Teachers’ Perceptions in Using Task-Based Instruction (TBI) for the Teaching of Grammar

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Abstract
Task-based instruction (TBI) is commonly used in language instruction to provide a meaningful learning process for learners. Its close affiliation with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method provides a production focus in a more structural framework in language learning. In this study, we examined eight English language teachers’ perceptions of using task-based instruction in their grammar classroom. This study was guided by the following three research questions: (1) How did the teachers feel about TBI for teaching grammar? (2) How did they feel about TBI in comparison with their own approaches for teaching grammar? (3) Was it easy for the coursebook to be adapted to reflect the task-based approach? The findings of this study were derived from survey, interview and textbook analysis. The teachers held a positive attitude towards task-based instruction because it had a positive impact on their role in the classroom and students’ engagement in their classes. Although not all teachers expressed TBI as a suitable approach in their grammar classes, they concurred that it was an alternative approach compared to the practice in use prior this study.

Key words: Teaching of grammar, task-based instruction, teacher’s perception

INTRODUCTION
Over the past few decades, there has been an obsession with discovering a ‘best method’—one that fits every student in every context. This best-method myth has largely been dispelled (Prabhu, 1990; Richards, 1990), with many language teachers preferring the concept of eclecticism—choosing from the various methods what works best for their particular context and students.

The issue of looking for a best method in language teaching usually renders itself to theoretical debates. For teachers, theoretical debates are meaningless unless they are translated into practices which can help them in their teaching. Questions that teachers always ask is—What about the realities of the classroom? How theoretical discussions...
about methods are interpreted and used by ELT practitioners is a different matter altogether; an exciting new method may not always suit every context, teacher or learner.

In an effort to connect theory to practice, a study was conducted to explore teachers’ perceptions in using Task-based Instruction (TBI) in grammar teaching. This study was conducted in an urban Chinese medium private school, whose English language teachers come from various backgrounds with differing teaching styles. Most of them had been familiar with and using the PPP (presentation, practice, production) method for teaching grammar. Although they knew the concept of TBI, they had never used it in their teaching.

It is against this backdrop that a trial TBI lesson was conducted, and this study set out to answer these research questions:
1. How did the teachers feel about TBI for teaching grammar?
2. How did they feel about TBI in comparison with their own approaches for teaching grammar?
3. Was it easy for the coursebook to be adapted to reflect the task-based approach?

Task-based learning (TBL) has been accepted in language teaching and learning since it is closely affiliated with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It also goes by other names such as task-based instruction (TBI), task-based language teaching (TBLT). However, the term TBI will be used for clarity in reference to the teachers’ preference for an instruction method in this article.

LITERATURE REVIEW
A Brief History of TBI
As Ellis (2000) explains, there are two theoretical perspectives in relation to task-based language use. One is the psycholinguistic perspective, which is concerned with second language acquisition (SLA) and views tasks as “devices that provide learners with the data they need for learning,” which means it is possible for tasks to determine language use (Ellis, 2000: p.193). Proponents for this perspective include Long (1996) (interaction hypothesis), Skehan (1996) (cognitive approach) and Yule (1997) (communicative effectiveness).

The other is the socio-cultural perspective which is based on the premise that learners engage in a task according to their “own socio-history and locally determined goals,” which means it is difficult to predict language use (Yule, 1997: p.193). Learning happens during social interaction, where scaffolding (or assistance from someone else) plays a key role. Therefore, the interaction is just as important as the task.

While the two perspectives may seem to be going in opposite directions, Van Lier (1996) argues that they form two sides of a coin: that is, the ‘planning’ aspect from the
psycholinguistic perspective and ‘improvisation’ from the socio-cultural perspective are both indispensable and must be present in any lesson for it to be balanced.

In order to understand how and why TBI was conceptualised, one must look back to the 1970s and 1980s, when Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was popular and ‘communicative’ was stamped on every commercial course book. CLT began as a reaction against the perceived failure of audio-lingualism and places emphasis on language functions, that is, language for communicative purposes. It is based on the principle that students will naturally acquire the target language as long as they get enough exposure to it (Harmer, 2007). It is because of this focus on the communicative purpose of language that the task-based approach has been seen as being an extension of CLT, which itself is not a monolithic approach as there are weak and strong approaches (Howatt, 1984).

