Task-Based Language Teaching from the Perspective of Transfer of Learning

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Abstract

While task-based language teaching (TBLT) is arguably one of the most successful frameworks within the umbrella of communicative language teaching, there has been little debate on this framework in reference to transfer of learning (ToL). ToL aims at putting learned knowledge and skills to practical use in a successful manner. From this perspective, this paper discusses how TBLT can maximize the possibility for learners to make use of learned knowledge and skills in the real world. In order to do so, I will first develop some principles that play a very important role in transfer-appropriate learning and teaching, followed by an argument on how they can be embedded in the framework, and future implications.

1 Introduction

Transfer of learning (ToL) is one of the most fundamental goals of any kind of education. It aims at raising independent individuals who can reactivate their newly learned knowledge and skills when needed. Therefore, ToL is defined as a successful use of previously learned knowledge and skills in a context apart from the original learning context.

ToL could happen in a laboratory setting (e.g., from room A to room B or from test A to test B) and most research investigating ToL has dealt with this type. In contrast, a more authentic type of ToL is what happens in real-world contexts (RWC). For example, people retrieve school knowledge and make use of it to function outside school. (Note that prior researchers may call it far transfer in comparison to near transfer; see Detterman, 1993, for near and far transfer.)

In this article, I focus on the latter type of authentic ToL and discuss how to make it happen maximally and effectively in reference to Task-Based Language

Teaching (TBLT), one of the most ToL-appropriate teaching frameworks. Discussing TBLT from the perspective of ToL has rarely been seen before. There are only two studies relevant to it, which I will mention at the end of the paper, and I propose that it is beneficial to focus more on ToL as a strand of TBLT research. To do so, first, I will describe the gist of TBLT, and subsequently review and revise the eight ToL principles that appeared in Ogawa (2022). Then, I deal a little more deeply with TBLT to analyze it from the point of view of the new principles.

2 Task-based language teaching

TBLT has been classified within the broad category of communicative language teaching (CLT) as Ellis (2003) explains that "task-based language teaching constitutes a strong version of CLT" (p. 27). However, TBLT itself should be considered as an umbrella term under which we can observe plenty of features and implementational differences. Being aware of such traits will enable us to consider what kind of tasks and task-based instruction work better to make ToL happen. We will consider this issue in Chapter 4.

First of all, and most importantly, a clear distinction should be made between focused tasks and unfocused tasks. "Unfocused tasks ... may predispose learners to choose from a range of forms but they are not designed with a use of a specific form in mind. In contrast, focused tasks aim to induce learners to process, receptively or productively, some particular linguistic feature, for example, a grammatical structure" (Ellis, 2003, p. 16). The underlying idea of this distinction may be the syllabus designers' attitudinal differences regarding whether to focus primarily on task content and language meaning or to shed more light on the language forms used in the task. These attitudinal differences can lead to very different forms of TBLT.

This distinction leads to another difference in language teaching; that is, TBLT can differ according to the extent to which the teaching procedure involves tasks. When tasks are central to the lesson and language acquisition is seen as a byproduct of it, "task-based" is an appropriate term to describe the lesson, but it is often "task-supported" teaching that is actually conducted by many language educators. Task-supported language teaching is defined as "teaching that utilizes tasks to provide free practice in the use of a specific linguistic feature that has been

previously presented and practiced in exercises" (Ellis, 2003, p. 351). Therefore, the difference in the degree of "taskness" (Ellis, et al., 2020) may depend on instructors' choices regarding whether to use a focused or unfocused TBLT syllabus.

Finally, TBLT and learning within it can be either interactive or non-interactive. Although TBLT is often considered to be synonymous with cooperative activities under the premise that tasks should work as contexts in which participants use the target language practically as a communicative tool, there are many tasks identified as non-interactive activities. Referring to them as non-reciprocal tasks, Ellis (2003) gives the example of listening tasks in which "learners listen to a text without any opportunity to interact, for example, when learners listen to directions about what route to follow and mark in the route on the map" (p. 49).

Although there is much more diversity in TBLT, these fundamental distinctions I mentioned above can be a useful starting point to discuss and design more ToL-appropriate TBLT that is also culturally and contextually appropriate. After introducing ToL principles in the following chapter, I will discuss TBLT once again in more detail.

