Chapter 4

Tasks in ESL Pedagogy

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and define the notion of “task” in language teaching literature. The chapter begins by defining tasks in language teaching literature and moves to note down the features of tasks. The next section will explore the core elements of a task. The following section discusses about task-based approach in language pedagogy and attempts to show the notion of task in CLT. The section will also touch the rich growing research agenda supporting the use of tasks in language teaching. The section will also highlight the concept of tasks in CLT.

4.2 Definitions of ‘Tasks’ in Language Teaching Literature

In language teaching literature tasks have been differently defined by different researchers. Recently researchers like (Willis 1996; Skehan 1998; Lee 2000; Bygte et al. 2001; Nunan 2004; Willis and Willis 2007; Samuda 2008) have published their material focusing mainly on task-based language learning and teaching, thus proving central position of tasks in current second language teaching and learning.

Long (1985: 89) defines tasks as:-

“a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples
of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, making a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping someone across a road. In other words by ‘task’ is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between”.

According to Nunan (2004), in Long’s definition of a ‘task’ is non-technical and non-linguistic. Here some tasks require the use of language, for example, making an airline reservation, while other do not require the use of language at all, for example, painting a fence.

Some researchers define task in terms of a pedagogical context. For example:-

a) Breen defines a task as “………any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. ‘Task’ is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work plans which have the
overall purposes of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem – solving or simulations and decision – making” (1987:23).

b) Richards, Platt and Weber consider task as

“……an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language” (1986:289).

According to other researchers, a task is perceived as the following:-

- “……a piece of work or an activity usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research.”

(Crookes 1986)
• “………an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process”.

(Prabhu 1987)

• “……an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome.”

(Skehan 1996)

• “……an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective.”

(Bygate, Skehan and Swain 2001)

• Lee (2000) defines task as

(1) a classroom activity or exercise that has:

(a) an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants,

(b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and

(c) a focus on meaning exchange;
(2) a language learning endeavour that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of workplans”

Cited from Ellis (2004: 4-5)

- Ellis (2003 : 16) considers a task as

“…….a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes”
• Nunan (2004:4) states that a task is

“……a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end”.

Nunan (2004) has divided the tasks in two types; (a) real – world or target tasks, and (b) pedagogical tasks. According to him, target tasks are those that make the use of language outside the classroom, and pedagogic tasks make use of the language inside the classroom.

4.3 Features of Task

Although, all these definitions of tasks vary in one or the other aspect but barring Longs’ definition, they all emphasize the involvement of communicative language use in pedagogical tasks; where meaning is given priority over form. Nunan’s (2004) definition of task shows that form
(grammatical knowledge) can not be neglected; it is there but just to achieve meaning. Tasks give an opportunity to the learners to use a range of language structures in order to achieve task outcomes (meaning) unlike grammatical exercises.

Richards’s et al. (1986) and Nunan’s (2004) definitions of tasks show that language involvement is necessary in each task related to language teaching and learning, as the overall goal of tasks in both language pedagogy and research “is to elicit language use” Ellis (2003:2). Lee (2000) stresses the technique for planning and organizing interaction, which are an important part of the task workplan, as they tell the process and product (outcome) of the task. Most of the researchers such as Richards et al. (1986), Breen (1987), Prabhu (1987), Lee (2000), Nunan (2004), & Ellis (2003) prefer to consider a task as a ‘workplan’, that engage the learners in meaning- focused language use rather than a process.

Long (1985: 89) in his definition of target tasks lists a number of linguistic tasks such as “filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test........” that people do in the real world. In these tasks the instructions should be such that enable the learners to use the target language to accomplish real world activities successfully. To make the learners practice such activities in the class the input material should be authentic and the task must be real- world. Also, there are many tasks like telling a story based on a series of pictures, describing a picture so someone else can draw it, identifying differences in two pictures
which are not real world but still they may have ‘some sort of relationship to
the real world’ (Skehan 1996 a). Such tasks may take place outside the
classroom and more relevant is the point that the kind of language behaviour
they need match with the kind of communicative behaviour that learners learn
from performing real-world tasks. Thus tasks need both situational and
interactional authenticity (Ellis 2003).

Long’s (1985) definition brings out one more fact: a task can
make use of both speaking and writing skills, for example ‘making an airline
reservation’, and ‘writing a cheque’. But Richards et al. (1986) gave
importance to both the receptive and productive skills while stating that a task
‘may or may not involve the production of language’ and when giving an
example of such tasks like ‘drawing a map while listening to a tape’. However
both task-based language pedagogy and research emphasize that language tasks
can involve any of the four language skills (Ellis 2003). Moreover, the overall
goal of second language pedagogy is to make the learners proficient enough in
all the four skills of the second / target language; so that they are able to
successfully accomplish any of the target tasks in the target language that they
encounter inside or outside the classroom.

Richards et al. (1986), Prabhu (1987) and Nunan (2004)
however indicate the involvement of some cognitive processes in performing
tasks, when explicitly indicating in their definition of task ‘processing or
understanding language’(Richards et al. 1986) tasks involve ‘some process of
thought’ (Prabhu 1987); or ‘comprehending, manipulating, producing or
interacting in the target language’ (Nunan 2004). This means that tasks involve learners in some cognitive processes like selecting, reasoning, classifying, deducing, informing, sequencing, transforming or evaluating information etc, in order to carry them out.

Skehan (1996a) in his definition of task states that ‘the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome’ and brings out the fact that, tasks must have a clear outcome that can be assessed in terms of content. For example, a task of spotting-the-difference can be assessed by checking whether or not the learners have spotted all the differences. According to Crookes (1986) ‘a specified objective’ (outcome) is a crucial feature of a task and works as a signal for the completion of a task. But the ‘outcome’ should not be misunderstood with the ‘aim’ of a task. According to Ellis (2003:8), “‘outcome’ refers to what the learners arrive at when they have completed the task, for example, a story, a list of difference, etc. ‘Aim’ refers to the pedagogic purpose of the task, which is to elicit meaning-focused language use, receptive and/or productive”. Although ‘outcome’ is an important feature of a task but not the real purpose of the task. The real purpose of a task is to enable the learners to use the target language in ways that will facilitate language learning (Ellis 2003).

It is quite impossible to give one comprehensive definition of a task because definitions of a task depend on its purpose and as the purpose varies so the definitions also vary. But there are certain criterial features which are common in each task and which can easily be identified. Ellis (2003: 9-10)
identifies six key characteristics of a task, depending on a number of other writers, and tries to pinpoint the essential commonalities in tasks. They are:

1) A task is a work plan.
2) A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
3) A task involves real-world processes of language use.
4) A task can involve any of the four language skills.
5) A task engages cognitive processes.
6) A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome.

4.4 Components of Task

A language learning task manifests certain core components. These components are the designing features of a task. Shavelson and Stern (1981) suggest certain elements that a task designer should take into consideration while designing a task. These elements are:

- **Content:** - the subject matter to be taught.
- **Materials:** - the things that learners can observe/manipulate.
- **Activities:** - the things that learners and teachers will be doing during a lesson.
- **Goals:** - the teacher’s general aims for the task (these are much more general and vague than objectives).
- Students: - their abilities, needs and interests are important.

- Social community: -the class as a whole and its sense of ‘groupness’

(Shavelson and Stern 1981:478)

According to Candlin (1987) input, roles, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes, and feedback are the components that a task designer should keep in mind while designing a task. Here ‘Input’ is that data or material which is given to the learners to work on. ‘Roles’ refer to the sort of relationship or interaction that learners need to perform in a task. ‘Setting’ is an arrangement or organization for a task, inside or outside the classroom. ‘Actions’ refer to the procedures and sub-tasks, which the learners are required to perform. ‘Monitoring’ refers to the supervision of the progress of the task. ‘Outcomes’ refer to the overall goals or specified objectives of the task, and ‘feedback’ is the teacher’s response or evaluation of the task. Wright (1987a) has minimized his elements of tasks just into two: -(i) Input data, and (ii) Instructional questions. ‘Input data’ is the material provided to the learners to work on, and ‘instructional questions’ are the instructions for the learners as how to operate or work on the input. According to Wright(1987a) ‘outcome’ can not be considered as one of the elements for designing a task because the outcome of a particular task varies and may differ from the ones predicted. But Ellis (2003: 19-20) rejects this point and argues that “tasks must have clear,
specifiable product outcomes in order to qualify as tasks”. His framework for
describing tasks is represented below here in table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Goal</td>
<td>The general purpose of the task. e.g. to practise the ability to describe objects concisely; to provide an opportunity for the use of relative clauses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Input</td>
<td>The verbal or non-verbal information is supplied by the task, e.g. pictures; a map; written text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Condition</td>
<td>The way in which the information is presented, e.g. split vs. shared information, or the way in which it is to be used, e.g. converging vs. diverging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Procedure</td>
<td>The methodological procedures to be followed the task, e.g. a group vs. pair work; planning time vs. no planning time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Predicted outcomes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>The ‘product’ that results from completing the task, e.g. a completed table; a route drawn in on a map; a list of differences between two picture. The predicted product can be ‘open’, i.e. allow for only one ‘correct solution’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The linguistic and cognitive processes the task is hypothesized to generate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1- A Framework for Describing Tasks**

(Reproduce from Ellis 2003:21)
Deriving concepts from Candlin (1987), Wright (1987a) and others, Nunan has given a detailed description of the components of a task and suggests that a task should contain ‘goal’, ‘Input’ and ‘procedures’ supported by ‘roles’, and ‘settings’. He has represented his model of task components diagrammatically in the following way:

![Diagram of task components](image)

Figure 4.1 A Representation of Task’s Components (Reproduced from Nunan 2004:41).

