

# The Application of Task-Based Language Teaching in College English Teaching in the Information Age

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**Abstract:** With the advent of the information age, profound changes have taken place in education. As an important part of higher education, college English teaching is also continually exploring innovative teaching methods to improve teaching quality. Task-based language teaching, with its unique teaching philosophy and practice, emphasizes the use of language for meaningful communication during task completion, which is in line with the goal of cultivating students' comprehensive English language skills. This paper first examines the basic characteristics of task-based language teaching and its application value in college English teaching, and then discusses the specific application strategies of task-based language teaching in college English teaching practice in the information age, to provide a useful reference for the reform and innovation of college English Teaching in the new era.

**Keywords:** Application value; Task-based language teaching; College English teaching; Information age

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## 1. Introduction

Under the background of globalization and informatization, English, as an important tool for international communication, has gradually shifted its teaching goal from the simple teaching of language knowledge to the cultivation of students' comprehensive language application ability. college English teaching bears the responsibility of improving students' English level and making them adapt to the needs of future study, work, and social interaction. Task-based language teaching, with its unique teaching philosophy and practice, provides a new idea for college English teaching reform. At the same time, the wide application of information technology has created more favorable conditions for implementing task-based language teaching, and enriched teaching resources and means. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to study the application strategies of task-based language teaching in college English teaching in the information age.

## 2. Opportunities and challenges faced by college English teaching in the information age

The rapid development of the information age has brought new opportunities and challenges to college English

teaching. On the one hand, the wide application of information technology has created a new teaching mode and means for college English teaching, such as network courses, and intelligent auxiliary teaching systems, which has greatly enriched and expanded teaching resources and provided more learning opportunities and channels for students. On the other hand, the learning characteristics of students in the information age have also changed significantly. They prefer interactive and experiential learning methods, and their satisfaction with the traditional teaching mode that focuses on knowledge transfer is also declining. Therefore, how to make full use of information technology and exploring teaching methods that meet the learning characteristics of contemporary college students has become the key to college English teaching reform.

### **3. Concept and characteristics of task-based language learning**

Task-based language teaching is a teaching method widely used in the field of foreign language teaching in recent years. It puts language learning in a real context and communicative situation. Students naturally use the target language to communicate and interact while completing a specific task. Different from the traditional “language point practice application” teaching mode, task-based language teaching emphasizes learner-centeredness and pays attention to the cultivation of learners’ language practical ability<sup>[1]</sup>.

The main features of task-based language teaching include:

- (1) Focus on tasks. Teaching activities are carried out around various specific tasks, which are the center and focus of teaching. These tasks have clear objectives, contents, procedures, and results, and students’ learning activities are guided by the completion of tasks.
- (2) Attach importance to the dominant position of students. Teachers are no longer the imparters of knowledge, but the organizers and guides of learning. Students become the main body of learning, actively participate in the design and completion of tasks, and give play to their initiative and creativity.
- (3) Emphasize the practical application of language. Task-based teaching focuses on cultivating students’ ability to use language in practice, rather than just learning language forms. In the process of completing the task, students naturally use the language knowledge and skills they have learned to communicate and communicate.
- (4) Pay attention to the process of language learning. Task-based teaching pays more attention to the process of language learning than the simple language output.

### **4. Application values of task-based language teaching in college English teaching in the information age**

#### **4.1. Stimulating students’ interest in learning**

In the information age, teaching resources are rich and diverse, such as multimedia courseware, online video, audio materials, etc. Task-based language teaching can use these resources to design interesting tasks and make the learning content more intuitive and visual. This learning method, which is different from the traditional classroom, can greatly stimulate students’ curiosity and interest in learning, and improve their enthusiasm to participate in learning.

#### **4.2. Improving students’ comprehensive language application ability**

Task-based language teaching emphasizes that students use language to listen, speak, read, write, translate, and other activities in the process of completing tasks. By completing real or near-real tasks, students can transform their language knowledge into practical language skills. In the information environment, students can

use the network platform to obtain rich information resources, collect, sort, and analyze data, and then report, discuss, or write reports in English. This series of activities helps to improve students' comprehensive language application ability so that they can better adapt to future social needs <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **4.3. Cultivating students' autonomous learning ability and cooperative learning ability**

In task-based language teaching, students need to plan the steps of task completion and choose appropriate learning resources and methods. The information age provides students with convenient autonomous learning platforms, such as online learning communities, learning management systems, etc. students can conduct autonomous learning according to their learning progress and needs. At the same time, group cooperation is a common form of completing tasks, such as jointly completing English drama performance tasks, team members' division of labor and cooperation, and improving team cooperation and communication skills through online discussion and rehearsal, which is difficult to achieve in traditional teaching.

