PART I

TASK IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Much of task-based language teaching and learning has been done under tight conditions in experimental settings. Empirical research along this line has been far less where tasks have been used as bases for classroom activities to promote language acquisition (Van den Brennen, 2006). In the literature of language teaching, the term ‘task’ has been defined in a variety of ways. The most widely quoted definition of task is proposed by Long who defines task as,

a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping someone across a road. In other words, by ‘task’ is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. (Long 1985)

This definition is non-pedagogic since it points to the kinds of things that people would do in life outside the classroom setting. The kinds of things mentioned in the definition may or may not involve the use of language.

Another definition is from Richards, Platt and Weber. They suggest that a task is,

an activity or action, which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. (Richards, Platt and Weber 1986)

This definition takes a pedagogical perspective. Tasks are defined with reference to language learning or what the learners would do in the classroom. In this
definition, a task involves an activity and has a specified outcome and that the completion of the task may require comprehension or production or both.

The third definition comes from Nunan (1989) who states that a task is,

a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.

Nunan’s definition also has a pedagogic perspective. All the definitions above have one thing in common; that is they all imply that a task involves communicative language use and the activities suggested in a task focuses on meaning rather than language form. However, there is one difference in the definition suggested by Long (1985). He defines tasks with reference to the real-world tasks that people usually do in everyday life outside the classroom. This definition of task is relevant in tour guiding tasks in which the guides use the language in non-classroom settings for the purpose of communication with an emphasis on meaning. Besides the definitions above, there are other definitions of task which all emphasize language use with reference to pedagogical purposes (Crookes, 1986; Prabhu, 1987; Carroll, 1993).

The role of task can be viewed from two perspectives; pedagogical and second language acquisition. From a pedagogical perspective, task is used as a method of promoting classroom interactions so that learners could use the language and express meanings through tasks in natural ways, while from the perspective of second language acquisition, task is used to elicit interaction, produce output, or meaning negotiation that would enable learners’ acquisitional process to proceed (Bygate, Skehan, Swain, 2001). Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001) state that the definition of task will need to be different for different purposes to which tasks are used. Therefore, for all-purpose definition, ‘a task is

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an activity which requires learners to use language with an emphasis on meaning to attain an objective’ (p.11). Referring to the statement from Bygate, Skehan, and Swain above, from the language teaching perspective, a task is ‘an activity, susceptible to brief or extended pedagogic intervention, which requires learners to use language with emphasis on meaning to attain an objective’ (p.11).

Theoretical bases of pedagogic tasks

The first theory that underlies task in language learning is the interactionist theory (Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun, 1993). This theory holds that language is best learned and taught through interaction. In classroom interaction, there are many opportunities to perceive, comprehend, and acquire new words, language forms and structures. Learners can exchange information and ideas with other learners or teachers not for the sake of practicing the language as an end in itself, but as a means of conveying and sharing ideas, opinions, working toward the task goal. Drawing a number of studies in L2 acquisition, Ellis (2000) concludes that input and interaction of L2 acquisition shows that language learning is assisted through the social interaction of learners and their interlocutors, particularly when they negotiate toward mutual comprehension of each other’s message and meaning (p.10).

It follows that the opportunity for learners to work out meaning in negotiation should be created because it is important for acquisition. Drawing on a number of research studies, Ellis (2000) provides a summary of task characteristics that are likely to have effects on the quantity of meaning negotiation. Tasks that are hypothesized to contribute to acquisition are the ones that:

- have a required information exchange;
- involve a two-way (as opposed to one-way) exchange of information;
- have a closed outcome;
• are not familiar to the interactants;
• involve a human/ethical type problem;
• involve a narrative discourse mode; and
• are context-free (in the sense that the task does not provide contextual support for communication) and involve considerable detail.

In my view, these are potential conditions, which could provide learners with the opportunities to develop meanings through negotiations. These types of conditions need to be planned and created in the classroom in order to facilitate language acquisition.

The second theoretical basis for task is drawn from Skehan’s (1996) research on learner production, which consists of three aspects: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Fluency is the ability of the learner to use language to communicate in real time. Accuracy is the ability of the learner to use the language according to the language rules or norms. Complexity is the use of the learners’ interlanguage structures by drawing on their knowledge of the target language system. According to Skehan, tasks elicit activities that may focus on fluency, accuracy, or complexity and learners’ production may vary with respect to what aspect is to be given more emphasis. These three aspects of language production draw on different aspects of language system. Fluency requires learners to use their memory and resort to communication strategies when there are communication problems. Accuracy and complexity require learners to draw on their knowledge of language rules. By providing opportunities through tasks, it may be possible to influence different types of language production (fluency, accuracy, or complexity).