3 Transfer of learning principles

In Ogawa (2022), based on prior research and transfer of learning (ToL) related theories, I developed eight ToL principles that may help maximize the chances that the activities going on in language classrooms will result in learning that will actually prove useful in real-world contexts outside of school. In this chapter, after introducing them, I would like to make necessary modifications to the principles before analyzing TBLT in more detail from the perspective of ToL.

3.1 Eight ToL principles

The first principle concerns the transfer appropriate processing (TAP) theory originally developed in psychology. Lightbown (2007, p. 27, in reference to Blaxton, 1989; Morris et al., 1977), who introduces the theory into the field of SLA, explains: "the fundamental tenet of TAP is that we can better remember what we have learned if the cognitive processes that are active during learning are

similar to those that are active during retrieval." Based on this assumption, the *similarity principle* advocates making learning contexts as similar as possible to the real-world contexts (RWC) where learners need to retrieve the learned content.

The *diversity principle*, which is the second ToL principle, is derived from the similarity principle. In other words, RWCs consist of diverse people and language with diverse situations and relationships. Therefore, one way to make learning contexts similar to RWCs is to bring their linguistic and contextual diversity into language classrooms. This involves, for example, several types of skills such as presentation skills, interactive communication skills, and cultural understanding. Contextual diversity also matters because language is not spoken merely in a single setting. Language sometimes functions to simply convey messages, but other times it can entertain interlocutors, and in other settings it can mediate language users' thoughts and behavior. However, language classrooms sometimes fail to take these features of RWCs into consideration and only focus on textbook language. Textbook language is not always helpful in offering learners useful materials that reflect language used in the real world (see Römer, 2009).

The *deduction principle* emphasizes the acquisition of accurate language forms without "fossilization" (Selinker, 1972, p. 215) of non-target forms. This principle does not underestimate the benefits of inductive language learning. As many meaning-based approaches in practice, especially communicative language teaching, emphasize induction, it has much to do with learners' natural interlanguage development. In fact, language learning necessarily involves some degree of learners' inducing patterns or rules based on features observed in the input. However, what the principle is concerned about is the incompleteness of inductive learning alone. To improve learners' accurate language skills, both inductive and deductive learning need to take place.

The *automatization principle* suggests learners be able to manipulate target languages without relying too much on declarative knowledge. It is often pointed out that effective speakers' utterances consist of fixed and formulaic expressions that are retrieved as if they were single lexical items (Wood, 2006; and Pawley & Syder, 2014). In SLA, learning to use formulaic expressions plays a significant role in learners' fluency development (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008). Therefore, learners need plenty of opportunities to get accustomed to their declarative knowledge of

the target language and convert it into procedural and automatic knowledge that they can use effectively and effortlessly.

The *generation principle* is derived from the constructivist idea of learning by doing. It claims that learning should not take place in a passive manner. Passive learning may be enough for test preparation, but not for actual language use. "Passive learning creates knowledge. Active practice creates skill" (Clear, 2019, p. xi). Larsen-Freeman (2002, p. 42, in reference to Hopper, 1998) claims that language learning is not merely acquiring knowledge, but it involves expanding a repertoire of communicative contexts. In order to do so, learners need trial-and-error opportunities in which they proactively apply their knowledge and develop their own useful and practical repertoires. This principle also goes along with what Wittrock (1974) calls "generative learning" which involves "actively making sense of to-be-learned information by mentally reorganizing and integrating it with one's prior knowledge, thereby enabling learners to apply what they have learned to new situations" (Fiorella & Mayer, 2016, p. 717).

The *vision principle* suggests learners have a clear perception of where and how they are going to apply what they are learning in the future. It assumes that if learners can vividly imagine where and how to use the target language in their real lives (e.g., when they talk with friends about a movie, when they make orders in a cafe, etc.), they are more likely to easily absorb what they are learning. James, a leading scholar of ToL, interviewed his learners and even revealed that simply being aware of future requirements such as examinations and presentations can motivate learners to transfer learned knowledge and skills (2012). Therefore, helping learners form clear visions can effectively make their learning far more outcome-oriented and transfer-appropriate.

