

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION
IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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To the memory of my father, Ali Kasap
To my family, and to my dearest niece, Yağmur

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION

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This thesis explores the effectiveness of task-based instruction (TBI) in improving students' speaking skills as well as student and teacher perceptions of TBI at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages.

Control and experimental class data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and oral tests. Oral pre- and post-tests were administered to both classes comprising 45 students total. The teacher's perceptions of TBI were explored in pre- and

post-treatment interviews, and a post-treatment interview was also conducted with a focus group from the experimental class.

Questionnaires were distributed to the experimental group after each of 11 treatment tasks. Data from the oral pre- and post-tests and questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively while data from the teacher interviews and the focus group discussion were analyzed qualitatively. T-tests were run to compare the improvement between groups and to analyze improvement within groups. The T-tests revealed no significant differences in any of the comparisons.

The study demonstrated, however that students' general perceptions of task-based instruction were positive, and the interview with the study teacher also yielded a positive result. The questionnaire results demonstrated that students had neutral or partially positive reactions to the treatment tasks but found these helpful in developing their oral skills.

Findings of this study may inspire teachers teaching speaking to adapt some of the activities in the usual course book according to a more task-based approach, so that students can participate in oral practice of language actively and in turn help them improve their speaking abilities.

Key words: Tasks, Task-based instruction, Speaking

ÖZET

GÖREVE DAYALI ÖĞRETİM TEKNİĞİNİN
ÖĞRENCİLERİN KONUŞMA BECERİLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİNLİĞİ

Kasap, Barış

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma, göreve dayalı öğretim tekniğinin öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerini geliştirmekteki etkisini, ve Anadolu Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'ndaki öğrencilerin ve öğretmenin bu teknik ile ilgili algılarını incelemiştir.

Veriler bir kontrol ve bir uygulama grubuna verilen anketler, mülakatlar ve sözlü sınavlardan toplanmıştır. Toplam 45 kişiden oluşan bu gruba göreve dayalı öğretim tekniğinin uygulandığı çalışma öncesi ve sonrasında sözlü sınavlar yapılmıştır.

Uygulama öğretmeni ile de çalışma öncesi ve sonrasında kullanılan tekniğe karşı olan tutumu üzerine mülakat yapılmıştır. Ayrıca uygulama grubundan gelen küçük bir grupta öğrencilerin bu tekniğe karşı olan öğrenmek için mülakatlar yapılmıştır.

Bunların yanı sıra, çalışmada kullanılan 11 tane göreve dayalı aktivitenin her birinden sonra uygulama grubu öğrencilerine anketler dağıtılmıştır. Sözlü sınav sonuçları ve anketler nicel, mülakatlar ise nitel olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Gruplar arası karşılaştırmaları incelemek için t-testleri uygulanmıştır. Bu testler, hiçbir karşılaştırmamanın istatistiksel olarak önemli olmadığını göstermiştir.

Fakat çalışma, aynı zamanda öğrencilerin ve öğretmenin, göreve dayalı öğretim tekniğine karşı olan genel tutumlarının pozitif olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Algı anketlerinin sonuçlarına göre de, öğrenciler çalışmada kullanılan göreve dayalı aktivitelere karşı çoğunlukla tarafsız, bazen de pozitif olduklarını, ve bu aktiviteleri konuşma becerilerini geliştirmek anlamında yardımcı olduğunu göstermiştir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları konuşma dersi veren öğretmenlerin, kullandıkları ders materyallerindeki aktiviteleri göreve dayalı öğretim tekniğine biraz daha yakın bir hale getirmelerine yardımcı olabilir. Böylece öğrenciler sözel dil kullanımına daha aktif bir biçimde katılabilir ve karşılığında konuşma becerilerini geliştirebilirler.

