

Task-Based and Situated Language Learning and Its Impact on Language Teaching

Hanan Tawil, PhD

Introduction

The most imperative function of language for human beings is to communicate meaningfully with each other; humans first need to understand the language used among them to communicate their meaning and intention (Hassan, 2014). This means speech is the primary skill in the language arts; speech is the fundamental first tool of expression for conveying information, feelings, emotions, ideas, and beliefs. This further implies that speaking, long before reading or writing, is the first stage of language learning, even when learning a new second or foreign language. Abdallah and Mansour (2015) confirm that language learning requires giving attention to speaking skills, acquiring realistic usages and contextual-pragmatic practices. Other skills such as reading and writing are equally important in advanced language usage, as they enhance eloquence and comprehension; however, speaking takes precedence.

Language learning is a specific skill for which the human brain is “hard-wired” from infancy. Abdallah and Mansour (2015) explain that language learning first means knowing how to speak the target language, inferring the meaning and contextualizing the message of spoken utterances. This is why language teachers employ drills and exercises that aid the students to describe and comprehend practical activities in the target language. David (2008) emphasizes that a language speaker might possess an impeccable mastery of vocabulary and grammar, but fail to convey their pragmatic uses and meaning in conversation. According to David (2008), this gap between correct grammar and full meaning can lead users to lose language functionality and significance, since speech is mainly social and must be used in real life situations. Abdallah and Mansour (2015) further show that speakers who only possess basic vocabularies and syntax, and not idioms and expressions, often only make meaningless utterances.

David (2008) emphasizes the importance of paying attention to language functionality and development of pragmatic competencies that connect with real-life practices and tasks in language learning. Hassan (2014) also feels that any language teaching techniques should primarily focus on delivering language functions and pragmatic insights to learners. This ensures that the learners learn to make effective use of the language, as opposed to making mere vocal utterances without deciphering the context of the target language.

In this respect, language teachers employ varied techniques that ensure their students are well equipped with the aforementioned language skills. Hassan (2014) explains that task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the methods of learning a language that has been widely used to confer target language skills. TBLT involves completion of real-life tasks using the target language, as directed by the facilitator or the teacher. In TBLT, teachers may instruct their students to complete a given task, such as visiting a doctor, so as to use the language that they are learning to complete the task. According to Hassan (2014), completion of such tasks gives learners an opportunity to interact with another person who is probably a native speaker or fluent user of the target language, and to use a shared language so as to complete a set of ideas, tasks and plans. These activities not only trigger cognitive abilities but also allow the learners to construct their own knowledge about the target language.

Using this TBLT approach learners are able to directly connect with the meanings of the words and their contexts in a real life situation. They are therefore in a position to decipher the meaning of a given word, without necessarily depending on what they have been taught but inferring to a practical situation; experiential learning. In this case, Ellis (2009) defines a task as an activity that allows learners to use the target language paying special attention to the meaning to achieve an objective. Therefore, in a routine task such as visiting the doctor, the learner aims at comprehending, manipulating, and interpreting the meaning of the language aspects in a practical form. Learners also generate cognitive knowledge as they are actively engaged in the completion of the tasks. Grant (2015) posits that a task has both cognitive and linguistic dimensions, as it involves interacting with a set objective or task to obtain the deeper meaning.

Abdallah and Mansour (2015) agree that task-based language learning allows participants to function as *language users* rather than merely language learners. In sum, task-based activity gives users confidence and an opportunity to practice their skills using the target language.

Situated Language Learning, according to Abdallah (2015), is another theory of language learning, one which always takes place in the same authentic context in which it is to be applied. It incorporates the social aspect of human activity interacting with the target language. Situated Learning simply refers to a language acquisition approach that is not structured, but involves normal interactions in the authentic communities and idioms of the target language. The process is dependent upon the situation or the environment in which the communication is taking place. Hassan (2014) advances the idea that human beings learn well when they are involved in activities that they are interested in; he explains that students do not learn by merely attending lectures but by being actively involved in the content to be learned. Abdallah (2015) further contextualizes situated learning by asserting that language learners are viewed as *constructors of knowledge* who bring their own needs and learning styles into a realistic context and setting. These needs and skills are transformed into new knowledge, since the learners will be eager to fulfil their needs by capturing whatever knowledge they are developing through performance of the tasks. Situated learning theory conceives of language as a practice where learners have to immerse themselves in purposive and practical activities to attain their learning objectives. Situated language learning allows learners to embrace authentic materials that Hassan (2014) defines as discourse that has been produced in the process of genuine communication. Observably, both task-based and situated language learning involve engaging practical and authentic activities in order to learn the language effectively.

In relating the two theories, Abdallah (2015) views task-based learning as a language learning approach that comes under the umbrella of situated language learning. Situated learning and task-based learning are thus intertwined, in that they involve users' participation through collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, and situated cognition. Shih and Yang (2008) acknowledge that task-based learning and situated learning can advance language learning from the acquisition of imposed symbolic mental representations, to a participatory agenda where language is increasingly acquired through practice. The two approaches both show that learning a language is more efficient if it is conducted in a community, where the target language is used in real context and for real tasks. It aids in capturing the authentic context where learners are immersed in the natural and meaningful milieu spontaneously.

