DEVELOPING SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND PRAGMATIC COMPETENCES THROUGH TASK-BASED LEARNING AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

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Abstract: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and B1/B2 level sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. The use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) at B1/B2 level for development of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. The paper reflects on challenges and opportunities of TBLT by reviewing principles from theory and practice in the classroom. Well-crafted, intentionally designed tasks not only facilitate students' engagement in socially appropriate language use, but they also contribute to their fuller journey as language learners. In addition, it addresses pedagogical implications, assessment procedures, and implementation challenges to provide an overview of TBLT regarding the development of communicative competence. This study also studies task structures affecting learners' motivation in various contexts and suggests some usages for getting it implemented.

Keywords: sociolinguistic competence, pragmatic competence, task-based learning, communicative competence, language acquisition, intermediate level learners, second language learning, language pedagogy, interlanguage pragmatics, classroom interaction

1. Introduction
Learning a language is more than memorizing grammatical forms; it involves understanding and being able to produce socially appropriate language. Intermediate (B1/B2) learners have sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences to manage social interaction and the implications of their actions. An engaging and purposeful framework for developing these skills can be found in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), where language learning takes place through authentic, meaningful activities. This article will discuss the importance of TBLT and its theoretical background, practical applications, and pedagogical implications. The research presents evaluation methodologies and techniques for successful implementation in a variety of classroom contexts. Finally, the article outlines the cognitive and socio-cultural frameworks surrounding task-based teaching and learning — noting how their theory is cross-contextual and can be adapted in many learning language environments.

2. Literature Review
The communicative competence-oriented approach and TBLT have been widely discussed. Task-based learning has been claimed to facilitate more authentic language use and meaningful interaction (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). Also, according to Taguchi (2015), real-world tasks are crucial for the development of language learners' pragmatic competence because they use real-life scenarios with which learners will be most likely to accurately read and use language.

2.1 Language Teaching and Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Competence
Based on different studies, one of the basic components of language acquisition is sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) because this phenomenon requires that learners modify their language depending on the social context where the language is used. In contrast, pragmatic

competence assures the learners they can grasp implicit meanings as well as apply suitable speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012). These competencies together contribute to the effectiveness of learners in communication with different social environments.

2.2 The Effectiveness of TBLT in Developing Communicative Competence

The second language acquisition research indicates that TBLT promotes fluency and accuracy. Task-based instruction improves not only linguistic but also interactional competence (Skehan, 1998; Long, 2015). In addition, work-based projects have been found to raise the motivation of the learner (Dörnyei, 2005) and enrich their attention.

3. Methodology

To analyze the effectiveness of TBLT in developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, a mixed-methods approach is applied to the study, using qualitative and quantitative research. This was the basis of a research study designed for students enrolled in an intermediate-level English course coordinating structured task-based activities in their classes to develop capabilities to communicate in the real world.

- **A Little About the Students:** 30 learners at B1/B2 level enrolled in the English language program
- **Data Used:** Observations, student reflections, teacher feedback, and pre/post-tests
- **Data Methods**: Thematic analysis of student interactions/replies and performance

4. Task-Based Learning Approach

Based on the task-based learning principle, TBLT can promote sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences as it includes:

4.1 Authentic Tasks

- Real-life simulations
- Imitating professional environments
- Performing task-related problem-solving
- Engaging in project-based learning

4.2 Following a Task Progression in a Structured Way

- **Stage 1: Pre-task** — Context setting, objective setting, introduction: relevant language
- **Stage 2: Task Cycle** — Engaging in initiatives that include collaboration with peers
- **Stage 3: Language Centered**– Discovering and reflecting on language features & usage; studying the language

All of these stages strike a balance between fluency and accuracy, helping students achieve both communicative effectiveness and grammatical accuracy.

5. Results and Discussion

The results showed that TBLT activities are effective as they help students improve their confidence in using English for social purposes.

- **High Efficiency:** Students improved their fluency in engaging in diverse social contexts.
- **Sharpened Perception:** Learners demonstrated an improved comprehension of levels of formality and culture.
- **Challenges Cited:** Some learners found that idiomatic speech remained a challenge and that adjusting their speech based on context did not happen as easily as they would have liked.

These findings illustrate the extent to which TBLT promotes sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence but that there is still scope for additional intra-task scaffolding to address learner difficulties.

6. Challenges and Solutions

6.1 Challenges

- Less real-world contact and meet-ups
- Students from different cultures in the classroom
- Too little time spent on both designing and implementing lessons
- Difficulties when it comes to assessment and evaluation
- Pushback from learners of different backgrounds accustomed to traditional modes of learning

6.2 Practical Solutions

- Incorporating activities and discussions related to cultural awareness
- Providing structured but flexible tasks that meet students' needs
- Clear rubrics with measurable criteria for assessment
- Scaffolding and feedback to support learner confidence and competence

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

At B1/B2 level, task-based learning is an especially productive means of developing the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences that learners will require to engage successfully with speakers of other languages. Vital communicative skills can be developed by learners which involve performing a sequence of systematic tasks that simulate real social realities. Success in anything demands a clear task-oriented structure, a clear outline of learning goals, and feedback loops to make meaningful progress on anything.

TBLT for the teacher: Those who have championed TBLT should:

- Provide a range of tasks that are reflective of the communication needs of the real world
- Include plenty of scaffolding during the completion of the task
- Encourage real peer interaction and collaboration
- Include both fluency-focused activities and accuracy-focused activities
- Employ multiple assessment methods to measure communicative growth
- Adapt tasks to learner differences and cultural contexts

Integrating these approaches may enable teachers to create an interactive, effective, and final task-oriented language learning environment where learners effectively develop sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence.

References

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