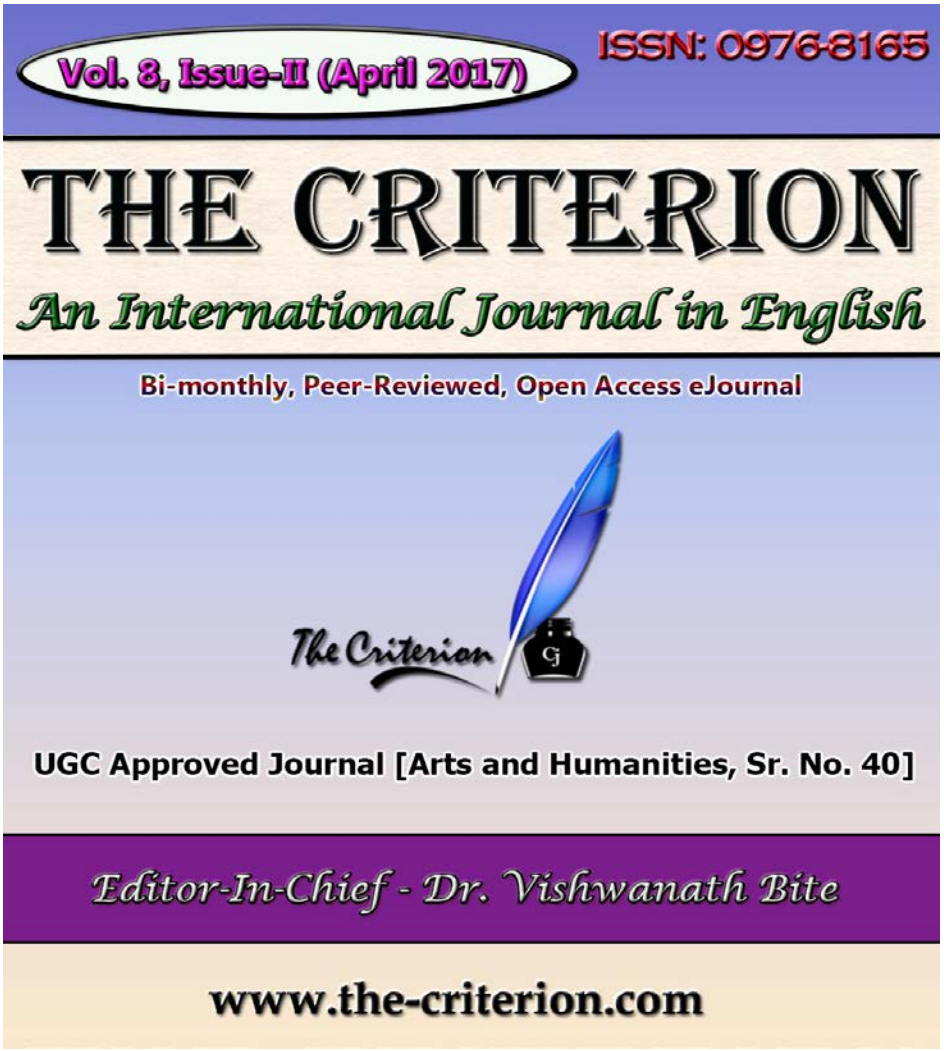

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Developing Speaking Skills among the B.Tech Students through TBLT

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Article History: Submitted-07/03/2017, Revised-06/04/2017, Accepted-22/04/2017, Published-30/04/2017.

Abstract:

Secondary School Certificate, at the state level of Andhra Pradesh, related to 10th class students. Generally, the High school level at A.P. consists of 8,9 and 10 classes. These classes are handled by trained teachers' courses offered by the State Board of Teacher Education. Due to the influence of globalization and technical revolution at the global level English language has its own distinct identity in the education from early levels. As a result, regional languages are shadowed by the influence of English which lead to certain political interests. Official Language Committee and some other committees are appointed by the State Government to appease the local politics. Among all LSRW skills including soft skills are partially failed in delivering its objectives positively. The present paper titled: "Developing Speaking Skills Among The B.Tech Students Through TBLT" is aimed at focussing on the Speaking skills which play a critical role in Learning Communication skills. Due its impact on the world, there are many new emerging trends in ELT. The researcher has taken the Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as a suitable application method for the contemporary situation prevailing among the students in Andrha Pradesh. The Study is completely focused on the application method.