Research Questions

What are the impacts of using task-based and situated learning in teaching and learning a target language?

What are the similarities and differences between these theories as they relate to new language acquisition?

Purpose of the Study

Teaching or learning a foreign language is not simple processes; language teachers often find it challenging to pass on language skills to the learners. As a result, language teachers have developed various techniques and patterns of teaching in order to impart these skills more effectively to their students. In this respect, there are two techniques that have proven to be quite efficient in language teaching and learning; task-based learning and situated learning methods. Hassan (2014) notes that numerous scholars have established these two techniques as most efficient in imparting language skills. This study, therefore, seeks to connect and explain the specific impact that task-based and situated learning can have on second language teaching and learning. The research explores the benefits that can be drawn from using these methods and validates the argument that these two methods are most efficient in language teaching.

Literature Review

Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT)

Background of TBLT

Ahmed and Bidin (2016) trace TBLT back to the principles and teaching of experiential learning, as first developed by John Dewey in the 1890s. Dewey wrote extensively about how real life experiences could be practiced in a classroom designed to enhance learning. According to Ahmed and Bidin (2016), Dewey was concerned with how theoretical learning could be transformed to allow students to participate in the pragmatic activities they learned in class. Dewey felt that allowing learners to interact with the practical activities would give them new insights and ultimately make them more productive when they entered into the workforce or higher education markets.

These concepts were later introduced into communication strategies in the 20th century which sought to establish how people from different backgrounds could embrace experiential learning to understand each other. Communication strategies were used for language learners visiting the community of the target language, to be assimilated and eventually master the language, as opposed to learning it in book didactically.

The experiential, pragmatic approach was later referred to as communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s, and used by second and foreign language researchers and teachers. This progressive ideology triggered the development of task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a method of instilling target language skills, eventually replacing the CLT. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) claim that task-based learning was popularized in the 1980s by Prabhu when he used it in a Communication Language Teaching project in India. Prabhu (1987) was perturbed by the lack of impact in the traditional approaches used in teaching foreign language, and decided to embrace real-life activities and experiences in language learning.

Ahmed and Bidin (2016) assert that Prabhu found that traditional didactic methods only provided abstract information, on the mistaken assumption that learners would easily memorize and practice the whole grammar of the target language. Unfortunately, these methods were not efficient as it was evident that learners could not communicate effectively in real life situation in the target language. Prabhu noticed these gaps and utilized a task-based approach to tap the student's natural mechanism in learning the target language which proved to be effective especially in handling real life situation (Ahmed & Bidin, 2016).

In this connection, Ganta (2015) argues that the fundamental reason for the task-based revolution was the fact that it enabled students to engage in intense verbal interaction, as opposed to a teacher-student interaction. Seyyedi and Mohamed Ismail (2012) imply that it provided learners an opportunity to participate in communication using the target language to accelerate their language acquisition. Generally speaking, task-based practice enhances comprehension and development of the cognitive aspects of the communicative skills. Prabhu (1987) says that this method was more participatory, and avoided the rote learning processes of inputting knowledge without putting it into practice. Additionally, in the Communication Language Teaching project in India, Prabhu (1987) noted that TBLT provided leeway for working in groups which were an alternative to individual work. In group work, learners get to work in co-operation and coordination lifting their morale and their urge to know more about the subject.

Further, Ganta (2015) observe that the traditional language teaching methods overlooked the authentic aspects of the traditional methods which are fundamental in learning the target language. Learners could be acquainted with the grammatical syntax that was taught by the teacher, but they did not get the core language tools and idioms that are primarily associated with the target language. Prabhu (1987) also noted that assigning the students task-based assignments gave them an opportunity to assimilate skills and idioms that would otherwise be challenging to teach in a classroom. Ultimately, the TBLT approach was quite successful in the Communication Language Teaching project in India, prompting Prabhu to promote TBLT as a new and more effective method of teaching second and target languages (Ganta, 2015). Since this point, the TBLT method has also been widely used to help learners in the acquisition of the second language in a conventional classroom setup.

Features of TBLT

Ahmed and Bidin (2016) note that the TBLT was formed on the basis that language constructivism is anchored on the student's motivation, reflectivity, cognitive abilities, and autonomy. Automaticity for language learning is the ability to perform high level tasks without consciously remembering and conducting low-level tasks and rules. Autonomy in this perspective represents the personal involvement and active engagement of the learners in the process of learning. Autonomy assumes that the learner alone is capable of using his or her available linguistic resources to handle a communicative task.

Robinson (2011) argues that the learner should understand that the resources given in the classroom are the basics that should be used in a real life situation. The aspect of autonomy views that the student should be in a position to use these resources in constructing interpersonal conversations. This process proposes that facilitators should give students the basics which they should enhance through practical language usage. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) also find that student motivation and willingness to learn the language is needed in TBLT. Motivation is intrinsic, however, and totally depends on the learners' willingness to acquaint themselves with the new language.