The third theoretical basis for task is drawn from Yule’s (1997) research, which examines task processes that contribute to communicative effectiveness. Yule’s theory of communicative effectiveness comprises two dimensions: the identification of referent dimension, and the role-taking dimension. According to
this theory, effective communication should reflect these two dimensions. The first of these suggests that learners should be able to encode the referent being communicated, notice specific attributes of the referent, and distinguish one referent from another using necessary linguistic ability. The second dimension suggests that learners need to be able to take into account their partners in communication. They need to be able to see their partner’s perspective, to make inferences, and to attend to the feedback provided by their partner. Thus, communication effectiveness is determined by both the nature of the task and the learner factors such as personality and cognitive style.

The fourth theory underlying task is drawn from sociocultural theory, which holds that participants always co-construct the activity they engage in according to their pre-determined goals. Drawing on research on sociocultural studies, Ellis (2000) says that “[language] performance depends on the interaction of the individual and task rather than on the inherent properties of the task itself and that the same task may result in different kinds of activity when performed by the same learners at different times” (p.208). This theory also claims that learning takes place in interaction. Learners may at first succeed in performing a new task with the help from another person, then they internalise this new ability so that they can perform the same task without any help. In this way, social interaction promotes learning. Ellis (2000) explains that scaffolding can be used to help learners acquire language forms. Scaffolding is the process of constructing a dialogue in which one speaker helps another to acquire a new language form. By way of scaffolding, learners are able to produce a particular grammatical construction jointly (Donato, 1994), acquire grammatical features constructed collaboratively through dialogues (Swain & Lapkin, 1998), and uptake a new grammatical feature (Samuda, 2001).
Factors affecting the difficulties of grading tasks

The grading of content for language program is usually associated with the work of designing a syllabus and it is a difficult and complicated work. Nunan (1989) mentions four major factors that contribute to the difficulty of grading tasks. The first factor is input. In the case of reading tasks, the grading needs to consider the language factor of the text: complexity of the text, its length, how information in the text is presented, the amount of support provided, and the genre type of the text. A text consisting of simple sentences is considered easier than a text having complex sentences. Information in a text that has similar chronological order as it does in real life is considered easier than the one that is out of sequence. A text with clear sub-headings is easier to understand than the one, which has no headings.

The next factor that contributes to the difficulty of grading tasks is the learner factor. This is internal to the learner and is largely beyond the control of the teacher. This includes learners’ confidence in carrying out the task, their motivation in carrying out the task, prior learning experience with the task, and the learners’ learning pace. In a speaking task, there is also an effect of the interlocutor (Nunan, 1999:236). Learners may behave differently when doing a task depending on the person they are interacting with. The study by Martyn (1996) shows that different language was produced by learners according to the degree of comfort they felt with the interlocutors. Another aspect of interlocutor effect is the level of competence of the interlocutor. Communication requires that the speakers work collaboratively to achieve communication goals. Therefore, success in communication partly depends on the degree of language competence of the interlocutor.

The third factor contributing to the difficulty of grading tasks is activity. Brindley (1989) suggests that this factor includes: complexity of steps that are involved in the task, amount of context provided before the task is carried out,
amount of help provided to the learner, and the amount of time allowed to complete the task. These are general instructional strategies (Honeywell, 1993) that can be manipulated by the teacher to make the task more or less difficult for a particular group of learners.

The last factor is cognitive processing. It includes the cognitive load of the task. The problem of determining the difficulty of cognitive load is recognized by Candlin (1987) who says that it is difficult to distinguish what is cognitively difficult from what is communicatively difficult for learners. Related to this, Skehan (1996) explains that cognitive complexity is concerned with the content of what is said and access to content involves processing and familiarity. Processing is concerned with the amount of cognitive work that is required in doing the task, while familiarity is concerned with the extent to which the task requires the learners to draw on their schematic knowledge. Candlin suggests that teachers can design tasks in which there is a gradual increase of cognitive complexity. For example, tasks having clear chronological order will be less cognitively demanding than tasks without clear structures or organization. Another aspect that may affect cognitive load of a task is communicative stress. Factors contributing to communicative stress are suggested by Brown & Yule (1988:34). They suggest the following aspects which could impose stress in communication. The first aspect is the feature of context. It includes the listener and the situation. It is easier for the speaker if the listener is one of his peers or junior to him or if he is talking to one listener rather than to many. With regard to the situation, it is easier for the speaker if he is speaking in a familiar, private environment.