The idea that language learning should revolve around tasks began in the 1980s with Prabhu’s Bangalore Project which used task-based approach with a small number of elementary and secondary schools in southern India. It was put forth that learners did not need form-focused instruction for the acquisition of grammar (Ellis, 1997). This approach revolves around tasks or communicative activities that enable students to use whatever language they have in order to get their meaning across. As such, the communicative activity is given prominence, not the language itself.

Since then, there have been various frameworks for TBI, developed by researchers such as Skehan (1996), Willis (1996), Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004). While there are various frameworks for TBI, Willis’s framework (1996), which is concerned with communicative effectiveness, gives the clearest guidelines in relation to classroom implementation. In addition, Willis & Willis (2007) followed up with practical considerations and suggestions for actual task ideas for the classroom. It is for this reason Willis’s framework which consists of three stages, pre-task, task cycle and language focus, is the most practical one for practitioners, and is used in this study.

**Support for TBI**
TBI has started to receive more attention as there is much reason to believe that it is closely tied to SLA. SLA researchers suggest that tasks work better than form-focused activities in activating the learners’ cognitive processes (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Ellis (2003) points out that tasks are a way for researchers and teachers to observe samples of language use to find out how language learning takes place and as evidence of learner success respectively. Meaningful activities such as problem-solving encourage learners to use the language for a real purpose. Learners focus not only on the task but also the language needed to complete it.

Traditional structural approaches such as PPP (presentation, practice, production) which are based on a series of structures, have been criticised on the grounds that SLA research
has shown that learners do not acquire language in the order given to them. Instead, it is argued that language is acquired through the process of interlanguages, where errors are not viewed as evidence of poor learning but as part of the learning process (Ellis, 1994). A task-based approach encourages learners to negotiate meaning through tasks, as opposed to learning items in a structured way.

Willis (1996) indicates that TBI offers the best of CLT and more structural approaches, with the “best insights from communicative language teaching with an organised focus on language form” (p.1). Theories related to TBI are the rehearsal rationale, as proposed by Nunan (1991) where activities provide learners with the language they will actually use in the real world. Another supporting claim is the psycholinguistic perspective, which outlines three hypotheses: (i) acquisition occurs by an on-line focus on form during communicative activities; (ii) that ‘noticing’ is important for acquisition; and (iii) the acquisition of syntax follows internally specified developmental sequences.

**Criticisms against TBI**

The task-based approach is not without its critics. Research following the Bangalore Project suggested that form-focused instruction still plays an important role. Beretta and Davies (1985) found that with task-based learning, students generally performed poorly on grammatical tests and showed signs of fossilisation. Seedhouse (1999), too, argues that interaction resulting from tasks is impoverished and can lead to fossilisation.

Another problem identified with TBI is that learners can often complete a task without using accurate language, or perhaps any language at all in extreme cases, relying on gestures alone. Learners may also fall back on undemanding language as their focus is on the task, not the language. In such cases, the task-based approach cannot be said to be developing the learner’s interlanguage skills (Foster, 1999).

Swan (2005) criticises TBI for the lack of empirical evidence, highlighting problems with TBI’s theoretical bases, that is, the three hypotheses regarding on-line acquisition, conscious noticing and teachability. He argues that there is no evidence that acquisition only happens through on-line communication, that not all acquisition requires conscious attention to form, and there is limited evidence to show the existence of developmental sequences of acquisition. Furthermore, he suggests that the condemnation of traditional methods by TBI literature is not well founded. The naturalistic element of TBI, he opines, has problems especially in contexts where time and exposure to the L2 is limited, which is usually the case for most language learners.

It is useful to note, however, Ellis’s (2006) response to Swan’s criticisms that TBI methodologists have never claimed that it is the only way to acquisition, but it is a good way and perhaps the most efficient way to develop implicit knowledge needed for fluency. Also, he adds that TBI is not dependent solely on the ‘conscious’ noticing of form; it also includes conscious and unconscious or sub-conscious noticing. Lastly, Ellis
points out that, contrary to Swan’s claims about limited evidence with regard to the existence of sequences of acquisition, there is indeed much support in the research in that area (see Pienemann, 1984, 1988, 1999, Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Lightbown, 2000).

