

The Effect of Task Planning on Speaking Fluency :A case study of High School EFL learners in Sirjan

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of task planning on speaking fluency of EFL learners . in this study 30 intermediate students from one of the institutes of Sirjan , Kerman , in 2024 that were selected through purposive sampling . The mean age was 18 . The result of the tests were analyzed using one way ANOVA test. Then Lon's test was performed for ANOVA test default. Finally, Duncan's post hoc test was performed to check the difference in means . The results indicated that the students who had been prepared by pre-task planning have spoken more words .

In addition , it was suggested that that further researchers should be conducted on the effect of task planning on speaking fluency . The overall results of this study were discussed and the theoretical implications for further studies and the practical recommendations for EFL context are made.

Key words: **Task – Task planning – Speaking – Fluency**

1. Introduction

English is an international language that everyone uses to communicate with people from different countries and is very essential for the development of education . English as an international language of communication plays an important role in many fields . The main aim of English language teaching is to give learners the ability to use the English language effectively and correctly in communication (Davies & Pearse, 2000).

As a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the 1980s witnessed the emergence of the Task-Based Approach (TBA) to language teaching, which was later also came to be known as TBLT) or Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL). (Rizwan Khan& Kord , 2018) Historically, TBLT grew out of applied linguists" and pedagogues discontent with the prevailing approach to second/foreign language teaching during the second half of the twentieth century. Long (1985)\ argued that in many second language classes. language was approached as a system of elements and rules which were explicitly taught in a piecemeal and decontextualized fashion. Learners were supposed to first digest the explicit information about a particular linguistic item (e.g. a word or a grammar rule), then practice the item in isolated sentences until its application had been automatized , only then were learners encouraged to try and use the linguistic item in the exchange of meaningful items for communicative aims. (Branden ,2016 , p.238.)

As an innovative learner centered approach TBLT is mostly concerned with theories of learning than theories of language, and considers language as a means which conveys the meaning. A significant difference between TBLT and former form-focused approaches is the fact that TBLT classes begins with a focus on meaning and then are followed by focus on language and eventually focuses on form. It involves learners in a meaning focused activity.

Compared with traditional approaches, it emphasizes on vocabulary and its objectives are matched with the specific requirements of learners in real world contexts. Providing learners with a usable meaning system is the main aim of the approach. It puts a strong emphasis on procedural syllabus, process syllabus, and task based language teaching. The syllabus relies on sets of grammatical, phonological, lexical, functional and notional items rather than just recognizing a specific item. It is the result of an exact analysis depending on the needs of the learners. As opposed to communicative language teaching , in TBLT it is believed that studying form can enhance chances of accuracy on communication . (Ahmadniay Motlagh& Sharif Jafari& Yazdani, 2014)

Speaking as one of the English skills is very essential for everyone. To communicate well, people must be able to speak English. Speaking is a tool for communicating with other ones . Acquiring English skills enables people to communicate with others, express their thoughts, and know others' ideas as well. Communicating in English is hard for students. They have to think more when they speak English. Because even if your pronunciation is good, They still have to come up with the right sentences and the right words. This reality forces teachers to think about how students acquire speaking skills . (Kord & Davari, 2023)

Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (2009) defines fluency as "the fluent speech or writing is smooth and confident, with no mistakes."Or "the state of being able to speak a language very well." (Rizwan Khan& Kord , 2018)

Fluency refers to continuity, smoothness, rate, and effort in speech production. It is also used to characterize language production, language ability or language proficiency Fluency is a commonly used notion in other language teaching, frequently contrasted with accuracy especially in a communicative language teaching. In ordinary life it often has an extended meaning and is used

as a synonym of overall oral proficiency. On the contrary, in the assessment of foreign language proficiency, it is one of several descriptors of oral performance. (Chambers , 1997)

1.1 Task based language teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been drawing researchers' and practitioners' attention since its onset in the 1980s. The rich and still expanding literature on TBLT is helping to mature both its theoretical conceptualization and useful implementation in foreign and second language education. (Guofang li , 2011)

1.1.1 Task planning

TBLT is a realization of communicative language teaching. It is the strong version of Communicative language teaching , as tasks provide the foundation for an entire language program. Planning is one of the criteria of task condition factors that impacts L2 production and has been of both theoretical importance to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers and practical significance to language teachers (Ellis, 2005).

A task is defined as a goal-oriented activity including a meaningful, real-world process of language use, and engages four language skills as well as cognitive processes. The main objective in researching language tasks has been to identify a set of task features based on the assumption that learner performance varies according to task characteristics (Ellis, 2003).