The second aspect is the state of knowledge of the listener. It is helpful for the speaker if the listener knows as much of the target language as the speaker does. Another listener-aspect that is helpful for the speaker is if the listener does not have the information that the speaker has and the listener needs it. This would
motivate the speaker to communicate the information to the listener.

The third aspect that contributes to communicative stress is the type of task. It is helpful for the speaker if the information in the task is familiar and he has the vocabulary that is essential to the task completion. Another task feature that is helpful for the speaker is the task structure. It is helpful for the speaker to complete a task if it has a clear structure, such as a series of events. In Skehan’s (1996:52-53) framework, communicative stress is influenced by a number of factors such as time pressure, modality (reading, writing, speaking, or listening), scale (number of participants or relationships involved), stakes (either low or high, depending on how important it is to do the task and to do it correctly), and control (how much learners can “control” or influence the task).

The degree of task difficulty is also determined by the presence or absence of referents in a task (Robinson, Ting, and Urwin (1995). In their speaking research they design tasks with the “here-and-now” condition and tasks with “there-and-then” condition. The task with the “here-and-now” condition is considered to have low cognitive load because the narration requires the learners to use the present tense while viewing the pictures. This condition is context-supported, and therefore, learners need only to describe what is happening as they speak. Learners engaging in this task condition may resort to simple structures and pragmatic strategies because much of what they have to say is supported by the context and they may expect the interlocutor to make inferences about information from the context (Robinson, 1995). On the other hand, the task with the “there-and-then” condition is considered to have high cognitive load because the narration requires the learners to use the past tense without looking at the pictures. This is the ability to make a displaced reference (Robinson, 1995), that is, the ability to encode events or objects that are not visible at the moment of speaking, utilizing conversational and linguistic ability that is different from what is needed in the “here-and-now” condition. This task condition requires learners.
to retrieve events that have been stored in memory. In their listening task, Robinson, Ting, and Urwin (1995) manipulated the amount of “prior information” of the task. They hypothesized that providing relevant information about a task would make the task easier to process than a task without the provision of background information. The following section presents task characteristics that are believed to promote language learning.

Characteristics of tasks that promote learning

Research on tasks has indicated that opportunities for learning are promoted in tasks that have certain characteristics and in the way a task is structured and carried out. Tasks that help learners to comprehend input, obtain feedback on their production, and modify their interlanguage are the ones in which:

- Each participant has a different portion of information which must be exchanged in order to reach the task goal.
- Both participants are required to request and give this information to each other.
- Both participants have the same goal.
- There is only one acceptable goal (Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun, 1993).

Under these task conditions, learners must work together to understand each other’s information and provide each other with feedback when problems arise while doing the task. Under those task conditions, it is likely that there are opportunities for negotiation for what is not clearly understood, for comprehension of each other’s production and for getting feedback in order to modify what was said. In regard to information exchange, the findings of Doughty & Pica’s (1986) study suggest that a task which requires learners to exchange information promotes conversational modification. Other studies along this line (Long & Porter, 1985; Varonis & Gass, 1983; and Gass & Varonis, 1985) also
look at the amount of interlanguage modification in the interaction. These studies suggest that the most modification was obtained when the participants in the task are non-native speakers, have different proficiency levels, and come from different L1 background. In another study, Varonis & Gass (1983) found that communication is facilitated when participants share a common L1 background.

Another line of research has focused on the types of language and discourse patterns stimulated by different task types. Berwick (1993) investigated the different types of language stimulated by transactional and interpersonal tasks. A transactional task is a task in which communication aims to bring about the exchange of information, whereas an interpersonal task is one in which communication aims for social purposes (Nunan, 1999:53). Berwick (1993) found that the different functional purposes stimulated different morphosyntactic realizations. This was evidenced in a collaborative task where participants were sitting facing away from each other for a construction task of a small Lego toy. The task was accomplished through use of clarification requests, comprehension checks, and referential questions. The participants’ communication conveyed different functional purposes and realized them in different syntactic structures.

In a similar study, Nunan (1991) investigated the different interactional patterns stimulated by open and closed tasks. Nunan (1999) defines an open task as, "one in which there is no single correct answer, while a closed task is one in which there is a single correct answer or a restricted number of correct answers" (p.53). He found that the different task types stimulated very different interactional patterns. In an open task, the students were presented with a list of words that had to be grouped according to some categories that they had to agree on. In this task, the students exhibited much interaction in completing the task in order to put the words into the same categories. However, in another task, a closed task, where students were required to read a set of instructions and draw a diagram, the students did not interact as much as those in the open task. It could
have been due to the conceptual and cognitive demands of the task as well as the students’ interest in the task (Nunan, 1991: 52-55). However, Nunan’s research also indicated that some task types were more appropriate than others for learners at particular levels of proficiency. He found that with lower intermediate to intermediate learners, closed tasks stimulate more modified interaction than open tasks. He does not suggest that such students should engage only in closed tasks. He suggests that program planners and teachers should select a mix of tasks to reflect the pedagogic goals of the curriculum. For example, tasks could be designed so that the tasks would: (i) require the learner to provide information to another learner, (ii) require learners to share information to each other, (iii) have convergent or divergent goals, (iv) require one single correct answer or more than one.

