\The Effects Of Task Based Learning On Young Learners' Willingness To Communicate

Action Research

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Education

By

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March 2024

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to see how task based language teaching affects willingness to communicate in young learners. Willingness to communicate WTC will be divided into two sub factors: perceived communicative competence and second language (L2) anxiety. This study will analyze the relationship of these two factors with WTC and see whether an improvement coincides with more communication in the classroom. The pedagogical intervention informing these variables will be task-based learning. TBL was chosen because of its ability to help teachers employ communicative and meaningful tasks with many opportunities to participate. In this study, young learners will be the participants which requires developmentally appropriate tasks, emphasis towards accuracy and fluency, and negotiation strategies. Again, features that TBL can provide.

Context

The level of the class was elementary third grade. The class size was 4 as of June 27th, as of July 18th it was 3 students, and as of February 6th it was 2 students. The class convened once a week for 80 minutes. The textbook was Finding Out 4. However, for the TBL lessons the researcher produced his own worksheets.

The students were reserved in class often only speaking when addressed by the teacher. They were proficient in reading and writing but, they did not converse with each other unless it was rehearsed in some manner. They were cordial with each other but not friendly. Their expectations of the class were that it would be focused on reading and writing because that had been their experience in the past. The goal was to get them to speak more in unrehearsed contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Willingness to Communicate in L1 and L2

WTC was first used to describe the disposition of L1 learners when faced with the prospect of speaking (McCroskey and Baer, 1985). At the same time, Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model predicted motivation as a core predictor of achievement in L2 learning. He also saw anxiety as a negative factor that would influence motivation in his model. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) would later come to an agreement that both motivation and anxiety had reciprocal paths towards language learning outcomes. MacIntyre's (1994) next step would then be to develop the first L1 WTC model which placed perceived communicative competence and language anxiety as major predictors of WTC. This is where he defined WTC as "the probability of initiating conversation when given the choice to do so (p. 140)." With the popularity of CLT emerging late in the century, MacIntyre et al. (1998) attempted to connect WTC with the broader field of second language acquisition (SLA). This time a new heuristic model was developed that encompassed a broader range of external and internal influences.

Improving Willingness to Communicate

Since the turn of the century, many studies have sought to improve participants' L2 WTC in a wide range of different learning contexts. Drawing on MacIntyre's L1 WTC model, Hashimoto (2002) was one of the first to research the role of perceived communicative competence on L2 WTC in her japanese high school class. Her studies revealed that perceived communicative competence was a predictor variable for WTC and "L2 anxiety was found to exert a strong and direct negative influence on perceived competence (p. 57)." To further test MacIntyre's original model, Matsuoka (2004) researched the relatedness among motivational variables, WTC, and English proficiency. She specifically mentions anxiety as a major predictor variable. She concluded that "the teaching professions should be aware of the fact that lowering the level of anxiety in an English learning context will enhance WTC (p. 174)." Content-based instruction's (CBI) effect on WTC has been investigated by Yashima and Zenuk (2008) in the context of a Japanese high school. The results showed that even though students that studied abroad showed more L2 WTC than those receiving CBI, there was a cluster of students that "exhibited a developmental profile similar to the study abroad group (p. 580)." And lastly, Yashima et al. (2021) would conduct more studies with pedagogical intervention at the center when looking at the effects of task based learning on the situational L2 WTC of beginners in Japan. These results showed that during the study, "learner's L2 WTC improved significantly and that learner's reported feelings of enjoyment when participating in authentic L2 social interaction (p. 208)." These studies show how a focus on perceived communicative competence and L2 anxiety and predictor variables can lead to results in improving learners' WTC. Pedagogical interventions and the Japanese cultural context were not seen as negative factors in the studies.

Measuring Willingness to Communicate

For the most part, measuring WTC has been a predominantly quantitative endeavor. However, in recent years there has been experimentation with qualitative methods of data collection as well. One of the primary tools for measuring WTC has been the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). This was first introduced by Gardner (1985) with the aim of analyzing linguistic and non-linguistic goals of those that try to learn an L2. However, the original version was seen as too long and time-exhausting with 109 items. A smaller and more condensed version of the test was released in 1993 (Gardner and MacIntyre), with only 54 items and it was referred to as S-AMTB. Many authors would go on to adapt and use the S-AMTB in different cultural and social environments. The aim would remain the same, to study the motivational and attitudinal causes of learning L2. MacIntyre et al. (2001) would modify the test to meet the needs of his study where he wanted to measure his student's WTC both inside and outside the classroom. Major changes included dividing items evenly (27+27) among items referring to "student's willingness to engage in communication outside the classroom," and " student's willingness to engage in communication during class time (p. 375)." Matsuoka (2004) changed the test for her research for cultural reasons. Her participants were Japanese high school and university students, so her changes were reflected in both language and the context of some of the questions. Lately, there have been more occurrences of qualitative data that has entered the research field of WTC. Josephine Lee (2018) used conversation and multimodal analysis when researching how individuals' WTC would