Some pre-mid- and post-task activities can be used to help language learner pay equal attention to both forms and meaning simultaneously and improve the quality of learner language. (Rizwan Khan& Kord , 2018)

1.1.1.1 Pre task planning

Pre-task planning takes place before task performance. Pre-task activities are different from pre-task planning, such as brainstorming, regarding access to the task materials. During the pre-task activities, learners do not have access to the resources that they are going to use to do the task, while during pre-task planning, learners receive the actual materials for the task. He further divided Pre-task planning into strategic planning and rehearsal (i.e. planning what content to express and what language to use however without the opportunity to rehearse the complete task). (Rizwan Khan& Kord , 2018)

This phase is aimed at preparing the learners, both cognitively and linguistically for the upcoming parts of the lesson to enhance acquisition. A thoughtfully prepared and conducted opening phase greatly increases learners' motivation to take part in the task. It also prepares them for the performance phase by providing them with knowledge of language and appropriated knowledge of the words.(Ahmadniay Motlagh& Sharif Jafari& Yazdani, 2014)

Generally speaking, pre task stage is aimed at establishing schemata of any type in order to provide learners with a grasp of the theme and expectations (goals) of the task. However, this stage should not be over loaded since it is naturally supposed to take much less time than the main phase of task thus it is not necessary at all for the teacher to present and describe all the new vocabulary items of the real world must be at the service of the main task.

Effects of such planning can be approached in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.(Ahmadniay Motlagh& Sharif Jafari& Yazdani, 2014)

1.1.1.2 With in task planning

As the title goes, in this stage learners are busy with the task. As it was previously mentioned, in this stage students are given the opportunity to make use of all the language they already have. During this phase, the teacher keeps monitoring the students and provides them with guidelines

and support. Although this phase can be done one by one, it is highly advised that the task should be done in pairs or groups. (Ahmadniay Motlagh & Sharif Jafari & Yazdani, 2014)

1.1.1.3 No task planning

In no planning, learners were required to carry out the task without any instruction that is given by the researcher. They were extremely pressured to express their ideas and plan their spoken production. They should carry out the task within the designated time limit as well. (Kord, 2017)

1.2 Speaking

Speaking is being capable of speech, expressing or changing thoughts through the use of language. "Speaking is a productive aural/oral skill and it includes producing systematic verbal utterances to deliver meaning. Notes down that from the communicative point of view, speaking has many different elements such as two main categories - accuracy, involving the suitable use of vocabulary, grammar and considered to be the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously'. Additionally emphasizes knowledge of the language, and skill in the use of this knowledge for an effective communication. Language knowledge and skill in using it, are considered two essential factors of an effective communication (Correspondence, 2012).

1.2.1 Speaking strategies

Strategies are mentioned as specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability. (Prabawa, 2016)

2. Statement of the problem

Speaking is an important skill of learning another language. If we want to communicate with others we need to speak to them in their language. So there should be a place for speaking in our teaching methods. Most of students are not able to speak fluently or they need many time to think about a topic then they start speaking.

Regarding the problems second language speakers face in developing their speaking fluency, the current study was carried out to delve into using TBLT in teaching speaking fluency. The researcher in this study uses fluency as a variable to demonstrate the value of task planning in teaching speaking.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of task planning on students' ability to speak English fluently. The research was carried out among high school students in Sirjan.

3. Research question

To what extent task planning effects on EFL learners' speaking fluency? Or

Does task planning have any significant effects on EFL learners' speaking fluency?

4. Research hypotheses

H0: There is no relation ship between speaking fluency and task planning.

Task planning doesn't have any significant effect on EFL learners' speaking fluency.

5. Methodology

The researcher measures the effects of task planning as a dependent variable on speaking fluency as an independent variable in this quantitative analysis.

5.1 participants

30 female Iranian EFL learners were recruited for this study which was chosen based on random sampling. As a pre-test, Oxford Placement Test was administered to these students to identify students who were at the same level in terms of language skills. 10 of the participants randomly

assigned to the with in planning group , and the other 10 on the pre planning group and the last ones (10 students) on the no planning group . At first , the amount of students in groups should be measured as pre-test. Again, pre-planning group had 30 minutes to clear their minds before the conversation began. The group with in planning had about 10 minutes to think while talking, And the No planning group had no time to think .

5.2 Instrument

Oxford placement test was used to homogenize the participants. The pre-test and post-test of the present study were standard speaking questions that the participants had to answer orally were the instruments used in this study.

The researcher chose this test, because it is a highly economical and easy-to- administer objectively scorable test, which provides consistently meaningful scores.

5.2.1 Fluency measures

According to the theoretical principles of measuring fluency, the same measures will be used in this study as Chenoweth & Hayes (2001) and Ellis & Yuan (2004).

5.3 Data collection

This study was conducted during the last semester of high school education and the data collection took about two months. For collecting the data, the researcher distributed a proficiency test to ensure the students would be on the same level of proficiency. Selected students were divided into two groups randomly; the control group and the experimental group. A speaking test was taken from both groups as pre-test. The experimental group was educated using the task based method, while the other group was educated using the traditional method. After two months, a standard speaking test was administered as a post-test. It measures the number of words and syllables per minute to consider the task based method's effects.

