

Exploring english language teachers' perspectives on task-based approach

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Abstract: This study's primary goal was to investigate how English teachers felt about the task-based approach in the classroom. In order to investigate EFL teachers' perspectives on TBA concepts and implementation with reference to classroom practice, data was gathered using an interview and questionnaire instrument. A total of 45 English teachers from three public universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, voluntarily responded to the questionnaire. The statistical program SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data. The qualitative data was recorded and interpreted according to the main of research. The study's findings demonstrated that most English teachers are adequately knowledgeable about the concepts of the task-based approach. Similarly, there are distinct opinions among English teachers regarding the implementation of task-based approach. Basing on the findings, the article has some recommendations for specific actions to ensure applying task-based approach in English classrooms effectively.

Keywords: Task-based approach, perspectives, task, English teachers

1. Introduction

In the field of foreign language acquisition, the use of various approaches, methodologies, techniques, strategies, and instructional materials, among other significant elements, has continuously changed over time (Taourite & Cecilia, 2020). Task-based approach (TBA), which is distinguished by being a vital component in the classroom, is one of the strategies employed by English teachers. It emphasizes on completing the tasks set by the teacher in order for the students to identify the particular objectives of the target language, which are inserted purposefully in a pragmatic manner (Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003). TBA is predicated on tasks that offer thorough knowledge and promote communicative engagement among students utilizing the target language (East, 2012; Prianty et al., 2021).

TBA offers numerous advantages that improve teachers' attitudes since it facilitates better student involvement during target language acquisition, which enhances the teaching process. These advantages center on meaningful learning, which helps teachers accomplish their objectives by fostering the right environment (Ocel & Bergil, 2022). Nevertheless, when the TBA is put into practice, teachers sometimes reject it because they don't have the necessary teaching resources, an adequate testing system, or the time to

prepare a lesson using this approach (Ocel & Bergil, 2022; Mahdavarad, 2017; Jeon & Hahn, 2006).

Thus, the current study aims to ascertain teachers' comprehension of TBA, analyze teachers' perspectives regarding the concepts of TBA, and English classroom.

2. Literature review

2.1. Task-based approach

A task-based approach is a methodology that centers on language acquisition through tasks. Teachers assign students a set of exercises to complete with the goal of fostering communication in the target language. The entire school language curriculum is being completely redesigned, with a focus on task-based learning (East, 2012). Study plans should therefore be created with the interests, backgrounds, and cognitive abilities of the students in mind. This will promote real-world practice, engagement, teamwork, and communication during the learning process. Task-based learning fosters proactive thinking, positive attitudes, and complete language proficiency.

Regarding the framework of TBA, Willis (1996) has developed into a practical framework for communicative classroom in which learners perform tasks through the cycles of pre-task preparation, task performance and language focus. Teachers can follow each stage of solving tasks so that they can help students become more professional in using the target

language in classroom.

2.2. The characteristics of tasks

According to Skehan (1998), the following characteristics of learning tasks are essential: (1) tasks should prioritize providing learners with meaning; (2) tasks should be tied to real-world activities; (3) task completion calls for specified procedures; and (4) tasks should be assessed in order to support learning outcomes. According to Lee (2000), learning tasks are classroom activities with specific learning objectives. According to Van den Branden (2006), a task is an activity that a person completes using only one target language in order to achieve the desired results. To put it briefly, there are a few things that learning task definitions have in common. An activity with a clear objective that students complete in classes with designated target languages is called a learning task. Additionally, learning tasks connect to the real world of the learners.

2.3. Teachers' perspectives on task-based approach

The teachers believe that the proper application of TBA appears to be associated with the mastery and control of the four language skills, which are learned via social interaction. The teacher's job is to facilitate this learning process (Cheng, 2011). To generate authentic language learning settings and circumstances, English teachers employ language teaching methodologies that prioritize process and outcome. As a result, teachers believe that the TBA is socially created through in-person encounters, with the result that "homework" actually functions as work schedules tailored to each student's interests, personality, and objectives.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design of the study

In order to gather teachers' perspectives on various aspects of task-based approach, a questionnaire was issued to teachers at some universities in Ho Chi Minh City as part of the survey research strategy utilized in this study. This study investigated the teachers' views on the concepts of task-based approach, and implementing task-based in English classroom.

3.2. Participants: English lecturers were randomly chosen from three distinct Vietnamese universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The demographic data for the teachers is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Workplace	No.	Percent
Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City	12	26.7%
Ho Chi Minh University of Technology and Education	16	35.6%
Nong Lam University – Ho Chi Minh City	17	37.7%
Total	45	100%

3.3. Instrument

Questionnaire instrument was used to collect the data. To enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by an expert in the field of English language studies before they were delivered to lecturers for collecting data.