change across different interactional contexts. S.U. Phillip's (1983) work on 'participant structures' would be the basis for her coding of turn types and frequencies. And her multimodal analysis was based upon Norris, 2004 and his set of 'communicative modes.' Even though questionnaires and the AMTB still hold a lot of weight in the field of WTC, the need for data triangulation necessitates new modes of collection such as conversation analysis and multimodal analysis.

Task-based learning origins

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the widely discussed teaching approaches at present. This section touches on its beginnings before supporting one framework for this study. Many scholars trace the beginning of task-based learning to Prabhu (1987). He argued that creating conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication, will lead to L2 competence. His problems were non-linguistic yet produced as much communication as linguistic classroom activities at the time. He said, "students may learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the tasks, rather than on the language they are using." In the meanwhile, Nunan (1989) established his idea of *tasks* which would fuse both what was learned and how it was learned. He defines a task as a "piece of meaning-focused work involving learners in comprehending, producing, and/or interacting in the target language. (2) " One of the first and most important frameworks for TBLT (Appendix 3) was by Jane Willis (1996). The importance of this framework will be referenced a lot in this study because of its pioneering nature and its continued relevance. Even though there are books by Rod Ellis (2003) and David Nunan (2004) that have made large contributions to the method, and Willis and Willis (2007) continued their work in the field. Her TBLT framework consists of three phases: pre-task, main task, and language analysis This includes the main task being sub-categorized into *task*, *plan* and *report* phases. Over the years, one of the main criticisms of TBLT and young learners is that they don't have the necessary language skills or vocabulary in order to participate effectively. Littlewood said, "they need to be taught some language before they can take part in a task (2007, p. 244). Willis (1996) had already made considerations for young learners and gave four suggestions for how her TBLT framework could be modified: (a) extending the pre-task phase, (b) using sets of shorter tasks, (c) omitting the plan and report stages, and (d) omitting the language analysis. TBLT is seen today as an attractive teaching approach that promotes communicative teaching and meaning-focused activities.

Task-based learning Framework

This section will highlight some of the key terms of TBLT and offer a basic understanding of its design. Firstly, a *task,* as defined by Willis are "activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome (p. 23)." An example would be a listing activity where students brainstorm and the outcome would be a mind map or a complete list. Next, a more detailed explanation of the different phases of the task cycle. Pre-tasks are "activities that give relevant exposure and create interest in doing a task on this topic (p. 40)." An example would be matching phrases to pictures where the students describe what they see and match it with what is given. The main task is an "opportunity for all learners to use whatever language they can muster,

working simultaneously, in pairs or small groups, to achieve the goals of the task (p. 53)." She adds, "there needs to be a need for accuracy which will keep students along the path of fluency (p. 55)." Language Analysis are tasks that focus exclusively on language form and use. These should "involve learners in a study of the language forms that were actually used or needed during the cycle (p.102)." An example would be progressive deletion. In this activity students read out language examples with each turn having one word deleted from the text. They're tasked with remembering the deleted words as the next student attempts to read. Because TBLT is a large subject and only key terms were elaborated on, more will be written about Task Design later in this study.

Teaching English to Young Learners and TBLT

Young learners are different from many of the other usual participants in WTC research. Certain considerations need to be taken upon when designing speaking activities for young learners. One such consideration is that of ability. "Teachers have to consider what kinds of oral communication are appropriate activities for learners at certain ages (p. 121)." Young learners are still developing and teacher's expectations should be calibrated to their students' needs. A second consideration proposed was that "with young learners our approach is not focused on grammatical explanations, so the approach should be more message-oriented or based on meaningful activities within a realistic context (p. 124)." As with TBLT, content-related to student's interests is of importance because it helps engage the students. When teaching young learners speaking there are seven principles that should be recognized (p. 124). Among them are ensuring there are many opportunities to participate, developmentally appropriate lessons, and a focus on improving accuracy and fluency. Lastly, the authors recommend activities that utilize dialogue building and cooperative learning (p. 129). Willis (1996) mentions Focus-on-Form and pair work as suitable activities for TBLT. In summary, young learners must be taken into account when doing research because they pose restrictions on lesson design.