4.4.1 Goals

‘Goals’ may be defined as general intentions or aims behind any learning task. They work as a bridge between the task and the curriculum. Behind every task there are some goals that the learners aim to achieve after the successful completion of the task. For example, learners undertaking tasks on speaking may want to develop their confidence in speaking. Nunan (2004) suggests the following features of ‘Goals’:

- Goals may relate to a range of general outcomes (communicative, affective or cognitive) or may directly describe teacher or learner behaviour.
- Goals may not always be clearly specified although they can usually be inferred from the task itself.
- A simple one-to-one relationship between goals and tasks is not always possible to find.
- Goals are not value-free. Adopting one set of goals might mean rejecting others.
As task-based language teaching has recently gained prominence, many curriculums focusing on task-based language teaching have been proposed. These curriculums distinctly describe the goal(s) of the language teaching programme. For example, The Australian Language Levels (ALL) project, which is one of the earliest task-based curriculum suggests the following communicative goals of the language:

- To build up interpersonal relationships in order to give and take the personal opinions to complete some works.
- To take the information in the L2 from publicly displayed materials to use it in some useful ways.
- To create and to get entertained through the literary work of the target language.

The Australian Language Levels (ALL) project highlights one more fact, that goals can be related to other aspects of the learning process rather than just to language. To prove the fact the ALL project relates goals to the sociocultural, process oriented or cultural and communicative aspects of the learning process. Nunan (2004:43), depending on Clark (1987:227-32) shows this fact in a tabulated form, which is reproduced below in table 4.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>Establish and maintain interpersonal relations and through this to exchange information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, and feelings and to get things done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>Have some understanding of the everyday life patterns of their contemporary age group in the target language speech community; this will cover their life at home, at school and at leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning-how-to-learn</td>
<td>To negotiate and plan their work over a certain time span, and learn how to set themselves realistic objectives and how to device the mean to attain them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and cultural awareness</td>
<td>To have some understanding of the systematic nature of language and the way it works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Goal Classification Table  
(Reproduced from Nunan 2004:43)

It has been argued that the goals that are related to the students and are designed in terms of observable performance are the relevant goals. Nunan (2004:47) has designed a list of goals and named it as ‘sample progress indicators’ which can be used by the teacher to check if the students have met the given standards.

- obtain, complete and process application forms, such as driver’s license, social security, college entrance
- express feeling through drama, poetry or song
- make an appointment
- defend and argue a position
- use prepared notes in an interview or meeting
- ask peers for their opinions, preference and desires
- corresponds with pen pals, English-speaking acquaintance, friends
- write personal essays
- make plans for social engagement
- shop in a supermarket
- engage listener’s attention verbally or non-verbally
- volunteer information and respond to question about self and family
- elicit information and ask clarification question
- clarify and restate information as needed
- describe feeling and emotions after watching a movie
- indicate interests, opinions or preference related to class project
- give and ask for permission
- offer and respond to greetings, compliments, invitations, introduce-disputes
- negotiate solutions to problems, interpersonal misunderstandings and disputes
- read and write invitation and thank you letter
- use the telephone.

Thus goal is one of the crucial component of a task, as it provide direction to the task as well as to the curriculum Nunan (2004).

4.4.2 Input

‘Input’ may be defined as the data or information provided to the learners to work on while accomplishing a task. Input can be spoken, written, or visual, and can be supplied by the teacher or a textbook or the learners themselves can bring some material (input) in the class to work on. Nunan (2004:48) has cited from Hover (1986) a wide range of items that can be used as input and are as follows:-
“letters (formal and informal), newspaper extracts, picture stories, telecom account, driver’s licence, missing person’s declaration form, social security form, business cards, memo note, photographs, family tree, drawings, shopping lists, invoices, postcards, hotel brochures, passport photos, swop shop cards, street map, menu, magazine quiz, calorie counter, recipe, extract from a play, weather forecast, diary, bus timetable, notice board items, housing request form, star signs, hotel entertainment programme, tennis court booking sheet, extracts from film script, high school year book, note to a friend, seminar programme, newspaper reporter’s notes, UK travel regulations, curriculum vitae, economic graphs”.

(Hover 1986)

Morris and Stewart - Dore (1984:158) have suggested list of items, that teacher can easily use in the language classroom as a resource material to facilitate language skills. The list is as follows:-

- articles from newspapers, magazines and journals
- reports to different kinds of groups
- radio and television scripts and documentaries
- puppet plays
- news stories and plays
- press releases
- bulletins and newsletters
- editorials
- progress reports and plans for future development
- publicity brochures and posters
The items suggested in the above lists can be provided either verbally, non-verbally or visually to the learners and teachers can adapt them in a set of tasks for developing both productive and receptive language skills. Moreover, all these items should be authentic in nature. Now the question arises as so how far it is appropriate to use authentic materials in a task-based language classroom. Some researchers favour the use of authentic materials while others favour the use of simplified (non-authentic) materials in the language classroom. But for Nunan (2004) what matters is not authentic or simplified material, but the fact that how much learning opportunities it provides to the learners.

Porter and Roberts (1981) have identified various differences between specially written dialogues and authentic speech. For example, recorded conversation usually has a slow pace, attention signals or hesitations like “Uhuh’s” and “mm’s” are generally missing, sentences are generally well formed etc. In other words, what the learners are provided with in the class is
quite different from what they encounter in the real world. On the other hand learners can see the direct relationship between the language classroom and the world outside the classroom with the help of authentic materials and media. Brosnan et al. (1984) give priority to authentic materials and advise teachers to choose such materials which are appropriate according to the needs, interests and proficiency levels of their learners. They justify the use of authentic material on the following grounds.

- The language is natural. By simplifying language or altering it for teaching purposes (limiting structures, controlling vocabulary, etc.) we may risk making the reading task more difficult. We may in fact, be removing clues to meaning.

- It offers the students the chance to deal with small amounts of print, which at the same time, contain complete, meaningful messages.

- It provides students with the opportunity to make use of non-linguistic clues (layout, pictures, colours, symbols, the physical setting in which it occurs) and so more easily to arrive at meaning from the printed word.

- Adults need to be able to see the immediate relevance of what they do in the classroom to what they need to do outside it, and real – life reading
material treated realistically makes the connection obvious.” (Brosanan, Brown, and Hood 1984:2-3).

Although exposing learners to authentic materials has value but this does not mean that non-authentic materials should completely be ignored in the language classroom. Non-authentic materials mean simplified material. Teachers can adapt or simplify the input to make it easier for their learners to process the language. If the teachers slow down the speed of authentic or recorded speech, then it will become easier for the learners to understand, especially at the beginning level (Nunan 2004).

But for Brown and Menasche (1993), the distinction between the authentic and non-authentic material is an oversimplification, and the teacher can place the material (input) on a continuum from authentic to non-authentic. They have also given five points along this continuum:

- **Genuine:** Created only for the realm of real life; not for the classroom, but used in the classroom for language teaching.

- **Altered:** While there is no meaning change, the original has been altered in other ways (for example, the insertion of glosses, visual resetting, the addition of visuals).
- **Adapted**: Although created for real life, vocabulary and grammatical structures are changed to simplify the text.

- **Simulated**: - Although especially written by the author for purposes of language teaching, the author tries to make it look authentic by using characteristics of genuine texts.

- **Minimal / Incidental**: - Created for the classroom with no attempt to make the material appear genuine.

  (Cited from Nunan 2004:52)

### 4.4.3 Procedures

‘Procedures’ is that component of a task, which specifies what operations learners will perform. It refers to what the learners are supposed to actually do with the input. Nunan (2004) has presented four ways to analyze procedures. They are:-

- **Authenticity**: - The procedures that the learners are required to follow should also be authentic. Nunan (2004) uses the term ‘procedural authenticity’ for this and regards those procedures as authentic procedures “that attempt to replicate and rehearse in the classroom the kinds of things that learners need to do outside the classroom ……” (Nunan 2004:54)

- **Focus / Goal**: - Procedural goals are widely characterized on the basis of ‘skill getting’ and ‘skill using’ (Rivers and Temperley 1978).
Skill getting makes the learners memorize and manipulate the phonological, lexical and structural skills of language given in the task; and then they are required to apply these skills (skill using) in communicative interaction. Advocates of audiolingualism prefer to place skill getting before skill using on the basis of presentation, practice and production (3Ps) technique. But Nunan considers this assumption as inappropriate because it neither reflects the complex relationship between language acquisition and use; nor the notion of learning by doing.

