

# Task-based Language Teaching and Learning through Supportive Materials

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**Abstract:** *This research paper aims to provide opportunities for learners to experiment and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities designed to engage students in the authentic, practical and functional use of language. The teachers can encourage the students to activate and use language in the process of completing a task. In this study task-based language learning is designed to stimulate a natural desire in learners to improve their language proficiency by simulating to complete task. English language teaching (ELT) teachers from University of Computer Studies, Yangon, (UCSY), use a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching through supportive materials (computer, projector, TV, language labs and flashcards) to capture students' attention and to make language teaching more communicative. Designing task has the overall purposes of easier language learning to a more complicated and length activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision-making. The practice of task-based language teaching with supportive materials or technology offers a favorable track to control students' attraction as these technologies enable meaningful tasks.*

**Keywords:** authentic; communicative; supportive proficiency; materials; Task-based

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the relationship between Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL). This paper targets on the intermediated students for their creative thinking and problem solving in the real world. This study included 120 students from UCSY. Task-based language teaching and learning involve information gathering, problem solving and evaluative tasks. By using supportive materials or technologies such as computer, projector, Internet, YouTube videos, or audiovisual aids in teaching and learning process students' language proficiency can be improved and can be motivated in active learning. Technology enhanced learning offers to a wide formation of a thought in the language classroom and incorporates a wide range of interactive learning [5]. This study examines the learners of the widespread interest in learning environments and looks at how they are being used to promote task-based learning. Through technology or supportive materials the teachers can design a task as a classroom undertaking where the target language is used by the students and as a communicative purpose to succeed an effective result.

### 1.1 Literature Review

In order to identify cohesions in abstract writing, some theoretical frameworks need to be reviewed as a

concept for this study. The literature review includes Task-based Language Teaching theory, Task Design, Designing Active Learning, Class Interaction through Technology, and Communicative Activities. According to Marta Gonz lez-Lloret, Lourdes Ortega, (2014), the development of TBLT contributes the intersection between tasks and technology from a variety of theoretical views and implementation of diverse tasks for writing, interaction and communication. Tasks and technology are productively integrated in language teaching and learning. According to David Nunan (1989, 2004), TBL brings teaching to real world and encourages the students for collaborative work. In TBLT, task indicates language learning activities in which students require to use language, to achieve some communicative outcome and to create authentic situations in the class (Kris van den Branden, Martin Bygate, & John Norris, 2015).

## 2. TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Task-based language teaching is a student-centered approach to English language instruction. It is a branch of the communicative approach, wherein the teachers focus on activities for the students to use target language in the real world.

In task-based teaching, the learning center process moves to the students themselves and allows them to realize the language that is a tool to solve the problems in the real world [1]. In this way, teachers need to introduce the students to necessary constructions earlier in the chapter as well as to the vocabulary to complete allocated tasks within the restriction of what they know of the target language. This approach emphasizes on natural, creative language use, whether spoken or written, rather than on accuracy, and assessment is based on task outcome. In addition, task-based teaching provides students to complete the real-world tasks wherein how to introduce themselves, how to talk about themselves, their families, their interests, etc. in the right social and cultural matters [2]. The teachers emphasize on their teaching techniques comprising role-playing, class discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, group projects, think-pair-share, debates and short demonstrations. Today language teaching focuses on communication and interaction using appropriate language [3]. Task kinds can be seen in figure (1).

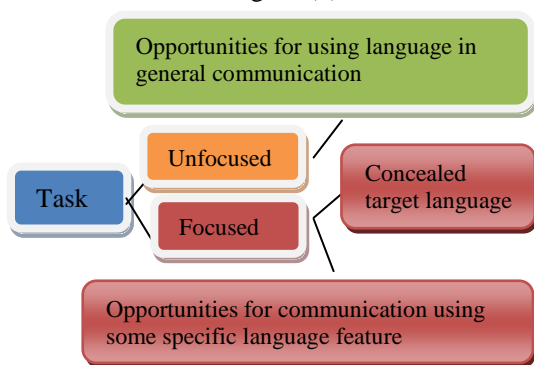


Figure 1. Kinds of Task

### 2.1. Task Design

The task is goal-oriented, and that the goal is meaningful for the learners' professional career. It provides the set goal and it makes necessary student-student and student-teacher interaction. The teachers supply process-oriented feedback to be a powerful learning environment for task-based teaching and learning. Teachers can use many strategies to provide the students to be successful. The content: students engage in the learning task. The processes: students apply in the learning task. The products: the students produce as an outcome of the learning task. Task cycle is shown in figure (2) and task component in figure (4).

