Task-Based Language Teaching and Willingness to Communicate in Group Discussions and Public Speaking: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempted to examine the impact of task-based language teaching (TBLT) on university undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in group discussions and public speaking. This experimental study hypothesized that TBLT would facilitate students' WTC, which is also effective for language learning. To test the proposed hypothesis, students' pre-test and post-test scores on WTC were calculated at two different times by administering the adopted version of McCroskey's (1992) 20-item questionnaire. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including an Independent-Samples t-test and one-way MANCOVA, were performed in SPSS. The results showed that both the experimental group and the control group were not homogeneous on the pre-test. To control for the pre-existing difference between the two groups, the t-test was replaced with one-way ANCOVA, in which the pre-test score was treated as a covariate. The findings showed that TBLT exerted a significant impact on English language learners' WTC in group discussions and public speaking. In contrast, the control group did not exhibit any progress in WTC on the post-test. The implications of the study are also discussed.

Keywords: WTC, WTC in group discussions, and public speaking, TBLT, experimental study

INTRODUCTION

According to Shamim (2008), the English language in Pakistan is considered 'the vehicle for achieving modernization, scientific and technological development, and economic advancement for oneself and the country' (p. 236). Similarly, English education is considered a gateway to better job opportunities, social and economic mobility, and social prestige (Rahman, 2007; Manan, David, Dumanig, & Channa, 2016). It is also postulated that English language learners with good proficiency are considered indicators of social class and high-standard education (Shamim, 2011). Due to the widespread use of English in Pakistan, Kachru's (2005) concentric model places Pakistan in the 'outer circle' of countries where English is predominantly used in institutions.

In Pakistan, existing uncommunicative teaching methods in English classrooms primarily focus on the syllabus, which covers grammatical aspects of the English language with less emphasis on communicative abilities (Ali et al., 2020). Teachers' sole reliance on the grammatical structure of English in classrooms requires students to memorize the rules of English grammar, depriving them of practicing

English communicatively. As a result, Pakistani students cannot communicate in English with relative ease (Warsi, 2004; Manan, Dumanig, & David, 2017). On the contrary, existing research (Peng, 2007) asserts that the prime objective of teaching English should be to foster students' willingness to communicate (WTC) to enhance their language learning outcomes. Therefore, the present study investigates whether task-based activities can effectively increase students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in group discussions and public speaking in the English language.

Despite studying English, which is the medium of instruction in colleges and universities (Islam, 2018), for 6 to 8 years, Pakistani students cannot communicate in English with relative ease (Warsi, 2004; Manan, Dumanig, & David, 2017). Due to prevailing defective and uncommunicative teaching methods (i.e., the grammar-translation method (GTM)), Pakistani English language learners memorize material to pass examinations, whereas their communicative abilities are rarely focused on and are not part of their final grades (Bukhari, Cheng, & Khan, 2015). This situation produces language learners with profound lexico-grammatical knowledge but low or no competence in using the target language communicatively (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). As communicative competence is significantly and positively related to English language learners' WTC (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017), a lack of communicative competence (henceforth, a lack of WTC) is likely to result in learners' low language learning outcomes (Osterman, 2014). Hence, language learners should be exposed to effective pedagogical methods that equip students with communicative abilities to gain positive English language learning outcomes and possibly enhance WTC (Rafiee & Abbasian-Naghneh, 2018; Zhang, Beckmann, & Beckmann, 2018). This is because ESL learners with low WTC experience difficulties attaining proficiency in the English language (Chang, 2018).

Therefore, the present research attempts to examine the impact of task-based activities on Pakistani English language learners' WTC in group discussions and public speaking compared to the existing GTM at the tertiary level. This is because TBLT has been found effective in promoting language learners' communicative abilities and their volitional behavior in participating in English communication (i.e., WTC) in contexts such as Japan and Cyprus (Cutrone & Beh, 2018; Vrikki, 2013), and there is a paucity of research in the context of Pakistan. Based on previous research findings (Cutrone & Beh, 2018; Vrikki, 2013), it is hoped that task-based activities may also cultivate and foster Pakistani ESL students' WTC in the English language. As Chang (2018) recommends that the primary goal of language teaching should be to help language learners enhance their communicative competence and WTC, and a program is deemed unsuccessful if it fails to attain this objective, the present interventional study involving task-based activities may be effective in enhancing language learners' WTC.

