

TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH YOUNG LEARNER CLASSROOM

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Abstract: As the development of globalization era, teaching English for young learner regarded as a preparation for a future generation to face it. The children regarded as the future generation are already enrolled in an English class in their early ages. Within their unique characters, the way of teaching and learning process is different from what the adults got. Task-Based Instruction, as one of the new method of communicative approach, has been used as an effective way in teaching a foreign language, especially for adult learners. The issue comes by its implementation into young learners. It is said to be a doubtful thing to apply Task-Based Instruction into young learners in learning foreign language. The characteristics of Task-Based Instruction which includes three stages; (1) Pre-Task, (2) Task-Cycle, (3) Language focus is regarded to be too much for young learners. Besides, it is said that implementing Task-Based in English young learner classroom can be a burden for them. Beginning by this perception, this study investigates; (1) the implementation of Task-Based Instruction in English young learner classroom (2) some adaptation that can be done in using Task-Based Instruction for young learner (3) the strengths and weaknesses of Task-Based Instruction in English Young Learner Classroom.

Keywords: *Task-Based Instruction, pre-task, task-cycle, young Learners*

The process globalization leads people to the need of English as the international language. It becomes a must to be able to communicate in English for the media, advertisements, entertainments and so many things are using English. It can be said that there is no space without English.

English for young learner regarded important today. There is an expectation such “the earlier the children master English, the best result they can get”. Based on this

assumption, many English for young learners classroom are available. Many techniques, approach, and method are used to in those classrooms, from the oldest one to the newest one.

As one of the new method of communicative approach, task-based instruction becomes one of the method that be used in learning foreign language. On the contrary, it’s a doubtful thing when it is applied to young learners because of its

characteristics including three stages: (1) Pre-Task, (2) Task-cycle, (3) and language focus. The reasons are: (1) The last stage-language focus is regarded inappropriate for young learners as its assumption that it is not good to teach young learner grammar or structure, (2) having the whole activities based on task can be a burden for young learners. Therefore, this paper will try to discuss the implementation of task-based instruction on young learner classroom and how far teachers can adapt the activity of this method.

WHAT IS TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION?

Shortly, when it comes to task-based instruction, we can assume that it is a method which is the whole activities is based on task. Nunan (2004) divides task into real-world task which refers to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom, pedagogical task are those that occur in the classroom. Directly, the term real-world task in foreign language classroom as a task which uses English as media, but the context used is not for a classroom activity. Kinds of task are including: having a phone call to a friends, writing a memo to the manager, or having an errand to a supermarket. While pedagogical tasks can be said as the tasks which can be done in the classroom, such as making an essay about personal experience, having a grammar quiz, or telling a story to a friend.

Richards (2006) adds that an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks.

It can be said that pedagogical task is task that is done in the classroom which focuses on the performance of understanding a language. Task-based instruction comes up with tasks, real-world task and pedagogical task. The 'real-world' activity is brought into the classroom as it blended to be a pedagogical activity. It can be said that the term task in task-based instruction can be a real-world task, pedagogical task and also a blended task (pedagogical task and real-world task).

Breen in Zhao (2011) states that task-based Instruction is any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. In this view, task is assumed to refer to all kinds of work plans that have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning, from the simple and brief exercise type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making.

Richards (2006) defines that Task-Based Instruction is another methodology that can be regarded as developing from a focus on classroom process. In the case of TBI, the claim is that language learning will result from creating the right kinds interactional processes in the classroom, and the best way to create these is to use especially designed instructional tasks. While Nunan (2004) defines task-Based Instruction as a language course whose syllabus or teaching and learning activities are organized around tasks. Unlike conventional syllabuses that oriented towards language as the primary subject matter, a task-Based Language

is oriented in the process of learning in the classroom.

It can be concluded Task-Based Instruction or Task-Based Learning is a method which believes that the communicative competence can be gained by doing task in the classroom. The task that can be done is interactional activity that can create the communication among students. By doing communicative task, students will get the habitual action of communicating using English; besides they can learn the pattern, grammar, or structure indirectly by experiencing the task.

HOW IS THE PROCEDURE?

Willis (1998) proposes the stages of task-based instruction as follows.

a. Pre Task activity-Introducing to the topic and task.

The teacher explores the topic with the class, highlight useful words and phrases, helps students understand task instructions and prepare. Students may hear a recording of other doing task.

b. Task Cycle

1) Task.

Students do the task, in pairs or small groups. Teacher monitors from a distance.

2) Planning.

Students prepare to report to the whole class (orally or in writing) how they did the task, what they decided or discovered.

3) Report.

Some groups present their reports to the class, or exchange written reports, and compare results.

c. Language Focus

1) Analysis

Students examine and discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording

2) Practice

Teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases and patterns occurring in the data, either during or other analysis.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG LEARNER?

Scott outlines the general characteristics of the children aged eight are as follows;

1) Their basic concept are formed they have very decided of the world

2) They can tell the differences between fact and fiction

3) They ask question all the time

4) They rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to convey and understand meaning

5) They are able to make some decisions about their own learning

6) They have definite views about what they like and what they don't like doing

7) They have develop sense of fairness about what happens in the classroom and begin to question the teacher's decisions

8) They are able to work with others and learn from others.

Later he adds that the children aged eight to ten have several development of language, they are: understanding abstract, understanding symbols and they generalize and systemize the language.