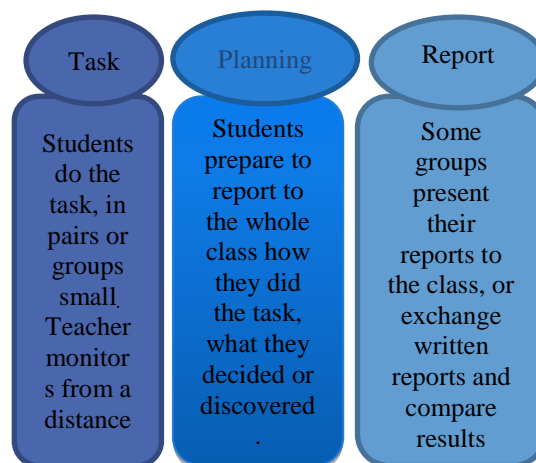


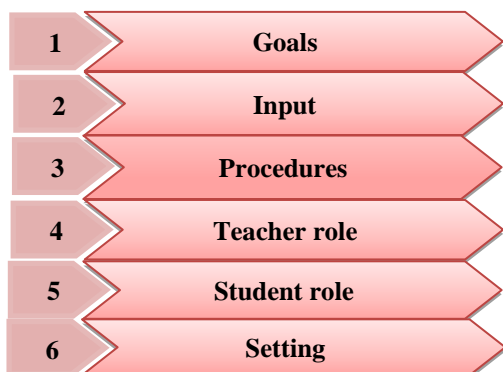
Figure 2. Task Cycle

### 2.2. Advantages of Task-based Teaching

In task-based language teaching (TBLT) process, a task helps the immediate needs of the students and supports a framework for creating classes. It gives the students a chance for natural learning in the classroom and motivates naturally. TBL brings teaching to real world and gives the students a specific goal. So TBLT is useful for moving the focus of the learning process from the teacher-centered approach to the student-center. Task-based language teaching or learning encourages the students to participate actively in collaborative work and inspires ones to adopt it in the classroom [2]. TBLT framework can be seen in figure (3).



Figure 3. TBLT Framework



**Figure 4. Task Components**

### 3. DESIGNING ACTIVE LEARNING

ELT teachers from UCSY use the easy ways to enhance students' active learning through discussion using supportive materials such as computer, TV, projector, Internet and flashcards. In the class, the teacher talks about a particular topic for fifteen minutes and then pauses for the learners to unify their notes, to find gaps and to work with their classmates. In active listening lecture the students just listen to a lecture without writing any notes and then, after about twenty minutes, the learners work with classmates to recall, to explain, and to provide additional details. As the other methods the teachers use short film for creative thinking, writing and speaking. The teachers show short video files in the classroom and then pauses for the students to unify their notes, grammar usage and mechanics language skills practice, vocabulary usage English and to work with classmates to recall the lecture (Figure 6).



**Figure 5. Thinking and Sharing activity**

And the teachers also use language labs for students' listening practice. In an active listening lecture, students give attention to audio script and then they work with a small group to recall and clarify the script (Figure 7). In task-based learning process, students can learn how to ask questions, how to negotiate meaning and how to interact and to work within groups. They are able to monitor different approaches to problem solving and also to learn how

others think and make decisions (figure 5). In active learning, teachers are not only one way providers of information and also expeditors. Active learning is a student approach in which the students take responsibility for learning. Through straight learning, active learning can be promoted by supportive materials. On video lecture, audio script lecture and drawing cards the teachers use think-pair-share technique and role playing to motivate students and to raise their thinking skills and their sharing knowledge.

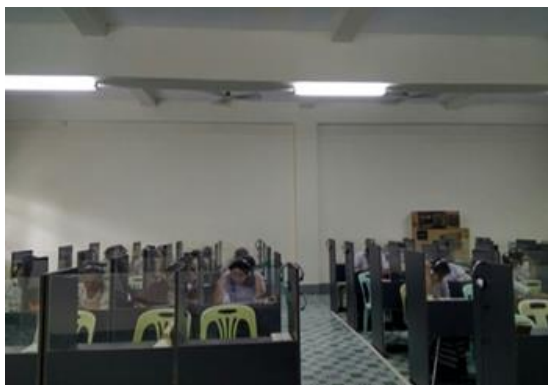


**Figure 6. Using Short Film for Creative Imagination**

#### 3.1 Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share activities put forth a question to the students to consider themselves and converse with a classmate before solving on the answer. This is a good way to motivate learners and raise higher-level thinking. The teachers use this technique for pairs and small groups (three or four learners) alike. The teachers can use the learners' feedback as a base for discussion, to motivate a lecture and they need to obtain feedback what learners know or are thinking. By this way, they can be easy more than one think-share activity during the class period.