Essentially, learners who enroll in second language lessons should be intrigued with the new language and have the zeal to master it. This means that the learner should be ready to go the “extra distance” in the quest to attain language competency. Experience shows that teaching motivated students is easier as than teaching less motivated students (Robinson, 2011). Motivated students take these tasks positively and are willing to make maximum use of them in learning the target language. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) explains reflectivity as the language characteristic that focuses on the meaning, as opposed to the forms of grammatical structures and the structural syllabus. Reflectivity asks, “what do the words or sentences mean in the target language?” It focuses more on contextualization and comprehension of the language, as opposed to “cramming” to remember the vocabulary and declensions.

Robinson (2011) believes that the scholars found out that the most important aspect of language learning was to create a meaningful communication where the speakers are fully aware of what they are communicating. Traditionally, language learning looked at how fluent a person was organizing and writing in the target language. These traditional approaches lost touch with language constructivism, as learners could not assemble meanings in the target language. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) explain that language learning is an interpersonal activity that relies on understanding the psychology of the language agents that enhanced constructivism. Task-based assignments were best-suited to connect these agents through language constructivism among the learners. Constructivism argues for the students’ innate ability to make meaning out of the language, just as they do in their first language. More importantly, Robinson (2011) explains that TBLT does not compel learners to perfect the lexical domains and grammatical aspects, but emphasizes the language functions and tasks in a pragmatic way.

Different types of TBLT tasks

Ellis (2009) defined a task as any activity that requires learners to embrace the target language, focusing on the meaning in order to attain a certain goal or perform a certain action. Learners engage in a set of lesson plans that are interactive, to aid them in comprehending and manipulating the target language. Ellis (2009) also notes that tasks embrace a cognitive process that involves selecting, reasoning, classifying, sequencing information, and transforming that information from one form to the other.

According to Ellis (2009), there are four characteristics that extensively define a task. First, a task is pragmatic; that is, it has to focus primarily on the meaning. Second, the task has to have a clearly defined non-linguistic outcome. Thirdly, the participants or learners are at liberty to choose the linguistic resources that are needed in completing the task. Lastly, the task should have some kind of procedures or steps, to enable learners to fill in “gaps” to comprehend whatever they are undertaking.

Prabhu (1987) noted that there are three type of gaps; information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap. Information gaps suggest that any task should have a space or blank to be completed by the learner, through decoding or encoding information. For instance, a pair or a group of participants can be given a tabular representation to complete in the form of text. A reasoning-gap allows learners to infer, deduce, or identify the perception of relationship or patterns in a piece of information (Prabhu, 1987). The opinion gap establishes and articulates personal preferences, attitudes, or temperament to apply to a given experience. This may be attained through factual information or by stimulating an argument where an individual has to justify their opinion. In general, Prabhu (1987) feels that any task that meets this criterion is effective in learning the target language.

TBLT tasks can, therefore, take an array of forms in order to achieve the end objective. **Focused tasks** are designed in a way that helps the learner to gain a certain targeted feature. They may be reciprocal or non-reciprocal (Seyyedi & Ismail, 2012). Reciprocal tasks are the ones that allow learners to respond to the other party while non-reciprocal only involve listening (Seyyedi & Ismail, 2012). Focused tasks are developed in the following three designs: *Structure-based production tasks*- These activities are developed for the purposes of evoking a particular target language facet or structure. Each task is designed to meet a certain language feature such as understanding the present tense and future tense of the target language; the task, in this case, should be targeted at achieving such semantics (Bygate, 2016a). *Comprehension tasks*- These tasks are based on the assumption that language is garnered via processing inputs. These tasks look at how the respondent in the interactive group outlines and understands the linguistic meaning. Learners are expected to pay special attention to the input features and learn how to process them on their own, without assistance. *Consciousness-raising tasks*- These focus on the explicit learning where the learner raises awareness to a higher level of understanding. Such tasks may help the learner understand the impact of a certain culture on the language forms and even how grammar rules are applied in different scenarios (Bygate, 2016a).

Unfocused tasks. These tasks depend on an implicit learning theory asserts that language practice must involve learners in authentic, automatic communicative activity, based on a version of communicative language teaching (Ellis, 2009). Unfocused tasks do not involve delving into a certain language feature, but are holistic with the aim of producing higher accuracy and more advanced language. Ellis (2009) also compels that teachers should thereafter provide post-task activities after the interaction in order to foster the understanding and enhance accuracy.

Hassan (2014) insinuates that the Task-Based Language activity is assessed based on the appropriate completion of the tasks and not the accuracy of language forms. The activities look at how the learner manipulates the information to provide a solution to the outlined problem. Teachers do not pay keen attention to the grammatical errors, as their main aim is to establish if the learner understands words' and can use the language to solve real-life situation problems. This pragmatic focus fosters confidence, and develops fluency as the student learns from people who are more advanced the language (Abdallah, 2013). The fact that the learner completes a task in the target language instils poise and the confidence that they are capable of understanding and using the language.

