Teaching File 75

Task based learning and the status of grammar

Authors | Martina Zimmermann, Anna Häfliger, Vere Schofield, mit Studierenden der PH Luzern

At a glance

Target audience	This contribution discusses the status of grammar in Task Based Learning and presents grammar-focused suggestions for the classroom on the basis of tasks created by students at the PH Luzern.
Language	English as a foreign language
Target level	Primary school (Grade 3 to 6)
Aims	Based on the knowledge gained thanks to the preceding task, the pupils discuss task-related linguistic features and learn how to use them correctly.
Materials	Task instructions, exercises and other necessary material (memories, tables, etc.) can be downloaded from www.babylonia.ch > classroom supplement 75.

In diesem didaktischen Beitrag geht es um die Rolle von Grammatik im Framework for Task Based Learning (Willis, 1996). Die Antwort auf die Frage *Why not start with grammar?* basiert einerseits auf der Beobachtung, dass der gleichzeitige Fokus auf Inhalt und Form auch bei fortgeschrittenen Lernenden nicht ohne weiteres gelingt (Willis & Willis, 2007). Andererseits heben die beiden Autoren hervor, dass die Bearbeitung grammatischer Formen vor dem Bearbeiten von Inhalt den Effekt hat, dass Lernende dabei die korrekte Anwendung der Form fokussieren und so gar nicht erst die eigenen sprachlichen Ressourcen aktivieren um einen Inhalt zu bewältigen. „…*if we begin with a pronounced focus on form it is almost impossible to switch immediately to a focus on meaning. The benefits of a focus on meaning will be lost. Learners will not make the most of all the other language they have if their efforts are directed to reproducing the target forms. They will be less likely to grow in fluency and confidence. They will be less equipped to use the language o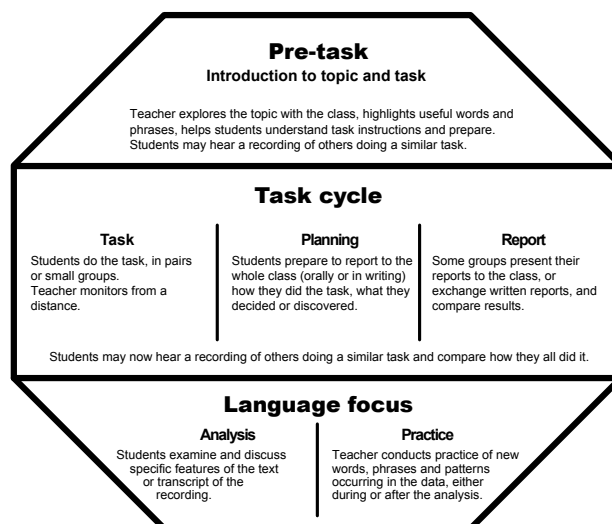utside the classroom.*" (Willis & Willis, 2007: 16) Die Debatte, ob und inwieweit im aufgabenorientierten Unterricht sprachliche Formen auch ausreichend erworben werden, wird kritisch geführt (Ellis, 2003; Richards, 2006; Thornbury, 2011). Kritiker befürchten, dass der "focus on meaning" zu Lasten des "focus on form" geht. Triassanti (2011) beschreibt, dass Lernende im aufgabenorientierten Setting sich schneller und leichter auszudrücken lernen, dabei aber im formalen Sprachgebrauch oft Abkürzungsstrategien entwickeln. Dies zieht den Schluss nach sich, dass die Arbeit an Sprachform und -struktur im Kontext des gegebenen bedeutsamen Inhalts einzufordern ist. Im von Willis (1996) entwickelten *Task Cycle* wird die Arbeit an der Sprachform integriert. Die Grafik illustriert die einzelnen Phasen im Zyklus.

Mit Bezug auf die Fragestellung des Stellenwerts von Grammatik wird ersichtlich, dass die Arbeit an der Form (*Analysis/Practice*) ihren festen Platz im Anschluss an – und nicht als Vorbedingung für – die inhaltliche Bewältigung der kommunikativen Aufgabe hat. Dabei geht es nicht darum, Form gegen Meaning auszuspielen, sondern es ist die als wesentlich zu gewichtende Kombination von beidem, die für den Kompetenzerwerb Sinn macht.