Teachers find that the preparation is generally easy and they need to take a small amount of time. According to this way, interaction motivates learners and they can be asked different questions. The teachers have selected questions that are adequately interesting to catch learner attention and to increase their awareness. It can attract the whole class and allow quiet learners to answer questions without having to be noticeable from their classmates. Teachers can access learners' understanding according to several groups during the activity. This technique is very effective and popular to use in the large classes.



**Figure 7. Listening Practice in Language Lab**

### 3.2. Role Playing

Role playing in the class allows learners to apply content immediately as they are regarded the role of a decision maker and they must make a decision for the outcome. This technique is effective way for engaging learners and allowing them to interact with their classmates as they try to perfect the task in their specific role. The students can do in cooperative groups and can sustain their role through the lecture. According to role playing students can immediately implement content in a relevant, real world situations. Students can outdo and think beyond the limits of the classroom setting. The teacher and learners receive immediate feedback with regard to their understanding of the lecture. So learners can activate in higher order thinking and learn in a deeper way. Teachers can create useful scripts when setting the parameters of the role play and they promote the learners' language skills by creating classroom interaction.

## 4. WAYS OF CLASS INTERACTION

The classroom interaction contributes to language development simply by creating activities providing target language practice opportunities. The process of developing activities is a very effective way of learning skills and content, and provides rich exposure to the language [4]. ELT teachers create controlled practice activities and free practice activities to develop students' interaction in the class. Controlled practice activities are easy for the students to create and they can give them to other students as exercises. This is a useful task for the students. Free practice activities give students a chance to use their own ideas about what is a useful way to learn a language.

Through carefully designed classroom interaction activities involving various forms of more or less realistic practice, students can become skilled at actually doing the things they have been taught. The ability to communicate in a second language efficiently contributes to the success of the students in school and later in every stage of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers need to pay great attention to teaching oral communication skill. Therefore, language teachers

should provide students with opportunities for meaningful communicative behavior about relevant topics by using learner-learner interaction as the key to teaching language for communication. In teaching communication skill the teachers use technological tools to improve students' language skills and they are easily motivated in their learning process. Teachers require to make their instruction carefully to the needs of learners and to teach them how to listen to others, how to talk with others, and how to negotiate in shared opinions. Negotiation can be expected to be identified as a relevant target language skill for the students in the classroom. Using supportive materials is better in teaching and learning process to create a lively situation in the classroom, to motivate the students with full involvement in giving practices, to remove the students' fear of public speaking. By this ways, the students can be engaged in meaningful and authentic language use for learning to take place. So the teaching and learning process will not take place without communication. So the key factor in foreign language development is the opportunity given to learners to speak in the language promoting interaction. The more students understand about the language learning process, the more effective they will be as learners. This is the ultimate in student-centered learning.

### 4.1. Motivation through Technology

ELT teachers from UCSY use technological aids integrating in their traditional classrooms for students' motivation. Motivation is a sudden force or need to create friendly classroom for free thinking, free talking, and free questions. In accordance with collected data, ELT teachers have already known stimulation that brings the students to accomplish their activities. It directs toward particular goals and increases persistence in activities. The teachers all know that the students like to look at a screen better than at a book. So ELT teachers use audiovisuals and make use of new technology to capture learners' attention and to motivate them easily. The key to a successful learning environment is motivation. As utilizing one of digital tools, video can be a stimulating English language learning tool especially in situation where a native speaker model is unavailable. In order to teach the communicative efficiency, teachers can motivate using a balanced activity approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives the students producing language themselves. In structured output, students may have options for responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific structure that the teacher has just introduced. In communicative output, the students may use the language that the instructor has just presented, but they also may draw on

any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know. Students are motivated to be able to think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Applying technological aids such as Internet, videos, DVD, and projector, the teachers can motivate the students and can help them learn to speak effectively. Through technological aids or supportive materials teachers can create activities to be active learning classroom. Bringing technology into the classrooms is a good way to motivate students [5].

### Sample Activity 1

In the classroom, the pictures are shown on the screen using computer and projector. And then the teacher let the students made groups to discuss or to share ideas for description of the pictures. Then the teacher gives the instructions. It is targeted to communication, free thinking and free talking.

Teacher: Look at the pictures and discuss with your group members of each group. I will give ten minutes for your discussion. And choose representatives of each group to describe and share your ideas in front of the class.



**Figure 8. Brain on Nature**

Students: How many people in each group, teacher?

Teacher: Four for each group.

Students: Yeah! (They make groups and discuss.)  
(after ten minutes)

Teacher: Finished your discussion?

Students: Yes, we are ready.

Teacher: Ok! Please share all your ideas in front of the class. How about group A?

(One representative of group A stands in front of the class)

Group A: It's a fantastical image. We see tree, human brain and beautiful nature. It makes us fresh and release stress. This image reminds us to save our nature.

