



DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: This article explores the role of task-based language teaching in developing students' critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom. It discusses how meaningful tasks encourage learners to analyze information, solve problems, express opinions, and reflect on their learning. The study emphasizes the importance of learner-centered activities such as problem-solving tasks, discussions, projects, and collaborative work in improving both language competence and higher-order thinking skills. Task-based instruction is presented as an effective approach for preparing students for real-life communication and independent learning.

Key words: critical thinking, task-based language teaching, ESL classroom, problem-solving tasks, collaboration.

In modern language education, the development of critical thinking skills has become one of the main objectives of teaching. Students are expected not only to learn grammatical rules and vocabulary but also to think independently, analyze information, and express their ideas clearly. One of the most effective ways to achieve this goal is task-based language teaching. Task-based language teaching focuses on using meaningful and practical tasks as the central part of the lesson. These tasks reflect real-life situations and require learners to use the language for a clear communicative purpose. While completing tasks, students are encouraged to plan, discuss, negotiate meaning, and solve problems. As a result, language learning and critical thinking development occur at the same time. One important aspect of task-based learning is problem-solving activities. When students are asked to find solutions to realistic situations, they are required to compare different ideas, evaluate possible options, and justify their choices. For example, learners may be asked to discuss a workplace problem, plan an event, or suggest solutions to social issues. Such tasks help students develop analytical thinking and decision-making skills while using English in a meaningful context [1,12-34].

Another effective task type is information-gap and opinion-based activities. In these tasks, students receive different pieces of information and must communicate with their partners in order to complete the task successfully.



This process encourages learners to ask questions, clarify meaning, and evaluate the reliability of information. Opinion-based tasks, such as debates and discussions, require students to support their viewpoints with reasons and examples, which strengthens logical thinking and argumentation skills. Project-based tasks also play an important role in developing critical thinking. During projects, learners search for information, organize data, and present results to the class. They learn how to select relevant information and reflect on the learning process [2,47-59]. Such tasks promote learner autonomy and responsibility, which are essential components of critical thinking. Collaboration is another key feature of task-based language teaching. When students work in pairs or groups, they share ideas, challenge each other's opinions, and learn to respect different perspectives. This interaction supports reflective thinking and helps learners become more confident in expressing their thoughts in a foreign language[3,102-127].

Reflection activities at the end of a task are especially useful for developing critical thinking skills. Students can discuss what strategies were successful, what difficulties they faced, and how they could improve their performance in future tasks. This stage helps learners become aware of their own learning process and develop self-evaluation skills.

In conclusion, task-based language teaching provides rich opportunities for developing critical thinking skills in the ESL classroom. Through problem-solving tasks, discussions, projects, and collaborative work, students learn to Therefore, integrating task-based activities into language lessons can significantly contribute to both language development and higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, integrating task-based activities into language lessons can significantly contribute to both language development and higher-order thinking skills [4,299-315].

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