

Task-Based Teaching for Developing Communication Skills in Second Language Learners

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Abstract : Teaching-learning of English as a second language is a challenge for the learner as well as the teacher. Whereas a student may find it hard and get demotivated while communicating in a language other than mother tongue, a teacher, too, finds it difficult to integrate necessary teaching material in lesson plans to maximize the outcome. Studies reveal that task-based teaching can be useful in diverse contexts in a second language classroom as it helps in creating opportunities for language exposure as per learners' interest and capability levels, which boosts their confidence and learning efficiency. The present study has analysed the impact of various activities carried out in a heterogenous group of second language learners at tertiary level in a semi-urban area in Haryana state of India. Language tasks were specifically planned with a focus on engaging groups of twenty-five students for a period of three weeks. These included language games such as spell-well, cross-naught besides other communicative and interactive tasks like mock-interviews, role plays, sharing experiences, storytelling, simulations, scene-enact, video-clipping, etc. Tools in form of handouts and cue cards were also used as per requirement. This experiment was conducted for ten groups of students taking bachelor's courses in different streams of humanities, commerce, and sciences. Participants were continuously supervised, monitored, and guided by the respective teacher. Feedback was collected from the students through classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Students' responses revealed that they felt comfortable and got plenty of opportunities to communicate freely without being afraid of making mistakes. It was observed that even slow/timid/shy learners got involved by getting an experience of English language usage in friendly environment. Moreover, it helped the teacher in establishing a trusting relationship with students and encouraged them to do the same with their classmates. The analysis of the data revealed that majority of students demonstrated improvement in their interest and enthusiasm in the class. The study revealed that task-based teaching was an effective method to improve the teaching-learning process under the given conditions.

Keywords : communication skills, English, second language, task-based teaching

Conference Title : ICELL 2020 : International Conference on English Language and Literature

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : December 03-04, 2020