Teacher: Oh great! Thank you for your discussion. Please the next one, ready?

Group B: I'll talk about our brain on nature. I think this picture gives the healing power of nature. It shows the benefits of nature on our mental health and physical welfare. We should spend our time in nature and we need to keep beautiful nature.

Teacher: Very good! Thank you! We all have responsibility to keep the beauty of nature and to save our world.

By this way each group discusses about the picture on the screen respectively.

### Sample Activity 2

In this activity, teachers improve the students' language skills especially listening skill, pronunciations, vocabulary by playing songs using TV and DVD. Teacher delivers handouts to students to do exercise after listening songs.

Teacher : I'll play this song for two times. Listen to the song carefully and complete the lyrics.  
Ok?

Students : Yes, teacher.

Teacher : Ok. Let's start! (Teacher plays a song.)

Lyrics

A word's just a word 'til you mean what you -----  
(a)

And love isn't love 'til you give it -----(b)

We've all got a -----(c) ,yeah, something to give/to make a chance

CHORUS

Send it on, on and on

Just one that can -----(d) another

Be a part, -----(e) a heart

Just one -----(f) starts a fire

With one little action

The -----(g) will never stop

Make it strong, shine a -----(h) and send it on

Just ----- (i), and the world will smile along with you

## 4.2. Analysis of Task-Based Learning

In 2018-2019 academic year, teachers have collected data as students' report based on evaluation form (Table 1). According to the evaluation form, ELT teachers know clearly to select appropriate strategies for effective learning or teaching. In this study, nearly 35% of students (first year students from UCSY) prefer task-based learning through supportive materials. This result made ELT teachers recognize to use appropriate language teaching methods. They need to set a variety of engaging, meaningful activities and they also know that their students prefer looking at a screen than a book and their students become more active in class discussion through supportive materials. So ELT teachers from UCSY use visuals, flashcards, and make use of new technologies (TV, DVD, computer, projector, Internet, YouTube, flashcards, etc.) to capture students' intention and to motivate easily.

**Table 1. Data Analysis on Task-based Learning**

no.	Question items	Agree	Disagree
1	Using technology (computer, projector, Internet, TV, etc.) is good in language learning.	120 sts	0
2	Watching video in English class motivates me to learn English.	116 sts	4 sts
3	I am interested to participate in any class activities.	85 sts	35 sts
4	I feel very self-conscious to speak English in class or out of classroom.	75 sts	45 sts
5	Learning with supportive materials is better than looking at book.	118 sts	2 sts
6	Sharing ideas with others in class is good.	115 sts	5 sts
7	Playing with flashcards enriches vocabulary.	110 sts	10 sts
8	Looking at books in learning makes satisfy.	40 sts	80 sts
9	I like only listening to teacher without discussion.	10 sts	110 sts
10	Digital devices make more effective in learning.	118 sts	2 sts

\*sts – students

**Table 2. Results in Analysis of TBL**

Question no.	Agree	Disagree
1	100%	0%
2	97%	3%
3	71%	29%
4	63%	37%
5	98%	2%
6	96%	4%

7	92%	8%
8	33%	67%
9	8%	92%
10	98%	2%

## 5. FINDINGS

In this study, the results showed students' positive attitude of innovative way in learning through technologies. Most students prefer to use digital aids or supportive materials in their learning process and they can adopt student-centered processes. They can interact through authentic experience while engaging the target language and can solve problem and make decision through discussion in the class. Moreover, the results indicate that student-centered teaching and teacher-centered teaching methods should be carried out in English language teaching and learning process.

### 5.1. Difficulties and Discussion

In task-based language teaching (TBLT), the ELT teachers sometimes encounter a little difficulty because of different students' proficiency levels and time limits. They select appropriate teaching strategies to solve difficulties between less effective with task-based language teaching and more effective with task-based language teaching. Teachers encourage students to think critically in innovative ways using technologies or supportive materials to improve their proficiency skills.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Task-based language teaching with supportive materials offers the students the opportunity for creating natural learning and encourages to be student-centered learning. It helps students use language in a communicative learning process and also helps them develop individual differenced and support learning autonomy. So teachers need various teaching strategies to motivate the students and to encourage effective learning. The teachers also require timely assessment of students learning style to choose appropriate teaching strategies. This study provides creation processes rather than just reading about language or hearing from the teachers. Task based teaching encourages the students to participate actively in collaborative work and inspires one to adopt it in the classroom which bring authentic and sustainable results. This article also emphasizes on learning process, how to learn, self-enquiry, social and communication skills. As the results of the consequence, traditional classroom (looking at book and only listening to teacher in class) need to be integrated with technology for effective teaching and learning process.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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