Task-based language teaching: its goal

One consequence of current globalization has been the emergence of English as a lingua franca (Evans, 2013); a means of communication between peoples of different nationalities. This need in turn has intensified the demands for courses in English including those for people who work in the tourism industry with the goal to communicate in English.

In task-based language teaching, the materials and classroom activities are designed with reference to tasks that learners will need to do outside the classroom. A task-based syllabus uses a methodology that avoids an explicit focus on grammatical structures. Instead, it uses tasks by which the students are encouraged to communicate through opinion gap, information gap, or reasoning gap activities. Other proponents of task-based syllabus (Fotos and Ellis, 1991; Long and Crookes, 1992; Long, 1985; Nunan, 1989, 1991) argue that task-based instruction focuses on the ability to perform a task or an activity, not on the explicit teaching of grammatical structure. Language learning activities are made
such that they can facilitate language acquisition processes. According to Nunan (1991:278), task-based language teaching has the following features:

- an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language,
- the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation,
- the provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning processes itself,
- an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

Classroom tasks are generally justified in “real-world” terms and tasks require learners to approximate the sorts of activities that are required beyond the classroom (Nunan, 1989:40). The specification of tasks in real-world terms is called the rehearsal approach to language teaching (Widdowson, 1987).

Nunan (1989) states that task-based language teaching has been an important development in the field of second or foreign language teaching and it has had some influence on syllabus design, materials development and teaching methodology. Although task-based language teaching has been widely recognized as a new and important development, Skehan (1996) admits that, in spite of the support for the adoption of task-based language teaching, there are also arguments for the role of explicitness in teaching because a focus on meaning in task-based language teaching may not pay enough attention to acquisitional processes. To compensate for this lack of explicitness of teaching language forms, Skehan (1996) argues that it is necessary to set the goal of task-based language teaching which includes three aspects: accuracy, complexity, and fluency. Accuracy is important because inaccuracy could inhibit communicative effectiveness. Complexity is desirable because learners having more complex interlanguage system would be able to express complex ideas more effectively. Fluency is desirable because it is important in communication. Poor fluency
would make interaction difficult to proceed because ideas cannot be expressed effectively.

The three goals set out by Skehan (accuracy, complexity, and fluency) deal with how language acquisition can be promoted through classroom language activities by creating a balance among those three aspects. Skehan (1996) argues that in task-based language teaching, the three aspects (fluency, accuracy, and complexity) compete with one another for learners' attentional resources. Fluency is the ability to use language in real time. It emphasizes meaning. More emphasis on fluency may lead to lexicalized performance and consistent priority of fluency in performance may result in errors that are difficult to change. Accuracy is the ability to use language according to the rules. Performance which puts more emphasis on accuracy may lead to lack of fluency. Learners may be avoiding structures that are challenging because the structures could provoke errors. Complexity is the ability to produce more advanced language structures. Performance which encourages complexity could lead to a wide range of structures, which may be beyond the learners' control, and they fail to attend to accuracy. An ideal language performance would be fluent, error free, and use whatever structures that are necessary to achieve the goal of interaction or task. A balance among the three aspects needs to be established by giving attention to each of them proportionally during task performance.

In Ellis's (2000) view, Skehan's (1996) framework only deals with acquisition. This is only one aspect of communication. Ellis says that task-based language teaching has not paid sufficient attention to the distinction between communicative effectiveness and L2 acquisition (p.212). Task-based language teaching also needs to promote communicative efficiency, which, according to Ellis, can be achieved using Yule's (1997) theory of communicative effectiveness in communication; the identification of referent dimension, and the role-taking dimension. In other words, task-based language teaching should aim to promote
(1) communicative efficiency using Yule's framework, and (2) language acquisition using Skehan's work that are needed to promote accuracy, complexity, and fluency. These goals should be conveyed in a task syllabus.