5.4 Data analysis

In order to find an answer to the research question, the data collected through the instrument were scored and then entered into SPSS version 22 to be analyzed. The statistical test used in order to answer research questions is one way ANCOVA test. One way ANCOVA test used to determine the effect of task planning on EFL learners' speaking fluency.

6. Results and Discussion

The results, as indicated by the tables below, showed that according to the hypothesis, task planning improves the learners speaking fluency and gives them motivation to speak in the second language.

The results of the ANCOVA test showed that the students who was in pre planning group , received higher scores from the within planning and no planning group.

Statistics

group			Post_test	Pre_test
pre.planning	N	Valid	10	10
		Missing	0	0
	Mean		71.4000	28.3000
	Std. Deviation		5.77735	3.86005
	Variance		33.378	14.900
	Skewness		.097	-.183
	Std. Error of Skewness		.687	.687
	Kurtosis		-1.290	-.920
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.334	1.334
	Minimum		63.00	22.00
	Maximum		80.00	34.00
with.in.planning	N	Valid	10	10
		Missing	0	0
	Mean		61.1000	31.6000
	Std. Deviation		3.10734	5.60159
	Variance		9.656	31.378
	Skewness		-.088	-1.091
	Std. Error of Skewness		.687	.687
	Kurtosis		1.854	.680
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.334	1.334
	Minimum		55.00	20.00
	Maximum		67.00	38.00
no.planning	N	Valid	10	10
		Missing	0	0
	Mean		48.4000	31.4000
	Std. Deviation		4.64758	4.06065
	Variance		21.600	16.489
	Skewness		1.060	-.138
	Std. Error of Skewness		.687	.687
	Kurtosis		.750	-.549
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.334	1.334
	Minimum		43.00	25.00
	Maximum		58.00	38.00

Table 6.1 results of descriptive statistics for three groups during pre test and post tes

The table above shows the average and standard deviation of 3 pre-planning groups. In the pre-test stage, with in planning and no planning were 28.3, 3.86, 31.6 and 5.60 as well as 31.4 and 4.06065, respectively. The same statistics were obtained in post-test stage for pre planning group 71.4, 5.77 for group with in planning 61.1 and 3.1 and 48.4 and 4.64 for the no planning group.

Tests of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statisti			Statisti		
group		c	df	Sig.	c	df	Sig.
pre.planning	Pre_test	.131	10	.200*	.973	10	.921
	Post_test	.134	10	.200*	.961	10	.797
with.in.plann ing	Pre_test	.166	10	.200*	.908	10	.271
	Post_test	.170	10	.200*	.951	10	.676
no.planning	Pre_test	.139	10	.200*	.974	10	.925
	Post_test	.165	10	.200*	.920	10	.360

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 6.2 results of tests of normality for pre planning , with in -planning and no planning groups

The results of Kalmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests showed that the significance level in two stages of pre-test and post-test in three groups of pre-planning, with in planning and no planning was more than 0.005, indicating that the data are normal and this assumption is confirmed.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene			df	
		Statistic		df1	2	Sig.
Post_test	2.617			2	27	.091
Pre_test	.631			2	27	.540

Table 6.3 resulats of the Homogeneity of Variances

The results of the Lunn test showed that due to the significant level of 0.54 and 0.091 in the pre-test and post-test stages, and since these values are more than 0.05, the hypothesis of homogeneity of variances of the groups is not refuted.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Post_test	Between Groups	2654.600	2	1327.300	61.608	.000
	Within Groups	581.700	27	21.544		
	Total	3236.300	29			
Pre_test	Between Groups	68.467	2	34.233	1.636	.213
	Within Groups	564.900	27	20.922		
	Total	633.367	29			

Table 6.4 results of the Anova test

The results of one-way ANOVA showed that given the significance level of three groups in the pre-test stage was 0.213 and this value is more than 0.05, it can be concluded that the mean of words uttered by all three groups in the pre-test stage is equal and there is no significant difference. Also, the results indicate that since the significance level of three groups in post-test stage is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the mean of words uttered by the three groups in the post-test stage is significantly different. To find out which group is the highest average, we use Duncan's post hoc test.

Post_test

Duncan^a

		Subset for alpha = 0.05		
group	N	1	2	3
no.planning	10	48.400		
		0		
with.in.plannin	10		61.100	
g			0	
pre.planning	10			71.4000
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 10.000.

Table 6. 5 The result of post test

The results of the Duncan post hoc test showed that there was a significant difference between the mean words of the three groups, with the pre-planning group with the average of 71.4 units, and the groups with in planning and no planning were 61.1 and 48.4 respectively.

7. Conclusion

There are different ways to teach speaking , and make speaking classes more fun and active .

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effect of task planning on speaking fluency . And the result of current study indicates that that task planning plays an important role to prepare the minds of students to speak about a current subject .

Results from ANNOVA indicates that there was statistically significant difference between three groups. Based on the present findings it can be concluded that EFL learning speaking is affected by task planning.

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