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Using Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) to Improve Preparatory Stage Pupils' Communicative Grammar Performance

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to improve preparatory stage pupils' communicative grammar performance using task-based language instruction. The study problem was the low scores of the first year preparatory stage pupils' communicative grammar performance obtained from the pre-research. The participants of this study consisted of (N=60). Pupils enrolled at the first year preparatory stage at Kafr-Saqr Preparatory School for Girls, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt, in the academic year (2018-2019). They were randomly divided into two groups: Experimental group (N=30), and control group (N=30), during the treatment period, first-group participants received task-based language instruction, while second-group participants received instruction through traditional method. Firstly, pupils were administered a pre-test, then a post-test was administered to evaluate whether the progress between pre and post-test results were meaningful or not. The analyzed results clearly demonstrated the significance contribution of Task-Based Language Instruction to the EFL first year preparatory stage pupils' communicative grammar performance. Hopefully, these findings would be beneficial to those studying and teaching English to L2 learners.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Instruction, Communicative Grammar Performance.

استخدام التدريس اللغوي القائم علي المهام لتحسين الأداء النحوي التواصلي لدي تلاميذ المرحلة الاعدادية

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ملخص الدراسة

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تحسين الأداء النحوي التواصلي لدي تلاميذ المرحلة الاعدادية باستخدام التدريس اللغوي القائم على المهام. وتتلخص مشكلة الدراسة في تدني مستوي أداء تلاميذ الصف الأول الاعدادي للنحو التواصلي والتي تم تحديدها في مرحلة ما قبل البحث. ولقد اشتملت عينة الدراسة علي (٦٠) طالبة بالصف الأول الإعدادي بمدرسة كفر صقر الإعدادية للبنات بمحافظة الشرقية ، مصر للعام الدراسي (٢٠١٨-٢٠١٩م)، و تم اختيارهم خلال فترة التجريب عشوائياً وتقسيمهم الي مجموعتين: المجموعة التجريبية (اشتملت ٣٠ طالبة) ، والمجموعة الضابطة (اشتملت ٣٠ طالبة) ، و درس طلاب المجموعة الأولى عن طريق التدريس اللغوي القائم على المهام ، بينما درس طلاب المجموعة الثانية بواسطة الطريقة التقليدية .و قام التلاميذ أولاً بتطبيق اختبار قبلي ، ثم تم إجراء اختبار بعدي لتقييم ما إذا كان التقدم بين نتائج الاختبار القبلي والبعدي ذا مغزى أم لا؟.وقد أوضحت النتائج التي تم تحليلها بوضوح الدور البارز للتدريس اللغوي القائم على المهام في تحسين الأداء النحوي التواصلي لدي تلاميذ الصف الأول للمرحلة الإعدادية. ونأمل أن تكون هذه النتائج مفيدة لأولئك الذين يعلمون ويدرسون لمتعلمي اللغة الانجليزية.

Introduction

<u>**Using Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) …………………………..**</u>

Many English language teachers have taught grammar classes over the years as sentence pattern groups, with no flexibility or transformation possible, only in prefabricated structures. But in these classes, the communication approach has been widely used since the nineties as the aim of the foreign and second language education is to describe a group of general principles which based on the notion of communication specialization. (Richard, 2006:23)

Thus, Bancole'-Minaflinou (2018) affirmed that it is apparently a real challenge to teach EFL for communication in general and its grammar for communication. The four communication skills appear to be a plausible idea. But it is worth paying close attention to how teachers can classify grammar lessons as a set of rules to communicate correct phrases.

Singh (2011) used the term "Communicative Grammar Teaching" to refer to teaching grammar communicatively. This grammatical teaching method is based on the teaching in second languages by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). With this method in mind, structures of language should not be taught alone, but integrated with the four language skills.

A number of approaches were advocated in conjunction with grammar (Izumi, 2009; Matsumura, 2011, Muranoi, 2006, Takashima, 2005 & Yokota, 2011), most of which are task-supported learning. These approaches are not seen as a rejection, but as the adaptation of language education in the classroom rather than as a task (Littlewood, 2007). Yildiz and Senel (2017) also stated that language teaching based on tasks is one of these methods and deals with the teaching of grammar by the using language communicatively. The students work on tasks and practice the entire language.

Baralt & Gomez (2017) demonstrated that "Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a second or foreign language theory and pedagogical teaching process." TBLT means teaching, learning and assessing tasks

not isolated types of grammar to facilitate linguistic consistency. According to Bygate, Skehan & Swain (2002) Task-based language instruction begins with a simple concept of learning the language through tasks performed by students. A task is generally described as an activity involving people committed to achieving an objective and a meaningful use of the language.

As a consequence, one of the task-based learning difficulties is the participation of learners in different activities. The learners have multiple pedagogical requirements, which require a different approach to teaching. For instance, they need to participate in psycholinguistic and meta-linguistic processes, such as repetition, hypothesizing and conceptualizing the rules (Nunan, 2004). As a result, both Ellis (2003) and Skehan (1998) insisted that task designers should manipulate tasks in such a way as to increase the likelihood that in a meaningful activity language learners will pay attention to specific aspects of the language code, as this is thought to promote strongly the acquisition of second language.

Theoretical Background

(A) Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) Model:

In teaching a foreign language there are several methods and approaches employed. It was generally accepted in recent times that language teaching and learning requires that learners take on an agent role in language learning and continue to develop. This recent role has encouraged them to become aware of the importance of their involvement, the use of international strategies and opportunities for learning L2. These views underpin approaches to communication, such as task-based language teaching (TBLT). (Garcial Ponce, 2016)

Accordingly, task-based language teaching or task-based instruction is one of the methods developed by an engaging and meaningful approach that allows students to understand or achieve results using the target language. The tasks performed in this approach

differ from the traditional tasks of the teacher for students. (Marlina, 2014)

A.1. Definition of Task and Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI)

Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) model is a communication-based approach for language teaching that involves tasks in which learners aim to execute certain tasks inside a classroom where reciprocal relations are of highest quality. (Yildiz & Senel, 2017). Noroozi (2012) also described TBLI as a method that offers students materials that they must intentionally communicate to accomplish a goal or perform a specific task.

