



PRESENTATION PRACTICE PRODUCTION VS TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING: A COMPARISON OF TWO TEACHING TEMPLATES

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Abstract

A number of statements are addressed to defend and criticize two popular teaching templates: Presentation Practice Production (PPP) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Advocates of each teaching template claim that their method is more effective to be implemented in English language teaching than the other. This article compares these teaching templates to find out their strengths and weaknesses. This paper is a library study. It employs theoretical analysis to examine experts, prominent figures, and previous important theories and findings on discussing the same topic. The idea of PPP is a deductive and teacher-centered approach with focuses mainly on accuracy by means of drilling practice. Meanwhile, TBLT encourages students to be communicative in the classroom through language input and pushes the teacher to be a facilitator. The result of the comparison indicates that using PPP is effective in preparing students to take exams or tests, while TBLT is useful to accommodate students' real-life communicative purposes. As these teaching templates are effective in certain contexts, teachers should consider the learning goals before deciding to implement either PPP or TBLT.

Keywords: Comparison; Presentation Practice Production; Task-Based Language Teaching,

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INTRODUCTION

The awareness of English as a means of communication is rapidly growing, especially in countries that regard English as a second and foreign language. The rise of attention, at the same time, demands the most efficient and effective way in learning English. Moreover, the goals of learning English may be varied among learners whether they are going to

use English for a communicative purpose only, or they are going to employ English as a tool to achieve higher prestige, for example, on a test. To cope with this, English teachers should consider various teaching elements in conducting the English teaching and learning process.

In general, English teaching is not only about transferring a teacher's knowledge to students. Teachers must make

sure that students understand what language learning is, encourage and motivate students, build accountability and discipline, and encourage students to take command (Association 2017).

Of all things to consider, getting students to understand what language learning is beneficial to both students and teachers. Once students know their goals, teachers are able to decide what kind of teaching method to be applied in order to accommodate students' goals to eventually create an effective teaching and learning process.

For instance, Yatmini et al., (2017) conducted a study investigating the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) to teach reading comprehension and it concludes that the implementation of DRTA is successful. In relation to a productive skills, Werdiningsih, (2021) carried out a study examining how to improve students' speaking through a cartoon film-based discussion. The results show that a cartoon film-based discussion improves students' speaking skills and participation through three main factors: (1) students are able to discuss certain topics before taking the speaking test, (2) students are able to obtain new vocabulary while watching the cartoon, and (3) students are able to improve their grammar and pronunciation as they pay attention to the structure of the subtitle in the film. In

accordance with these studies, different skills need different methods to teach.

Nowadays, there are a huge number of teaching templates implemented by English teachers. Two of the most-established ones are Presentation Practice Production (PPP) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). PPP, as the name suggests, focuses on presenting a rule, practicing how to use it, and accommodating students to construct the language that they have been dealing with.

Maftoon & Sarem (2012) wrote that PPP has been regarded as an old approach leading to the Grammar-Translation Method and Audiolingualism but it can still be an effective method to support the communicative approach. In addition, Carless (2009) believes that low-achieving students are more motivated and learn better through traditional methods, such as PPP.

On the other hand, TBLT is a more recent template that is concerned with doing functional tasks and exchanging meaning. Long (2015) states that the aim of TBLT is to equip learners with their present and future real-world communicative needs. Bhandari (2020) argues that students are exposed to various meaningful tasks to enhance their language ability. Through language tasks, they learn both the subject matter and communication skills that are related to their life experiences. Added to

this, (S 2020) conducted a study aiming to investigate the use of TBLT to enhance students' writing achievement and they conclude that TBLT is successful to do so.

Each teaching template facilitates different learning experiences and produces varied outcomes in the teaching and learning process. Recognizing that all teaching approaches have advantages and disadvantages is important for teachers. Instead of criticizing them, English teachers should assume that the approach which is currently in use is not the only acceptable approach to language teaching. In addition, comparing PPP and TBLT becomes useful as a contribution to the field of English teaching and learning. This article is intended to find out the strengths and weaknesses of adhering to both teaching templates(Lougheed 1996).

