

IMPLIMENTATION OF TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) IN TEACHING VOCABULARY AT STUDENTS FROM ENGLISH MODULES: HOW EFFECTIVE IS IT FOR LEARNERS?

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ABSTRACT

This project was developed to implement English vocabulary to the students, who are studying different majors at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, and it is mandatory to study and approve six English modules, the main goal of this study was to create a Didactic Guide based on the Task-Based Language Teaching through which students could learn new English words. In order to achieve this objective, during this study, different tools were applied. With the qualitative method, interview, and class observation, took place to obtain data about the students learning process. With the quantitative method, questionnaires, and surveys applied to the pupils, it was possible to stablish that the students had a poor knowledge of vocabulary. With all these information in hand a proposal was designed to cover the students' needs, and with the benefit of the Task-Based Language Teaching activities, it was possible to build a custom Didactic Guide for the students, always having in mind their most liked activities to perform during English lessons, this guide will become a very useful tool for the teacher to provide the students a different interesting method that can include every one of them during the development of each lesson, while practicing and improving all the four language skills required to obtain the English proficiency.

Key Words: TBLT, teaching vocabulary, didactic guide, modules

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential element for all lifeforms in the world, animals have a certain way of communicating among their own, but language is a gift for humans, it goes further than just helping us to communicate, language is an intrinsic part of the culture and society.

There lies the importance of understanding the cultural background to learn a foreign language, there are several excellent reasons to learn English, but the most valuable one is that knowing English, will make learners stand out from the crowd, meaning that they will get more opportunities, not only in the professional field but also in their social activities.

Ecuadorian students have limited access to practice speaking or listening to English, learners also face a lot of pressure, when they need to start using the foreign language to communicate either with their teachers or their classmates; and usually get frustrated, when they noticed that all the skills developed and learned inside the classroom, are not good enough to allow them to have proper communication.

Students have a deficit of vocabulary knowledge, making it more difficult to attempt to start using English during class, many scholars have used many methods or approaches to teach English, it is proven that traditional methods offer a large amount of grammar and structure knowledge of English, but modern approaches like the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), has proven that the teaching-learning process can be faster and easier, students get engaged with this method, they have improved their vocabulary, and speaking abilities, learners have found themselves practicing the 4 skills of the foreign language at the same time, meaning that when the TBL, these abilities become more natural.

Task-Based Language Teaching and English for Academic Purposes: An Investigation into Instructor Perceptions and Practice in the Canadian Context

Task-Based Language Teaching is also perceived as useful in English Academic Purpose instruction, as 13% of responses mentioned it as a perceived advantage of TBLT. Participants reported that some students felt a sense of achievement and improvement and a sense of success regardless of their level. They also mentioned that Task-Based activities were more effective than other methods of teaching. The participants thought that having a learner-centered classroom was appropriate, and activities were more student-centered; therefore, the teacher was a facilitator helping students to communicate with each other [5].

The Impact of Task-based Approach on Vocabulary Learning in English for a Specific Purpose Courses

Students who have been taught vocabulary through task-based language teaching outperformed those learners who have been taught vocabulary through traditional approach. So, the traditional approach, in this context is proved to be unsuccessful. It shows that learner-learner interaction while performing tasks provided opportunities for the learners to talk about vocabularies and monitor the language they used. In traditional method the focus is on translation and memorization of new vocabularies and students are not concerned with the context in which these technical vocabularies are used. The task-based approach allows language use and language learning e simultaneously [20].

The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching on Motivation and Grammatical Achievement of EFL Junior High School Students

Regarding the use of TBLT which is a suitable technique for language learning, the results of this study support [16] who found the positive effects of task-based techniques on speaking proficiency development of EFL learners. Also, the findings of Zhang and Hung (2012) that concluded using task-based instruction in big-sized class in China for college students' learning attainments, motivation and attitudes and their oral English performance leads to learning development are consistent with the findings of this research which both confirm the positive effect of TBLT on grammar development. The results of this study are also congruent to the study of Rezaeyan (2014); he researched

the impact of task-based language teaching on the academic achievement of Iranian EFL female learners in Yasuj high school. Finding drawn from the analysis of data revealed that implementation of task-based teaching can significantly affect the learners' academic achievement in high school (Pazhakh et al, 2017).