**What Is a ‘Task’?**

Despite the fact that TBI is gaining momentum, with many books having been written about it from various aspects of ELT, there is no real consensus amongst the experts about what constitutes the most vital element of TBI: the ‘task’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). ‘Task’ has been defined in different ways by different writers, as discussed in Nunan (2006). Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001) argue that the definition of ‘task’ depends on the purpose of the task. Ellis (2003), in discussing the various definitions as given by researchers, finds commonalities between the different definitions and summarises the features of a task as follows:

- A task is a workplan.
- A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
- A task involves real-world processes of language use.
- A task can involve any of the four language skills.
- A task engages cognitive processes.
- A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome (p.9)

Nunan (2006) concludes that despite the differing definitions, they agree in one respect: that tasks involve communicative language use, where the learner’s focus is on meaning rather than grammatical form. He emphasises that this does not mean form is unimportant: meaning and form are closely linked. In the task-based approach, learners are free to choose the forms they prefer to convey meaning in order to complete the task.

**METHODS**

Eight teachers from a Chinese private school took part in this study. Six teachers had at least a professional certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) while the other two did not. The teaching experience among the eight teachers was between two to twenty years. All of them were teaching Pre-Intermediate English language classes at the time this study was conducted.

The eight teachers were given a similar TBI lesson plan (see Appendix A) to conduct in their Pre-Intermediate classes, which consisted of students from the Junior 1 and Junior 2 levels (13- and 14-year-olds). Before they were given the lesson plan, they were given a brief introduction to TBI. Six of the eight teachers participated in a mock lesson using the same TBI lesson plan, with the first researcher being the instructor and the teachers as the learners. The mock lesson lasted for thirty minutes.

The mock lesson was done to allow the teachers to personally experience a TBI lesson, so that they could clarify any concerns. During the mock lesson, the six teachers were
invited to interrupt the researcher if they had any question. This was done to help clarify any query that the teachers had. After the mock lesson, the teachers were encouraged to approach the researcher if they had any further enquiry. The duration between the mock lesson and the actual lesson by the eight teachers was one to two weeks. This long gap allowed the teachers to read and search more information about TBI.

The lesson plan was drawn up based on Willis’s framework (1996), whereby there are three stages: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. The target language was selected based on the scheme of work of this level, and the grammar focus for this particular unit of the course book was on modals of obligation (can, can’t, have to, don’t have to, must, mustn’t).

Textbook analysis was also carried out to examine if the grammar section in the textbook could be adapted to suit task-based instruction. Such analysis was carried out in order to provide an answer for Research Question 3. Willis’s framework (1996) was used as a guide for the analysis. The analytical focus was on the presentation and activities of the grammar section proposed by the textbook writers.

DISCUSSION

Part 1: Teachers’ Feedback on the TBI Lesson Plan Provided to Them

Overall, the teachers had positive experiences with the TBI lesson plan, as shown in the charts below (Figures 1 and 2).

Five of the eight teachers were able to achieve the main aim of the lesson: getting the students to use the modals of obligation correctly. Two teachers who had reservations about saying they had fully achieved the aims took into consideration the fact that students with lower proficiency struggled to come up with more than just the ‘easy’ modals (such as ‘can’). The only teacher who felt the lesson aim was not achieved at all stated that “students used simple sentences like ‘You are not allowed…’ and ‘can’ ‘cannot’ when talking about the [school] rules.” For this teacher, achieving the lesson aim meant that
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students should have been able to come up with most or all of the modals in that module of the course book.

In terms of the effectiveness of the materials and activities, the teachers’ responses corresponded with their sentiments about whether they had achieved the lesson aim. The same teachers who felt they had achieved the lesson aim also thought the materials and activities helped them to do so. The ones who thought the lesson aim was partly achieved said that the materials and activities only worked with some of the students, namely the ones with a higher level of proficiency. The one teacher who disagreed that the lesson aim was achieved opined that the materials and activities only went so far as to help the students understand the task, but not to remember how to use the modal verbs during the reporting stage.