The *interaction principle* takes the sociocultural perspective into consideration. It considers learning as a process that is social in nature. Interaction can occur either between learners and instructors or among learners. With interaction, learners can construct their own culture, collaboratively challenge difficulties, and make necessary improvements through mutual teaching and learning. The zone of proximal development (ZPD), a Vygotskyan concept, has a critical role here. The ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level

of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). With peers' help through interaction, which is often referred to as scaffolding, learners can stay in the zone as much as possible to make learning happen naturally.

Feedback can be a key to learners' effective and successful interlanguage development. The *feedback principle* is relevant to the deduction principle and the interaction principle because feedback can lead to learners' correct language use (see Rassaei, 2014), and it usually emerges from and in the interaction as interactive feedback. However, it should be carefully determined which type of feedback, how, and in which contexts feedback is provided in order to maximize its effect. (See Hattie & Timperley, 2007.) The feedback principle as a ToL principle, however, argues that feedback should be provided in a way that leads learners' attention to the target language forms but does not interrupt the conversational flow. In other words, primary focus should be put on meaning negotiation and feedback should accompany it.

These eight ToL principles are summarized below with brief explanations.

1) The similarity principle: learning contexts and performance contexts should be similar.
2) The diversity principle: learners should be involved in many kinds of learning.
3) The deduction principle: learning should aim at acquiring core concepts of issues properly and applying them to new situations.
4) The automatization principle: L2 knowledge should be automatized.
5) The generation principle: learners should be required to apply their knowledge.
6) The vision principle: learners should envisage as clearly as possible when and how to use learned knowledge and skills.
7) The interaction principle: learning should take place in an interactive manner.
8) The feedback principle: instructors should provide learners with natural interactive feedback. (Ogawa 2022, p. 28, with a few revisions added)

3.2 Revising the ToL principles

Some of my ToL principles are insufficiently clear, and I would like to make a few changes to them, renaming some and combining others. The key changes, which will be discussed further below, are as follows: I will integrate the diversity principle into the similarity principle. I will also rename the vision principle the *meta-learning principle* and the deduction principle the *abduction principle* (used in the special sense originated by Charles S. Pierce), which also subsumes the feedback principle. The resulting set of six principles is summarized here:

1) The similarity principle: learning contexts should be set in alliance with real-world contexts.
2) The *abduction principle*: learning should form a cycle of inductive and deductive learning.
3) The automatization principle: L2 knowledge should be automatized.
4) The generation principle: learners should be required to apply their knowledge.
5) The *meta-learning principle*: Being aware of what and how to learn, learners should envisage as clearly as possible when and how to use learned knowledge and skills.
6) The interaction principle: learning should take place in an interactive manner.

The diversity principle is absorbed into the similarity principle because the purpose of setting up diversity in a language classroom is to make it similar to RWCs. However, diversity is merely one of the characteristics seen in the RWCs, and the similarity principle covers other traits of RWCs as well. Depending on target language features, language instructors need to closely analyze them in RWCs and bring them in to their classrooms.

My renaming of the deduction principle is due to its confusing terminology that could imply the superiority of deduction over induction. Rather, these two types of learning should form a continuous cycle that goes on and on. Learners are encouraged to induce patterns underlying the target language from input and try it out in their output, but they also need to engage in deduction to acquire correct forms and avoid fossilization. The abduction principle points up the dialectic nature of such processes. The word "abduction" is explained often in a scientific context as a means of making inferences. Reichertz (2013) explains that "abduction

is not the product of uninformed guessing or a god-given ability to recognize what is right, *but is rather a matter of absorbing (the greatest possible amount of) environmental data*, which are then (albeit subconsciously) interpreted and used to arrive at a meaningful conclusion" (p. 127). Therefore, the abduction principle in SLA implies that learners' interlanguage development involves both induction and deduction, which come together to constitute abduction. With learners' own effort, feedback can also trigger learners' abduction and work effectively to alter their interlanguage, and which is why this principle subsumes the feedback principle.