METHOD

This paper is a library study. It employs theoretical analysis to examine experts, prominent figures, and previous important theories and findings on discussing the same topic. The data were collected from reading and synthesizing the related source and then they were analyzed by associating PPP and TBLT and their application in a teaching and learning process. Hence, the paper aims to answer this research question 'What are the

strengths and weaknesses of PPP and TBLT?'

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Methods are a wide term containing approach, design, and procedure. Richards (2001) assert that an approach is theories about the nature of language and learning serving as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. The design itself is necessary to develop as it leads an approach to a method. Design deals with objectives, language content and organization, tasks and teaching activities, roles of learners and teachers, and the roles of instructional materials. The approach and design contained in a method are then materialized in a classroom through the procedure. Procedure refers to activities and tasks integrated into lessons and used as the basis for teaching and learning.

Presentation Practice Production

One of the widely used teaching templates is PPP. PPP is a teaching template under the umbrella of a traditional method that gained popularity in the 50s and 60s. The approach to teaching grammar is the deductive one which explains the rules and facts, then the students are given opportunities to practice them. It is contradictory to an inductive approach that enables students to identify the grammar

rules of the presented sentences (Richards 2006).

The Audiolingual Method (ALM) is the basis of the PPP application. Richards (2001) mention ALM’s typical lessons in the following list.

a) Students first hear a model dialog containing key structures that are the focus of the lesson. They repeat each line of the dialog, individually and in chorus. The teacher pays attention to pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Correction of mistakes in pronunciation or grammar is direct and immediate. The dialog is memorized gradually, line by line. A line may be broken down into several phrases if necessary. The dialog is read aloud in chorus, one half saying one speaker’s part and the other half responding. The students do not consult their books throughout this phase.

- b) The dialog is adapted to the student’s interest or situation, by changing certain keywords or phrases. This is acted out by the students.
- c) Certain key structures from the dialog are selected and used as the basis for pattern drills of different kinds. These are first practiced in the chorus and then individually. Some grammatical explanations may be offered at this point, but this is kept to an absolute minimum.
- d) The students may refer to their textbook, and follow-up reading, writing, or vocabulary activities based on the dialog may be introduced.
- e) Follow-up activities may take place in the language laboratory, where further dialog and drill work is carried out.

Willis (1996) depicts the typical PPP lesson in the following Figure 1.