The present study is guided by the following research question and hypothesis:

1. Is there any impact of task-based language teaching (TBLT) on university undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in group discussions and public speaking in English?

Hypotheses

H1: TBLT significantly increases university undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in group discussions in English.

H2: TBLT significantly increases university undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in public speaking in English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Relationship between WTC and English Language Learning

Researchers and practitioners believe that WTC is an important variable in facilitating classroom learning (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). Communicating with peers allows learners to negotiate meaning (Long, 1996) and improve their linguistic skills (Nunan, 1989). MacIntyre et al. (1998) believed so strongly in the importance of encouraging WTC in the classroom that they argued it should be a primary goal of language instruction. They explained that if an instructor had the ability to increase a learner's desire to communicate in the L2, then learners would communicate more, thus enriching their L2 learning experience and acquisition. Research has also shown a moderate to strong correlation between higher L2 WTC and greater success in L2 learning, especially when given the opportunity to speak with native speakers of the L2 (Baghaei & Dourakhshan, 2012; Rastegar & Karami, 2015). For language students, WTC may enhance learning because it increases both the frequency and opportunity for processes that pave a way for proficiency including speaking, output, and negotiation of meaning. Swain (2005) also assert that collaborative talks can be seen as second language learning in progress. By taking part in communicative tasks that require learners to negotiate meaning and solve linguistic problems, learners gain proficiency in their language skills. When learners direct their attention to linguistic forms in collaboratively constructed tasks, speech must occur in order for them to carry out these tasks. WTC plays a key factor in speech taking place.

Cao and Philp (2006) studied students' perceptions of the factors underlying their WTC. All eight study participants were enrolled in a General English program at a university-based private language school in New Zealand. The findings showed that learners' familiarity with interlocutors, group size, interlocutor participation, topic familiarity, and learning interest were among the potential factors that impacted students' WTC. Additionally, students' own lack of self-confidence was a reason associated with their low participation in classroom discussions. These findings suggest that group discussions on familiar and interesting topics can cultivate learners' WTC in the English language. The present study will also explore students' experiences regarding the nature of topics for peer or group discussions incorporated during the interventional phase of the study. It is hypothesized that task-based activities might also generate students' WTC.

In one of the interventional studies, Yashima et al. (2018) examined the influence of Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) patterns during discussion sessions on students' WTC. The findings of their study showed that learners' self-initiated turns in communication were associated with their group behavior, proficiency, and personality dimensions. In another study, Peng (2012) reported on a multiple-case study designed to investigate factors influencing WTC in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in China. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews from four university students, learning journals recorded by the students, and classroom observations that lasted for seven months. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theoretical framework, Peng's (2012) research studied students' WTC in relation to the six factors: learner beliefs, motivation, cognitive factors, linguistic factors, affective factors, and classroom environment. The results revealed the interplay of learners' psychological, cognitive, and linguistic factors affecting their WTC in the language classrooms. This study was significant in a way that it produced a thorough view of the individual and environmental factors that constitute learners' WTC.

In another such study, Öz (2015) examined Turkish students' affective factors, communicative competence, and apprehension in relation to their WTC. Drawing on data gathered through a closed-ended questionnaire, the results of structural equation modeling (SEM) indicated that learners' communication apprehension and communication competence significantly explained their WTC. Additionally, Öz's (2015) study showed that students' affective variables (i.e., motivation) exerted an

indirect effect on learners' WTC. Although motivation is considered a key factor in SLA, students' lower communication apprehension and greater communicative competence seem to foster their WTC, which is also an affective variable influencing SLA.

As the classroom is a primary source for most EFL learners where they have an opportunity to communicate in English, as in the case of Pakistan, the concept of WTC has also been researched in the context of classroom learning environments. For example, Peng and Woodrow (2010) studied Chinese students' WTC in relation to their classroom environment by recruiting 579 students from eight universities in China. The results of their study revealed that the classroom environment influenced learners' WTC, as well as their L2 communication confidence, L2 motivation, and language learning beliefs. In another similar study, Khajavy et al. (2016) also found that the classroom environment had a direct effect on Iranian students' WTC in English. This study also found that students' communication confidence equally accounted for learners' WTC. These findings evidently suggest that students should be given access to an affective classroom environment where they can use English communicatively without fear of committing grammatical errors or being scolded by their teachers. The tenets of task-based language teaching also require teachers to be flexible with learners' grammatical errors, which can be addressed at later stages once students gain confidence in the target language or through focused task-based activities (Ellis, 2014).