Keywords: AP, LSRW Skills, TBLT, Speaking skills, contemporary approach and application method.

1. Review of ELT Speaking

TBLT first emerged from some experiments done in India in the late 1970s,when a native speaker Prabhu, one of the greatest linguist, got his non native speakers' secondary school students to do a geography task by obliging them to ask him everything in English , and getting all the answers in English . In other words they were focused on Geography, and were incidentally engaged in English as the medium to complete task. This idea was very appealing to a liberal minded teaching profession because it offers the ideological attractive principle of a teacher who was not an authoritative figure but a facilitator of learning. The research findings show that TBLT offers an opportunity for the authentic learning in the class room Moreover, TBLT not only emphasizes *meaning* over *form* but also caters to the need of learning the *form*. In addition, TBLT is intrinsically motivating and may be compatible with a learner centered educational philosophy. At the same time, it allows the teacher input and direction. Finally, it caters to the development of *fluency* while passing attention to *accuracy*, and can be used along

with mere traditional procedures. Therefore TBLT motivates students and promotes higher levels of *proficiency*. It also creates a low anxiety learning environment which students can utilize their ideas and practice their language to develop confidence. Teacher can provide timely guidance, which leads to higher retention rates. Despite that TBLT as labor intensive and high maintenance, it develops a cooperative learning community among students.

2. Research Methodology

This study explores the effectiveness of Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the improvement of learners' speaking skills. In this study, the answers for the following questions are investigated through testing and reported authentically.The students data is taken in SPSS format.

Within group comparative results for the experimental and control groups

Groups	N	M	MD	sd	t	Sig.
Pre-experimental	20	66.58	6.20	9.80	-1.96	0.0573
Post-experimental	20	72.78		10.2		
Pre-Control	25	63.17	6.12	7.20	-3.29*	0.0019
Post-control	25	69.29		5.90		

Note. N = Number, M = Mean; MD = mean difference; sd = standard deviation; t= T value

*p<.05

Table 5 shows that experimental group averaged 66.58 on the pre-test, and 72.78 on the post-test. The mean difference of the experimental groups' exam results was 6.2, and this difference is not at significant level.

Table 5 also shows the pre- and post-test results of the control group. As can be seen from the table, control group scored 63.17 on the pre-test, and 69.29 on the post-test. The mean difference of control group was 6.12. The t-test result shows that the control groups' improvement was statistically significant.

Between groups of comparison

The purpose of the paired samples t-test between groups was investigate the impact of task-based treatment on the subjects' oral test scores. These t-tests were computed to compare the groups in terms of their pre- and post-test scores. Table 6 demonstrate the between groups comparison t-test results for the pre- and post-treatment tests.

Table 1

Between groups of comparison for pre- and post-test results of both groups

Groups	N	M	MD	sd	t	Sig.
Pre-experimental	20	66.58	3.41	9.80	1.35	0.19
Pre-control	25	63.17		7.20		
Post-experimental	20	72.78	3.49	10.2	1.44	0.16
Post-control	25	69.29		5.90		

Note. N = Number, M = Mean; MD = mean difference; sd = standard deviation; t= T value

*p<.05

Table 6 shows that the experimental group scored 66.58 on the pre-test while the control group scored 63.17 on the pre-test. The T result shows that the difference between both groups' pre-test scored was not significant.

Table 6 also shows that the experimental group scored 72.78 while control group scored 69.29 in the post-test. The t-test results display that the difference between the improvements of both groups in the post-test was also insignificant.

Finally, when the Table 5 and 6 showing the within groups comparison and between groups comparisons were examined, it can be seen that control groups' improvement was significant. However, when the significance level of the experimental group's improvement was taken into consideration, it can be accepted as a noticeable improvement. Therefore, it may be further claimed that experimental group benefited by the task-based treatment at a noticeable degree, but not at a significant level.

These results were confounded by the initial variation of pre-test scores between control and experimental groups. This was an unintended consequence of the necessary selection of "intact" classes for the study.