### **4.4. Promoting individualized teaching**

Information technology can record students' learning behavior and learning data. Teachers can understand each student's learning characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages by analyzing these data, to provide personalized learning suggestions and guidance for students. In task-based language teaching, teachers can design hierarchical tasks for students with different levels and learning styles, meet diversified learning needs, teach students by their aptitude, and promote the growth of each student in English learning. Students can also choose their tasks and learning methods according to their actual situation to realize personalized learning <sup>[3]</sup>.

## **5. Application strategies of task-based language teaching in college English teaching in the information age**

### **5.1. Task design strategy based on information resources**

#### **5.1.1. Clear task objectives**

Task objectives are the core of task design. When designing tasks, teachers should clarify the teaching objectives of tasks, that is, what language knowledge and skills students should master and what abilities and qualities they should cultivate by completing tasks. According to the teaching content and students' actual English level, interests and hobbies, and learning needs, select the appropriate task topic and task type. The task objectives should be specific, operable, measurable, and consistent with the requirements of the College English syllabus.

#### **5.1.2. Combining information resources**

Various English learning resources on the Internet, such as English news websites, English movies, English songs, English learning forums, etc., are used to provide rich materials for task design. For example, a teacher can design a task based on an English news report, requiring students to read the news content, summarize the main points of the news, then have a group discussion, analyze the reasons and effects behind the news event, and present the results of the discussion in the form of an English report. Such a task can not only improve students' reading comprehension and oral expression ability but also enable students to understand current hot issues and broaden their knowledge.

#### **5.1.3. Designing a hierarchical task chain**

To meet the learning needs of different students and improve the teaching effect, teachers can design a series of

hierarchical task chains. The tasks in the task chain are arranged in the order of increasing difficulty. The former task lays the foundation for the latter task, and the latter task expands and deepens based on the former task. For example, when teaching English writing, teachers can design the following task chains: first, let students watch English writing teaching videos through the online learning platform to learn the basic structure and common expressions of writing; Then, assign a simple writing task, such as writing a self-introduction; Then, the students are required to read some excellent model essays, analyze the writing ideas and language characteristics of the model essays, and then imitate writing, such as writing an introduction to their hometown; Finally, design a comprehensive writing task, such as letting students express their views on a hot social issue and write an argumentative paper. Through this task chain, students can gradually improve their English writing ability <sup>[4]</sup>.

## **5.2. Information technology integration strategy**

### **5.2.1. Creating task scenarios using multimedia technology**

Multimedia technology can integrate text, image, audio, video, and other information elements to create a vivid and realistic task situation for students. Teachers can use multimedia courseware, teaching videos, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and other technical means to present task-related situations for students so that students can feel the charm of English language and improve their interest and participation in learning. For example, in oral English teaching, teachers can use VR technology to create an English communication scene, such as the scene of ordering in a western restaurant. After wearing VR equipment, students feel as if they are in a western restaurant, having an English conversation with a virtual waiter and completing the ordering task. Such a teaching method can make students more truly experience the situation of English communication and improve their oral expression ability.

### **5.2.2. Carrying out task teaching with the help of online learning platform**

The online learning platform has a powerful teaching management function and interactive communication function, which provides strong support for the implementation of task-based language teaching. Teachers can publish tasks, learning materials, reference links, etc. on the online learning platform. Students can submit task assignments, conduct group discussions, and interact with teachers and classmates on the platform. For example, teachers can carry out task-based language teaching activities by using online learning platforms such as school online and superstar learning link. Create course classes on the platform, issue task notifications and learning resources, conduct student online discussions and submit assignments, understand students' learning progress and difficulties through the data analysis function of the platform, and give timely help and guidance.