Accordingly, Task-Based Language Education begins with the basic idea that students learn a language through activities, instead starting with Task-Based Language Instruction. Specific meanings for the "task" were therefore provided. Nunan (2004) claimed that a classroom work includes learners in the understanding, manipulation, development and/or engagement of the target language when their emphasis is to organize their grammatical knowledge to convey meaning in order not to control form, but to transmit meaning.

Bystrom (2007) reported that the task is generally seen as a planned collection of connected physical or cognitive human activity; typically it has a meaningful purpose and an apparent start and finish. Hence, the task was defined by Huang (2010, p. 32) as "an activity with the primary meaning, problem-resolving, relationship with the real world and goal that can be assessed as an outcome."

A.2. Common Characteristics of Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI)

TBLI's main characteristics, focused on teaching tasks according to Nunan (1991), Richards & Rogers (2001), Ellis (2003,2009), Nunan (2004), Samuda & Bygate (2008), Noorozi (2012) the Cambridge University Press (2016), and Hao (2017), are as follows:

First: TBLI is consistent with an educational philosophy based on learners which encourages minimal teacher feedback during the tasks.

Second: It requires special components, such as objective or particular outcome, to mean that the task is completed successfully.

Third: Instead of linguistic forms, it focuses on words to facilitate natural communication skills for learners.

Fourth: This makes it possible for learners to learn through communication and dedication.

A.3. Task Goals

Tasks were carried out as a result of language learning, with several goals to meet. Oxford (2006) defined the purpose of the task as to focus on meaning forms. The descriptions of these goals are as follows:

1) Concentrate on meaning. The students obtain continuous chunks in this form of syllabus. It is delivered in lively classes with no structures or rules and little encouragement to the students themselves to learn rules. If the learner is ready for a given structure, grammar is viewed as evolving naturally, so that no structures should be discussed.

2) Concentrate on form. It happens when attention focuses primarily on meaning but occasionally shifts when a collapse in communication occurs.

3) Concentrate on forms. It means presenting some pre-planned forms one-by-one in the hope of being mastered by learners before they can enter into negotiations with them.

A.4. Task Cycle

Teachers can plan three phases for a task, as Skehan (1996), Ellis (2003, 2006), Li (2004) and Willis (1996, 2012) proposed, they are as follows:

1) Pre-task: Introduction to topic and task.

2) Task cycle: Task performance, planning and report.

3) Language focus: Language analysis, practice.

A. 5. Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) Principles

Task-Based Learning (TBL) involves a task-based approach as a central unit of language learning planning and instruction. Some of its proponents, such as Willis (1996), have presented the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a logical development since it builds on a series of principles that form the part of the CLT movement.

Sheikh (1993) has explained that there are principles on which to work based learning is based to conform to English language teaching principles. These principles are as follows:

1-Langauge is essentially a means of communication.

2-Langauge is an individual process.

3-Language is a social process.

4-Langauge use is something people like to enjoy or engage in.

A. 6. The Teacher's and Pupil's Roles in TBLI

For teachers and pupils, TBLI plays a different role. The teacher's role is to encourage rather than provide information, while the student's position transforms from "language learners" to "communicators." Noroozi (2012), Ellis & Shintani (2013) summarized the role of teacher as follows:

1) Orient students into relevance by clarifying the result of the assignment from the outset.

2) Use L1 to encourage student understanding by shifting gradually to L2.

3) Encourage learners to stay on when they fail.

4) Foster the use of L2 by students.

5) Provide direct feedback on verbal and nonverbal answers for learners.

They also argued that students will primarily behave as "communicators" and not as "learners". It is doubtful that students will give up their position fully when carrying out a mission, because they are conscious that their aim is essentially to improve L2 skills.

A.7. Importance of Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) in an EFL/ESL Classroom

Tasks differ in many ways from different approaches in the provision of purposeful learning experiences to learners. Thompson & Millington (2012) have indicated that tasks thus enable students to freely communicate within the L2 in order to attain some real-world objective. However, some attention must be given to the linguistic form if language learning is to be done; learners must be corrected for communication errors and introduced into new grammar or vocabularies that can be incorporated into their repertoire of languages.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) have therefore emphasized that TBLI improves the establishment and mastery of learning tasks to suit the needs of students by delivering different exercises in the classroom. Rooney (2001) suggested that TBLI offers a wide range of benefits: first, students' control within this method is free of language control. Second, students can use all their language resources in pre-tasking, post-tasking and task cycles rather than only doing one pre-selected item. Next they personalize the contents accordingly while students perform tasks. In addition, students will have a much different exposure to TBLI as the interaction is significant and students work together in pairs and groups.

Therefore, TBLI is an approach to skill integration, Nunan (2005) reported that it helps students to understand, produce, manipulate or

communicate with each other. This approach usually requires specific activities in which students have significant roles and use four skills. This allows students to explore how text and oral messages are transmitted verbally and orally to complete the written work.

Authenticity and communicative activities are emphasized by Carless (2007) as the importance of this approach. When TBLI is used in classes, students assume active roles and constant learning and thinking.

Amin (2009) therefore discussed that TBLI often calls for language use as students require. It should provide students with a true language, meaning that in realistic foreign language situations both in teaching and in testing it would serve their authentic (real) communicative requirements.

Izadpanah (2010) described TBLI as promoting real practice in the target language and providing various contexts for language studies. With meaningful classes, which include learners to practice and function L2 TBLI offers the possibility of learning spoken languages.