Die Arbeit an der Sprachform im Task Cycle von J. Willis (1996)

Pre-task
Introduction to topic and task

Teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases, helps students understand task instructions and prepare. Students may hear a recording of others doing a similar task.

Task cycle

Task	**Planning**	**Report**
Students do the task, in pairs or small groups. Teacher monitors from a distance.	Students prepare to report to the whole class (orally or in writing) how they did the task, what they decided or discovered.	Some groups present their reports to the class, or exchange written reports, and compare results.

Students may now hear a recording of others doing a similar task and compare how they all did it.

Language focus

Analysis	**Practice**
Students examine and discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording.	Teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases and patterns occurring in the data, either during or after the analysis.

Studierende und Dozierende aus den Fachbereichen Englisch und/oder Französisch Primarstufe der Pädagogischen Hochschule Luzern haben im Verlauf des Herbstsemesters 2013 die Lernwerkstatt COOLÉCOLE erstellt. Die Lernwerkstatt ist Bestandteil von "Lernwelten" an der PH Luzern. Sie ist ein Raum mit wechselnden Lernumgebungen, welche von den jeweiligen Fachschaften gestaltet wird. Lehrpersonen werden mit ihren Klassen zur Teilnahme eingeladen. http://www.lernwelten.phlu.ch/lernwerkstatt/home/ Für die Lernwerkstatt COOLÉCOLE wurden auf Basis der in der Zentralschweiz obligatorischen Englisch- und Französisch-Primarstufen-Lehrmittel aktivierende handlungsorientierte Aufgaben konzipiert, und zwar im Sinn einer Erweiterung oder Vertiefung des vorangehend bearbeiteten units/der unité. COOLÉCOLE wurde im Frühlingssemester 2014 im Bereich Englisch von 44 Primarschulklassen der Zentralschweiz besucht.

Die drei folgenden Beispiele illustrieren die Arbeit an Grammatik innerhalb des *Task Cycle* anhand von Tasks[1], welche für den Bereich Englisch der Lernwerkstatt entwickelt und durchgeführt wurden.

Generell ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass diese Arbeit nur bedingt planbar ist, da die Lehrperson die wesentlichen Hinweise auf Formen und Strukturen, die weitere Bearbeitung oder Übung erfordern, aus den Präsentationen der Lernenden erhält. So basieren die Vorschläge für „*Young World 3 unit 6 − Music in my ears*" auf beobachteten Gruppenpräsentationen, während „*Young World 1 unit 3 − Apples and Crisps*"

und „*Young World 4 unit 2 − Forms of Migration*" mögliche Übungsfelder bearbeiten. Sämtliche vorgestellten Materialen sind auf der Homepage von Babylonia abrufbar (www.babylonia.ch > classroom supplement 75).

Anmerkung

[1] Diese wurden von folgenden Studierenden der PH Luzern entwickelt: Fabienne Bregenzer, Carmen Bättig, Olena Halter, Susanna Hösli, Solène Kunz, Michèlle Christen, Alexandra Hesemann und Laura Oester.

Literatur

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. www.cambridge.org [letzter Zugriff 10.05.2014]

Thornbury, S. (2011). *T is for Task-based Learning*. http://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2011/11/13/t-is-for-task-based-learning/ [letzter Zugriff 10.05.2014]

Triassanti, R. (2011). Integrating Grammar into Task-Based Learning. *The Proceedings of National Seminar on English Language Teaching "The Best Method"*, 82-90. http://ejournal.unirow.ac.id/ojs/index.php/karyailmiah/article/view/115 [letzter Zugriff 30.08.2014]

Willis, J. (1996). *A Framework for Tasked-Based Learning*. Harlow, England: Longman.

Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing Task-based Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Die Lernwerkstatt COOLÉCOLE in der Pädagogische Hochschule Luzern.

