CHAPTER - 4

Task-Based Language Teaching and Teaching of Vocabulary
4.1 Introduction

This entire chapter investigates the task-based approach to language learning and teaching which is actually different from traditionally used methods. It will first discuss how communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) are interrelated and trace the move towards the task-based language teaching from the CLT paradigm. In the next section the framework for designing task-based language teaching is established, along with the key features that will make up a task. It also highlights some key points of vocabulary teaching through task-based language teaching. The last section highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the approach by taking into consideration its effectiveness for teaching and learning, and offers some pedagogical problems with suggested solutions.

4.2 From Communicative Approach to Task-Based Language Teaching

Researchers have been questioning the efficacy of the traditional, form-based approaches, generally referred to as PPP, implying that teaching a new language should comprise three stages, i.e. the presentation-, the practice- and the production stage. This approach was completely teacher-centred. The reason behind the failure of form-based approaches was that learners were not learning, processing and storing the elements that were being taught, they were only saying repeatedly what the teacher wanted to hear.

Then, a communicative language teaching approach to language learning, which meant to be basically learner-centred, appeared. Ellis (2003) says that one of the most important goals of communicative language teaching is to increase learner’s capability for using the target language in real-life communication circumstances. He stated that with the adoption of this approach, the language teacher’s primary
attention was on making opportunities available to the learners for oral communicative practice. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has developed from Communicative language teaching (CLT) as a result of the realization of the shortcomings of CLT.

4.2.1 Relationship between Communicative language teaching (CLT) and Task-based language teaching (TBLT)

Communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) have affected English language teaching in a global manner. As already mentioned earlier, it was seen that there had been an increasing disapproval of the traditional approaches to English language teaching such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods. Traditional approaches to language teaching gave priority to grammatical competence (linguistic forms) as the core element of language competence. They were based on the principle that grammar is chiefly learnt through direct teaching and through a methodology based on repetitive practice and drilling. These traditional approaches to language teaching can be described as ‘synthetic approaches’ (Butler, 2011); and a well-known critical assessment of such approaches is that they are unable to give support to students in building up a more advanced level of communicative ability and interactional power. “In the synthetic approach, the target language is broken down into constituent parts in various ways, and such parts are then presented to learners in a linear fashion (e.g., grammar rules, words, phonemes, structures, functions)” Wilkins, 1976; cited in Butler, 2011: 37).

Long and Robinson (1998; cited in Butler, 2011) claim that such approaches are put in a category of focus on forms to move ahead with instruction that separates linguistic forms from their meaning. And to present a substitute for traditional synthetic approaches, CLT and TBLT were introduced as counter approaches, as the most important components of English language curricula and teaching programs. In spite of receiving great recognition, they were not easily adapted to classrooms because a number of constraints were imposed on implementing CLT and TBLT.

CLT came into existence before TBLT. From the beginning of 1970s, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach was established and turned out to be popular amongst second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and second language teachers (Skehan, 2003). In the period of 1980s, “task” replaced the term
"communicative activity". From the beginning till the end of 1970s, great moves were taken within language teaching to incorporate the communicative approach.

According to what has just been discussed in the previous section, task based language teaching has been regarded as being a strong realization of CLT. As Skehan, (2003b) said, communicative language teaching is the foundation of task-based language teaching. Despite the fact that TBLT is argued to have originated from CLT, task-based language teaching has its own rationale derived from different philosophies and approaches to language instruction. TBLT was introduced in the end of 1970s, when scholars argued that both grammar and meaning should be taught in language instruction. “The implications of these pedagogic developments were widespread, and influenced the design of syllabus, methodology and assessment of language teaching. . .” (Skehan, 2003b; cited in Zhao, 2011: 46).

More recently, language pedagogy has seen a shift in focus from communicative-based instruction (CBI) to task-based language teaching (TBLT). “. . communicative language teaching may be increasingly replaced in some contexts by approaches comparable in principle but different in degree or in contextualization” (Zhao, 2011: 46). Task-based language teaching could be thus regarded as basically a more complete version of CLT.