RESEARCH ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Research Issues

The students do not want to participate in speaking activities. I consistently observed that students were more comfortable reading to their partners rather than trying to recall words during an interaction. Their confidence in their reading abilities outweighed that of their speaking skills. As well, communication breakdowns often occurred followed by anxious moments where students would either disengage or seek help from a teacher. How can I improve my student's confidence when speaking in their L2? How can I lessen the feeling of anxiety of my students when they speak in their L2? What interventional instruction can help facilitate that improvement? This study chose to implement TBL because student interaction was 'built in' to the lesson, as they needed to communicate to complete the task. A greater focus on interaction would hopefully translate to an improvement in communication skills, confidence, and calmness when speaking.

Research Questions

(1) How does TBL affect young learner's L2 anxiety when speaking, if any?
(2) What is the effect, if any, of TBL on young learner's perceived competence of their L2 speaking skills?
(3) What is the relationship between TBL and situational L2 WTC amongst young learners?

Objectives

By using TBL activities and materials, my goals for the class are that:

(1)   By the end of the year, all students will report improved self-confidence when speaking English in class. The reference will be the student surveys and interviews.

(2)   By the end of the year, all students will report an increase in comfortability with speaking English in class. The reference will be the student surveys and interviews.

(3)   By the end of the year, all students will be able to speak for at least one minute each in a timed conversation setting.

METHODS

Participants

Two third grade students. 2 boys. They have been doing weekly after school lessons for the last three years. They have been in the same class together for one year. They do not show strong friendships. They have no prior experience with TBL. They have strong reading and writing skills.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was meant to be an adaptation of the S-AMTB for a young learners context. The variables being measured were perceived communicative competence, L2 anxiety, and attitudes towards the class. The time afforded towards the survey was 15 minutes. This was because the possibility of untruthful answers necessitated the time to clarify questions. The scales were from 1-3. For young learners, the addition of more options could lead to confusion and invalidate the results. The composition of the questionnaire was divided into 3 sections: (a) *perceived communicative competence.* 5 items that assessed learner's attitudes towards their own abilities in the classroom-for example, "I can talk with my classmates in English?" (b) *L2 anxiety.* 5 items that assessed a learner's feelings towards possibly anxious moments in the classroom-for example, "How do you feel when you make a mistake in class?" (c) *attitudes towards the class.* 5 items that assessed students' feelings towards the lesson and tasks-for example, "Do you like the activities in class?"

Turn Types and Participant Structure Frequencies

The audio/video recording was analyzed by two methods: (a) coding of turn types and frequencies and (b) multimodal analysis. The *participant structures* (S.U. Phillips, 1983) being observed were as follows:

(1)   *Questions.* When a participant casted a question to their partner.
(2)   *Answers.* When a participant answers a question.
(3)   *Conversation Strategies.* When a participant employs a conversation strategy in a contextually correct manner.
(4)   *Word Fillers.* When a participant seeks to gain time in order to express themselves.

Multimodal Analysis

The *communicate modes* (Norris, 2004) being observed were as follows:

(1)   *Facial Expression.* This can be divided into either a positive or negative facial expression.
(2)   *Distance.* This refers to the distance between two participants and can be subdivided into: interactional space (close) and emotional space (far).
(3)   *Speech Volume.* This refers to the sound levels of a participant's speech. It can either be audible (appropriate) or inaudible (soft).
(4)   *Posture.* This can be described either as open or closed. *Open* being hands down at the sides and *closed* being arms crossed or handling something.
(5)   *Gestures.* Any deliberate expressive hand/arm movement that often accompanies spoken language is considered a gesture.
(6)   *Gaze.* Eye contact can either be categorized as no eye contact, a glance, or direct eye contact. This is measured when participants are speaking.

Task Design

In the first semester the lessons included one TBL cycle. Since the latter months of the second semester, the focus shifted from completing one TBL cycle to multiple attempts during a class. Each cycle contained a pre-task (only the first cycle), main task, and language analysis activity.

The **Pre-Task** phase was where the teacher introduced the topic and task. Students got exposures of linguistic chunks and any need of comprehensive input. The **Main-Task** was subdivided into three task stages, including task stage, planning stage, and report stage. First, the students attempt the task. Second, they prepare their results. Third, they present their results to the class. **Language analysis** is done after the task attempt is complete. The teacher conducts a small lecture correcting the language used in the activity. If the task went uncompleted then another cycle would begin.