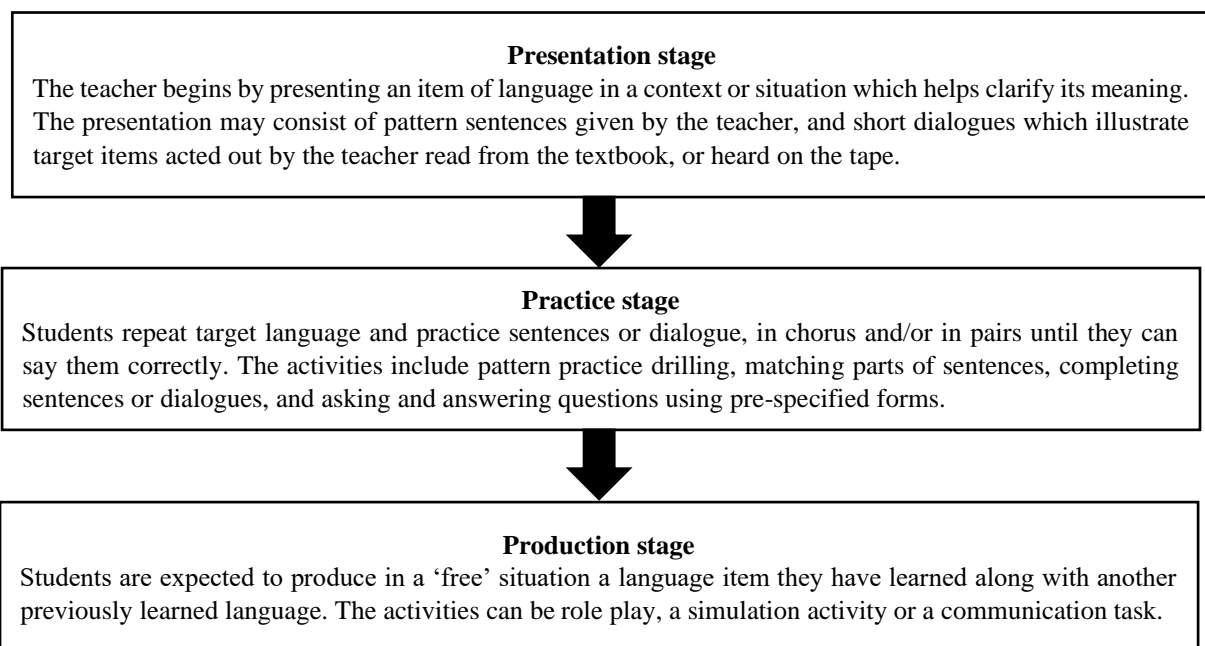


Figure 1. The Sequence of the PPP Model

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According to Thornbury (1999), this model allows the teacher to control the content and pace of the lesson. In addition, it also provides a convenient template onto which any number of lessons can be mapped.

Willis (1996) states that, in terms of teachers' roles and approaches, PPP sets out a narrowly predetermined set of objectives and procedures for the teacher and the teachers are at center stage orchestrating the class, except during the final production stage. In addition, the procedure of PPP includes:

- a) The presentation of the target language comes first. The context has to be invented.
- b) It is the teacher who pre-selects the language to be taught.
- c) It leads from accuracy to fluency.
- d) It provides a paradigm for grammar and form-focused lessons.
- e) The activities involve repeating, manipulating, and applying the language (Willis 1996).

Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT is derived from Communicative Language Teaching. It focuses on meaning rather than form. The teaching and learning activities involve tasks which facilitate learners to exchange meaning. Richards (2006) emphasizes that TBLT, or TBI (Task-Based Instruction), is extracted from an assumption saying that

language learning will be effective by creating the right kinds of interactional processes in the classroom to engage students, and the best way to generate these is to use specially designed instructional tasks. Experts have their own terms referring to TBLT, such as TBI (Task-Based Instruction) and TBL (Task-Based Learning). In this article, I use TBLT to avoid confusion.

As the name suggests, the concept of task is the central point of TBLT. Willis (1996) defines a task as a goal-oriented communicative activity with a specific outcome, where the emphasis is on exchanging meanings not producing specific language forms. Nunan (2004) divides tasks into two, target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks deal with the use of language in the world beyond the classroom, while pedagogical tasks refer to those that occur in the classroom. Moreover, a pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work involving learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, and interacting within the target language. Learners' attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge to express meaning (Nunan, 2004:4).

Added to this, Richards (2006:31) defines pedagogical tasks as specially designed classroom tasks intended to use specific interactional strategies and may

also require the use of skills, grammar, and vocabulary. From these two definitions, TBLT accepts the importance of grammar, but form-focused activities always follow the meaning-focused on to develop the language.

While the procedure of PPP is clearly reflected in its name, the procedure

of TBLT is somewhat different. There are a large number of TBLT versions. Here, I use the one which is proposed by Willis (1996). It consists of three components of the TBLT framework: Pre-task, task cycle, and language focus

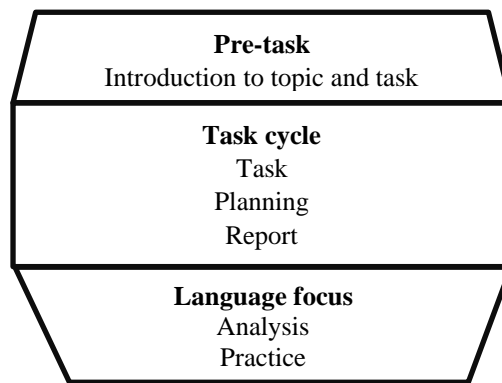


Figure 2. The Sequence of the TBLT Model

In the pre-task, the teacher introduces the topic and the task which activates topic-related words and phrases. The task cycle offers learners the chance to use whatever language they already know in order to do the task, and then to improve that language, under teacher guidance, while planning their reports of the task. At last, language focus includes analysis and practice components, fulfilling explicit study of language form (Willis 1996). Teaching templates explained earlier in Figure 1 and Figure 2 above look similar to each other and they only are in reverse order. However, according to Willis (1996), each framework shows observable differences Seen from the teacher's roles

and approach, TBLT enables learners to move from language experience to language analysis and the teachers set things up and hold back. They intervene only when needed, and review each phase at the end. In terms of procedure, in TBLT:

