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## A Task – Based lesson to Grammar Teaching: A Post Modern Approach to Teach Grammar

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### Abstract

This is a very recent and widely accepted teaching method. Almost all the aspects of the lesson are based on communicative language teaching. This is a revolutionary and most appropriate method to second language teaching, developed in the end of the last decade of the twentieth century. The communicative language teaching methods (CLT) did not reject grammar teaching completely. In fact, grammar is still the main component of the syllabus of CLT. This belief was popular at about the time that CLT was being developed, and was really absorbed into it. Grammar rules reappeared in course books and grammar teaching re emerged in classrooms. This task – based lesson is interaction based because communication skills are used and acquired in serial interaction. It enables unpredictability and creativity in both form and message. This is a kind of learner centered method. Here, learning takes place through interacting interaction and negotiation.

**Keywords:** Grammar Teaching, Modern Approach.

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### Introduction

This is a very recent and widely accepted teaching method. Almost all the aspects of the lesson are based on communicative language teaching. This is a revolutionary and most appropriate method to second language teaching, developed in the end of the last decade of the twentieth century. The communicative language teaching methods (CLT) did not reject grammar teaching completely. In fact, grammar is still the main component of the syllabus of CLT. This belief was popular at about the time that CLT was being developed, and was really absorbed into it. Grammar rules reappeared in course books and grammar teaching re emerged in classrooms.

A leading proponent of this method was N. S. Prabu, a teacher of English in South India. His Bangalore project paved the way to what is called Task - Based learning. Here task is a syllabus, for which no formal instruction is provided. In the end of the task circle, a student can apply a rule of grammar in his sentence. This is a method where grammar rules are as important as the language lesson. This task – based teaching is centered around two concepts, they are 'focus on form' and 'consciousness raising'. Here focus on form simply means correcting mistakes. In the language consciousness raising points out the features of grammatical systems in the language. This focus on form and consciousness raising will help the students to

practice the language form and concentrate on meaning. As Leibniz once said 'A Language is acquired through practice and it is merely perfected through grammar'. (Scott Thorbury, How to teach Grammar? – 72)<sup>1</sup>.

### A model lesson to task Based Learning Encouragement

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the famous nineteenth century poet and artist, was once approached by an elderly man. The old fellow had some sketches and drawings that he wanted Rossetti to look at and tell him if they were any good, or if they at least showed potential talent. Rossetti looked them over carefully. After the first he knew that they were worthless, showing not the least sion of artistic talent. But Rossetti was a kind man, and he told the elderly man as gently as possible that the pictures were without much value and showed little talent. He was sorry, but he could not lie to the man. Rossetti looked over the second batch of sketches and immediately became enthusiastic over the talent they revealed. "These, young student has great talent. He should be given every help and encouragement in his career as an artist. He has a great future if he will work hard and stick to it." Rossetti could see that the old fellow was deeply moved. "Who is this fine young artist? He asked, "Your Son?" "No", said the old man sadly. "It is me forty year ago. If only I had heard your praise then! For you see, I got discouraged and gave up – too soon." (Taken from "The Sower's Seeds" By Brain Cavanaugh, T.O. R.)

### A kind of motivation

The teacher writes the word, "Encouragement",

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on the black board and tells the students that they would have a very funny and interesting game. The teacher asks each student to coin as many words as possible, using only the letters of encouragement. The teacher starts the game by, himself coining a few easy words like ‘men’, ‘age’, ‘rage’ etc., The students are allowed to discuss with their neighbors. Then after two minutes the teacher divides the class into four or five groups and asks them to write down as many words as possible. Then the teacher asks a student from each group to come to the stage and read out the words that the group had listed. He awards points for each word written and to make it a little more interesting he awards a minus half a point if the word is repeated in any one of the groups. The teacher gives two bonus points if any group had coined a word which has more than five letters. The teacher explains that there will be two task cycles in this lesson. This will lead us to reading a short anecdote about an encounter by an elderly man with Rossetti, one of the greatest artists in the world has ever seen. The teacher explains how the lack of appreciation would ruin one's greatest talent. He writes the difficult words and the main topic words on black board.

#### Pre task ( 2-3mins)

The teacher explains the first task. The teacher announces the result of game and allows them to talk among themselves over the points. The teacher asks the students to come out with their feelings when they were penalized for the repeated words and awarded bonus points. The students come out with certain words like “frustrated”, “dejected”, “Put off”, “Angry”, “happy”, “Sad” and “Excited”.

