

Study on Task-Based Language Teaching in High School English Based on the Flipped Classroom Mode

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Abstract. Task-based language teaching emphasizes real and meaningful tasks as the driving force to promote students' comprehensive English abilities. The flipped classroom, as an innovative teaching mode, shifts knowledge instruction to an extracurricular setting, allowing more in-class time for task completion and interactive communication to enhance students' self-directed learning ability and learning efficiency. This paper integrates the task-based language teaching method with the flipped classroom to design a teaching framework for Unit 4, "Looking Good, Feeling Good," from the High School English Required Textbook 1 (the Yilin Edition). This study not only provides novel teaching strategies for high school English teaching but also offers theoretical support and practical solutions to the combined application of task-based language teaching and the flipped classroom.

Keywords: Task-based Language Teaching; High School English; Flipped Classroom; English Teaching.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rapid development of information technology, the rising attention to fragmented learning, and the increased digitalization of teaching methods have posed many challenges to the traditional teaching mode. However, the flipped classroom, as a new teaching approach, has received widespread attention in the field of education for its flexibility and interactivity. By transferring traditional in-class knowledge instruction outside the classroom, the flipped classroom reserves more time for completing tasks and interacting with classmates and teachers. This transformation not only improves students' independent learning ability but also promotes learning efficiency (Chen & Yang, 2018; Zhang et al., 2012). Flipped classroom provides students with more opportunities for personalized development (Chen & Yang, 2018; Zhang & Zhang, 2012; Zhu et al., 2015) and demonstrates significant advantages in language learning, making it an integral part of educational reform in the new era.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT, henceforth) advocates a student-centered approach, encouraging the design of real and meaningful classroom tasks to lead language use in real-life contexts, thereby improving students' language skills and critical thinking abilities (Dai, 2010). The *English Curriculum Standards* issued by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in 2001 emphasized that the curriculum should start from students' learning interests, life experiences, and cognitive ability, and advocates the learning methods of experiencing, practicing, participating, cooperating, and exchanging (Ministry of Education, 2001). The curriculum standard encourages teachers to implement task-based language teaching in the English classroom, aiming at cultivating students' comprehensive language skills and self-directed learning ability. Since then, TBLT has been widely implemented in China's primary and secondary education and has gradually expanded to higher education.

This paper integrates task-based language teaching and the flipped classroom to analyze Unit 4, "Looking Good, Feeling Good," from the High School English Required Textbook 1 (the Yilin Edition). It explores a new teaching mode and constructs a specific implementation framework. The research aims to provide innovative teaching strategies for future foreign language teaching, especially high school English teaching, as well as theoretical support and practical guidance for the integrated application of task-based language teaching and flipped classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT is an important language teaching method that emphasizes real-world tasks as a means of promoting language learning. TBLT was first proposed by Prabhu (1987). He believed that learners should acquire language through real communicative tasks, rather than relying solely on grammar and vocabulary instruction.

The development of task-based language teaching phases in China has undergone several phases. Xia & Kong (1998) compared the theoretical basis and teaching modes of “problem-based learning” and “task-based language teaching”, which marked the introduction of task-based language teaching in China. Subsequently, schools in Guangdong Provinces and other regions gradually implemented task-based language teaching, but the results were not initially promising (Luo & Zhang, 2021). A series of studies then began to focus on challenges in the process of implementation, such as teachers’ proficiency levels, students’ insufficient knowledge, and their incompatibility with traditional exam-oriented education (Reinders & Thomas, 2015). However, with the introduction of the *English Curriculum Standards* and increased teacher training, TBLT has gradually become one of the mainstream methods in foreign language teaching in China.

However, even though task-based language teaching has been widely used globally, research on the application of task-based language teaching in Chinese high schools remains limited. High school students face significant course pressure, making the effective implementation of TBLT in this context an urgent issue. Therefore, exploring how to integrate TBLT in high school English teaching effectively is still an important research focus.

2.2 Flipped Classroom

The concept of the flipped classroom can be traced back to two high school chemistry teachers (Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sams) in Woodland Park, Colorado. They started recording lecture videos to help students who missed classes catch up but soon realized that this method optimized classroom time. Since then, this model, where students watch instructional videos before class and engage in interactive learning activities during class, gained widespread popularity, realizing the teaching mode of “flip”.