- a) the context is already established by the task itself.
- b) during the analysis stage, learners are free to ask about any aspects they notice
- c) it leads from fluency to accuracy (combined with fluency)
- d) all four skills are naturally integrated.
- e) the activities encourage students to think and analyze (Willis 1996).

Li (2020) also elaborates on the differences between PPP and TBLT in terms of teachers' roles and procedures. The PPP model constitutes teachers as a leader who takes charge of the pace and content of the lesson. Meanwhile, in the TBLT framework, teachers barely intervene in students' performance when they do the task. In terms of procedure, PPP mainly focuses on linguistic forms rather than language meaning through the application of a presentation-practice-production sequence. In contrast, TBLT provides greater flexibility for teachers to design suitable based on students' levels.

Criticism

PPP lesson has been popular among English teachers all over the world for quite some time, even up to this second. Nowadays, a growing trend criticizing PPP has widely appeared as it focuses too much on accuracy and does not facilitate the need of learners in using language to communicate. Westwood (2006) asserts that this template does not arise out of any genuine need of the students to communicate since the topics for study are predetermined by the teacher and the textbook. In addition, Harmer, (2007) writes that PPP assumes that students learn 'in straight lines', from no knowledge, through highly restricted sentence-based

utterances and on to immediate production, while human learning is more random.

Willis (1996) mentions several problems of PPP.

(a) Sometimes learners manage to do the task or role-play at the production stage without using the target form at all.

(b) Sometimes learners tend to overuse the target form and make very unnatural conversation.

(c) PPP gives an illusion of mastery as students can often produce the required forms confidently in the classroom, but once outside, they either do not use them at all or use them incorrectly.

Willis (1996) also argues that it is unfortunate that the PPP cycle restricts the learner's experience of language on a single item. She also adds that it is ironic that the goal of the final 'P' – free production – is often not achieved. In addition, the PPP model is likely more suitable for a certain level of students. Phillips (1996) states that PPP is more applicable when teaching mature and more-motivated students who are anxious to understand the grammatical rules.

On the other hand, TBLT is derived from Communicative Language Teaching which emerged as a substitute for traditional methods. Although it is claimed to overcome the previously criticized method, TBLT cannot be separated from

the criticism as well. Richards (2006) asserts that there is little evidence that TBLT is more effective than PPP. Task work may well serve to develop fluency at the expense of accuracy. Added to this, Elis, et. al (2020) list several criticisms addressed by both outsider and insider critics of TBLT regarding the implementation of TBLT. Outsider critics argue that:

- a) tasks cannot serve as the units of a syllabus,
- b) TBLT does not help learners learn a 'new' language and,
- c) there is no grammar in TBLT,
- d) Performing tasks encourages indexical and minimal use of the L2,
- e) TBLT is not suited to low-proficiency learners,
- f) TBLT assigns the teacher a very limited role,
- g) 'Task' is an ill-defined construct,
- h) learners will resort to using their L1 when performing tasks. TBLT is not suited to 'acquisition-poor' environments.

The criticism mainly focuses on unclear definitions of 'task' and the lack of grammar acquisition in TBLT. In relation to the importance of grammar, Rossiter (2021) states that grammar, as well as syntax, vocabulary, and spelling, is essential in written language to ensure that

messages are understandable to the reader and to avoid being meaningless and ambiguous. Meanwhile, the criticism is not only delivered by the 'outsider' but TBLT is also criticized by its advocates.

- a) Task-Based research is limited in a number of respects
- b) What types of tasks should figure out in a task-based course?
- c) What makes a task complex and how can tasks be sequenced effectively?
- d) What is the role of explicit instruction in TBLT?
- e) Teachers' and students' negative perceptions about TBLT?