It might be noted that the overall mean oral assessment value for students in the B.Tech level is 70. Thus, experimental group had pre-test scores below the B.Tech mean level and completed the study with post-tests above the level. However, the control group, whose pre-test scores also started below the lower B.Tech level, had post-test scores that remained below the B.Tech mean level after the study.

4.3 The results of perception questionnaires

As the second data collection instrument, the perception questionnaires were analyzed to investigate the level of effective responses of the experimental group students to the tasks used in the treatment. According to the mean values and standard deviations of students' affective response in the questionnaires, a rank order of tasks in terms their man values was developed. Table 7 shows the rank order of the tasks in the study.

Table 2

Rank order of tasks in the treatment in terms of their mean values

Rank	Task number	M	sd
1	4	3.21	0.79
2	11	3.11	0.69
3	9	3.01	0.72
4	3	2.91	0.73
4	2	2.90	0.65
6	1	2.79	0.66
7	10	2.70	0.54
8	6	2.69	0.62
9	8	2.69	0.69
10	5	2.56	0.71
11	7	2.45	0.82

Note. M = Mean; sd = standard deviation;

The scoring for the positive statements were as follows: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1)

Table 7 shows that when examining questionnaire responses to all the tasks, only Task 4, 11 and 9 has a positive mean value, being over 3.01. In other words, students responded to this task more positively than to any other task. Additionally, in the focus group interview, Task 11 was the first task the students recalled. This task was viewed as the most interesting and

appealing task for the students based on their commentaries in the focus group interviews. To the tasks, students responded in a neutral way. It is worth mentioning that none of the tasks were responded negatively. Task 11 is a problem-solving task where learners were asked to create their own endings for an incomplete story. This particular task can be regarded as a creative task because it is a more open-ended task. That is, students were not expected to come to set of or predefined conclusions.

Results of the perception questionnaire were also analyzed in terms of some of the discrete item responses in the questionnaire. Although only one task, Task 11, had a positive mean value in the study for the whole questionnaire analysis, in this analysis it was discovered that some other tasks received positive mean values in terms specific items in the questionnaire. Table 8 shows the tasks receiving positive mean values for the fifth statement in the questionnaire.

Table 3

Mean values for the responses in Tasks 2, 4 and 11 to Item 5

Statement in Item 5	Task	M
This task made me curious	2	3.14
	4	3.54
	11	3.19

Note. M = Mean;

Table 8 indicates that Tasks 2,4 and 11 were responded positively in terms of students' finding these tasks as "curious" activities. The commonalities of these tasks were that they were pair-work activities and required role-playing. These first four activities were also related the topic 'ordering in a restaurant'.

Furthermore, Tasks 4 and 9 received positive mean values for another statement in the questionnaire: Item eight. Table 8 shows the mean values of Tasks 4 and 9 for the eight item.

Table 4

Mean values for the responses in Tasks 4 and 9 to Item 8

Statement in Item 8	Task	M
This task helped me extend my self.	4	3.77
	9	3.02

Note. M = Mean;

Table 9 shows that Tasks 4 and 9 were responded positively as being challenging tasks for students that helped them extended themselves in terms of language use. Task 4 (see Table 4) was real-world activity, and in this task students were given different situation cards about 'ordering in a restaurant' around which they would prepare their own conversations. Task 9 (see Table 4) was again real-world task in which students were supposed to prepare conversations for the given situations in which they would use target structures for the function 'giving directions'.

Table 8 and 9 show that Tasks 1,2,3,4, and 9 were responded to positively in terms of particular questionnaire items It should be also noted that there were no negative responses for these task for the rest of the questionnaire items.

In addition, three questionnaires were administered to the control group after three task similar to the ones used in TBI treatment. They were analyzed to find out the mean values and standard deviations for these particular tasks. The results of three independent sampled *t*-tests run to compare these three tasks between groups are shown in Table 13.

Table 5.

Independent samples t-tests for three similar tasks in both groups

Task number	Groups	N	M	sd	t	Sig
5	Experimental	25	2.39	.59	2.004	0.0512
	Control	22	2.12	.24		
6	Experimental	21	2.57	.30	1.35	0.1847
	Control	23	2.69	.29		
9	Experimental	23	2.46	.36	3.44	0.0013
	Control	23	2.77	.24		

Note. N = Number pf students; M = Mean; sd = standard deviation; t= T value

As Table 10 shows, there is no significant difference in mean values for Tasks 5 and 6 between groups. For task 9 there is significant difference between Experimental and Control. For Tasks 6 and 9, the experimental group's mean values are slightly higher, while for Task 9 the control group's mean value is higher. However, in each, task, the standard deviation is higher for the experimental group. Higher standard deviation in the experimental group show that there is more variation and perhaps more individual students who are more interested in the task in the experimental group.

