



The Impact of Task-Based Approach on the Improvement of Communicative Competence

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Abstract

This study makes a contribution to the continuous accumulations of research knowledge about the tbl approach and communicative competence in efl classrooms by providing a better understanding of the impact of the tbl method on students' English communicative competence. Further research into these topics could look at how effective the tbl approach is at improving students' communicative skills in various contexts and learning situations.

Keywords: *Communication, Competence, Task based approach, Improvement, communication skills.*

1. Introduction

An ever demand for English communication skills has resulted in a large demand for English teachers all over the world. Millions of people now desire to enhance their grasp of the English language or ensure that their children do as well. Learning English can be done in a variety of methods, including formal education, travel, and study abroad, as well as through the media and the Internet. The enormous need for excellent language education and language teaching materials and resources has resulted from the worldwide demand for English. Learners establish challenging goals for themselves. They want to be able to communicate clearly and fluently in English. Employers, too, demand that their staff speak English fluently. In today's world, fluency in English is a must for success and progress in many fields of work. As a result, the need for a suitable teaching methodology is as strong as ever (Jack C Richard, 2005).

In general, the teaching and learning of English has posed significant obstacles for the interested parties. Surprisingly, the situation is excruciatingly painful and requires immediate technological attention. As a result, the goal of this study is to find out how communicative task-based training might help students improve their oral communication abilities, as well as to recommend several remedial options for improving students' oral communication skills.

In fact, the focus of this research is on the several types of communicative task-based education in which the teacher plays an important role in assigning openings and offering directions, as well as explaining and showing.

The word ".....tasks" refers to educational tasks, which are defined as "...." in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics. . . an activity or action that is carried out as a result of linguistic processing or comprehension. ..." (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985, p. 289). A task, according to Nunan, is "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilising their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, with the intention of conveying meaning rather than manipulating form." The task should also have a sense of completion, as it should be able to stand on its own as a communication act with a beginning, middle, and end....." (p. 4 in 2004). As a result, the researcher will use Nunan's definition in this investigation.

Many communicative tasks in the classroom require face-to-face interactions. Interaction allows students to experience talking and negotiating meaning at the same time, helping them to get a sense of how well they can communicate and negotiate meaning. Learners gain communication competence, knowledge, and expectations while reading. They can understand and produce meaningful language because of this underlying knowledge.

Communicative task-based instruction entails passing on knowledge to others in an interactive manner, with the instructor playing a key role in allocating opportunities for students to participate, as well as providing directions, explanations, and illustrations.

The distinction identified by Widdowson (1978) between language use and language usage is at the foundation of task-based language training or learning.

As a result, TBLL (Task-Based Language Learning) provides numerous advantages. One of the benefits is that the assignments are more student-centered, allowing for more meaningful dialogue. Such assignments frequently assist the learner in developing practical extra linguistic skills.

They also give students the opportunity to be creative with the language resources they already have. Tasks can give the learner new personal experience with the target language, allowing them to solve problems, reach agreements, and transmit messages. Learners' language knowledge and communicative skills are stretched to their limits in this way. Another benefit of TBLL is that it promotes learner autonomy through task completion. Learners are required to apply a variety of language learning methods while completing tasks, such as compensatory strategies, communication strategies, and cognitive strategies. Performing communicative activities necessitates greater autonomy on the part of the learner since the learner must make several decisions related to language use.

One of the key goals of language teaching classrooms is to raise awareness of the need of improving students' skills for "real world" mastering oral communication skills (Guariento & Morley, 2001, p.347). Classroom courses included Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and a task-based teaching approach (TBTA), which allowed for ample oral language practise in the classroom (Fitts & Bowers, 2013; Hall, 2011; Ellis, 2011).

The use of task-based language training in the teaching of a second and foreign language has recently been strongly suggested by study findings (Seedhouse, 1999). Task-based language training is a highly communicative approach to language learning that includes communicative tasks.

Many studies in English language learning have focused on the importance of classroom communication or interaction in developing students' oral communication skills; nevertheless, getting students to respond in an EFL discussion class is a challenge for most students and teachers. It's worth noting that English is taught as a foreign language (FL) for at least fifteen years in Indian intermediate

and secondary schools before students enrol in colleges and universities. As a result, students must have a basic understanding of English, such as grammar and vocabulary, before enrolling in colleges and universities in order to communicate effectively and sufficiently both within and outside the classroom. Helping pupils develop oral communication skills is one of the obstacles that English language teachers encounter in many classes where English is taught as a foreign language. The method of instruction is one of several elements that contribute to this problem.

Despite its flaws, many English language teachers rely largely on the conventional or traditional approach of teaching English for a variety of reasons, and the traditional technique is still widely employed by many teachers. Teachers usually use traditional teaching approaches that emphasise reading and writing skills while ignoring productive abilities like communicating. As a result, "the explicit training of speaking and listening has been ignored," according to Hodson.