Malihah (2010) addressed the fact that learning based on tasks is helpful because it focuses more on students and allows more meaningful communication.

Robinson (2011) clarified that the Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) is a language-specific task that enables students to carry out useful tasks. The development of communication skills and encouragement of second language learners is considered to be of great advantage. Not only because the emphasis is on the linguistic learning process, which can be adapted to different groups of students.

Consequently, the impact of task-based instruction on 6th grade students' vocabulary learning, reading and writing skills in the foreign language and on their attitudes towards language learning have been studied by Kurt (2004). The research findings have shown that task-based instruction in young student classes is an effective approach to language teaching.

In addition to exploring students and teachers ' perceptions about TBI, Kasap (2005) conducted a study on the effectiveness of tasks-based

instruction to improve students ' speaking skills. There were two groups in this study. One was a control group, while the other was the experimental group. There was no significant difference in speech skills in any of the comparisons. The results showed. However, it was shown that students have a positive overview of task-based Instruction and interviews with the teacher were also positive. .

Soyaslan (2008) examined the extent to which traditional methods and task-based teaching differ in the achievement of 6th grade students in foreign language. The study revealed that the post-test results for each group were significantly different. This resulted in TBL being more effective in the achievements of learners in foreign languages.

Thompson & Millington (2012) investigated the efficiency of task-based learning in Asian educational contexts that were used to the more traditional language teaching practices. They explained how the task was used for the interaction and use of English articles, a certain grammar form.

Viet (2014) showed that there was little research into teachers ' beliefs in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and that none has been done in a Vietnamese context, where the current curriculum and textbooks are claimed to adopt TBLT as the principal method of teaching. The findings had implications not only in Vietnam but in related contexts for education and research.

Huang (2016) investigated the question of the positive impact on student motivation and linguistic skills of the implementation of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) in a complete English lesson. The quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that the majority of students showed good perceptions of using TBLT in their English language learning course and recognized the increase in motivation for the study, indicated an increase in interest, enjoyment and autonomy in the study and in their language abilities, in particular speaking and writing.

In order to integrate linguistic skills and to improve its communication skill, Cordoba Zúñiga (2016) implemented task-based language instruction. The results showed that language teaching based on tasks facilitated the integration of four competencies into the English

language context. In addition, various reading, writing, listening, and speech exercises have been meaningful, integrated, and enhanced communication and interaction among students. Task language teaching could be concluded as a good approach to promoting the integration of language skills and competency.

In conclusion, TBLI, through its communication activities, is a bridge between classroom and daily life, requiring interaction between students in order to accomplish a task in class. Learners are not only expected to know the language, but to use their language skills. (Yildiz & Senel, 2017)

B.1. Definition of Grammar

Grammar was defined in several ways by researchers:

Brinton & Brinton (2010) defined grammar as the rules of a language, its system or structure and the principle by which it works. Humphrey, Droga & Feez (2012) claimed that grammar is the pattern and structure system, a set of resources used to organize words into phrases that make up the meaning in a text.

Nawaz et al., (2015) referred to grammar as the entire mechanism and arrangement of a language or languages in general, typically taken as syntax and morphology (including infections) as well as often phonology and semantics. Saaristo (2015:292) contended that grammar is "the official definition of how to write a mother tongue and how to use its structures."

B.2. Communicative Grammar Instruction in EFL/ESL Classes

The language in general and the grammar knowledge in particular are practical skills that help us make more effective use of language. However, it can be fascinating, engaging and fascinating to know how language works. (Humphrey, Droga & Feez, 2012)

Singh (2011) therefore confirmed that grammar is to be taught by means of the communication, commonly referred to as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It looks at students who participate in meaningful communication to learn best.

Nan (2015) noted that grammar instruction has been discussed for some time in foreign language learning and instruction. This culminated in different perspectives on grammar, grammar and different teaching approaches based on certain experiences or in various contexts in language learning.

Thus, the study of grammar has been given a lot of attention as grammar becomes a priority and a central subject in English teaching and learning. Whether to direct students ' grammar is becoming highly problematic for some English teachers. (Peng, 2017)

Accordingly, several researches that dealt with the efficacy of grammar teaching in EFL / ESL instruction as follows: Petraki & Hill (2011) reported results from a study that looked at teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding grammar teaching in EFL contexts. The results had implications for language teaching and indicated that growing awareness of what was needed to be an effective grammar teacher could lead to building confidence in those who started or struggled with grammar teaching.

Dang & Nguyen (2013) aimed at investigating the effects of EFL learners' indirect, explicit grammar instruction on the mastery of English tenses. The findings showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group substantially in the study of grammar rules and oral competency, except for using grammatical constructs in predefined context.

By their initial teaching practices, Capan (2014) investigated the pre-service beliefs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher regarding grammar instruction in a context of foreign languages. The study demonstrated that the role of knowledge in the beliefs of pre-service teachers has not been modified. The results also demonstrated several other factors affecting the pre-service teachers' grammar preferences.

Ho & The Binh (2014) examined whether the teaching of communicative grammar was effective in the grammatical knowledge and oral communication of students and their attitude towards this

method. Findings demonstrated the students 'grammar skills handling, oral and positive attitudes.

Hos & Kekec (2015) investigated the views of EFL students and teachers on the controversial role of grammatical instruction and the correction of errors. This research shows that both students and teachers agreed that language grammar and error correction were important; however, there were some gaps between students and teachers in the use of language in grammar and other areas of grammar teaching.

Alghanmi & Shukri (2016) investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices in grammar and grammar instruction. The results showed that the views of the teachers were also reflected in their practice in the classroom. Six factors influenced the transformation of teacher beliefs into action in grammar and grammar instruction were the level of student competencies, language attitudes, needs, learning styles, classroom atmosphere and teacher development.