Based on the teaching practices of R. Musallam, a chemistry teacher at Sacred Heart School in Francisco, J. Hooper, a calculus teacher at Champaign High School in Illinois, and Clintondale High School near Detroit, Zhao (2013) summarized the three essential components of the flipped classroom: problem-guiding, video-learning, and problem-solving. The flipped classroom emphasizes pre-class knowledge acquisition through teacher-prepared videos and online resources, while in-class time is mainly used for task-driven activities, group work, and problem-solving. The advantages of this model include aligning with students’ cognitive processes, fostering critical thinking, and building harmonious teacher-student relationships (Meng, 2017; Tian, 2014; Wang et al., 2013). Fewer schools promoted this teaching mode in China (Wang et al., 2013), and most of them are applied in university settings (Cui & Wang, 2014; Li Wei & Chen, 2023; Lu, 2014). However, for Chinese high school English teaching, the flipped classroom is still in its early stages both in research and practice.

2.3 Advantages of Integrating TBLT and Flipped Classroom

The integration of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and the flipped classroom can maximize the advantages of both approaches, facilitating student’s comprehensive language abilities. TBLT engages students in real and meaningful tasks, while the flipped classroom offers a more flexible and efficient classroom structure by requiring students to learn knowledge beforehand and spend more time on task-driven activities in class. In this combined model, students can learn knowledge on their own before class, while class time is spent on applying what they have learned, completing tasks, and engaging in in-depth interactions.

Despite the significant advantages of the combination of task-based language teaching and the flipped classroom, the current application and research in high school English teaching is still relatively limited. Especially how to design tasks that align with high school students' cognitive development and learning needs and effectively implementing them in classrooms are areas that require further investigation. Therefore, this study explores the implementation of TBLT and the flipped classroom in teaching Unit 4, "Looking Good, Feeling Good," from High School English Required Textbook 1, providing theoretical and practical support for their integration.

3. Flipped Classroom Practice of High School English Based on Task-based Language Teaching

Figure 1 presents the process of task-based language teaching in a flipped classroom, which is divided into three stages: pre-class, in-class, and post-class, emphasizing task-driven and interactive learning. In the pre-class stage, teachers analyze textbook content, set teaching objectives, and prepare instructional videos. Then, teachers assign pre-class tasks through online platforms and provide Q&A sessions to address students' difficulties, laying the foundation for the following in-class activities. The in-class stage focuses on task completion, where students engage in group activities. In the middle of class, the main task is to complete the classroom tasks, and students carry out activities through group cooperation. During this period, teachers patrol the classroom to offer timely assistance, and students refine their work by self-correcting before presenting. When time is up, each group needs to give a short presentation while peer and teacher feedback will be delivered during this process. The post-class stage involves targeted assignments to reinforce learning achievements and encourage independent learning. The whole process ensures systematic connections between pre-class preparation, in-class activities, and post-class reinforcement, which is suitable for inquiry-based and cooperative learning modes.

