately, they can be mutually benefitted.

## III. DISADVANTAGES OF CONVENTIONAL TEACHING METHODS

### A. Students' Ability in Speaking and Listening:

Conventional second language teaching trusts that the second language acquisition should depend on vernacular language.

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In second language teaching, basics are emphasized, expecting a detailed explanation and practice on vocabulary, grammar and sentences. "Indoctrination" teaching has gradually gone off. It is certainly teacher-centred where the teachers are explaining the things with a piece of chalk and also with a book and the students are supposed to follow what their teachers are telling and copy what they are writing on the blackboard. Under these circumstances, most of the students are still not willing to practice the language because they are completely trained to obtain better grades in the examinations.

### *B. Students' Ability in using the Language:*

In the conventional method of teaching, there's a general phenomenon that the abilities of the student participants in using the language is fully ignored. Many of the students from vernacular medium schools have learnt the English language only at a minimal level and when it comes to graduation, they find it very difficult to get through the language paper. The main reason for this is they are not allowed to think or analyse the components. They are strictly instructed to memorise everything for the sake of examinations. Thus, the students hesitate and nervous to make use of English for effective communication.

### *C. Students Lack of Interest in Learning:*

The process of language learning should be very interactive with original significance. English language is a communicative tool by which the student participants are able to sense the real value of skills and knowledge in communicative tasks in order to raise awareness and initiative to develop the process of learning. In addition to that, the learning activities should be designed in such a way that students must utilize the chance and stimulate enthusiasm in students for learning and improvise the outcomes of learning.

## IV. THE NECESSITY FOR APPLYING TBLT IN COLLEGES

### *A. Optimization of TBLT*

TBLT has a strong power to change the conventional practices that the teachers provide lengthy lectures for the whole period. It is a boost to the status that the students are easily ignored in reciprocal teaching and learning activities. By transferring the methodology of teaching, students can appropriately make use of the knowledge to contribute, practice and gain experience in order to enhance the comprehensive skills in using the language during the stages of completing the activities.

### *B. Promoting Students' Thinking Process and Inductive Ability*

Different forms of activities in language classroom allow the students to completely develop the skills which in turn improve the thought process and make the students to be well prepared for the language classrooms.

### *C. Independent Learning via TBLT*

Due to the advancement of science and technology, modern facilities for teaching have entered the language classrooms. At the same time, it can be assured that TBLT

can fully utilize the modern facilities of teaching and provide pathways to change the language classroom atmosphere more lively. In case of students' learning activities combine with modern facilities, the interest of students' in learning the target language will be improved, and both the initiative and the energy in learning the language will be developed. So in an easy atmosphere, students enthusiastically learn English language and their capability in using and practising the language can also be improvised.

## V. THREE MAIN STAGES OF TBLT

### *A. Pre-task:*

During this stage, the teachers introduce the theme, support the students to master the task-pertinent words and expressions and support the students to become familiar with the instructions of the given task.

### *B. Task cycle:*

During this stage, students perform the task either individually or in groups. During the task completion stage, the teachers have a monitoring role. They should make sure that all the student participants have understood the real objective of the provided tasks and at the same moment, try to complete the tasks. The teachers should stimulate the student participants to complete the activities without any excessive intervention. They should monitor and motivate the students in ensuring that each and every student participate in completion of the given task and the teachers should also provide some support when the same students find it difficult to answer. They are in a position to clarify the chief purpose and the form of the report, suggesting possible resources. At the same time, the teachers should ensure themselves in arousing the interest of all the student participants and even sometimes assign certain roles in accordance with students of different natures. During the report stage, the teachers will act as a moderator in enabling the students to grasp the importance and the main objective of listening to the students' report. The teachers will order the submitted reports, comment on each and every report.

### *C. Language focus:*

During the stage, the focus tends to transform from meaning to form of language. It involves two important steps: analysing and practising the language. The teachers monitor them and afterwards examine the students' analysis activities.

## VI. APPLICATION OF TASK & RESULTS

A task is designed for dialogue writing and circulated among the students of first year engineering college. The class strength of 62 is chosen for the study following the three main stages of TBLT.

### *A. Appropriate Objective of the Task:*

The designed task has a clear objective that after completing the activity, the students will be able to write a dialogue construction. The student participants were allowed to understand first what it was all about.

They were provided with worksheets individually. The teacher provided them certain advice to understand and complete the task. The students were asked to do role plays and sometimes the teacher called out their names randomly and made them to come out with their answers. The unique arrangement made the student participants to enjoy and they were attracted to the tasks given. Also students had a better understanding about the theme.

*B.Tasks obtain non-verbal results:*

The feedback from the student participants showed that the way they were involved in group work aroused the interest in students in the content of the theme. Students were curious to learn more about certain vocabulary which brought both oscillation and surprise. These are the examples for non-verbal learning aspects.

*C. InteractiveTasks:*

The tasks are generally from collective and collaborative activities and they are necessarily to be completed in either communicative or interactive way. The so called interaction is reciprocal or multilateral that can be between student to student, between student and teacher, or even between student and the given material interaction. The students were provided with some advice and support when selecting the topics for avoiding similarities. During the preparation of the tasks, group representatives play the significant role of co-ordination, making necessary arrangements for expanding the tasks, such as identifying information and finding pictures and words. All the student participants cooperated and mutually benefitted, put forth their best to excel their presentation both verbally and written. Ziahosseiny(2007) states that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously.

It is important to make use of the activities appropriately for the present level of english language proficiency of the student participants. Also at times, teachers should balance and adjust the activities. Tasks should have specific objectives for which student participants can interact in the target language and lastly, students are able to complete the activities and attain communicative proficiency. One specific note is that the activities should also be in an interesting way because students' involvement is closely pertinent to learning process. Thus, in planning the activities, the experts should surely consider student participants particular levels, analyse the various implications that affect the difficulties of the tasks, choose carefully and take benefits or offer necessary support in adjusting the selected tasks to match the exact level of difficulty so that student participants can do better.

**VII. CONCLUSION**

TBLT is fully learner oriented methodology. Task based language teaching induces interest as a beginning point, targeting to enhance student participants ability to make use of the language. It can certainly guide the teachers to choose particular teaching modes and techniques. TBLT is driven by crystal clear tasks where student participants can actively take part in language classroom practice so that modern way of teaching mode is need of the hour in which the selected

topic is the core, the tasks are hints, activities are the future carriers and exclusively, students play a central role. It is duty of the teachers in colleges to exhibit how to carry out the tasks according to the level of students from different backgrounds, how to use the students to solve the practical issues with mastered second language, continuously take part in second language teaching and complete many tasks and also experience the joy of learning.

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