Situated Learning

Shih and Yang (2008) agree with Abdallah (2015) that situated learning acts on the assumption that learners are active *constructors of knowledge* who have their preferred learning techniques, and employ them in a practical scenario. Put simply, language learners have needs which are unique to each one of them. Situated learning, therefore, is a platform that allows these learners to fulfill their language needs by immersing in a community and absorbing what is necessary to them (Rezaeyan, 2014). The process does not limit them to the tasks of acquiring skills and knowledge within the realistic contexts and authentic settings. It implies that learners are at liberty to employ any learning style that will give them the ultimate results. This method is more concerned with the context and the situations that bring new knowledge construction (Abdallah, 2013). Learners embracing this methodology learn through spoken phrases that are not necessary inscribed in any syllabus, creating an individual-environment interaction.

Situated learning takes precedence in social interactions that are not construed into any structural format to obtain a specific language feature, but use a reciprocal constructed form of knowledge. Shih and Yang (2008) feel that the same interactive goals can be achieved through online platforms, where people engage in social interactions that are not aimed at achieving anything academic. Online interaction platform such as social media sites are pervasively and widely used where people from very different geographical locations can interact (Abdallah, 2013). Online learning creates a situation which learners may use to achieve their language learning needs privately or socially (Shih & Yang, 2008).

Basically, the learners should be interested in learning *something*, so they will eventually capture a pragmatic language context in the real conversations done in social environments. Therefore, the major difference between TBLT and Situated Learning is that situated learning does not involve structured activities but normal social interactions (Seyyedi & Ismail, 2012). TBLT, as observed earlier, has systematized activities that are meant to capture a certain language feature; on the contrary, Situated Learning gives learners the freedom to learn what they find fit to them. Irrespective of these differences, both theories embrace participative interactions and authenticity, and have similar learning objectives which intertwine the two techniques. In fact, Shih and Yang (2008) refer to the two concepts together as Task-Based Situated Language Learning (TBSLL), which is broadly regarded as an approach to instructional intervention that is concerned with promoting an interactive environment where some pragmatic language goals can be achieved.

Oral performance and Language Acquisition

As noted earlier, speaking is the key feature of any language, for it involves an interactive process between two or more parties. Hassan (2014) believes that speaking engages the brain in constructing meaning; it produces the information and invokes a response. This makes speaking a leeway for abducting the different language functions. In most cases, it is spontaneous, open-ended, and even evolving where the learner can capture things like the correct pronunciation, sentence structures, or linguistic competence all referred to as oral performance. Bygate (2016a) insists that speaker's skills and speech habits have an impact on the success of any exchange.

During a task-based and situated learning activity, speakers may find themselves rephrasing, gathering other words to describe the item sort, or receiving feedback which enhances their language acquisition. They identify the mistakes made while expressing themselves, and have an opportunity to correct them.

This is an efficient learning process, as the corrections are permanently embedded in the brain; hence, the learner adds on to the previously acquired knowledge.

Speaking generally enhances language growth and competency which is known as oral performance; that is, improving on vocabulary, grammar, structure, socio-cultural impetus, and language fluency (Rezaeyan, 2014). Oral performance is therefore integral in understanding why, when, and in what ways certain words can and should be used (sociolinguistic competence). Ziegler (2016) suggests that most language acquisition is therefore dependent on the learner's oral performance. As noted, oral performance is dependent on practical speaking skills. Significantly, speaking skills are the fundamental building blocks in learning any language.

According to Willis (2011), effective oral performance is sparked by the engagement of the learner or the level of speaking participation involved. TBLT aims at providing this active engagement, so that the learner can get an opportunity to interact and improve his or her oral performance (Yarahmadi, 2011). It is through TBLT and situation learning where the learner gets a leeway to speak continuously improving on their oral performance. TBLT tasks provide an opportunity for the learner to be careless or use the language casually, without being aware of the monitor. In this way, learners do not limit their creativity and knowledge; Hassan (2014) argues that the tasks make learners become risk takers. As a result, they become active participants in speaking, and they eventually sharpen their oral performance skills slowly from these activities.

Communicative Competence

Sandberg, Maris, and de Geus (2011) refer to communicative competence as the aptitude to employ the target language in various dimensions that are present in humans on a day-to-day event. Communicative competence encompasses all the elements that should be captured in learning of any language. Sandberg, Maris, and de Geus (2011) believe that there are four main elements of competency that enhance language acquisition.

1. Linguistic or grammatical: capturing of lexical domains, morphologies, syntax, semantics, and phonology
2. Sociolinguistics; understanding of the social-cultural constraints and registration of linguistic varieties
3. Discursive: mastery of coherence and cohesion resources
4. Strategic: knowledge and mastery of skills, norms, non-verbal aids that allow communication fluency and avoid problems of ambiguity.