Pedagogical Basis

Teachers need to be extremely effective for essential education, through the knowledge of philosophy in education, teachers can understand the nature of their students, having a better understanding of how they adapt in the classroom, and how learners behave during lessons, based on this information, and teachers must find a suitable way to meet the students' needs.

Deeksha S. shares an interesting point of view about education in her article "Jean Piaget's Theories and Practices in Education", she declares that the main principle of education is to guide the pupil towards higher levels of learning, recalling that Piaget says that the learning environment motivates the learner to pamper into some explicit or undercover activity.

Sometimes education mostly focuses on the tool or teaching technique, not paying much attention to providing effective support to teachers, Dr Hood mentioned in her article "learning form things schools gets wrong" that teachers have a direct influence on students' learning. She expressed, tools or techniques themselves do not create significant benefits, and moreover teachers' pedagogy determines the impact of a tool or technique in the learning process success or failure [12].

In an excerpt of the book "Teaching strategies for all teachers" by [14], he says that teaching is a science, a craft, and an art. A science because teachers must use investigation to enlighten their procedure, just like doctors do, also teachers should be like scientists experimenting new strategies or techniques to see if their students are learning in their best way.

Every teacher has a different method, a personal teaching style, meaning teaching is similarly to art, what works for one teacher might not work for another, and teachers sometimes have to find a custom strategy that would meet specific teaching situations. They must obtain their own distinctive abilities for their students' benefit.

Finally, he describes teaching as a craft that is learned by experience, as in any other profession a person cannot expect to leave college and master a career, it takes years of experience outside the classroom and the academics to become a well experienced professional.

Theoretical Basis

English has adopted the denomination of Lingua Franca, because it has become the systematic language that people who do not share a native language use to communicate, English language is related to the Indo-European family of languages,

English is included in the most predominant West Germanic languages among Dutch and German. It was spoken in Great Britain 1400 years ago, it is the dominant language of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, several countries of the Caribbean Sea, and the Pacific Ocean, it is also the official language of India, Philippines, Singapore, and South Africa.

English is the leading language in the world with most speakers due to the colonial influence of the British Empire, but later to the spread of American culture. English has more non-native speakers, so it can be found in far more countries, particularly in Africa. English is spoken in 146 countries (Eberhard et al, 2021).

English language has become a crucial tool that helps people around the world to achieve better opportunities in personal, professional, and business matters. Globalization has played a significant role in the way we communicate meaning that more than 50% of the information found online is written in English, most of the biggest companies have their headquarters in English speaking nations. Therefore, the importance of learning this language especially at an early age, will guarantee a favourable outcome in any profession chosen by the current elementary and high school students.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that “language teaching in the twentieth century was characterized by frequent change and innovation and by the development of sometimes competing language teaching ideologies” (p, 1). Learning a new language is a complex process in which learners must acquire a lot of new words, grammatical structures, accents, phonetic sounds, etc.

Numerous studies have proven that learning a foreign language helps the brain to develop certain skills, that it will decrease the aging process, increase memory, improve communication abilities, also will help to perform better in a professional field, or just give us the opportunity to know people around the globe.

Regarding learning a foreign language, we could say “the sooner, the better,” learning another language at an early age, will aid the learning process in adult life. Children learn their mother language with extraordinarily little effort, when they are introduced to a foreign language at a youthful age, the process becomes natural and eases the ability to verbal communication in other words, children do not learn the structure of a language but its meaning and are able to interpret and interact with their surroundings in two or more languages at the same time. The process of learning a foreign language boosts cerebral and rational abilities, it is not an easy task it requires lots of brain exercise.