Anahtar kelimeler: Göreve dayalı öğretim tekniği, göreve dayalı aktiviteler, konuşma

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Language classrooms strive to involve and support learners in the learning process. Instructional tasks are important components of the language learning environment, and “hold a central place” in the learning process (Ellis, 2003, p.1). The type of task used in instruction may positively influence learners’ performance. Hence, the curriculum or course designer tries to create tasks that foster a language learning context in which the learners can be involved and supported in their efforts to communicate fluently and effectively (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). Among the ways to create this language learning context, Task-Based Instruction (TBI) presents opportunities to employ effective and meaningful activities and thus promotes communicative language use in the language classroom.

While some researchers suggest that the traditional methods include prescribed steps that provide teachers with a clear schedule of what they should do (Rivers, cited in Skehan, 1996), other researchers emphasize the importance of task-based approaches to communicative instruction which leave teachers and learners freer to find their own procedures to maximize communicative effectiveness (Gass & Crookes, cited in Skehan,

1996; Prabhu, 1987; Long & Crooks, 1991; Nunan, 1989). Task-based instruction can thus be defined as an approach which provides learners with a learning context that requires the use of the target language through communicative activities and in which the process of using language carries more importance than mere production of correct language forms. Therefore, TBI is viewed as one model of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in terms of regarding real and meaningful communication as the primary characteristic of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Willis, 1996). As important tools in language teaching, tasks are described by many researchers as activities that will be completed while using the target language communicatively by focusing on meaning to reach an intended outcome (Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001; Canale, 1983; Lee, 2000; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Skehan 1996). In particular, speaking classrooms are well suited for task-based instruction, given that the approach favors real language use in communicative situations. This study will explore the effectiveness of certain kinds of task-based instruction on the development of learners' speaking skills.

Background of the study

Task-based instruction (TBI) is regarded as an alternative method to traditional language teaching methods because it favors a methodology in which functional communicative language use is aimed at and strived for (Brumfit, 1984; Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). Also, TBI is considered to be an effective approach that fosters a learning environment in which learners are free to choose and use the target language forms which they think are most likely to achieve the aim of accomplishing defined

communicative goals (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). In the literature, two early programs applying task-based instruction within a communicative framework for language teaching were implemented. These were the Malaysian Communicational Syllabus (1975) and the Bangalore Project (Beretta and Davies, Beretta, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Prabhu 1987). Although these instructional programs were relatively short-lived, they received considerable attention in the language teaching community and are still being discussed and debated as other attempts to create similar programs (Beretta & Davies, 1985; Prabhu 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The term ‘task’, which is one of the key concepts in task-based learning and teaching, is defined in different ways in the literature and instructional tasks are used for different purposes. In everyday usage, tasks are seen as the commonplace goal-directed activities of everyday life such as cooking dinner, writing a letter, building a model (Long, cited in Ellis, 2003). Tasks became more formalized as part of various kinds of vocational training in the 1950’s and came into widespread use in school education in the 1970s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Major programmatic proposals for Task-Based education in language teaching appeared in the 1980’s and 1990’s (Skehan, 1998). Currently, tasks are also viewed as important research tools as well as the basis for language instructional approaches (Corder, 1981 cited in Ellis, 2000; Crooks, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

In second language education, a task is defined as an activity that focuses on meaning which the learners undertake using the target language in order to reach a specific goal at the end of the task (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Nunan, 1989;

Skehan, 1996). Nunan (1989) claims that tasks should encourage learners to feel the need and strive to complete the activity communicatively. Through tasks, students are provided with a “purpose” to use the target language (Lee, 2000, p. 30). In this purposeful learning process, learners are not instructed to use certain language forms. Instead, they are encouraged to build and use the target language on their own, with teacher support but without immediate teacher correction. The role of the teacher is to observe and facilitate the process of task-based communication (Lee, 2000).

In order to promote the meaning-focused and communicative nature of tasks, Skehan (1996) proposes that tasks be designed to have a relation to the real world. This relation to real life creates more meaningful and authentic focus. According to Ellis (2003), authentic tasks are those tasks whose interactional patterns are similar to those in real life situations. Other definitions, apart from those that emphasize the relation of tasks to real life, underscore the pedagogical usefulness of tasks (Nunan, 1989). Pedagogic tasks are similar to authentic tasks, but they do not necessarily aim to have interactional patterns that take place in the real world. These real world and pedagogic tasks are called goal-oriented but they are “form-unfocused” tasks that promote comprehension and production of language for communicative purposes. Focused tasks, unlike unfocused tasks, are designed to draw learners’ attention to specific linguistic forms (Ellis, 2003).