The vision principle is changed into the meta-learning principle. In Ogawa (2022), I do not include the meta-learning principle in the eight ToL principles, but briefly mention its importance referring to some authors. Young (2019, pp. 54-55) claims that "being able to see how a subject works, what kinds of skills and information must be mastered, and what methods are available to do so more effectively is at the heart of success." James (2006) asserts that "when students think relatively deeply about their own learning process and outcomes, they are thinking in a way that is consistent with high-road [i.e., conscious] transfer" (p. 157). In contrast to low-road transfer, which is an unconscious process provoked when learning and performance situations are alike enough, high-load transfer requires conscious attempts to figure out similarities between ostensibly unsimilar situations and conscious efforts to apply them. Based on these ideas, I propose that it is worth considering meta-learning behavior to be an important ToL inducer and that the vision principle needs to include a metacognitive view of learners' learning itself.

4 Analyzing TBLT from the perspective of ToL

In Ogawa (2022), TBLT was judged to be one of the most transfer-appropriate frameworks. By considering the framework from the ToL perspective, there is potential to make it even more effective. Therefore, in this chapter, I will take a closer look at TBLT mainly in reference to Ellis (2003), one of the seminal texts on TBLT, and discuss how it can relate to and embody the new ToL principles explained above.

4.1 The similarity principle

"The unit of analysis at every stage of a TBLT course is the task" (Long, Lee, and Hillman, 2019, p. 509). Then, the similarity principle suggests choosing appropriate task types that are allied with learners' language learning purposes and educational goals of the school authorities. When it comes to SLA, a clear distinction can be made between prepared language use, which is often one way and non-reciprocal as in presentations and speeches, and prompt language use which is often interactive. Referring to Levelt's speech production model, Wendel (1997, cited in Ellis, 2003) explains that they involve different types of planning for language speakers, namely "strategic or off-line planning, i.e. the planning that takes place when learners are given time to plan a task prior to performing it, and online planning, i.e. the planning that occurs while learners are actually performing the task" (Ellis, 2003, p. 25). Considering the language use in the RWCs and judging from the perspective of the similarity principle, although strategic planning is far from unnecessary, online planning should be more in focus.

Task purpose and target language domain being determined, instructors (sometimes with learners) can construct appropriate tasks which involve languages and skills used in the RWCs. These tasks were christened "target tasks" by Long, and Ellis describes them as "the real-world activities they engage in" (Ellis, 2003, p. 220). In carrying out such tasks, teachers should be careful that an "educational imperative" (Goffman, 1981, p. 54) does not take over. This term refers to a situation in which language teachers and learners tend to deal with language as a learning target, not as a tool. Ellis explains that "task-based teaching calls for the classroom participants to forget where they are and why they are there and to act in the belief that they can learn the language indirectly through communication in it rather than directly through studying it" (p. 251). Therefore, it is one of the biggest strengths of TBLT that it can provides learners with opportunities to actually make their language function in a meaningful context.

In order to make learners' language use as real as possible, tasks can be prepared as unfocused because the real world is full of linguistic diversity and many kinds of expressions. Focusing on specific forms can work in certain situations but sticking specifically to a few forms right from the beginning of tasks may not be a good idea from the perspective of the similarity principle. It is not a

problem that instructors have some language forms listed that could be introduced in the task, but it is a problem when they show up in unnecessary sequences in it, which causes a divergence from the real world. Rather, instructors need to elicit these forms when real problems occur in meaning negotiation, or at least, learners make problematic utterances that are compatible with what instructors have prepared. Therefore, Ellis (2003) concludes that "They cannot determine in advance exactly which forms, or range of forms, should be addressed nor can they stipulate when they should be addressed. All that is possible is a checklist of items and procedures for deciding when a particular item can usefully be addressed" (p. 232).

4.2 The abduction principle

While there is a consensus in SLA regarding the necessity of input and the importance of implicit learning, explicit teaching has also been considered useful. Lantolf and Poehner (2014), for example, point out that "explicit knowledge subserved by declarative memory is a viable, if not primary, alternative for instructed adult learners" to achieve the ability to engage in spontaneous communicative activity (p. 79). It has been hotly debated, in addition to that, whether conscious attention is necessary in language acquisition. Ellis (2003) also mentions the issue and refers to Schmidt's (1990) concept of "noticing." Many empirical studies have been conducted and they provide supportive evidence. (See Schmidt, 2010). In fact, excessively content-based instruction, which tends to rely mostly on learners' implicit learning and fail to provide them with enough noticing opportunities, such as immersion education, has been criticized for learners' unsatisfactory outcomes especially in terms of grammatical correctness.

