

Syllabus Design in ELT: Evaluating Grammatical, Functional, Situational, Task-Based, Content-based, and Genre-Based Approaches

**Maulina Nur Chikmahwati, Annisa Ayu Fatimah Zahro,
Novi Intan Aprilia**

Master of English Education, Faculty of Language and Arts,
Universitas Negeri Semarang

maulinanurchikmahwati@students.unnes.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15294/elslt.v1i1.623>

QRCBN 62-6861-2530-756

ABSTRACT

This paper examines six major types of syllabi in English Language Teaching (ELT): Grammatical, Functional-Notional, Situational, Task-Based, Content-Based, and Genre-Based. Each syllabus type is discussed in terms of its definition, features, strengths, and weaknesses, highlighting how they reflect different theories of language and learning. Special attention is given to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Genre-Based Approach (GBA) due to their relevance in modern communicative language teaching and alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. A comparative analysis reveals that while traditional syllabi offer clarity and scaffolding, more communicative, learner-centered approaches such as TBLT and GBA better address current educational needs. The study concludes that hybrid models integrating traditional and modern approaches are most effective for fostering communicative competence, literacy development, and learner autonomy in the Indonesian ELT context.

Keywords: curriculum, English Language Teaching, functional-notional syllabus, genre-based syllabus, grammatical syllabus, syllabus design, task-based syllabus

INTRODUCTION

In English Language Teaching (ELT), syllabus design serves as the structural framework that shapes the quality of instruction and learning outcomes. It bridges the gap between curriculum theory and classroom practice by determining what content is taught, how it is sequenced, and how learners engage with communication. As Richards (2013) notes, the syllabus specifies both the content and order of instruction, forming the basis for planning, materials, and assessment.

Over time, ELT has shifted from structure-based methods to communicative and learner-centered approaches that emphasize autonomy, contextual learning, and 21st-century skills. Nation and Macalister (2010) highlight that effective syllabus design should align with environmental and needs analyses to remain responsive to local and global educational demands.

This chapter examines six key types of syllabi: grammatical, functional-notional, situational, task-based, content-based, and genre-based. While each offers valuable insights, no single model fully meets the complexity of language learning. Therefore, integrated or hybrid approaches that combine structural and communicative elements are considered most effective for fostering communicative competence, literacy, and learner independence, especially in diverse educational contexts such as Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative conceptual research design using a descriptive-comparative approach. The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate six major syllabus types in English Language Teaching (ELT): grammatical, functional-notional, situational, task-based, content-based, and genre-based. It will analyze their theoretical foundations, pedagogical characteristics, strengths, and limitations.

The data sources consist of secondary literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, curriculum documents, and policy-related publications relevant to syllabus design, communicative language teaching, and contemporary ELT practices. These sources were selected

based on their relevance to theories of language, learning, and curriculum development, particularly within the contexts of EFL and Indonesian education.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic and comparative analysis. Each syllabus type was analyzed according to standard criteria, including the underlying theory of language and learning, instructional focus, pedagogical strengths, limitations, and contextual applicability. The findings were then compared to identify patterns, contrasts, and points of convergence, with particular attention to the relevance of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in relation to the Merdeka Curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Syllabus design is grounded in theories of language learning, curriculum development, and educational psychology. Within the communicative paradigm, language is viewed not merely as a system of grammar, but as a socially situated tool for meaning-making (Halliday, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This view has led to diverse syllabus types—from structural models that emphasize accuracy and form to communicative models that prioritize context, meaning, and learner engagement.

In Indonesia, aligning curriculum goals with classroom realities remains a key challenge. The Merdeka Curriculum promotes learner-centered and project-based instruction, which requires more flexible and communicative syllabi (Kartika-Ningsih & Gunawan, 2019). However, limited teacher training, lack of resources, and exam-oriented practices continue to hinder the effective use of task-based and genre-based approaches (Carless, 2007; Hanifa & Farida, n.d.).

Hence, integrating the systematic structure of grammatical syllabi with the communicative strengths of task-based and genre-based designs offers a more practical and context-sensitive solution. This approach reflects Nation and Macalister's (2010) concept of *principled flexibility*, adapting global pedagogies to local realities while maintaining theoretical coherence.