The semi-structure interview was chosen because it helped to explore more of the teachers' insights into the use of task-based approach in teaching English.

3.4. Data collection procedure

The questionnaire covered two primary aspect and had roughly twelves statements. It took ten to twenty minutes for each participant.

The interview was also conducted in 10 minutes with randomly selected teachers. All interview questions were translated into Vietnamese so that the teachers can grasp the main ideas and have clear answers to each questions.

3.5. Data analysis procedures

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were calculated by using SPSS 22.0 to find out the value. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the data.

For research purposes solely, recorded qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interview questions were translated into English. The content analysis method was used to examine the interviewee's response.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Teachers' perspectives on concepts of task-based approach

Table 2. Teachers' perspectives on concepts of task-based approach

No	Items	Mean	SD
1	A task is designed to direct communicative goals.	3.45	0.58
2	A task primarily focuses on meaning	3.64	0.82
3	A task has defined outcomes	3.66	0.64
4	A task helps to encourage students' use of target language	3.55	0.74
5	TBA is based on learner-centered instructional approach	4.34	0.63
6	TBA has three basic stages: pre-task, task implementation and post-task	4.37	0.68

With respect to teachers' views on concepts of TBA, as can be observed from Table 2, the questionnaire included 6 items. It is clear that teachers agreed that a task is designed to direct communicative goal (item 1: M=3.45; SD=0.58). Most teachers also agreed that a task primarily focuses on meaning (item 2: M=3.64; SD=0.82). Furthermore, said that a task has defined outcomes (item 3: N=3.66; SD=0.64). The results revealed that a task helps to encourage students' use of target language (item: M=3.55;

SD=0.74). With regard to the task-based approach, teachers strongly agreed that TBA is based on learner-centered instructional approach (item 5: M=4.34; SD=0.63). Besides that, teachers also strongly agreed that TBA has three stages (item 6: M=4.37; SD=0.68)

With respect to the qualitative data, the findings interpreted some important ideas from teachers as follows:

A task must be adapted from students' real-life experiences. (T8)

Tasks help students become flexible in using the target language; however, teachers must prepare many different tasks for lessons. (T12)

To get students familiar with TBA, teachers need to support them in each stage of TBA lessons. (T30)

4.2. Teachers' perspectives on implementing task-based approach

Table 3. Teachers' perspectives on implementing task-based approach

No	Items	Mean	SD
7	I feel interested in implementing TBA for most classes.	3.56	0.87
8	TBA provides an interesting atmosphere to encourage students' use of target language.	3.86	0.62
9	TBA provides specific stages to solve learning tasks.	3.74	0.85
10	Defining kinds of tasks is important in implementing TBA.	4.01	0.66
11	Implementing TBA in classroom is suitable for a small amount of students.	3.69	0.58
12	Thanks to regularly implementing TBA, students' speaking skill is dramatically improved.	3.54	0.66

According to the results shown in Table 3, most of teachers agreed that they felt interested in implementing TBA for classes (item 7: M=3.56; SD=0.87). In addition, teachers showed their agreement with the TBA providing an interesting atmosphere to encourage students' use of target language (item 8: 3.86; SD=0.62). In the same way, teachers also agreed that TBA provides specific stages to solve learning tasks (item 9: M=3.74; SD=0.85). Furthermore, teachers strongly agreed that defining kinds of tasks played important roles in implementing TBA (item 10: M=4.01; SD=0.66). With regarding the number of students in classroom, teachers agreed that TBA was suitable for small classes (item 11: M=3.69; SD=0.58). Last but not least, teachers also admitted that regularly implementing TBA, students' speaking skill was dramatically improved (item 12: M=3.54; SD=0.66).

Aligning with quantitative data, some results from the interview were collected to get teachers' insights into the use of TBA.

TBA should be used for a small group of 20-25

students. (T4)

To implement TBA successfully, it requires students to be active in learning process. (T10)

Teachers need to pay attention to the time allotted for students' solving tasks. (T15)

5. Conclusion

This study's primary goal was to investigate the views of the teachers regarding the task-based approach. Thus, it is possible to draw the conclusion that English teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable about the concepts of the task-based approach, and they also think that this approach might be used in English classrooms in an effective way.

The majority of Vietnamese EFL teachers, according to the study's overall findings, had a strong perception of TBA concepts. Additionally, teachers exhibited favorable sentiments regarding the use of TBA in the classroom.

Most teachers believe that TBA will help students improve their communication skills effectively. In addition, implementing TBA in English teaching creates a more fun and positive learning environment. What is quite special, according to most teachers, is that creating opportunities for students to solve tasks in stages will help students form the habit of using the target language to solve problems in life effectively.

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