Possible implementation in the teaching and learning process

As explained above, heavy criticism has been constantly directed at the PPP as a teaching template for so many reasons. While it is regarded as being too mechanical, it is suitable to be implemented in exam preparation classes. Many English language exams, such as TOEFL and TOEIC, are tested in tasks which focus on skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

Burgess & Head (2005) mentions several common task types in English language exams. Two of them are gap-fill tasks and error identification and correction tasks.

(a) Gap-fill tasks

A multiple-choice gap-fill task offers the candidate a choice of a possible answer to

fill each of the gaps in a sentence or text. The correct answer must not only make sense, but it must fit grammatically. Therefore, awareness of sentence structure

is vital. The following figure is the example taken from the Longman Preparation Series for the New TOEIC Test.

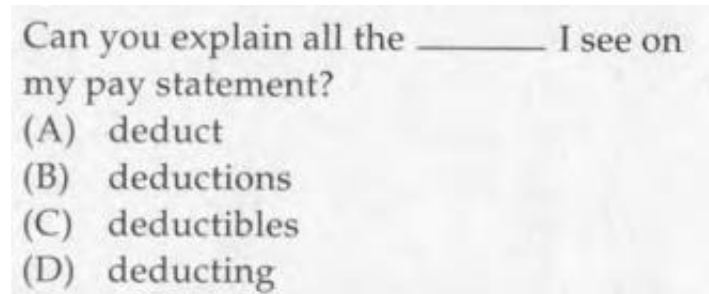


Figure 3. Example of a Gap-fill Task in TOEIC Test

More complex gap-fill tasks involve inserting whole phrases instead of single words into a gap as in the following figure.

The example is taken from the Longman Introductory Course for the TOEFL Test

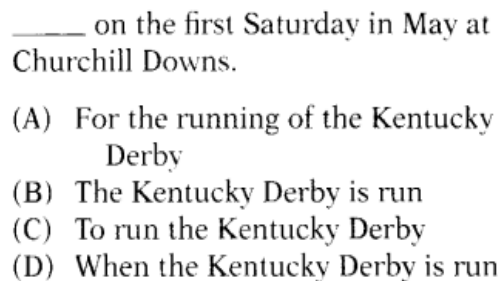


Figure 4. Example of a More Complex Gap-fill Task in TOEFL Test

(b) Error identification and correction tasks. The tasks focus on identifying incorrect uses of English. They are made more

difficult in that four possible mistakes are highlighted, but only one is actually wrong, as in this TOEFL example

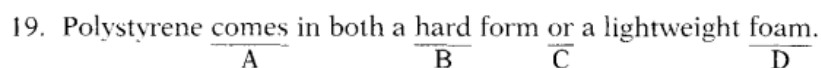


Figure 5. Example of error identification and correction task in the TOEFL Test

Types of tasks above demand the candidate to focus on accuracy and appropriateness to answer the question correctly. As stated by Burgess & Head

(2005), students should be familiar with the main terminology of grammar such as modals, articles, conditionals, reported speech, and the passive. They should also

be able to recognize examples of the various forms and structures they denote.

Related to this, Harmer (2007) explains that PPP is extremely useful in a focus-on-form lesson, especially at lower levels, but it is irrelevant in a skills lesson, where focus-on-form may occur as a result of something students hear or read. It is useful in teaching grammar points such as the use of *can* and *can't*. Burgess & Head (2005) mention that exams tend to focus minds on grammatical accuracy in which learners are explicitly penalized when they make grammatical errors in written answers, while students obtain little feedback on grammar when they use English for more communicative purposes. Thus, PPP tends to be more suitable to be implemented to prepare students for accuracy-based examinations.

Apart from its criticism, TBLT is effective to be applied in a teaching and learning process to some extent. TBLT is

well-known as meaning-focused learning which enables students to experience real-life communication through language. According to Willis (1996), learners need opportunities to communicate what they want to say and express what they feel or think. Using language for real purposes enables learners to recall and use the language they already know.