#### Task – Cycle

The teacher asks the students to go in groups and share how they felt sad when somebody didn't recognize their achievement or talents and how they were happy when someone praised and appreciated them. The teacher also asks the students in each group to select the best story told or shared by the members of the group and write it for a student magazine. When the discussion goes on, the teacher goes around the class as a guide for the students. He encourages and helps the students with appropriate words and right expressions.

#### Report – Reading

The group leader of each team comes to the stage and reads out the ‘Real incident’ adding his own flavor. To initiate interactions, the teacher asks the students to ask questions to the leader of the group. Why they chose this story and other necessary details. Thus the teacher avoids diversions and makes it interesting.

#### Reading the Text

Now the teacher reads the text slowly and in a dramatic style of that the students get into the feeling of the old man. If any words seem to be unfamiliar, the teacher writes it on the blackboard. The teacher stops the story mid way i.e., at the point where Rossetti, says he

has a great future if he will work hard and stick to it.

#### Tasks – Cycle 2

The teacher asks the students what the old man's reply could or asks them to write an appropriate end to the story. He gives three minutes to decide and write the end. Then, the teacher collects the answers from a few students and reads them out. Now the teacher reads the last paragraph of the story and asks how many of them had the same ending.

#### Grammatical Consciousness raising: Analysis and Practices

##### 1. Main Theme : Verbs

The teacher asks the class to circle all the main verbs. The teacher explains the differences between the auxiliary verb, verbs like is, was, were, are, shall will etc. Which help the main verb and the main verb which can stand by itself. E.g. Showed, Approached.

##### 2. Adjectives

The teacher explains in simple words what an adjective is (like an adjective is a word that describes or qualifies a noun).

The teacher now asks the students to underline all the adjectives they find in the text (E.g. Famous, Old, Potential)

##### 3. Direct and Indirect Speech

3.1 The teacher asks the students to read the text once again and mark with pencil what they think would be dialogue between two people. The teachers marks a few sentence such as:

He wanted Rossetti to look at and tell him if they were good....

He then apologized for taking Rossetti's time.

He said “ Oh, these are good. This young student has great talent”.

3.2 The teacher introduces certain rules to be kept in mind while changing direct speech sentences into indirect speech. When the reporting or principal verb is in the past tense, all present tense of the direct speech are changed into the past tense. **For Example:**

##### a. A simple present becomes past

Direct :He said, “The Headmaster is angry”

Indirect :He said that the Headmaster was angry.

##### b. A present continuous becomes past continuous

Direct :He said, “ Saritha is writing a love letter”

Indirect :He said, that Saritha was writing a love letter.

##### c. A present perfect become a past perfect

Direct :He said, They have built the house”

Indirect :He said that they had built the house.

The pronouns of the direct speech are changed where necessary, so that their relations with the reporter and his hearer rather than with original speaker, are indicated.

**E.g.** Direct : He said to me, “ I won’t marry you”  
 Indirect: He told that he would not marry me.  
 Direct :I said to her, “I won’t marry you”  
 Indirect :He told that he would not marry her.

Word expressing nearness in time or place are generally changed into word expressing distance.

**E.g.** “now” becomes “then”  
 “here” becomes “there”  
 “age” becomes “before”  
 “today” becomes “so”  
 “tomorrow” become “the next day”  
 “yesterday” becomes “the day before”  
 “last night” becomes “the night before”

In reporting questions the speech is introduced by come verbs such as “asked” “inquired”. Etc. when the question is not introduced by an interrogative word, the reporting verb in followed by “whether” or “is”

**E.g.** Direct :He said to me, “What are you doing?”  
 Indirect :He asked me what I was doing.  
 Direct :He said “Will you listen to such a man?”  
 Indirect :He asked them if they would listen to such a man.

The teacher gives a few sentences and asks them to find out whether they are direct or indirect speech.

1. Don’t you know the way home? Asked I
2. The warden enquired, “When do you intend to pay me?”
3. He asked, “How is your sister?”
4. He said that he would pay as soon as possible.
5. He replied that he had forgotten the new number
6. Rajan told him that his was better now.

This task – based lesson is interaction based because communication skills are used and acquired in serial interaction. It enables unpredictability and creativity in both form and message. This is a kind of learner centered method. Here, learning takes place through interacting interaction and negotiation.

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