**Methodological issues in task-based language teaching**

The primary function of a language classroom is to provide opportunities for language learning to take place. In my view, many, if not most foreign language classrooms in Indonesian schools, these opportunities are difficult to obtain. There are various reasons, one of which is because the language learning in the classroom, though it sometimes claims to be communicatively oriented, is not always designed to provide opportunities for language acquisition which develops language capacity. These classes are often characterized by their structurally oriented methodology which does not aim to develop an ability to use the language for communicative purposes. This condition is related to the view about the learner and learner role in the traditional model of language learning.

Learner role refers to the part that a learner is expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between classroom participants (Nunan, 1989:79). Traditionally, learners in classrooms are characterized by a transmission model of learning who are assigned a relatively passive role. This is commonly found in audiolingual method. In such a classroom, learners practice sentence patterns provided by teachers, textbooks, or tapes. They are assigned passive, reproductive roles. Learners do not learn how to use language creatively themselves. They spend most of learning time repeating and reproducing language. They learn how to communicate in the model provided by the teacher or the textbook in predictable situations. They do not learn how to respond appropriately in new and authentic communicative situations (Nunan, 1999:75). This is due to the belief that learning is seen as stimulus-response mechanism. The students' learning is regarded as a result of
continuous repetitive practice such as drill exercises (Nunan, 1989:80). In this
traditional method, learners are not given the opportunities to initiate interaction
in the language. Making mistakes is discouraged as much as possible (Richards
& Rodgers 1988:56) and students are considered as passive recipients of
information who are often assigned individual work (Nunan, 1999:7).

With the introduction of the communicative language teaching, such as
that in a task-based language teaching, learner roles have changed dramatically.
In the communicative method, the learner is no longer regarded as a passive
recipient of language learning but assigned an active, negotiative role. The learner
should contribute as well as receive (Nunan, 1989:80). In this methodology, there
is more attention for learner roles and for differences among learners (Richards &
Rodgers 1988:23). This new role is particularly evident in oral interaction tasks
such as those in small group work where learners are required to use the language,

to negotiate meaning, and to draw on their new knowledge rather than simply
receiving and repeating the language (Nunan, 1989:80).

Unlike the purpose of learning in the traditional model of language

teaching, the emphasis in communicative language teaching is on the processes
of communication, rather than the learning of language forms and structures
(Richards, and Rodgers, 1988:76-77). In the communicative language teaching,
the learners are considered as active participants. This view has influenced the
design of the instructional system. This can be seen in the types of activities
learners carry out in the classroom, the degree of freedom learners have over the
content of learning, the patterns of learner groupings adopted, and the degree to
which learners influence the learning of others (Richards & Rodgers 1988:p.23).

In contrast to the structural approach to teaching language, a task-based
language teaching (TBLT) aims to develop the learners’ language capacity.
Unlike the content in the structurally based methodology that is based on
linguistic structures, the task-based language teaching uses tasks as the basis for

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its methodology. The methodology in a task-based language teaching focuses on communication, not language forms. The central role of the methodology in TBLT is to provide learners as much as possible with comprehensible input through communication during classroom activities. Therefore, TBLT accepts error correction to modify learners’ interlanguage forms (Long, 1985). The discussion of oral errors is common in the literature of L2 learning and methodology showing the importance of learners to self-correct their production (Chaudron, 1988, Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Recent studies on the focus on form within a communicative classroom setting address the problem of how to provide corrections to learners and the effectiveness of the different types of corrections. Lyster and Ranta (1997) find that feedback with respect to language forms could lead to negotiation of forms in classroom interaction. This study shows that feedback that leads to learners’ self-correction could have a positive effect in their acquisition because the learners work with their errors. In another study, Anton (1996) shows how the teacher provides learners with feedback that leads to collaborative learning and scaffolding between learners. These types of feedback encourage learners to an effective engagement of negotiation of linguistic forms.

Given that the content in the task-based language teaching is based on tasks and task specification is derived from learners’ needs, the source of input may have to vary according to the learners’ needs. Traditional teacher resources such as taped dialogues, authentic texts, or models of language use may be provided for learners and used to accompany practice of target tasks. However, as Long (1985) suggests, the purpose of such models is not to reproduce them in a drill-like manner or to replicate them, but to approximate the model as the learners work on the materials until they reach maximum target difficulty. The learners’ success is judged in terms of the goal of the task.

