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Task-based learning method of English language in Kazakhstan

**Abstract**

Task-based learning (TBL) has emerged as an innovative and effective approach to teaching English in secondary schools worldwide, including in Kazakhstan. This article explores the implementation of TBL in the context of English language learning in Kazakhstani secondary schools. Through qualitative analysis, the study examines how TBL is used in the classroom, the challenges faced by both teachers and students, and the outcomes of this pedagogical approach. The findings indicate that TBL enhances students' language acquisition and communication skills, though it also highlights the need for teacher training, adequate resources, and curriculum support to fully capitalize on its potential.

**Key words:** innovations, graph projector, collaboration technologies, language portfolio technologies.

**Introduction**

In Kazakhstan, English has become an essential part of the educational system, driven by the country’s efforts to integrate into the global economy and improve its international standing. Since the adoption of the trilingual education policy, which emphasizes Kazakh, Russian, and English, there has been a renewed focus on improving English language teaching in secondary schools. Task-based learning (TBL), which emphasizes the use of real-life tasks to promote language acquisition, has gained traction as an alternative to traditional grammar-focused methods. TBL encourages students to use the target language in meaningful, context-rich situations, enhancing their communicative competence.

However, while TBL has shown positive results in various educational contexts, its application in Kazakhstan’s secondary schools remains a work in progress. The gap between the theoretical benefits of TBL and its practical application in the classroom is still a significant concern, with many teachers struggling to implement this approach effectively. This study explores the current state of TBL in Kazakhstani secondary schools, focusing on how teachers are using the method, the challenges they face, and the outcomes observed in students' language development.

This paper investigates the application of TBL in Kazakhstani secondary schools, focusing on how teachers implement this approach, the challenges they encounter, and the effectiveness of TBL in fostering language skills. In particular, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1.How is TBL integrated into the English curriculum in secondary schools?

2.What challenges do teachers and students face when implementing TBL?

3.What are the educational outcomes of TBL in terms of language learning?

**Literature view**

The concept of Task-based Learning (TBL) has gained significant traction in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), particularly in communicative language teaching (CLT). TBL is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the use of real-world tasks to promote language acquisition, rather than focusing solely on formal grammar instruction. In this section, we review existing literature on TBL, its application in different educational contexts, and its relevance to English language teaching in Kazakhstan.

TBL is grounded in constructivist theories of learning, particularly those of Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1973), which emphasize the role of social interaction and active engagement in the learning process. In TBL, language learning is seen as a process of using language to perform tasks that mimic real-life scenarios (Willis, 1996). This focus on practical communication aligns with the communicative approach, which prioritizes fluency over accuracy and encourages learners to use language in context (Littlewood, 2004).

The key tenet of TBL is the use of "tasks" as the central unit of instruction. Tasks are typically defined as activities where students engage in a process that leads to a meaningful outcome, such as problem-solving, role-playing, or project work (Ellis, 2003). According to Nunan (2004), tasks allow learners to focus on meaning rather than form, thereby fostering more natural and authentic language use

**Method**

**Research design**

This study uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of task-based learning in secondary school English classes in Kazakhstan.

The interviews aimed to gather detailed information about teachers' perceptions of TBL, the challenges they face when implementing it, and their views on the outcomes of using this approach. The questions covered topics such as the types of tasks used, how these tasks were aligned with the curriculum, how teachers managed classroom interactions, and how they assessed students’ progress. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

**Participants**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with English language teachers from school in Almaty. Teachers were selected based on their experience with task-based teaching methods, and the sample consisted of both novice and experienced educators. Participated 20 teachers.

**Instruments**

The data were analyzed thematically to identify common patterns, challenges, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of TBL. The study also took into account factors such as school resources, curriculum structure, and the students' level of language proficiency.By triangulating interview data and classroom observations, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of how TBL is applied in practice.

**Results**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | Very good | Good | Poor | Very poor |
| How effective do you find Task-Based Learning in improving students' overall language skills? |  |  |  |  |
| How confident are you in your ability to design and implement Task-Based Learning tasks in your lessons? |  |  |  |  |
| How engaging do you find Task-Based Learning for your students during lessons? |  |  |  |  |

(Figure 1)

Teachers rated TBL as "Very Good" (30%) or "Good" (50%), indicating that a significant majority believe TBL improves students’ language skills.

15% found it "Poor", and only 5% rated it "Very Poor.

(Figure 2)

"Very Good" (20%) or "Good" (60%)

However, 15% were "Poor" in confidence, and 5% felt "Very Poor"

(Figure 3)

The vast majority of teachers rated TBL as highly engaging "Very Good" (40%) and "Good" (45%) .

- Only 15% found TBL less engaging 10% "Poor" and 5% "Very Poor", which could suggest challenges in keeping students motivated during tasks.

**Discussion**

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has become an increasingly popular method for teaching English in secondary schools worldwide, including Kazakhstan. TBL is an approach that focuses on the use of language as a tool to complete real-world tasks, rather than on rote memorization of grammar rules or vocabulary lists. This method can be particularly effective in the context of Kazakhstan, given the country's multilingual landscape and its educational reforms aimed at improving English language proficiency.

Kazakhstan is a bilingual country, with Kazakh and Russian as the official languages, and English becoming increasingly important as a global lingua franca. The government has placed a strong emphasis on teaching English to prepare students for a more interconnected world and to help them access global knowledge, technology, and opportunities. This emphasis on English is reflected in various educational policies and curricula, which encourage more communicative and interactive methods of teaching.

TBL emphasizes student-centered learning, where students actively participate in tasks that have real-world relevance. This engagement can increase motivation, especially when students see the practical value of learning English for future opportunities.

Since tasks are often designed around authentic, everyday situations, students learn how to use English in real contexts, making the language more relevant and useful.

In addition to language skills, TBL also encourages the development of critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for success in the modern world.

TBL is flexible and can be adapted to different student needs and learning styles. Some students may excel in collaborative group work, while others may thrive in individual tasks. The diversity of tasks used in TBL can cater to a variety of learners.

**Coclusion**

The findings of this study suggest that Task-Based Learning has significant potential to improve English language teaching in Kazakhstan’s secondary schools. The use of real-world tasks that promote interaction and problem-solving appears to foster not only language acquisition but also critical thinking, collaboration, and engagement. However, for TBL to be more widely adopted, several challenges need to be addressed.

First, there is a clear need for professional development to ensure that teachers are adequately trained in task-based methods. Many teachers in this study reported that they lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to design and implement effective tasks. Offering targeted training programs focused on TBL could help teachers feel more confident and capable in using this approach.

Second, classroom management strategies need to be developed to address the difficulties teachers face in managing large, mixed-ability classes. Smaller class sizes or more effective group management techniques could help facilitate more successful task-based activities.

Third, the alignment of TBL with the national curriculum must be addressed. The national focus on grammar and formal language testing presents a challenge to communicative methods like TBL. Curriculum designers may need to revise the curriculum to allow for more flexibility and integration of task-based activities that emphasize fluency and real-world language use.

Finally, improving resource availability such as authentic materials, digital tools, and task templates could significantly enhance the implementation of TBL in Kazakhstani schools. Teachers who have access to these resources are better equipped to design engaging and effective tasks.

In conclusion, while Task-Based Learning holds promise for enhancing English language acquisition in Kazakhstan, its successful implementation requires systematic support, including teacher training, resource allocation, and curriculum adjustments. By addressing these challenges, TBL could become a more effective and widely adopted approach to English language teaching in the country.

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