In summary, syllabus design stands at the crossroads of theory, policy, and classroom practice. While communicative and genre-based models hold promise, successful implementation in Indonesia depends on contextual adaptation to ensure effectiveness and inclusivity.

Syllabus Design in ELT

Within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the syllabus constitutes a central and operational component of curriculum design. It functions as the bridge between pedagogical theory and classroom implementation, translating broad curricular goals into specific learning content, tasks, and assessment plans (Richards, 2013). A syllabus is defined as an explicit statement of the linguistic content, communicative skills, and learning tasks to be covered in a course, together with the order in which these elements are presented. Fundamentally, it answers two essential questions: What will be taught? And in what sequence?

In contrast to the curriculum, which encompasses philosophical principles, policy objectives, and evaluative frameworks, the syllabus is more pragmatic and teacher-focused, emphasizing the organization of instruction and learning activities (Nation & Macalister, 2010). This distinction positions the syllabus as the primary vehicle through which educational theory is operationalized within classroom practice. Consequently, effective syllabus design requires balancing theoretical coherence, contextual adaptability, and learner needs, particularly in diverse EFL settings such as Indonesia.

Types of Syllabi in ELT

Over the past half-century, applied linguists and curriculum specialists have proposed a range of syllabus types, each grounded in distinct theories of language and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Collectively, these designs reflect the historical and theoretical development of ELT—from structural views of language as a system of forms to communicative and sociocultural perspectives that treat language as a tool for interaction and meaning-making.

The most commonly discussed types include:

- A. Grammatical (Structural) Syllabus
- B. Functional-Notional Syllabus
- C. Situational Syllabus
- D. Task-Based Syllabus
- E. Content-Based Syllabus
- F. Genre-Based Syllabus

A comprehensive understanding of the definitions, features, advantages, and limitations of these models is indispensable for curriculum designers and teachers who seek to select or adapt the most appropriate framework for their learners' linguistic and sociocultural contexts.

A. Grammatical (Structural) Syllabus

The grammatical or structural syllabus organizes course content around the formal elements of language—its grammar and syntax. Language instruction follows a linear sequence, in which discrete structures, such as tenses, clauses, and modals, are introduced from simple to complex, often accompanied by controlled practice and drills (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Key Characteristics:

- Primary focus on form and accuracy at the sentence level.
- Sequenced presentation of grammatical items (e.g., Present Simple → Past Simple → Present Perfect).
- Use of explanation, repetition, and error correction as core pedagogical tools.
- Frequent use of decontextualized exercises rather than communicative interaction.

Pedagogical Strengths

This syllabus remains valued for its clarity, predictability, and systematic sequencing, which provides teachers with a clear instructional roadmap and enables consistent assessment (Burton, 2022). It is especially effective for beginner learners who require explicit instruction and structured input before developing fluency (Richards, 2013). In Indonesian ELT contexts, its organized structure aligns with exam-oriented curricula and large-class settings, offering stability and

measurable outcomes (Kartika-Ningsih & Gunawan, 2019).

Globally, the model continues to evolve through digital and blended learning environments, where AI-based grammar tutors enhance learners' accuracy and feedback processes (Vuorikari & Castaño, 2023). Thus, while traditional, the grammatical syllabus remains adaptable when supported by modern tools.

Limitations and Challenges

Despite its practicality, this syllabus provides only a partial view of language competence. Its focus on form often overlooks meaning, interaction, and discourse-level use (Ellis, 2003). Learners may understand grammatical rules but struggle to use them spontaneously or appropriately. Moreover, the sequencing of grammar items rarely reflects the natural order of acquisition, reducing its pedagogical effectiveness (Krashen, 1982).

In Indonesia, grammar-heavy teaching can lead to low motivation and limited communicative practice, especially in large classes where drills dominate classroom interaction (Hanifa & Farida, n.d.). The approach also fails to address how grammar operates within social and cultural contexts, an essential element of communicative competence.

B. Functional-Notional Syllabus

Emerging in response to structural limitations, the functional-notional syllabus organizes content around the communicative functions learners perform (e.g., requesting, apologizing, suggesting) and the notions or conceptual meanings they express (e.g., time, quantity, location). This model reflects a shift toward communicative competence, as defined by Canale and Swain (1980), with a focus on pragmatic use rather than grammatical form.