Based on such findings, this ToL principle claims that although TBLT should elicit learners' natural acquisition through negotiation of meaning, it also needs to encourage learners to acquire correct forms. Since TBLT naturally offers learners a huge amount of meaningful input which triggers their inductive learning, what needs to be discussed is how to rectify learners' problematic language use. The most plausible solution has been developed by Long (1998) as "focus on form" which leads learners' conscious attention to target linguistic items without spending too much time on them so to maintain negotiation of meaning

as the priority in lessons. TBLT can incorporate focus-on-form into its tasks both explicitly and implicitly. Ellis (2003, p. 257) introduces two implicit and four explicit techniques: request for clarification; recast; explicit correction; metalingual comment/question; query; and advice. The feedback of focus-on-form is surely one way to bring about abductive opportunities for learners and create the conditions for positive changes in their interlanguages.

Task designs also influence the amount of attention learners pay to language forms. For example, some tasks require learners to understand and/or use specific linguistic forms to complete tasks goals. Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993) call it "task-essentialness" and explain that some comprehension tasks can work this way, but the problem is the difficulty of making learners use such target forms in their own production (p. 139). This may be because a language usually has diverse ways to express an idea. However, I would say that other learners' utterances and instructors' use of target forms as modeling in such contexts can make the task conditions conductive to letting the learner try out new expressions, which could result in their interlanguage development as well. (Note that Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993) refer to "task-naturalness" (p. 132) in production tasks in comparison to "task-essentialness" in comprehension tasks.)

4.3 The automatization principle

Automatization is often considered as the main outcome of repetitive practice. This may be a strength of the audiolingual method. However, TBLT can approach it from a different angle. Ellis (2003) claims that, in contrast to the behaviorist view of making habits, "cognitive theories of language acquisition emphasize the need for practice in the context of 'real operating conditions.' ... This provides a strong rationale for task-based teaching, given that the aim of tasks is to afford opportunities for learners to perform their competence in activities that emphasize using rather than learning language" (pp. 112-113). Therefore, what matters in TBLT is not repetitive practice, but learners' activation and development of automatic processing that is most often present in the real world. "Given that communicative language use requires rapid online processing there is an obvious need for learners to develop automatic process/procedural knowledge" (Ellis, 2003, p. 145).

The question is how learners can train their automatic processing through TBLT. The automatization principle suggests the use of formulaic sequences and chunks to develop learners' exemplar-based linguistic knowledge. In contrast to rule-based linguistic knowledge, which represents learners' skills to grammatically construct sentences based on linguistic rules, exemplar-based linguistic knowledge consists of unanalyzed lexical units and fixed patterns which are retrieved by learners as wholes. It is said that "human beings possess a limited processing capacity" (Ellis, 2003, p. 108) and learners are less able to manipulate their language smoothly when they need to put a greater degree of effort in sentence construction or what Levelt (1989) calls "grammatical encoding" (p. 11). Exemplar-based linguistic knowledge requires less effort of learners to deliberately construct sentences, and thus contributes to faster utterances and fluent speech. In fact, learners' use of formulaic sequences has been proven to make their processing faster (see Conklin & Schmitt, 2008).

In terms of fluency development, TBLT can also approach it by adjusting the ways to implement tasks. For example, Yuan and Ellis's (2003) study demonstrates the positive effect of a time limit in a narrative task on learners' fluency. They also discuss the need of time limit in tasks regarding the conditions learners will experience in the real world (p. 24). Based on their study, we can assume that setting a time limit in each task is effective to develop learners' fluency through TBLT. From a different point of view, Ellis (2003) sums up task design variables that would impact learners' fluent language use thus: "tasks that: (1) provide contextual support; (2) have familiar or involving topics; (3) pose a single demand; (4) are closed; and (5) have a clear inherent structure are likely to promote fluency" (p. 127).