- **Accuracy / Fluency:** Procedures can focus on learner’s development on both fluency and accuracy. When the learners process any task then the process adopted reflects either on their accuracy development or fluency development. While according to Brumfit (1984) fluency and accuracy are not opposites of each other but are in complementary relation. But materials and activities designed so far for language teaching and learning show that accuracy and fluency are just opposite to each other and the language teachers adopt any one out of these two according to the situation and according to their purpose.

- **Control:** When a task is underway, the procedure can either be in learner’s or teacher’s control. In certain tasks like pattern drills and skill getting the procedure control is in the hands of the teacher; while
in other activities like role play and simulations the procedural control is in the hands of the learners.

4.4.4 Task Type

Different Researches who have worked on task–based language teaching (TBLT) have proposed different task typologies. In current TBLT there is no single accepted task typology. Moreover there is not any consensus on what organizing principles the task typology should be constructed. A number of task typologies have been proposed so far. Some of the most popular and those which suit the purpose of this work best are discussed below:

Bangalore project, proposed by Prabhu in 1987 is one of the earliest curricular applications of TBLT (Task Based Language Teaching). It proposes three principal task types. The classification is based on the kind of cognitive activity that different types of task involved.

- **Information gap activity**: - This kind of activity involves “transfer of given information from one person to another or from one form to another or from one place to another- generally calling for the encoding or decoding of information from or into language” (Prabhu 1987:46). Two examples given can be: standard information gap activity and information transfer, such as, completing a chart or table on the basis of textual information.
• **Reasoning-gap activity:** This involves “deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns” (Prabhu1987:46). Here the activity obviously requires students to comprehend and convey the given information. But in between there is some reasoning which connects them so the students are required to go beyond what was initially comprehended, for example, students may be asked to work out a teacher’s timetable from a set of class timetables.

• **Opinion –gap activity:** Here an activity involves “identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation” (Prabhu1987:47). Two examples given are: story completion and taking part in a discussion. Here a student can provide any piece of information or argument to support his/her opinion. There can be as different and as many outcomes as students and situations, so there is no objective procedure to judge the results. Here the tasks involved are the open tasks.
Then Richards (2001) taxonomy of tasks, which is based on psycholinguistic classification, proposes four principle task types:-

- **Jigsaw tasks**: These tasks involve learners in combining different pieces of information to form a whole (e.g. three individuals or groups may have three different parts of a story and have to piece the story together).

- **Information-gap tasks**: These are tasks in which one student or group of students has one set of information and another student or group has a complementary set of information. They must negotiate and find out what the other party’s information is in order to complete an activity.

- **Problem-solving tasks**: Students are given a problem and a set of information. They must arrive at a solution to the problem. There is generally a single resolution of the outcome.

- **Decision-making tasks**: Students are given a problem for which there are a number of possible outcomes and they must choose one through negotiation and discussion.
Opinion-exchange tasks: Learners engage in discussion and exchange of ideas. They do not need to reach agreement. (Richards 2001:162)

Tasks can also be classified on the basis of strategies. One can group the tasks under different strategies which support them. Nunan (1999) has devised a classification scheme on the basis of five different strategy types. The scheme is given below in table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIVE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLASSIFYING</td>
<td>Putting things that are similar together in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: study a list of names and classify them into male and female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREDICTING</td>
<td>Predicting what is to come in the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: Look at the unit title and objectives and predict what will be learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDUCING</td>
<td>Looking for patterns and regularities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: study a conversation and discover the rule for forming the simple past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKING NOTES</td>
<td>Writing down the important information in a text in your own words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCEPT MAPPING</td>
<td>Showing the main ideas in a text in the form of a map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFERENCING</td>
<td>Using what you know to learn something new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCRIMINATING</td>
<td>Distinguishing between the main ideas and supporting information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAGRAMMING</td>
<td>Using information from a text to label a diagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPERSONAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO-OPERATING</td>
<td>Sharing ideas and learning with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE PLAYING</td>
<td>Pretending to be somebody else and using the language for the situation you are in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONVERSATIONAL</td>
<td>Using expressions to start conversations and keep them going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATTERNS</td>
<td>Example: Match formulaic expressions to situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRACTISING</td>
<td>Doing controlled exercises to improve knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USING CONTEXT</td>
<td>Using the surrounding context to guess the meaning of an unknown word, phrase, or concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARIZING</td>
<td>Picking out and presenting the major points in a text in a summary form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTIVE LISTENING</td>
<td>Listening for key information without trying to understand every word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKIMMING</td>
<td>Reading quickly to get a general idea of a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFECTIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONALIZING</td>
<td>Learners share their own opinions, feelings and ideas about a Subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-EVALUATING</td>
<td>Thinking about how well you did on a learning task, and rating yourself on a scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTING</td>
<td>Thinking about ways you learn best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAINSTORMING</td>
<td>Thinking of as many new words and ideas as one can</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.3 A Strategy Classification Scheme.**

(Reproduced from Nunan 2004:59-61)
All the above given task typologies focus mainly on the development of the oral language skill. Grellet (1981) has also proposed a strategy based typology, which focuses mainly on the development of the reading skills. The typology is given below in figure 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading techniques</th>
<th>How the aim is conveyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 SENSITIZING</td>
<td>1 AIM AND FUNCTION OF THE TEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Inference; through the context Inference: through word-formation</td>
<td>2 Function within the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Understanding relations within the sentence</td>
<td>2 ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT: DIFFERENT THEMATIC PATTERNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Linking sentences and ideas: reference Linking sentences and ideas: link-words</td>
<td>1 Main idea and supporting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 IMPROVING READING SPEED</td>
<td>2 Chronological sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 FROM SKIMMING TO SCANNING</td>
<td>3 Descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Predicting</td>
<td>4 Analogy and contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Previewing</td>
<td>5 Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Anticipation</td>
<td>6 Argumentative and logical organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Skimming</td>
<td>3 THEMATIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Scanning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding meaning</th>
<th>Assessing the text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 NON-LINGUISTIC RESPONSE TO THE TEXT</td>
<td>1 FACT VERSUS OPINION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Ordering a sequence of pictures</td>
<td>2 WRITER’S INTENTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparing texts and pictures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Matching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Using illustrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Completing a document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Mapping it out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Using the information in the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Jigsaw reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LINGUISTIC RESPONSE TO THE TEXT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Reorganizing the information: reordering events Reorganizing the information: using grids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Comparing several texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Completing a document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Question-types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Study skills: summarizing Study skills: note-taking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.2 Reading Comprehension Exercise Type
Nunan (2004:62-63) has adapted a strategy based typology from Lai (1997) focusing on the development of reading strategies. According to Lai, L2 learners can match their strategies, text, and reading purposes to increase their reading speed as well as comprehension. The typology is set out below in table 4.4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Having a purpose</td>
<td>It is important for students to have a clear purpose and to keep in mind what they want to gain from the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Previewing</td>
<td>Conducting a quick survey of the text to identify the topic, the main ideas, and the organization of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Skimming</td>
<td>Looking quickly through the text to get a general idea of what it is about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scanning</td>
<td>Looking quickly through a text in order to locate specific information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Clustering</td>
<td>Reading clusters of words as a unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Avoiding bad habits</td>
<td>Avoiding habits such as reading word by word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Predicting</td>
<td>Anticipating what is to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Reading actively</td>
<td>Asking questions and then reading for answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Inferring</td>
<td>Identifying ideas that are not explicitly stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Identifying genres.</td>
<td>Identifying the overall organizational pattern of a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Identifying paragraph structure</td>
<td>Identifying the organizational structure of a paragraph, for example, whether it follows an inductive or deductive pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Identifying sentence structure</td>
<td>Identifying the subject and main verb in complex sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Noticing cohesive devices</td>
<td>Assigning correct referents to performs, and identifying the function of conjunction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Inferring unknown vocabulary</td>
<td>Using context as well as parts of words (e.g. prefixes, suffixes and stems) to work out the meaning of unknown words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Identifying figurative language
16. using background knowledge
17. Identifying style and its purpose
18. Evaluating.
19. integrating information
20. Reviewing
21. reading to present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the use of figurative language and metaphors.</td>
<td>Using what one already knows to understand new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the writer’s purpose in using different stylistic devices such as a series of long and short sentences.</td>
<td>Reading critically, and assessing the truth value of textual information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking ideas that are developed across the text through techniques such as highlighting and note taking.</td>
<td>Looking back over a text and summarizing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the text fully and then presenting it to others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Strategy Based Reading Typology  
(Reproduced from Nunan 2004:62-63)

**4.4.5 Teacher and Learner Roles:**

‘Role’ may be defined as the part played by teachers and learners in the classroom in carrying out learning tasks. It also refers to the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants.

