



CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF THEORETICAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Volume: 03 Issue: 05 | May 2022 ISSN: 2660-5317

Content-Based and Task-Based Instruction and Application of them into Language Teaching

Suyunova Mohinur Ilhom qizi

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

First-year student in Foreign Language and Literature (English) Department in Masters'
suyunovamokhinur@gmail.com

Received 24th Mar 2022, Accepted 13th Apr 2022, Online 17th May 2022

Abstract: *This paper examines main assumptions of two methodologies known as Content-based and Task-based instruction together with an overview of positive practices of them in English language teaching methodology. It further investigates challenges in applying these trends when used to achieve communicative competence. The outline of effective activities within these two approaches can be applicable for language instructors in organizing language classrooms.*

Keywords: *CBI (content-based instruction), TBI (task-based instruction), classroom practice, task, communicative competence.*

Introduction

Ever-growing need for professionals with knowledge of foreign languages has necessitated to discover new and efficacious language teaching methodologies in which communication is the priority. Content-based instruction has been widely used within an approach known as communicative language teaching that emerged in the 1970s. Content-based instruction has been effectively used in different language contexts and its applicability has increased dramatically in the last few years. While CBI was first implemented in courses such as English for Specific Purposes and early language vocational courses, its use has increased considerably in university-level language classrooms such as English for Academic Purposes.

Content refers to material choice in organizing language classrooms, linking all aspects of teaching, to the chosen content. Undeniably, in other approaches, content is still used to practice the language, however, in CBI, content is the driving force of communication and selection of it is carried out first before choosing an item of language or target students. According to Krahne (1987, 65), CBI refers to “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teaching the language itself separately from the content being taught.”

Cummins (1981) claims that it would be impossible for language learners to acquire the language through exclusively ESL classes or daily conversations, the approach should expose students into “complex interdisciplinary content” so that learners can acquire academic language skills. Therefore, Content-based instruction should include common features of other methodologies as well as playing an integral role in

language teaching. According to Crandall, 1995, content-based instruction not only guides teaching the target language which is often the main goal of other methodologies, but also it provides “a less abrupt transition before programs”.

The third foundation of CBI suggests that language knowledge goes through cognitive process which happens in three stages: in cognitive stage language skills are developed by required tasks, in associative stage, learners need to accomplish further tasks under teacher’s guidance though language skills are more developed, in the autonomous stage learners are able to accomplish tasks independently (Anderson, 1983, as cited in Kasper, 2000).

In addition to these foundations, Richards and Rodger (2000) suggest other additional assumptions of principles in CBI:

Language learning is more successful when information received is interesting and triggers extrinsic motivation of students which means language input is related to their desired goals. Students learn best when the content is compatible with learners’ needs. According to the study on “essential modes of academic writing, academic reading, study skills development and the treatment of persistent structural errors” by Snow and Brinton (1998), synthesizing the information by authentic and meaningful texts would enable students to learn the target language. Furthermore, discussions and writing activities make learners integrate the four skills in the language.

In order to create CBI-oriented language classrooms, instructors should realize the importance of content in delivering information. In the book “Communicative language today” Rodgers suggested that “Content refers to the information or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it. Of course, any language lesson involves content, whether it be a grammar lesson, a reading lesson, or any other kind of lesson”. According to J. Richards and T. Rodgers (2014), CBI best facilitates language acquisition as its main assumptions are based on the idea that language is successfully learned when it is used as a means of acquiring information, it best reflects learners’ needs for language learning and its opportunity to develop all language skills at the same time.

Since CBI provides an opportunity to practice the language with authentic materials, it helps a learner to form an understanding about the culture of the target language and improves lexical competence of learners making them aware of proper usage of words and expressions in different social contexts. For instance, language learners whose native language is Uzbek tend to make similar mistakes related to the right lexical use of some words. When they mean to say “Allocate time”, they often use “separate time” since “separate” means “ajratmoq” which is homonymous translation of “allocate” in the Uzbek language. Enriching teaching materials with authentic ones easily prevents learners to make the same mistakes helping them to reach native-like proficiency both in written and oral language.

However, there are some potential challenges in applying CBI into teaching that hinder successful English classrooms. For instance, the chosen content may not be culturally relevant to learners or societal norms in their community leading to failure in engaging them into a collaborative teaching process or the content may contradict with the needs of learners or it may be out of their field of interest. Therefore, conducting a survey or needs assessment by an instructor before choosing a content easily removes these obstacles in application of CBI.

