# SILENT LEARNERS IN TASK-BASED CLASSROOMS: PARTICIPATION PATTERNS AND HIDDEN ENGAGEMENT IN TBLT

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**Abstract.** For decades teachers have been designing various methods, models and approaches to make language learning efficacious and easy in educational process. Among them Task -based language teaching model is considered more impactful and suitable for teaching practices. In this paper writer purposes to describe Task based language teaching and usage of this model for silent learners by recommending some activities which are utilized other teachers.

**Key words.** Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), silent learner, Role playing and simulations, interactive games, Non-Verbal Engagement Recognition, feedback

## INTRODUCTION

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged in the early 1980s and is at present known as one of the most productive approaches to language teaching and learning (Dettori & Giuliana,2011). Task-Based Language Teaching is acknowledged a learner-centered approach that pay attention the implementation of language as a means for being successful in communicative competence. Tasks in TBLT are defined as activities including real-world meaning and necessiate learners to use language authentically and purposefully (Ellis, 2003). According to investigations a key component of successful language acquisition is motivation, and task-based language instruction is especially good at boosting student motivation. TBLT makes language learning more interesting and pleasurable by concentrating on activities that are significant and applicable to the learners' daily life. Students are more likely to be inspired to actively participate in the courses when they can see how what they are learning is applied in real-world situations.Another benefit of TBLT approach is development of cognitive thinking of students while they are doing their task. Additionally, TBLT gives students a sense of accomplishment when they finish assignments and observe concrete outcomes of their work. They may feel more confident and motivated to take on more difficult activities as a result of this sense of achievement.

A typical TBLT framework includes three phases: pre-task, task performance, and post-task reflection (Willis & Willis, 2007). This structure advocates interaction, negotiation of meaning, and the integration of form-focused instruction within communicative contexts. In

accordance with the thoughts of scholar Li (2023) the following are the steps of TBLT instruction:

(1) The instructor provided the assignment, the information needed to finish it, the task's requirements, and the procedures for carrying them out;

(2) Task cycle: One individual completed a variety of tasks in groups of two, and the group reported to the class when the tasks were finished;

(3) Post-task: Consisted of two components: practice (students worked on language challenges with teacher assistance) and analysis (students examined and assessed how other groups completed tasks).

What do we mean by Silent learners?

There have always been quiet or silent learners within traditional classrooms who never speak out until asked. These passive learners outweigh the active ones in many traditional classrooms, and some of them have a tendency to dominate all class discussions. However, they are noticeable, and the instructor is typically aware of the passive majority. Well, why are they silent? Are there serious reasons not to be active?

According to investigations which were gathered from educators, there are some causes to be silent student in a class:

• Prefer to work alone without disturbance; a genuine introvert

• Unclear about how to be active in an online course – unfamiliar with the ‘rules’ or etiquette of participation. Waiting for a cue to participate

Low confidence – any setback can confirm feeling of inadequacy.

• Due to perceived language difficulties and being afraid of making mistakes

Cultural reasons – not polite to question the teacher or start talking without permission

There might be more reasons to be silent learner,but it does not mean they should be passive and never perform.Teachers should some use some productive techniques to wake up these learners and make them engage in.

## METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research study employed semi-structured interviews to gather insights from teachers of Yangi Asr University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan regarding effective engagement techniques for silent learners in task-based language teaching (TBLT) environments. The purpose of interviews to clarify specific activities that facilitate participation among silent learners and to explore the reasons behind their hesitant engagement.

**Participants**

Participants included 15 experienced English language teachers from Languages department, each with a minimum of five years of teaching experience in task-based classrooms. The teachers were approached through professional networks and invited to contribute their thought on silent students and their engagement strategies.

**Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes each. The interviews were made to elicit open-ended responses and teachers could freely discuss their perceptions and experiences.

Following questions are requested:

*What strategies have you found effective in engaging silent learners?*

*Can you provide examples of activities that facilitate participation for these learners?*

The interviews were recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and finally made analysis thematically to find out similar patterns and uncommon conclusions.

**RESULTS**

Several recurrent themes about successful engagement strategies for quiet learners emerged from the analysis of the interview data:

**-Role-Playing and Simulations**: Activities that enabled students to embody roles in a structured task helped less vocal learners to feel more involved without the spotlight directly on them.

**-Interactive Games**: Teachers reported that games, particularly those requiring physical movement or visual stimuli, increased overall class engagement, providing silent learners with alternative means to participate.

**-Non-Verbal Engagement Recognition**

A significant number of teachers observed that silent learners often engaged non-verbally. Responses indicated the need for educators to recognize and influence these forms of participation:

• Observational Assessments: In order to gauge students' levels of participation, teachers emphasised the significance of noticing non-verbal clues such body language, writing, and nodding.

• Feedback on Non-Verbal Contributions: Many instructors observed that encouraging quiet learners to progressively develop verbal engagement was achieved by giving positive feedback for non-verbal contributions.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study emphasise that involvement is not just determined by vocal inputs, which is consistent with previous

research on silent learners and engagement in task-based learning environments. Teachers' identified tactics have practical consequences for improving silent learners' involvement in TBLT frameworks. Silent learners are empowered and given a sense of security by the stepwise technique of progressively increasing engagement through controlled assignments and pair work. This is consistent with sociocultural theories that support cooperative learning settings where peer relationships can facilitate learning and boost self-esteem. Also, the necessity for a variety of teaching strategies is highlighted by the preference of silent learners for visual and kinaesthetic exercises. Diverse educational approaches are naturally supported by TBLT, and using multimodal resources can accommodate various learning styles and increase inclusivity. Furthermore, fostering an inclusive classroom environment requires acknowledging nonverbal interaction as a valid form of participation. Teachers can encourage quiet learners to progressively move into more active involvement by validating their experiences by broadening the criteria for evaluating engagement.

## CONCLUSION

By the way of conclusion, in educational process teachers should always pay attention to all types of learners whether they are active or silent. They should take into account learners' learning behaviours and design materials based on these factors. Effective engagement strategies for silent learners in task-based classrooms should be utilised diversely that incorporates collaborative work, interactive activities, and an awareness of non-verbal cues. Conducted interviews demonstrate that silent learners can achieve hidden engagement, and by recognizing their unusual participation patterns, teachers can design a more inclusive and supportive educational atmosphere.

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