Deng & Lin (2016) aimed at investigating, analyzing and comparing similarities and differences between teachers, the current state of grammar beliefs and teaching behaviors of high school students. The result showed that teachers' teaching of grammar is tended towards communicative teaching while students' grammatical beliefs are characterized by the combination of communicative and conventional grammar teaching. The grammar teaching behaviors of the teachers might essentially be consistent with their teaching beliefs in grammar.

Graus & Coppen (2017) studied the different cognitions of 74 Dutch student teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with regard to grammar instruction and how they handle learner- oriented cognitions i. The results showed that specific, systemic and independent grammatical instruction was required not only to linguistic correctness, but also to advanced communication competence.

Saengboon (2017) aimed at investigating the knowledge of English grammar by a group of Thai university students. The results of the interview indicated that participants found grammar to be essential for learning and using English effectively. They also stated that effective

teaching of grammar was advantageous as long as there was emphasis on the communicative use of grammar.

In the Benin EFL classes, Bancolé-Minaflinou (2018) examined the effectiveness of using communicative grammar in facilitating true language practice. The findings showed that (I) numerous teachers in Benin do not teach communicative grammar and teachers still have an incomprehensible idea of what it should be; (ii) communicative grammar teaching was required to make EFL learning a worthwhile experience to be implemented successfully in the students' language; (iii) both methods were not mutually exclusive as these could be converted into a rewarding experience for students.

Onalan (2018) described the beliefs of non-native English-speaking teachers on grammar instruction and clarified how specific demographic factors affected these beliefs. Teachers of adult learners have shown a greater inclination towards direct grammar instruction. Non-native speakers tended to use more indirect grammar instruction as they advanced academically and professionally, but they provided more direct grammar instruction as the ages and levels of their students increased.

Sotomayor et al., (2019) studied the importance of grammar in the teaching of writing in the countries of Hispanic America and Spain. The findings showed a strong adherence to the communicative approach to grammar.

B.3. Grammar Difficulties

One of the difficulties encountered in learning other languages is grammatical rule. That truth also applies to those studying English at different educational levels. Second / Learners of foreign languages typically make mistakes in certain grammar rules. (Widianingsih & Gulo, 2016)

Thus, the role of grammar instruction has been a major issue for both students and teachers for decades in an ESL / EFL context. Investigators have discussed whether to teach grammar in the classroom, and students generally regard grammar as a necessary evil at best, and at

worst as an avoidance burden. (Abdu Mohammed & Ramani Perur, 2011)

Accordingly, Ellis (2008) distinguished two types of difficulty: (1) the learners have difficulties in understanding and expanding a grammatical feature (2) the learners have difficulties in internalizing a grammatical feature so they can use it fluently and automatically in communication. He argued that the first sense of grammatical difficulty concerns explicit knowledge, while the second is implied knowledge. On the other hand, in acquiring grammatical features, Dekeyser (2009) made a distinction between the objective and the subjective difficulty. Objective difficulty relates to the grammatical rule itself, whereas subjective difficulty refers to the actual difficulty experienced by individual learners in learning L2.

Some researchers have characterized grammatical difficulty for Shiu (2011) in terms of the correct use of grammatical features by students, which are considered more difficult to learn based on the fact that many students have difficulty using the features correctly. Eleni and Deborah (2011) added that many teachers lack adequate grammar awareness or skills to effectively deliver grammar knowledge in a manner that promotes effective language learning.

Abushihab (2014) examined and reported grammatical errors in writing by 20 second-year students in English as a Foreign Language at the University of Gazi Turkey. The results showed that participants made 179 grammatical errors, including 27 tense errors, 50 preposition errors, 52 the use of articles errors, 16 passive and active language mistakes, and 33 morphological failures.

Sun (2014) examined the number of popular ungrammatical patterns in free Chinese EFL Learners writings to determine the useful pedagogical consequences for English grammar in EFL situations, particularly in China. The results indicated that the most common grammatical mistake was misused in writing by Chinese students. Additional ungrammatical patterns, like the English-Language of Chinese and the tense error and misuse of prepositions have also been important and in their teaching practice EFL teachers, especially Chinese EFL teachers, should be given due attention.

Albalawi (2016) examined whether Female Saudi Students ' grammatical errors could be due to conflict with their mother tongue. This study analyzed120 English essays written by Saudi Female Arabic speaking students studying at the University of Prince Fahad Bin Sultan. The results of the study indicated that the transition of Arabic linguistic constructs had an effect on grammatical level on the English writings of Saudi Female Students. Additionally, the Saudi Female Students ' English writing skills need improvement.

Alhaysony & Alhaisoni (2017) investigated grammatical difficulties from the perspective of Saudi university students, from the perspective of EFL as well as university professors. This sought to find out which aspects of English grammar are difficult / easier than others. The findings revealed that some aspects of English grammar were more complex and others were less difficult than others. The study's results could help syllabus designers, content developers, teachers, and EFL learners.

Atashian & Al-Bahri (2018) aimed to identify the grammatical difficulties faced by university students in their academic writing and the causes of this problem. Three grammatical points, namely tenses, adverbs, and pronouns, were the most common mistakes made by students. The perception of students has been looked into in writing against their actual errors.

B.4. Task-Based Language Instruction in Improving Communicative Grammar

Task-based language instruction to grammar involves the use of tasks that involve students to meaningfully interact and negotiate a task. The grammar needs of Learner are determined, based on task performance, rather than through a predetermined grammar syllabus according to Abdollahzadeh & Maleki (2011). However, this week at the beginning of task- instruction, i.e. the lack of concentration on form, led researchers to integrate form and meaning through various methods.

