Designing for Teaching and Learning in an Open World:
Task Supported Open Architecture Language Instruction

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ABSTRACT

Concepts about tasks have been considered as the major part of analysis in different teaching approaches. Instructors are being more interested in the use of task-based instruction in foreign and second language teaching. Task-based instruction and teaching strategies are implemented by emphasizing meaning. The purpose of this paper is to introduce and discuss some major principles of open architecture in the application of task based instruction in areas such as second language vocabulary acquisition, grammatical rules, and expressing new ideas. This manuscript examines the following topics (a) Task based (supported) instruction, (b) Open Architecture teaching design, and (c) The role of technology in language learning.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate with others was a question for long time. Various strategies and methods were used for language interactions. During the 20th century, Grammar-Translation method was proposed and implemented as a language teaching approach. Then, conceptual changes in linguistics led to scientific revolution in language teaching and learning. Different methods concentrating on different skills such as; silent way, audio-lingualism, and whole approach were recommended. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in 1980 (Rozati, 2014). Afterwards, Task-based approach was most likely first used in Prabhu's procedural curriculum (Prabhu, 1987). The 1984 Bangalore Madras project was a practical curriculum program which included the first attempt in a real task-based program. In the 1980's Nunan explained the notion of task and the ways in which task based instruction will be utilized. Then, Long and Crookes (1992) described task based curriculum in three categories: (1) practical curriculum, (2) technical curriculum and (3) task-based language teaching. Ellis (2002) added another group that is known as "humanistic teaching." Ellis explained humanistic teaching as "humanistic principles of education emphasized the achievement of students' full potential for growth by acknowledging the importance of the effective dimension in learning, thinking and reasoning" (2002, p. 31). Long and Crooks defined process syllabus as "a social and problem-solving orientation, with explicit provision for the expression of individual learning styles and preferences" (Long and Crooks, 1992, p. 38). Additional method that was similar to Prabhu's

was proposed by Breen (1987) and Rozati (2014). Breen and Rozati based the curriculum design and classroom practice on the use of language rather than a language item. The method is different from the procedural curriculum in two ways: First, the teacher's role is not one sided as a director, but teachers can consult learners and help them understand their own learning plan. Second, in Prabhu's practical method students were operating with the curriculum but they focused on language structure explicitly. Additional study conducted by Dewey's concentrated on task-based language teaching, experience and its role in successful learning. It contained the functional, technical and applied role of language in real tasks as the major objective for students to communicate at the class for an unlimited and unconditional learning. Unlike traditional methods, task-based includes the design of a sequence of collaborating tasks to be performed in the target language rather than a sequence of language items.

Nunan (2004) explained Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as follows:

[A] pedagogic task is a piece of classroom work that involves the learner 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, middle and an end. (p.4)

Within this explanation are basics of meaning, and communicating meaning through grammatical knowledge, in tasks that involve learners in a range of thinking orders that increase their existing knowledge. Discussing meaning in both speaking and listening has been considered essential to comprehension and language acquisition (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, & Morgenthaler, 1989). Through useful collaborations in task-supported learning environments, learners internalize their knowledge, which allows them to perform this knowledge independently. "Learning involves a progression from the inter-to-[entra]-mental as learners shift from object and other regulation to self-regulation" (Ellis, 2002, p. 24). Learning through tasks is seen to move through stages starting with initial activator, sign, response, follow-up and ending up with discussion (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, Berducci, & Newman, 1991).

Building on the concrete concept of the logical output, Pica et al. (1989) developed a context for the analysis of meaning, a trigger which is an indication of no comprehension communication. The response clarifies and supports comprehension, and follow-up closes the structure, after meaning has been achieved. Many of these mini cycles can be embedded in larger task-supported learning cycles. Discussing the meaning is common to TBLT pedagogy and allows students to engage in greater learning but also allows teachers to design tasks that apply this process. In TBLT students start tasks through questioning, analyzing, examining, formulating and testing potential solutions, and making modifications as a result of new information and interactions, and finally supporting new knowledge.

Activity Theory, developed by Vygotsky (1978) and Leont'ev (1981) summarized learning as an interaction of a number of elements such as; subject, rules, community, that interacted through the cultural context of the learning environment (Robertson, 2014). It is graphically represented as a triangle. Through interactions the pedagogy of TBLT is indicated. The diagram crystallizes the conception of the essential elements required for learning and the interactions between the elements, interacted through context, and the other language teaching and learning activity system.

Figure 1 depicts helpful interactions within Task Based (Supported) Language Teaching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Task is defined in different ways. Long (1985) defines it as a work specified for oneself or for others. Nunan (2004) made a distinction between aimed tasks and academic tasks. According to him, aimed tasks refer to language use in the world beyond the classroom. Academic tasks on the other hand refer to language use that happens in the classroom. The word "task" has extensive meaning. It sometimes

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