

ANALYSIS OF THE TYPES OF TASK-BASED CURRICULA FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM FACULTIES

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the Task-Based Language Teaching Approach, and it considers different perspectives and views of scholars on the curriculum. They also give a classification of curricula and each type is discussed in detail. The main differences between traditional and modern approaches to teaching a foreign language (Language for Specific Purposes, LSP) are also presented.

Keywords: linguistic wave, communicative wave, third wave, interventionist, traditional approach, modern approach.

Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for learning, but a source through which every aspect of human life makes sense. For learning and teaching in the classroom, language itself should be the main topic of study programme. It is evident that the curriculum for teaching English (ELT) is influenced by researches conducted in Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and is shaped by global tendency of immigration as well as dominance of English as the language of business, science, and technology.

Katheleen Graves, in her article 'Language Curriculum Design: Possibilities and Realities', divides the curriculum into three types, which are sequential and partially overlapping:

1. The Linguistic Wave
2. The Communicative Wave
3. The Third Wave

The Linguistic Wave. The meaning of this type, the traditional form of the study program, is that a language learner sees the knowledge they need to learn, divided into parts, as an external collection. In this type, all learners are expected to acquire the same knowledge. This type of study program often ignores learners' individuality and specific needs. Uzbek scholar Jalalov writes that in foreign language teaching, one of the didactic principles is to teach students individually, taking into account each student's abilities. In linguistics, the principles of one-to-one teaching place certain requirements on a teacher. Teachers should understand each student's character, abilities, interests, social relationships, and any negative interactions they may have. Jalalov also stated that when preparing for a class, a teacher should take into account students' strengths and weaknesses, which may lead to differences in their knowledge. This



approach is based on viewing language as a system regulated by grammatical, morphological, and phonological rules. The content of the study program consists of ready-made grammatical examples and language features selected beforehand used to create sentences and dialogues. Usually, such examples are combined with the topic or the vocabulary related to it. In this type of study program, materials are organized around target grammar and vocabulary, or grammar and pronunciation exercises embedded in topic-related dialogues. For example, the Present Simple tense can indicate how often an action occurs, and when teaching the topic of daily or weekly routines, we can use the question form ‘How often?’

The Communicative Wave. In the 1970s and 1980s, the development of sociolinguistics changed perceptions of language, and as a result, it led to the advancement of the communicative approach in language teaching. Instead of focusing on individual components to be combined and mastered, language is always seen as being used in different situations for different purposes, where speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills are applied correctly for social communication. The linguistic study program was neither comprehensive nor sufficient, as it did not prepare language learners to use the language effectively. Taking this into account, the use of language, which is a functional approach to language, was set as the goal of the communicative study program. Canale’s model of communicative competence, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competencies, is a foundation and framework for this kind of study programs. Paying attention to the needs of language learners and the context in which the language is expected to be used began to emerge.

The aim of the communicative study program is to achieve advanced proficiency in language activities such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. A component of the study program is the language learning strategy, which refers to learners’ management of their own learning processes to accelerate and carry out effective language acquisition. The aim of the communicative study program was the mastery of the four language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening at a sufficient level for effective communication.

Research in the field of second language acquisition was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s to study engaging in communication and constructing meaning. As Long and Crookes state, achieving the final result requires activities that involve interaction between two or more learners; such “tasks” became elements of the study program. In communicative language teaching, a task refers to an activity that learners are expected to perform outside the classroom, such as ordering food from a menu or filling out a form for a job application. Thus, the content of such a study program focuses not on the mastering of specific linguistic units alone, but on their use within the communicative process. As Van den Branden writes, the linguistic aspect of a task is such that learners do not rely on predetermined or structured grammatical forms, but instead draw on the linguistic resources available to them.

It is known that the emergence of the communicative study program introduced functions, strategies, and the four individual language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing along with tasks as essential elements of the study program. The aim of these elements is the development of communicative competence.

The Third Wave. The third type of study program content considers language as a source for meaning-making according to its use. The study program is organized around genres, texts,



content, or projects, each of which engages students in using the language authentically and appropriately according to the context. For example, in relation to genre and text, learners may participate in discourse communities through apprenticeship, study content for meaning construction, or engage in projects.

The approach of the study programs depends on the genre and the text, which is linked to the context in use. Both approaches consider the text as the combination for analyzing language. According to Hyland, a text is a structured piece of language designed to achieve a social purpose in a specific context.