4.2.2 Background/Origin of TBLT

According to Shehadeh (2005), the first person who applied task-based language teaching programs and practice was Prabhu. He was one of the first proponents for tasks or TBLT, who started using this task-based approach in his secondary school classes in Bangalore, India, on his Communicational Project, in early 1979. The Bangalore project, labelled as the Communicational Teaching Project, occurred from 1979 to 1984 and was based on the principle that language form can be acquired in the classroom simply through focus on meaning, while engaged in a task and that grammar creation by the learner is a sub-conscious process (Prabhu, 1987; cited in Yousefi, Mohammadi and Koosha, 2012). The purpose of the project was to find out new ways of teaching. He was the first methodologists who aroused an interest in tasks and supported TBLT. He began his bold experiments to put his theories into practice which seemed radical at that time. He believed that students may learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task rather
than on language they are using. Therefore, Prabhu is regarded to be the originator of TBLT. He believed that task-based teaching and learning is a good way for education and practice, because effective learning occurs when students are fully engaged in a language task rather than just learning about language. He considers a task as “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; cited by Ruso, 2007: 2).

American government language institutions changed to task-based approach to teach adults in the early 1980s (Shehadeh, 2005). At present, other teachers and institutions throughout the world are taking interest in TBLT, and all are convinced of its value (Ibid). Increasing interest in TBLT according to Shehadeh, is often because teachers have realized that most language learners are taught foreign/second language through methods that are only focused on mastery of grammar and do not help in acquiring a considerable level of competency in the target language.

Language Institutions led by American government discovered that with task-based instruction and authentic materials, learners can achieve more rapid development and are able to use their new foreign language in real-world situations with a high level of competence after short courses. They are enabled to manage an effectual meaning system, i.e., to express what they want to speak, even if their grammar and lexicon were not often considered as perfect (Leaver and Kaplan, 2004; cited in Shehadeh, 2005).

Over the last few years a number of researchers, syllabus designers and educational innovators have shifted their focus in language teaching towards task-based approaches to instruction (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Long and Crookes, 1991; Ellis, 2003; cited in Murad, 2009). From the mid-1980s, TBLT began to be accepted and identified and widely discussed in language teaching and research in second language acquisition (SLA). Nowadays, TBLT is a broad term which involves not only research and teaching, but testing and curriculum design in SLA.

Task-based syllabus design has now been explored universally, and publications in this field have flourished exuberantly (the works of Prabhu, 1987; Bygate, 2001; Ellis, 2005; Lee, 2000; Long, 2005; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1996, 2003; Willis, 1996; cited in Hung, 2012). Many scholars in the area agree that TBLT is
another version of Communicative Language Teaching (Oxford, 2006). Some proponents such as Ellis, (2003; cited by Brown, 2007: 50) asserts that “. . . TBLT is at the very heart of CLT”. Similarly, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), it is an approach which has evolved from CLT. They say so because, like CLT, TBLT is focused on the use of target language in learning a foreign language through communicative language use.

TBLT came as an approach which successfully resolved many of the problems traditionally associated with communicative language teaching. It provides a systematic structure to both instruction and assessment. With the use of tasks as the fundamental building blocks, teachers can design lessons where the outcome is that it creates a real imitation, where students communicate with each other for a purpose. In a task-based approach, teachers are required to pay attention to what the learners are uttering to each other and not how they are speaking it. Since, the principal focus should always be on meaning-making and not on language features.

TBLT is a communicative approach to language instruction which aims at the successful achievement of communicative ‘tasks’ because it is the main organizing principle. In simple words, instruction should be systematized in such a manner so that students can improve their language skills while using the language, rather than merely practicing language forms, which can be seen in the traditional methods of instruction.