WHAT I DID

First Semester

During the first semester, each lesson contained a pre-task, main task, and language analysis activity. The **Pre-Task** was separated into two subtasks: review task and creative task. The *review task* both reviewed and introduced vocabulary. The *creative task* was an opportunity for students to prepare meaningful answers. The **main task** was a speaking activity where the students used information collected from the pre-task. **Language analysis** was done after the task was complete. The teacher conducted a small lecture on the grammar used followed by an output exercise.

The first survey was done on July 14, 2023. The results produced insights into how the participants felt about learning English. It was concluded that the students were uncomfortable speaking English outside of school. Possible reasons included: a lack f experience with communicative language teaching (CLT) and a division of language between home and school. Levels of anxiety appeared higher as a concern than perceived competence. Some students believed they could speak with their classmates but just don't want to. The results of the attitude towards the class could be explained simply as one student enjoyed the class while one student did not care for it.

The first video was done on July 14, 2023. The students merely read their scripts. There were some moments of spontaneity but they were few and far between. For example, during a speaking activity, Rento forgot his conversation card and the interaction had to pause until he found it. Anxiety levels were high and confidence was low as they were more focused on accuracy. When analyzing the multimodal features of the conversations, similar conclusions were reached. Rento was anxious as conveyed by his facial expressions, speech volume, and gaze. In contrast, Hayato was ready to engage with enthusiasm but eventually brought down to match his partner's energy. His confidence may have dropped as a result of communication breakdowns.

Issues

I wanted to address some of the issues that emerged from the first semester. First, the task cycles were too long and leaving students tired and uninterested. Since they are young learners, I want the activities to be short to be able to keep their interest. Second, the task cycles were difficult for the students because the speaking activities required a higher level of competence. Third, the task cycle did not build towards a lesson goal. The material from a previous activity was not necessarily used in the following activity.

The task cycle was too long. The students needed lots of time and often went over the lesson time. Activities like creative tasks resulted in students having not participated and the others took too much time drawing. This led to some students finishing quickly and having to wait for their peers. There was a lack of fun in the activities.

Students needed lots of guidance and assistance from teachers. The students were not familiar with speaking so much in class and the expectations were too high. Their perceived

competence was lower as expectations were raised. Much of the vocabulary and grammar was new and they often forget them by the next class. They needed practice and review.

The activities varied widely as many different exercises were tried. There was a lack of consistency in the lessons that increased preparation time. The goals of the lesson were unclear before the task. Students did not want to participate in speaking activities so it was important to position them properly to maximize effectiveness.

Second Semester

During the second semester, I wanted to address the issues that emerged from the previous research. First, since the task cycles were too long and leaving students tired and uninterested, I want the activities to be short to be able to keep their interest. Second, since the task cycles were difficult for the students, I wanted the speaking activities to focus more on their pre-existing knowledge language that was being introduced. Third, since the task cycle was not building towards a lesson goal effectively, I wanted the material from all previous activities to be more relevant when doing conversational activities after task completion.

The task cycle was too long. I shortened the task cycle and prepared for multiple attempts at it's completion. This allowed the students to change their focus more frequently and not feel constrained if other's needed more time. The creative/review tasks were replaced with games in order to incorporate more fun into the lessons. Both students would participate during these activities. Lastly, the emphasis of personalizing answers was lessened since one student did not want to share much about himself. The reporting stage was used instead for students to express opinions about the vocabulary using target grammar.

Students needed lots of guidance and assistance from teachers. As mentioned before, the onus put on the students to write personally about themselves was often daunting. They were not interested in sharing and had trouble finding the words to express themselves which led to resignation from the activity. Games offered an opportunity for students learn the target language in a less pressurized setting. The repetition of task cycles afforded the students more opportunities to practice the language rather than just prepare their answers. As well, the students had more chances to experience success after completing the games. The longer-term goal of completing the task also provided motivation that was lacking before.

The activities varied widely as many different exercises were tried. The difficulty of the tasks had to be modified in order to create a lesson where incremental learning of target structures paired with review games could build the students towards a place where they felt safe conversing. Conversational practice was moved to the end of the lesson in order for the students to use what they had learned previously in the lesson in an output exercise. The importance of a lesson series was both true for teachers and students. It made the preparation aspect of the lesson easier for teachers. And for students, it allowed them a sense of security in knowing that the task did not need to be completed the first time and could be attempted again.