Young learners, up to the ages of eleven or twelve, are often less self conscious and less anxious about beginning to learn a new language than adults are. They are used to making sense of things without

understanding everything; they often have good memories, and good at imitating. They enjoy playing games, and often more used to activity-based learning than adults are. (Willis, 1996)

Later, Shin (2005) states that the characteristics of Young Learners are as follows:

- 1) Learning to read and write in L1
- 2) Developing as thinkers
- 3) Understanding the difference between real and imaginary
- 4) Can play organize how best to carry out an activity
- 5) Can work with others and learn from others
- 6) Can be reliable and take responsibility for class and routines

Different from adults, young learners have more bravery to learn the new language. They used to making sense without understanding everything means that they don't need to understand the structure, pattern, and grammar, but as long as they can use the language to communicate they will learn about it. Children also love playing. Therefore, teacher should avoid a strict and too serious condition in the classroom. Children need to be relaxed to reduce their anxiety.

TASK-BASED FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Here are some principles of Task-Based Instruction in teaching young learner (Willis: 118)

- 1) Establishing a relaxed, anxiety-free atmosphere in the classroom
- 2) Providing a lot of exposure that learners can make approximate sense of
- 3) Building on what they know, but without expecting perfection
- 4) Not forcing them to speak at first if they prefer not to

- 5) Reassuring them of their progress, and generally boosting their confidence

The task-based framework for beginner differs from the standard framework in four main ways. Firstly, there is much more weighting given to exposure. One result of this will be longer pre-task phase and shorter task-cycle. Secondly, the cycle may well consist of sets of short tasks rather than one long one. Thirdly, because there is less emphasis put on public use of language until learners have gained confidence, the planning and report stages are either omitted or very short, with the teacher giving the first report informally. Finally, the language focus concentrate initially on words and phrases, only gradually progressing towards grammar. For young learner, there is unlikely to be any language focus.

Willis (1996) proposes some activities of Task-based Instruction for young learners, he offers three sets activities. Set A does not necessarily involve the learner in any language production at all, but provide incentives for listening and trying to understand as much as possible. Set B offers exposure and minimal language use and set C requires more language production.

A sets are:

1. Listen and do activities
This activity involves physical activity such as throwing ball, or 'Simon says' or having a Bingo card that they made themselves.
2. Story telling
Children love listening to stories. The teacher can read aloud the story, explores it by some gestures or puppets. The children will probably mime the words; imitate

some phrases and also gaining some new vocabularies.

3. Listening to song
Miming the action can be fun. 'The wheels on the bus go round and round' is a good action song. Most children's courses have suitable song in them.

B sets are:

1. Collecting games
In this game children can do a listing activity such as collecting the name of some friend who has swimming hobby.
2. Matching games
In this activity, children can match the picture and the phrases, or the picture of an animal and its description, etc.
3. Memory games
This kind of game involves the activity of memorizing, for example using cards and phrases on one side and pictures on the other. Teams take turns to choose a picture and remember the words on the back.

C sets are:

1. Verbal hide and seek using a big picture of a room, or familiar to the children, the teacher decides where in the picture to hide a small object like a key. The children guess where it is by asking e.g. is it in the vase? Etc.
2. Modelling
Following instructions written in the target language to make, for example a village, farmyard or garage out of cardboard cartons, old plastic bottles, etc. And writing signs for it can generate a lot to talk.

It can be concluded that using Task-Based instruction for young

learner needs creativity. The teacher must be careful in arranging the task. One the student lose their interest, teacher will fail to get them joining the class. Task-Based for young learner provides fun and interesting activities such as games. Therefore, teacher can create variety kinds of interesting tasks.

SOME ACTIVITIES ADAPTED INTO TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION

Based on some characteristics on the previous explanation, some activities for young learners that can be adapted in task-based instruction are as follows.

- In teaching speaking, teacher can adapt these activities;

Pre-Task

- Dividing the class into two groups.
- Giving a table to each group consisting of the name of popular sports
- Asking the students in group 1 to list the popular sport using ball, while group 2 writing the game without ball.
- Asking the students to act or to mime the sport on their lists. If group 1 act, group 2 should guess
- Writing the answer of the students on the blackboard
- Drilling a sentence of like and dislike; e.g. "I like football but I don't like jogging"
- Asking the students to say what sport they like and dislike

Task-cycle

- Giving a blank table to the students. Each table consists of column name, like, and dislike

- Asking the students to ask 5 of their friend what sport they like and write it down on the table.
- After the students fill the table, the teacher asks some of them to tell what they got from the table
- The teacher can correct the mistake that the students made, for example when they say “Tia like taekwondo”

Language Focus

- Giving a jumbled sentence to the students
- Asking the students to arrange the words into good sentences.

Basically, using task-based instruction for young learner needs creativity. The teacher must be careful in arranging the task. One the student lose their interest, teacher will fail to get them joining the class. Task-Based for young learner provides fun and interesting activities such as games. Therefore, teacher can create variety kinds of interesting tasks.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES OF TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION

In every method of language teaching, there must be strengths and weaknesses. The strength of task based instruction is:

1. Students centre
There is no doubt that task-based instruction is based on task done by the students. Beginning from pre-task cycle to language focus, students do actively their task. It means that the students not only listening to the teacher but they also do some activities related to the teaching learning process actively.
2. Allows need analysis

It is allowing course content to be matched to identify student needs. Teacher can creatively arrange the task-based activity based on students' need.

While the weakness is as follows.

1. Need more effort to create the continuous tasks of every meeting
2. Arranging some tasks for the whole meeting is not easy. Teacher should be creative in choosing, mixing and matching the game, task, and activity done by the students. Therefore, it needs more efforts, especially for the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Task-based as a new method of communicative approach can be applied in English for young learner classroom. However, with those principles, task-based for young learners needs to be adapted. Set of games and activity for young learner can be adapted and adopted on the stages of task-based instruction ; (1) pre-task, (2) task-cycle, (3) language focus. Therefore, it needs creativity from the teacher to select, adapt, mix and match the activity of task based done in the classroom.

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