4.4 The generation principle

In terms of the generation principle, it is relatively easy for learners to take part in creative activities in TBLT. In fact, carrying out tasks itself is one kind of generative behavior especially when tasks require learners to produce explicit materials such as handouts and presentations as task outcomes.

From a language educational point of view, however, how to make learners build new skills on their existing language knowledge and try out new language

forms is a difficult question. One useful conceptual distinction to take into account here may be that of "borrowing" contrasted with "reproduction," which is made by Prabhu (1987, cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 250). Borrowing is learners' proactive take-up of available linguistic items in their real needs and is initiated by learners' own motivation to communicate their ideas by means of them, while reproduction is learners' use of the target linguistic items, but which is encouraged or sometimes even forced by instructors and not initiated by learners' needs. TBLT can provide learners with a rich amount of input and modeling of useful expressions; however, once it forces them to practice such language forms regardless of their needs, their learning becomes passive and possibly reduces the potential for them to be more creative. Therefore, the generation principle suggests all that TBLT could do is to give learners motivational stimulus with meaningful contexts and maximize the chance for them to try such language forms by themselves.

4.5 The meta-learning principle

This principle basically argues two things: learners should be aware of the practicality and usefulness of target language and skills; and learners should participate in learning plans, observation of learning trajectories, and review. The former may be triggered by the similarity principle as, the more real practice situations are, the easier it is for learners to imagine when and how target language and skills would function in their real lives as well. It is also possible to explicitly tell them some example contexts in which target language and skills work well. Take "how much do I owe you?" for example. The instructor can set up a mock bar counter in a classroom and act as a bartender to serve a drink to learners, and later explicitly tell them that they could also use the phrase when, for example, someone else gives them a cup of coffee, as in "how much do I owe you for the coffee?" In the bar example, learners can immediately perceive exactly in which situations the phrase can work, and in the coffee example, they may well imagine a future in which their kind friends bring them some coffee from a nearby coffee shop. In either case, the more vivid and clearer the contexts are, the more they stick.

Another approach that may be almost unique to TBLT is the use of needs analysis prior to task implementation. Needs analysis is important because, based on learners' real needs and motivation to function with their target language and

skills, it effectively enables tasks to incorporate their future vision. Ellis (2003) mentions activity theory and comments that "we can expect a task to result in different kinds of activity ... because different people will approach the task differently depending on their underlying motives" (p. 184). Taking such motives into consideration when planning task types and target language domains, TBLT can provide learners with practical and meaningful learning goals that go along with learners' preferences and needs.

What is more, "tasks can be designed with a metacognitive focus for learner-training purposes. This can be achieved by constructing tasks that help learners to become aware of, reflect on, and evaluate their own learning styles and the strategies they use to learn" (Ellis, 2003, p. 32). Needs analysis can surely work for this purpose, but post-task reflections are also powerful in maximizing learners' TBLT outcomes and learners' motivation for their future learning. Reflection can be carried out in the forms of learner reports and self-assessments. Willis (1996, p. 86) recommends giving learners opportunities to report or present their task outcomes as well as what they discovered in the task. In addition to this, Ellis (2003, p. 259) suggests letting learners articulate which aspects of language they put a special focus on and why and evaluate their own performance and communications with other learners. Reflections are important for both learners and instructors because they contribute not only to the self-mediating abilities during the task execution, but also to the continuous development of the task designs and procedures in the future.

4.6 The interaction principle

Although tasks can be either reciprocal or non-reciprocal and both have advantages and disadvantages, this principle endorses interactive two-way communication tasks. It is not difficult to design TBLT this way, and in fact, most TBLT practitioners may take it for granted that TBLT is an interactive framework of L2 learning and teaching. Especially when TBLT assigns priority to negotiation of meaning, interaction is beneficial, and this is what the Interaction Hypothesis mainly proposes. This hypothesis highlights the importance of interaction which is described as "*negotiation for meaning*, and especially negotiation work that triggers *interactional* adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor,

facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (Long, 1996, pp. 451-452, cited in Gass, 2008, p. 234). Mitchell, Myles, and Marsden (2013) explain that negotiation for meaning involves negative feedback as well as repetitions, confirmation checks, and clarification requests. Therefore, interaction itself is beneficial for language acquisition.