The teacher and learner roles have been given importance in an understanding of language teaching and learning through materials and tasks. Several studies such as that of Wright (1987), Richards and Rodgers (1986) have paid special attention to teacher and learner roles in their work. The following table 4.5, highlighting the roles of teachers and learners in different teaching methods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods/Approaches</th>
<th>Learner Roles</th>
<th>Teacher Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Situational Method</td>
<td>To listen and repeat, respond to questions and commands; learner has no control over content; later allowed to initiate statements and ask questions.</td>
<td>Act as a model in presenting structures; orchestrates drill practice; corrects errors; tests progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-lingual Method</td>
<td>Organisms that can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses.</td>
<td>Teacher dominated; central and active teacher provides modes, controls directions and pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Approach</td>
<td>Learner as negotiator and interactor who gives as well as takes.</td>
<td>Facilitator of the communication process; needs analyst counsellor; process manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Physical Response</td>
<td>Listener and performer; little influence over the content of learning.</td>
<td>Active and direct role as ‘the director of a stage play’ with students as actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Silent Way</td>
<td>Learning is a process of personal growth. Learners are responsible for their own learning and must develop independence, autonomy and responsibility.</td>
<td>Teacher must a) teach, b) test and c) get out of the way; remain impassive. Resist temptation of model, remodel, assist, direct exhort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Language Learning.</td>
<td>Learners are members of a community. Learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment, but something that is achieved collaboratively.</td>
<td>Counselling/parental analogy. Teacher provides a safe environment in which students can learn and grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Natural Approach</td>
<td>Should not try and learn language in the usual sense, but try and lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication.</td>
<td>The teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. Must create positive low-anxiety climate. Must choose and orchestrate a rich mixture of classroom activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestopedia</td>
<td>Must maintain a passive state and allow the material to work on them (rather than vice versa).</td>
<td>To create situation in which the learner is most suggestible and present material in a way most likely to encourage positive reception and retention. Must exude authority and confidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 4.5 A Framework Highlighting the Teacher’s and Learner’s Roles in Language Teaching Methods.

(Adapted from Nunan 2004:184-86).
In the current task based language pedagogy, much emphasis is given to a learner centred class; because such a class focuses on learning and the learners; and all tasks and activities are designed are to make the learners independent in their learning process. This brings a different and new role for the teacher.

According to Breen and Candlin (1980) the teacher should act either as a facilitator, or as a participant or as an observer and learner in the language learning class. The teacher should let the students use language and should create opportunities for learning.

According to Cohen (1998:97) “One potentially beneficial shift in teacher roles is from that of being exclusively the manager, controller, and instructor to that of being a change agent--- a facilitator of learning, whose role is to help their students to become more independent, more responsible for their own learning. In this role, the teachers become partners in the learning process”.

But then becoming a facilitator does not mean that teachers should eliminate their presence from the classroom activities. The teacher needs to make a balance between the roles that they feel appropriate and those which arise from the situation. According to Clarke and Silberstein, in the reading class:

“The teacher as teacher is necessary only when the class is attempting to resolve a language problem, for it is only in this situation that the
teacher is automatically assumed to possess more
knowledge than the students. This role can be
minimized if the students’ attack strategies and
reading skills have been effectively developed. If
the task is realistic and the students have learned
to adjust their reading strategies according to the
task, there should be little need for teachers’
intervention” (1977:52).

Task based language pedagogy imposes some new and different roles on the learners also. Traditionally, learners were supposed as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge, which is provided by the teacher. But now, the learners are not perceived as a “tabula rasa” or a clear board on which the teachers work and change it by new knowledge supplied by them. Instead, learners bring some prior knowledge to the classroom and make use of it to interact with new knowledge in order to reach at successful results. But here it is necessary that learners should have a desire and love for learning. Desire for learning occurs from inside the learners, the teacher can not pour information into unreceptive minds. Learners have to see their role as that of an active participant in the classroom activity Freire, Paolo (1972), and should develop an awareness of themselves as learners. Nunan remarks that learners should “see themselves as being in control of their own learning rather than as passive recipients of content provided by the teacher or the text book”. (Nunan 2004:67).
Task-based learning also promotes learner autonomy in the classroom. Learners should take the decision about what, how and when to study and should also realize the need for study. They should take responsibility for their own learning and should develop an autonomy and skills in learning-how-to-learn. In a task-based language learning class, learners should be “‘sensitive to a range of learning processes’ and should also ‘appreciate the rationale behind what to them may appear a radical new way of learning’” Nunan (2004:65). Rubin and Thompson (1982) define good language learners as critical, reflective and autonomous. Nunan (2004) deriving ideas from Rubin and Thompson (1982); defines good language learners as those who

- --- find their own way.
- --- organize information about language.
- --- are creative.
- --- make their own opportunities
- --- learn to live with uncertainty.
- --- use mnemonics.
- --- make error work.
- --- use their linguistic knowledge.
- --- let the context help them.
- --- learn to make intelligent guesses.
- --- learn formalized routines.
- --- learn production techniques.
- --- use different styles of speech and writing.

Adapted from Nunan (2004:66-67)
4.4.6 Settings:-

‘Settings’ may be defined as arrangements or organizations of the classroom as demanded by the task. Broadly speaking, ‘settings’ refers to the situation in which learning takes place. Tasks may demand outside or inside or partly inside and partly outside classroom setting for its operation. However, most of the language tasks require settings inside the language classroom, although there may be variations according to the size of the class, the intelligence level of the students and so on. Tasks may come directly from the teacher or from the text book. There are various forms of classroom interaction that could occur in the language classroom, when the task is in operation.

For example:-

Teacher – Whole Class (TSSSS)
Teacher – Group of Students
Teacher – Individual Student
Whole class – Teacher
Group of Students – Teacher
Individual Student – Teacher
Individual Student – Individual Student
Individual Student – Other Students
Other Students – Individual Students

Mathew, Rama (1998:30)

Learners can interact individually, in pairs, in small or large groups or as a whole class with the language tasks. Although pair work, individual work, and whole class learning is also fruitful and have their own benefits but still most of the researchers, for example, Anderson and Lynch (1988) favour group work in language learning.
“We might wish to use group-based work for general pedagogic reasons, such as the belief in the importance of increasing the cooperation and cohesiveness among students. Then there are more specifically language oriented arguments: classroom researchers such as Pica and Doughty (1985) have offered evidences for the positive role of group work in promoting a linguistic environment likely to assist L2 learning” Anderson and Lynch (1988:59).

Moreover there are the two concepts of ‘mode’ and ‘environment’ which need to be taken into consideration in task based learning settings. Here, ‘mode’ means whether the learner is interacting with a task individually or in group. If the learner is working individually, then is the learner teacher-directed or self-directed? If learner is working in group, then is the task actually designed for whole class, small group or for pair work? Before designing any task, the task designer has to keep all these concepts in his/her mind. On the other hand, ‘environment’ tells the place where learning actually takes place. The place might be any, from conventional classroom to language laboratory. Although conventional classroom was much emphasized until recently as the suitable place for language learning; but still there is an increasing interest in an environment outside the classroom and is viewed as the world of natural language acquisition. Strevens (1987) also favours this
concept and pinpoints three benefits of those tasks that use the real world as a resource:

- They provide learners with opportunities for genuine interactions which have a real life point to them.
- Learners can adopt communicative roles which bypass the teacher as intermediary.
- They can change the in-class role relationships between teachers and pupils.

Strevens (1987:171)

Here Nunan (1987, 2004) raises the point regarding the learners’ views. Means what opportunities learners feel or have, for practising/learning a language in a natural environment. Nunan and Pill (2002) investigated those opportunities that are used by a group of adult learners in Hong Kong, and those that need further practice. They found that learners are widely exposed to the world outside the classroom but the learners were themselves confused between activities which are simply the part of their routine life and those that they have practiced as a part of language learning. This concept of ‘learner’s view’ needs further research and development.

4.5 Task Based Approach in Language Pedagogy

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) came into existence as a result of the Bangalore project (Prabhu, 1980, 1984, 1987). Here ‘tasks’ refer to the special kind of classroom activities, which focus primarily on meaning. The aim of the project is to sort out the new teaching techniques which sprang from
“----- a strongly felt pedagogic intuition, arising from experience generally, but made concrete in the course of professional debate in India. This was that the development of competence in second language requires no systematisation of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication” (Prabhu 1987:1).

The project came into existence as an improvement of the Situational Oral Approach, and stresses on competence and communication. For Prabhu ‘competence’ refers to ‘grammatical competence’ and ‘communication’ refers to the ‘understanding or conveying meaning’.

Tasks serve as a means in developing in L2 learners, the competence that is required to use second language effectively in the real life situations. Tasks serve as a means for experiencing L2 learners how language is used as a tool of communication inside the classroom, and then enable them to use second language outside the classroom. Such merits of tasks, declare them as those units of teaching around which the whole language course can be designed (Long and Crookes 1992).
4.5.1 Research Evidence Supporting Task in Language Teaching:

Language teaching based on tasks is supported by a rich and growing research agenda. Finch (2006) summarizes the research findings of Willis (2004), and some psycholinguists and sociolinguists, which shows the reasons for choosing task-based approach in language classroom in the following terms:

1) language learning, even in a classroom setting, seems to develop independently of instruction.