The problem of learning materials as input in TBLT raises the problem of
authenticity. Task-based materials explicitly or implicitly claim that rehearsal of
asks in the classroom using the target language will improve performance in the
real world. There is an assumption that the more authentic the materials to be
worked on in the classroom the more the classroom activities reflect real-world
tasks, the more real the rehearsal and the better the language learning will be.
Hence, the materials would include things such as authentic recordings, authentic
dialogues, authentic texts derived from original sources. However, this
authenticity in terms of materials, or in Widdowson’s (1987) term, “genuineness”,
will not guarantee that the learning activities will also be authentic. As Arnold
(1991) argues authenticity in language learning should include authenticity of
learner purposes in using the materials, authenticity of interaction, authenticity of
responses, authenticity of participants, authenticity of setting, and authenticity of
output of learning. Authenticity in this sense is not restricted only to authentic
materials but also, in terms of classroom activities, including authentic interaction
or communication. One approach suggested to meet these requirements is to
design classroom tasks in the form of classroom projects, which require the use
of English with genuine purpose, interaction, response, etc. In line with this,
Widdowson (1998) suggests that,

...language teachers should indeed be concerned with pragmatic meaning, but
this can only be achieved if they localize the language, create contextual
conditions that make the language a reality for particular community of learners
so that they can authenticate it, and so realize, in both senses of that term, the
semantic resources that are encoded in the language. (p.715)

Widdowson’s comment points to the need to present language within a
context in a way that learners can experience or use the language meaningfully.
The language presented in the classroom has to have some pragmatic purpose for
the learners and at the same time learners need to be aware of the importance of
understanding meaning conveyed in whatever form the materials take.

Another methodological issue in TBLT is what to focus on during the
learning process. Long & Robinson (1998) suggests that there are three choices to focus on during learning: focus-on-forms, focus-on-meaning, and focus-on-form (fonF). Teaching with the focus-on-forms is associated with the structuralist approach where classroom activities are designed to practice linguistic items. This approach to teaching language has been much criticized on the ground that it ignores language learning processes. Presentation of linguistic items one at a time suggests that language learning is a linear process. Rutherford & Smith (1988) found that this is not the case; language acquisition is not a process of accumulating entities.

The second choice, the focus-on-meaning, is a reaction to the focus-on-forms because it is not working as expected. The teaching with the focus-on-meaning claims that, "learning an L2 incidentally and implicitly from exposure to comprehensible target language samples is sufficient for successful second or foreign language acquisition" (Long & Robinson, 1998:18). The essential claim is that learners can learn best by using the language as a medium of communication. In order to comprehend language, it has to be modified to match the learner’s ability and the modification has to be made in such a way that the meaning is understandable to the learners. This approach to teaching is non-interventional.

The third choice, the focus-on-form (fonF), grows out of the realization that attention to language forms in teaching is not a waste of time. Studies such as those of Pienemann (1984, 1989) have indicated that instruction has beneficial effects on the application of language rules and rate of acquisition. Besides these studies, the focus-on-form (fonF) is also motivated by the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1991, 1996) which points to the crucial role of interaction between learners and other more proficient speakers for language development.

In language teaching, the negotiation between the teacher and learners may elicit feedback of different types such as recasts, repetitions, or corrections. These feedback types are believed to be helpful to learners because feedback can
draw the learners' attention to errors and enhance learning. Providing feedback to learners' production is a reactive stance (Doughty & Williams, 1998) in the focus-on-form (FoF), a pedagogical choice that is made during teaching. It requires the teacher to notice and be prepared to handle learning problems as the learner is using the language. This does not mean that every occurrence of a production problem should be handled right away. Feedback needs to be restricted to those problems which are pervasive, systemic and remediable for learners at a particular stage of their development (Long & Robinson, 1998, Long 1996).

There are instances when a particular task requires that the teacher needs to take a proactive stance (Doughty & Williams, 1998). It means that a certain linguistic item is selected in advance, prior to task work, to be taught. The teacher may consider that a certain linguistic item will cause difficulty and it is brought to focus before task work. The problem with the proactive stance is: what structure is to be selected. In this case, Lorchky & Bley-Vroman (1993) have identified three types of structures in a task that may be predetermined: task naturalness, task utility, and task essentialness. The structures are defined as follows,

In task-naturalness, a grammatical construction may arise naturally during the performance of a particular task, but the task can often be performed perfectly well, even quite easily, without it. In the case of task-utility, it is possible to complete a task without the structure, but with the structure, the task becomes easier. The most extreme demand a task can place on a structure is essentialness. The task cannot be successfully performed unless the structure is used. (Lorchky & Bley-Vroman 1993:132)

This illustrates that task essentialness is most useful because without understanding the structure the task cannot be completed.

