Teaching simple past passive sentences to students english language essay

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)

The researcher is motivated to extend a Task- Based approach to teaching simple past passive sentences to high school students in Iran. The goal is to convince government and educational policymakers to take a long-term view of the development of TBLT in Iran, to revamp curricula, to update English syllabi, to produce new English textbooks, and to upgrade teachers' professional competence since all of them are fully intended to prepare students for the University Entrance Examination, which focuses mainly on linguistic forms, therefore, explicit grammar teaching is still considered a crucial teaching aspect in language classrooms in Iran. The Task-based approach has gained popularity in the field of language teaching in the last decade of the 20th century. It is widely believed that communicative tasks can facilitate the learning process by engaging students in negotiation of meaning in the form of small group work. (Ellis, 1997; Skehan, 1998; Nunan, 2004; Littlewood, 2004, 2006). Nevertheless, recently, quite a few scholars have also expressed their concerns about the effectiveness and practicality of this approach. Their concern of Task-based approach mainly revolves around the problem that this approach seems not so successful in promoting high levels of linguistic competence (Bygate, 2000; Foster, 1999; Spada, 1987; Swan, 2005). Task-based language teaching is an educational framework for the theory and practice of teaching second or foreign languages. It is based on a constellation of ideas issuing from philosophy of education, theories of second language acquisition, empirical findings on effective instruction techniques, and the exigencies of language learning in contemporary society. Since its origins in the literature in the 1980s, TBLT has evolved from a handful of pedagogic principles and methods to a broad

based foundation for the implementation of full-scale language programs. Publications on the topic are on the increase (including at least 10 books published between 2005-08), there is an active conference series (2005 in Belgium, 2007 in Hawaii, 2009 in Lancaster UK; 2O11 in....?), and programs in a variety of second language settings are currently implementing task-based ideas.(John M. Norris, 2008). The researcher believes that TBLT needs more understanding and in-depth attention in Iran and he is going to take full advantage of this approach to teach his students how to make simple present passive sentences and enable them to use those structures in order to communicate meaningfully. With this end in view the researcher will provide his students with tasks to complete. The researcher buttresses the idea that TBLT is an efficient approach to implementing communicative teaching. He, therefore, is willing to adopt this approach to see whether this approach will do the trick or not, whether it will make all the difference to his students' performances or not. He is interested in comparing the results gained from the application of this approach to the one now being taught at schools in Iran: Explicit grammar teaching. Statement of the ProblemThis study is an attempt to investigate the effect of TBLT on teaching simple present passive sentences to high school students in the third grade. The researcher will examine the effect of TBLT and will try to determine the effectiveness and superiority of this approach over the traditional methods. Research QuestionBased on the purpose of the study the research question is:●What is the effect of TBLT on teaching simple past passive sentences to third grade high school students by comparison with the effects of the present traditional methods being employed at schools in Iran? Research

HypothesisBased on the above-mentioned research question the following research hypothesis is formulated:●There is a positive relationship between implementing TBLT and teaching simple past passive sentences to third grade high school students in Iran. Definition of Key TermsTask: The definition of 'task' has receive much attention in the literature (e. g. Breen, 1987; Bygate, 2000; Bygate, Skehan, and Swain, 2001; Candlin, 1987; Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998, 2003). Skehan (1998) defines tasks using four criteria: Meaning is primary, it works toward a goal, it is outcome evaluated, and it is related to the world outside the classroom. This definition is well accepted for the ESL adult context(Carless, 2004). The tasks provided for the students in this study are based on the above mentioned criteria. TBLT: Task-based language teaching (TBLT) refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. (Jack, C. Richards. , & Theodore, S. Rodgers (2001). Approaches and Modals in Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press). Significance of the StudyThe major objective of the study is to provide a picture of how high school students try to riposte to the planning and implementation of a task-based pedagogical approach. By conducting the research, the researcher hopes to identify pertinent pedagogical issues that may arise during TBLT implementation and to offer workable solutions. The study aims to contribute to the enrichment of the knowledge about TBLT practice in high schools while enhancing our understanding of ELT pedagogic change and curricular innovation in Iran. It provides educational policymakers insights into issues arising during TBLT implementation. Most importantly, the study hopes to assist the frontline teachers in a successful transition of TBLT in high schools