2) learners acquire language according to their own inbuilt internal syllabus, regardless of the order in which they are exposed to particular structures and regardless of mother tongue influences;

3) teaching does not and cannot determine the way that the learners language will develop(citing Skehan, 1996);

4) learners do not necessarily learn what teacher teach (citing Allwright, 1984);

5) learners do not first acquire language as a structural system and then learn how to use this system in communication, but rather actually discover the system itself in the process of
learning how to communicate (citing Ellis, 2003,p.14);

6) motivation is one of the key issue in language learning and that skills to motivate learners are crucial for language teachers (Dornyei, 2001,p.1);

7) collaboration is more effective than competition as a means of promoting effective learning (Kohen 1992);and

8) learners learn more in groups than individually, since cooperative social interaction produces new, elaborate, advanced psychological processes that are unavailable to the organism working in isolation (Vygotsky, 1989, p.61).

(Cited from Finch 2006:44-45)

Many researchers have used ‘task’ as an instrument for investigating L2 acquisition; and tasks themselves have been used as a unit of research in their own right (Ellis 2003).

In second language acquisition, the use of tasks has become the major focus of study recently. Earlier, researchers in SLA mainly focused on the description of the learners’ acquisition of L2. Those researchers also showed the order and sequence for the grammatical acquisition of a language (Dulay and Burt 1973; Hakuta 1976; Cancino et al. 1978), and the different
types of communicative situations in which child and adult language learners participated (Wagner-Gough 1975; Hatch 1978b). When researchers started to test L2 acquisition hypotheses, SLA became more theory oriented. Here in both descriptive and theory based research, tasks have an important role. Early descriptive research tended to examine the naturalistic way of acquiring an L2. The data collected was based on the spontaneous speech used by the learners while conversing in the L2. But such data was not always useful in the sense that it did not always supply examples of the particular linguistic features needed for investigation. Then it was substituted with data collected on the basis of various kinds of tasks that the learners were asked to perform. These tasks were designed to bring out the samples of language use of the learners in communication. The analysis of these samples provides the reason for changes in learner’s use of specific linguistic features (Ellis 2003). In this regard Ellis carried out a study between 1979 and 1982, on three classroom learners and collected samples of naturally occurring speech and clinically elicited speech. The study takes the first step to sort out the relationship between tasks, language use and L2 acquisition; and the reason of variability in learner language was sorted out. Tarone (1979; 1982; 1983a) proved that the reason for variability in learner’s use of language is the type of activity they are engaged in. According to her, in naturally occurring speech, learners attend to meaning rather than form; and in experimentally elicited speech, learners attend to form. The former style is named as ‘vernacular style’, and later as ‘careful style’. And in between there is a series of other styles which can be tested from tasks
to test-like exercise devices. This shows that learners possess a continuum of styles, and it also highlights the variables that affect task performance (Tarone 1982; Ellis 2003).

Another study around the mid 1980s was conducted by Krashen (1981, 1982) which contributed a lot to second language acquisition; and had a major influence on task- based language teaching. Krashen formulated four hypotheses i.e. acquisition learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, and the input hypothesis. He distinguishes between language acquisition and language learning. According to him language acquisition is the unconscious development of L2 /target language, and happens when one is able to understand the messages (input) he/ she is exposed to. The messages (input) are just little more advanced than his/her current level of competence. Whereas language “learning is the conscious repetition of grammatical knowledge that has resulted from instruction, and it cannot lead to acquisition” (Richards and Rodgers 1986:72).

Another research proposed by Long (1981, 1983a, 1996) is Interaction Hypothesis. Interaction Hypothesis too recognizes the important role of input but argues that “the ‘best’ input for language acquisition is that which arises when learners have the opportunity to negotiate meaning in exchanges where an initial communication problem has occurred”. Then in his later version Long (1996) finds other ways in which meaning negotiation can contribute to language acquisition. The theory given by both the early version (1981 and 1983) and the later version (1996) of Interaction Hypothesis, gave
opportunities to researchers to make use of tasks to investigate the kind of Input which works best for comprehension (for example Pica, Young and Doughty 1987) and, for language acquisition (for example Doughty 1991; Ellis, Tanaka, and Yamazaki 1994; Loschky 1994). The Input and Interaction Hypothesis have then become the ideal for other research studies focusing on tasks. This research aims to identify “psycholinguistically motivated task characteristics’ which ‘can be shown to affect the nature of language produced in performing a task in ways which are relevant to SL processing and SL learning’” (Crookes 1986, cited from Ellis 2003:23-24). Actually, the goal of the researches was to sort out those tasks which promote meaning negotiation to facilitate language acquisition. And thus the dependent variables were elicited from those interactions that resulted from different tasks performed by the learners.

Krashen’s hypotheses subsequently became the subject of criticism and gave birth to a great deal of controversy, which remains the same till date. An alternative to ‘input hypothesis’ is the ‘output hypothesis’ proposed first by Hatch (1978). Hatch gave priority to engaging in conversations over learning grammatical structures. According to Hatch (1978), for learning a second language, learners should first be given opportunity to converse in L2 and then to develop grammatical knowledge out of this interaction. Ellis (1984:95) making his case with output hypothesis states:
“Interaction contributes to development because it is the means by which the learner is able to crack the code. This takes place when the learner can infer what is said even though the massage contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and when the learner can use the discourse to help him/her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production”.

Merrill Swain argues that input in necessary but not sufficient for acquisition. Besides input, opportunities for production should be given because production needs a different psycholinguistic process from comprehension (Swain 1985).

Some other task based studies, have been based on Levelt’s model of speech production (1989), which proposed the three stages in speech production: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation by converting formulation into actual speech (Levelt 1989). Taking into account the Levelt’s model, Wendel (1997), gave a distinction between ‘Strategic or off-line planning and ‘online planning’. According to Wendel during off-line planning, the given time is utilized by the learners in planning a task prior to performing it and, during online planning; the learners actually perform the task. Thus Wendel calls, the strategic or off-line planning as the conceptualization stage and online-planning as the stage of formulation and
articulation which in turn is manifested through monitoring. Bygate (1996) uses Levelt’s model to bring out the effect that occur on task performance if the learners are asked to repeat a task.

Unlike the above reviewed task-based research involving the use of unfocused tasks, some other researchers have laid emphasis on focused tasks. Newton and Kennedy (1996) show the possibility for predicting the linguistic form used by the learners while performing any particular tasks. It was found that discourse genre (i.e. descriptive / persuasive); task processing (i.e. performing a narrative and an argumentative task) and the task condition (i.e. Shared / Split information) influenced learner’s choice of linguistic forms

Newton and Kennedy (1996). These studies prove that “task procedures can be manipulated to induce the use of specific features” Ellis (2003:25).

Other recent studies have turned their attention to the place of form (grammatical instruction) in task based language teaching. An important and controversial issue for task-based language teaching is whether the tasks themselves should be focused or unfocused. In focused tasks learners are restricted to use a particular structure for the completion of a task; whereas in unfocused tasks they are free to use any form from a range of forms. Some researchers favour the focused tasks (such as, Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993; Long 1988, 1991; Ellis 2001, 2003 Nunan 2004) while other have spoken in favour of unfocused tasks (e.g. Willis and Willis 2001).

Speaking in favour of the focused tasks, Ellis (2003) points out the two main aims of focused tasks: “one is to stimulate communicative
language use; the other is to target the use of a particular, predetermined target feature. According to him focused tasks are beneficial for both researchers and teachers. To researchers, such tasks inform the learner’s potential in performing some particular linguistic feature, which is the subject of investigation. Teachers on the other hand, can make the learners practise some specific feature under naturalistic condition. According to Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993), learners may not make use of a particular form in order to complete a task successfully, but certain forms can naturally arise while learners are performing a specific task. Moreover, learners may not think essential the use of linguistic forms suggested by the curriculum, the textbook or the teacher for the completion of the task; but if they use such forms then task completion will greatly be facilitated. For example, for a particular task, one of the forms to be elicited is the ‘preposition’. It is possible for the learners to complete the task without using preposition at all; but if they use the preposition, then it would be easier for them to complete the task and the outcome will also be successful (Loschky and Bley-Vroman 1993: Nunan 2004).

Ellis also makes a distinction between a focused task and situational grammar exercise. According to him, in a focused task “the learners are not informed of the specific linguistic focus and therefore treat the task in the same way as they would an unfocused task, i.e. pay primary attention to message content” whereas ‘in a situational grammar exercise the learners are told what the linguistic focus is and thus, when they
perform the task, are likely to make special attempts to attend to it. In this case, then, attention to form is intentional” (Ellis 2003:141). He then discovers a particular variety of focused tasks and names it as consciousness-raising (CR) tasks, and states two ways which make the difference between CR tasks and other focused tasks.