A number of different versions of TBLT have been suggested, which vary between strong versions and weak versions. According to Ellis (2003), weak version is referred to as ‘task supported language teaching’ where the tasks are used for communicative practice but follows a pattern which borrows from function-based syllabus too. On the other hand, strong version is referred to as task-based language teaching which uses tasks as the core of curriculum and lesson planning (cited in Adams and Newton, 2009). According to Ellis (2003; cited in Zhao, 2011), task-supported language teaching implies the tasks which are integrated into conventional language-based approaches to language teaching, and task-based language teaching treats tasks as components of teaching in their own right and entire courses are planned according to it.
The difference between weak and strong versions of communicative language teaching (CLT) is similar to the difference between task-supported language teaching and task-based language teaching. Tasks in the weaker version are seen as a way of involving students in communicative practice for language items that have been established in a more traditional way. They are required though not considered adequate for a language curriculum. While, strong version of tasks is regarded as both essential and sufficient for learning.

4.2.2.1. Basic assumptions of TBLT

Like the other approaches of language teaching, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has its own suppositions on which it is based. Feez (1998); cited in Richards and Rodgers (2001: 224) gives the following six basic assumptions of task-based instruction (TBI):

1. The focus is on process rather than product.

2. Basic elements are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication, i.e. meaning.

3. Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while they are engaged in meaningful activities and tasks.

4. Activities and tasks can be either:
   - those that learners might need to achieve in real life, and
   - those that have a pedagogical purpose specific to the classroom.

5. Activities and tasks of a task-based syllabus can be sequenced according to difficulty.

6. The difficulty of a task depends on a range of factors including the previous experience of the learner, the complexity of the tasks, and the degree of support available.

It is clear from the above given assumptions, that a task-based instruction underlines the significance of tasks. They are activities that are selected as the basic parts of teaching and also believed as the most important element of the language syllabus.
4.2.2. Approach of TBLT

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is mainly based on the theory of language learning rather than theory of language itself. However, there are also various assumptions about the nature of language on which TBLT rests. Richards and Rodgers (2001) broadly define the theories of language on which TBLT lies:

1. Language is principally a means of creating meaning, i.e. communication.
2. Many models of language (Structural, functional and interactional) relate to TBI. In other words, TBI is not linked to a particular model but draws on these three models of language.
3. Lexical units are fundamental in language use and language learning. Therefore, students are required to acquire some vocabulary items which are significant for their tasks and to report it after the execution of the task.
4. Conversation is the central focus of language and the basis of language acquisition. The use of language starts with easy conversation in real life circumstances. For the duration of this time, the learners’ linguistic and communicative resources will be turned on and language acquisition will take place.

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 228-9) discuss the theory of learning as follows:-

1. Tasks provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition.
2. Task activity and achievement motivate students to learn and therefore promote learning.
3. Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes.

The role of learner, teacher and instructional materials form the essential parts of an approach. In TBLT, learners play a number of defined roles such as group participant, monitor, risk-taker, innovator, strategy user, goal setter and self-evaluator (Oxford, 2006; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The instructor also plays respective roles viz., selector and sequencer of tasks, preparer of learners for task, pre-task consciousness-raiser, guide, strategy-instructor and assistance provider (Richards and
Instructional materials also play a significant part in TBLT because the approach is dependent on an adequate supply of suitable classroom tasks (Ibid). They can be either pedagogic or authentic but authentic tasks are given priority because they prepare learners for handling language-based tasks in their real life.

4.2.3 Rationale of Task- Based Language Teaching:

The time when communicative language teaching was introduced, it was believed that language can only be best learned when it is being used to communicate messages, the communicative tasks had moved up to higher position of prominence as a unit of organization in syllabus design. Nunn (2006: 70), for example, suggested a task-based unitary structure because it “leads to student- led holistic outcomes in the form of written reports, spoken presentations and substantial small-group conversations that lead to decision-making outcomes”. This type of attention has been given to a large extent to ‘task ’ as it is now seen as a construct of importance for second language acquisition (SLA) by researchers and language teachers (Pica, 1997; cited in Murad, 2009).

