

## **The Role of Self-Directed Based Learning and Task-Based Learning as a Student Centred Method**

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### **Abstract**

Methods and materials adopted in teaching grammar remains a controversial subject. Teaching of second language grammar is very hard because learner becomes inevitable in order to acquaint the norms of grammar of the target language. Even in the current trends a grammar teacher remains in a state of confusion to device whether one should follow the prescriptive or descriptive or structural approach to teach the grammar. Teacher might have the confusion whether to input the grammatical competence or communicative competence for the learners. In order to get rid from this state of confusion Task Based Method helps the language teacher to teach the grammar rules as well to apply in the real life situation and initiate the self-learning method in the adults who needs to learn new skills.

**Key words:** Self-directed learning, task-based learning, student-centred method

### **Introduction**

Most adults spend a considerable time acquiring information and learning new skills. This acquisition is necessary because of the rapidity of change, the continuous creation of new knowledge and ever widening access to information. Over the past few decades, grammar instruction has long been a controversial issue in the field of second language. Focused on two keys such as whether grammar should be taught or how to teach grammar, it has undergone its ups and downs. In the process of which the necessity of grammar instruction is no longer the focus, and the explicit-implicit dimension in grammar teaching has received more attention. Many empirical studies have investigated that which method is better for grammar teaching. (Scott 1989; Zhou, 1989; Gao & Dai 2004; Tian 2005; Xia 2005).

### **Grammar and Its goal**

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What is grammar? According to Rob Bastone, grammar is multi-dimensional: grammar is a formal mechanism, a functional system from significant meaning, or a dynamic resource which both users and learners call on in different ways at different times Rob Baston (1994). The teaching of grammar has been the focus of language teachers and learners for many years.

The main goal of grammar teaching is to enable learners to achieve linguistic competence, learners use grammar as a lot or resource of comprehension, and creation of oral and written discourse efficiently, effectively, and appropriately depending on the situation (Huang 2005).

### **Task based Teaching: Principles and Definitions**

Task based language teaching and learning grew out of the alternative approach to language pedagogy and was popularised by N. Prabhu. He deserves credit for originating the task-based teaching and learning based on the concept that effective learning occurs when students are fully engaged in language tasks, rather than just learning about language. Task oriented teaching is defined as teaching which provides actual meaning.

### **Task-Based Method as Student Centred**

Task based learning is a different way to teach languages. Real world situation can be created only by the task based method. It focuses towards the students in achieving a goal where language becomes a tool and it is considered as the major advantages in learning language. Ancient teaching includes by-hearting or the method which makes the students to get force in getting the knowledge of grammar rules. But the trend at present is following the task based method which brings them in the real-life situation. For example, when the teaching is done for the primary students, the sounds help them in taking up the situation. If a teacher wants to teach the word aeroplane he makes the sound of the aeroplane and then shows the direction how its fly. So, when it gets practiced into them if the teacher acts the students pronounce the name of that product or thing. It makes them to practice in real life situation. Hence the task based method could make the teacher to think in every level of teaching from primary to high level graduate students. The elements that are chosen by the teacher in language teaching or grammar will develop the student's skills. Peter Skehan recognized about the task based method adopted by the teachers as "teaching does not and cannot determine the way the learner's language will develop and that "teachers and learners cannot simply choose

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what is to be learned” (Peter Skehan, 1998). At his point of view it is clear that Task Based method is to increase learners’ activity and it is concerned with learner and not teacher activity and it the duty for the teachers to produce the task by giving more opportunity for the students to learn the language comfortably.

According to Willis, “Tasks are activities where the second language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome” (Willis, 1996). At his point of view it is clear that tasks help the learners to learn the grammar rules without any hesitation. The advantages of task based method is real world application, different method as a tool to understand and learners complete focus on learning language. When this is implemented in teaching grammar students or learners does not get bored or feel very hard to understand. Task in grammar helps the students to implement his knowledge and identify the answers by his own interest.