Task-based Language Teaching

Tasks in the literature are defined in various ways, and they are used for myriad purposes. According to Long (1997, cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 89), tasks are activities performed by people in their daily routine, such as "painting a fence, buying a pair of shoes, finding a street destination, or making a hotel reservation". Bygate et al. (2001) state that the definition of a task varies according to the purpose for which tasks are devised. However, they propose a definition of task that can be used for all purposes: "a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (p. 11). Moreover, Nunan (1993) defines a task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (p. 59).

Most of TBI proponents agree that tasks as instructional tools have unique features. Tasks, essentially, convey meaning through the medium of language. In addition, tasks have work plan, dealing with cognitive processing and well explained communicative outcomes and are more focused to real world (Ellis, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). One of distinguishing features of tasks regarded by various researchers are focus on meaning tasks.

Another important aspect of tasks is its relationship with the real-world (Ellis, 2003). Such association of tasks with the real-world warrants utilising authentic stuff in the classrooms. By authentic, it means that material that are not related to teaching language rather the language used in such materials is more near to real world and out-of-class language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Further, material developed particularly for teaching language has pedagogical requirements that make them effective for instruction. Such tasks are defined as "pedagogical" tasks "which have a psycholinguistic basis in SLA theory and research but do not necessarily reflect real-world tasks" (Nunan, 1989, p. 76). One of important features of tasks in TBI is cognitive processing. According to Ellis (2003, p.10), learners use cognitive skills such as ''selecting, classifying, ordering, reasoning, and evaluating information'' while accomplishing a given task. Restriction may be found in linguistics functions while performing a task. Such restriction is based on the nature of the task and task outcome. It is learners' choice to use language forms during a task.

Comparison of TBLT with GTM

This section provides a succinct comparison between GTM and TBLT, because in the present study, GTM was used in the control group and TBLT was used in the experimental group. GTM is one of the methods of language teaching that primarily focuses on the grammatical aspects of the target language. The key tenets of the GTM include rote-learning, memorisation, and translation. Additionally, in GTM, teacher is the sole authority (i.e., teacher-centered) and students are mostly passive learners with no or minimum interaction with their teachers and classmates (Larsen-Freeman, 2004). Contrarily, TBLT is a student-centered teaching method in which students are active learners who perform different language learning tasks in small groups and teachers' role is to navigate the language learning activities (Ellis, 2018). Unlike GTM, the prime purpose of TBLT is to help learners enhance their communicative abilities. In other words, TBLT focuses more on the meaning of the language rather than form (Ellis, 2018). To be precise, further comparison has been drawn in the following Table 1:

Table 1. *Comparison between GTM and TBLT*

Principle	GTM	TBLT
Characteristic of Teaching Learning Process	1. Grammar is taught inductively. 2. Students are encouraged to translate from native language to the target language. 3. Learning activities are carried out individually.	1. Grammar is taught deductively. 2. Students are encouraged to use the target language communicatively. 3. Learning activities/tasks are carried out in groups.
Nature of Interaction	1. Teacher-centered 2. Little student-student interaction. 3. Communication takes place between a teacher and a student.	1. Student-centered 2. More student-student interaction. 3. Students interact with one another and teacher remains as a facilitator.
The role of native languages of students	1. L1 is mostly used in teaching and learning.	1. Most of the teaching and learning process takes place in target language, whereas L1 is fairly used.
Prime focus of teaching and learning	1. Grammatical components and vocabulary are taught explicitly. 2. Over-emphasis on reading and writing.	1. Grammatical components and vocabulary are taught implicitly. 2. In addition to reading and writing, students enhance their listening and speaking skills.
The way of teachers' response to students' error	1. No compromise on grammatical errors	1 Students errors are allowed that can be rectified at the later stages.