Thornbury, (1999) mentions that communicative tasks prepare learners for real-life learning use, and they encourage the automatization of language knowledge. He also provides some examples of communicative tasks, information gap activities, and jigsaw activities.

(a) Information gap activities

The information required to complete the task is distributed amongst interactants. The knowledge gap between them can only be bridged by the interactants communicating with each other. Here is an example.

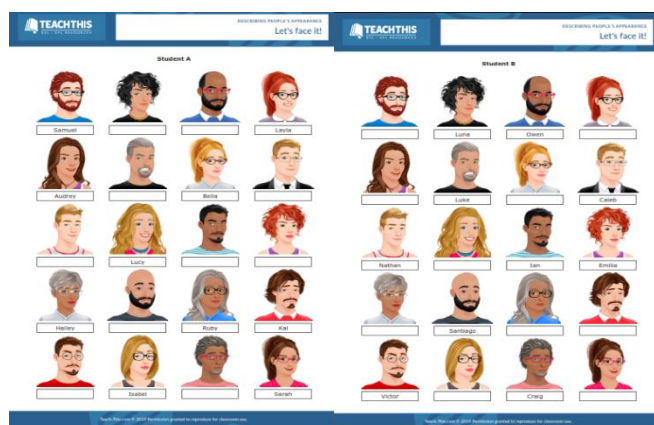


Figure 6. Example of an Information-gap Activity

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Using this worksheet, students are asked to complete all of the names under the images by asking and describing those people's appearances. The students are given opportunities to use any words to do the task. Willis (1996) argues that it is important to give students the freedom to

express what they want to say, to gain practice in turn-taking, controlling the interaction, and interacting spontaneously in pairs.

(b) Jigsaw activities

Here is an example of a series of pictures in a jigsaw activity.

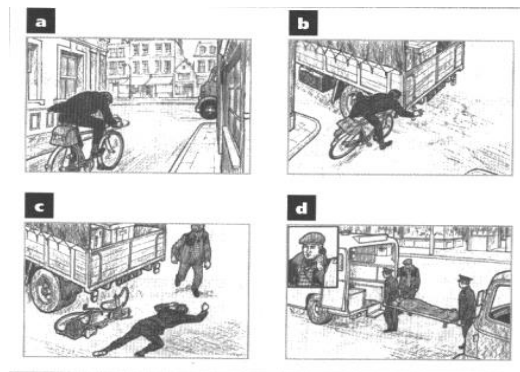


Figure 7. Example of a Jigsaw Activity

Ellis et al. (2020) provide an example of a jigsaw activity. Students are given five jumbled pictures depicting a story. The task can be performed individually by asking students to sequence the pictures independently before telling the story in oral or written form. The task can also be performed in group work. Each member is given one picture and describes what happens in his/ her picture. Then, they work together to arrange the pictures in the right order.

As explained above, apart from the heavy criticism received, PPP and TBLT have their own strength. PPP might be stricter with its sequence, but it is considered more effective to be implemented in test/exam preparation classes as students can focus solely on form.

On the other hand, TBLT might be useful to be applied if the students are pushed to use language in their real-life context. Although it considers fluency first then accuracy, grammar knowledge is not completely abandoned. In fact, in the last phase, which is language focus, students are expected to fulfill explicit study of language form.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the outcomes of the English teaching and learning process are embedded with the method used by the teacher. In this article, I have elaborated on the difference between PPP and TBLT, teaching templates that are frequently compared by a lot of experts. The most obvious difference is that PPP is a teaching template that focuses more on accuracy than

fluency. The new information is presented, and the students are expected to acquire the language through practice. On the contrary, TBLT expects students to develop their language through more real-life language input and its use of it. It values fluency and process as the paramount aspect.

Each teaching template indeed has its own strength and weakness. In fact, there is no single teaching template that is effective to be implemented in all contexts and situations. Any of them is effective in a way. If the goal of the lesson is to score well on exams or to prepare students for tests, PPP might be effective. In contrast, if being communicative is the primary goal, TBLT might be useful for facilitating students to be able to communicate naturally. The most important thing is not which teaching template is applied, but how a teacher facilitates students to achieve their goals.

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