The Task-Based Method

Along with history there have been various methods, techniques, or approaches involved in foreign language teaching, there is a debate among different authors on which method has proven to be more effective, the challenge no matter what technique or approach the

teacher chooses to apply for the lesson, is to put it on practice in the real educational environment.

All these techniques or strategies were developed from social, educational, economical, and even political conditions but mainly stated in a theoretical system. Moreover, modern theories and perspectives assure that virtual experiences and practical activities combined with traditional methods lead to a better approach for teaching English. "There is a long history of proposals that attempt to characterize how humans manage the effort of communication and understanding" [13].

There are methods that support the effective English language teaching process and enhance the students' learning. Those methods are Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), among others.

The Task-Based Language Teaching is an approach aimed to complete tasks effectively as the main goal of the planning and language instruction. This method is based on the constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching. The first Task Based Language Teaching performed was carried out by N.S. Prabhu in 1982 through his Bangalore research project [1].

The learning process is found on perception and observation, being an active participant of any activity will lead to experience and acquire new skills of knowledge [10]. In this matter, sensory experiences develop a better comprehension of the world, TBM focuses on the development of linguistic skills or international competence [8], an English lesson classroom is the perfect scenario to practice new ideas, to teach and to learn facilitating many opportunities for its participants [22].

Over the last decades this method has been attracting for both, teachers, and researchers because of its significance in the educational field. It is a student-centered approach, it provides learners the opportunity to interact and communicate with others using the target language to develop their communicative skills through tasks and activities [11].

Richards and Rodgers, (2001) stated TBM is mainly motivated and focused on a theory of learning than a theory of language acquisition. Some learning principles are relevant in TBM such as tasks to supply input and output processing for language acquisition. The Tasked-Based Method goal is to stimulate students to fully use their communication skills by achieving daily task activities inside the classroom, it gives them the opportunity to experience first-hand L2 by listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

With this approach, learners are in a way, forced to put in practice all the L2 background learned in the past years, and it challenges the teacher to keep improving the lessons according to the knowledge the students achieve every day. Also, TBM brings out real communication, so the students experience first-hand problem-solving to apply their own creative skills.

In the opinion of [23], when students are taking part in diverse types of tasks, they are all working goal-oriented to obtain a result or specific outcome, by doing these activities learners, improve communication in L2 they rehearsal all the skills needed to achieve the goal of L2 proficiency. TBM has become very well accepted lately since it allows teachers to improve real communication skills basing their methodology in meanings instead of forms. When TBM occurs, English learning becomes more natural and lessens the anxiety that students might experience while employing other learning techniques.

Using TBM in the classroom means that students must develop a specific activity in the foreign language to achieve a predetermined outcome, teachers are aware of students' requirements and concerns' teachers' goal is to ease the learning process to the learners.

A study made in a university of Florencia, Colombia, about implementing TBM to integrate language skills, suggested that this method is indeed an impressive approach, due to the outcome mentioned by the students involved in this study, they said that they could finally put all the four skills to work, for instance, one of them pointed out that this method helps her to comprehend written text, understand verbal language, learn how to write, and communicate her thoughts. Another student said that TBM helped him to work on his weakness with reading, writing, and listening, that this method was encouraging him to develop tasks without even noticing that he was forced to communicate in English. [3]

The Task-Based Method Stages

In her work, Willis J. , included three phases of TBM pre-task, task-cycle, and post-task. They must follow a sequence in a unit of study.

Pre-task is when the teacher introduces a certain topic to students through clear explanations about what they will do in the next stage; for example, playing an audio or video about modelling the final activity or brainstorming ideas about the topic.

The task cycle is the step in which students have to complete a task individually, in pairs or in groups. It can be subdivided into task stage, planning stage, and report stage. Here is where students mostly use the foreign language, to accomplish the task requirements to achieve the task goal. At these time teachers must support any linguistic issue and assist students with materials, to solve their problems or difficulties.