RESULTS

Observations

The results from the changes in task design were on the whole positive. By condensing the task cycle and repeating it multiple times, the students changed their focus more frequently and felt less constrained by time. For example, since the tasks and games required less time to complete, students spent less time waiting to move on to the next activity. In addition, by replacing the creative task with games, both students saw their participation increase. A new discovery was also made that Rento was competitive. By motivating him through competition rather than creativity his WTC improved. He took the initiative during games and was speaking more frequently. His anxiety seemed to lessen as you could see him anticipating his next turn.

By focusing attention on the game, the students did not realize the minimized element of personal expression that was part of the target language. For example, when answering questions during a card game, Rento showed less hesitation in answering questions than he had previously. Before he had refused to draw or write about his favourite sport. The games appeared as an opportunity to learn in a less pressurized setting that invariably improved WTC. When using target phrases like" I play _____ at the _____," students would previously look at their worksheets and read the sentences to each other. Now, during the game they would have many opportunities to use the phrase and would do do without reading. This may have been due to the excitement of continuing the game quickly. Lastly, you could see that both students were visibly pleased after completing stages of the tasks. The consistency of the positive returns from the lesson increased their confidence.

By reducing the difficulty of the tasks and introducing target structures during games, the momentum of the lesson changed. Students were more aware of the phrases and questions they were practicing. They were still unwilling to converse with each other after the task but you could see they were more comfortable with the language. After moving conversational practice to the end of the lesson, the students were too tired to attempt it. However, the amount of speaking throughout the lesson had increased. One aspect with the students was that they may have been overly focused on accuracy. However, when attempting the task multiple times they were not discouraged and more so invested in its completion.

Turn Types and Frequencies

When analyzing turn types we want to see how much each student is speaking and how spontaneous they are. We will look closer at when they speak and how they speak. The legend for the transcripts is as follows:

questions   **answers**   **communication strategy**   **word filler**

7/14/23
[00:00:00.00]

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(1)       Hayato:  hi rento how are you [00:00:02.14]
(2)       Hayato:  how are you [00:00:17.19]
(3)       Hayato:  where do you want to go rento [00:00:27.05]
(4)       Hayato:  this one this one this one [00:00:50.25]
(5)       Hayato:  what do you want to see [00:00:58.10]
(6)       Rento:   [inaudible] [00:01:02.04]
(7)       Hayato:  what do you want to do [00:01:04.25]
(8)       Rento:   [inaudible] [00:01:09.18]
(9)       Rento:   where do you want to go [00:01:15.01]
(10)      Hayato:  I want to go to Hawaii. [00:01:28.25]
(11)      Rento:   what do you want to see [00:01:32.01]
(12)      Hayato:  I want to see the beach [00:01:34.03]
(13)      Rento:   when do you want to see [00:01:38.13]
(14)      Hayato:  one moment please I want to go to the volcano [00:01:42.02]
(15)      Hayato:  see you next to the mountain [00:01:58.21]
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In this excerpt students are mostly reading from their scripts. The long pause before Rento speaks was because he did not have his answer sheet near him. Hayato's confidence was high at this time as shown by his attempts to assist Rento by repeating questions and eventually showing him where he was in the script. As well, he was adding conversation strategies he had just learned.

