

Communicative Skills through Task Based Learning

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Task Based Language Learning (*TBLL*) focuses on the use of authentic language and directing students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. Based on the constructivist theory of learning, and with the acceptance of the communicative-language teaching (*CLT*) approach in the early 1980s the term, *task-based language teaching (TBLT)* came into widespread use in the field of second language acquisition (*SLA*) in terms of designing communicative tasks to promote learners' actual language usage (Jeon and Hahn (2005).

According to Gillian Porter Ladousse and Tom Noble (1991), 'It can clearly be argued that being able to speak in a sustained manner, or to use "long turns" successfully in a foreign language, constitutes an authentic task and is a skill that language learners need, whether it be to sell a product, entertain dinner guests, or to explain a problem. The oral-presentation activity provides an excellent opportunity for the learner to develop this skill, speaking for several minutes in a structured way, delving into various aspects of a single topic.' (Gillian Porter Ladousse & Tom Noble – Forum xxix – 2 April 1991 p.31)

The objective of this research is to improve the communicative skills and confidence of the English as a Second Language (ESL) learner by using ESL itself effectively in the learning-teaching process in the ESL classroom. In particular, the study focuses on the use of stress-free oral presentations in groups as a major methodological tool in achieving this objective.

The sample consisted of twenty nine teacher-students of the National Institute of Education (*NIE*), Maharagama, who are following the Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language conducted by the *NIE*.

They were given a series of opportunities to do different kinds of presentations on different topics depending on their syllabus. The marking criteria were known by them before preparation. At the end of each presentation, they were evaluated and the

weaknesses and the strengths were discussed in a constructive way in order to further improve their presentation skills and confidence.

During the observation and at the end of the process it was found out that this methodology was very effective and successful in teaching communicative skills in the Teaching-Learning process.

Observation Schedules, interviews, and evaluation sheets were used as research instruments to measure the strengths and weaknesses of this methodology and to arrive at the above conclusion.

Key words: *Task-based, Oral-presentation, Communicative-skills*