Finally, post-task is when teachers based on what the students have accomplished in previous phases, help them gain linguistic skills and focus on language accuracy. In this section is recommendable to allow students to evaluate each other's work, reflect on what they have done and think about how they can improve it [9]

Types of tasks

The Task-Based Method

According to the English Cambridge dictionary, a task is a piece of work to be done, for this research we must focus on the classroom task, knowing that real tasks are eligible for pedagogical purposes. Meaning that teachers must find a way to make a real-life task fit the purpose of teaching by adapting it to the student's needs. In general, tasks for learning a foreign language are those that involve communication and the usage of the language. In TBM language use while performing a task is a requirement. Not every task involves interaction or communication among people, if teachers want to apply TBM they face the challenge of developing custom tasks for the learners that include language skills.

The complexity of the task must be elaborated according to the knowledge of the students, having a syllabus design beforehand to start gradually introducing more vocabulary. We should remember the process in which children learn a language, they first learn simple phonetics, after this, they continue creating more complex phonological sounds, words, phrases, and simple sentences.

According to [23], there are different types of tasks that teachers must use as resources for the planning for their English lessons.

1. Listing task: Despite what most teachers believe, a listening task involves a great amount of speaking, while one student is explaining a topic, the others are listening for instance, a listening task could be performed as an interview, students asking each other questions, or just practicing brainstorming. Possible outcomes could be an article, an interview, or even a short story.

2. Ordering task: Ordering task, engage learners with many approaches, students are asked to rank items, actions, or events in chronological order, then they classified them into categories or groups.

3. Problem solving task: There is a task that students demand the most, it is "problem-solving", learners quickly get engaged with this task even though it could be quite challenging students have shown great satisfaction after finishing a problem-solving task. Teachers have unlimited sources of finding this type of task for example, they can confront the learners with a real-world situation, so the students might work in groups and find different outcomes for the same issue.

4. Comparing and Contrasting task: When students are asked to compare any given information, they are working on the Comparing and Contrasting task generally, learners find common grounds about the topic they are studying, also it becomes very interesting when they point out the differences, then we have a contrast in the same group of students.

5. Story telling task: The task that encourages students to speak aloud, sharing either their own or other people's experiences, is called "Story Telling", it could also be a fiction story, leading to the usage of learners' imagination, this task is perfect for improving vocabulary.

6. Creative Task: When students face a Creative Task (Project), commonly they are asked to work in groups, this task could also be developed outside the classroom. As the name of this task says, imagination resources are unlimited, it could be a musical play, writing an article, a science project, etc. This type of task has proven to be a total success among teachers and students.

The Task-Based Method and Vocabulary

Zandmoghadam said that in the past years teaching English was mainly based on grammatical structure, rather than on phonological structure, vocabulary then was quite simple, novel words were only introduced when an exercise was made, and the belief was that once students learned the grammatical structure, vocabulary would take care of itself.

Nowadays we are aware of the need to enrich vocabulary to improve students' communicative competence. Limitations with the vocabulary knowledge, the fact that students tend to use their mother tongue while attending an English lesson, represent a great challenge for teachers, who need to have excellent communication skills to approach learners with an immense amount of novelty words and have students engage in the learning process. Vocabulary is the heart of language communication, and it is the platform for learners to speak, listen read, and write [19].

Another research carried out by [17] and the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, concluded that, when using TBM, students related to skills of interest, economics, technical studies, and social studies. Learners proved to show enhanced learning, including not only a 50% increase in vocabulary as well as comprehension. It proves that task-based learning should be incorporated into the process of learning a foreign language. Other forms of this tasked base method developed not only a greater understanding of vocabulary and context but also engaged students' curiosity in the subject matter. TBM enables the student and teacher to both be immersed in the learning process.

