

# THE GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

A Peer Reviewed International Journal

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Special Issue  
Conference Proceedings

EMERGING APPROACHES AND METHODS IN  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (EAMELT)

Jointly organised by :  
Kongu Engineering College, Perundurai  
The Global Association of English Studies  
All India Network of English Teachers

An official Journal of

**GLOBAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
ENGLISH  
STUDIES**

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Volume II, Issue 1,  
February 2016

## **A Task Based Approach in Developing English Language Communication**

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### **Abstract**

*Today employment is every student's dream, for which command over English language communication is essential. The responsibility of training the students in this regard is laid on the shoulders of English Teachers. The responsibility is filled only when a new approach emerges. In the Indian context, teachers play a very crucial role in developing students' communication skills, but they are still following the outdated and traditional methods. The Present, Practice and Produce paradigm is still being practiced to train the English training courses, where the teachers are introduced to a particular grammar item, and students are expected to practice the same and finally, they are asked to deliver the sentences of their own. However, this is the way they can't learn the language in a natural way as the method was quite unnatural, but they are expected to exercise to complete the task at the time of teaching only. In order to avoid the above stated problem, Task based learning is the solution. This article presents the advantages of a Task-Based Learning approach and highlights its advantages over the more traditional PPP approach.*

*The paper also aims at the following:*

- 1. Learning English language in natural way*
- 2. Advantages of Task-based approach and how language communication is developed in a Simple way for effective employability.*

**Keywords:** Language teaching methods, Paradigm, Task-Based approach, English language

## **Introduction:**

Effective English language communication skills are required in today's work place, the importance of these skills can't be neglected. It is very essential to become an effective communicator in every one's professional life and in social life. Since communication is an exchange of views, opinions, directions etc, it is very essential to communicate them. Communication is a continuous process. More often than not, it is repeated to achieve the desired result. The process of communication is complete as soon as a message is received and understood by a receiver in the right perspective.

As LPG revolution has taken its shape, the importance of communication among people of different nations has been increased, and this, in fact, kept a lot of pressure on the students, on the prospective employees, to learn English language more quickly and effectively. This requirement to learn English language gave birth to new methods and approaches. Many methods and approaches have existed and gone in failure. But, Task-Based approach has gained its importance among the students for development of their communication skills. New methods are not born in a day and they take different shapes and try to meet the challenges, demands and the needs of present situation.

Task-Based approach is very popular among academic circles as Bangalore project. It was initiated by N S Prabhu in 1979 with the hypothesis 'Form is the best learnt when the focus is on meaning'. He believes that when the students are allowed to use a language by creating a meaningful purpose, they are able to express the language. He has conducted experiments on the students who studied in regional medium schools with no English competence. He designed some tasks for the students to solve them. When they have to solve the task, they have to use English language. Using those tasks he started teaching English and he was great successes, it was found that in the process many children were able to speak English effectively.

## **Task-Based Approach:**

Task-Based language has been originated from communicative language teaching. It concentrates and focuses on some important tasks in developing English language communication. Here, students are expected to use the language as an instrument to finish the tasks. In this approach the students are free to express in a language whatever they know. Here; students get an opportunity to express their language when the focus is moved away from forms and structures. In the process, it is proved that it is an approach where learners are expected to improve their language in a natural way. Task-Based language learning does not determine like present-practice-produce (PPP) paradigm how the language is studied. It helps the learners to improve their language in all spheres. Problem solving, playing a game, sharing information, narrating a story, role-plays etc are relevant and authentic tasks in developing one's communication skills. "TASK" is a term defined in many ways. Let us take some definitions given by the researchers who worked on this approach.

## **Prabhu's definition:**

An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate the process was regarded as task. Prabhu, (1987:24);

According to Skeham task the following are the characteristics;

Meaning should be given primary importance.

Learner should not be given other peoples meaning to regurgitate.

Task has some sort of relationship with the real world activities.

There should be priority to task completion.

The assessment is based on task outcome

Skeham (1998:95).

These language tasks can't be equalled with other tasks where there is no use of language for the development. These tasks are different from the real world tasks, but the language tasks are expected to implement effectively for the development of communication. Specific learners are blessed with very good cognitive skills to perform a task but are not blessed with linguistic skills to explain what they do in foreign language. They may not be known the accurate words for the concepts in their mind. In order to avoid this problem, some authors suggested three types of tasks that are to be introduced in language learning process.

1. Pre-Task
2. During-Task
3. Post-Task.

**Pre-Task:** When the pre task is being prepared, the language needed to perform the task is introduced. The students are introduced to the key vocabulary in weak form of task based learning .This sounds very much like traditional present-practice –produce paradigm where as strong task based language learning, learners are responsible for choosing appropriate vocabulary with reference to the context.

**During-task:** Here, the learners perform the task in small groups and the role of the teachers is limited to be an observer.

**Post-task:** Post –task activities involve refining what has been learnt .when the students know how to perform the task ,then, they may focus their attention on fluency .In such cases the emphasis is given on accuracy or restructuring rather than on fluency .It requires further practice ,repetition of the task, analysis of how it has been done. Thus, it completes the whole cycle.

### **Examples of tasks:**

*Communication activity:*

Students are asked to give their their hobbies

Students are asked to narrate a story

Students are asked to give their opinion on the issues like over pollution

### *Grammar activity:*

Students are asked to write three forms of verb (walk, go, put, know, see, listen, write)etc. They are asked to write yesterday activities using past tense and are asked to speak the same on the dias. Grammar can be thought in this manner by creating interest among them.

### *Role play:*

This kind of activities improves conversational skills of the students. For example: Students are asked to play a role of a principal and student.

A: Principal

B: Student

Now, conversation starts between them with the student asking permission for a leave and principal speaks to the student about his reasons for leave.

### **Activities through video clips:**

Teacher displays a video clip on the screen to the students for ten minutes. Teacher can make a discussion among the students regarding the central theme, characters, conversation of the clip etc. Here, the students are asked to be divided into small groups. They prepare notes on the video clip or they are asked speak on the video clip. Each group presents the activity orally. At the end of the task, the teacher will give the feedback on every student performance.

### **Activities through audio clips:**

The teacher plays an audio clip for some time and asks the questions. The students are expected to write words and sentences on a piece of paper on the concerned topic and answer them when asked.

The role of the teacher in Task-Based language learning:

- The teacher co-operates students and prepares a frame work according to the learners needs.
- The teacher conducts the activities in a smooth manner.
- The teacher creates the environment for the students to feel free to do the activity; with this, the co-operation among the students is developed.
- The teacher gives the necessary feedback and teaches the language according to their needs.

### **Role of the students:**

- Learners participate in the tasks either individually or in groups.
- Learners gather the information in written or in oral form and present it.
- Learners get the feedback from the teacher and analyze their performance and go for remedial work, if necessary.

### **Advantages of Task-Based language learning:**

- Task-Based language learning is students centered.
- Students are encouraged to use the language spontaneously and creatively through tasks.
- Students explore new ideas discussing among themselves and so they develop co-operative skills.
- It provides practical linguistic skill building.
- Students will get more opportunities to express their views.
- TBLL is a kind of learning which gives motivation to the students.
- Assessment is based on the task outcome.

### **Conclusion:**

In the history of English language teaching many methods and approaches have existed. They existed for some time and continued for some time to the needs of that particular. Today, it is a demand from multinational companies (MNCS) that good and effective communication skill from the students. The impact of learning English language communication skills shows the development in one's social and professional life. Hence, Task-based approach is well suited to the present needs of the students to learn the language naturally. Implementation of Task-based language learning in ELT class rooms makes the class effective and active.

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