

**TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING:
IMPLEMENTING A TASK-SUPPORTED SYLLABUS**

Fika Megawati^{1*}, Rahmatul Khalik Alwiyasa²

¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

² Universitas Siliwangi

E-mail: ¹⁾ fikamegawati@umsida.ac.id, ²⁾ rahmatulkhalikalwiyasa@gmail.com

Abstract

Task-Based Language Teaching has emerged as an innovative approach to language learning, emphasizing the use of meaningful tasks to facilitate language acquisition. This method not only fosters engagement among learners but also caters to their specific needs and proficiencies, thereby promoting a more dynamic and effective learning environment. The study employed a qualitative research design utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather data on learners' experiences and outcomes associated with task-based activities. Participants comprised language learners from diverse backgrounds who engaged in a variety of task-based activities designed to reflect their linguistic needs and cultural contexts. The findings showed that students generally found the task-based activities engaging and relevant to their language learning needs, as the tasks often mirrored real-life situations, which increased their motivation and facilitated a deeper understanding of language use in authentic contexts. The incorporation of such authentic tasks not only enhanced the learners' motivation but also encouraged the transfer of skills to real-world communication scenarios, demonstrating the critical link between task relevance and communicative competence among language learners.

Keywords: *Task-Based Language Teaching, Syllabus Design, Learner Engagement, Communicative Competence*

1. INTRODUCTION

Task-based language teaching has emerged as a promising approach in second language acquisition research, offering an alternative to traditional language teaching methods that often rely on the presentation and practice of discrete language forms (Klapper, 2003). This approach actively engages learners by focusing on authentic tasks that mirror real-life communication, promoting the development of both linguistic and pragmatic competence in language learners (Alqahtani & Vadakalur Elumalai, 2020). Moreover, the successful implementation of task-based language teaching necessitates a careful design of tasks that align with learners' needs and contexts, ensuring that these tasks are not only relevant but also facilitate genuine communication. Effective task design requires an in-depth understanding of the learners' language proficiency levels, their learning goals and preferences, as well as the specific pedagogical objectives of the course. This allows educators to craft meaningful and contextually appropriate tasks that resonate with students' experiences and enhance their language skills in a practical manner ("Task-Based Language Education: From Theory to Practice," 2006). Furthermore, a thorough needs analysis should guide the creation of tasks, as this will ensure that educators address the specific linguistic challenges and interests of their students, thereby fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment (Thomas,

2013). Incorporating a task-based approach not only aligns well with the principles of second language acquisition but also addresses the diverse learning needs evident in classroom settings, particularly when tasks are tailored to reflect the contextual realities of learners, encouraging a more interactive and participatory mode of language learning. In this regard, tasks that are rooted in real-world scenarios not only increase learner motivation but also provide opportunities for meaningful communication, which is essential for language development in various contexts, including those outside of the traditional classroom setting (Thanh, 2015). Moreover, integrating technology in task-based language learning can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the approach, as evidenced by studies highlighting the importance of designing blended learning environments that support students in navigating and engaging with tasks in dynamic ways, ultimately leading to improved language outcomes in a more authentic and engaging manner (Wiemeyer & Zeaiter, 2015). Additionally, the incorporation of digital tools and platforms into task-based language learning can facilitate collaboration among students and create immersive learning experiences, allowing for interaction and participation that mimic authentic language use in social contexts while also addressing potential issues of motivation and engagement (Klapper, 2003).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research paper aims to explore the implementation of a task-supported syllabus in language learning, with a focus on the benefits and challenges of this approach. To achieve this, a qualitative research design will be employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather data on learners' experiences and outcomes associated with task-based activities, thereby providing insights into how such a syllabus can be effectively integrated into existing language.

The study will be conducted in the context of an English as a Foreign Language program, with participants comprising language learners from diverse backgrounds. These learners will engage in a variety of task-based activities designed to reflect their linguistic needs and cultural contexts, allowing for a richer exploration of how such tasks can facilitate not only language acquisition but also critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for real-world communication. The data collected will be analyzed to identify patterns and themes related to learners' engagement, motivation, and perceived language development through task-supported learning, emphasizing the need for authenticity and relevance in task design as critical factors for enhancing communication competence among language learners.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Students' Engagement in the Task-Based Syllabus Activities

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed that students generally found the task-based activities engaging and relevant to their language learning needs. Many participants noted that the tasks often mirrored real-life situations, which not only increased their motivation to participate but also facilitated a deeper understanding of the language use in authentic contexts, highlighting the effectiveness of integrating authentic

materials and experiences in task design. Additionally, the incorporation of such authentic tasks not only enhanced the learners' motivation but also encouraged the transfer of skills to real-world communication scenarios, demonstrating the critical link between task relevance and communicative competence among language learners. Moreover, a significant portion of the participants emphasized the importance of conducting a thorough needs analysis prior to task design, as this practice substantially contributed to the perceived success of the activities and allowed for a more tailored approach that addressed individual learning goals, ultimately promoting a more engaging and meaningful learning experience (Legak & Wahi, 2020).