“First, whereas structure-based production tasks, enriched input tasks, and interpretation tasks are intended to cater primarily to implicit learning—that is, they are intended to develop awareness at the level of ‘understanding’ rather than awareness at the level of ‘noticing’ (see Schmidt 1994). Thus, the desired outcome of a C-R task is awareness of how some linguistic feature works. Second, whereas the previous types of task were built around content of a general nature, for example, stories, pictures of objects, opinion about the kind of person you like, C-R tasks make language itself the content. In this respect, it can be asked whether C-R tasks are indeed tasks. They are in the sense that learners are required to talk meaningfully about a language point using their own linguistic resources. That is, although there is some linguistic feature that is
the focus of the task learners are not required to 
use this feature, only think about it and discuss it. 
The ‘taskness’ of a C-R tasks lies in the linguistic 
point that is the focus of the task but rather in the 
talk learners must engage in order to achieve an 
outcome to the task”.


Ellis (1991, 2003) characterizes C-R tasks as those which, 
isolate a specific linguistic feature for attention, and provide the learners with data for the illustration of the targeted features and the rules (optional) for the description of the feature. C-R tasks then expect the learners to either understand the feature or to describe the asked grammatical structure. Fotos and Ellis (1991) then provide an example of a C-R task, which is given below in Table 4.6.
A  What is the difference between verbs like ‘give’ and ‘explain’?

She gave a book to her father. (= grammatical)

She gave her father a book. (= grammatical)

The policeman explained the law to Mary. (= grammatical)

The policeman explained Mary the law. (= ungrammatical)

B  Indicate whether the following sentences are grammatical or ungrammatical.

1  They saved Mark a seat.

2  His father read Kim a story.

3  She donate the hospital some money.

4  They suggested Mary a trip on the river.

5  They reported the police the accident.

6  They threw Mary a party.

7  The bank lent Mr. Thatcher some money.

8  He indicated Mary the right turning.

9  The festival generated the college a lot of money.

10  He cooked his girlfriend a cake.

C  Work out a rule for verbs like ‘give’ and ‘explain’.

1  List the verbs in B that are like ‘give’ (i.e. permit both sentence patterns) and those that are like ‘explain’ (i.e. allow only one sentence pattern).

2  What is the difference between the verbs in your two lists?

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**Table 4.6 An Example of a C-R Task.**

(Reproduced from Ellis 2003:164)
Instead of focusing on focused tasks, some researchers gave priority to the unfocused tasks. Willis and Willis (2001) call focused tasks as ‘metacommunicative tasks’ and argue that:

“The use of the word ‘task’ is sometime extended to include ‘metacommunicative tasks’, or exercises with a focus on linguistic form, in which learners manipulate language or formulate generalizations about form. But a definition of task which includes an explicit focus on form seems to be so all embracing as to cover almost anything that might happen in a classroom. We therefore restrict our use of the term ‘task’ to communicative tasks and exclude metacommunicative tasks from our definition.”

(Willis and Willis 2001:173-74).

It is widely accepted that ‘focus on form’ has a place in the language classroom and grammar plays an important role in making meaning (Halliday 1994; Hammond and Derewianka 2001; Nunan 2004). Accepting the importance of focus on form in task-based language teaching, Ellis (2003) advises the teachers to methodologically incorporate form-focused instructions into meaning-focused instruction than through designing a separate task in the course of a task. He also suggests some temporary ways in which teacher can focus on form while responding to learner’s errors (Lyster
and Ranta 1997), while drawing learner’s attention towards the advantages of specific form in the task (Samuda 2001), or when the learners are working as a whole to solve some linguistic problem for successful completion of a task (Swain and Lapkin 1998).

Nunan (2004) has presented a six-step pedagogical sequence to show how an instructional sequence around tasks can be developed:

Step 1: schema building
Step 2: controlled practice
Step 3: authentic listening practice
Step 4: focus on linguistic elements.
Step 5: provide freer practice
Step 6: introduce the pedagogical task,

He argues for the introduction of a focus on form in an instructional sequence at Step 4. The reason behind this selection is the opening focus of the sequence is the communicative ends and not the linguistic means. Moreover in the Step 3 learners are able to hear the language use in speech by native speakers or competent speakers of the language which would help them to create links between the linguistic forms and the communicative functions they realise. Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993) have merged the large number of studies proposed in the early 1990s in the area of task-based language teaching into two key features of tasks i.e. the ‘interactional activity’ and the ‘communication goal’, each of which is further
divided into two subsidiary dimensions. The framework is given below in figure 2:

**Interactional activity**

- **Interactant relationship:** Do task participants hold mutual or mutually exclusive information?
- **Interactant requirement:** Is the exchange of information necessary or optional for task completion?

**Communication goal**

- **Outcome options:** Is a single outcome required, or are several outcomes possible?
- **Goal orientation:** Are participants expected to converge on a particular goal or to diverge?

Figure 4.3 Representation of Two Key Features of a Task.
(Reproduced from Nunan 2004:84)

Thus the purpose of the review of studies supporting task based-language teaching is to bring out the development, place and importance of tasks in language teaching from time to time. The studies highlight the status of tasks, when tasks were considered merely instruments for investigating second language acquisition, to the present status where tasks are now considered as units of teaching and analysis in their own right. The purpose here is not to support the TBLT but to view tasks as one way of teaching a second language.

Whether tasks are simply incorporated into traditional language-based approaches to teaching or viewed as units of teaching in their own right, in both ways, tasks have been used to make language teaching more
communicative. Tasks are an important feature of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and play a vital role in it Ellis (2003).

4.5.2 Task in Communicative Language Teaching:

Communicative language teaching (CLT) begins with an aim in developing learners the ability to use language in communication. According to Brown and Yule (1983) communication involves two general purposes, the ‘interactional function’, - where the function of language is to establish and maintain contact, and the ‘transactional function’—where the function of language is to exchange information. On this basis, CLT, then aims to enable learners to function interactionally and transactionally in an L2. Unlike the other approaches, prior to CLT, such as Situational Language Teaching, and Audio- Lingual Method, which place emphasis on the elemental component of language, CLT places emphasis on the functional aspect of language. Earlier methods viewed language as a set of linguistic systems (phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax) and thus proficiency in language comes from the mastery of this system. Where as the focus of CLT in language teaching and learning is on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures Richards and Rodgers (1986).

The communicative approach to language teaching begins from a theory of language as communication. The main goal of language teaching is to develop ‘communicative competence’ (proposed by Dell Hymes 1971) in learners. Hymes coined the term ‘communicative competence’ as a reaction
against Noam Chomsky’s theory of ‘competence’. Chomsky (1965) introduces the concept of ‘competence’ and ‘performance’. ‘Competence’ according to Chomsky, is an ideal native speaker’s knowledge of his/her language, its (given language) linguistic system which he/she has internalized, whereas ‘performance’ is the actual use of language in concrete situations.

“……….the linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is affected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance”.

Noam Chomsky (1965:3).

Linguistic theory, according to Chomsky, should focus on those abstract abilities or system of rules, which a native speaker has mastered, and which enable him/her to produce and understand large number of grammatically correct sentences in a language. But for Dell Hymes (1971) using sentences appropriately (appropriacy) according to the context is far more important than just producing grammatically correct (accurate) sentences. Hymes’s ‘communicative competence’ is the ability to know when and how to say what to whom, besides producing grammatically correct
sentences. This brought the focus of language teaching on functional aspects of a language (use); rather than focusing on ‘formal aspect’ (usage).

The status of grammar in language teaching curriculum was considered unnecessary after the rise of CLT. Explicit instruction on form was avoided and it was believed learners will automatically develop the ability to use an L2 if they focus on meaning while completing a task. But recently linguists such as Swain (1985, 1996), Doughty and Williams (1998) have criticized this view and focus on form in the language classroom is re-established. Researchers such as Halliday (1994), and Hammond and Derewianka (2001) view grammar as an essential source in making meaning. Beginners can be benefited to a great extent from a focus on form Doughty and Williams (1998), Long (1985), Long and Robinson (1998). Infact, language pedagogy should reveal to learners a systematic interrelationship between form, meaning and use (Freeman 2005).

Howatt (1984) demonstrates a distinction between a ‘strong’ and a ‘weak’ version of CLT. The weak version of CLT assumes that the elements of communicative competence can easily be sorted out, and can be systematically incorporated into the language teaching process. It gave importance to providing learners with opportunities to use their second language for communicative purposes. That is, the learners should be taught to realize some particular notions and functions of their second language through the forms/structures which are explicitly taught.
On the contrary, the strong version of CLT assumes that “‘language is acquired through communication’ and does occur by ‘stimulating the development of the language system itself’” (Howatt 1984:279). In the weak version of CLT learners learn L2 to use it, whereas in the strong version of CLT, they use L2 to learn it (Howatt 1984).

Researchers such as Wilkins (1976) and Van EK (1976) support the weak version of CLT, whereas Krashen and Terrell's (1983) gave priority to the strong version of CLT and it appears in their Natural Approach.

Whether one gives priority to either of the version, the important thing to be considered here is that both have greatly facilitated the status of ‘task’ within the curriculum. Ellis (2003) highlights the status of tasks in both the versions and makes his case for the strong version.