Finally, the research "The Impact of Task-based Approach on Vocabulary Learning in ESP Courses", [20] concludes, that students who have been studying vocabulary with the TBM, outperformed the ones using a traditional method, one of the main reasons for this outperformance, is that language use and language learning were used by learners at the same time.

Legal Basis

The Ecuadorian constitution, Art. 26 and 27 establish that education is a right of people throughout their lives and an undeniable and inexcusable duty of the State, constituting a priority area of public policy, guaranteeing of equality and social inclusion and indispensable condition for good living. “The Ministry of Education will encourage the development of teaching support materials to develop the curriculum and will issue provisions to guide its work.” [15]

“Each educational institution may increase or decrease the workload of the instrumental areas (Language and Literature, Mathematics and Foreign Language) according to the needs they present.” [15]

The General Regulations to the Organic Law on Intercultural Education says in the article 275 that to become a public-school teacher, filling a position in the foreign language specialty, applicants must take an international standardized test that certifies that the candidate possesses, as a minimum, level B2 of the Framework according to the European Common of Reference for languages or their equivalent.

METHODOLOGY

This research project is very interesting because, in order to collect the needed data, two different methods will take place, the quantitative and the qualitative method. Through these methods and techniques, the researcher will be able to recognize the different factors that are involved in the teaching-learning process for the teacher and the students who take the English modules at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena.

Qualitative Method

This is a scientific method that generally is applied to social sciences like anthropology or in this case education. this method through interviews, conversations, and observations permits the researcher to collect valuable information that after being analyzed, it would lead to a better comprehension of the English vocabulary knowledge of the students at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, and it can determine the common approaches used by the English teacher and what is the student’s interest and participation during their English class. Using this method, the researcher will be able to interpret the data for future recommendations.

Quantitative Method

Statistics and math are the principal tools of this method, in this study those tools will help to obtain accurate information about the students’ preferences when learning English, and their level of English vocabulary, it will also gather data about the English teacher lessons performance, with all this material at hand, it will be easier for the researcher to design and plan and activities to engage the students at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena into a more active participation when acquiring English vocabulary.

Level and Type of Research

This project will have two research levels: an exploratory level and a descriptive level because they allow the researcher to describe the problem, and its causes and effects. In this study, the exploratory level is aimed to explore and examine the origins of the problem through the observation and the analysis of the context. The descriptive level will be applied because it will describe the population sample and the association between the researches proposed variables.

This study is based on experimental design, it will collect data directly from the participants, meaning it is field research. When different instruments are applied, the researcher will have a very important source of data to interpret, and to organize always focusing on the benefit of the students and their English teachers.

Instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be defined as a research tool consisting of a set of questions or other types of values that aim to collect information from a respondent. It is a classic procedure in the social sciences for the data collection and recording. In this study the questionnaire was compounded by ten (10) questions in order to measure student's vocabulary.

Techniques

Observation

Observation as an instrument must have three main characteristics, it must have a purpose, it must be systematic and it must have a structure; the object to be observed in this case, the English lessons of the students at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, can determine the relationships between students and the learning environmental elements, this tool will give the researcher a better understanding of the classroom management, and will also determine if the students' needs are fulfilled by the teacher.

Interview

The purpose of the interview is to gather verbal data from the interviewee, for this research the structured interview was applied, and the objectives for which the proposed questions were drawn up were aimed at diagnosing the current situation of the English vocabulary teaching procedures for the PINE students at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena.

Survey

The survey has become an essential tool for research projects. The survey has proven to be useful in a wide variety of fields and applications for instance universities, and academic research centers. This study employs this technique as an indispensable

instrument to know the behavior preferences and thoughts of the PINE students at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena.