Due to the dual aspect of unfocused tasks, as being of both pedagogic and authentic types, TBI is seen as a method fostering a learning environment that finds appropriacy in all skills and often combines more than one skill in the same task (Willis,

1996). The research literature on the use of tasks reveals particular application of tasks in the development of oral skills (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, Crooks & Gass, Day, Klippel, Ur, cited in Willis, 2003). Skehan (1996) suggests that tasks be evaluated in terms of the fluency, accuracy and complexity of language produced by task users. For Skehan, skills can best be acquired in a balance of these three aspects.

Speaking tasks are helpful to fulfill the conditions to practice the target language communicatively. Through design of communicative tasks in speaking classes, fluency can be achieved, and accuracy can be promoted through these pedagogic tasks (Brumfit, 1984). In designing speaking tasks, an essential point is to estimate the difficulty level of the tasks. Some complexity is seen as necessary to vary the language used in order to have challenging communication (Skehan, 1996). According to Skehan, when students are asked to complete tasks that require a lower level of language use than their proficiency levels permit, they may not work on these tasks as diligently as they should, and it is less likely that they will adequately achieve the three stated goals of fluency, accuracy and complexity. The appropriate level of task difficulty may, thus, enable learners to focus on fluency, accuracy and complexity equally.

Statement of the problem

Tasks as organized sets of activities play essential roles in classroom learning processes. Task-based instruction is an approach that emphasizes the significance of the role of tasks in these processes. As learners in EFL contexts have fewer opportunities to practice language outside school, classroom activities become more important (Nunan, 1989). Teachers and syllabus designers turn to the role of tasks and task-based

instruction in order to have a more effective teaching-learning environment. There are some important studies examining the use of task-based instruction and its focus on communicative competence, such as the Bangalore/Madras Communicational Teaching Project and the Malaysian Communicational Syllabus (1975, Beretta & Davies, Beretta, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Prabhu 1987). However, there are few research studies on the use of task-based instruction in teaching a specific skill, such as speaking.

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of task-based instruction on the development of learners' communicative skills in speaking classes at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL). After completing the intensive English program in preparatory programs, many of the learners complain about their lack of communicative competence as required in their departmental courses. This may result in part from the fact that students do not attempt to practice enough in speaking classes or may not find appropriate environments to practice using the language. No real standard of speech expectation has been established for prep school graduates. Although the existing instruction in speaking classrooms seems to have some effect on students' ability to communicate, it is the sense of both students and departmental instructors that speaking instruction could be more effective and result in a higher student standard in spoken communication.

This study might be regarded as a pilot study of a new approach in speaking classes, which may increase learner interaction in speaking classrooms and beyond. Since my own institution is undergoing a continual curriculum renewal process, it may also yield results that will in turn lead toward rethinking the entire speaking/listening program.

Research Questions

1. How effective is the employment of task-based instruction in speaking classes at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in terms of improving students' speaking skills?
2. What are the students' perceptions of task-based instruction in speaking classes at AUSFL?
3. What are the attitudes of the teacher using task-based instruction in her speaking class at AUSFL?

Significance of the problem

The study addresses the paucity of research on the employment of task-based instruction in EFL speaking classrooms. Although task-based instruction has been investigated in ESL classrooms, little research has been conducted in EFL speaking classrooms at the university level. Thus, it may provide general information for program planners at the university level by providing an additional tool for the improvement of students' speaking skills.

At the local level, the study may contribute to the re-thinking and re-design of speaking courses in the curriculum renewal process at Anadolu University and, in turn, encourage a more thorough examination of task-based instruction in all language areas. Some experience in task-based speaking instruction may assist teachers in designing more focused tasks on the specific needs of their own students as well as assist them in modifying such tasks in mid-stream as particular student needs are identified.