"The spoken language of English has been badly neglected," Wilkinson agrees, as cited in Wilkinson, Davies, and Berril. These linguistic experts have clearly demonstrated that teaching is neglected as a result of traditional language teaching techniques; as a result, most English EFL students find it difficult to participate in oral tasks since oral skills are not emphasised in the classroom. According to Elzubier's research, traditional teaching methods are still used in EFL classrooms (grammar translation method).

Teachers may rely on their own views and pedagogical practises, or they may lack practical application understanding of methodologies, or they may be for the teacher's inadequate and unattractive teaching approach having a significant impact on students' learning. Elzubier stated that there are numerous issues and roadblocks to using the communicative language teaching technique in an EFL setting. There are a variety of factors that contribute to students' low academic achievement.

From receptive (listening, reading, and viewing) to productive (speaking) skills, the four language skills were considered. Each activity required the acquisition of new language skills. The students were organically motivated to communicate in the target language, hence the exercises were intrinsically motivating. The students' interest was piqued, and they participated fully in the activities. Additionally, the students were given active roles in the assignments and were encouraged to use the target language. The exercises were completed alone and/or in groups, and then graded and ordered from tangible information tasks to more abstract information and then-and-there scenarios. Students were allowed to make mistakes because it is considered to be a normal part of the learning process.

Tasks are activities in which students use the target language for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to attain a specific result – depending on the task's focus (i.e. reading, vocabulary, oral, problem-solving, decision-making). The following questions were used as a guideline to determine how task-like a certain activity was:

- Does the exercise pique the interest of the students?
- Is there a strong emphasis on meaning?
- Is there a conclusion?
- Is success measured in terms of results?
- Is completing the project a top priority for you?
- Is there a connection between the activity and real-life activities?

The concept of engagement was vital in the tasks since there would be no focus on meaning without engagement and genuine interests. A meaning-based strategy is similar to a task-based approach. It indicates that the teacher (or in this example, the lecturer) has no influence over learner language because the focus is on successful communication or interaction rather than grammar (or form). The students and professor will focus on language in the task-based approach at some point, not on the correct linguistic form to utilise, but on how the student communicates.

It was critical to ensure that the students were aware of the tasks' eventual outcomes in order for them to be effective. Some of the jobs included preparation time to encourage participation, but others were accomplished without it. For each exercise, the interaction patterns were diverse; some were completed independently, while others were completed in pairs or in a whole-class setting. Students were sometimes assigned roles such as chairperson or timekeeper. Games, writing, and oral tasks were among the post-task activities, but the main activity was reflection on the exercises via a questionnaire and/or an interview. Based on the findings, It was able to determine that the tbl strategy should be implemented through the establishment of a set of tasks suggested by Willis. In keeping with students' interests and requirements, It was able to improve the communicative skills of efl classroom pupils, which was the study's main goal. Students' oral and writing production improved greatly as a result of their exposure to English and regular opportunities to use the target language through various tasks and pre tasks set in class, as evidenced by the many artefacts collected as well as their involvement. However, according to the focus groups conducted at the conclusion of the study, some students perceived greater changes in one or both of them, possibly related to their learning style and willingness to participate in class. Vocabulary growth, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation were among the most noticeable gains in students' communicative skills. Another major factor that led to students' improved English communicative competence was the emphasis placed on meaning and purpose rather than language form in the various tasks offered. Because students focused their attention on form and grammar at the end of the tasks, they were able to use the language in a more spontaneous and meaningful way during the tasks, avoiding teacher correction and peer criticism, both of which are major sources of anxiety for students (Pea & Onatra, 2009). Students progressed from translating and writing isolated sentences to writing meaningful short paragraphs and expressing their viewpoints through assignments like discussing personal experiences with one another. Nonetheless, this was a gradual process in which activating students' prior knowledge as well as task repetition played a key role because this resulted in an increase in accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, and better performance on the same task as students' language repertoire grew and their task cycle management improved (Bygate, 2001; Willis, 1996).

In terms of teacher and student aspects, the study concluded that, while the role instructors play in the tbl approach differs from that of more "linguistic" or structure-oriented approaches, it is equally important and has an impact on the approach's effectiveness. Similarly, the teacher's position and the students' personal learning methods have an impact on their performance and progress.

2. Conclusion

This research also had some ramifications for teachers' practise. The first is that, in order to develop students' communicative skills, teachers should ensure that they have ample exposure to English and a variety of chances for oral and written expression. Teachers should also remember how much their students' interests, learning styles, and needs influence their learning and production. However, these conclusions must be viewed in context, taking into account the realities of the students who took part in this study and the fact that this was their first-time developing assignments using the tbl approach.

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Chomsky

The tasks were structured according to Willis' (1996:155) framework of pre-task (preparation), task and task focus:

PRE-TASK Teacher introduces topic, activities to activate the existing vocabulary or introduce the new vocabulary, gives examples of task completion and gives instructions on how to complete the task

TASK(S) Cycle/s of Task > Planning > Reporting back

TASK FOCUS Moves from focus on meaning to focus on form, develops and enhances accuracy by using different focus activities (e.g. word analysis, semantic analysis, syntactic analysis)