

ISSN (E): 3067-7874

Volume 01, Issue 02, May, 2025

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THE EFFECT OF TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING ON WRITING SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study has validated the effectiveness of Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in promoting writing skills of EFL learners enrolled in undergraduate programs at public universities. TBLT is emerging as an essential part of curricula in language pedagogies in several countries around the globe and advocated by prominent SLA researchers along with ELT practitioners

Keywords: Task Based Language Teaching, Productive Skills, Second Language Acquisition English as Foreign Language, Mixed Method Research.

Introduction

English language is the key to success in every walk of life as it is the lingua franca of our age and the most learned as well as taught language around the globe. It is a fact that English language has emerged as the most important and widely used language all over the world, so it is required to learn English everywhere in all continents. Due to its efficacy and being a guarantee of secure future, the number of English learners is increasing day by day in every part of the world. English language teaching has emerged as an independent discipline and we have ever increasing English language teaching methodologies

The prime objective of the study was to determine the effect of TBLT on the writing skills of the English language learners of university undergraduates. The study constituted and focused on validating any improvement on the learners' writing skills, in the first phase, by TBLT treatment at undergraduate level registrants. Secondly learners from the experimental group also presented their views about the TBLT treatment with respect to their previous schooling



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experience following Presentation-Practice-Production paradigm in ELT classrooms Student feedback and perceptions about TBLT exposure was sought in order to determine their vision about TBLT treatment as compared to the traditional teaching methodology. To be more specific, current empirical study was designed to find out the answers of following research questions.

- 1) How does TBLT affect the learners' second language writing skills?
- 2) What are the EFL learners' perceptions about TBLT in improving writing skills?

In a holistic view English is enjoying a status of the most prestigious language as compared to any other language in this world. It is due to the importance of communication in English as no nation can survive without sufficient knowledge of English in order to promote trade, commerce and imports/exports. Irrespective of nation, religion or any geographical location everyone is struggling to be dexterous in English language skills. Same is the case with the emergence of several language teaching methodologies.

Language is one of the basic characteristics of human beings; language categorizes Homo sapiens uniquely from all other animals. According to, "It is language, more than anything else, which makes us feel human". Each society in this world has a particular language, and this unified language usage determines that speech community marking identity of the speakers. Language is an important tool and it has various functions but the most vital function of language is to communicate with fellow human beings. There are four basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. A child in any linguistic environment learns his/her mother tongue in this natural order and it is a fact that writing is the most complex skill to master.

Another division of language skills is the productive skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading). Categorized speaking as an interpersonal skill and writing as the transactional skill. We all acquire mother tongue almost without any effort. When there is a case of learning a language other than one's mother tongue, situation is different as compared to any individual mother tongue. Learning style refers to an individual's favorite way to learn and utilize one's natural abilities to focus on particular ways to learn in an idiosyncratic manner. Basically learning styles are two faceted subjects such as



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systematic versus unsystematic, reflective versus impulsive and inductive versus deductive. Every individual has certain style specific priorities marking their merits and demerits. Learning styles, can maneuver at any time, are not static or fixed for a long time as they are dependent on relative situations and tasks undertaken by the learners. Almost same is the case with language teaching methods as has differentiated language teaching methods in three main categories:

- 1) Language centered methods
- 2) Learner centered methods
- 3) Learning centered methods

Each language teaching method is based on specific syllabus depending upon the focus on the underlying assumptions as highlighted in the syllabus. In fact syllabus is at the center of any teaching-learning process and it plays a paramount role in ELT. For effective and result oriented ELT scenario a number of syllabuses have been devised based on certain assumptions and requirements of the target needs of the learners.

There are two major kinds of syllabuses such as product-oriented syllabuses and process-oriented syllabuses. describes that product oriented syllabuses are those where focus is on the end product i.e. knowledge which learners gain after classroom teaching. Process oriented syllabuses are those where emphasis is on the learning experience using analytic approach. Task based syllabus is an upgraded modification of communicative language teaching and it differs from other syllabi as it commences after needs analysis Task based syllabus considers many perspectives of language learning before its execution. Task based syllabus is emerging as the most utilized syllabus in all the continents of the world due to its effectiveness and outcome in English language pedagogy.

The role of the learner's motivation, cognitive abilities and autonomy enjoy the central place in constructivism, which are also fundamental assumptions in TBLT asserts that constructivism emphasizes learners' autonomy, reflectivity, personal involvement and active engagement of the learners in the process of learning; practically same is the case with TBLT principles. When a learner undertakes a communicative task, he is inclined to make use of his existing linguistic resources in order to achieve an outcome . There is a concurrence both



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in TBLT and in the learning principles of constructivism. TBLT asserts that language is best learned when focus is on meaning and it is contrary to the concentration on form i.e. grammatical structures of the target language based on the traditional linguistic or structural syllabus has illustrated that "language learning is ultimately a highly interpersonal enterprise, involving relationships between learners and teachers, therefore, understanding the psychology of these relationships and of the agents involved in them is half the battle."

Skehan (1996) and Carless (2009) differentiated strong from weak forms of task based language teaching. The strong TBLT form focuses more on meaning making in real life scenarios along with authentic and accurate performance of the tasks. The weak form of TBLT accommodates more flexible tasks for communicative teaching and language pedagogy. The roles performed by the language learners in TBLT are labeled as: participants, risk takers, listeners/speakers, storytellers, innovators and sequencers. The basic unit of a lesson in TBLT classroom is the task and various tasks are designed to facilitate the learners with real life communicative situations enabling them real communicators of the target language. It is a learner-centered approach, based on the constructivist school of learning and teacher plays the role of a facilitator of the communicative interaction among the learners. During TBLT a language learner plays a dynamic role in the whole process of language learning as he takes active part in interactive and communicative activities throughout the task performance cycle to achieve an outcome defined task as "A task is a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some nonlinguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both" has differentiated task classification as the pedagogical tasks and real life tasks. The pedagogical tasks mean the communicative activity performed in the classroom to achieve an outcome, basic purpose of pedagogical task is the rehearsal of real world all around. The real-world task means the real life interactive communication outside the classroom for example reserving an air ticket, job interviews and making new friends. The basic purpose of a task is not only to communicate but to achieve a purpose and an outcome while focusing primarily on pragmatic meaning.



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Rehearsal tasks assist the learners to perform anything which requires the learners to attempt outside classroom. These tasks are not exactly the same as the real-world situations but there is some kind of adaptation to fit in the classroom environment. Examples of rehearsal tasks are to search an advertisement in newspaper for a suitable employment or a job interview by a pair or group in the classroom. The activation tasks have nothing to do with real world situation and they are designed to stimulate and to improve integrated language skills. Here textbook adaptation by a skillful teacher facilitates the second language learners to improve target language learning.

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