Key terminology

The following terms are emphasized throughout this study:

Task-based instruction

Task-based instruction can be defined as an approach in which communicative and meaningful tasks play central role in language learning and in which the process of using language appropriately carries more importance than the mere production of grammatically correct language forms. Therefore, TBI is viewed as one model of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in terms of regarding real and meaningful communication as the primary feature of language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Willis, 1996).

Task

Many researchers define tasks as activities that will be completed while using the target language communicatively by focusing on meaning to reach an intended outcome (Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001; Lee, 2000; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Skehan 1996;).

Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief summary of the issues concerning to the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the problem, and key terminology have been discussed. In the next chapter I review the relevant literature on speaking pedagogy, task-based instruction and tasks. The third chapter is on the methodology. It explains the participants, instruments, data collection procedures and

data analysis procedures. The fourth chapter presents the data analysis chapter which contains a summary of collected data, the analysis, and the summarized findings. The last chapter is the conclusion which covers the findings, implications and limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study examines the effectiveness of task-based instruction on the improvement of learners' speaking skills. An experimental study was conducted to investigate whether the implementation of task-based instruction in one speaking classroom at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages in the academic year of 2004-2005 improved students' speaking competence.

This chapter presents background information on the teaching of speaking in historical perspective to its current place in task-based instruction. This is followed by a more detailed discussion of task-based instruction, its goals, tasks and features of tasks, and the instructional components of task-based instruction. The tasks used for the purpose of this study will be examined in the context of task descriptions in the literature.

Teaching Speaking

Speaking is the natural state of language, as all human beings are born to speak their native languages. It is thus the most distinguishing feature of human beings. This verbal communication involves not only producing meaningful utterances but also

receiving others' oral productions. Speaking is thus regarded as a critical skill in learning a second or foreign language by most language learners, and their success in learning a language is measured in terms of their accomplishment in oral communication (Nunan, 1998; Nunan, 2001).

Even though acquiring oral skills is considered to be important, speaking did not have a primacy in language learning and teaching in the past. Historically, learning structural language, rote memorization of sentence patterns and vocabulary and using literary language were considered superior to practicing spoken language. These pedagogical activities were supported by the Grammar Translation Method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, in the mid-nineteenth century, the importance of teaching grammar for grammar's sake, decreased as a result of the existence of opportunities for achieving conversational skills in learning a foreign language. Europeans were traveling more and sought to build business and personal connections through learning and using the languages of Europe. As well, some language specialists, especially the Frenchman F. Gouin (1831-1896), developed new language teaching methods, which had an important impact in the field of language pedagogy. Gouin supported the idea that language learning requires using spoken language related to a sequence of natural physical actions: walking across a room, opening a door, and so on (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Other innovations in language teaching encouraged ways of language learning using a speech-based approach to language instruction. These innovations supported by a Direct Method of language teaching dominated the field of language teaching into the 20th century.

Toward the end of the 1950's, the Audio Lingual Method (ALM) in the U.S. and Situational Language Teaching in the U.K. dominated the field of language pedagogy. These methods both emphasized speaking and listening skills in language teaching. In ALM, lessons were built on pattern practice, minimal pair drills and pronunciation practice designed to develop speech habits equivalent to those of a native speaker's. Even though this approach favored the spoken language, the emphasis was mostly on the use of accurate pronunciation and structures while speaking in the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Little attention was paid to the natural and spontaneous use of this new language in conversation.

Other succeeding methods - Silent way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia – also emphasized oral language proficiency in their aims. In all of these methods, basic language mastery was considered the ability to speak the target language with a native like pronunciation. Even though these new methods encouraged more communicative language use, having structural knowledge of the language was still central.

As a remedy for the perceived inadequacies of these methods, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1960s. CLT regards language as a tool for effective and meaningful communication, so in this approach, for example, comprehensible pronunciation rather than native-like pronunciation was the goal. CLT gave equal importance to the functional as well as the structural nature of language (Littlewood, 1983; Nunan, 1987). In CLT, meaningful and communicative activities are used to provide learners with the ability to use authentic language. “Using language to

learn it” rather than “Learning language to use it” became the slogan of CLT (Widdowson, 1978). Fluency and accuracy were both given emphasis as the important language goals employed in meaningful contexts in the approach as well.