In task-based language teaching, it may be necessary that the learners engage in activities that require the use of language having transactional or interactional functions (Brown & Yule, 1988). The transactional function of the language is concerned with the transfer of information. The purpose of the
speaker is to communicate a message, hence, it is message-oriented. On the other hand, the interactional function of the language is concerned with interpersonal relationship. It is listener-oriented. In relation to these functions, Brows & Yule (1988) distinguish two types of speaking turns: short and long turn speech. A short turn speech may consist of only one or two utterances, and a long turn speech may consist of a number of utterances and the length may vary. A clear cut-off between the two is difficult to determine, however, they note that producing a short turn is easier than producing a long turn in terms of using the language structure. A short turn may be needed in a conversation where each speaker contributes to get the conversation going, while a long turn may be needed when a learner describes an object or presents an opinion about something. These two skills need to be taught and practiced. It should be realized that teaching learners only to produce short turn speech will not automatically help them to perform tasks that require long turn skill. It will only train learners to be able to take part in simple conversations as commonly practiced in functionally based classroom activities. Brown & Yule (1988) explain why teaching long turns is important, 

The concern with teaching short turns arises fairly naturally from the traditional view in language teaching, which was that the only structure the student was required to master was the sentence. Recently the focus of attention has shifted from the form of the sentence to the functions it can be used to perform. This should yield a student who is able to produce correct sentences in a short turn, responding correctly to an identified social stimulus. It must surely be clear that students who are only capable of producing short turns are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language. They may have achieved basic interactional skills and they may have the language forms available to permit them to request information, services etc., but they are very far indeed from the expressed aim of many courses which is to permit the students to 'express themselves' in the foreign language. (p.20)

This does not suggest that teaching short turns is not necessary. It is indeed important to teach short turns but by itself is not sufficient since communication requires both skills.

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The research studies on tasks that were mentioned earlier were primarily confined to experimental design within classroom settings or pedagogical contexts. These studies have produced helpful findings to our understanding about the nature of language learning tasks. On the other hand, it is also important to explore empirically the kinds of tasks that are carried out beyond classroom settings; that is tasks that are carried out in the target setting by tour guides. Drawing on the insights from the principles of task-based language learning which, among others, uses tasks as the organizing principle for the syllabus, it is imperative to explore learners' needs with a particular focus on tasks in the target setting (tour guiding setting). The target situation analysis may be limited only to the kinds of tasks and their linguistic components that tour guides carry out during tour guiding which will constitute learners' needs at the end of the course (Robinson, 1991, Dudley-Evans & StJohn, 1998).

**Language function**

One of the language-related aspects of task completion is the utilization of language functions. Language function has been defined and classified into different categories depending on the perspective of the linguist. In his book, Dvoraharjo (2001) summarizes the different views of language functions into eight classifications (p.371). However, there are three views of language functions which are most relevant to language use in tour guiding. The first view is proposed by Brown and Yule (1988). They state that the primary function of language use is to transfer information and to exchange information. The former has a transactional function and the latter has an interactional function. When language is used transactionally, it is important that the information is clearly conveyed because the purpose of using the language is to get the information understood by the listener. This is usually realized in monologues. On the other hand, when language is used interactionally, there are usually constant changes
of topics, use of discourse markers and gestures which accompany language use. The purpose is to maintain social relationship between the speakers and the listener. Conversations are characterized by interactional use of the language.

The second view of language function is proposed by Halliday (1973) who divides language functions into three categories.

- The ideational function. It refers to language functioning as a means of conveying and interpreting experience of the world.
- The interpersonal function. It refers to language functioning as an expression of one’s attitude and an influence upon the attitudes and behavior of the hearer.
- The textual function. It refers to language functioning as a means of constructing a text, spoken or written.

In this categorization, the ideational function corresponds to Brown’s and Yule’s transactional function while the interpersonal function corresponds to the interactional function proposed by Brown and Yule (1988). Halliday’s textual function cannot be given a status as language function because “it is not language that has the function of transmitting itself through texts, but texts that have the function of transmitting language” (Leech, 1983:57). Both views of language functions are too general and can not adequately describe more specific use of language such as that in tour guiding. Therefore, the framework from van Ek and Trim (1991) seems more appropriate because the specification of language functions are classified into six broad categories. These categories are: imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out attitudes, getting things done, socialising, structuring discourse, and communication repair. Each of these broad categories are further specified into more specific language functions (pp.28-47). This specification is more comprehensive than the framework of language functions proposed by Halliday (1973) in which language functions are specified “in terms of the child’s intentions” (p.17). Hence, it is more
The concept of the task-syllabus

A task syllabus has a strong theoretical justification from the perspective of language learning and language acquisition (Long & Crookes, 1992; Ellis, 1998; Ellis, 2000). Long & Crookes (1992) state that a task syllabus uses 'task' as the unit of analysis rather than structures or language functions. The task syllabus proposed here is analytic (Wilkins, 1978) in the sense that the syllabus items (i.e. the tasks) were organized in terms of the purposes for which the students are learning the language and the kinds of language performance that the students are expected to be able to do at the end of the program. The purpose of learning the language for the group of students this syllabus is intended to relate to the kind of profession they want to have at the end of the program; that is to work in the tourism industry particularly in tour guiding. Therefore, the syllabus contents are stated with reference to the kinds of language performance derived from the analysis of the tour guiding tasks. These are the kinds of language performance the students are expected to do as tour guides.