Table 1: Population details

Population Details		
Category	Frequency	Percentage
English teachers	15	10%
Modules-students	150	90%
Total	165	100 %

Source. Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena

Authors

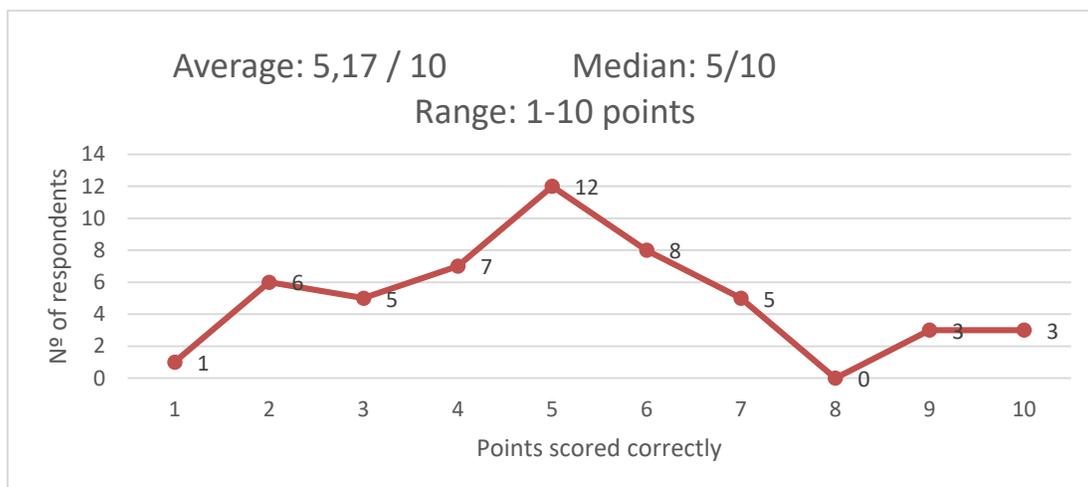
Sample Group

The sample group is compounded by the English Modules students and teachers at Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena “UPSE”, 2021-2022.

Analysis of Data

Diagnostic Test Results

Figure 1: Diagnostic Test Results



Source. Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena

Authors

Interpretation of the Vocabulary Diagnostic Test Results.

This diagnostic test-principal objective is to establish the level of prior English vocabulary knowledge presented by the English Modules students at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena “UPSE”; particularly to know how they base the understanding and comprehension of new words. It is clear then that the purpose of this type of evaluation is to identify the reality of the students, comparing it with the reality intended in the learning objectives and the didactic sequences that this research will develop.

A hundred fifty (150) students of the English Modules took this test; the full diagnostic test consisted of ten (10) questions; each question is multiple choice with four possible answers; there is only one correct possible solution on each question. The average test score is the sum of all the scores on an evaluation divided by the number of test-takers (150). In this case, the score is 5, meaning that the English vocabulary knowledge of the students, is below average, it represents a great challenge for the researcher because it is mandatory now that this study creates and designs a powerful tool based on the Task-based method, to ease the teaching-process.

It is well known the importance of students acquiring new words, therefore they will be introduced to a new learning technique or approach that will help the teacher and the students during the learning procedure, emphasizing the use of the learned words in activities that will help the students to communicate using a foreign language during their lessons, inside the classroom and in a bright future they could also start practicing these words in a different environment like their home or their friends, leading to the goal of learning English as a second language.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Knowing the signs that many other studies have proven when the Task-Based method is applied to teach English as a foreign language, this research is a useful technique to endorse vocabulary learning in English Modules students.
2. Students' preferences must be accountable when designing tasks or activities intended to teach basic English vocabulary, as the pupils can be directly implicated in the development and completion of these learning techniques.
3. It is important to elaborate an interactive task-based didactic guide, to support and ease the English vocabulary teaching method, that will aid and provide students with helpful tools to make the learning development fun and enjoyable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that with the help of Task-based activities, exercises, and assignments, the students get more exposed to the English language to enhance their vocabulary knowledge.

2. It is suggested that the students get directly involved in the planification and progress of English lessons through tasks and projects that they can do in the classroom.
3. It is recommended to apply the Task-Based didactic guide to teach English vocabulary, as it is an important and useful tool designed to help students with their learning development.

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