Research on the use of these tasks shows that grammar points which have some rules that are easily taught are much more likely to be taught through task success than systems controlled by many rules. This

was found, however, to improve understanding of grammar structures too difficult to understand through formal instruction alone by meaning-oriented practices such as tasks that involve communication instances of target forms (Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993; Robinson, 1996; Ellis, 2003)

Therefore, teaching communicative grammar through task-based teaching means helping students to internalize rules and patterns in ways that take account of the needs, goals, level of education, linguistic styles, error corrections strategies, successful communication activities, the authentic tasks of students and their needs. (Bancolé-Minaflinou ,2018)

Fotos and Ellis (1991) pointed out in their study of task-based grammar, that grammar tasks have enabled grammar for communication, allowing EFL learners to improve their understanding of dative alternations, Whereas, Marlina (2014) stated that choosing task-based instruction in teaching grammar would allow students to perform certain interactive tasks. Through taking into grammar the three fundamental steps of task language learning, students directly develop their language while learning the rules.

There are also a number of studies in which work based language teaching in grammar is taught, for instance, the impact of task-based language teaching on Ahvaz junior high school students in Namazian, Bohloulzadeh and Pazhakh (2017) studied motivation and grammatical achievement at EFL. The results illustrated that the experimental group was significantly better than the control group. Usually the test group exceeded the test group. The results of the survey showed also that the motivation between the experimental group's motivation and the control group after questionnaire management was significantly different, which implicitly increased the motive of the experimental group.

Yildiz & Senel (2017) carried out a study examining the effect of task-based language teaching on students' grammar understanding in the grammatical field. TBLT has significantly increased the grammar skills of experimental students. This study shows significant findings compared to traditional methods of languages teaching based on tasks, in grammar teaching.

Saraç (2018) compared two distinct grammar instruction methodologies: task-based and form-focused teaching. The experimental group, which had context grammar task-instruction, outperformed the group of learners who received formal grammar instruction based on the results.

To conclude, TBLT is a production – oriented teaching approach, so it is never really amenable of strong stress on grammar. Grammar and TBLI are fundamentally in compatible subjects, and force-existence, they need to make adjustments on both sides. So to make this sharpen, task-based teaching should be less, task-based and grammar teaching should be less grammar focused. (Long, 1998)

Context of the Problem

The researchers observed that pupils in the first year of preparatory stage face many difficulties in communicative grammar which may affect their performance and communication with the EFL. This is supported by the various aforementioned studies that revealed the pupils had difficulties in studying grammar which may effect on their communication. In the first year of preparatory school for girls, Kafr-Saqr, Sharquia Governorate, Egypt, the researchers conducted a pilot study to document the problem including (30) pupils. In the first term of the academic year 2018-2019 the pupils were given a communicative grammar test.

The results of the pilot study test showed that the percentage of the pupils' responses to communicative grammar aspects was less than 50%, as table (1) shows:

Table (1).
Results of the pilot communicative grammar aspects test

Communicative Grammar Aspects	Percentage
Form	45%
Language Function	30%
Writing	25%

Accordingly, the aforementioned results indicated that the majority of the pupils were not grammatically proficient. For example: Concerning **Form:** Pupils were not able to use (tenses such as: Present

simple, present continues, past simple, imperative, past continuous, some& any, because, so…..etc) in correct sentences, the percentage was 45%.

Concerning **Language Function:** Pupils were not able to express themselves, make description, ask and answer questions…..etc. the percentage was 30%

Concerning **Writing:** Pupils were not able to make correct sentences, or write grammatically correct paragraphs, the percentage was 25%.

Problem Statement

Based upon the pilot study results and the difficulties preparatory pupils have in learning grammar, it could be stated that the first year preparatory stage pupils had difficulties in communicative grammar aspects. That is why task-based language instruction was used to help them overcome such difficulties and improve their communicative grammar performance.

Study Questions

The study attempted to answer the following main question:

- How can Task-Based Language Instruction improve the first year preparatory stage pupils' communicative grammar performance?

The main question could be subdivided into the following questions:

- What are communicative grammar aspects, 1st year preparatory stage pupils should master?

- To what extent do they possess such aspects?

- How far is Task-Based Language Instruction effective in improving 1st year preparatory stage pupils' communicative grammar performance?

Study Hypotheses

The study hypotheses were formulated as thus:

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of overall communicative grammar aspects in favor of post-administration.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of each communicative grammar aspect in favor of post-administration.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post- administration of overall communicative grammar aspects in favor of experimental group.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post- administration of each communicative grammar aspect in favor of experimental group.

- Task-based language instruction is effective in improving the first year preparatory stage pupils' communicative grammar performance.

Significance of the Study

This study is hopefully expected to be useful to the following:

a. Teachers of English Language: It might provide them with various methods and approaches to teaching grammar. It might help them to teach grammar communicatively. In addition, the study might attract the attention of English teachers to the importance of using task-based language instruction as a means of developing pupils' communicative grammar and might be useful for them to change their traditional methods in teaching.

b. The EFL preparatory pupils as it helped them study grammar in a communicative manner either for writing or speaking skills.

c. Curriculum developers and designers as it helped them to incorporate some communicative tasks and activities in preparatory

school textbooks. Also, it might help them to employ task-based language instruction in teaching English.

Study Delimitations

The study was delimited to:

1) Teaching grammar in a communicative rather than deductive or situational manner.

2) Sixty pupils of the first year preparatory stage at Kafr-Saqr Preparatory School for Girls, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt.

3) A Task-based language instruction introduced through three main stages: pre-task phase, while- task phase and post- task phase.

4) The study was implemented in the first semester of the academic year (2018-2019).

Definition of Terms

-Task-Based Language Instruction can be operationally defined as" A teaching approach generated from the communicative approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks in which learners try to perform these tasks in classroom environment to achieve a set of goals (outcomes) using the target language. It consists mainly of three phases: Pre-task phase, while- task phase, and post-task phase".

- Communicative Grammar can be operationally defined as "One of teaching methods and deals with grammar through communicative use of the language. In the light of this method, grammar must not be taught in isolation but integrated to the four language skills".