Key Characteristics:

- Units built around communicative purposes rather than grammar topics.
- Prioritization of usefulness, frequency, and learner needs in sequencing.
- Integration of skills through communicative activities

such as role-plays, dialogues, and simulations.

Pedagogical Strengths

This syllabus enhances communicative relevance by allowing learners to practice language for immediate, real-life use. It promotes motivation and engagement, as students quickly gain functional skills for authentic interaction. The approach is also flexible, enabling teachers to select functions based on learners' needs and contexts.

Globally, it became central to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), with textbooks such as *In Touch* structured around functions. In today's classrooms, AI-based speaking platforms continue this tradition by supporting functional language practice (Vuorikari & Castaño, 2023). In Indonesia, the model aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes communication and learner autonomy in English instruction.

Limitations and Challenges

Despite its strengths, this syllabus often lacks systematic coverage of grammar and a precise sequencing of functions (Ellis, 2003). Lessons may become formulaic, focusing on memorized expressions rather than creative language use (Nunan, 2004). Without integration with other syllabus types, learners risk developing limited grammatical accuracy.

In Indonesia, teachers sometimes struggle to implement communicative principles due to exam-oriented practices and traditional teaching habits (Kartika-Ningsih & Gunawan, 2019). Consequently, many combine the functional-notional syllabus with task- or genre-based frameworks to achieve both accuracy and communicative fluency.

C. Situational Syllabus

The situational approach organizes teaching around real-life contexts (e.g., *at the restaurant*, *at the post office*), where grammar and vocabulary are presented through modeled situations and practiced orally (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Howatt & Smith, 2014).

Examples

1. Unit: At the restaurant → target language: “Can I have...?”, food vocabulary, polite requests.
2. Unit: Asking for directions → target language: prepositions of place, imperatives, map vocabulary. Each unit follows a sequence: presentation in context → controlled practice → role-play/production.

Strengths

1. Provides clear, concrete contexts for language learning.
2. Effective for teaching beginners, useful phrases and structures.
3. Offers structured, teacher-friendly lesson planning.

Weaknesses

1. Can overemphasize drilling and accuracy at the expense of honest communication.
2. Situations may feel artificial and not prepare learners for unpredictable discourse.
3. Fragmented syllabus coverage compared with notional-functional or task-based designs

D. Task-Based Syllabus (TBLT)

The Task-Based Approach, also known as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), is a communicative approach that places tasks at the center of the learning process (Nunan, 2004). A task is defined as a classroom activity that requires learners to use the target language to achieve a meaningful outcome, rather than simply practicing isolated linguistic forms. In this sense, TBLT shifts the focus from “learning language” to “using language” as a tool for communication (Ellis, 2003). TBLT draws on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) but goes further by structuring learning activities around real-world tasks, such as problem-solving, role-playing, or collaborative projects (Willis, 1996). According to Ellis (2009), tasks are characterized by a primary focus on meaning, the presence of a communicative gap, reliance on learners’ own linguistic resources, and a clear non-linguistic outcome. These characteristics make tasks powerful vehicles for promoting both fluency and accuracy in language

learning. In the Indonesian context, TBLT aligns with the goals of communicative competence promoted by recent curricula, including the Merdeka Curriculum. Its emphasis on authentic communication and learner-centered activities makes it a promising approach for engaging students.

In classroom practice, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is commonly realized through a task cycle, as proposed by Willis (1996). This framework consists of three main stages:

1. **Pre-task:** The teacher introduces the topic and provides useful expressions or vocabulary that may help learners. For example, before reading a narrative text, the teacher may brainstorm with students about familiar folktales.
2. **Task cycle:** Students perform the main task in pairs or groups. In the case of narrative texts, students may read a short folktale and then work together to reconstruct the story in their own words, create an alternative ending, or perform a role-play based on the characters. During this stage, the focus is on fluency and meaning-making.
3. **Language focus:** After completing the task, the class reflects on the language used. The teacher highlights useful expressions, discusses common errors, and helps students essential important grammar or vocabulary that emerged during the task.