This principle, largely based on the sociocultural view which claims that "acquisition occurs *in* rather than *as a result of* interaction" (Ellis, 2003, p. 177), suggests that TBLT consider two concepts appearing in Chapter 3: the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding. Ellis (2003) also mentions them and argues that "the implication for effective task-based learning is that tasks must be structured in such a way that they pose an appropriate challenge by requiring learners to perform functions and use language that enable them to dynamically construct ZPDs" (p. 179).

One way to deploy ZPDs among learners is scaffolding. Scaffolding is "the process that assists the learner in getting to the next point in development, in sociocultural theory consisting of social assistance by other people" (Cook, 2008). Both instructors and learners can scaffold for other learners in many ways. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) sum up the functions of scaffolding: enlisting the problem solver's interest; simplifying the task by reducing the number of required acts; keeping learners in pursuit of an objective; marking or accentuating critical features of the task; controlling the learner's frustration and dependence; and demonstrating or modeling solutions to a task (p. 98). These scaffolding features are useful in TBLT as well.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I revised previously developed eight ToL principles and explained the resulting six principles. They may well contribute to more transfer-appropriate language learning; that is, embodying them as much as possible in approaches to teaching and learning may enable learners to acquire real language use beyond the school walls. After introducing the ToL principles, I discussed TBLT, one of the current trends in communicative language teaching, and analyzed this framework from the perspective of each principle. Since TBLT seems to vary

considerably depending on syllabus designs, my analysis of it with the use of principles may suggest one approach to dealing with such divergent characteristics of TBLT and constructing more appropriate designs that can make learners use language more practically and effectively with transfer-oriented learning.

I focused on TBLT in this paper because I assumed it has some transfer-appropriate traits and ideal features to develop its learners' target language skills that can function in the real world. However, as Ellis (2003) points out that "the rationale for task-based syllabuses is largely theoretical in nature, there being little empirical evidence to demonstrate that they are superior to linguistic syllabuses" (p. 210), there is a real need for more research on TBLT in practice.

Since researchers perceived such research needs, some studies have been conducted, and indeed, there is "a growing body of empirical evidence to support how and to what extent this approach can promote language learning." (Benson, 2016, p. 341) However, it is only recently that TBLT research has gained an appreciation for ToL or "*transferability* (i.e. the transfer in task-based abilities and/or linguistic features, as learners progress from one task to subsequent tasks)" (Nolen, 2020, p. 36). As far as I know, there are two pioneer studies in this field, namely Benson (2016) and Nolen (2020). Both of them try to examine if TBLT is effective in making ToL happen afterwards. While Benson (2016) tested learners' task performance after 45 minutes of TBLT treatment, Nolen (2020) examined learners' task performance as well as vocabulary in two different task units after two days of TBLT treatment in each unit. Although the results in Benson (2016) highlighted the difficulty of achieving consistent ToL, both studies demonstrated the transferability of skills from TBLT to some degree. It is also important to point out that, in contrast to Benson (2016), Nolen (2020) carried out her transferability tests in RWCs outside the classroom, and thus, her study is very effective in illuminating the actual transferability that is probable in learners' real lives.

However, as Benson (2016, p. 360) admits that "45 minutes of training may not be sufficient for consistent transfer," and considering the short term of TBLT treatment in Nolen's (2020) study, there is still a strong need to investigate transferability in TBLT with more robust settings. In other words, although TBLT consists of each task and it is considered to be a unit of analysis, when testing transferability is the research target, a longer term needs to be taken into

consideration. This is because what we want from TBLT is to transfer learners' task-related language use and task-related skills as wholes (e.g., language used to effectively collaborate with peers and skills to find best methods to reach goals). Without continuous TBLT treatment, it is probably very hard to observe ToL in RWCs.

Finally, including Benson (2016) and Nolen (2020), most research on TBLT from the perspective of ToL deals with English as a second language (ESL) contexts. Needless to say, research in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context is also necessary.

6 References

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