Method

Study Design

The researchers used the quasi-experimental with a pre-posttest design for experiment and control. The experimental and control groups were selected to represent two classes. In addition, the experimental group studied using Task-Based Language Instruction to improve the

performance of the communicative grammar. The pupils received regular instruction regarding the control group.

Participants

The study participants were (60) pupils enrolled at the Kafr-Saqr Girls Preparatory School, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt in the first year preparatory stage. They were randomly selected and divided into two groups: Experimental group (N=30) (taught via task-based language instruction), and control group (N=30) (received regular instruction).

Pre-testing statistics was made before experimentation to ensure that the experimental and control groups were homogeneous in their entry level. (Table, 2)

Table (2)
Means, Standard Deviations, t.values, of the means scores of the control group and those of experimental one on communicative grammar aspects pretest

Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	Std	Df	T	sig
Form	Cont.	30	6.67	1.80	58	-0.58	0.566
	Expr.	30	7.00	1.31			Not Sig.
Language function	Cont.	30	3.20	1.15	58	-0.16	0.872
	Expr.	30	3.27	1.10			Not Sig.
Writing	Cont.	30	1.80	0.78	58	-0.72	0.480
	Expr.	30	2.00	0.75			Not Sig.
Total	Cont.	30	11.67	1.95	58	-0.98	0.334
	Expr.	30	12.27	1.33			Not Sig.

Table (2) indicates that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups. This shows the homogeneity between the two groups. That is to say, the two groups in the communicative grammar test were almost at the same level of performance. So any variance between two groups that might occur after the experiment could be attributed to the experiment's effect. The pre-test scores revealed that participants had an average low grammar performance of their communication skills.

Using Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) ………………………..

Study Instruments

To fulfill the study purpose, the researchers prepared the following instrument:

(1) Communicative grammar aspects questionnaire. (Appendix, A)

The communicative grammar aspects questionnaire was designed to determine the most important EFL communicative grammar aspects necessary for 1st year preparatory pupils and for developing the study pre/post communicative grammar test.

To develop the EFL communicative grammar aspects questionnaire, items of the questionnaire were derived from the following sources:

- The pupils' book and teacher's guide for "New Hello" for the for 1st year preparatory pupils

- Related studies and related literature concerning with developing EFL communicative grammar aspects.

- Consulting specialists and experts in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

- The Ministry of Education directives designed for the academic year 2018-2019 by the prep-education directorate and the counselor's office for the general preparatory school teachers.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of three major communicative grammar aspects (Form-Language Function-Writing) and each aspect consisted of sub-aspects (dimensions). Three degrees of importance on each item were: Very important, important and important to some extent.

To validate the questionnaire in its final form, it was submitted to jury members who included TEFL specialists to conclude the degree of importance of each aspect as well as the appropriateness of these aspects for the for 1st year preparatory pupils.

(2) A Pre-Post Communicative Grammar Test. (Appendix, B)

2.a. Purpose of the test

The communicative grammar test was prepared by the researchers to assess the communicative grammar aspects of pupils of the experimental and control groups before and after the task-based language instruction was administered. It was used as a pre-posttest to determine how far these aspects could be mastered by the pupils of the 1st year preparatory stage.

2.b. Test Construction

The test was constructed by the researchers following these procedures:

(1)   Reviewing literature and related studies on testing EFL Communicative grammar aspects.

(2)   Identifying the most important EFL communicative grammar aspects which were fitted to the first year preparatory stage pupils through the final form of the communicative grammar aspects questionnaire. (Appendix, A)

(3)   Analyzing pupils' book and teacher's guide "New Hello" English for preparatory schools, year one which was prescribed for pupils.

2.c. Test Description

The test final version consisted of three parts: Form, Language Function, and writing.

- Part one (Form): It was divided into two parts: part (A) pupils were asked to choose correct answers from a, b, c, or d, while part (B) they were asked to correct the underlined words.

- Part two (Language Function): Pupils were given mini-dialogues and were asked to complete.

- Part three (writing): Pupils were asked to write a paragraph on topics they studied including different aspects of grammar.

2.d. Piloting the Test

In order to pilot the test, it was administered to a group of (10) 1st year preparatory pupils (not involved in the study sample). They were chosen randomly from Kafr-Saqr Preparatory School for Girls, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt. The purpose of the piloting procedure was to:

- Ensure the validity of the test.

- Determine the appropriateness time needed to answer the test;

- Check the suitability of the test for 1st year preparatory pupils with regard to the clarity of the test and the appropriateness of its phrasing. Results revealed that most of the pupils did not master the communicative grammar aspects. Most students needed more help to improve their communicative grammar aspects, and it was estimated that 90 minutes would be sufficient to complete the test. This time was estimated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{The time taken by the ten students}}{10} = 90 \text{ minutes}$$

2. e. Test Validity

A number of jury members were submitted to measure the validity of the test content for validation of the test. The first version of the test was given to members of the jury in order to evaluate the content items of the test, number of questions, the scoring method and the suitability of the test for the level of the pupils. The test has been proving valid.

2.f. Test Reliability

The researchers used the test-retest method with a group of thirty pupils who did not participate in the current study in the first term of (2018-2019). Two weeks later, the same test was administered to the same pupils, and then the first and second administrations' results were calculated and analyzed under the same conditions. The calculated

reliability coefficient was (.92). Reliability was calculated using the Spearman Coefficient of Correlation.

2.g. Test Scoring

The final test consisted of three parts: Part One (Form), total score was 20 marks, Part Two, total score was 10 marks, while Part Three; total score was 5 marks. The total test score was 35 marks. The Researchers scored the test.

Experimental Procedures

Several procedures were used to achieve the study purposes:

(1) Communicative grammar aspects were selected in accordance with the curriculum, and the researchers prepared a test. The experimental and control groups were administered a pre-test to confirm whether there is homogeneity between the two groups.