TASK: Apples and Crisps
AGE GROUP: 3rd grade

CONTENT	LANGUAGE	OTHER SKILLS
Find out about	Practice	• Illustrate findings by creating a bar diagram
• Classmates' food likes and dislikes	• Interrogative forms	• Present findings using a diagram
• Classmates' breakfast habits	• Confirmation	
	• Negation	
	• Presentation skills	

OUTCOME	Bar diagrams illustrating findings from classroom questionnaires about food likes and dislikes and breakfast habits that are going to be presented in groups.
MATERIALS	Pencils, colour felt pens, poster (flip chart) sheets, questionnaire with 4 questions, 1 copy per child
PRE-TASK	Teacher assigns the questions to groups, learners walk around in the classroom asking their classmates the assigned questions and filling the answer into the questionnaire sheet. 1. Which food do you like? 2. Which food do you not like at all? 3. What do you eat for breakfast? 4. What can you cook?
TASK INSTRUCTION	With the answers to the assigned question learners in groups create a bar diagram (either: as learnt in Math, see primary curriculum 3rd/4th grade, or: following given instructions) that illustrates the findings.
LANGUAGE FOCUS	The suggestions below relate to the language aims listed above. • **Collecting the new food words:** Learners keep a personal logbook where they regularly collect new words they encounter and find worth learning. • **Create a Class Hitlist of "Don't likes":** Learners write (and practise thus the written form 'don't') over a week/two weeks their personal "don't likes" (besides food) on a wall poster. The class hit list is discussed once a week. • **More self-made "Can you…?" questions:** Can you jump from the springboard? Can you cook an egg? Can you say 5 words in French? Italian? Spanish? Can you fly a kite? Can you eat a worm? The activity can be done as a regular starter into the day over a defined period of training time, it can be varied into a (i.e. competitive: which group finds most answers in 5 minutes?) game.

The following files can be downloaded from www. babylonia.ch > classroom supplement 75:
• **Interview questions and Vocabulary list**
• **Task Card and Language support**
• **"Can you…?" questionnaire**

Extracts from the downloadable activities

Name	Can you		Yes, I can	No, I can't
	cook an egg			
	eat a worm			
	bake a cake			
	say 5 words in another language? Which one?			
	jump from a springboard?			

Apples and Crisps – "Can you… ?" Questionnaire

Task card

Material:

- Results from the interviews
- 2 posters (blank)
- 1 poster with example (1, 2)
- Colour felt pens
- Anleitung "Diagramm erstellen"

group: 3-4 children
time: 60 minutes

1. Read the answers from your class!

2. Take 2 questions (1 and 2) or (3 and 4)

3. Make a diagram with these answers

Write it ✎ on the poster!

"Apples and Crisps – Task card"

Language support

English	Deutsch
look	schauen/anschauen
answer	Antwort
question	Frage
choose	aussuchen
diagram	ein Diagramm
think about	darüber nachdenken
interesting	interessant
most	am meisten
least	am wenigsten
some	einige
speak clearly	deutlich sprechen
everyone takes part	jeder beteiligt sich
5 students like pizza	5 Schüler mögen Pizza
6 students eat/ don't eat breakfast	6 Schüler essen/ essen kein Frühstück
7 students don't like	7 Schüler mögen nicht
8 students can/ can't cook	8 Schüler können/ können nicht kochen

"Apples and Crisps – Language support"

CONTENT	**LANGUAGE**	**OTHER SKILLS**
• Find out about different music genres in the movie sector • Find out how to build instruments and how to talk about your creation and music in general in a rap	• Understand written instructions including imperatives and specific vocabulary (handicraft material, etc.) • Create a rap based on the vocabulary related to the topic music (Young World 3, Unit 6).	• Build instruments based on the instructions • Use the instruments to accompany rap while performing

OUTCOME	In groups, the pupils build instruments and create their own rap about how they built their instruments and about music in general. They present it to the class accompanying it with their self-made instruments.
MATERIALS	Paper, mp3- player with earphones, pens and crayons.
PRE-TASK	The pupils listen to different kinds of film music and guess the topic/genre of the movie. The class is divided into 4 groups. Every group has 5 cards labelled crime, action, drama, romance or thriller. First, the meaning of these terms is clarified with the class. The pupils listen to different kinds of film music and guess the topic/genre of the movie. In their groups, the pupils discuss their guess, before they decide in their group which card to show. If they are right, they get a point. Material: Labelled cards (crime, action, etc.); The teacher may use the PowerPoint presentation including the pieces of music and the solutions
TASK CARD	The children work in groups of three. Each pupil builds a different simple instrument following the instructions. The instruments will serve as the basis to create a rap as well as to accompany it acoustically (sounds, percussion).

