

HARNESSING THE BINGE WATCHING TREND IN TBLT LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: UTILIZING WEB SERIES AS AN EDUTAINMENT

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Abstract

The study suggests a conceptual and theoretical framework for designing lesson plans for Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) classrooms; further strategize and offers perspectives to harness the Over-The-Top (OTT) trend of binge watching Web Series (WS) in language classrooms by utilizing it as an edutainment to facilitate Second Language (L2) acquisition, which is popular among the tertiary learners. TBLT approach is a learner-centred approach; hence it complements the use of web series as a digital audio-visual text to design tasks to support language learners.

Incorporating web series in TBLT language classrooms had shown a progressive improvement in second language (L2) acquisition of tertiary learners, and enhanced their speaking skills, and imparts knowledge on cultural awareness and intercultural language transactions with regard to usage. The research aims to contribute TBLT lesson plan model framework to integrate web series in language classrooms as an edutainment for L2 learners.

Keywords:

Web Series (WS), Acquisition, Edutainment, Over -The -Top (OTT), Task-based.

Introduction

The digital revolution has a significant impact on people's lifestyles over the past decades, especially after the industrial revolution. Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms have become a commodity rather than a luxury due to the huge demand for online content and internationalization. In India, OTT platforms have grown significantly over the past decade, with an increasing number of consumers.

OTT players like Hotstar and Jio-Cinema have expanded their market share, while global players like Netflix and Amazon Prime have also expanded their market share in India (Pand et al.,

2021). The concept of “Binge Watching” emerged in India because the platform offered on-demand access, anywhere, with no commercial breaks and unlimited access. This concept revolutionized the way people viewed content, leading to an increase in subscriptions and changing traditional television viewing habits. As a result, OTT platforms have become an indispensable part of the entertainment industry in India, catering to diverse audience preferences and providing a variety of content options.

Review of Literature

A web series is a series of episodic content distributed over the Internet. Web series can be of various genres, such as drama, comedy, or reality television, and can be produced by independent creators or by major production companies. The history of the web series dates back to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the Internet began to become more popular and accessible.

Early web series were often low-budget productions independently created and distributed by individuals or small production companies (Honmode, 2019). These early web series were often short-form and distributed on platforms such as YouTube and other video sharing sites. As the Internet and streaming technology evolved, web series began to receive more attention and wider acceptance.

In the mid-2000s, streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Hulu began investing in and distributing web series. This has helped increase the production value and quality of web series, and helped to bring them to a wider audience. The emergence of web series is leading to the creation of new content by digital media providers. The expansion of internet access in rural and urban areas has contributed significantly to the growth in viewership of Web series on digital platforms (Meshram, 2020).

An Overview of TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) approach

Starting in the 1970s, communicative language teaching (CLT) has become popular among researchers and teachers of foreign and foreign language acquisition. During the 1980s, “task” replaced the term “communicative activity.” “Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has become a new teaching method widely applied in language classrooms (Hasan, 2014). The concept of “task” is central to task-based language teaching, which distinguishes between actual or target tasks and instructional tasks. Target tasks refer to language use in the world outside the classroom, while instructional tasks take place within the classroom (Nunan, 2004). As with content-based teaching, the task-based approach provides learners with a natural context for language use. As learners attempt to complete a task, they have many opportunities to interact with each other, as well as with the teacher and the lesson content. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition, as learners must make efforts to understand each other and express their own meanings.

TBLT is a method of learning and teaching foreign languages that takes classroom tasks as the main teaching goal. Task-based language teaching allows teachers to develop a variety of activities, such as fun activities on familiar topics, which can help learners become more interested in speaking lessons (Baihaqi, 2016).

Data Collection and Sampling

Thirty L2 learners participated (n=30) in the convenient sampling study; and they were belong to the first year undergraduate programme. The demographic details of the samplings were collected through survey questionnaire. These undergraduate learners participated in the language tasks designed based on Web Series. Tasks were designed on the web series titled Stranger Things from Netflix OTT platform. The speaking tasks were description task, Prediction task, alternative ending task, dubbing task, summarizing task, grammar task, episode review task and vocabulary tasks. L2 learners actively participated in the tasks as individuals, in pairs and groups.