Teachers’ Perceived Benefits of the TBI Lesson

When asked what went well during the TBI lesson, teachers reported having improved classroom dynamics, good teamwork, and a lively and fun atmosphere in the classroom, which suggested that the TBI lesson allowed social interaction that seemed to have a positive effect on students’ presentation and their participation in the activities.

“All students participated in the lesson. Class was lively….”

“[Good students] helped their group members who were weak.”

“[Students] really took turns to share with others and spoke confidently of real experiences. Students were cooperating well with other group members during group discussion.”

“The students enjoyed the group work and the task gave them an opportunity to reminisce. They were eager to talk about their school rules.”

“Students really enjoyed, they had fun sharing their primary school rules by saying “I remember last time I must…,” “I remember last time I cannot….,” Most of my students are average students, they also learned new vocabulary through this lesson.”

For teachers’ responses to Question 3 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B)

How does this tie in with researchers’ claims of the effectiveness of TBI? In the literature, it is claimed that tasks can be more effective than form-focused exercises for L2 acquisition. From these teachers’ comments, none of the teachers had observed how TBI helped students either with coming up with more than the usual ‘easy’ modals, or understanding modals better. Also absent from their comments were observations on how students...
successfully negotiated meaning through the task given to them, which was supposed to be the strength of the task-based approach as opposed to an approach like PPP.

However, it is also possible that the desired learning outcome did not occur because of the focus of the lesson: the target language being elicited is not unfamiliar to the students in this study, which in turn negates the need for engaging the cognitive process (as in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), as well as negotiating meaning (as in Ellis, 1994).

*Teachers’ Perceived Problems with the TBI Lesson*

The problems that the teachers identified could be categorised into three categories. They are, problems (or perceived problems) about TBI that have been highlighted and addressed in the literature. The three categories will be discussed separately below, with possible solutions to the problems.

1. Low-level students’ inability to cope with the task

   “Weak students continue to appear unmotivated.”

   “Weak students seemed a bit lost when they were asked to write rules in complete sentences. They relied on their good group members.”

   For teachers’ responses to Question 4 of the questionnaire (see Appendix C)

A perceived problem with TBI highlighted in Willis & Willis (2007) is that it is unsuitable for beginners and low-level students. This is likely because the description of pre-teaching in TBI seems to be more for introducing task-relevant process language rather than for presenting new language. Willis states: “The point of the introductory focus on topic and language is not to teach large amounts of new language” (1996: p.43)

Skehan (1998) is also of the opinion that if learners are made to use certain structures, the task then becomes unnatural and is “of dubious value for acquisition” (p.130). But as Swan (2005) points out, how do we elicit what is not there? Although Swain (2002) argues that students can learn from each other, Storch (2002) has shown that knowledge transfer in this type of peer interaction is not always correct. However, Ellis (2009) argues that TBI can be used even for complete beginners because the initial lessons can be more input-based, that is, reading and listening, with visual support.

Kiernan (2005) and Muller (2005) were both able to use TBI with low-level students, and achieved success with it. However, Muller, admitted that he did not follow the criteria or features of task-based lessons described in the literature strictly, but he adapted TBI to suit his context. This flexible approach towards TBI could be a way teachers could still do task-based lessons with low-level students. There are other ways in which the teacher could pitch the task at an appropriate difficulty level. Ellis (2009) suggests visual support to help students in the task, giving students more time to plan, providing a model and pre-teaching key linguistic items. In a class of mixed ability, the teacher’s discretion would be
vital in striking a balance and finding out what types of tasks work best for her unique blend of learners.

2. Students’ use of the same modals throughout the task cycle

“For some students, the same modals were used repeatedly, so the teacher had to remind them to think of various words and try not to use the same modals twice.”

“Students only used ‘must’ and ‘can’t’ to tell the school rules. I assumed that they have influenced each other while discussing.”

