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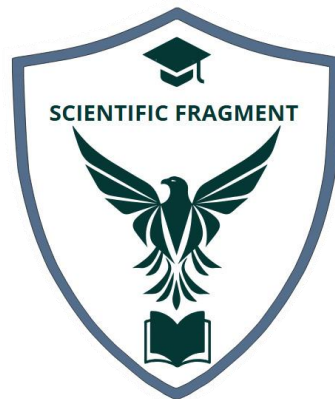
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Task-Based Learning in English Language Teaching: A Practical Method for Developing Communication Skills

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Abstract. Task-based learning has become one of the most practical and learner-oriented approaches in modern English language teaching. Unlike traditional methods that focus mainly on memorization and explanation, task-based learning places students in situations where they must use language for a clear purpose. This article discusses the methodological basis of task-based learning, its main advantages, and its relevance for teaching English to university students. The paper also describes how carefully designed tasks can improve speaking, writing, listening, and interaction skills while increasing learner confidence. At the same time, the article notes that successful implementation requires thoughtful planning, flexible classroom management, and a balance between accuracy and communication.

Keywords: task-based learning, English language teaching, methodology, communicative skills, learner-centered instruction

Introduction. Modern English language teaching increasingly emphasizes communication, participation, and practical use of language. In this context, task-based learning has gained strong attention because it moves away from passive repetition and encourages students to use English to solve problems, exchange ideas, and complete meaningful activities. For many teachers, especially those working with non-specialist students, this approach offers a realistic way to make lessons more engaging and useful.

The central idea of task-based learning is simple: students learn language more effectively when they use it for meaningful action. Rather than beginning with grammar rules and then moving to practice, the lesson starts with a task that requires communication. The language needed for the task becomes part of the learning process itself. This makes the classroom more dynamic and gives students a stronger sense of purpose.

Theoretical Background. Task-based learning developed from communicative language teaching and from the idea that language is best learned through use. In this approach, meaning comes first, and form is

explored through communication. Students are not only asked to produce correct sentences; they are asked to use language to achieve a goal, such as planning an event, solving a case, comparing ideas, or presenting a solution. This method supports several important educational principles. First, it encourages authentic language use. Second, it develops learner autonomy because students must think, negotiate, and make decisions. Third, it creates opportunities for interaction, which is essential in language learning. Finally, it allows teachers to observe how students actually perform in real communication, not only how well they remember rules.

Why Task-Based Learning Works. One reason task-based learning is effective is that it connects language with action. Students usually remember language better when they have used it in a meaningful situation. A task creates a natural reason to speak, listen, read, or write. For example, if students are asked to plan a business trip, design a survey, or solve a classroom problem, they must use language purposefully rather than mechanically.

Another reason is motivation. Many learners become more active when they see a direct result of their efforts. A completed task gives a visible outcome, which can be more satisfying than ordinary drills. This is especially important for students who do not study English as their main subject and may otherwise see it as abstract or difficult.

Stages of a Task-Based Lesson. A task-based lesson usually includes three main stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. In the pre-task stage, the teacher introduces the topic, explains the task, and activates prior knowledge. This stage helps students understand what they are expected to do and prepares them for communication.

During the task cycle, students complete the main activity, usually in pairs or groups. The teacher acts as a monitor and support person rather than a controller of every sentence. After the task is completed, students may report their results to the class, compare answers, or present their ideas.

In the final stage, the teacher draws attention to useful language forms, errors, or vocabulary that appeared during the task. This allows students to connect communication with accuracy. As a result, task-based learning does not ignore grammar; instead, grammar is taught in a more natural and contextual way.

Advantages in University English Classes. Task-based learning is particularly suitable for university students because it prepares them for academic and professional communication. Students often need to give presentations, participate in discussions, write reports, or work in teams. Tasks can be designed to reflect these real-life demands. For example, students may analyze an article, debate a social issue, compare data, or create a short project.

This approach also helps weaker students participate more comfortably. In a group task, learners can contribute in different ways, not only through perfect grammar but also through ideas, cooperation, and problem-solving. Such participation builds confidence and reduces fear of making mistakes.

Challenges in Practice. Although task-based learning is highly effective, it also presents certain difficulties. One challenge is classroom control. When students work in groups, the room can become noisy and the teacher may find it difficult to monitor everyone closely. Another challenge is time management, because tasks can take longer than expected.

There is also the risk that some students may remain passive while others do most of the work. For this reason, tasks must be carefully designed so that every learner has a role. In addition, teachers need to balance fluency and accuracy. If the lesson focuses only on communication, students may make repeated mistakes; if it focuses only on correction, the communicative purpose may disappear.

Practical Recommendations. To use task-based learning effectively, teachers should select tasks that are meaningful, clear, and achievable. The task should be connected to students' interests, academic needs, or future professional situations. It is also helpful to provide examples, model language, and enough preparation before the task begins.

Teachers should avoid overcomplicated instructions. The success of the lesson depends not only on the task itself but also on how well students understand what to do. After the task, feedback should focus on both successful communication and useful language improvement. This makes students feel supported rather than judged.

Conclusion. Task-based learning offers a strong methodological framework for English language teaching because it combines communication, purpose, and active participation. It helps students use English in realistic situations and encourages them to become more confident and independent learners. Although the approach requires careful classroom organization and thoughtful task design, its benefits are substantial.

In a modern English classroom, task-based learning can serve as a bridge between language knowledge and real-life language use. For university students especially, it provides a practical and motivating way to develop communication skills that are useful beyond the classroom.

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