The findings suggest that task-based language learning is an effective approach that aligns with the principles of second language acquisition, as it actively engages learners and promotes the development of both linguistic and pragmatic competence. By designing tasks that are rooted in real-world scenarios and address the specific needs and interests of students, educators can foster a more dynamic and participatory learning environment, which can lead to improved language outcomes and increased learner motivation. Furthermore, the participants highlighted that the tasks not only facilitated language learning but also fostered collaboration and peer interaction, which are essential components of effective communication skills. In addition, the role of authentic materials in task design was emphasized as a key factor in enhancing the learning experience, showcasing how such resources can effectively bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-life language use, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the language and its sociocultural nuances.

3.2. Designing Effective Task-Based Syllabus

The findings from the study highlight the importance of designing effective task-based syllabi that cater to the specific needs and interests of language learners. By conducting a thorough needs analysis prior to task development, educators can ensure that the activities reflect real-world scenarios and address the contextual realities of the learners, which in turn enhances their engagement and motivation. Additionally, the incorporation of authentic materials in task design can significantly contribute to the development of communicative competence, as it allows learners to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and practical language use. Furthermore, the task-based approach promotes collaboration and peer interaction, which are essential components of effective communication skills, ultimately leading to improved language outcomes and a more dynamic and participatory learning environment.

Ultimately, this approach fosters an environment where learners are not only passive recipients of language but active participants in their own learning journey, allowing for deeper engagement and more meaningful language acquisition through practical and authentic experiences, a notion that aligns with contemporary trends in language teaching and learning. The task-based syllabus design should also consider the diverse learning styles and preferences of the students, incorporating a range of task types and modalities to cater to different learner needs. This can include individual, pair, and group tasks, as well as a balance of receptive and productive activities, which can further enhance learner engagement and language development. Additionally, the integration of technology, such as digital tools and platforms, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the task-based approach by facilitating collaboration, creating immersive

learning experiences, and addressing potential issues of motivation and engagement (Bailey, 2015). Overall, the design of an effective task-based syllabus requires a comprehensive understanding of the learners' needs, preferences, and the contextual factors that influence their language learning, in order to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that promotes meaningful communication and language acquisition. Moreover, the successful implementation of a task-based syllabus necessitates ongoing assessment and reflection by both instructors and students, ensuring that tasks remain relevant and responsive to the evolving linguistic and contextual needs of the learners, which aligns with the pedagogical shift towards a more learner-centered approach in language education (Cook, 1981).

This process of continuous assessment allows educators to adapt their teaching methods and materials to better suit the learners' progress and changing needs, thereby maintaining a high level of engagement and promoting effective language learning outcomes, an approach that is increasingly recognized as beneficial for fostering communication. In conclusion, the implementation of task-based syllabi not only enhances language proficiency but also cultivates essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication, which are vital for success in an interconnected world, thereby affirming the necessity of aligning language education with the evolving needs and realities of the 21st-century learner.

3.3. Challenges

While the task-based approach has demonstrated significant benefits in language teaching and learning, there are also several challenges that educators may encounter in its implementation. These challenges include ensuring that all students are appropriately engaged and motivated, navigating potential disparities in language proficiency among learners, and effectively integrating authentic materials and technology into task design to enhance the learning experience. To address these challenges, it is essential for instructors to adopt a flexible mindset and develop tailored strategies that account for the diverse backgrounds and proficiency levels of their students while also considering the potential benefits of collaborative learning environments that can foster peer support and engagement (Bailey, 2015).

Educators must also be cognizant of the potential issues of student participation and motivation, and thoughtfully embed social media and other technological tools in a way that maintains the authenticity and relevance of the learning tasks. By leveraging platforms that facilitate interaction and collaboration, teachers can create meaningful, contextually rich tasks that not only engage students but also encourage them to utilize language in authentic scenarios, thereby enhancing both motivation and learning outcomes in a rapidly evolving digital landscape (Wiemeyer & Zeaiter, 2015). Furthermore, it is crucial for educators to balance the focus on fluency and accuracy, ensuring that while students engage in communicative tasks, there is also a structured approach to language form and usage that fosters skill acquisition, as highlighted by recent critiques of strong versions of task-based language teaching.

4. CONCLUSION

Implementing a task-based syllabus in language learning can significantly enhance the development of communicative competence. This learner-centered approach aligns with the needs and preferences of 21st-century learners, providing more engaging and relevant language instruction. It also prepares learners to navigate real-world communication, making the integration of task-based methodologies crucial in contemporary language education. Educators should commit to ongoing professional development and collaboration to create an effective task-based learning environment and share best practices. This can contribute to a more unified and effective approach to task-based language teaching across diverse settings. Educators should also incorporate communicative language tasks that nurture learners' intrinsic motivation and interest, aligning with the trend towards learner-centered, holistic language acquisition. By employing such strategies, educators can transform traditional language learning paradigms into dynamic frameworks that focus on developing language proficiency, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills, which are essential for success in today's world. Adapting teaching practices to suit the evolving needs and preferences of the 21st-century learner is a valuable approach.

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