This cycle ensures that students are not only exposed to meaningful language use but also given opportunities to refine their accuracy and fluency. As Ellis (2003) emphasizes, tasks serve as a bridge between communicative practice and form-focused instruction, striking a balance between fluency and accuracy in the learning process.

When evaluating the contribution of a task-based syllabus to English language teaching, it is essential to acknowledge both its advantages and limitations. As an approach that emphasizes meaningful communication, TBLT has been widely praised for its ability to engage learners in authentic language use and to provide opportunities for integrated skill development. At the same time, however, implementing this approach in actual classrooms often brings specific difficulties, particularly in contexts such as Indonesia, where traditional, exam-oriented practices remain dominant.

The following section outlines the benefits and challenges of adopting a task-based syllabus in ELT.

Task-based syllabus offers several advantages in ELT:

1. **Authentic Communication:** Learners engage in meaningful use of the target language (Ellis, 2009).
2. **Learner Motivation:** Real-life tasks are motivating and relevant.
3. **Fluency Development:** Learners develop confidence by focusing on communication rather than grammar drills.
4. **Learner Autonomy:** Students become active participants, making decisions and solving problems collaboratively.
5. **Integration of Skills:** Tasks often combine listening, speaking, reading, and writing naturally, allowing for seamless integration of these skills.

Despite its strengths, implementing TBLT also faces several challenges:

1. **Teacher's Role:** Teachers need training to design and facilitate practical tasks (Carless, 2007).
2. **Assessment:** Measuring learner achievement through tasks can be more challenging than traditional grammar tests.
3. **Classroom Management:** Group work can lead to noise, off-task behavior, or unequal participation.
4. **Learner Resistance:** Some learners prefer traditional grammar-focused instruction.

E. Content-Based Syllabus

A content-based syllabus organizes language teaching around meaningful subject matter or thematic units, such as science, history, or environmental issues, rather than separate linguistic forms or grammatical structures (Brinton et al., 2003). In this framework, language serves as a medium for learning content, indirectly allowing students to acquire linguistic competence while engaging in authentic and intellectually stimulating topics.

Examples

In practice, the content-based approach can be applied in various ways. For example, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes can use environmental issues as thematic units, integrating vocabulary related to pollution, recycling, and sustainability through reading assignments, discussions, and project-based activities. Similarly, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses can deliver geography or STEM topics, such as renewable energy or the water cycle, through the medium of English, promoting the simultaneous development of subject knowledge and language proficiency (Coyle et al., 2010).

Strengths

Content-based syllabus increases learning motivation by engaging students in topics that are personally or globally relevant (Brinton et al., 2003). This curriculum promotes the integrated development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and offers students opportunities to apply language in authentic academic or professional contexts. Additionally, this curriculum facilitates the transfer of cognitive and linguistic skills across disciplines, ensuring that language learning is aligned with real-world communication needs.

Weaknesses

Despite its pedagogical advantages, this approach faces several challenges. This approach requires instructors to have expertise in language teaching and relevant subject areas (Coyle et al., 2010). Additionally, an excessive emphasis on content can lead to uneven coverage of grammar. Lesson planning often requires substantial preparation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and access to diverse teaching resources.

Reflective

In the Indonesian EFL context, the implementation of content-based instruction has gradually developed in response to the need for more contextual and meaningful language learning. As noted in Khoiriyah (2021) studies, *“CLIL research in Indonesian EFL settings has been growing significantly in recent years. Some reported that the CLIL approach is also*

collaborated with other approaches such as bilingual education, project-based learning, task-based learning, and genre-based learning." This trend reflects a growing awareness among educators of the importance of integrating language with content and adopting flexible, interdisciplinary strategies suited to Indonesia's diverse educational contexts.

F. Genre-Based Syllabus (GBA)

The Genre-Based Approach is a teaching approach grounded in genre theory (Zhou, 2024). The Genre-Based Approach has a strong focus on the connection between text genres and their social contexts, guiding students to understand how language functions to accomplish various communicative purposes (Hanifa & Farida, n.d.). GBA is typically based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which views language as a tool for creating meaning within social contexts. SFL offers analytical frameworks, such as register components (field, tenor, mode), genre structures, and grammatical metafunctions, that support teachers and students in examining how texts serve specific social purposes (Kartika-Ningsih & Gunawan, 2019). In integrating GBA, three pillars of practice were identified: identifying, improving, and critiquing. Overall, these pillars aim to increase critical awareness, authenticity, and collaboration between teachers and students, using a holistic approach to create a positive learning environment (Anderson, 2025). In recent years, GBA has gained renewed attention due to its compatibility with Merdeka curricula and its potential to improve students' literacy and communication skills. However, successful implementation requires teachers to have a deep understanding of genre pedagogy and the ability to guide students through the stages of learning.