Developing a Lesson Plan Framework and Speaking Tasks with Web Series

A lesson plan framework must be developed to suit the pedagogy/andragogy to integrate web series in TBLT language classrooms. The speaking tasks on a Netflix web series involves assigning a task or activity that requires learners to talk about the series as part of their learning. These tasks are designed to improve learners' speaking skills, encourage them to analyse and participate in the lesson series, and promote critical thinking and communication. The lesson plans and different types of tasks are designed based on the Web series.

1. **Character Presentation:** Learners can choose a character from Stranger Things Web series and write a short introduction, including a description of the character, their personality traits, and their role in the story. Learners can then introduce their character to the class and engage in discussion about their character's motivations and relationships with other characters.
2. **Discuss the Plot:** Learners can work in small groups to discuss the main events in Stranger Things. Each group can take turns presenting their discussion to the class and participating in a whole-class discussion about the story and its resolution.
3. **Themes and Motifs:** Learners can work in pairs to present a discussion of a specific theme or motif from Stranger Things. Each pair can present their discussion to the class and discuss with the class the importance of these elements in the story.
4. **Web series reviews:** Learners can create a short review of the Stranger Things web series, including elements such as plot, characters, theme, and overall feel. Learners can then present their reviews to the class and participate in discussions about the series.
5. **Role Play:** Learners can choose a scene from Stranger Things and role play. This can be done in pairs or small groups and can include discussion and explanation of the characters and their motivations.
6. **Debate:** Learners can engage in a debate about a specific aspect of Stranger Things, such as its popularity, its influence on other media, or the position of it's in the science fiction genre. Each learner will take turns presenting their argument and participating in a discussion in class about the series Stranger Things.

Pre-test and Post-test

A pre-test and post-test were used in this study to compare learners' speaking skills before and after the test. The test was repeated twice. The first test was used to obtain the pre-treatment scores, and the second was used to obtain the post-test scores. To ensure consistency of scores, the

pre-test and post-test topics were the same in each task cycle. Each learner's speaking test lasted three minutes. Speaking skills were assessed under four categories: pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and vocabulary.

The statistical means and standard deviations of the sample group's pre-test and post-test were calculated based on the learner's performance in the tasks. The paired sample T-test was used for statistical analyses. The pre-test and post-test results were then compared, with the significance of one tail (P-value) used as a reference to determine the significant difference between the calculated means.

Pre-test and Post-test results

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre test	5.97	30	1.159	.212
	Post test	7.57	30	1.040	.190

Table 1

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Paired Pre test-Post test	- 1.600	.498	.091	- 1.786	-1.414	-17.588	29	.000	

Table 2

The mean score of the learners' pre-test speaking skills was 5.97, with a standard deviation of 1.159, as shown in Table 1. The mean score in the post-test was 7.57, with a standard deviation

of 1.040. The smaller the standard deviation (SD), the smaller the difference between the individual score and the average score; the larger the SD, the greater the difference.

The post-test SD was less than the pre-test SD, indicating that the learners' post-test scores were closer to the mean. The p-value was less than 0.05. This meant that the learners' speaking skills had improved as a result of the Tasks on Web Series, and the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant.

Guidelines to Integrate Web Series in TBLT Language Classrooms

Choose appropriate audio-visual clips from the episodes of a Web Series; which are much contextually relevant to the day-to-day L2 conversations and choose according to the learners' competence. It will help them, but not difficult to understand that they become discouraged. Use web series as a way to introduce new vocabulary and grammar. For example, if a character uses a particular verb tense, explain it to learners and ask them to use it in their own sentences.

Encourage learners to web series in their free time and ask them to complete related tasks or engage in discussions in the TBLT language classroom. This will help them with listening comprehension and enhance speaking skills. Use web series as a simulated demonstrative digital text for other activities such as role-playing, debating, or writing.