The following files can be downloaded from www. babylonia.ch > **classroom supplement 75:**
• Powerpoint presentation and labbelled cards
• Task card, example of rap, instruction sheets for the creation of the different instruments (material for each instrument is listed there).

Extracts from the downloadable activities

MUSIC IN MY EARS Young World Volume 3, Unit 6

1. You have to decide, who of your group builds which instrument.
2. Take the box with the material for your instrument and build it. Follow the instruction on the sheet.
3. If you have finished your instrument, you can help someone of your group.
4. Now, you can make a rap with your group. The rap should be about how you built the instruments or about music. Listen to the example before you start.
5. Write down your own rap in your group
6. Practise your rap. Use your instruments.
7. Finally, you perform your rap in front of the class.

Wordlist:
- decide → entscheiden
- build → bauen
- instruction → Anleitung
- example → Beispiel
- practise → üben
- perform → aufführen

MANUAL- Making your own instrument
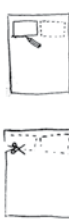
WIND INSTRUMENT

You need:
- 8 straws of different colours
- 1 template
- 1 piece of cardboard
- tape
- coloured tape
- scissors

Word list:
straw → Strohhalm
template → Schablone
cardboard → Karton
tape → Klebeband

You have to:

1. Take the template and draw it two times on the cardboard.

2. Take the scissors and cut them out.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

We identified the following areas of activities focussing on form. The suggestions below are based on presentations performed in the Lernwerkstatt in the spring term 2014. One group created a rap based on a modified version of the given instruction for the drum. They used a lot of imperative forms like on the instruction sheet. They did not make mistakes while giving instructions how to build the drum (e.g. "Take the scissors and cut and cut and cut"). However, they also used negative imperative forms to inform the audience how to avoid failure (*"do the can hold not like this"). A possible language focus for this group would fit nicely with the aims set for this unit (do/don't; does/doesn't) even though the book does not specifically deal with imperatives. First, the pupils could be reminded of the contraction of do not/don't before doing an exercise where affirmative or negated imperatives need to be formed. In the first part (a) of the suggested exercise "Please, don't do that!" the sentences are still related to the creation of the instruments but have been slightly modified. The second part (b) of the exercise could also be done orally.

Even though the classes had worked through the specific unit before coming to the Lernwerkstatt, the pupils were struggling with the forms does/do during their performance (child 1: "Do they like our rap?" child 2: "Yeah, they does, they does."). More practice appears to be necessary. The book offers an exercise (Young World 3, Activity book, p. 47, 8). In addition, oral exercises with questions and answers could enhance the automaticity of the use of do/don't and does/doesn't. Questions about different tastes of music and preferences for musicians/instruments could be asked in the class (e.g. Do you like funk? Yes, I do. Does Anna like Hip Hop? No, she doesn't. Do Anna and Emil listen to Bloc Party? Yes, they do.)

As different groups did different tasks, not all pupils were familiar with handicraft material vocabulary used in the rap. The group(s) who performed the rap could teach the new words to the rest of the class. Handicraft material in the classroom could be labelled.

The pupils are familiar with simple spatial prepositions (I live in/at…). Based on the rap productions, a potential language focus might include the repetition and/or introduction of spatial prepositions that were used in the instructions to build the instruments and in the raps (around, on, in,…). In their performances, the pupils were not always confident when using this kind of vocabulary (*on the bottom of the can, instead of: on the top). This vocabulary deserves further development. First, the children could search for the words in the instructions that tell them where to stick/cut, etc. Once these are found, their meaning could be clarified. The exercise "Where? Here!" shows a potential way of practicing these spatial words. The first part of the exercise (a) aims at memorizing the meaning of the spatial words based on the modified instructions used to build the instruments. A joint discussion about the different meanings of the sentences based on the use of various spatial words would be useful. In the second part (b) the pupils are asked to describe pictures that are not related to the creation of the instruments.

