

TEACHING ENGLISH FOR EFL YOUNG LEARNERS USING TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language which taught in school. For the EFL especially young learners, English is not common for them. It will be a quite challenging for teacher to motivate them involved in the classroom activities. This article attempts to share an overview of Task Based Language Teaching, the concept of Task Based Language Teaching it self and the example how its applied in teaching English for EFL young learners. The writer has tried to apply this method to the fifth grade students of primary school. The subject is fifth grade students. The selection of activities or tasks for the students were based on the students' need in order to motivate students so they can engage their attention, improve intellectual and linguistic challenge and promote their language development. After applied this method in the classroom activities, the writer found that the students more interested with the subject because the task were based on their needs. It also motivates them to learn English because they can finish the task together in group work so they can share their knowledge fulfill the goal of task.

Keywords: EFL Young Learner, Task Based Language Teaching, Teaching English

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in communication among people in the world. A language that spread widely as international language is English. For that reason, learning English is important for students, especially in Indonesia. English was studied by the students in the classroom since early stages in Indonesia. In order to make the students be able to master the language, the teachers should be able to choose or use appropriate methods in their classroom. For many years researchers and teachers have developed many methods to produce the technique, method or approach which can gain the use of language as a means of communication especially in language teaching areas.

One of the methods supporting the communicative approach is Task Based Language Teaching. It refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Task-Based Language Teaching has been used for many years although recently many researchers, teachers and methodologists still evaluate the effectiveness of this approach. One of the reason why Task Based language Teaching still use by many teachers is the desire of teacher or educators to promote the real communication so the students are not focused only on linguistic forms. The writers also believe that if task based instruction takes place, language learning process will be more meaningful and natural. As Richards & Rodgers (2001) said that engaging learners in task work provides a better context for the activation of learning processes.

Based on the explanation above, in this article the writer tries to provide an overview of task based language teaching, defining the concept of Task Based Language Teaching and how to applied it in the teaching and learning EFL for young learners.

MAIN DISCUSSION

A. Definition of Task Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), also known as task-based instruction (TBI), refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. It was first developed by N. Prabhu in Bangalore, Southern India. Prabhu believed that students may learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are using.

If we want to define a task, there is not a single definition. The definition of tasks are vary in TBLT. But there is the same understanding that a task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language. Nunan (1989) considers a task as a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is primarily focused on meaning rather than form.

According to Williams & Burden (1997) a task is any activity that learners engage in to process of learning a language. Skehan (1996) stated that tasks are activities which have meaning as their primary focus. Success in tasks is evaluated in terms of achievement of an outcome, and tasks generally bear some resemblance to real-life language use. So task based instruction takes a fairly strong view of communicative language teaching. While Breen (1987) defined a task is a range of learning activities from the simple and brief exercises to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making.

Another definition of task propose by Willis (1996:23) said that tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve outcome. She also add that the task is a goal-oriented activity which emphasize on understanding and conveying meanings in order to complete the task successfully. Van Den Branden (2006:4) defines a task as "an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language.

Based on all the definition above, we can conclude that tasks are goal-oriented activities and meaning-centered. Its designed to facilitate students' participation in meaningful activities. The language that use involves communication and its occur only when the environment offers the opportunity to exchange real and meaningful thoughts.

The success of task based language teaching based on the process of achieving the target language and it can be seen in the form of outcome of the learners. Task based language teaching provides learners with activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome in which the emphasis is on exchanging meanings not producing specific language forms. The selection of activities or tasks should be based on the students' need in order to motivate students, engage their attention, improve intellectual and linguistic challenge and promote their language development.

B. Types of Tasks in TBLT

There are various types of tasks or example of tasks that propose by experts. Nunan in (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) suggest that a syllabus might specify two types of tasks. They are real-world tasks and pedagogical tasks. Real-world task are designed to practice or rehearse those tasks and it would be useful in the real world, and pedagogical tasks do not necessarily reflect real-world tasks.

Prabhu cited in (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) use ten tasks types for primary age learners in his project. Both types of tasks were used. They are:

1. Diagrams and formations; Naming parts of a diagram with numbers and letters of the alphabet as instructed.

2. Drawing; Drawing geometrical figures/formations from sets of verbal instructions.
3. Clock faces; Positioning hands on a clock to show a given time.
4. Monthly calendar; Calculating duration in days and weeks in the context of travel, leave, and so on.
5. Maps; Constructing a floor plan of a house from a description.
6. School timetables; Constructing timetables for teachers of particular subjects.
7. Programs and itineraries; Constructing itineraries from descriptions of travel.
8. Train timetables; Selecting trains appropriate to given needs.
9. Age and year of birth; Working out year of birth from age.
10. Money; Deciding on quantities to be bought given the money available.