CLT had many methodological offspring which attempted to shape the principles of CLT into more specific teaching practices. Thus, Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Project Work, and Task-Based Instruction all are founded on the premise that language is learned through using it communicatively, with processing in language of equal importance to producing it. CBI focuses on organizing language teaching around the content topics or academic subjects that learners need to acquire. The basic aim in this method is to simultaneously acquire the content through the use of language and learn the language through the understanding of content. As in CLT, language is viewed as a tool for communication.

Similarly, Project Work and TBI have the aim of communicating in the target language. One distinguishing feature of all these communicative approaches is the time period of anticipated focus. In CBI, language of the content focus may comprise a subject study spread throughout a whole term or year while Project Work, and TBI tend to have topical foci of shorter duration (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). For instance, a “Project” might extend for several weeks while TBI tasks typically are completed in a class period.

In these communicative approaches, especially in Task-Based Instruction, tasks are the tools to promote interaction and real language use. Tasks are considered to be the core of language learning curriculum in TBI. The role of tasks is to promote interactive

and authentic language use rather than to serve as a framework for practice on particular language forms or functions. Tasks promote the role of speaking in negotiating meaning and collaborative problem solving (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

TBI has been accepted as an effective language teaching methodology for developing purpose-driven communicative language learning built around the use of real-world tasks. The major aim of the tasks is to encourage learners to use authentic language in order to achieve a clearly defined outcome (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003). On the other hand, many tasks require learners to use language creatively, even though students are not previously trained in acquiring useful language structures to complete the tasks. This situation creates an environment where learners are supposed to negotiate meaning while creating language useful in completing the tasks (Ellis, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Willis, 1996). For instance, in a program described by Richards (1985 cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 238), different communicative tasks were based on five interaction situations: basic interactions, face-to-face informal interactions, telephone conversations, interviews, service meetings. Task types included role-plays, brainstorming, ordering, and problem solving. As can be seen oral communication was central in all five-interaction situations. In order to accomplish the given tasks, it was necessary to build communicative interaction with fellow-students.

Since such group or pair activities are built into tasks in TBI, learners are required to engage in oral interaction to complete tasks (Ellis, 2003; Willis 1996). In other words, it can be concluded that communicative tasks, regardless of approach or method, foster oral communication in the target language and help learners acquire the

language unconsciously in the course of content mastery, project completion or task accomplishment.

Task-based instruction

Recent years have shown increased attention to the use of task-based instruction (TBI) in language teaching (Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2000; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996). The need for a change from the traditional approach of presentation, practice and production (PPP) to TBI is a controversial issue. Skehan (1996) claims that there are two opposite ideas about the help of PPP method in FL classes. Rivers (cited in Skehan, 1996) suggests that the traditional PPP method includes many techniques that provide teachers with a clear schedule of activation to follow. However, Skehan (1996) emphasizes the unproven and unrealistic nature of PPP and proposes task-based approaches to instruction as a preferable alternative. The same ideas are shared by Prabhu (1987) and Nunan (1989). In the PPP method, students are seen as “language learners”, whereas in the TBI pedagogy, they are treated as “language users” (Ellis, 2003, p. 252).

Task-based instruction can be defined as an approach in which communicative and meaningful tasks play the central role in language learning and in which the process of using language in communication carries more importance than mere production of correct language forms. Therefore, TBI is viewed as one model of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in terms of regarding real and meaningful communication as the primary feature of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Willis, 1996). Authentic language use, the real use of real language in classroom content, fosters a learning environment in which learners have their own say; they gain communicative

practice within their own sense of the defined goals in TBI. In other words, learners are to learn the language as they use it. Because of this, communicative language use comes into focus as an essential aspect of a task-based framework (Willis, 1996). In addition to developing communicative capability, attention to form is fundamental for language learning. Even though TBI emphasizes the primacy of meaning, a focus on form has a parallel importance in the language learning process (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001). In the task-based framework, it is desirable that learners can achieve accurate as well as fluent use of language (Willis, 1996).