11/17/23
[00:00:00.00]
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(1)       Hayato:  hello [00:00:03.13]
(2)       Rento:   hello [00:00:05.02]
(3)       Hayato:  how are you [00:00:06.10]
(4)       Rento:   i'm fine how are you [00:00:08.14]
(5)       Hayato:  I'm so so so so so fine [00:00:09.18]
(6)       Rento:   ok what do you [00:00:15.11]
(7)       Hayato:  hmm [00:00:17.11]
(8)       Rento:   what do you want to [00:00:18.05]
(9)       Hayato:  what do you want hmm [00:00:20.03]
(10)      Rento:   do [00:00:21.19]
(11)      Hayato:  I want [inaudible] surfer [00:00:24.26]
(12)      Rento:   what do you like doing 00:00:32.24]
(13)      Hayato:  I like singing [00:00:39.29]
(14)      Rento:   when [00:00:46.07]
(15)      Hayato:  when (breathe) I don't know [00:00:48.19]
(16)      Rento:   where [00:00:52.18]
(17)      Hayato:  where I don't know (laugh) [00:00:54.23]
(18)      Rento:   why [00:00:58.17]
(19)      (look at the camera and laugh) [00:01:10.00]
(20)      Hayato:  I don't know why I don't know [00:01:25.04]
(21)      Rento:   tell me more [00:01:29.08]
(22)      Hayato:  huh [00:01:30.23]
```

In this excerpt you can see that both students are not engaged in the conversation. Rento is reading his questions in a soft voice which is causing breakdowns in the conversation. Hayato is attempting to finish the activity quickly by giving minimal answers like "I don't know."

1/16/24
[00:00:40.18]
```
(21)      Hayato: uh what colour do you like Hm a what [00:00:45.25]
(22)      Alex: I like purple [00:00:52.27]
(23)      Hayato:  what what animal do you like [00:00:52.27]
(24)      Alex:  I like uh [00:00:56.18]
(25)      Hayato:  are you okay [00:01:01.23]
(26)      Alex:  I'm okay I'm thinking I like uhh porcupine [00:01:03.05]
(27)      Hayato:  hmm one more time please [00:01:11.18]
(28)      Alex:  porcupine [00:01:12.18]
(29)      Hayato:  porcupines [00:01:14.21]
(30)      Alex:  yeah it's small but with needles on its back [00:01:15.25]
(31)      Hayato:  what is it [00:01:24.16]
(32)      Alex:  you touch ahh [00:01:25.18]
(33)      Hayato:  huh [00:01:28.24]
(34)      Alex:  I will show you [a] picture okay what animal do you like
          [00:01:36.08]
(35)      Hayato:  I like eagle [00:01:40.27]
```

Rento refused to participate in speaking activities so the teacher did small talk with Hayato. You can see his much more spontaneous as evidenced by the word fillers pre-empting his thinking. He is engaged and even self-correcting.

Turn Types and Frequencies

#1 7/14/23	Questions	Answers	Conversation Strategies	Word Fillers	Turns	Words	Turns/Words %
Hayato	5	3	3	0	10	60	6.00
Rento	3	?	0	0	5	?	?

#2 11/17/23	Questions	Answers	Conversation Strategies	Word Fillers	Turns	Words	Turns/Words %
Hayato	2	6	5	3	12	41	3.41
Rento	7	1	1	1	11	30	2.72

#3 1/16/24	Questions	Answers	Conversation Strategies	Word Fillers	Turns	Words	Turns/Words %
Hayato	10	11	9	8	31	94	3.03

The results show that questions were the main source of of words uttered. Minimal answers were often given and would be the main target to increase word count in the future. Conversation strategies were a good indicator of confidence because it often required inflections when being delivered. These inflections could be regarded as embarrassing by some. Word fillers were a good indicator of spontaneity because it showed that students were trying to recall words. Word counts were an easier marker for participation than time speaking because it's easier to sort out the meanigfulness of the words being uttered.

Multimodal Analysis

Facial Expressions. Facial expressions can convey when a student is in the mood to communicate. For example, in Fig 1 both students are showing negative expressions. This point in the conversation was marred by long pauses and unresponsiveness. In Fig 2 the same students are showing positive expressions. The pauses were shorter and were more responsive. It should be said that they were reading from conversation cards.

re 1   Figure 2

Distance. Distance can show how comfortable someone is when engaging in an interaction. When they are more comfortable it means they would be more willing to talk. In Fig 3, Hayato attempts to assist Rento by signalling it's his turn. Rento did not reciprocate. In Fig 4 and 5, Hayato again tries to close the distance between them and this time Rento reciprocates. It's dependent upon mood and time. Speech Volume: For fear of making a mistake, the students had moments when their voice would be inaudibly soft. A soft voice denotes signs of anxiety and lessened confidence.

4   Figure 5

Posture. Posture can reflect anxiety in certain situations as well. In Fig 6 you can compare the two students and how they position their hands. Hayato's hands are down near his sides and he is more spontaneous because he doesn't look at his notes. Rento is holding his paper tightly and putting a lot of focus on it.