For teachers’ responses to Question 4 of the questionnaire (see Appendix C)

This problem is raised in the literature (Foster, 1998), where it has been pointed out that tasks cannot ensure that students will consciously make an effort to use cutting-edge language, and as a result, stretch their interlanguage further. As their focus is often on completing the task successfully, they may fall back on undemanding grammatical structures, as evidenced by these teachers’ comments.

In this particular study, however, the tendency of the students to repeat the same modals may have arisen because they were making comparisons of do’s and don’ts in a table format, which is linear and often begs uniformity in its presentation. It is possible that if the students had been asked to present the information in a mind-map or in some other free-form manner, they may have come up with a larger variety of expressions.

A more direct approach could also be taken to prevent the overuse of the same grammatical structure or the reliance on undemanding structures. As seen in the first comment, the teacher took the opportunity to remind students to use different expressions while she was monitoring the activity. As such, one possible solution is for the teacher to give clear pre-task instructions to use as many different structures as possible during the task, and to reinforce this by individually reminding the students while she is monitoring their learning process.

3. Insufficient time to complete the task

“The weaker students couldn’t come up with the rules within the time given (too rushed).”

“Students had to spend more time to develop more interesting ideas. I actually spent 50 minutes instead of 40 minutes [to complete the lesson].”

“Insufficient time [to complete the lesson]. It could have been a successful lesson if I had done it in a double-period lesson (80 minutes).”
“Students required more than the given time to come up with the school rules. Due to time constraints, only three groups out of nine were able to present. Accuracy practice couldn’t be carried out.”

For teachers’ responses to Question 4 of the questionnaire (see Appendix C)

Most of the teachers indicated a problem with the time limitation. The lesson plan given to them was meant for a 40-minute lesson but it was not possible to teach the whole lesson plan successfully within that time. Some of the teachers chose to trial this lesson during a double period (80-minute lesson), so they were able to finish the lesson. However, the others who taught it during a single period (40-minute lesson) had to stop mid-way. This has serious consequences for the use of TBI in this school, where time is a precious commodity. Teachers may have reservations using an approach that takes up too much time. Furthermore, teachers will not be convinced to learn a new approach that does not seem to give immediate and apparent results.

A possible solution to this problem would be to adapt Willis’ (1996) task cycle by removing the reporting stage unless there is time and a reason to carry it out. Group presentations, no matter how brief, often take no less than 10 minutes per group, especially if students need to set up their Powerpoint presentation.

If one TBI lesson can be completed within the 40-minute limit, it would be more likely that teachers will be willing to try the approach. In order for this to happen, it must first be seen as feasible and practicable.

Willis and Willis (2007) suggest time-saving measures such as having the students prepare task-related words at home, do grammar or other follow-up exercises at home, and encouraging the students to do independent vocabulary learning. Teachers need not feel obliged to do all stages of the task cycle (pre-task, during-task, post-task), as some task-based lessons consist of the during-task stage only (Ellis, 2006).

**Figure 3.** Teachers’ responses to effectiveness of TBI

**Figure 4.** Teachers’ responses to question ‘Is TBI better than own approach?’
Part 2: Teachers’ Feedback on TBI as an Approach to Teach Grammar

When asked about TBI in general, and then TBI as compared to their own approach, teachers seemed to give contradictory responses. On the face of it, five of the eight teachers questioned the effectiveness of TBI as an approach to teach modals (Figure 3). However, the same group of teachers still felt that TBI was better than the approach they would have used to teach those modals (Figure 4). This could stem from the teachers’ realisation that their usual methods had not proven to be particularly effective, and although they had not yet been convinced that TBI was the answer to grammar acquisition, they still preferred traditional structural approach PPP to TBI.

In response to the question about TBI as an approach to teach grammar in general, teachers repeated that TBI suited students with a good proficiency in English, and not the low-level students. As discussed above, the design of the lesson plan is very important in relation to low-level learners. Muller (2005) indicated that a class-specific lesson plan is the one that takes into consideration the specific circumstances of a particular class of learners. Such a lesson plan is more likely to have a more positive effect.