In educational practice, GBA is typically realized through the teaching and learning cycle, which consists of four main stages:

1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF): Teachers engage students' background knowledge while providing related content, vocabulary, and cultural context.
2. Modelling of Text (MoT): Students are introduced to

samples of the target genre, focusing on its text structure, language features, and communicative purposes.

3. Joint Construction of Text (JCoT): Teachers and students collaborate to create a text, with the teacher providing guidance on language use and text organization.
4. Independent Construction of Text (ICoT): Students independently use their understanding to create a full text in the target genre.

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA) has been widely applied in language classrooms due to its effectiveness in improving students' literacy skills. However, like other pedagogical approaches, GBA has advantages and limitations that need to be considered to ensure successful implementation and meaningful learning outcomes.

Advantages

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA) offers several pedagogical advantages in language teaching. This approach significantly improves students' writing skills by guiding them to organize their ideas coherently and produce well-structured texts. Additionally, this approach enhances reading comprehension as students develop a deeper understanding of the purpose and structure of texts through explicit modeling. It also increases genre awareness, enabling learners to identify linguistic features and communicative purposes in various types of texts. Furthermore, the scaffolding process throughout the GBA stages encourages active participation, thereby increasing student motivation and engagement. Finally, GBA aligns with modern educational reforms, such as the Merdeka Curriculum, as it supports literacy goals and emphasizes contextual learning.

Limitations

Despite its strengths, the implementation of GBA presents several challenges. The multi-stage teaching cycle can be time-consuming, requiring more instructional time than traditional approaches. Additionally, its effectiveness heavily depends on teachers' expertise and familiarity with genre pedagogy, which may vary across contexts. In mixed-ability classrooms, scaffolding becomes more complex, as learners require different levels of support. The approach also faces

practical constraints such as limited access to authentic text models and supporting media. Lastly, an excessive focus on textual structure and conventions might restrict students' creativity, resulting in formulaic or less original writing outcomes.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis reveals that no single syllabus type can fully address the diverse goals of language education. The Grammatical (Structural) Syllabus, historically dominant, emphasizes linguistic accuracy through explicit instruction in grammatical forms such as tenses and clauses. While effective for beginners and for structured assessment, it often results in decontextualized learning that neglects communicative fluency. Similarly, the Functional-Notional and Situational Syllabi focus on communicative purposes and real-life contexts, providing practical value but often resulting in fragmented grammar instruction and constrained spontaneity.

In contrast, more contemporary communicative approaches, Task-Based, Content-Based, and Genre-Based Syllabi, prioritize meaning-making and authentic language use. The Task-Based Syllabus (TBLT) engages learners in purposeful tasks that integrate multiple skills and foster autonomy and fluency. The Content-Based Syllabus (CBS links language learning to real-world knowledge, enhancing motivation (Brinton et al., 2003). The Genre-Based Approach (GBA), grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), develops literacy by exploring the structures and purposes of texts (Hyland, 2007). Though resource-intensive, GBA aligns closely with Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes literacy, communication, and critical thinking.

Modern educational practice increasingly supports hybrid or integrative syllabus models, combining the systematic foundation of structural syllabi with the communicative and cognitive depth of contemporary approaches. Such integration enables teachers to maintain linguistic accuracy while cultivating essential skills, including fluency, creativity, and critical literacy, that are crucial for 21st-century learners.