in Iran. Limitations of the StudySeveral common factors may negatively influence the researcher's implementation of TBLT. There is a lack of empirical research on TBLT teaching in schools. Two main classroom factors which may influence the implementation of TBLT are time constraints and class sizes. The 75-minute class period may not be enough time to implement TBLT. The big class sizes are expected to be a major obstacle of implementing TBLT. The big class sizes may make it impossible for the researcher to take care of each of his students when they come across difficulties in performing challenging tasks. Another issue regarding students is that, because of exam pressure students may feel they need to pay attention to their formal knowledge of the language which may to some extent weaken their enthusiasm to participate in class activities or tasks. Another hindering issue affecting the implementation of TBLT from the National level is the University Entrance Examination which mainly focuses on linguistic forms. To prepare students for the university entrance exam, therefore, explicit grammar teaching is still considered a crucial teaching aspect in language classrooms. Review of the Related LiteratureFew would question the pedagogical value of employing tasks as a vehicle forpromoting communication and authentic language use in second language classrooms, and depending on one's definition of a task, tasks have long been part of the mainstream repertoire of language teaching techniques for teachers of many different methodological persuasions. TBLT, however, offers a different rationale for the use of tasks as well as different criteria for the design and use of tasks. It is the dependence on tasks as the primary source of pedagogical input in teaching and the absence of a systematic grammatical

or other type of syllabus that characterizes current versions of TBLT, and that distinguishes it from the use of tasks in Competency-Based Language Teaching, another task-based approach but one that is not wedded to the theoretical framework and assumptions of TBLT. (Jack, C. Richards. , & Theodore, S. Rodgers (2001). Approaches and Modals in Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press). Task-based language teaching is an approach to the design of language courses in which the point of departure is not an ordered list of linguistic items, but a collection of tasks. (Nunan, D. 2006. Second Language Teaching and Learning. Newbury House Teacher Development). There are procedures relating to how the tasks specified in a task-based syllabus can be converted into actual lessons. The design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of stages or components of a lesson that has a task as its principal component. Various designs have been proposed (e. g., Estaire and Zanon 1994; Lee 2000; Prabhu 1987; Skehan 1996; Willis 1996). However, they all have in common three principal phases, which are shown in figure 1. These phases reflect the chronology of a task-based lesson. Thus, the first phase is 'pre-task' and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task, such as whether students are given time to plan the performance of the task. The second phase, the 'during task' phase, centers around the task itself and affords variousinstructional options, including whether students are required to operate under time-pressure or not. The final phase is 'post-task' and involves procedures for following-up on the task performance. Only the 'during task' phase is not obligatory in task-based teaching. Thus, minimally, a task-based lesson consists of the students just performing a task. Options

selected from the 'pre-task' or 'post-task' phases are non-obligatory but, as we will see, can serve a crucial role in ensuring that the task performance is maximally effective for language development. PhaseExamples of optionsA) Pre-task●Framing the activity (e. g., establishing the outcome of a task)●Planning time●Doing a similar taskB) During task●Time pressure●Number of participantsC) Post-task●Learner report●Consciousness-raising●Repeat taskAccess to a clear framework for a task-based lesson is of obvious advantage to both teachers and learners. Richards (1996) shows how many experienced teachers adhere to a maxim of planning ('Plan your teaching and try to follow your plan') while Numrich (1996) reports on how novice teachers feel the 'need to be creative and varied in teaching'. A framework such as the one outlined in Figure 1 caters to both needs. It provides a clear structure for a lesson and it also allows for creativity and variety in the choice of options in each phase. (Ellis, (2006); The Methodology of Task- Based Teaching: Asian EFL Journal). Like researchers, language teachers, material writers, and course designers have not been slow to recognize the value of tasks. However, they have differed considerably in the use they have made of them. Some methodologists have simply incorporated tasks into traditional language-based approaches to teaching. Others more radically, have treated tasks as units of teaching in their own right and have designed whole courses around them. These two ways of using tasks can be referred to respectively as 'task-supported language teaching and as 'task-based language teaching. In both cases, tasks have been employed to make language teaching more communicative'. (Ellis, R.(2003). Task-Based Language Learning and

Teaching. Oxford University Press). The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (2002) defines TBLT as a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction. Such tasks are said to provide an effective basis for language learning since they: involve meaningful communication and interaction, andnegotiationenable the learners to acquire grammar as a result of engaging in authentic language use. Task-based language teaching is an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and an attempt by its proponents to apply principles of second language learning to teaching. Task-based language teaching refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Some of its proponents (e. g., Willis 1996) present it as a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching since it draws on several principles that formed part of the communicative language teaching movement from the 1980s. For example:● Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning.● Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.● Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. Because of its links to Communicative Language Teaching methodology and support from some prominent SLA theorists, TBLT has gained considerable attention within applied linguistics, though there have been few large-scale practical applications of it and little documentation concerning its implications or effectiveness as a basis for syllabus design, materials development, and classroom teaching. (Jack, C. Richards. , & Theodore, S. Rodgers, (2001). Approaches and Modals in Language Teaching. Cambridge