Overall, five out of eight teachers indicated a willingness to create their own TBI lessons in the future (Figure 5). These teachers had a positive experience with TBI while participating in this study, and commented after the TBI lesson how their students had been invigorated by this ‘new’ approach. One teacher was interested to test the effectiveness of TBI with a more challenging grammatical structure:

“I am not sure if [TBI] can work better if I try to teach other grammar items (past continuous?). I think I should try planning [a TBI lesson] to see its effectiveness.”

At this point, the effectiveness of TBI as an approach to teach grammar in this particular context is still questionable. It can be argued that most of the students in this study were able to use the target language because it was not unfamiliar. What about more difficult grammatical structures that students have never encountered? Two further questions arise from that: (1) Would TBI be effective if the grammar is difficult and totally new to the students? (2) Would TBI be significantly better than any other approach? The second

Figure 5. Teachers’ responses to willingness to create their own TBI lessons
question relates directly to time, as TBI takes up more time compared to the PPP approach. The time factor is a vital consideration in this context. As the teachers in this study quickly realised, the TBI lesson took up more time than expected. However, if TBI can be shown to assist in L2 acquisition, it would be time well spent because teachers would not have to repeat the same grammatical items over the years, which is the current situation. More empirical research is needed to support the claims by the proponents of TBI, and this is certainly an area that would benefit from future research.

**Part 3: Adaptability of the Course Book**
The grammar section in the two course books used at this school is presented in the PPP format, which makes it easy for teacher to adapt. First, for the pre-task stage, the teacher can refer to the lead-in activity given in the book. Next, the task for the task cycle is also often given in the ‘Personalisation’ section of the book and requires little to no adaptation. Additionally, it is also possible for the teacher to change the task in the ‘Personalisation’ section to make it more interesting and relevant to her students. The teachers’ guide provided by the publisher gives suggestions for adapting the lessons for better or weaker classes, and teachers could continue to use the suggestions or come up with their own ideas to adapt the task to suit their learners. Finally, for the language focus stage, the ‘Presentation’ section gives sufficient material for the teacher to either address problematic areas or to use as a platform for error correction. With materials already provided, teachers do not have to burden themselves by creating task-based lessons from scratch, making it possible for them to experiment with this approach using readily available resources.

**CONCLUSION**
From the discussion above, the answer to the first research question (*How did the teachers feel about TBI for teaching grammar?*) ties in closely to the second research question (*How did they feel about TBI in comparison with their own approaches for teaching grammar?*). The teachers who thought that TBI held promise and indicated that they would be willing to incorporate TBI into their repertoire, also felt that TBI could be better than their usual approaches for teaching grammar. There was a willingness to find out how TBI would fare with other types of grammatical structures.

The third research question (*Was it easy for the course book to be adapted to reflect the task-based approach?*) was answered by perusing the grammar units in the course books, and from the researcher’s experience of having used the course books, it was clear that adapting the course book materials would not pose too much of a challenge to the teachers.

This study was conducted in a Chinese private school, where the level of English was average to good, depending on the class. There were no absolute beginners at the time this study was carried out. Therefore, the language focus on modals of obligation such as ‘can’ and ‘must’ was most likely not new material for them. The results could have been different if there had been students with low or no proficiency in English.
Task-based instruction (TBI) could be implemented in this school because English is a second language for most students and they were not absolute beginners in this study, having undergone six years of English lessons at primary school level at the very least.

While it should be unproblematic to introduce the concept of TBI to both teachers and students, it is unlikely that the TBI will be embraced in this school on a widespread level in the foreseeable future. Ellis (2003) points out that task-supported teaching will be more acceptable to teachers compared to a task-based approach which requires teachers to teach grammar implicitly. In a task-supported approach, teachers can choose to use whatever method they think is best, with TBI being just one of many of the approaches that teachers can utilise according to their students’ needs. At the very least, however, teachers can widen their repertoire of teaching methods and try different things to prevent their lessons from being routine and predictable, and to keep students interested and motivated.

With further research and stronger evidence of a link between TBI and SLA for students similar to the ones in this study, there may be a wider acceptance of TBI as a staple in the classrooms. Until then, however, the application of this method will possibly only occur as a secondary approach to more traditional approaches such as PPP.