The term ‘task’ was increasingly used as a “replacement for communicative activities during 1980s” (Skehan, 2003; cited in Butler 2011: 38) and in this respect, TBLT can be considered as “an offset of CLT” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; cited in Butler, 2011: 38). And now because of its connection and relationship with communicative language teaching methodology and support from some prominent theorists, TBLT has attracted considerable attention within applied linguistics.

The two most important sources of evidence which explain the use of tasks in language classes are:-

1. Lynch and Maclean (2000; cited in Murad, 2009) say that the first source of explanations for task-based learning is ecological alone, it is believed that the finest way to increase effectual learning is through setting up classroom tasks that show to a greater extent the real world tasks which learners will act upon. Task performance is seen as practice or preparation for communication to appear.

2. The second source of evidence is SLA research. “Those arguing for TBL, drawing on SLA research, have tended to focus on issues such as learnability, the order of acquisition of particular L2 structures, and the implications of the input,
interaction and output hypotheses” (Lynch and Maclean, 2000; cited in Murad, 2009: 33).

There are also the researchers who are strongly opposed to TBLT. Like, Seedhouse (1999) argued “that the interaction that results from tasks is often impoverished and can lead to fossilizations” (cited in Murad, 2009: 35). Seedhouse, further also argued “that ‘task- as a work’ plan has weak construct validity” (cited in Murad, 2009: 35). Since the interaction that occurs while learners carry out a task (i.e., the task- as- process) most of the times does not remain same as that planned by designers of the task (Ibid).

Moreover, Swain (2001) argues “that beginning learners need to be taught grammar because they will not be able to shift attention to code features in interaction if their knowledge of basic grammar is so limited that they cannot produce discourse to shift from” (cited in Murad, 2009: 35). TBLT is merely appropriate for ‘acquisition- rich contexts’ (Ibid).

Interest in tasks as potential building blocks of second language instruction grew when researchers moved to tasks as SLA research tools in the mid-1980s. Involving learners in task work gives a better situation to initiate the learning process than the form-based activities. Thus, it ultimately provides better opportunities for language learning to take place. Language learning is supposed to involve learners not only in “comprehensible input” but in tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and engage in naturalistic and meaning based communication.

4.3 The Methodology Of Task-Based Language Teaching

4.3.1 Framework for designing task- based language teaching

Only selecting good tasks is not enough for task-based instructors but they should also have acquaintance as to how to put them into practice. Ellis (2006) claimed that the “design of a task based lesson involves consideration of the stages or components of a lesson that has a task as its principal component”. A range of designs has been projected (for example, Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1996; cited in Ellis, 2006) but they all have in common three principal phases, these phases show the arrangement of a task based lesson. They are pre-task, the task-cycle and language focus (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Oxford, 2006). In these three phases of tasks, the specific roles of teachers and learners are described. The first phase is ‘pre- task’ phase which is
related to a variety of activities that teachers and students can accomplish before they initiate a task. The second phase is ‘during-task’ phase, where learners perform the meaning-focused activity. The final phase, ‘post-task’ phase, includes actions to go after the task performance. Willis (1996a) proposes a ‘Task Cycle’ comprising three stages: pre-task, task cycle and language focus.

Table 4.1: THE TASK CYCLE  (based on Willis, 1996a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-TASK</th>
<th>Introduction to topic and task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TASK-CYCLE</td>
<td>Task</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE FOCUS</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Practice</td>
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Adapted from Klapper, J (2003: 36)

4.3.1.1 Pre-Task Phase

The principle of the pre-task phase is to get students ready to act upon the task in such a way that can encourage acquisition (Ellis, 2006). Skehan (1996, cited in Ellis, 2006: 21) refers to two broad alternatives that can be used by the teacher all through the pre-task phases:

- an emphasis on the general cognitive demands of the task, and/or an emphasis on linguistic factors. Attentional capacity is limited, and it is needed to respond to both linguistic and cognitive demands... then engaging in activities which reduce cognitive load will release attentional capacity for the learner to concentrate more on linguistic factors.