Critical Reflection

Despite the theoretical promise of modern communicative approaches such as TBLT, CLIL, and GBA, the realities of implementation in Indonesia reveal persistent challenges. Many teachers face limitations in institutional support, professional training, and access to authentic materials. Moreover, the coexistence of mixed-proficiency classrooms and exam-oriented evaluation systems often hinders full adoption of these innovative frameworks. Recent research indicates that CLIL in Indonesian EFL settings has been experiencing significant growth, with many teachers integrating CLIL with other pedagogical approaches, such as bilingual education, project-based learning, task-based learning, and genre-based learning (Coyle et al., 2010). This indicates a positive movement toward more flexible, integrative models that balance communicative purpose and linguistic structure. Reflecting on these dynamics, it becomes evident that successful syllabus design must strike a balance between innovation and contextual feasibility, bridging global pedagogical ideals with the realities of Indonesian classrooms.

Evaluating Syllabus Types: Which Works Best?

While no single syllabus approach can be declared universally "best" for all English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts, modern pedagogical evidence strongly supports approaches that prioritize meaning, authentic use, and learner engagement over isolated linguistic form. Therefore, Task-Based (TBLT), Genre-Based (GBA), and Content-Based syllabi generally offer the most comprehensive framework for achieving communicative competence and aligning with 21st-century skills. The most effective strategy is the adoption of hybrid models that strategically integrate these modern approaches with the strengths of foundational structural knowledge.

The Argument for Modern, Learner-Centered Syllabi

Modern syllabus types—especially Task-Based and Genre-Based—are more closely aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and learner-centered education.

Task-Based Syllabus (TBLT): TBLT organizes instruction

around tasks that require learners to use language to achieve a meaningful, non-linguistic outcome. This approach is most effective because it strikes a balance between fluency and accuracy. During the Task Cycle, the focus is on communication and meaning-making, which develops fluency and confidence. Crucially, the subsequent Language Focus stage enables the teacher to highlight useful expressions, discuss common errors, and refine accuracy, thereby addressing the risk that purely communicative approaches may neglect form.

TBLT offers significant advantages: it promotes authentic communication, enhances learner motivation (as tasks are relevant to real life), fosters fluency development, and builds learner autonomy. In contexts like Indonesia, TBLT aligns well with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Genre-Based Syllabus (GBA): GBA organizes content around specific text genres (e.g., reports, narratives) and their social purposes. This syllabus is highly effective in improving students' literacy skills, encompassing both writing and reading comprehension. GBA utilizes a structured teaching cycle (Building Knowledge of the Field, Modelling, Joint Construction, Independent Construction) that provides necessary scaffolding and explicitly connects language features to communicative purposes. This detailed, scaffolded approach helps students organize ideas and produce coherent, well-structured texts, making GBA highly compatible with modern curricula's literacy goals.

The Necessity of Hybrid Approaches

While modern approaches excel, traditional syllabi possess strengths that prevent their complete dismissal. The Grammatical Syllabus, for instance, offers essential clarity, predictability, and ease of sequencing for course designers, providing necessary scaffolding for beginners. The Functional-Notional Syllabus provides immediate communicative relevance and is flexible and adaptable to learner needs.

Therefore, the best approach is a hybrid model. For instance, a curriculum could be primarily organized around a Task-Based Syllabus, using meaningful tasks as the core content. However, during the TBLT Language Focus stage, the teacher could incorporate the systematic sequencing strengths

of the Grammatical Syllabus to address structures that emerged during the task. Alternatively, a Content-Based Syllabus, organized around a compelling subject (such as environmental issues) that increases learner motivation, could utilize functional-notional goals (e.g., arguing, persuading) and integrate Genre-Based instruction to produce required texts (e.g., a formal report on climate change). This integration ensures systematic coverage of grammar, development of pragmatic competence, and the achievement of authentic communicative goals.

Practical Implications

For Curriculum Designers:

1. **Define Outcomes First:** The choice of syllabus must be guided by the overall aims and objectives of the educational program. If the goal is academic readiness, Content-Based or Skill-Based approaches should be the primary focus. If the goal is immediate real-world use, Task-Based or Functional-Notional may dominate.
2. **Plan for Integration:** Avoid using any syllabus in its "pure" form. Design a framework where one approach acts as the organizational core and others (like the structural or functional) serve as supplementary resources for ensuring systematic coverage.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Recognize that modern approaches (TBLT, GBA, Content-Based) require more resources, preparation time, and teacher training compared to traditional structural syllabi.