However, there are some issues raised by content-based instruction. The first thing is the scope of the content to provide an adequate training for all language skills. For instance, in educational institutions where English is the primary language of instruction, students often focus on knowledge on content rather than language skills and its appropriate use. Another problem that may arise is the lack of subject-matter knowledge of a teacher in some subjects such as medicine, biology or economics. Another challenge is

linked to assessment which pose a difficulty in grading students' performance. Whether content knowledge should be assessed or language use? Or should students excel at both?

Task-based instruction

Task-based instruction has been very influential in language teaching since the 1980s, when it encouraged to integrate communicative language teaching. Task-based instruction prioritizes meaning in language learning, but it does not mean that it neglects form. With ever-growing demand for developing communication skills, Task-based language teaching has come into prevalent use in language teaching. A large body of investigation on practices of Task-based instruction, the following conclusions may be drawn; task-based language teaching is a learner-centered methodology (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), it includes some pillars such as goal, procedure and desired outcome (Murphy, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1998), it prioritizes content-oriented meaningful tasks rather than activities that advocate linguistic forms (Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Carless, 2002; Littlewood, 2004).

Task-based learning emphasizes the role of the tasks in language learning and the right kind of tasks is contributing factor to language development. Naturally, instructors and teachers make use of different tasks in their classes, but the best way to create interactional language classroom is to design tasks specially for students. This methodology was first suggested by N.Prabhu in Bangalore. According to Prabhu, students excel at language learning more easily if they focus on the task that they are completing rather than language practice.

Nunan (2006) also stated that a right task requires to activate students' grammar knowledge and urge them to use the knowledge to understand, to express, to exchange information and tasks should be meaningful from beginning to end aiming at engaging students outside the language classroom. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), tasks may be in different complexity levels ranging from writing a newspaper article to simply making a hotel reservation.

Willis (1996) suggests 6 different types of tasks for TBI instruction. They are as follows:

1. Listing tasks: For example, students make a list of necessary items for a holiday preparation.
2. Sorting and ordering: Students may complete the task in sub-groups choosing the most important items for an ideal holiday and less important thing that may be excluded.
3. Comparing: Students make comparison between the facilities range by two different hotels.
4. Problem-solving: Students read about a problem of a freshman student abroad and present a solution to the problem.
5. Sharing personal experience: Students debate moral values in their community.
6. Creative tasks: Students offer plans for scheduling a university meeting.

However, unexpected results may happen in TBI. Skehan (1996) claimed that TBI instruction may not give expected results if implemented inappropriately. "Especially, it is likely to create pressure for instant communication rather than interlanguage change and growth".

TBI may possibly develop students' creativity, but it may be less effective when it is implemented where exposure to target language is rather limited. Furthermore, TBI instruction may not be as fruitful as expected mainly because learners, whose native language is Uzbek, are not able to use the language right due to lack of real language environment.

Conclusion

Language teaching methodology is continually exploring new methods to address basic issues in language teaching and learning and the effectiveness of different instructional strategies and methods in language classrooms.

Even though there are some challenges in applying these two approaches to rapidly develop communicative competence, they have given successful results in many language classrooms.

References:

1. Adamson, J. (n.d.). From EFL to contentbased instruction: What English teachers take with them into the sociolinguistics lecture. Asian EFL Journal. Retrieved September 20, 2006, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/pta_november_8_ja.pdf
2. Beglar, D. & Hunt, A.. 2002. Implementing task-based language teaching. In: Richards, J. C. & Renandya, W. A.. (Eds.). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Carless, D.. 2002. Implementing task-based learning with young learners. *ELT Journal*, 56(4), 389-396.
4. Crandall, J. (1999). *Content-based instruction (CBI)*. Concise encyclopedia of educational linguistics. Oxford, UK: Cambridge University Press.
5. Ellis, R.. 2003. *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. Kasper, L. (2000). *Content-based college ESL instruction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
7. Krahne, K. (1987). *Approaches to Syllabus design for Foreign Language Teaching*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
8. Lightbown, M and Spada, N (1999). *How Languages are learned*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
9. Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
10. Littlewood, W.. 2004. The task-based approach: Some questions and suggestions. *ELT Journal*, 58(4), 319-326
11. Murphy, J.. 2003. Task-based learning: The interaction between tasks and learners. *ELT Journal*, 57(4), 352-360.
12. Nunan, D (2006). Task-based language teaching in Asia context: Defining “task”. *Asian EFL Journal*.
13. Prabhu, N (1987). *Second Language Pedagogy*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
14. Richards, J and Rodgers, T (2004). *Approaches and Methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
15. Skehan, P (1996). A Framework for the Implementation of Task-Based Instruction. *Applied Linguistics* 17 (1).
16. Snow, M., & Brinton, D. (1988). Contentbased language instruction: Investigating the effectiveness of the adjunct model. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22(4), 553-574.