Task-Based Learning and Learning Outcomes in the ESP Classroom

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Abstract. A model for a Task-Based Learning (TBL) refers to language acquisition through solving a problem or doing a task without concentrating on language features. A task involves an activity consisting of three stages: the pre-task, the task itself and focus on language. Teaching through tasks creates favourable learning conditions for students who study English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at tertiary level. TBL involves students in performing tasks relevant to their future profession, increases learners’ motivation and does not emphasize linguistic issues in the primary stages. Language analysis is incorporated only after learners have performed a task and depends on their needs, which become apparent only after performance. TBL seems to grant meaningful use of language and can promote autonomous learning. Moreover, it implies meaningful use of language and provides unthreatening environment for learning. However, this approach has not been universally accepted by English language practitioners and linguists due to uncertainties in assessing learning outcomes. This article addresses research into learners’ attitudes to Task-Based Learning, which is thought to have advantages over the more traditional and rather simplified Present, Practice, Produce approach, and the investigation of TBL influence on learning outcomes in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom.