TASK-BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Narzullayev Sarvar

Narzullayeva Sevara

Toshkent Davlat Iqtisodiyot Universiteti

Abstract The learning of a foreign language has become a primary requirement for today's society. This represents one of the great challenges for teacher, who should draw students' attention and motivate through strategies and methodologies. This study examines how task-based learning can be an efficient in foreign language teaching and enabling students to be active, to interact with each other and to develop their language skills through communicative tasks and activities that are related to real-life situations. The preliminary results of the research show that performances of different grade students depicted various results. The conclusion can be drawn that students' level of motivation and attention should be taken into account while conducting task-based learning approach in teaching a foreign language.

Keywords: task-based learning, foreign language teaching, communicative tasks, efficiency of task-based learning

Introduction

Task-based learning is an approach to teaching focuses on the completion of specific tasks that was originally used by second or foreign-language teachers. It is an approach that stems from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which emerged in the 1970s. In this approach, students are given real-life tasks to complete, such as ordering food in a restaurant, making a phone call, or writing a letter, creating a poster and role-play. The tasks are designed to be meaningful and relevant to the students' lives, and they require the use of language skills in order to be completed successfully.

Task-based learning is often used in language education, as it provides a practical and interactive way for students to develop their language skills. It also allows students to focus on communication and problem-solving, rather than just memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. As the principal component in TBLT, the task provides the main context and focus for learning, and it encourages language use similar to the way language is used outside of the classroom. Students learn language and develop skills as they work toward completing the task, which motivates them to stretch their available language resources.[1] Overall, task-based learning is a student-centered approach that emphasizes the practical application of language skills in real-life contexts, making it an effective and interactive method for language learning.

Benefits

Task-Based Learning (TBLT) is beneficial because students learn language by communicating interactively while engaging in meaningful tasks. TBLT is relevant to students' needs and interests, as it stimulates language learning and skills development necessary for completing tasks that students may encounter outside the classroom.[2] Furthermore, students use self-selected language during tasks, which helps them to focus on the meaning of their message to complete it. Specific language items are not imposed on students, which means they are free of language control. Students use the language that they have rather than practice specified language items.[3] Task-Based Language Teaching is a student-centered approach. Students communicate real-life situations they may experience outside of the classroom with the language that is closely connected to their lifestyle or situations. In more traditional approaches, the contexts may seem artificial to the students because they were created for language practice and not for the students' needs. TBLT encourages input from students to the teacher about how the

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[1] Ellis, R. (2003). Designing a task-based syllabus. RELC Journal, 34(1), 64–81.
[2] Nunan, D. (2004). Task-based language teaching. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
[3] Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 19(3), 221–246.

learning environment should evolve. Accordingly, it is an active approach to language learning that is highly motivating and improves student confidence.[4]

Drawbacks

Task-based learning may not provide a balanced approach to developing all language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It may prioritize certain skills over others, leading to an imbalance in language development. Task-based learning often relies on implicit grammar instruction, which may not be sufficient for some learners who require more explicit explanations and practice of grammar rules.

Planning and implementing task-based learning activities can be time-consuming for teachers, and it may not always be feasible to incorporate these activities into every lesson. This approach may not be suitable for all learners, particularly those who require more structure and guidance in their language learning process.[5]

Results

Task-based language teaching can be effective for students of all ages, as it provides practical and interactive opportunities for language learning. The results of task-based language teaching can vary depending on the age of the pupils. For younger learners, the focus is often on developing a strong foundation in the language, as well as promoting creativity and imagination. As a result, task-based activities can help young students become more confident and proficient in using the language in a variety of real-life situations. They may also develop a positive attitude towards language learning, as the activities are designed to be fun and engaging. For older students, the results of task-based language teaching can include improved practical communication skills and fluency in the language. By working on tasks related to real-life situations, such as travel or job interviews, students can develop the language skills they need for everyday life and future career opportunities. Additionally, task-based learning can help older students

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[4] Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). Techniques and principles in language teaching (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
[5] Ellis, R. (2017). Moving task-based language teaching forward. Language Teaching, 50 (4), 507–526.CrossRef

become more independent and self-directed learners, as they are actively engaged in meaningful tasks that are relevant to their interests and goals.[6]

Conclusion

The conclusion can be drawn that while task-based learning has its benefits, it also has limitations that need to be considered. It is important for teachers to carefully balance the focus on language skills, provide explicit grammar instruction as needed, and assess progress effectively. Additionally, it is important to consider the individual needs and learning styles of students to ensure that task-based learning is suitable and motivating for all learners.

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