Mansour (2017) augments that these four elements of communicative competence act as the pillars of language acquisition. Familiarizing with the four elements in any given target language transforms the student from a learner to a professional speaker of the language. In summation, these elements major on the cognitive, psychological, and socio-cultural factors that act in coordination with the linguistic codes to enhance competence. Mansour (2017) augments that the communicative task is the foundation stone of teaching-learning languages for the purpose of achieving competence. Language teachers, in this case, have to ensure that the learners are competent in the language knowledge that has been tailored to them.

According to Mansour (2017), one of the most effective ways to achieve communicative competence is by embracing communicative tasks as a material of incorporating what has been learned to reality. One key thing that Mansour (2017) observe that communicative tasks should prioritize on discursive, strategic, and sociolinguistic elements, and later focus on the linguistic codes. Communicative competence is attained by first looking at how a learner uses the language in the realistic situations as opposed to their grammatical prowess.

Various scholars have argued in favor of task-based and situated learning as ways of attaining communicative competence. Chao and Lo (2011) find that task-based learning mediates the cognitive phenomena and social interaction that links the environment to the information process. Chao and Lo (2011) observe that practice enhances what has been taught in class and the student gets higher chances of interacting with some language elements that are not in the curriculum programs.

Takimoto (2008), on the other hand, conducted a study of 60 Japanese studied learning English as a target language, testing them on their ability to make English "polite requests". The findings suggested that explicit tasks were effective for learners' comprehension of English polite requests. McDonough (2007) also investigated the efficiency of TBLT for learning a second language among students at Thai University in Bangkok. The 12-month study found out the task-based course encouraged learners to become more independent, and addressed their real- world academic needs. In conclusion, both task-based and situated learning have been used widely in teaching and learning a second language, and various scholars have elicited positive results.

Research Methodology

Introduction

A research methodology in a research study is viewed as the foundational basis for conducting the given study (Patton, 2002). It incorporates the sequential stages and levels that are involved in gathering data from the field, and using those data as evidence to respond to the research questions. A research methodology explains exhaustively the techniques applied to collect the data, analysis, and present it in a logical manner (Creswell & Clark, 2007). It is important to describe all the research procedures as methodology, as this section describes the specific actions involved and allow the reader to determine if the data collected and analysis present make a correct reflection of the information in the field of study.

Research Philosophy

Modern research philosophies can be classified into two categories: the interpretivism paradigm and the positivism paradigm (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Interpretivism paradigm takes the subjective path where it acts on the assumption that there are various realities, which can exist from a single or multiple phenomena being investigated. This paradigm is widely used in qualitative research as a way of responding to the *why* and *how* of the outlined research questions (Patton, 2002). Positivism, on the other hand, argues for a more objective paradigm. It suggests that a single reality can be derived from the phenomena being investigated and it uses statistical analysis to answer the research questions (Creswell & Clark, 2007). It is mostly preferred in the quantitative studies where the data collected gives empirical evidence, either supporting or rejecting the hypotheses of the study. The present study employs the use of interpretivism paradigm since it is a qualitative study.

Research Design

The study embraced a case study design as a method of data collection for analysis and interpretation. A case study design reviews the established literature drawing an argument from various studies for the purposes of responding to the research question (McLachlan & Garcia, 2015). The case study embraced in this research evaluated the findings from various scholarly articles and studies discussing the impacts of task-based learning and situated learning in language teaching and learning. The findings are then analyzed in the analysis section in order to derive a conclusive response to the research question.

Analysis and Discussion

The Speaking Skills and Oral Performance

The most fundamental objective in teaching or learning is to derive a specific set of outcomes or objectives. Mansour (2017) argues that language teachers should have a number of set goals that they want to achieve at the end of the course, and the same case applies to their students. It would be quite meaningless for both language learners and teachers to enrol in lessons without any set objectives. Generally speaking, the broad objective is to learn the target language and master its contexts. According to Elmahdi (2016), one of the main objectives of using task-based and situated learning is to enhance the oral performance skills. According to Elmahdi, improved speaking skill is one of the most beneficial effects of using task-based learning in language learning. Speaking behaviorally, speaking is described as the production of auditory signals that are aimed at producing varied verbal responses in a listener.

The main aim of teaching conversational speaking is to ensure that the learner produces speech sounds and patterns with the intonation and rhythm of the second language (Sarani & Sahebi, 2012). It also involves showing the learner how to select appropriate thoughts, logical sequence, and expressing values and judgments. Speaking also involves natural pauses and rhythms that enhance the communication function. In this realm, Elmahdi (2016) identified that traditional methods were lacking in enhancing all these set of speaking skills or oral performances among language learners. This is because the methods only utilized the approach of mastering words and sentences to discourses.

Ziegler (2016) explains that situated learning and task-based learning ensures that these resources acquired in the classroom setup are taken to the outside environment for practical application and experience. This is because speaking is an interactive, transactional skill which is a product of *cooperation* between two or more participants.