These alternatives can be tackled procedurally in one of four ways:

i. Supporting learners in performing a task similar to the task that they will perform in the during task phase of the lesson.

ii. Asking students to observe a model of how to perform a task.
iii. Engaging learners in non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task.

iv. Strategic planning of the main task performance. (Ibid)

**Performing a similar task**

According to Prabhu (1987), the use of a 'pre-task' was a key aspect of the Communicational Teaching Project (cited in Ellis, 2006). It was performed as an activity which engaged the whole class with the teacher, and engaged the learners in accomplishing the task of the similar kind, using similar materials as in the main task. As a result, it offered a practice for achieving the main task independently. For example: If the main task relates to attires and appearances of individuals or groups; the teacher may talk to the students about how they dress and how this affects their personalities.

**Providing a Model:**

Another substitute like this above example is to ask students to watch carefully a model of how the task can be done without their involvement for taking a trial performance of the task. This means introducing students to an oral text to display an 'ideal' presentation of the task. Both Skehan (1996) and Willis (1996) recommend that watching those who are doing a task can facilitate lessening of cognitive load on the learner (cited in Ellis, 2006).

**Non-task preparation Activities:**

Non-task preparation activities can centre on less cognitive or the linguistic demands on the learner. “Activating learners’ content schemata or providing them with background information serves as a means of defining the topic area of a task” (cited in Ellis, 2006: 23). Examples of this are brainstorming and mind maps.

**Strategic Planning:**

At this stage learners are given plenty of time for preparation i.e. how they will execute the task. It is different from the other pre-task options because it does not engage learners in a trial performance of the task or to view a model. Planning can be done individually, in groups or with the teacher.
4.3.1.2 Task – Cycle:

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), this is the phase in which students carry out the task in pairs or in groups and work towards the task outcome. Students are given opportunity to express themselves and speak whatever they want to. The teacher should influence each and everyone to go in for communication in the target language. Furthermore, teachers can only motivate students to speak up, but are not supposed to correct errors. Achievement in reaching the goals of task increases student’s motivation. This phase is subdivided into three stages: ‘task’, ‘planning’ and ‘report’.

a. In the task stage, learners complete the task.

b. Planning: It forms the essential part of the cycle. It helps learners to get prepared for the next stage. Students prepare for reporting to the full class on how they did the task and what result they achieved. Students organize either a written or oral report for the presentation to the class.

c. Report: Some pairs or group of students are asked to report or present in a few words to the whole class so that all students can match up their results with others. Then, teachers go through the discussion, give remarks on the content of the student’s reports and rephrase them.

Within this phase, all students are required to participate in doing the task, planning and reporting directly. The instructors should get actively involved in their roles. They should stimulate all learners to take part in all steps.

4.3.1.3 Language Focus:

In this final phase, the students pay attention to a real recording of those fluent speakers who have done similar tasks and evaluate the manners in which they accomplished their own task. Language focus phase can be subdivided into two parts: analysis and practice.

a. Analysis

The teacher reviews the analysis in absolute form and writes down a list of appropriate language items on the board. Students act in response and compose notes. Students scrutinize and talk about the particular features of the text or transcript of recordings.
b. **Practice**

After analysis activities, the teacher is likely to perform practice activities, where needed, to construct students’ self-confidence. Practice activities may consist of any of the following:

- Choral repetition of the phrases recognized and classified.
- Sentence completion, matching the past-tense verbs with the subjects or objects in the text.

These three main phases which are discussed above are very essential for the expansion of learners’ knowledge.

