TEACHING WRITING TO EFL STUDENTS THROUGH TASK-BASED APPROACH

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Annotation: This article provides general information about writing, teaching writing skills by using the task-based approach, its usage in the classroom, benefits and special features, the effect of TBLT in the learners' second language writing skills.

Keywords: writing skill, EFL students, task-based instruction, English Curriculum, Learner-centered English as a second language.

Writing has always been considered as a vital skill in English language acquisition. The significance is due to the fact that it reinforces the grammatical structures and vocabulary that teachers and instructors endeavor to teach their students. In order to develop writing skills and to be ready to communicate effectively in real life as well as academic situations. Furthermore, writing skills can be enhanced when the students' interests are acknowledged and when they are provided frequent opportunities to actually practice writing. After researching, it was found that a number of researchers discovered the need for ESL students to be exposed to various genres, strategies, and methods in order to succeed in writing English.

Task-based learning is an approach to English language learning that learners are provided interactive tasks to complete. In this approach, learners need to communicate. Once the task is complete, then the language used in the classroom is discussed by the teacher. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is the learner-centered approach developed in the 1980s by N. S. Prabha who worked as a teacher and researcher in Bangalore, South India. It has been emerging as a student-centered and experiential pedagogical approach arising from the practice of communicative language teaching (East, 2017). In this approach, teachers engage their students in both pedagogic as well as real-world tasks to improve their language skills so that they can improve skills in figuring out any language problem in their academic, social, and professional lives. During the task-based approach, learners solve tasks that are relevant as well as interesting to them. In order to solve the task, students should use the target language they're learning to communicate with their peers. Language teachers utilize this approach in improving their learners' communicative skills by actively engaging them

in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Additionally, task-based approach, that creates situations for interactions between learners and teachers, and among students within the classroom. Unlike teacher-centered approaches that mainly focus on the language form, TBLT concentrate on the meaning of the language.

Task as an activity aims to improve learner's communicative skills, focusing more on meaning than form. Any activity provided in the textbook may not meet the criteria for a language task rather it needs to foster students' communication skills. Task-based language teaching is considered as an approach rather than a method that creates a natural context for utilizing the target language in the classroom environment. It assists learners to explore their ideas as well as select their own words, and therefore become active students. Besides, it provides teachers an opportunity to develop activities in the form of interesting tasks on subjects that are familiar to students. As it is mentioned above, the lesson is based on the accomplishment of an activity and the language studied is determined by what happens as the learners proceed with the work. Task-based leaning approach is an approach that offers learners material that they should actively engage with in the process of their learning, enabling them to explore their opinions freely and use their own words without worrying about grammatical, vocabulary mistakes or mechanical aspects of writing. When students practice to write continually and complete their tasks, they can build their vocabulary and enhance their handling of grammar, spelling, punctuation as well as useful expressions. The familiarity of the topic and the enjoyment of the task are a solution to difficulties which are faced by students. Dave and Jane Willis (2007), in their book "Doing Task-based Teaching", listed seven types of task that can be used in an EFL classroom to improve student writing skills: listing, ordering and sorting, matching, comparing, problem-solving, projects and creative tasks, sharing personal experiences.

The main unit of a lesson in TBLT classroom is the task and different tasks are designed to facilitate the students with real life communicative situations enabling them real communicators of the target language. It is a learner-centered approach, based on the constructivist school of learning and teacher plays the role of a facilitator of the communicative interaction among the learners (Ellis, 2009) . During TBLT a language learner plays a dynamic role in the whole process of language learning as he takes active part in interactive and communicative activities throughout the task performance cycle to achieve an outcome (Prabhu, 1987; Bygate et al., 2001; Skehan, 1998; Robinson, 2011; Ellis, 2003) . Samuda and Bygate (2008) defined task as "A task is a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some nonlinguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of

promoting language learning, through process or product or both" (Samuda & Bygate, 2008: p. 69) .[176]

The major advantage of the task-based learning approach is that it offers learners much freedom and natural context in which students can use the target language in class. Thus, learners have a more various exposure to language and are exposed to an excellent range of lexical phrases, collocations and language forms. However, the main focus in this approach is essentially on writing than the correctness of grammar, syntax etc. The final part of task-based approach can be devoted to corrections and development. Furthermore, TBLT is learner-centered and is a strong communicative learning instruction where learners spend their time fruitfully and creatively. Since the significance of task-based language instruction has been felt by EFL teachers, researchers, and instructors the emphasis on combining different tasks for teaching English has been prioritized in the syllabuses.

This approach is explored by many researchers in order to prove its effectiveness. One of the researchers, Lahman Prasad Bhandari explored English teachers' practices and experiences of TBLT for developing the secondary level students' writing skills. The study aimed at exploring English teachers' experiences in teaching writing with respect to the intent of the secondary-level English curriculum. It started with the exploration of TBLT and teaching writing in connection with the curriculum. As the data were analyzed based on the taxonomy of task types (Willis & Willis, 2007), it elicited that the teachers employ both tasks from their textbooks as well as their self-designed tasks to improve writing in their learners. The type of teacher education helped them improve their theoretical knowledge of task-based language teaching. The findings on the research also revealed that teachers experienced their students learning better from their peers in pairs and groups than from teacher-centered classes. The findings revealed that though the teachers are well aware of the theoretical aspects of TBLT and teaching writing, they need more exposure to fully bring their theoretical knowledge of TBLT including the designing, sequencing, and implementing tasks in teaching writing effectively to achieve the objectives.[177]

All in all, teaching writing to foreign language learners can be challenging for teachers and instructors. In order to avoid difficulties in teaching as well as learning writing skills TBLT can be an effective tool. Furthermore, EFL teachers should adopt some more new techniques, and strategies to improve the EFL/ESL learners' writing skills. When the teachers or instructors provide a certain writing task to the learners, they have to suggest to the learners how to express ideas, opinions and organize the provided task. The teachers have to guide the students through the process of writing

[176] Ahmed, R. and Bidin, S. (2016) The Effect of Task Based Language Teaching on Writing Skills of EFL Learners in Malaysia. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, **6**, 207-218. doi: 10.4236/ojml.2016.63022.

[177] Lahman Prasad Bhandari. Lumbini Banijya Campus(2020) Teaching writing through task-based instruction: Exploring English teachers' experiences

that needs to divide the writing activity into several stages where each activity involves sub-skills in the teaching process. Therefore, the teachers should motivate the learners properly so as to involve them in the activities, and tasks with a lot of motivation and encouragement.

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