Parties engaged in a conversation have shared time and physical context where the learner gets the well-formed sentences and puts them in discourse (Sarani & Sahebi, 2012). They learn from the basics in smaller units and ultimately understand the entire content in a real-world context.

Elhamdi (2016) notes that overreliance in the classroom set-up only gives the basics, as found in books, but does not entail the *micro-skills*. Task-based learning is involved in promoting learners' fluency and proficiency. Speaking proficiency is a product of various structures and other underlying abilities that are widely garnered from social interactions (Rahman, 2015). As noted in the literature review, tasks and situational learning develops automaticity which is the basis of efficiency, accuracy, and stable language performance. Automaticity is lauded for giving learners a near-native performance, by triggering the cognitive psychology in an authentic communication situation (Rahman, 2015). Therefore, task-based and situated learning are both effective in giving learners competent oral performance abilities, and in fostering their speaking skills in the target language.

Social Linguistics

Another key aspect of using task-based learning is that it enhances social linguistics in new language acquisition. There are various norms, do's and don'ts and regulations that are associated with every language. This may involve the appropriateness of using a term in regard to both meaning and form. In some languages, various words may have close pronunciation but the varied meaning (Hassan, 2014). The differentiation of such socio-linguistics is noticed when the participant interacts with the language practically and learns what it entails.

Cultural norms and moral perspective vary in different social settings; these differences may not be documented in a book (Hassan, 2014). Task-based learning gives the learner this maiden opportunity to understand the socio-linguistics which enhance their language knowledge. In other words, Ganta (2015) assert that task-based learning help learners interact spontaneously with the language. This means that they try the vocabulary and grammar that they are conversant with, and get an opportunity to be corrected by the society, using problem-solving features in language acquisition.

Meaning Orientation

Most of the studies reviewed have identified task-based learning as effective in giving meaning and language fluency. Hassan (2014) believes that TBLT is used for one overriding purpose, which means that real communication takes place in a set of work-plan activities. The assessment of these tasks depends on the completion of the task and the outcome. A very popular example of a conversational task involves visiting a doctor who is a professional or native speaker of the target language. The learner is expected to complete the activity using the target language, and the appraisal will be based on the outcomes.

Hassan (2014) augers that these activities invoke a series of information processes before the learner get the final outcome. The learner has to engage brainstorming, problem-solving, fact finding, creativity, and analytical skills to complete a single task. This implies that the learner will have to undergo a sequential information process with each step having a unique benefit in language constructivism. Brainstorming, for instance, means that the learner will engage other members in order to find a way to crack the task ahead of them. They will have to be creative and also analytical in order to make decisions. In fact, they have to explore the non-verbal aides in order to find the solutions to the problem. All these processes ensure that the learner fathoms the meaning and most importantly grasps the language functions. They will be able to structure sentences in a logical manner and understand what exact emotion is generated by a certain word.

Similarly, Elhamidi (2016) noted that there are four language elements which complement each other. In that respect, social interactions help in grasping the meaning and also an opportunity to learn vocabulary. Words that are generally taught in class are easily forgotten and do not play many roles in language acquisition. However, task and situation learning is quite efficient in imparting those words in the memory improving the learner's vocabulary (Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2012). Tasks and situations are better placed in providing an interactive platform where the learner can pick a vocabulary randomly or even get to know the meaning of a word. Furthermore, learners may be familiar with a word but do not know how it is used in real life contexts. Through these tasks, learners can analyze new words in different contexts and use these vocabularies to meet meaningful task goals.

Experiential Learning

Scholars have identified the important rapport between experience and learning. Students who are fresh from school may fail to perform exemplary in their workstation due to their inexperience (Park, 2010).

According to Park (2010), experiential learning is a model that fuses experience as a source of learning. It is a theoretical model that is based on the ideals of reflective learning, building learning experience in the field of study, factoring in the personal involvement. The experiential learning has been used in second-language acquisition as an approach that encourages learners to develop the target language skills through a group work rather than relying only on examining the discrete elements of the target language. It is lauded for motivational purposes and cultural understanding in language acquisition.

Ahmadian (2016) asserts that experiential learning encourages personal input, initiative, and self-direction in the learning process. A student gets the opportunity to reflect on past experiences and building on them to construct a framework for learning unique learning style for each student. Experiential learning is sequential as it begins with the exposure phase when the topic is introduced. During this phase, students acquainted with the basics of the topics and the requirements in relation to the language learning goals (Pishghadam, 2011).

The second phase is participation phase where the learner is personally involved in an activity. Task-based learning plays the largest role in this phase as it gives students the opportunity to participate in real-life experiences (Pishghadam, 2011). After the activity, experiential learning gets to the internalization phase where students deliberate on the activities. This is where they can rely on the experiences during the language activities to build on their language knowledge. Long (2015) argues that in experiential learning teachers should put more emphasizes on reflection.