The main concern of this syllabus is the language behaviour or language performance. Therefore, the kinds of language structures needed to realize the language behaviour (i.e. the task) cannot be pre-determined since language behaviour is structurally varied. It is a methodological matter whether or not any structural item is brought into focus during the learning activities because task is the basis for its methodology and the focus of learning is on communication, not language forms. The role of methodology in task-based language teaching is to provide the opportunities to the learners to use the language as much as possible and to expose them with comprehensible input through communication during classroom activities. It does not suggest that the implementation of the task syllabus should not pay any attention to grammatical problems. Attention to
language forms in teaching does have beneficial effects (Pierrman, 1984, 1989; Long, 1991, 1996) on rule applications.

**The strengths and weaknesses of task-syllabus**

The task syllabus proposed here is research-based. The tasks reflect the kinds of tasks that tour guides do in their job. Under this syllabus, the language learning will have the characteristics that can promote learning. In the learning process, each student will have information that other students do not and the information has to be exchanged to each other through requesting and giving information. Language learning always has some goal to be achieved. Learners will work together to understand each other’s information and provide each other with feedback when problems arise while doing the task. In this way, there are opportunities to ask for information that is not clearly understood, to comprehend each other’s language, and to get feedback in order to clarify or explain what was said. As can be seen in the syllabus, there are transactional tasks, which aim to exchange information, and there are interpersonal tasks that aim for social purposes. These different types of tasks are accomplished through various kinds of language use such as clarification requests, comprehension checks, and referential questions. These functional purposes are realized in the use of different syntactic structures. Nanun (1999) mentions various studies in support to the use of tasks as units of learning. Among others, (i) tasks can produce a greater quantity and variety of language in group work, (ii) learners will have opportunities to negotiate meaning, make clarification requests, and comprehension check, (iii) instruction that focuses primarily on meaning but allowed for a focus on grammar within meaningful contexts work better than grammar-only or communication-only instruction.

In spite of its advantages, the task syllabus has the following drawbacks. Since the main focus of the task syllabus is to develop communication rather than
grammatical structures that are necessary for any one task, it may raise methodological problems with regard to how any task should be introduced and how to deal with students’ errors. According to Doughty & Williams (1998), there are two feedback strategies to students’ language. The first strategy is called a reactive stance. This means that the teacher should be prepared to handle any learning problem that will arise as the student is using the language. This does not mean that every mistake made by the student should be corrected. The teacher should make a selection to those problems that are pervasive, systematic and remediable at the time of learning (Long & Robinson, 1998, Long 1996). The second strategy is called a proactive stance. It means that the teacher selects in advance, before a task is introduced, certain language structures that may be necessary in order to accomplish the task. The structure chosen may be the one that will cause difficulty and it should be discussed before the task work. Loschky & Bley-Vroman (1993) suggest that the structure item should be determined in terms of its essentialness, meaning that the task cannot be successfully done unless the structure is used.

Another drawback with the task syllabus proposed here is the question of sequencing and grading of task difficulty. Although the tasks in the syllabus have been ordered in the way they are usually carried out during the tour, there has not been any empirical evidence as to how those tasks should be ordered in order to maximize learning. It may be advisable just to follow the sequencing of the tasks in the syllabus before any empirical evidence is available. Determining the task difficulty is another problem in the implementation of the task syllabus. However, the discussion of task difficulty should provide some useful criteria for task grading. Task difficulty varies according to task variation (group size), interlocutor’s effect, complexity of the problem in the task, complexity of interaction, amount of help available, and speech mode that is required to complete the task. The framework for determining task difficulty proposed by
Brown & Yule (1988) could be used to decide on the grading of the task in the syllabus. In their framework, task difficulty varies according to the type of speech mode and the number of elements, properties, and relationships in a task.

The task syllabus presented below has been designed on the bases of the findings from the target setting. The task identified from the tour guiding data constitute only the raw data for the syllabus and these raw data should be manipulated in order to form pedagogical tasks by identifying task components.