### **Problems and Challenges in Teaching Grammar**

Teaching of Grammar in task based method might create a problem for the teachers. One of the challenges and problem being faced by the teachers of grammar is the selection of examples to teach grammatical rules and forms. According to the level of the students, the teaching should be done. Because students from all the standards like high proficient students, low proficient students might attend the classes. When the poor standard students are taken into consideration they might be ignorant of the basic rules and structural patterns which they are supposed to have learnt at the school level. Therefore, teacher could not start the class directly to the goal of achievement. Step by step by instruction should be followed even at the graduate level. These problems occur because the students are taught in the traditional method in which the importance given to the rules than to the example. This makes the learners to acquire less importance in grammar and becomes ignorant without utilizing.

According to C. Paul Verghese, “A knowledge of grammar is perhaps more important to a second language learner than to a native speaker. This is because in the process of acquiring the language the native speaker has intuitively internalized the grammar of the language whereas the second language learner has to make a conscious effort to master those aspects of the language which account for grammaticality. It is, therefore, necessary for us to whom English is a second language to learn the grammar of the language” (Verghese 1989).

## **Tasks as a Facilitator**

Nunan defines “task” as: “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (Nunan,1989). For example, in order to make the learners to utilize communication skill basically the grammar can be taught under the task based method. For instance, when the preposition seems hard to them instead of giving the sentence pictures can be portrayed. The images of cat and table can be given by placing the cat at different places. First it can be portrayed under the table then on the table and then beside. Even other images like tree, fruit, boy etc. can be used to project the places. So Instead of teaching the rules by explaining through the blackboard, the images itself will make them to think and even the multiple choice like key, distractor, relevant forms can be given. So that students might learn the different types of prepositions as well the usage. When the activities continue automatically students may recall and remember the previous image and where it has been placed and differentiated the distractors. Student automatically starts thinking and utilizes it in the appropriate place. In order to motivate the students in learning grammar careful selection of frequently recurring grammatical items may be selected and be graded them as per the background of the learners. Generally, around 275 structures are prescribed to make the learning of a language smooth and convenient. Through the minimization of rules and structures and removal of pedantic and non-existent rules teaching of grammar can be used as an accelerant rather than a retardant in the learning of English. The tasks are activities that require learners to arrive at an outcome from the given information through some process of thought which allows teachers to control and regulate the same process.

## **Self-Directed Learning**

It is an individual learner who can become empowered to take increasingly more responsible for various decisions associated with the learning endeavour. It has existed even from classical antiquity. Self-study played an important part in the lives of Greek philosophers as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Several researchers also have demonstrated that giving some learning responsibility back to learners in many instances is more beneficial than other approaches.

## **Initiating Self- Directed Learning through Task Based Method**

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Teaching of English grammar focuses on training the students to speak accurately i.e in terms of pronunciation as well as grammatical structures. The formers is considered to be the form-based instruction which aims to provide learners with language forms which can be practiced and memorized and this activities usually teacher-centred but the Shrum and Glisan (2000) point out that this view of proficiency was prevalent in the audio lingual, Situational Language Teaching and other drill-based or repetition- based methodologies of the 1970s and 80s. In contrast, the emergence of communicative language teaching in the 1980s led to changed views of syllabuses and methodology as well as the Threshold Level and more recently proposals for task-based and text-based approaches to teaching, which are continuing to shape approaches to teaching speaking skills today, meaning-focused instruction, usually student-centred, aims to make learners able to communicate and the teacher, therefore, plays a role more as a facilitator than a teacher.

Cotter proposed a method in his work and said that there should be three stages in any language classroom and they are Preparation which allows that students to prepare for the tasks ahead with an effective warm-up exercises in grammar, Presentation which includes topics, grammar and vocabulary and Practice which should always be worked towards real use of the language. This includes task based method as well as self- directed learning method.

## **Conclusion**

Elinger proposed self- directed learning has been identified as an approach to knowledge that relied on a person being both responsible for and able to self-directed in their own learning task based method initiates the learners to learn the grammar through activities of their own interest and lead a way for self -directed learning. Task based method trains the learners in practicing the grammatical structures and usages and the self- directed method leads them to identify the learning needs, preparing goals determining resources and evaluating outcomes. Formal education and schooling remain highly valued in most societies and many educators, employers, policy-makers and average citizens find it difficult to place high value on what is learned on their own or outside the formal system. Thus, tasks or activities shed more lights on new methods and brings out students ability to manipulate structure and to distinguish appropriate grammatical form in appropriate one.

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