As mentioned earlier, reflection is one of the key features of TBLT as it is actively involved in language constructivism. Generally, experiential learning has been successful for imparting skills in a realm of disciplines (Pishghadam, & Zabihi, 2012). It gives practical and tactical knowledge that is more functional than theoretical knowledge in the handling of tasks. In language learning, therefore, task-based and situated learning ultimately offer similar benefits to the learner. The immediate personal experience with the language is picked up from experiential learning. This means that task-based learning, in context, is most effective in enhancing language acquisition through experiential learning.

Interactive Atmosphere

Goto (2011) states that the core function of language among humans is for them to socialize and interact with each other. It would be of no benefit if an individual learned a language and failed to use it in interactive aspects. Interaction is very important as humans need to share and exchange ideas, experiences, feelings, and understand what happens in the real world. Situated learning requires learners to interact with a community that has authentic materials for the target language (Thomas & Reinders, 2010). In such events, the learner gets to know about that community, their way of living, their needs, among other things. Social interaction in TBLT and situated learning maximizes the scope for communication which is imperative for interactive purposes (Lia & Li, 2011). This also is an opportunity for the learner to assimilate what they may notice and understand while performing the tasks.

An interactive atmosphere allows the students transfer their earlier obtained knowledge creatively to new contexts of communication. It connects learners in resolute communication and gives chances to learners to try out diverse communication approaches and endows the learners with language for public use. Actually, Ganta (2015) confirms that respectful relationships and interaction on personal level advances learners engagement. Learning is described as social and interactive activity that occurs both in the classroom set-up and the outside environment. This implies the students are motivated to working together with both their teachers and colleagues.

Ganta (2015) posits that various studies have recommended the need for a stronger relationship between learners with their teachers and the external societies (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2011). Modern learners are in a technological environment that supports connection and constant communication, either face-to-face or on the various media and digital platforms. Socially interactive platforms foster learning among students in school, within the larger community, and allow easy connection with experts; the users are constantly finding more opportunities for dialogue and conversation. Conversations ultimately have to extend beyond the classroom; this interconnection is what eventually creates greater professionalism and gives rise to *media personalities*. Students complete their language learning with enough confidence and self-esteem to tackle issues in real life situations. This confidence is first obtained when they are still in school, through such activities like task-based learning.

Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to establish the specific impacts of using task-based learning and situated learning in teaching and learning a target language.

The research question was triggered by the fact that various scholars have vouched for task-based and situated learning as important methods for language teaching. Therefore, it was imperative to delineate the specific effects that the two methods offer. According to the study, task-based and situated learning have been studied across various disciplines and subject matter. However, the findings have been uniform, and help explain the role of task-based learning in language teaching. Observably, many scholars have mentioned and advanced task-based learning as a promoter of language function and meaning. The study has found out that these two methods are preferred to traditional methods, since they pay special attention to the fundamentals of language usage in a real life situation. This implies that the learner is acquainted with the requisite knowledge that will be used in handling issues using the target language.

Another major finding from the study is that task-based learning enhances motivation and zeal among learners. Scholars have associated motivation with better performance in classroom assignments. Participatory activities associated with TBLT foster the morale among students making learning easier and faster. Task-based learning has also been found to be effective in imparting socio-cultural skills that would otherwise be challenging to teach in class. Students manage to learn the dos and don'ts in target language usage in what has been referred to as sociolinguistics. Finally, these language teaching methods offer an interactive atmosphere that enables human beings to socialize and achieve the ultimate purpose of language which is to communicate effectively. Empirically, task-based and situated learning have various strengths which are effective in teaching and learning the language. Therefore, the study validates the assertion that task-based learning and situated learning are some of the most effective language teaching methods.

References

- Abdallah, M. & Mansour, M. (2015). Virtual Task-Based Situated Language-Learning with Second Life: Developing EFL Pragmatic Writing and Technological Self-Efficacy. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 2: 150-18
- Abdallah, M. (2015). Situated Language Learning: Concept, Significance, and Forms. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277404276_Situated_Language_Learning_Concept_Significance_and_Forms
- Abdallah, M.M.S. (2013). A Community of Practice Facilitated by Facebook for Integrating New Online EFL Writing Forms into Assiut University College of Education. *Assiut University New Valley College of Education Journal*, 12, (1), 581-650.
- Ahmed, R. Z., & Bidin, S. J. B. (2016). The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching on Writing Skills of EFL Learners in Malaysia. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 6, 207-218. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2016.63022>
- Ahmadian, M. (2016). Task-based language teaching and learning. *The language learning journal*, 44(4): 377-380
- Aliakbari, M. & Jamalvandi, B. (2011) The Impact of 'Role Play' on Fostering EFL Learners' Speaking Ability: A Task-Based Approach. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics* 14(1), 15-29.
- Bygate, M., ed. (2016a). *Domains and Directions in the Development of TBLT: A Decade of Plenaries from the International Conference*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Chao, Y. C. J., & Lo, H. C. (2011). Students' perceptions of Wiki-based collaborative writing for learners of English as a foreign language. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 19(4), 395-411
- Creswell, J & Clark, S. (2007). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications
- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2015). *Qualitative Methods in Business Research: A Practical Guide to Social Research*. Sage.
- Ellis, R. (2009). Task-Based Language Teaching: Sorting out the Misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19, 221-246. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2009.00231.x>
- Elmahdi, O. (2016). The Impact of Task-Based Approach on EFL Learner's Performance. *World Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2)
- Ganta, T. (2015). The strengths and weaknesses of task-based learning (TBL) approach. *SRJIS*, 3(14): 2760-2771
- Goto, Y. (2011). The implementation of communicative and task-based language teaching in the Asia-Pacific Region. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 36-57
- Hassan, A. (2014). The effect of using task-based learning in teaching English on the oral performance of the secondary school students. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 3(2)
- Lia, C. & Li, G. (2011). Technology and task-based language teaching: a critical review. *CALICO Journal*, 28 (2), 498-521
- Long, M. (2015). *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