Willis (1996) proposes six task types built on more or less traditional knowledge hierarchies. She labels her task examples as follows:

1. listing
2. ordering and sorting
3. comparing
4. problem solving
5. sharing personal experiences
6. creative tasks

Pica, Kagany, and Falodun cited in (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) in classify tasks according to the type of interaction that occurs in tasks accomplishment and give the following classification:

1. Jigsaw tasks: These involve learners combining different pieces of interaction to form a whole.
2. Information-gap tasks: One students or group of students has one set of information and another students or group has a complementary set of information. They must negotiate and find out what the other party's information is in order to complete an activity.
3. Problem-solving tasks: Students are given a problem and a set of information. They must arrive at a solution to the problem. There is generally a single resolution of the outcome.
4. Decision-making tasks: Students are given a problem for which there are a number of possible outcomes and they must choose one through negotiation and discussion.
5. Opinion exchange tasks: Learners engage in discussion and exchange of ideas. They do not need to reach agreement.

C. Task Based Language Teaching Models

Task based language teaching offers an alternatives for language teacher in teaching learning process in the classroom. In TBLT, the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is stages. There are many tasks-based TBLT models for class lessons. Ellis (2003) proposed a model that focuses on meaning and real-world activities that demand learners to process language for real situations. It consist of three stages: pre-task (consciousness-raising activities), during task, and post-task (focused communication activities). In the pre-task students will be showed the grammar that they will master in the future and form is developed by the design of the task. On the other hand, during task stage focuses on communication activities, which means performance is crucial. Teachers are expected to let communication flow and find strategies to make error correction in such a way that indirect focus on form is accomplished. Finally, students report to class. They may be exposed to any kind of input and then share with the group their understanding.

According to Willis (1996) tasks can be used as the central component of a three-part framework: "pre-task", "task cycle", and "language focus". Learners get exposure at the pre-task stage, and an opportunity to recall things they know. The task cycle gives them speaking and writing exposure with opportunities for students to learn from each other. The task cycle also gives students opportunities to use whatever language they have.

The writer has tried to apply this model in teaching and learning process in the classroom. The activities consist of three phases; pre task, task cycle and language focus. The procedure of the activity as follows;

Lesson theme	: Public place and preposition of place.
Level of students	: Fifth grade students
Implementation schedule	: March 15, 2017
Time	: 70 minutes
Communicative goal	: Identify the name of public place in the city; asking and showing location using the right preposition.
Objectives	: students will be able to describe public place location using preposition of place.

Pretask :

- Introduction to topic and task (10 min).
Introduce the topic about public place; preposition and expression to ask and show the direction. It is important to highlight new words and phrases.
- Teacher helps Students to understand the theme and objectives of the task, for example, brainstorming ideas with the class, using pictures, mime, or personal experience to introduce the topic.
Show the students pictures of public places and map.
Tell the students how to ask and show the direction using picture of map

The task cycle :

- Task, Planning, and Report (45 min)
Teacher divided the students into group of 4-6.
Teacher ask the students to draw a map based on the paragraph given to identify the public place using preposition of place.
Students will do the task with their group.
After completed the task teacher ask the student to report their task in the classroom.



Figure 1. task cycle process (a) and (b)

The language focus :

- Analysis and Practice (15 min)
Show the task that student finished on the board. Highlight the language focus that will address. Students review the phrases in context and take a notes of the language focus that they need.
Teacher sets some language-focused tasks, based on the topics today and assign it as homework to practice at home.

CONCLUSION

Task-Based Language Teaching is a method of learning a language by using task as a central unit of learning. By doing the task given by teacher in the classroom, the students expected to be able to follow some stages to achieve the target language and finally, to use the language to communicate in a real world.

After tried to apply task based language teaching for fifth grade students of primary school and observed the activities of classroom when using Task Based Language Teaching, the writer found that comment of student about this method is interesting. Its because they work together to finish the task and each of them feel free to share the idea in order to fulfill the task goal. That is why the writers believe that Task-Based Language Teaching can improve the students motivation because students are given opportunity to use whatever language they know and already learn in communicating their messages. The writer also believe that this method or approach can be implemented in all level of education because it is enjoyable and motivating.

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