University Press). Kumaravadivelu (1993b) argues that TBLT is not linked to any one particular method. He reckons that it is beneficial to look at task for what it is: a curricular content rather than a methodological construct. In other words, different methods can be employed to carry out language learning tasks that seek different learning outcomes. Using a three-part classification of language teaching methods, he points out that there can very well be Language-centered tasks, Learner-centered tasks, and Learning-centered tasks. Language-centered tasks are those that draw the learners' attention primarily to linguistic forms. Tasks presented in Fotos and Ellis (1991) and in Fotos (1993), which they appropriately call 'grammar tasks', come under this category. Learner-centered tasks are those that direct the learners' attention to formal as well as functional properties. Tasks for the communicative classroom suggested by Nunan (1989) illustrate this type. Learning-centered tasks are those that engage the learner mainly in the negotiation, interpretation, and expression of meaning, without any explicit focus on form. Problem solving tasks suggested by Prabhu (1987) are learning centered. (Kumaravadivelu, B.(2006). Changing Tracks, Challenging Trends. TESOL QUARTERLY Vol. 40, No. 1, March 2006). Defining a TaskWhat exactly is a 'task'? How does a task differ from other devices used to elicit learner language, for example an 'activity', or an 'exercise', or 'drill'. It should be acknowledged from the start that in neither research nor language pedagogy is there complete agreement as to what constitutes a task, making definition problematic(Crookes 1986: 1), nor is there consistency in the terms employed to describe the different devices for eliciting learner language. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching.

Oxford University Press). Within the literature, tasks have been defined in a variety of ways. Long for instance, suggests that a taskIs a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination, and helping someone across a road. In other words, by task is meant the hundred and one things people do in every day life, at work, at play, and in-between. (Long 1985: 89). In my 1989 book on task-based language teaching, I drew a distinction between pedagogical tasks and real-world or target tasks. The tasks Long sets out above are target tasks. They are the sorts of things that individuals typically do outside the classroom. (Nunan, D. (2006). Second Language Teaching and Learning. Newbury House Teacher Development). Richard, Platt and Weber (1985) suggest that a task isAn activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i. e., as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative…since it provides a purpose for classroom activity which goes beyond practice of language for its own sake. (Nunan, D. (2006). Second Language Teaching and Learning. Newbury House Teacher

Development). Breen(1989) defines task as 'a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use during communication'. Breen specifically states that a 'task' can be 'a brief practice exercise' or 'a more complex workplan that requires spontaneous communication of meaning'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). Crookes(1986) describes task as 'a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). Prabhu(1987) defines task as 'an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). Nunan(1989) says 'a communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). Skehan(1996a) believes a task is 'an activity in which meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). Lee(2000) sees

task as ' (1) a classroom activity or exercise that has :(a) an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants, (b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and (c) a focus on meaning exchange;(2) a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of workplans'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). Bygate, Skehan, and Swain(2001) think that 'a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective'. (Ellis, R. 2003. Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. Oxford University Press). The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (2002) defines task as 'an activity which is designed to help a particular learning goal. MethodParticipantsThe researcher will have about 80 male students to do the research. The students will be randomly divided and placed in two separate classes of equally the same size. Forty students will be placed in the control group and forty students in the experimental group. All of the students will be high school students in the third grade and from two different public schools. MaterialsSince the research is going to be a true experimental one, the researcher will randomly select the experimental group and the control group and then he will give the experimental group a pretest and then the treatment and finally the posttest. The control group will simultaneously be given a pretest and then the placebo and finally the posttest. Data will be collected and analyzed to see whether the treatment is effective or not. The researcher will do all these things in just a month and at the end of the month he will provide the experimental group with a questionnaire so as to

see how the students feel about the effects of the new method. Figure 2

shows the general design ofExperimental GroupT1

↓
X

↓
T2Control GroupT1

↓
O

↓
T2this research. In this figure T1 stands for Pretest, X stands for Treatment,

O stands for Placebo, and T2 stands for Posttest. Data Collection and

Analysis ProceduresThis study will provide an opportunity for a class to

experience a novel way of approaching the learning of a topic area.

Throughout this study the researcher will make direct observations on

possible effects of the treatment using note taking, simple surveys, formal

and/or informal interviews with the students, and a questionnaire. Since it is

really necessary to examine the students' educational background and the

degree of their familiarity with the topic area, both groups will be given a

pretest. For the sake of validity and reliability of the pretest the items

included in the pretest will be chosen from the current standard tests of

English available in schools and the posttest items will be alike, but will be

taken at the end of the period. Data AnalysisAfter the required data are

collected an independent T-test will be taken in order to find out if the

treatment affects the experimental group's performance and if so, compare the result with the performance of the control group. Outline and Organization of the StudyThis study will be organized in a thesis with the following chapters: Chapter one: Introduction in which the problem under study will be introduced, research question and significance and limitations of the study will be presented as well. Chapter two: Literature review in which the most outstanding definitions of TBLT and Task will be offered. Chapter three: Method of the study in which some information about the participants, materials and data collection and analysis will be provided. Chapter five: Summary, discussions, and conclusions in which the study will be summarized, the findings will be discussed, and some implications based on the findings of the study will be presented.