In order to investigate the individual attitudes towards the three task, mean values for these tasks as responded to by both groups were compared. Table 11 shows the distribution of students' responses in both groups towards the three tasks.

Table 6

Distribution of students' responses of both groups to three similar tasks

Task number	Groups	Responses		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive
		(1.00-2)	(2.01-3)	(3.01-4)
5	Experimental	1	21	3
	Control	0	21	1
6	Experimental	2	10	9
	Control	1	19	2
9	Experimental	2	12	9
	Control	1	15	6

As can be seen in Table 11 in each task, more students were interested in the task in TBI than in the existing treatment. Students mostly responded to the tasks I a neutral way and few students responded to the tasks negatively in either group.

3. Research Questions

1.How effective is the employment of TBLT in speaking classes at MITS Engineering College, Madanapally of Chittoor Dist. of Andhra Pradesh in terms of improving students speaking skills?

2. What are the students' perceptions of Task Based instruction in speaking classes at B.Tech level?

3. What are the attitudes of the teacher using TBLT in his/her speaking classes at B.Tech level?

The study explores the effectiveness of Task Based Approach in developing students' speaking skills at MITS Engineering College, Madanapalle. Central and experimental class data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews and oral tests. Oral Pre and post Tests were administered to both classes comprising 45 students totally. Data from the Oral pre and post tests and questionnaires was analysed quantitatively. Tests were conducted suitably to compare the improvement between groups to analyse effectively the improvement with in groups.

4. 1: Findings for the Research Question 1

The first aspect of the present investigation focused on the participants' thoughts and opinions regarding various aspects of the TBLT in particular. For the purpose of this research, the data subjected to our analysis included the comments made by the learners on their performances and on the pedagogical procedure. Focused questions oral and open-end questions were used. The learners responded that the TBLT helped to improve their Vocabulary, Fluency, Accuracy and any other responses that conveyed the participants' personal impression and reflections.

4.2: Findings for the Research Question 2

Students' components to the open-end question followed by the interviews were both negative and positive about their motivation, perceived performance and assessment of the procedure. Anxiety and low esteem inferred in their perceived performance in all the interviews but on the whole, the students expressed themselves the sense of having improved in the target skill i.e., SPEAKING.

4.3: Findings for the Research Question 3

Mean values for the experimental group's post test results did not show significant changes, although this group reflected somewhat positively on the TBLT treatment in the questionnaire and more positively on the focused group interview. The experimental group students were interested in the tasks and functioned well in the class in using Oral Skills and the class teacher stated that they wanted to continue with the TBLT instruction after the experimental period was completed.

5. Results and Findings

The researcher drew the following conclusions from the findings of the study and theoretical propositions of the related literature.

1. TBLT improved students' speaking skills.

2. In TBLT, teachers can assume various roles when performing the task. They are selector, sequencer, and preparer of learner for the task.

3. Students' Fluency and Accuracy have been improved.

4. TBLT minimizes anxiety/fear and maximizes confidence.

5. Moreover, Practice and exposure to both listening and speaking activities in real world situations appeared to be a practical method to promote English speaking skills with a confidence.

6. Conclusion

Thus this study investigated the effects of TBLT on the improvement of learners' speaking skills' mean scores for the control group moved in a positive direction ,mean scores for the experimental group also showed a positive skill in oral trend improvement. According to quantitative data analysis results, the experimental group seemed content with treatment and thought that they benefited from the treatment in the long term, although they did not make significant progress in the post test when compared to the control group. The study teachers' observation showed that the treatment helped learners participate and communicate each other in the lesson more and more to improve both their accuracy and fluency in speaking. These results imply that TBLT is partially effective in improving speaking skills and could be viewed as an alternative teaching method that can be integrated with current methods for all students and perhaps used more extensively with these students who respond to TBLT most positively.

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