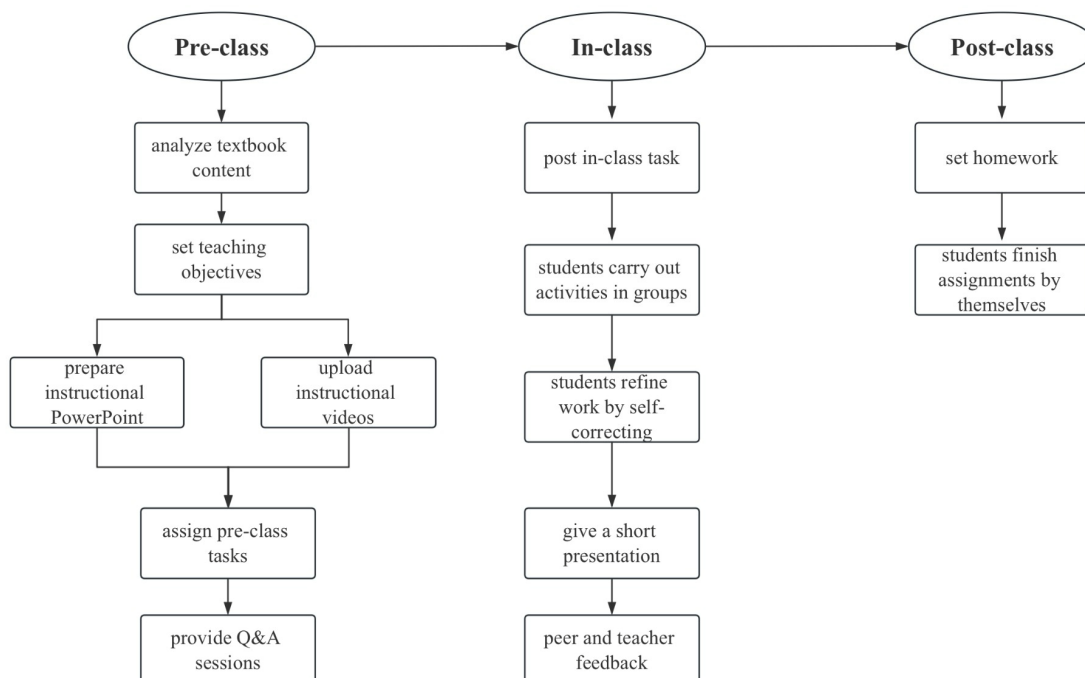


Figure 1. Practical Process of Flipped Classroom of High School English Based on Task-based Language Teaching

This study selects the Yilin Edition for its concept of practicing English learning activities and its emphasis on language ability, learning ability, cultural awareness, and thinking quality (Wang & He, 2019). Besides, the content of the textbook has strong maneuverability and is also in line with the physical and mental development of high school students, which is conducive to stimulating students'

endogenous motivation for learning. Moreover, it emphasizes the use of modern educational technology to create an informatized teaching environment through online and offline learning resources and promote the reform of English teaching in the new era. In addition, this paper takes Unit 4, “Looking Good, Feeling Good,” because it is close to students’ daily lives and has the potential to cultivate a healthy lifestyle mindset for students. Therefore, this paper takes Unit 4 from the High School English Required Textbook 1 (the Yilin Edition) as an example to design a series of task-driven activities that aim at improving students’ language proficiency and fostering the development of good living habits.

3.1 Pre-Class Preparation

3.1.1 Analysis of Teaching Contents and Objectives

Before designing a specific teaching plan, teachers should thoroughly analyze the textbook content to clarify the teaching objectives and teaching difficulties. The theme of this lesson is “Body Management and Healthy Lifestyle”. The text *Teen Faints After Skipping Meals* discusses the case of Jennifer Jones, a 15-year-old student, who fainted due to dieting to lose weight, emphasizing the dangers of extreme dieting and providing correct methods to lose weight. By reading this article, students can not only learn vocabulary related to dieting, weight loss, and health but also further reflect on the relationship between body image and health, as well as the harm caused by unhealthy lifestyles.

The specific teaching objectives of this lesson can be developed from two levels: on the one hand, through task-based language teaching activities, students should master expressions related to health, grammar, and the structure of news reports and be able to apply them to daily speaking and writing activities. On the other hand, by discussing unhealthy dieting methods and their relationship with body management, students’ critical thinking ability and correct health mindset can be cultivated.

3.1.2 Pre-class Tasks to Promote Self-Directed Learning

The core of the flipped classroom is to shift the traditional process of imparting knowledge from the classroom to outside class, reserving class time for engaging in and completing activities. Effective pre-class tasks help students have a solid knowledge foundation for subsequent learning phases and stimulate their interest in self-directed learning. Therefore, the pre-class learning tasks are crucial. These tasks will focus on two key objectives: one is to learn expressions related to health and grammar, and the other is to master the inverted pyramid structure of news reports.

To be more specific, students should first read the text *Teen Faints After Skipping Meals*, understand the main idea, and answer the following questions: (1) What event is reported in this news article? (2) What is the central idea of the article? (3) How did this report attract readers’ attention? (4) What unhealthy dieting behaviors have you observed in your life? What do you think is the right way to lose weight? Students also need to learn vocabulary related to health and body management (such as “diet,” “calorie” and “nutrition”) and grammar of this unit through videos recorded by teachers. Additionally, teachers should provide supplementary resources to help students master the basic patterns of news reports, such as recording an analysis and explanation video about the structure of news reports and providing an additional sample news report. With the help of these materials, students can understand the inverted pyramid structure of news reports and learn how to organize information to make the reports concise and logically clear, thus laying a foundation for news report writing after class. This series of tasks not only deepens students’ understanding of the article but also provides a solid language foundation for subsequent activities.

3.2 In-Class Activities

3.2.1 Classroom Activities to Guide Engaging and In-Depth Learning

In the flipped classroom mode, class time should focus on task-driven and in-depth learning. Task-based language teaching focuses on guiding students to participate and think through specific learning

tasks. Therefore, at this stage, teachers design engaging classroom activities that encourage students to use target expressions for effective communication. Students will be encouraged to discuss how to design and introduce applications in an organized manner and to develop teamwork skills by dividing tasks and working collaboratively.