MATERIALS

The following files can be downloaded from www. babylonia.ch > classroom supplement 75:
- "Please, don't do that!" language support exercise a) and b)
- "Where? Here!" language support exercise a) and b)

Extract from the language support extra exercices

CONTENT	LANGUAGE	OTHER SKILLS
• Learners are creative and form rules for Utopia which they must justify in their presentation to the class	• Focus on verbs expressing permission and prohibition • Discussion and argumentation skills	• Foster co-operation • Practice presentation skills

OUTCOME	Presentation of the rules to the class with rationale for choice.
PRE-TASK	In the pre-task, the learners' attention is focussed on vocabulary and structures that occurred in Unit 2 Young World 4. The memory game is a playful way to remind learners of the vocabulary and leads logically to the task itself. Memory cards use icons to illustrate rules which have to be matched to a written description.
TASK CARD	Learners are asked to create their own rules as members of the "Bundesrat" of "Utopia". Clear instructions are provided for the learners to prepare for the outcome, which is a presentation in the class of their rules and why they chose them.
LANGUAGE FOCUS	The focus on language, which follows the learners' presentations, should concentrate on usage and structure. • Rules of the class in English • Rules for your room • 10 dos and don'ts for pet owners • Rules you would like to see on the playground • Worksheet with icons expressing permission and prohibition (see below) • Gap filling worksheet

MATERIALS

The following files can be downloaded from www. babylonia.ch > classroom supplement 75:
• Memory cards "Silly Rules"
• Task card
• Vocabulary list
• Language Focus exercices

Extract from the Language support exercise

Choose the right verb:

a) must   b) mustn't   c) are allowed to   d)are not allowed to

1. In a library you..............................shout

2. At school you .... play football on the playground

3. You .... look before you cross the road

4. You .... travel in the bus without a ticket

5. You .... clean your teeth every day

6. In the cinema you .... eat popcorn

Extracts from the "Silly Rules Memory Cards"

In Switzerland, you are not allowed to slam the car door.
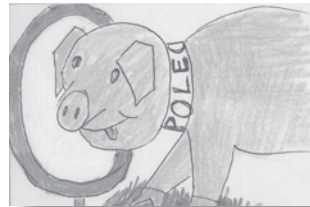
In France, you are not allowed to call your pig „Napoleon".

If you tell a lie in Nigeria, they will cut your tongue out.

In Alaska, you mustn't push a deer out of a plane.

Extracts from the "Task Card"

YOUNG WORLD 4, UNIT 2: FORMS OF MIGRATION

HELLO DEAR "BUNDESRAT"! THIS TASK IS ABOUT FUNNY RULES IN YOUR OWN IMAGINARY WORLD, WHICH IS CALLED UTOPIA.

1. MEMORY

FIRST, YOU ARE GOING TO PLAY A CARD GAME. IT IS ABOUT SILLY RULES THAT EXIST IN OUR WORLD. THIS WILL GIVE YOU GOOD IDEAS FOR YOUR OWN WORLD.

♦ TAKE THE MEMORY CARDS OUT OF THE BOX.

♦ TURN THE CARDS. NOW YOU CAN'T SEE THE PICTURES AND THE SENTENCES.

♦ MIX THE CARDS.

♦ THE YOUNGEST PERSON STARTS AND TURNS TWO CARDS. PLEASE READ OUT LOUD THE RULE WRITTEN ON THE CARD!

→ IF THE RULE BELONGS TO THE PICTURE, THE PERSON CAN KEEP THE TWO CARDS AND CAN PICK TWO OTHER CARDS.

You are not allowed to walk backwards.

♦ WRITE THE RULES DOWN (YOU ARE ALLOWED TO USE THE DICTIONARY).

♦ MAKE FUNNY SIGNS FOR YOUR RULES.

♦ PREPARE A PRESENTATION. YOU ARE GOING TO PRESENT THE RULES OF UTOPIA TO YOUR CLASS. FOR YOUR PRESENTATION YOU CAN USE THE SIGNS YOU MADE TODAY.
FOR YOUR PRESENTATION YOU NEED TO DISCUSS WHO SAYS WHAT. YOU CAN ALSO WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY AT YOUR PRESENTATION.
→ WHICH RULES DID YOU MAKE?
→ WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THOSE RULES?
→ WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT YOUR RULES?
→ WHAT DOES YOUR WORLD LOOK LIKE?