(2) At the beginning of the experimental period, the experimental group taught through task-based language whereas the control group was given regular instruction.

(3) Pupils performed the tasks given by the researchers. The role of the teacher (researchers) was a guide, a facilitator and a monitor.

(4) The task-based language instruction lesson plans were planned based on the framework suggested by Willis (1996), since each stage of the Willis process prepares the ground for the next. It goes hand in hand with the systematic use of language. These steps included: Pre-task, Task-cycle which was divided into: Task, planning, and reports, Language focus which was divided into: Language analysis and language practice. Designing sessions in the light of task-based language instruction included: Determining the objectives, formulating the content of the sessions, determining the teacher's roles, determining the pupils' roles.

(5)   The post-test was administered to both groups to determine whether the communicative grammar performance of the participants in both groups was significantly improved.

(6)   Data were collected and statistically analyzed using means, standard deviations, t-value and effect size to investigate the effectiveness of the task-based instruction strategy..

(7)   Results were presented in the section coming.

Study Results

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of overall communicative grammar aspects in favor of post-administration.

Table.3.
Means, Standard Divisions, t.values, and Effect size of the means scores of the experimental group on overall communicative grammar aspects pre and post tests

dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	Std	df	T	Sig	ES
Total	Pre	15	12.27	1.33	14	-21.76	0.000	0.971
	Post	15	27.47	2.07			Sig.	High

As shown in table 3, the results of the t-test comparing the pre-posttest experimental group show that there is a significant difference between the mean experimental group scores on that pre-posttest favoring the post-test. This result supports the first hypothesis that states that "There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of overall communicative grammar aspects in favor of post-administration". The table also reflects that the effect size is 0.971 which is high.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of each communicative grammar aspect in favor of post-administration.

Table.4.

Means, Standard Divisions, t.values, and Effect size of the means scores of the experimental group on each communicative grammar aspect pre and posttests.

Dimensions	Groups	n	Mean	sd	Ddf	T	Sig	ES
Form	Pre	130	7.00	1.31	158	-17.76	0.000	0.958
	Post	130	15.47	1.92			Sig.	High
Language function	Pre	130	3.27	1.09	158	-15.60	0.000	0.945
	Post	130	7.80	1.08			Sig.	High
Writing	Pre	330	2.00	0.76	158	-15.20	0.000	0.942
	Post	130	4.20	0.68			Sig.	High

As shown in Table 4, the results of a t-test comparing the pre-posttest experimental group show that there is a significant difference between the mean experimental group scores on that pre-posttest favoring the post-test. This result supports the second hypothesis that states "There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of each communicative grammar aspect in favor of post-administration". The table also reflects that the effect sizes which are 0.958, 0.945, and 0.942 are high.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post-administration of overall communicative grammar aspects in favor of experimental group.

Table 5.
Means, Standard Divisions, t.values, and Effect size of the means scores of the control group and those of the experimental group on overall communicative grammar aspects posttest.

Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig	ES
Total	Cont.	30	19.83	1.16	58	-13.94	0.000	0.874
	Expr.	30	27.47	2.07			Sig.	High

As shown in table 5, the results of t-test comparing the experimental group and the control one on communicative grammar post-test show that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of two groups in favor of the experimental group. This result supports the third hypothesis that states "There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post- administration of overall communicative grammar aspects in favor of experimental group". The table also reflects that the effect size is 0.874 which is high.

- There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post-administration of each communicative grammar aspect in favor of experimental group.

Table 6.
Means, Standard Divisions, t.values, and Effect size of the means scores of the control group and those of the experimental group on each communicative grammar aspect posttest.

dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	Std	Df	T	Sig	ES
Form	Cont.	30	12.80	0.86	58	-4.90	0.000	0.461
	Expr.	30	15.47	1.92			Sig.	High
Language function	Cont.	30	3.93	0.70	58	-11.60	0.000	0.828
	Expr.	30	7.80	1.08			Sig.	High
Writing	Cont.	30	2.20	0.41	58	-9.77	0.000	0.773
	Expr.	30	4.20	0.68			Sig.	High

As shown in table 6, the results of t-test comparing the experimental group and the control one on communicative grammar post-test show that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of two groups in favor of the experimental group. This result supports the fourth hypothesis that states "There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups on the post- administration of each communicative grammar aspect in favor of experimental group". The table also reflects that the effect sizes which are 0.461, 0.828, and 0.773 are high.

Discussion

The study findings supported hypotheses of the study. According to statistical data, the task-based language instruction was more effective than regular instruction in improving the communicative grammar performance of first-year preparatory stage pupils. Firstly, the findings clearly showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and the control groups found in the pre-test. This indicates that both groups in the communicative grammar performance are roughly equivalent in their entry level.

The researchers used task-based language instruction to help pupils improve their communicative grammar performance and overcome the difficulties they have. It is one of the communicative approach methods that offer the opportunity for pupils to learn grammar focusing not only on the form but also on the meaning.

A comparison of experimental and control was then made between both groups. The post-results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in their performance on the post administration of grammar test in favor of experimental group. There was also a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's mean scores in their performance on grammar test pre-post administrations in favor of post administration. Furthermore, task-based language instruction proved to be effective in improving the communicative grammar performance of the first-year preparatory stage pupils.

Using Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) ………………………..

Through experimentation, the topic and the task were introduced in the pre-task stage to the pupils in whom the researchers illustrated the task requirements for pupils, showed them the topics, set objectives and task procedures. They also gave supplementary instruction and various activities. The students were asked to form groups and discuss the results. This stage prepared pupils to produce sentences with grammatical accuracy.

Then, the pupils tried to perform the task given to them in an interactional context in the second phase "During Task" or in the "Task Cycle," and tried to improve their communication skills. Pupils were attempting to use the target language to complete the task; the researchers were monitoring and providing feedback. This stage comprised three phases: task, planning and reporting.