Larsen-Freeman (2004)

RESEARCH METHOD

To answer the proposed research question and test the hypotheses of the study, a quasi-experimental research design was employed. Experimental research design is 'the general plan for the research in which

an independent variable is manipulated to determine its effects on a dependent variable' (Ary et al., 2018, p. 247). In experimental research, the quasi-experimental non-equivalent group design is a popular research design in educational research because it does not disrupt or segregate pre-existing groups (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2007) when attempting to establish groups (control and treatment groups) through randomization (Ary et al., 2018). Quasi-experimental research typically involves at least two groups: a control group and an experimental group. In the experimental group, researchers introduce an intervention or treatment to manipulate the dependent variable, while the control group serves as a 'baseline group' or 'comparison group' that does not receive any intervention but follows its normal practice (Dörnyei, 2007). A comparison of the two groups on the post-test determines the effectiveness of the designed instructional interventions (Creswell, 2012).

In the present research, the quasi-experimental research design was followed to examine the impact of task-based activities on English language learners' WTC in group discussions and public speaking. To this end, two groups were constituted i.e.an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group participated in task-based activities. The control group did not receive any intervention or treatment and followed their routine practices of learning the English language in a traditional way.

Sample

The sample for the present study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in a public university situated in Quetta, the capital city of Baluchistan, Pakistan. At the university level, English is used as a medium of instruction for all subjects (i.e., life sciences, hard sciences, arts, and humanities) besides a few humanities subjects (i.e., Urdu language, Pashto language, and Islamic studies) which are offered in indigenous languages. Additionally, English is offered as a compulsory subject across all departments. The average number of students in each classroom ranges from 45 to 60 students.

The fact is that researchers should be cautious of internal validity issues when employing quasi-experimental designs; therefore, they should undertake measures to control or reduce them. To address this issue in the present research, the technique of randomly assigning intact classrooms to the control group and experimental groups was employed (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Two intact classes were randomly selected using multistage cluster sampling. Creswell (2012) states that "in multistage cluster sampling, the researcher chooses a sample in two or more stages because the population is either difficult to identify or extremely large. If this is the case, it can be difficult to obtain a complete list of the population members" (p. 146).

As study participants are not selected through randomization in quasi-experimental research (Ary et al., 2018), randomly assigning intact classes to the control and experimental groups can reduce internal validity issues in the study (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). In the current research, study participants in the intact classes were included based on convenience sampling. Creswell (2012) asserts that "in convenience sampling, the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (p. 145). Similarly, the study included students who were willing to participate and had the right to withdraw at any stage without explanation.

Procedure in the Experimental Group

The experimental group was instructed to complete the assigned language learning tasks in pairs or groups. All the language learning tasks were completed during "English communication Skills" class hours twice a week. The overall aim of the language learning tasks was to foster language learners' abilities and WTC to covey the meaning in the real-world activities using the target language (Skehan, 1998). In addition to the emphasis on the communicative abilities, task-based language teaching also facilitates language learners to attain accuracy in learning a second or foreign language (Ellis, 2003), and

"attention to grammar can be achieved in all the phases of task-based lesson" (Ellis, 2014, p.109). Therefore, the present research follows the seven steps of a task-based lesson proposed by Willis (1998) that encompasses learners' communicative abilities and accuracy in the target language. The seven steps are:

1. **Pre-task:** This task precedes the main task of the lesson in which teachers raise learners' interest and prepares them to perform the task. This is done by pre-teaching vocabulary, activating students' general knowledge on a particular topic, and helping students anticipate what kind of content and language they require to perform the assigned task.
2. **Main task:** This is the central part of TBLT in which learners' are expected to accomplish task in pairs or groups. They largely rely on their existing knowledge of the target language to express their ideas and opinions. Since communication is the focus of the task, therefore teachers monitor and provide support, and they do not intervene to rectify grammatical errors.
3. **Planning and oral report:** This part of the lesson provides students a chance to pen down their discussion in a report form and share with the rest of the class. At this stage, students can polish their report by rectifying grammatical errors and maintaining cohesion. They would solicit help from their group mates and the concerned teachers if necessary.
4. **Listening:** In this segment, learners have an opportunity to listen to the report prepared and read out by their classmates. Thus, students can compare their own reports with their classmates to assess how they all did it (Willis, 1998). Additionally, instructors also highlight some of the grammatical components new to the students or essential to perform the task (Cutrone & Beh, 2018).
5. **Language Analysis Activities:** This activity is a part of task-based lessons and primarily aims to help students enhance their grammatical accuracy. In the task-based teaching and learning activities, students normally assess their language used in the preparation of their own reports or listening to the oral reports prepared by their classmates (Willis, 1998). In this segment, language analysis activities provide learners opportunities to practice the certain features of the target language on their own.
6. **Post-task:** This final activity provides learners another chance to repeat the performed task earlier. This stage is regarded as adding accuracy and fluency to the performed task earlier (Ellis, 2003). At this time, students are expected to show a good performance because they had corrective feedback from their instructors and had enough information on the topic while interacting and listening to their classmates.