For Teachers:

1. **Embrace Complexity:** Teachers must be prepared to handle the difficulties associated with modern approaches, such as complex assessments and potential issues with classroom management during group work (which is a common occurrence in TBLT).
2. **Deepen Pedagogical Expertise:** Implementing GBA successfully, for example, depends heavily on the teacher's deep understanding of genre pedagogy. Teachers must understand the theoretical underpinnings of each component they integrate.
3. **Balance Fluency and Accuracy:** Utilize the structure of

models, such as the TBLT cycle, to ensure that communication (fluency) is prioritized during production, while accuracy is systematically addressed during reflection and follow-up activities.

CONCLUSION

Syllabus design serves as the pragmatic roadmap that translates the philosophical framework of the curriculum into concrete instruction. The six major syllabus types—Grammatical, Functional-Notional, Situational, Task-Based, Content-Based, and Genre-Based—reflect different theories of language and learning. While the Grammatical Syllabus offers clarity and measurability suitable for foundational knowledge and beginners, it risks neglecting communicative purpose, resulting in decontextualized instruction and an overemphasis on form over meaning. The Functional-Notional Syllabus excels in its immediate usefulness and ability to increase learner motivation by focusing on communicative purposes (functions), but it often struggles with systematic coverage of grammar.

The most effective approach for ELT today is not a single "pure" type. Still, a hybrid model centered on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is strongly supported by current pedagogical research. TBLT works best because it structures learning around the authentic use of language to achieve a meaningful, non-linguistic outcome. Its core feature, the task cycle (Pre-task, Task cycle, Language focus), ensures that fluency is prioritized during communication. At the same time, accuracy is systematically refined during reflection, serving as a critical bridge between communicative practice and form-focused instruction. Furthermore, TBLT promotes high learner motivation and integration of skills, aligning perfectly with the goals of communicative competence promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum.

For future research and practice, there is a need to focus on overcoming the implementation challenges of TBLT. Specifically, future work should focus on developing practical

strategies for teacher training in effective task design and facilitation. Additionally, research should explore innovative and reliable methods for assessing learner achievement within task-based environments, moving beyond traditional grammar tests to measure proficiency in communicative and critical thinking skills. Finally, curriculum designers should continue to investigate optimal models for integrating TBLT with specialized approaches, such as using the Genre-Based Syllabus to provide targeted literacy and writing instruction within the TBLT framework.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, K. A. (2025). Integrative genre-based pedagogy: Enhancing social responsiveness in English medium of instruction and STEM education. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 74(January).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2025.101483>
- Brinton, D. M., Snow, M. A., & Wesche, M. B. (2003). *Content-based second language instruction* (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
- Burton, G. (2022). Grammar syllabus. In *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1–6). Wiley.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt1013>
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). *Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing*. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.
- Carless, D. (2007). The suitability of task-based approaches for secondary schools: Perspectives from Hong Kong. *System*, 35(4), 595–608.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2007.09.003>
- Course planning and syllabus design*. (n.d.).
https://fgsalazar.net/pdf/RICHARDS-J/UMG_CUR_CAP06.htm
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), 221–246.

- <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2009.00231.x>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold.
- Hanifa, K. A., & Farida, A. N. (n.d.). *Genre-based approach in speaking activities of the English for Change textbook. 1*, 230–247.
- Howatt, A. P. R., & Smith, R. (2014). *The history of teaching English as a foreign language, from a British and European perspective*. *Language & History*, 57(1), 75–95. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1759753614Z.00000000028>
- Kartika-Ningsih, H., & Gunawan, W. (2019). Recontextualisation of genre-based pedagogy: The case of Indonesian EFL classrooms. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 335–347. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v9i2.20231>
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2013). *Curriculum approaches in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Syllabus Design II – English Language Teaching. (n.d.). In *E-PG Pathshala*. Retrieved from <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/engp12/chapter/syllabus-design-ii/>
- Wikipedia contributors. (2025, May 4). *Notional-functional syllabus*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notional-functional_syllabus
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow: Longman.
- Vuorikari, R., & Castaño, J. (2023). *AI in task-based learning environments*. *Computers & Education*, 204, 104808.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Zhou, Y. (2024). A Scoping Review of Genre-based Approach. *Frontiers in Sustainable Development*, 4(7), 109–117. <https://doi.org/10.54691/w531w980>