Figure 6

Gestures. Gestures can be used to help partners communicate meaning without knowing the vocabulary. It can also be used to remember vocabulary. In Fig 7, Hayato is using gestures to enhance the meaning of his words. In Fig 8, Rento is relying on non-vocal communication. The difference between using and not using gestures conveys anxiety.

Figure 7

Figure 8

Gaze. Consistent eye contact is connected to confidence because it conveys a focus on the interaction. You can see in Fig 9 that Rento is looking downwards towards his paper. He can be anxious about his next turn and not have enough confidence in his ability. In Fig 10, Hayato is more relaxed and looking at his partner as he speaks. He's confident in his abilities to speak without assistance.

Figure 9

Figure 10

Questionnaire

There were 5 questions that had answers change between June and February.

Hayato

I can speak English with new people? Hayato lost confidence in his abilities. He showed an unwillingness to interact with other teachers.
How do you feel making a mistake in English? Hayato is more open to bring new things in class so it's confusing that he did this.

Do you enjoy speaking in class? Hayato has become more unwilling to participate in speaking activities. Since it has just been two students then he has changed his behaviour.

Rento

I can talk with my teacher in English? Rento is capable of speaking with the teacher. Perhaps now, after more practice with speaking, he is more confident.
Do you enjoy learning English? Rento has a particular few things he does not like but TBL games and tasks are more enjoyable for him since we moved more towards games and away from creative tasks.

Comments

The students gave comments in Japanese to the co-teacher after the class.

Teacher:	Why don't you like speaking in English?
Rento:	It's embarrassing to say something in English. It's not about making mistakes.

Teacher:	How well do you speak in English?
Hayato:	I guess it's okay. I'm not very good at it.

WHAT I LEARNED

This year I learned many things about my AR, students, and views on English language teaching. When analyzing my AR results a few things were noticeable. First, the confidence of my students increased as I made my tasks more appropriate. Students were speaking more and willing to make mistakes in order to complete the task. Second, the anxiety levels lessened when the students were engaged in fun games. During these activities, the teacher did not need to encourage anyone to participate. Third, the tasks themselves were seemingly more enjoyable after making them shorter, simpler, and clearer.

There were also unforeseen issues that appeared from the relationship between the students and the tasks. First, since the TBL tasks were rooted in interaction, they were going to be new for the students that were used to primarily reading and writing classes. This sudden increased emphasis on speaking lowered their confidence and caused an increase in anxiety. Second, the idea of making the lessons more meaningful for the students by having them share personal opinions and expressing their ideas was not well received by some students. In fact they were not motivated by this proposition and felt that speaking in English in this way was "embarrassing." Third, in the first semester, I wanted to maximize the lessons and have the students produce material that would help them during conversational tasks. However, the process of creating these materials left the students tired and unmotivated. For young learners, too much time was being devoted to planning and not enough time was given to the actual task.

Upon reflection, my views on English language teaching changed in a few ways as well. First, I had originally thought that more time allocated to an activity would increase engagement. However, the results showed that younger students were not willing to invest long periods of time for possible future gains. Second, I had originally thought that discussion was required in some measure to make TBL effective. However, due to their minimal lexicons, I turned towards input-based tasks. These tasks were more appropriate for the children because it removed the barrier of critical thinking. Third, I thought that scripts were helping my students by easing anxiety and giving them an outlet for assistance. However, I learned that these materials could become crutches and affect the student's ability to recall during speaking activities.

FUTURE ISSUES

(1) For next year, I want to make sure that my research is clearly explained to the students and that the expectations for the class are clear. This means that an emphasis on interaction should be expected. As well, recordings need to be presented and regarded in at least a neutral manner.
(2) For next year, the reputation of speaking activities should be protected and improved from the beginning of the year. Their importance and necessity should be reenforced whenever possible.