**4.3.2 Teaching of Vocabulary in Task-based language teaching:**

With the advent of CLT in the 1970’s, the outlook towards learning and teaching vocabulary shifted from existing norms and it was felt group work, peer interaction and cooperative learning should be incorporated in classroom contexts to learn new words. Vocabulary is a crucial part of any language. Yet, teachers generally give preference to teaching grammar than vocabulary. As a result, learners find difficulties in communicating when they are not familiar with a definite word in a particular context. So, teachers must focus on giving proper activities to students in order to increase their receptive knowledge of vocabulary through reading and listening, and productive knowledge through writing and speaking. Meeting new vocabulary is among the logical and inescapable challenges confronting the language learners who use the target language in communication outside the classroom. Such encounters offer difficulty for learners when they have to meet the dual demands of paying attention to unfamiliar language for the duration of communication, and also maintain the flow of communication. The learners are badly equipped to face this challenge because of the traditional teaching methodology in classrooms where the teacher cautiously controls the exposure of new language forms. A task-based approach deals with this challenge seriously by providing classroom experiences that fulfill the requirements of authentic language use in the outside world. From the definitions of tasks which have been already discussed, it can be summed up that for working with tasks one needs to develop materials or activities which emphasize meaning, and present students with information gaps which students are required to fill. This gap stimulates students to get the information to complete the task. The task
must require learners to employ either a real-world or artificial activity, but the language outcomes of the task must address real-world communication. The tasks require learners to use both receptive and productive skills. It gives a definite communicative result and various opportunities for negotiation of meaning. So, tasks have all the characteristics which are considered necessary for acquiring vocabulary and provide a facilitative role in making use of it in the classroom context and take it to real-world settings. The most important benefit of using this approach as remarked by Newton (2001: 30) is that “it enables learners to develop strategies for managing new vocabulary while also maintaining a communicative focus”. These strategies consist of “guessing with the use of context cues, negotiating meaning with others, and the means to attend to new items under communicative pressure” (Ibid).

In a task-based approach to learning, learners often come across new vocabulary, when they try to achieve communicative goals. And so, such encounters are for learners’ benefit, and instead of eradicating difficult words, teachers can think of several cooperative options for exposing learners to new words during task-based language teaching. Compelling learners to do away with the protection of their bilingual dictionaries, and to look for help through cooperation with one another, will need motivation on the part of the teacher and the learners to explore new options for encounters with unfamiliar vocabulary in task-based interaction. Vocabulary can be taught pre-task, in-task, and post-task. The tasks are designed based on the options for handling new vocabulary proposed by Newton (2001) and that can be used in the pre-task, in task, or post-task stages of a lesson.

Table 4.2: Options for targeting unfamiliar vocabulary in communication tasks (Newton, 2001: 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-task options</th>
<th>1. Predicting</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Cooperative dictionary search</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Words and definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-task options</td>
<td>4. Glossary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Interactive glossary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Negotiation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-task options</td>
<td>7. Vocabulary logs</td>
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</table>
The options that can add-on such encounters for new words are revision tests, quizzes, group activities concerning review and analysis of new vocabulary, and systems for learners to separately record and revise new vocabulary. Through tasks, learners get a number of opportunities to encounter and explore new words, and to utilize them for achieving meaningful task goals. Teachers have numerous options for directing focus towards vocabulary, options which teachers must select with regard to the particular constraints of person, place, and time operating in their classrooms. So it is clear that effective options let learners work cooperatively with some degree of teacher assistance and use new words in communicative settings.

4.4 Benefits and Challenges of Task-Based Approach (TBA)

Benefits:

Some important advantages of task-based teaching or learning are discussed below:

1. Task-based learning is beneficial to the student as it is learner-centered. Even though the teacher may present the language with the pre-task stage, the learners are permitted to employ whatever language they want to, and their focus is entirely on meaning of the message. They are not bound to merely use the ‘target language’ of the lesson.

