

Task based approach to teaching prepositions of place and direction to undergraduate students

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Task Based Language Teaching is considered as an effective teaching approach where the Second Language is taught using the tasks to which the language becomes the tool. Thus it is an approach which is goal- oriented, reflecting real life language use and language need. This task based activity is designed to teach prepositions of place and direction to the Undergraduate students who are following the 1st year English course at the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya. The main objective of the Task Based activity is to teach the students' prepositions of place and direction in an interesting and a student- centered arena.

For this purpose 40 1st year students were selected from the Faculty of Science and they were randomly divided into 5 groups with 8 members in each group. A map of the Faculty of science was provided to each group. On the map different directions to different locations were marked and the given directions were different from that of one group to another. Each group was presented with the directions to the given destinations without providing the name of the final destination. The other groups had to follow the instructions and the directions and they had to guess the final destination. On the next level, after an introduction to the lesson, the students again performed the activity with better knowledge on prepositions.

The above mentioned task made the students use the prepositions to express the location and directions to different destinations, as in real life. Since the students were given a goal to find the correct destination all the students actively participated in the activity. Moreover the students got the opportunity to raise their problems related to the lesson after the practical usage of the preposition. As the activity is an integrated activity of speech and listening skills, the students got the opportunity to improve their speaking as well as listening abilities in collaboration with the grammar lesson.

The task based teaching activity was very successful because, the 40 students actively engaged in the lesson and successfully completed the worksheet on prepositions.