- McLachlan, C. J., & Garcia, R. J. (2015). Philosophy in practice? Doctoral struggles with ontology and subjectivity in qualitative interviewing. *Management Learning*, 46(2), 195-210
- Mansour, A. (2017). How Task Based and Situated Language Learning and Teaching is Changing the Way English Can be Taught to Foreign Students. *Journal of Literature, Languages, and Linguistics*. 34
- McDonough, K. (2007). Teachers' and Learners' Reactions to a Task-Based EFL Course in Thailand. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41, (1)
- National Council of Teachers of English Executive Committee. (2008). The NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies. *Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English*. Retrieved April 5, 2016.
- Park, S. (2010). The Influence of Pretask Instructions and Pretask Planning on Focus on Form during Korean EFL Task-Based Interaction. *Language Teaching Research*, 14, 9-26.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1362168809346491>
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Peterson, M. (2012). EFL Learner Collaborative Interaction in Second Life. *ReCALL*, 24, (1), 20- 39
- Pishghadam, R., & Zabihi, R. (2012). Life Syllabus: A New Research Agenda in English Language Teaching. *Perspectives (TESOL Arabia)*, 19, 23-27.
- Pishghadam, R. (2011). Introducing Applied ELT as a New Approach in Second/Foreign Language Studies. *Iranian EFL Journal*, 7, 8-14
- Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second Language Pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rahman, T. (2015). *A History of Pakistani Literature in English (1947-1988)*. Islamabad, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.
- Rezaeyan, M. (2014). On the impact of task-based teaching on the academic achievement of Iranian EFL learners (case study: female high school students in Yasuj). *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)*. 7(3): 476-493
- Riazi, A. M., & Candlin, N. C. (2014). Mixed-Methods Research in Language Teaching and Learning: Opportunities, Issues, and Challenges. *Language Teaching*, 47, 135-173.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444813000505>
- Richards, J. C. (2015). The changing face of language learning: Learning beyond the classroom. *RELC Journal*, 46(1), 5-22.
- Robinson, P. (2011). *Task-Based Language Learning*. Ann Arbor, MI: Language Learning Research Club, University of Michigan
- Sarani, A. & Sahebi, L. (2012). The Impact of Task-based Approach on Vocabulary Learning in ESP Courses. *English Language Teaching*; Vol. 5, No. 10
- Seyyedi, K., & Ismail, M. (2012). Task-based instruction. *International Journal of Linguistic*, 4(3).
- Shabani, M. B. & Ghasemi, A. (2014). *The effect of task-based language teaching and content-based language teaching on the Iranian Intermediate ESP learners' Reading comprehension*. Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin
- Shahini, G., & Riazi, M. (2011). *APBLT approach to teaching ESL speaking, writing, and thinking skills*. Oxford journals, Macquarie University
- Shih, Y.C., & Yang, M.T. (2008). A Collaborative Virtual Environment for Situated Language Learning Using VEC3D. *Educational Technology & Society*, 11, (1), 56-68
- Takimoto, M. (2008). The Effects of Various Kinds of Form - Focused Instruction on Learners' Ability to Comprehend and Produce Polite Requests in English. *TESL Canada Journal*, 26, (1)
- Thomas, M., & Reinders, H. (Eds.). (2010). *Task-based language learning and teaching with technology*. London: Continuum.
- Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2011). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford: OUP
- Willis, D & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task – based teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Yang, Y.F. (2011). Engaging Students in an Online Situated Language Learning Environment. *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 24, (2), 181-198.
- Yarahmadi, M. (2011). Gender differences views on problem-solving reading strategies in L2 a case study of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of basic and applied scientific research*, 1(12), 2633-2634.
- Zare, P. (2010). An investigation into language learning strategy use and gender among Iranian undergraduate language learners. *World science journal*, 11(10), 1236-1247.
- Zheng, X., & Borg, S. (2014). Task-based learning and teaching in China: secondary school teachers beliefs and practice: *Language Teaching Research*, 18(2), 205-221
- Ziegler, N. (2016). Taking technology to task: technology-mediated TBLT, performance, and production. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 36: 136-63