Procedure in the Control group

In the current research, control group was a comparison group and was used as a yardstick (Creswell, 2012) to compare the impact of task-based language teaching activities in enhancing students' WTC in group discussions and public speaking in the English language. This group did not receive any specific treatment or instructions, and was taught in a traditional method (GTM) following learning contents similar to the experimental groups.

Research Instrument

The present research adopted McCroskey's (1992) 20-item questionnaire, which primarily aimed to measure language learners' WTC in different contexts, such as group discussions and public speaking. In this experimental study, students' WTC in group discussions was measured by involving them in group and peer discussions, while WTC in public speaking was measured through solo presentations.

Data Analysis

To answer the first part of the first research question, 'Is there any impact of task-based language teaching (TBLT) on university undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in group discussions and public speaking in English?' an Independent-Samples t-test and one-way MANCOVA were performed in SPSS, where the pre-test scores were treated as covariate.

RESULTS

To address the research question of the study and to test the hypotheses of the study, Independent-Samples t-test was run in the SPSS to assess whether there were any statistically significant differences across the two groups in the mean scores of pre-test on the two categories of WTC: WTC in group discussion and WTC in public speaking. As shown in Table 2, there was a significant difference between the control group (M = 46.83, SD= 5.20) and the experimental group (M = 49.55, SD = 4.23) in the mean scores of pre-test on WTC in group discussion (t = -2.98, p = .004). Similarly both control group (M = 46.18, SD= 4.55) and experimental group (M = 52.95, SD = 4.40) also significantly differed in terms of mean scores of pre-test on WTC in public speaking (t = -7.85, p= .001). Hence, the two groups were not equivalent. To control and eliminate the possible effects of pre-test on the outcomes of intervention (i.e., post-test scores), t-test was replaced with One-way Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) in which the mean scores of pre-test on WTC in group discussion and WTC in public speaking were treated as control variables or covariates (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 2. *Pre-test Mean Scores of the two categories of WTC for Experimental and Control Group*

Pre-test	Instructional Group	M	SD	t-value	p
WTC in Group Discussion	Control Group	46.83	5.20	-2.98	.004
	Experimental Group	49.55	4.23		
WTC in Public Speaking	Control Group	46.18	4.55	-7.85	.000
	Experimental Group	52.95	4.40		

It can be interpreted from Table 3 that the experimental group's mean scores of the post-test on WTC in group discussion (M = 64.58, SD = 6.60) and WTC in public speaking (M= 58.85, SD = 8.23) were greater than the control group's mean scores of the post-test on WTC in group discussion (M = 48.59, SD = 5.79) and WTC in public speaking (M = 47.20, SD = 5.39).

Table 3. Post-*test Mean Scores of the two categories of WTC for Experimental and Control Group*

Pre-test	Instructional Group	M	SD
WTC In Group Discussion	Control Group	48.59	5.79
	Experimental Group	64.58	6.60
WTC in Public Speaking	Control Group	47.20	5.39
	Experimental Group	58.85	8.23

Additionally, the results in Table 4 show that the differences in the mean scores of the post-test between the two groups were also significant: $F (2, 103) = 65.71$, $p< 0.001$; Wilks' $\Lambda =.439$; partial $\eta2$ squared=.561. These results signify that task-based activities enhanced students' WTC in group discussion and public speaking more than those students who did not participate in task-based activities. The intervention caused 56.1% of the increase in experimental group students' WTC in the two categories. Both the hypotheses were approved.