“The weak version views tasks as way of providing communicative practice for language items that have been introduced in a more traditional way. They constitute a necessary but not a sufficient basis for a language curriculum. The strong version sees tasks as a means of enabling learners to learn a language by experiencing how it is used in communication. In the strong version tasks are both necessary and sufficient for learning” Ellis (2003:28).
Ellis (2003) further finds that in weak version language teaching is supported by tasks, and in strong version language teaching is based on tasks.

4.5.2 (A) Tasks in the Weak Version of CLT:

Earlier language teaching that was based on linguistic content consists of the Present-Practise-Produce, (PPP) method. PPP method assumes to lead learners from controlled to automatic use of target language features. The target language feature is first provided to the learners through exercises especially structured, and then through textual tasks they structure language for themselves. In simple terms, a specific language item is first presented to the learners; it is then practised by them in controlled exercises and, then finally produces by them freely by means of communicative tasks.

This view then became a subject of criticism on the following grounds:

In PPP, Language is viewed as series of ‘product’ and can be acquired in a sequence as ‘accumulated entities’. Research in second language acquisition rejects this view and argues that “L2 acquisition is a ‘process’ that is incompatible with teaching seen as the presentation and practice of a series of ‘products’ (Ellis 2003:29).

In PPP, there is a need of ‘grammar tasks’ in the production stage, which are quite difficult to design, as it is not easy to make the learners use a targeted structure because they always make use of the strategies they are competent in to cope with tasks problems.
Brumfit (1979) has suggested to change the series of PPP stages. He suggests to begin with the production stage and then moving systematically towards presentation stage and then finally towards practice stage but only if learners are enable to produce correctly the targeted feature i.e. (Product-Present-Practice). Here with the production stage task takes the first position and serves a diagnostic purpose. But here also the problem arises that if learners fail to use the features presented and practice correctly at the production stage and are not developmentally ready to acquire them, then no L2 acquisition will take place Ellis (2003).

Allen (1984) has proposed a syllabus with a variable focus. Here tasks are simply assume as a means of activating learners existing L2 knowledge by developing fluency, rather than as a tool of acquiring new knowledge or restructuring interlanguages. Although here, tasks can not be substituted in place of exercises but can go with a ‘process’ view of language acquisition Ellis (2003).

4.5.2 (B) Tasks in the Strong Version of CLT:

Task-based language teaching is a learner-centred approach. Here the students are required to discover target language through self-directed, task-based and project-based groups work. TBLT views language learning as “a process that requires opportunities for learners to participate in communication, where making meaning is primary. ‘Task’ is a tool for engaging learners in meaning-making and thereby for creating the condition
for language acquisition” (Ellis 2003:319). Leaver and Kaplan (2004:47) comment in support of the task-based approach:

“……..it is a tribute to the efficiency of task-based instruction (TBI) that this method has become the one of choice in the best government programs. Since the 1980’s nearly all government institutions have used TBI in their foreign language programs”.

In task-based language teaching (TBLT) tasks possess the central position and are the basis for the whole curriculum. Tasks, here are a useful tool or a resource through which a whole communicative curriculum can be planned; especially in contexts where learners get only few opportunities to interact with more authentic material. As the weak version of CLT can be viewed in other terms rather than just in terms of the PPP method, likewise the strong version of CLT can also be viewed in other terms rather than just in terms of tasks. Researchers such as Stern (1992) proposes a typology of ‘communicative activities’ which consist of topics like discussion on the topics related to ‘students’ personal life’, ‘school subjects’, and some other classroom management activities and, field experiences etc.

After the rise of CLT, the distinction between ‘syllabus’ (what to teach) and ‘methodology’ (how to teach) began to decline and researchers started viewing both terms in an integrated way. Nunan (1989, 2004) finds that one needs to state in an integrated way both the content and the tasks, and
learning procedures. Thus task-based curriculum consists of “an integrated set of processes involving, among other things, the specification of both what and how” (Nunan 1989:1). In this way “methodology become the central tenet of task-based pedagogy” (Kumaravadivelu 1993, cited from Ellis 2003:31), where there is no specification about what to learn only how to learn.

One important thing to be taken into consideration despite the above given arguments, according to Skehan (1996a) is the syllabus design and the choice of methodology in task-based teaching. Designing involves the selection (what) and gradation (the sequence) of language tasks. And methodology refers to the specific procedures for teaching each task. Skehan (1996a) proposes a ‘pre-task’, ‘during-task’, and ‘after-task’ classification of choices to organize these procedures. Nunan (2004) proposes a framework for task-based language teaching, where the key elements are real-world / target tasks, pedagogical tasks and enabling skills. This framework is represented diagrammatically below in figure 4.4

Figure 4.4: A Framework for TBLT
Reproduced from (Nunan 2004:25)
According to Nunan (2004) a language teacher, first of all, must transform real-world / target tasks into pedagogical tasks for creating learning opportunities in the classroom; and then place them on a continuum from rehearsal tasks to activation tasks. He defines ‘rehearsal tasks’ as those tasks which “bear a clear and obvious relationship to its corresponding real world counterpart”, (p.20) for example, writing a resume, and activation tasks’ as those “designed not to provide learners with an opportunity to rehearse some out-of-class performance but to activate their emerging language skills” (p.20). Here learners move from ‘reproductive language use’ to ‘creative language use’, for example, information exchange tasks. ‘Enabling skills’ present form-focused work. They are termed as enabling skills because “they are designed to develop skills and knowledge that will ultimately facilitate the process of authentic communication” (p.22) Enabling skills are further divided into ‘language exercises’ and ‘communicative activities’ “language exercises come in many shapes and forms and can focus on lexical, pedagogical or grammatical systems” (p.22), whereas “communicative activities represent a kind of ‘half-way house between language exercises and pedagogical tasks. They are similar to language exercises in that they provide manipulative practice of a restricted set of language items. They resemble pedagogical tasks in that they have an element of meaningful communication” (p.24).

After collecting the tasks, one of the major questions that arise in a task-based program is regarding the combining of these tasks. Language teachers question as to how to combine these elements to form units of work.
As an answer to this question Nunan (2004) suggests six steps through which, a language teacher can develop instructional sequences around tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a number of schema-building tasks that introduce initial vocabulary, language and context for the task.</td>
<td>Look at newspaper advertisements for renting accommodation. Identify key words (some written as abbreviations), and match people with accommodation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give learners controlled practice in the target language vocabulary, structures and functions.</td>
<td>Listen to a model conversation between two people discussing accommodation options and practise the conversion. Practise again using the same conversation model but information from the advertisements in step 1. In the final practise, try to move away from following the conversation model word for word.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Steps 3</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give learners authentic listening practice</td>
<td>Listen to several notice speakers inquiring about accommodation and match the conversations with newspaper ads.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Steps 4</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus learners on linguistic elements, e.g. grammar and vocabulary.</td>
<td>Listen again to conversations and note intonation contours. Use cue words to write complete questions and answers involving comparatives and superlatives (cheaper, closed, most spacious, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Steps 5</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide freer practice.</td>
<td>Pair work: information gap role play. Student A plays the part of a potential tenant. Make a note of needs and then call rental agent. Student B plays the part of a rental agent. Use ads to offer partner suitable accommodation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps 6</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical task</td>
<td>Group work discussion and decision making task. Look at a set of advertisements and decide on the most suitable place to rent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.7:** A pedagogical sequence for introducing tasks.
(Reproduced from Nunan 2004:34-35)
Nunan (2004:35-38) then, summarizes the seven underlying principles of the instructional sequence. These principles can serve as a guideline for task-based language teaching. The principles are:-

**Principle 1: Scaffolding**

- Lessons and materials should provide supporting frameworks within which the learning takes place. At the beginning of the learning process, learners should not be expected to produce language that has not been introduced either explicitly or implicitly.

**Principle 2: Task dependency**

- Within a lesson, one task should grow out of, and build upon, the ones that have gone before.

**Principle 3: Recycling**

- Recycling language maximizes opportunities for learning and activates the ‘organic’ learning principle.

**Principle 4: Activate learning**

- Learners learn best by actively using the language they are learning.

**Principle 5: Integration**

- Learners should be taught in ways that make clear the relationships between linguistic form, communicative function and semantic meaning.
Principle 6: Reproduction to Creation

- Learners should be encouraged to move from reproductive to creative language use.

Principle 7: Reflection

- Learners should be given opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how well they are doing.

There are number of other approaches related to using tasks in language teaching.

‘Humanistic Language Teaching’ is one of the earliest proposals for task-based teaching. It emphasizes achieving learner’s full potential for growth both in learning as well as the cognitive. The aim of Humanistic approaches is to make learners recognize their feelings, in order to add to their own self respect and their interest in learning. Moskowitz (1977) proposes some ‘humanistic exercises’, which have all the important characteristics of tasks. Although she has envisaged that humanistic tasks contribute to task-supported language teaching, that is to weak version of CLT, still then, to construct an entire course around humanistic tasks was greatly accepted. Curran’s (1972) ‘Counselling language learning’ has incorporated humanistic principles.