2. Each task has obviously clear set of objectives which state what participants will achieve from the tasks.


4. The approach is basically focused on meaning more than form but can provide basis for learning form too.

5. Task-based learning (TBL) is applicable for learners of all ages and backgrounds.

6. Tasks offer a natural chance for correction and recycling, and they provide teachers an opportunity to review learners’ development.

7. TBL gives mutual support. Classroom work is supposed to be done on a cooperative basis, connecting a group of participants’ right from the start.

8. Learners put in great efforts to express what they want to. They are encouraged to get familiar with the language whether it is a new language or a language that they are familiar with, but have not acquired it properly.

9. Tasks expose the learners’ needs which decide which items/skills have to be covered in the lesson rather than recommended by the course book or the teachers.
Challenges:

Although the implementation of task-based language teaching and learning has gradually increased world-wide and possesses the advantages described above, there are still some weaknesses, limitations and problems with TBL which are listed below:

1. Large class size:

   If the task is problematical, then it can become more time-consuming in large classes. Teachers may not have sufficient time to attend to each and every student and to check their learning progress. In reaction, teachers may decide and instruct some capable students to guide others. They can assist other students to teach and model target skills for them and thereby gain communicative skills for themselves too.

2. Cramped classrooms:

   If the classroom is very small and crowded, then it can be difficult to use task-based activities which need extra space. It is better to either change the classroom or use less dynamic activities.

3. Lack of appropriate resources:

   ‘Resources’ in TBL comprise of time, place, technology tools and supplementary materials etc. For example, some schools which are situated in rural areas might not get the internet facilities in the school premises. Hence, teachers must keep these limitations in mind when designing task-based lessons.

4. Teachers are not trained in task-based methodologies:

   It can create trouble if teachers are not trained in task-based methodologies, however, they may want to adopt this approach. In that case, they can adopt textbook materials prepared for TBL. To gain the professional knowledge of TBL, teachers may have to attend the professional development workshops aiming at TBL.

5. Teachers with limited language proficiency:

   Most EFL and ESL teachers are not native-speakers. If TBL is integrated in EFL/ESL classroom, it is possible that those teachers do not have adequate language proficiency to conduct the activities which require them to operate in un-rehearsed situations or they may not be able to provide abundant language exposure to support
students’ language acquisition. Therefore, teachers require developing their own language proficiency by attending professional workshops.

6. Task-based learning expects a high level of creativity and initiative from the side of the teacher. But, if they are restricted to more traditional roles and they do not have much time and resources to apply task-based teaching then this type of teaching may not be possible.

7. When things get difficult and tricky, often learners fall back on the use of mother tongue (L1).

8. There possibly is a danger for learners to obtain fluency at the rate of accuracy.

Ellis (2007); cited in Murad (2009) mentions a few more pedagogical problems in implementing task-based teaching (TBT):

1. Teachers often think that making use of TBLT in classroom is not promising with beginners as they do not have the ability to converse in L2. The recommended solution is that teachers should realize that TBLT is input-based; therefore it is possible to enhance proficiency through a string of situational tasks. Briefly, teachers should use such types of activities that increase the skill to communicate effectively.

2. Students perhaps seem to be unenthusiastic to talk freely in class. Ellis suggests that teachers use small groups, so that they can give learners some time for planning and guiding them.

3. Students often adopt the use of L1 (mother-tongue) for communication to come out of a complicated situation. In this case, Ellis asserts that this may not be a problem. When proficiency grows, learners will automatically start using L2 more.

4.5 Conclusion

To sum up, TBLT, an off-shoot of CLT has attracted immense attention during the last ten years. In the above discussion, I have discussed the origin and its relation with CLT. I have also briefly discussed the rationale, and the basic assumptions and the methodology of TBLT. Then, the teaching of vocabulary in task-based language teaching is discussed. In the final section, the challenges in TBLT are discussed though one finds that there are solutions to them.