Make them watch web series as a platform to learn and understand the target language apart from the language sessions; and encourage them to discuss specific scenes or usage of language components. Encourage learners to web series with subtitles in English by enabling the subtitle features, as it will help them to learn vocabularies and understand the dialogue better and also improve their reading skills. It is important to use web series in the TBLT Language classroom and it should be part of a comprehensive curriculum to enable the L2 learners to have meaningful interactions.

Lesson Plan Framework for Integrating Web Series in TBLT Language Classrooms

The Lesson Plan Framework consists of various segments. TBLT workspace has the details about the title of the task, language focus, skill to be enhanced, duration, task category and sample details. The web series workspace has the details about the OTT Platform, episodes and ICT tools features.

Learner preparatory assignment segment consists of the facilitator's and the learner's role during the pre-task session. During the main task cycle, the tasks will be reported by following the task instructions. Assessment scale is included in the framework to evaluate the performance and post task results of the learners.

Feedback part is much more significant to acknowledge the opinions and perspectives of the learners during the whole task cycle. A model Lesson Plan of the framework for integrating Web Series in TBLT Language Classrooms is drafted for reference in Table 3. The following segments are thoroughly furnished to help the facilitators to design tasks to harness the binge watching trend as an edutainment.

Lesson Plan Framework for Integrating Web Series in TBLT Language Classroom	Task Lesson Plan No: TL 00
Task Facilitator and Affiliation Details Course Facilitator: Mrs. I. Anto Arockiya Anita Designation: Research Scholar (Ph. D) Institution: St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli-620 002. Affiliation: Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India-621 024.	
TBLT Workspace Task Title: Skill(s) Focused: ____ Skill(s); Task Duration: ____ hour(s) / day(s); ____ week(s). Language Focus: Task Focus: Language focused (Meaning) / Form focused (Grammar) Task Type: Task Mode: Online / Offline ; Task Category: Individual / Paired / Group Task Level: Slow / Moderate /Advanced ; Sample Population: ____ (Tertiary L2 Learners)	
Task Objective is to	
Web Series Workspace Title: Season: <u>00</u> ; Episode: <u>00</u> ; OTT Platform: _____. Play Timing- From: <u>00/00/00</u> - Till: <u>00/00/00</u> (e.g: HH/MM/SS) ICT Tools and Features Checklist Audio: Enabled / Not Enabled; Video: Enabled / Not Enabled; Subtitle: Enabled / Not Enabled	
Learner Preparatory Assignment (Prior to Participation in the Task) Web Series to Watch: Season: <u>00</u> ; Episode: <u>00</u> ; Play Timing- From: <u>00/00/00</u> - Till: <u>00/00/00</u>	

Focus on: Dialogue Exchange between Characters	
Prep-Duration: _____ Hour(s)/ Day(s)/ Week(s)/Month(s).	
Pre Task Duration: ____ min.	Facilitator Role:
	Learner Role:
Main Task Cycle: ____ . Duration: ____ min.	Task Stage, Plan Stage and Report Stage: Post Task Instruction
Assessment Formative / Summative	Assessment Scale:
Feedback Session Facilitator / Learner Duration: ____ min.	

Table 3
Conclusion

Integrating web series in education meets several goals in language teaching. A creative and resourceful facilitator can produce significant results not only in developing learners' language skills but also in fostering higher level critical and creative thinking skills. The proposed Lesson Plan Framework helps to contribute the use of web Series with intended learning objectives and incorporate a set of tasks that enable learners to engage with the material individually. By considering Web series as source of authentic language input and providing opportunities for learners to use language in appropriate contexts, facilitators can create more engaging tasks and effective learning experiences. The research aims to contribute TBLT lesson plan model framework to integrate web series in language classrooms as an edutainment for L2 learners. The prescribed TBLT Lesson Plan Framework helps facilitators to design L2 language tasks by integrating Web Series in accordance with the pedagogical principles of Task-based approach.

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