‘Experiential learning’ approach is an important conceptual basis for task-based language pedagogy. It is based on the principle of ‘learning by doing’ and thus in this approach learners are encouraged to participate actively in the classroom activities. The immediate personal experience of the learners
is a departing point for the learning experience. Psychologist David Kolb (1984) finds its roots in social psychology, humanistic education, developmental education and cognitive theory. Kolb’s (1984) model makes the learners incorporate new knowledge and skills into what they already know. Learners, after recognizing and feeling some immediate experience go beyond it through reflection and transformation process and thus move from their initiative.

Kohonen (1992) has provided an application of experiential learning to language teaching and his model is regarded as a theoretical blueprint for TBLT. Nunan (2004:12) has derived and listed the following precepts for action from his work.

- Encourage the transformation of knowledge within the learner rather than the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner.
- Encourage learners to participate actively in small, collaborative groups.
- Embrace a holistic attitude towards subject matter rather than a static, atomistic and hierarchical attitude.
- Emphasize process rather than product, learning how to learn, self-inquiry, social and communication skills.
- Encourage self-directed rather than teacher directed learning.
- Promote intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation.
Discussion of the type of syllabus is crucial for all aspects of a language teaching program. David Wilkins (1974, 1976) proposes two different approaches to syllabus design. (a) Synthetic approaches (b) analytical approaches. All syllabuses, according to him fall under either of these approaches.

Synthetic syllabuses break the target language content into separate linguistic items for presentation step by step and the next item is not introduced until and unless the students have mastered the current item Wilkins (1976).

“Different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up.……….At any one time the learner is being exposed to a deliberately limited sample of language”

(Wilkins 1976:2).

In synthetic approaches syllabuses are organized in the traditional way, and the main role of the teacher is believed to simplify the learning challenge for the learners. Lexical, structural, notional, and functional syllabuses are an example of synthetic syllabuses.

However, it was subsequently recognised that learners do not acquire one item at all time perfectly, in a serial fashion, in second language
acquisition; rather, they learn a number of different items imperfectly and simultaneously as learning is unstable.

The studies into L2 acquisition then started supporting the second option i.e. ‘analytical approaches’ to syllabus design. In analytical approaches the learners are provided with holistic ‘chunks’ of language and are supposed to segment them into their constituent parts Nunan (2004). Unlike the traditional syllabuses analytic syllabuses provide the learners with target language samples without the control for structure or lexis (Long and Crookes 1992).

Wilkins (1976:13) states that:

“Prior analysis of the total language system into a set of discrete pieces of language that is a necessary precondition for the adoption of a synthetic approach is largely superfluous ……… Analytic approaches ………are organised in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes.”

Long and Crookes (1992) have identified three task-based syllabus types--- procedural, process, and task syllabuses which appeared in 1980’s, and put them under analytical approaches. All these three syllabuses consider ‘task’ as a unit of analysis rather than any linguistic elements (such as word, structure, notion, function, topic, and situation).
R.V. White (1988) presents the analytic-synthetic distinction partially in Type A and Type B syllabus. Wilkins (1976) based his distinction on the way input and learner interact, whereas White’s distinction is based on course design, instruction, language learning, and evaluation. “Type A syllabuses focus on ‘what’ is to be learned: the L2. They are interventionist…. Type B syllabuses, on the other hand, focus on ‘how’ the language is to be learned. They are non-interventionist” Long and Crookes (1992:29).

Long and Crookes (1992) put all the synthetic syllabuses under Type A and all the three task-based syllabus types i.e. procedural, process, and task syllabus under Type B. According to them only procedural and task syllabuses show one characteristic of Type A syllabuses. And process syllabuses are entirely Type B syllabuses.

Out of these three task-based syllabus types, Long and Crookes (1992) find the task syllabus employed in task-based language teaching (TBLT) as holding special promise.

The entire three task-based syllabuses types are discussed here in relevant depth.

- **Procedural Syllabus:**

  Procedural syllabus, embodied a very different approach to task-based language teaching proposed by the work of Prabhu, Rumani and others from 1979-1984. In secondary schools, especially in southern India, Structural-Oral-Situational Method was the most favoured method of whole L2 instructional program, until and unless task-based method was instituted by
Prabhu through his new curriculum project. He has suggested certain activities which focus on meaning which are primarily cognitive and where the focus on form is only incidental. These activities consist of two stages i.e. pre task, and task proper. In pre-task phase teacher interact with the whole class to complete the phase. The purpose of this phase is to present and display the task, to simplify or modify it, and “to let the language relevant to it come into play” Prabhu (1984:276). The next is ‘task proper’ which is meant entirely for the students, who have to work usually on their own on tasks and activities. In these activities and tasks students are required to understand, convey or extend meaning. These tasks include like distance calculation, planning itineraries using maps and charts, answering comprehension questions etc. (Long and Crookes 1992; Ellis 2003).

- **Process Syllabus:-**

  Process Syllabus, a second approach to task-based teaching is proposed by Breen and Candlin (1980). The process syllabus is based on the view that language learning should be viewed as a process which develops as a result of communicative interaction Freeman, L (2005). The negotiation between the teacher and the learners is the main construct of process syllabus. Breen (1984) and Candlin (1984) believes that learning should be and can only be the result of negotiation, which in turn brings out learning.

  “A process syllabus addresses the overall question: ‘who does what with whom, on what
subject-matter, with what resources, when, how
and for what learning purpose (s)?”

(Breen, 1984:56).

A process syllabus gives preference to the learners to do their
own needs analysis, and choose appropriate material, classroom procedure, and
even evaluation techniques regarding every aspect of the teaching learning
process. Thus, there is no prior syllabus in this approach; rather the syllabus is
the result of the course progression. But the teacher however can select a set of
‘curriculum guidelines’ (Candlin 1987) which contains a lot of pedagogic tasks
for learners to choose from. In this way a ‘task’ is the unit, chosen by the
learners, from a range of tasks given by the teacher, to construct the process
syllabus, and in reach of both teachers and learners. According to Breen (1987,
1989) a task should incorporate both form and meaning focused activities.
Breen argues that, it is not task-as- workplan, but task-as-process, which
matters most.

- **Task Syllabus :-**

The third type of syllabus i.e. ‘task syllabus’ (Crookes 1986;
Crookes and Long 1987a; 1987b) came into existence in the late 1980’s and
holds a special promise for task-based language teaching. It focuses mainly
on meaningful interaction, but focus on form is also not neglected Freeman
(2005).
A task syllabus for task-based language teaching takes task as the unit of analysis in order to provide an integrated and internally coherent approach to all aspects of course design; an approach which matches with the contemporary theory of second language acquisition.

Task-based syllabuses give priority to pedagogic task over target tasks, as pedagogic “tasks provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners- input which they will inevitably reshape via application of general cognitive processing capacities- and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty” (Long and Crookes1992:43).

For task-based syllabuses needs identification is the first step, in terms of the real world-target task, which the learners have to perform, for example, reading a report, borrowing a library book, making train reservation, writing a cheque etc. After identifying the target tasks by doing need analysis, the second step is to categorize them into (target) task types. From this task type, pedagogic tasks are then taken and arranged to form the task-based syllabus. And pedagogic tasks are the actual tasks used in the language classroom for language teaching and learning purposes Long and Crookes (1992).

Now after the discussion of the syllabus type, the next important issue in task-based language teaching is regarding the integration of tasks in the language teaching program. Various studies have been conducted in this area (for example, Estaire and Zanon 1994; J.Willis 1996)
but the proposal of J. Willis (1996) is most convincing. Willis proposes a ‘Task Cycle’ which consists of three stages a) Pre-task, b) task, and c) language focus. In the first stage the teacher demonstrate the useful and necessary words, phrases and activities. In the second i.e. ‘task’ stage, the learner present the ‘report’ of their own performance. In the last stage, learners engage in consciousness-raising and practice activities which point towards a particular linguistic item that exist in the input of the task. Focus on form, during the actual task performance by the learners, has then became the subject of investigation and has began to be emphasized in second language acquisition research (Ellis 2003).

Hence the various approaches to task-based language teaching discussed above highlight the issues that are of major concern in the discussion of contemporary language pedagogy.

Now at last the question arises regarding the relationship between CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching). Nunan (2004:10) answers this question in the following terms:

“CLT is a broad philosophical approach to the language curriculum that draws on theory and research in linguistics, anthropology, psychology and sociology……. Task-based language teaching represents a realization of this
philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology”.

In this chapter, I have introduced and defined ‘task’ in relation to the general field of language curriculum design. Then I have noted down some features of task on the basis of the given definitions. In the next section I have looked at the core elements of a task, such as, goals, input data, procedures, teacher/ learner roles and setting. I have devoted the last section discussing task-based approach in language teaching where I have supported the concept of using task in language teaching by a rich growing research agenda. In the end of the chapter I have highlighted the place of task both in the strong and weak version of CLT.