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

The TBI lesson plan used in this study, based on the framework by Willis (1996)

LESSON PLAN (Task-Based Instruction)

STAGE 1: PRE-TASK
INTRO TO TOPIC & INSTRUCTIONS FOR TASK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>What you can say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T shows a pic of her old school/old class photo/etc.</td>
<td>Elicit answer to: “Where do you think this is?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T talks about her school days &amp; school rules.</td>
<td>Include some of the following modals (whatever fits your story): - could/couldn’t - had to/didn’t have to Example: “In my secondary school, we couldn’t bring story books.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T instructs Ss to tell each other what primary school they went to.</td>
<td>“Tell your partner which primary school you went to”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T nominates a few Ss to tell which school their partner went to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T puts Ss in groups of 4-5 When Ss are in groups, give them paper.</td>
<td>“Make groups of 4”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAGE 2: TASK CYCLE

I. TASK: List down school rules & decide which school is stricter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>What you can say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T instructs Ss to tell each other what primary schools they went to. Are they all from the same school?</td>
<td>“Tell each other which primary school you went to.” “Did you all study in the same primary school?” (Demo it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T instructs Ss to fold the paper in half vertically.</td>
<td>“Look at this list. Tell your group members the school rules about these things in their primary school Instruction check: “Do you write school rules for your primary school or Hin Hua High School?” (Primary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T projects list of behaviour on the screen. Ss are to refer to the list of behaviour when writing down their school rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T checks that Ss know what they’re supposed to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T gives a time limit (3 mins).</td>
<td>“You have 3 minutes”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Teachers’ Perceptions in Using Task-Based Instruction for the Teaching of Grammar

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>What you can say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T instructs them to turn the paper over &amp; write all the school rules for Hin Hua.</td>
<td>“Use the same list of things. Write the rules for Hin Hua High School.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T checks instructions.</td>
<td>“Do you write school rules for Hin Hua now?” (Yes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T gives a time limit (3 mins).</td>
<td>“You have 3 minutes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T tells ss to decide in their groups which school has stricter rules &amp; why.</td>
<td>“In your groups, decide which school has stricter rules. Explain why.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. PLANNING: Plan how to present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>What you can say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T explains that Ss will have to report their decision to the class (which is stricter – primary or Hin Hua)</td>
<td>“Next, tell us which school has stricter rules and why”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T gives Ss about 2 minutes to prepare.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. REPORTING: Present your work to the class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to do</th>
<th>What you can say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T nominates groups to present. T may give feedback on the content after each presentation.</td>
<td><del>whatever you like</del></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAGE 3: LANGUAGE FOCUS

ANALYSIS & PRACTICE

T can do error correction on the board for any errors heard/seen during the task (whole class can give feedback) – better if the errors are on modals. T highlights the modals of obligation in the Ss’ work. T can also highlight good use of modals used in Ss’ verbal reports that did not appear in the written work (if any)

** If no modals came up during the task, you can try to elicit it from the class. (e.g., “We _____ use our mobile phones in class.”)

New Opportunities, Pre-Intermediate Student Book (SB) & Language Powerbook (LPB) SB p. 43
- no. 5 & 6: Presentation
- no. 7, 8, 9: Accuracy practice (choose what you think is necessary)

LPB p. 28-29
You may give selected exercises as homework.

Note
Materials needed:
- Big pieces of blank paper.
- (Optional) Blue tack / magnets for students to mount their work on the board/wall.
APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for respondents (a post-lesson reflection)

POST-LESSON REFLECTION

Name: _________________________________  Date: _____________________________

PART 1: ABOUT THE LESSON
1. Was the aim of the lesson achieved (the use of modals of obligation)? What evidence was there?

2. Did the materials/activities successfully enable you to achieve the aim?

3. What went well in this lesson?

4. What were the problems in this lesson?

PART 2: ABOUT TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION (TBI) TO TEACH GRAMMAR
5. Was this an effective way to teach that grammar item? Why/why not?

6. How would you normally have taught this grammar item?

7. How does TBI compare to your own approach to teaching grammar? Do you like it better or not at all?

8. Would you try to create your own TBI lesson for future grammar lessons? (Y/N)

9. Any other comments?