Task Based Language Teaching: Pedagogical, Real-World Tasks and Group Tasks

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Task based language teaching (TBLT) represents an approach that is a part of the communicative language movement. Thus, TBLT focuses on language used in a manner that creates meaning, as such related tasks are designed for communicative purposes, real world use and vocabulary necessary for learning language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). TBLT incorporates various language teaching methods, but at the core classroom activities used in this approach are tasks that enable language learning. According to Willis (1996), an important principle of TBLT is that "all tasks should have an outcome" (p. 24). The outcome of these tasks according to Willis (1996) is a motivating factor for students, which is one major condition that is essential to language acquisition. This method is linked to various syllabuses and can be applied to teaching from young learners to adults. Some insightful aspects of TBLT are that some tasks mentioned facilitates the development of various skills and processes in second language learners applicable in real life and academic situations, the framework provides a systematic method for organizing and presenting thoughts, and group tasks allow students of low language proficiency skills to be an active participant in the English language classroom.

One insightful aspect of task-based language teaching is that it incorporates real world and pedagogical tasks. Integrating both tasks in the approach form a balance between functional and academic English language learning. Additionally, tasks such as listing, ordering, and sorting can be employed to improve learners categorizing, organizing, and clarification skills. Comparison and problem-solving tasks can be effective at improving second language learners analytical and meaning negotiation skills. Sharing personal experiences and creative tasks allows learners more free will to access and make connections to and apply

previously acquired knowledge in a meaningful manner. Moreover, multiple processes can be implemented in completing different tasks while using English to casually express themselves. The learners' skills can then be further applied to a real-world task, such as giving a presentation. Through similar tasks, second language learners can acquire skills that would be valuable in daily life which might be more interesting for students, especially English as a second language learners.

Task based language approach can be applied to teaching presentation skills in business English classes for intermediate students. Considering the pre-task, task cycle and language focus stage, each stage has a function that helps students advance towards production of the final goal. Thus, in the pre-task stage of teaching presentation, students can be given the task of introducing a software that was created by their company. Within this stage, the students can be instructed to talk about some software programs used by a client recently that were created within the company, then describe the software that is considered the most useful. After this, students could be asked to decide within their group which software is the best, then create a presentation to introduce the capabilities of the chosen software to share with the class. The task stage involves planning, practice, and reporting. Consequently, students can decide in their group the content and layout of their presentation and practice presentation in their group. Then they can present the decided content of the group for the entire class. Finally, the last stage of TBL is language focus where teachers have the opportunity to address reoccurring mistakes, provide feedback, and further highlight concepts from the presentations that may be useful in real life situations. Each stage of the framework is an integral part of the task and learning outcome, in that: In the pre-task stage learners are introduced to the topic and a goal to be achieved and can also reflect on previously acquired knowledge and experience to aid with the understanding of what is required of them; in the task cycle students are able to interact with the group members, negotiate meaning, and create a piece together that will then be presented to the class; after the task cycle teachers facilitate further

discussion of concepts and comment on the students' performance.

TBLT focuses tasks on goals or outcome and places less emphasis on language accuracy. Therefore, associated tasks can be effective at allowing students with lower language abilities and higher content knowledge and skills more opportunities to be active in English language classes. For example, in a class where students are placed in groups of four and tasked with creating an advertisement about a product, skills such as knowledge of music, content or product knowledge, marketing and organizing skills, and knowledge about the target audience would be necessary. In this case each student could choose to do a task that they are best at. Therefore, student A could select appropriate music. Student B could provide content information. Student C could write and organize the content, and student D could help to focus the content in a manner that would be appealing to the target audience. While in an authentic EFL/ ESL classroom where student population might differ significantly, group tasks such as writing a commercial or doing a presentation can be used as a means of advancing students' motivation and confidence through allowing them to demonstrate their skills in EFL/ESL classes which further facilitate language acquisition.

In summary, task-based language teaching approach emphasizes language learning through tasks that are communicative and meaningful in real world situations. The framework outline for tasks provides a procedure by which language learner can organize their ideas and progress to achieve task related goals. In addition, the tasks outline in task-based language teaching approach provide learners with an opportunity to develop classification and analytical skills among other academic skills and processes in addition to using language in a meaningful manner. Considering the importance of motivation to language acquisition as outlined by TBLT, another insightful aspect of this approach is that with the practice of group work and emphasis on fluency as opposed to accuracy, students with lower language proficiency and high content knowledge can become active participants in language learning classes by applying content

knowledge to various tasks done in class.

References

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