To give a clearer example, Mickan, in his study *Language Curriculum and Socialization*, discusses a program for migrant students in secondary school science classes who learn to participate in scientific practice through literacy and laboratory activities. The program consists of textbook instructions, interpreting diagrams, conducting different experiments, and studying and documenting results. Lexical and grammatical features of the language, for example, instructions like “let the solution cool”, are learned through participating in these practical activities. Mickan mentions that in both genre- and text-based approaches, the lexical and grammatical features of language used to create a text are applied alongside its communicative expression.

Here, we also present White’s classification of study programs. The researcher divides study programs into two types: Type A and Type B. Type B includes task-based syllabi, which differ from traditional Type A programs. As given in the table below, Type A programs (traditional syllabi) specify what should be learned, whereas Type B programs show how the content should be learned.

Type A/ What should be learned?	Type B/ How should it be learned?
Interventionist	Learner-centered
External to the learner	Internal to the learner
Directed toward others	Directed toward self and learner-centered
Determined by management	Decisions made jointly by learner and teacher
Content= for the expert	Content = for the learner
Content is given to the learner by the teacher	Content is brought or chosen by the learner
Goals are predetermined	Goals are described later
Emphasis on the topic	Emphasis on the process
Assessment based on success or skill	Assessment based on learners’ own success criteria
Learners are assigned tasks	Doing something with or for the language learners



The following table presents the main differences between traditional and modern approaches to teaching Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)

Traditional Approach	Modern Approach
A single, universally recognized curriculum for all fields and majors in higher education institutions	Curriculum developed by each higher education institution based on general recommendations from the Ministry, considering fields, majors, and student levels
Lack of clear descriptions of expected language proficiency levels	Clear reference to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) levels
Expected learning outcomes not linked to course topics or assessment system	Expected learning outcomes closely linked to course topics and assessment system
Emphasis on grammar and phonetic rules	Curriculum content designed according to students' future professional needs and employers' requirements
Theoretical approach (e.g., linguistics: syntax, phonetics, morphology, semantics, stylistics, etc.)	Curriculum content designed according to students' future professional needs and employers' requirements
Historical approach: teaching language history	Modern approach: English as an international language
Cultural approach: literature and culture of the UK and USA	Intercultural understanding: developing intercultural communication skills
Frequent use of the native language in class; emphasis on translation	Classes conducted entirely in the target language (English); emphasis on communication
Focus on memorization	Focus on practical language use
Assessment emphasizes knowledge	Assessment emphasizes ability to apply language skills; transparent system based on CEFR levels and criteria
Focus on error-free learning with constant correction by the teacher	Focus on teaching fluent language use and addressing only systematic errors
Learning under strict teacher supervision	Encouragement of independent learning
One single textbook for all	Learning materials prepared based on students' needs, including authentic materials from real sources
Content-based on topics	Course content organized into meaningful, integrated modules

Another important aspect that should be considered when making study programs is the advancement of written discourse competence. We believe that improving written discourse competence should be accepted as a major aim and, like other types of language skills, it should receive equal attention and sufficient time management.



In his article “The Four Strands,” Paul Nation discusses four parts of language teaching and states that they ensure a balanced range of learning opportunities. Language learning opportunities can be usefully divided into four sections:

- Meaning-focused input
- Meaning-focused output
- Language-focused learning
- Fluency development

In a language teaching course, every activity, exercise, or task matches to one of these strands. In a well-balanced curriculum, approximately equal time should be devoted to each of the four strands. According to Paul Nation, the foundation of a balanced approach to learning opportunities is the principle of task time. If something is not practiced during learning, how can learners develop the ability to perform it? For example, how can someone learn to read without reading, or learn to write without writing? Therefore, it can be understood that the more time spent to improving language skills, the more learners’ competencies advance. When designing curriculum content, it is important to consider that the four language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening- each have their own specific characteristics, and each requires suitable time and attention.

Required conditions are the following:

- learners mainly write about topics that are familiar to them;
- learners’ main goal is to communicate their message to others;
- only a small portion of the language they need to use is unfamiliar to them;
- learners may use communicative strategies, dictionaries, and prior knowledge to fill gaps in their knowledge when conveying information; multiple opportunities for writing practice should be provided.

Based on the results of previous research on English Language Teaching (ELT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), we consider that, for effective education programs, a communicative-oriented working syllabus should be developed. After the objective and content of the course are clearly defined, teachers should prepare teaching materials, lesson plans, and handouts.

The selected and created materials should be based on the principles of teaching English for specific purposes as mentioned in the syllabus. We believe that relying on a single textbook for teaching the course is not appropriate. Foreign language teachers should make use of authentic texts and audio/video materials, taking into account the latest updates in the subject area from the internet and other sources. This includes using national and international sources as well as online resources to prepare materials that are relevant and effective.

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