At the beginning of the class, teachers check the completion of pre-class tasks by asking questions and guide students to think about how to cultivate a healthy lifestyle in today's technological era. Then teachers guide students to think about the combination of healthy lifestyles and technology through real cases, such as showing a health or fitness management application (such as Otterlife, Bodyknows, Keep and Cosleep), and asks the following questions: (1) What do you think is the main function of this app? (2) How does it help users develop healthy habits? (3) If you could improve this app, what features would you add? Through such guidance, students can form an initial concept of application and prepare for brainstorming in the next task.

Next, teachers guide the students to think further and introduce the class activity: if you were a programmer, what kind of application would you design to cultivate a healthy living habit? The activity is conducted in groups of 4-5 students, and the task is to collaboratively design a health management application and present it to the whole class. Teachers provide core vocabulary about software design, such as activity logs, goal setting, progress tracking, user interface, user experience, and personalization etc. Meanwhile, teachers lead students to review the grammar in this unit (restrictive relative clauses with relative clauses) once again and require the students to use the grammar structures in the subsequent reporting activities. Additionally, teachers should provide guidance on thinking about software design, such as discussing core functions of application programs, such as diet tracking, exercise plans, habit-forming reminders, etc, identifying target user groups (such as teenagers, the elderly, fitness enthusiasts, etc.), considering potential user problems and proposing solutions.

In the group activity, students strengthen their understanding of healthy lifestyles through active discussion and describing their designs by using pre-class and in-class vocabulary. Teachers will circulate among the groups, observe the discussions, and provide necessary help and guiding questions in time, such as: "What are the differences between your application and the existing health management apps?"; "How do you ensure users continue to use the app long-term, not for three days?"; "Have you considered personalized user needs?". These questions will help ensure that each group engages in meaningful discussion, enhances the feasibility and innovation of the design, and makes effective use of the target vocabulary. After the discussion, each group will present their application to the whole class within 3-4 minutes and explain its functions, features, and expected user feedback. Through this activity, students can improve their speaking abilities, cultivate team spirit, and understand the diversity of healthy lifestyles.

3.2.2 Evaluation and Feedback to Promote Further Reflection

In the flipped classroom, feedback and assessment serve not only to evaluate students' task completion but also as important guidance throughout the learning process. Through effective feedback mechanisms, teachers help students to reflect on their learning progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make improvements.

Regarding classroom tasks, after group presentations, other groups can pose questions or provide suggestions to help the presentation group optimize its design. In addition, teachers will give summative feedback on each group's collaborative process and application design results, focusing on students' participation in group discussions, accuracy of language expression, creativity, and teamwork abilities. Teachers should offer constructive feedback, pointing out areas for improvement while providing encouragement.

3.3 Post-Class Activities

3.3.1 Post-Class Assignments to Extend and Deepen Knowledge

The design of post-class tasks is an extension of the flipped classroom and task-based language teaching, aiming to consolidate the knowledge learned in class and encourage students to apply what they have learned in new contexts. At this stage, students need to complete a writing task to deepen their understanding of news report structure and writing techniques. The post-class writing assignment requires students to write a report about the application they designed in groups, imitating the format of the article. The task requires students to detail the application's functions, features, advantages, and disadvantages of the application and user feedback from the perspective of a journalist. Students need to apply the inverted pyramid structure to ensure that the report is concise and clear and provide an objective analysis of the application's innovation and effectiveness. This task not only reinforces students' language skills but also enhances their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Through writing the report, students will learn how to convey information succinctly and improve their critical thinking ability. In addition, to deepen students' vocabulary and grammar mastery, students need to complete related exercises to assess their understanding of restrictive relative clauses with relative adverbs.

4. Suggestions for Integrating Task-Based Language Teaching and Flipped Classroom

4.1 Recording Appropriate Course Videos

In the flipped classroom, pre-class video recordings are crucial. Zhao (2014) summarized three roles of pre-class micro-videos: promoting students' self-directed learning before class, providing timely help and stimulating students' thinking during class, and addressing remaining doubts after class. Teachers should carefully record course videos based on unit content and teaching objectives to ensure that students can master the basic knowledge needed for tasks through the videos. The difficulty level of the videos should be in line with the students' current language level—neither too simple to cause disinterest nor too complex to hinder understanding.