(3) For next year, I want to have a higher potential for different interactions in the classroom. This means more participants and fostering group cohesiveness.

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Lesson Plan

Time	Interaction (T-Ss, S-S, S)	Activity and Procedure
10 (10)	T-S	**Homework Review** (1) Check the homework with the students and go over common mistakes.
15 (5) (5) (5)	S-S S-T S-S	**Task Cycle #1** (1) Listing Task (2) Report the lists (3) Karuta Game
15 (5) (5) (5)	S-S S-T S-S	**Task Cycle #2** (1) Listing Task (2) Report the lists (3) Memory Game
15 (5) (5) (5)	S-S S-T S-S	**Task Cycle #3** (1) Listing Task (2) Report the lists (3) Card Game #3
15 (5) (5) (5)	S-S S-T S-S	**Task Cycle #3** (1) Listing Task (2) Report the lists (3) Conversation Practice
10 (10)	S	**Textbook Writing** (1) Students do a page from the textbook.

Total Time: 80 minutes

S-S: 40 minutes

S: 10 minutes

T-S: 10 minutes

S-T: 20 minutes

	happy		angry
	disgusted		scared
	excited		sad
	shy		nervous
	sick		confused
	jealous		tired
	loving		surprised
	silly		proud
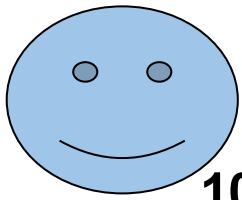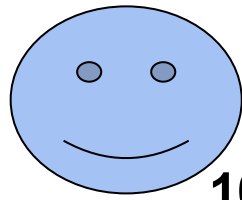
100	...when you see a snake.	**100**	...when someone pushes you.
100	...when you finish a test.	**100**	...when you speak English.
200	....when you go to Disney	**200**	...when you see a snake.
200	...when you go on a plane.	**200**	...when someone else gets a treat.
300	....when you don't know something.	**300**	....when you need help.
300	....when you eat too much.	**300**	....when you see a ghost.
400	....when you see a puppy.	**400**	....when you see your friend.
400	....when you walk in the rain.	**400**	....when you finish school.
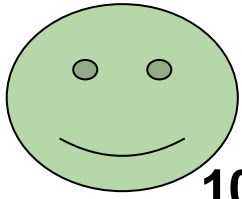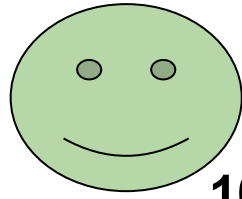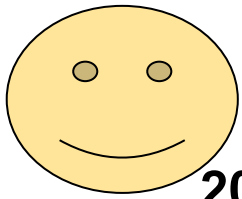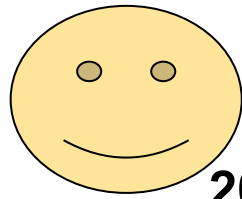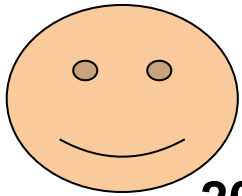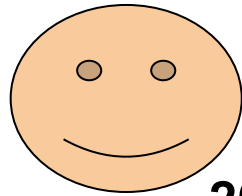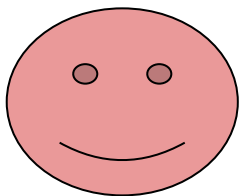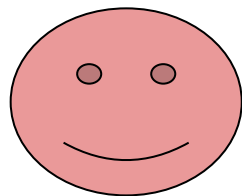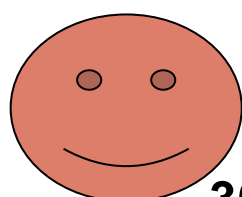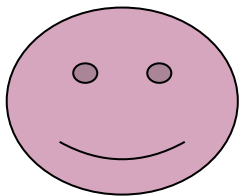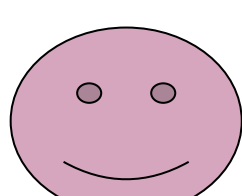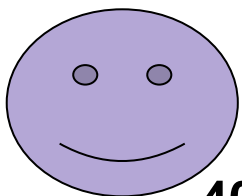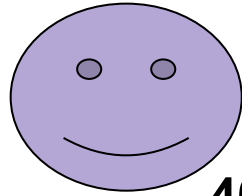
Hayato	6/27/23	2/13/24
I can talk with my teacher in English?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
I can talk with my classmate in English?	😐 (neutral)	😐 (neutral)
I can ask questions in English?	😐 (neutral)	😐 (neutral)
I can speak English outside of class?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
I can speak English with new people?	😐 (neutral)	🙁 (sad)
How do you feel speaking in class?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
How do you feel making a mistake in English?	😀 (happy)	😐 (neutral)
How do you feel speaking English outside of class?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
How do you feel when the teacher asks you a question?	😐 (neutral)	😐 (neutral)
How do you feel before coming to English class?	😐 (neutral)	😐 (neutral)
Do you enjoy learning English?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
Do you enjoy the activities in class?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
Do you enjoy speaking in class?	😀 (happy)	😐 (neutral)
Do you enjoy answering questions?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)
Do you enjoy the teacher?	😀 (happy)	😀 (happy)

Rento	6/27/23	2/13/24
I can talk with my teacher in English?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
I can talk with my classmate in English?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
I can ask questions in English?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**
I can speak English outside of class?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
I can speak English with new people?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**
How do you feel speaking in class?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
How do you feel making a mistake in English?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
How do you feel speaking English outside of class?	**🙂 (circled)** 😐 ☹	**🙂 (circled)** 😐 ☹
How do you feel when the teacher asks you a question?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**
How do you feel before coming to English class?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**
Do you enjoy learning English?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
Do you enjoy the activities in class?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
Do you enjoy speaking in class?	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**	🙂 😐 **☹ (circled)**
Do you enjoy answering questions?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹
Do you enjoy the teacher?	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹	🙂 **😐 (circled)** ☹