### **5.2.3. Using intelligent teaching tools to assist task learning**

Language learning software as a teaching aid is a very effective method. Nowadays, there are many excellent language learning software to choose from, such as fluent English speaking, 100-word chopping, scallop reading, etc. These software have rich learning functions, such as oral practice, vocabulary memory, reading training, and so on. Teachers can recommend students to use corresponding software to assist learning according to the needs of teaching tasks. For example, in oral task teaching, let students use English fluency software for oral imitation and practice to improve their oral expression ability <sup>[5]</sup>.

## **5.3. Teaching organization and management strategy**

### **5.3.1. Combination of classroom teaching and online learning**

In task-based language teaching, traditional classroom teaching and online learning are organically combined.



Classroom teaching is mainly used for task arrangement, explanation, guidance, and summary, while online learning provides students with a platform for autonomous learning and cooperative learning. Teachers can explain the requirements and key and difficult points of the task in class, and then let students complete the task on the online learning platform after class. In the process of online learning, students can cooperate with each other through group discussion, online communication, and other ways to complete tasks together. Teachers should log in to the online learning platform regularly, pay attention to students' learning progress and learning situation, and give guidance and feedback in time.

### **5.3.2. Group cooperative learning**

Group cooperative learning is a common form of teaching organization in task-based language teaching. The teacher divides the students into several groups according to their English level, learning ability, personality characteristics, and other factors. Each group is composed of 4–6 students. Group cooperative learning can promote communication and cooperation between students, and cultivate students' team spirit and cooperation ability. In the process of group cooperative learning, students need to clarify their responsibilities and complete the task together. For example, when completing an English project task, team members can be responsible for data collection, data analysis, report writing, report presentation, and other links, and improve their comprehensive language application ability through cooperation.

### **5.3.3. Personalized learning guidance**

Information technology is used to collect students' learning data, analyze students' learning behavior and learning characteristics, and provide personalized learning guidance for students. According to the students' learning records on the online learning platform, teachers can understand the problems and difficulties students encounter in the learning process, and provide personalized learning suggestions and guidance for different students. For example, for students who have difficulties in listening, teachers can recommend some suitable listening materials and listening training methods; For students with weak writing ability, teachers can provide learning resources such as writing templates and model essay appreciation to help students improve their writing level <sup>[6]</sup>.

## **5.4. Teaching evaluation strategy**

### **5.4.1. Establishing a diversified evaluation system**

In the teaching process, teaching evaluation is an important part that has an important impact on the teaching effect. In task-based language teaching in the information age, we should establish a diversified evaluation system, and comprehensively consider the students' learning process and learning results. The evaluation content should not only include students' language knowledge and skills but also include students' learning attitude, learning methods, cooperation ability, innovation ability and so on. The evaluation methods should be diversified, including teacher evaluation, student self-evaluation, student mutual evaluation, automatic evaluation of online learning platforms, etc. The evaluation results should be fed back to students in time so that students can understand their own learning situation and find their own advantages and disadvantages, to adjust their learning strategies in time.

### **5.4.2. Focusing on formative assessment**

Formative assessment is the assessment of students' learning process, which can timely find the problems existing in students' learning process, and provide the basis for teachers to adjust teaching strategies and

students to improve learning methods. In task-based language teaching, we should pay attention to formative evaluation and strengthen the evaluation of students' task completion process. Teachers can evaluate students' learning process by observing students' performance in group discussions, students' completion of homework, students' online learning records, etc.

### 5.4.3. Evaluation using information technology

Information technology provides a more convenient and efficient means for teaching evaluation. Teachers can use information technology such as online learning platforms and learning analysis tools to collect and analyze students' learning data, to achieve a comprehensive and objective evaluation of students' learning process and learning results.

## 6. Conclusion

The information age has brought new opportunities for college English teaching. As an effective teaching method, task-based language teaching is of great significance in college English teaching. Through the implementation of a task design strategy based on information resources, deep integration strategy of information technology and task-based language teaching, teaching organization and management strategy, and teaching evaluation strategy, the advantages of task-based language teaching can be brought into full play, students' learning interest and enthusiasm can be stimulated, students' autonomous learning ability and cooperative learning ability can be improved, and students' all-round development can be promoted. In the process of practical application, teachers should flexibly use various teaching strategies and constantly optimize the teaching process to achieve the best teaching effect.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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