In addition to real language use, which is a common feature both in CLT and TBI, other critical dimensions define TBI: “input and output processing, negotiation of meaning and transactionally focused conversations” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). TBI provides effective language learning contexts in the form of tasks (Willis, 1996). Among the significant contexts for language learning, exposure to meaningful language input is seen as primary (Krashen, cited in Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). However, Swain (1985) indicates that productive output is as significant as meaningful input, and TBI requires a product-an output-at the end of a task (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Communication in task-based instruction places an equal importance on the processing of comprehensible input and production of comprehensible output. In task-based learning, learners also have the opportunity to negotiate meaning in order to identify and solve a problem that occurs in their communication (Ellis, 2003; Foster, 1998; Plough & Gass, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Negotiation of meaning involves adjustment, rephrasing and experimentation with language. The components of meaning negotiation are central for communication in real life conversations. Conversations involving

clarification requests, confirmation and comprehension checks, and self-repetitions make input comprehensible. Thus interactions to negotiate meaning are essential to insure that input is comprehensible and language acquisition is promoted (Seedhouse, 1998, and Yule, Powers, & Macdonald, 1992).

Goals in TBI

According to Skehan (1996), it is vital to set proper goals for TBI in order to support its effectiveness, and he suggests that TBI focus on three main language learning goals: fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

To achieve the first goal, fluency, learners aim to use the target language in real life situations at an adequate degree of speech rate without disturbing pauses. In addition to adjusting speech rate, pausing, rephrasing, hesitation, redundancy and use of appropriate lexical items are keys to attaining language fluency (Skehan, 1996). But, occasionally learners have difficulty achieving spoken fluency. An adequate level of fluency is necessary to be accepted as a member of an interaction (Larsen-Freeman & Long; Level, cited in Skehan, 1996; Schmidt, cited in Canale, 1983). Poor fluency may affect communication by limiting interaction patterns and may cause dissatisfaction both on the part of the speaker and the interlocutor. Learners need opportunities to practice language in real-time conversations. Another reason for poor fluency may be that learners focus more on other goals-accuracy and complexity. Personality factors are also considered to have a possible negative effect on fluency as well. These factors may involve general shyness, production anxiety, embarrassment in speaking, feelings of inadequacy of one's ideas.

Accuracy is related to the use of target language in a rule-governed way. Since inaccuracy may cause communication breakdowns and reflect negatively on the speaker's production, it is necessary for TBI to promote accuracy for effective language learning and use (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996). Focus on form as well as fluency has to be a key goal in language practice and language acquisition. However, TBI proponents emphasize that focus on form should not influence the flow of communicative pedagogy in the classroom (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001). Tasks balancing fluency and focus on form are central keys in designing successful language teaching tasks.

Complexity (restructuring) involves learner's commitment to expand basic competencies to use more challenging phrases, words or sentences. Learners' willingness to attempt more complex language use is also important in the learning process (Skehan, 1996). If learners do not attempt to restructure and elaborate the language, it may be due to a lack of interest to improve their interlanguage or an unwillingness to take risks to use more complex structures (Schachter, cited in Skehan, 1996).

Tasks

Background of tasks

Tasks are used for different purposes and thus defined in different ways in the literature. According to Long (1997, cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 89), tasks have their everyday meaning as the things people do, such as "painting a fence, buying a pair of shoes, finding a street destination, making a hotel reservation".

In the 1950s tasks were used for instructional purposes in vocational training. In this application, work tasks are analyzed, adapted to teaching tasks, designed in detail as instructional tools and sequenced for classroom training (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Following the emphasis on the role of tasks as tools for vocational training, tasks started to be used for academic purposes in the early 1970s. Academic tasks have four dimensions. These are 1) student products, 2) operations required to construct products, 3) cognitive skills to carry out the tasks, and 4) an accountability system for product evaluation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Task-based language instruction has many of the same features of tasks developed for other academic purposes.