Ideally, the content of the videos should be concise, highlighting key concepts and language points, and at the same time interesting and inspiring to stimulate students' interest in learning (Zhang, 2013). Teachers should also consider the interactivity and diversity of the videos when selecting them. For example, under the theme of healthy lifestyles, in addition to vocabulary and grammar teaching videos, teachers can choose some interactive videos and online discussion-type videos (e.g., health education videos) to help students understand the knowledge related to healthy eating, exercise and mental health, and encourage students to think and discuss while watching the videos, so that they can be prepared for more interactive and in-depth tasks in the classroom.

4.2 Setting Real Task Scenarios

Task-based language teaching emphasizes the authenticity and practicality of tasks, which is conducive to stimulating students' interest and motivation. Fang (2003) proposed that authentic tasks were more likely to activate learners' existing knowledge structures and naturally arouse their interest because they were presented with real problems to solve. The flipped classroom requires teachers to carefully design tasks related to students' daily lives or future needs so as to increase the practical relevance and engagement of the tasks. In addition, the tasks should be challenging to further spark students' interest and motivation. For example, in the teaching of healthy lifestyles, the task of designing a health management app has clear connections to real-world needs and offers students a sense of accomplishment when working on it. This task can not only help students acquire the vocabulary related to health and software design but also guide them to think about how to apply what they have learned to real-world situations, thus cultivating their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

4.3 Task Design Closely Aligning with the Textbook

The core of task-based language teaching lies in the design of tasks, which should be closely related to the content of the textbook. Teachers should base their planning on the key content of the textbook and align classroom tasks with unit themes, vocabulary, and grammar. For instance, in designing the task of developing a health-related app, teachers should guide students to use the health-related vocabulary and expressions introduced in the unit, such as “nutrition”, “diet”, “get into shape”, and “function”, to reinforce their language acquisition.

4.4 Ensuring Task Continuity and Flexible Adjustments

In the flipped classroom, effective integration of pre-class and in-class tasks is pivotal. In the implementation of the combination of task-based language teaching and the flipped classroom, teachers should ensure that students acquire basic knowledge through pre-class learning so that they can engage in more advanced tasks during classroom activities. Students can prepare for in-class tasks by watching instructional videos provided by teachers, exploring online resources, and conducting independent searches, thereby enhancing their independent learning abilities. In-class tasks should be designed to help students apply what they have learned to practical tasks in real-world scenarios through collaborative group work, role-playing, and problem-solving activities, further enhancing their language proficiency. Moreover, task design should be dynamic, allowing teachers to adjust the difficulty and content of the tasks based on the actual situation in the classroom to ensure students can successfully complete the tasks and achieve the teaching objectives.

4.5 Enhancing Teacher-Student and Student-Student Evaluation

Teachers often overlook the evaluation process in classroom design (Lv, 2010), which plays a critical role in fostering students’ sense of achievement and finding their areas for improvement. Teachers’ assessments should go beyond merely summarizing students’ task performance, and they should also focus on students’ learning process and participation during task implementation. In the classroom, teachers should observe group activities, provide timely feedback, and assist students in overcoming difficulties related to language expression and comprehension. After completing tasks, teachers should also provide individualized feedback based on students’ performance, helping them recognize their strengths and areas for improvement, thereby promoting their further development in other tasks.

Peer assessment is also an important aspect of task-based language teaching. Through peer evaluation, students not only receive feedback from their classmates but also gain new perspectives by reflecting on their peers’ approaches, thus deepening their understanding of the task and improving their performance in future activities. To facilitate effective peer assessment, teachers can establish specific evaluation criteria, such as the quality of task completion, the accuracy of language expression, the effect of teamwork, guiding students to provide more constructive evaluations.

5. Conclusion

This study integrates task-based language teaching with the flipped classroom, exploring their combined application in high school English instruction. A series of related teaching activities were designed based on Unit 4, “Looking Good, Feeling Good,” from High School English Required Textbook 1 (the Yilin Edition). The integration of task-based language teaching and the flipped classroom is expected to effectively enhance students’ language proficiency, especially in fostering independent learning, critical thinking and language skills. By engaging in self-directed pre-class learning, participating in task-driven group activities during class, and completing reinforcement exercises after class, students can deepen their understanding and use of language through cooperation and practice. This paper provides theoretical support for future foreign language teaching, especially in innovating high school English teaching methods. Furthermore, it offers a concrete implementation framework and pedagogical suggestions on how to integrate task-based language

teaching with the flipped classroom to improve students' language proficiency and overall competencies.

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