Table 4. *One-Way MANCOVA across the Two Groups*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Pillai's Trace	.561	65.71	2.000	103.00	.000	.561
	Wilks' Lambda	.439	65.71	2.000	103.00	.000[**]	.561
	Hotelling's Trace	1.276	65.71	2.000	103.00	.000	.561
	Roy's Largest Root	1.276	65.71	2.000	103.00	.000	.561

[**]$p<0.001$

DISCUSSIONS

Examining the implementation of task-based activities in the intervention first, the results informed that Pakistani university students' participation in the intervention had exerted a significant impact on their WTC in group discussions, WTC in public speaking in the English language. Contrarily, there was an insignificant slight change in the mean WTC scores of the control group students. A significant improvement in experimental group students' WTC can be attributed to the language learning tasks they performed during the intervention (Cutrone & Beh, 2018). According to Ellis (2009), task-based language learning activities provide an opportunity for language learners to use the target language communicatively, and it also can provoke their WTC in the English language (Cutrone & Beh, 2018). As the intervention required the students to complete the assigned language learning tasks by actively participating in group discussion, and class presentations, such language learning activities influenced their behavioral disposition to communicate in the English language. These findings also corroborate with Cutrone and Beh's (2018) study in which task-based activities showed a positive significant impact on Japanese university English language learners' (ELLs) WTC. Additionally, the findings of this study also support the evidence that language learners improve their communicative abilities after participating in meaningful interactive language learning tasks in English (Wang, 2010).

Besides some stable or trait-like antecedents of WTC, such as communicative confidence, less communication apprehension, and motivation (Khajavy et al., 2016), there also are some situational variables embedded in the classroom context (Cao, 2014; Syed & Kuzborska, 2018) that exert an impact on language learners' WTC, such as task type, classroom language learning environment, classmate, and topic. Similarly, the increase in experimental students' mean WTC scores on the post-test can be attributed to situational variables embedded in the task-based language learning classroom (Syed & Kuzborska, 2018).

The improvement in students' mean WTC scores in the two dimensions of WTC (i.e., Group discussion and Public speaking) could also be the result of the nature of task-based activities they performed during the intervention period. The learning tasks designed for the present study required students to engage in group discussions, role play, and presenting reports of their discussions to class individually (public speaking). In doing so, students availed opportunities throughout the intervention to enhance their fluency, group discussion and public speaking skills. In this way, the task-based oral activities, by and large, seem to influence students' oral abilities where they are able to engage themselves in meaningful interaction with their peers in the English language (Wang, 2010).

Additionally, it is also worth noting that the tenets of task-based language teaching seem to align with students' WTC in the English language (Vrikki, 2013). The results of qualitative data informed that students' familiarity with the topics assigned for the learning tasks could cause a boost in their linguistic self-confidence, which ultimately leads to their WTC in the English language. Prior research (Cao, 2011) on students' WTC has also noted that students' linguistic self-confidence and familiarity with a topic are two of the potential factors underlying WTC. Contrarily, it has also been reported (Bamfiled, 2014) that students' WTC can significantly be inhibited if they are least interested in or unfamiliar with an assigned topic.

IMPLICATIONS

Implementing task-based language teaching in English classrooms can be challenging for novice teachers unfamiliar with this instructional approach. To address this challenge, the Ministry of Education in Pakistan could initiate a series of training programs to familiarize teachers with the various phases of task-based language teaching. Such training would enable teachers to incorporate task-based teaching principles and characteristics into the prescribed syllabus, adapting it into effective tasks.

Another potential challenge to implementing task-based teaching in Pakistan is large class sizes. In overcrowded classrooms, English language teachers often focus on covering the syllabus to ensure students pass their final exams, which could hinder the introduction of task-based teaching as an alternative method. Therefore, the Ministry of Education in Pakistan should consider reducing average class sizes to 20-30 students, as practiced in developed countries. Failing to do so may force English language teachers to rely on a 'one-size-fits-all' teaching strategy, rather than providing individualized feedback on task performance.

CONCLUSION

The qualitative data revealed that during task-based learning activities, students felt autonomous and independent, practicing English without fear of grammatical errors or teacher reprimand. Student-centered activities, a key tenet of task-based language teaching encouraged student involvement and WTC in group discussions and public speaking, aspects often neglected in teacher-centered activities. In student-centered learning, students exhibit motivated and outgoing behavior, demonstrating increased WTC when engaging with interlocutors. The present study's results are consistent with expectations, as task-based activities were designed to align with learning objectives outlined in the English syllabus. Students' independence, reduced fear of errors, and enthusiasm for tasks like group discussions and role-play fostered increased WTC in English. In contrast, teacher-centered activities emphasizing sentence structure over communication led students to minimize engagement and exhibit less WTC, avoiding potential grammatical errors and loss of confidence (Bamfield, 2014)."

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