In the final phase, "Post -Task", the pupils analyzed the post-task phase into: Language focus and language practice.

On the contrary, regular classes were confronted with teachers, with learners sitting in rows in front of the researchers. In the present study, the control group pupils spent most of their time repeating and manipulating the types and models provided to the researchers, all the time using the course book (text). Pupils did not learn how to express their own ideas by communicating in small groups. In contrast, the task-based language instruction pupils were encouraged to co-operate with each other and to express their own opinions, this increased their confidence.

Thus, Using Task-based language instruction was effective in improving the first year pupils' communicative grammar performance; this might be due to many factors:

- Task-based language instruction focused on learning (learning by doing) rather than listening. This had meaning for the pupils who had to solve communication issues, and this meaning was internalized in real-life situations as linguistic ability along with authenticity.

- In a task-based language instruction approach, learning has been developed as steps for successful implementation through a series

of activities. The researchers became aware of the needs of the students by implementing task-based language teaching.

- Within task-based language instruction, the pupils' feeling of anxiety reduced. The pupils felt relaxed and tension-free while performing the task. They were not afraid to make mistakes regarding the series of complicated rules that were difficult to implement.

- Most of the time, the pupils were free to form groups themselves. This led to the fact that weak pupils who worked in one group learnt from each other, while those who were in a good group finished the task earlier.

- The pupils were encouraged to perform various tasks by interacting communicatively with the language they were learning. This provided them encouragement and motivation.

- A task-based language instruction lesson provided an active role for the learner in participating and doing the activities. Language instruction based on tasks allowed students to use the knowledge they had learned productively in the context of the task.

- In task-based language instruction, the pupils gain confidence while trying to accomplish the task.

- Task-based language instruction fosters an attentive, enthusiastic classroom learner who has become more motivated to learn because the communication tasks were both relevant and consequential.

- Task-based language instruction promotes pupils' communication as well as collaborative learning, setting the defined outcomes for them to reach.

- Task language instruction enhances the interest of the learning process by encouraging, supporting and helping pupils through various activities that are interactive and communicative.

- Task-Based Language Instruction raises pupils' self-esteem.

- Pupils also stated that this approach provided them the possibility to take part in the lessons, to practice and negotiate as well as to improve the way they spoke, listened, read and written in a comfortable and collaborative environment, in which they were able to cooperate and to respect and value the points of view of other classmates. They shared their ideas and clapped to congratulate their classmates.

- In conclusion, although the task-based instruction is advantageous for the learning of a language and improves communicative grammar, the task alone does not necessarily ensure success unless the teacher, facilitator and task control is aware of the actual working of tasks in the classroom. It also suggested that task-based language instruction as a method of instruction would not only give learners a task and evaluate their performance. More importantly, the teacher wishing to successfully implement task-based language instruction must have adequate knowledge about the instructional framework to his plan, procedure and assessment.

- The above mentioned results were consistent with those of Rooney (2000), Malihah (2010), Nunan (2005), Careless (2007), Amin (2009), Izadpanah (2010), Robinson (2011), Ritchards & Rodgers (2001), Thompson & Millington (2012) who demonstrated the importance of task-based instruction in ESL/EFL classrooms. In addition, they asserted the idea of Abdollah Zaden & Maleki (2011), Ellis (2003), Loschky & Bley-Vroman, (1993), Robinson (1996), Fotos & Ellis (1991), Long (1998), Marlina (2014), Namazian, Bohloulzadeh & Pazhakh (2017), Yildiz & Senel (2017), Sarac (2018) who pointed out the basic role of task-based language instruction in teaching grammar.

Conclusions

This research examined the effect of task-based language instruction on improving the communicative grammar performance of pupils in the first year of the preparatory stage and to compare its efficiency with regular teaching methods.

Based on the results of the study and the discussion, it was concluded that task-based language instruction is an appropriate teaching strategy to improve communicative grammar performance. The improvement of the pupils' communicative grammar performance can be seen from the post-test results compared to the pre-test ones. Through task-based language instruction, the pupils were motivated to practice grammar through different activities included in the task, they also managed to practice different communicative grammar aspects. More active interaction, participation, communication and cooperation took place in performing the task whether among the pupils themselves or between the teacher and pupils; accordingly, they became positive learners.

Also, the pupils became more aware that grammar learning is important in communications and that they are responsible for classroom activity and take a part in the learning process through their answers. This improved their grammar communication performance.

Recommendations

In the light of the study findings and conclusions, these recommendations could be stated as follows:

(1) The pupils should practice grammar, try first of all to correct their grammar errors and seek ways of reducing those mistakes.

(2) The pupils should avoid the translation into English of the forms and meanings of the sentences from their first language.

(3) Teachers should provide the pupils confidence through encouragement and positive feedback while teaching grammar.

(4) Teachers should be trained on the innovative approaches to teaching which have a positive impact on pupils' performance.

(5) Classroom environment should be friendly to give pupils the chance to interact and participate actively to facilitate their learning.

(6) Classroom should not be teacher-centered but student-centered.

(7) The pupils should practice more activities in grammar in and out classroom.

(8) Grammar should not be isolated but integrated into the language skills.

(9) Integrating task-based language instruction into English increases their motivation and participation.

(10) Tasks should focus not only on forms but also on meaning. (Using English for Communication purposes)

(10) Curriculum designers are recommended to include task-based language instruction in the English textbook. The tasks should be included in the books of teachers and students.

(11) Teachers should choose appropriate tasks or activities in their teaching generally and in teaching grammar particularly, thereby helping pupils to be active participants.

(12) The importance of grammar instruction in the process of communication should be understood by the pupils. Communication might suffer if grammar rules are violated too carelessly, according to Harmer (2007). It means that if grammar mastery is not achieved, incomprehension will result and miscommunication will occur.

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