In language education, The Malaysian Communicational Syllabus and the Bangalore Project (Prabhu, 1987; Richards and Rodgers, 2001) were earlier trials of TBI concepts. The tasks used in the Bangalore Project were of two types, real life tasks and academic tasks. For instance, the task named ‘clock faces’ in which students were asked to put their hands on a clock to show a given time was a real-world task. Another task labeled ‘drawing’ where students were asked to draw geometrical figures from verbal instructions were designed to serve pedagogic purposes (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Currently, tasks are viewed as research tools as well as instructional techniques (Corder, cited in Ellis, 2000; Crooks, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Research tasks help language program designers diagnose learners’ needs. Tasks thus play an important role in program design and implementation (Long, cited in Ellis, 2003). For instance, in a program described by Richards, tasks were based on a needs analysis process. These tasks focused on five oral interaction situations: basic interactions, face-

to-face informal interactions, telephone conversations, interviews, service meetings. Task types included role-plays, brainstorming, ordering, and problem solving (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Although TBI plays important roles in language teaching pedagogy, some critics note that TBI programs lack organized grammatical or other types of systematic program designs. Some current versions of TBI attempt to respond to this criticism by placing tasks in a systematic structural syllabus (Richards & Rodgers, 2001 Skehan, 1996).

Task features

As instructional tools, tasks have certain distinctive features, which are agreed upon by most TBI proponents. Basically, tasks involve conveying meaning via language. Tasks have a work plan, are related to the real world, involve cognitive processing and have clearly defined communicative outcomes (Kumaravadivelu, cited in Ellis, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Focus on meaning in tasks is regarded by many as a distinguishing feature of tasks. Tasks should be designed to engage learners in practicing the target language in a meaningful context by paying primary attention to conveying meaning. In order to establish a meaningful context, the tasks designed often have a gap in terms of information, reasoning, or opinion. Task activities can create a reason for learners to communicate by negotiating with others to shape meaning and thus achieve closure (Ellis, 2003; Foster, 1998; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, through communicative activities that provide meaningful contexts, learners incidentally practice a variety of linguistic structures that they choose to use while completing the given task

(Ellis, 1997; Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). In this sense, tasks supply the content but the linguistic forms are determined by the learner often with some facilitation from the teacher (Breen, 1989; Kumaravadivelu, cited in Ellis, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Tasks can be seen as being part of an instructional work plan (Ellis, 2003). A work plan involves an outline of how the task will be carried out and what learners (and facilitating teachers) are expected to do to further the completion of the task. For instance, the instructional work plan may involve an academic task designed to promote focus on various language forms used to fulfill particular communicative functions. However, since learners contribute to task operations in various unpredictable ways, the process of task-completion may or may not match the work plan (Ellis, 2003). Breen (1989) explains this unpredictability of the process as a mismatch between task-as-work plan and task-as-process. In this case, task work plans should anticipate variability of learners' performance in task-completion. Breen (1989) thinks that if a task is adaptable to variation in learners' performances, the task can be more effectively promoted as an appropriate activity for language learning.

The relation of tasks to the real world is another significant aspect of tasks (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1996). This relation to the real world necessitates using relevant and authentic materials in classrooms. Authentic materials are materials that are not intended for language teaching; therefore, the language in these materials is close to real world, out-of-class language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). On the other hand, materials prepared especially for language teaching have pedagogical requirements that make them useful for instruction but different from authentic written or oral materials. 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).

Cognitive processing in TBI is also seen as an important task feature. According to Ellis (2003, p.10), learners use cognitive skills such as “selecting, classifying, ordering, reasoning, and evaluating information” while accomplishing a given task. The nature of the task and task product restricts the linguistic functions appropriate to the task. The cognitive choice of the language forms to represent these functions is, however, left to learners. While Ellis believes that cognitive skills affect learners’ language choice, Skehan’s (1996) ideas on cognitive approaches to tasks are more detailed. He deals with cognitive processing in task achievement by explaining the difference between the systems used by learners while demonstrating their second language knowledge. These are the exemplar-based and rule-based systems. The exemplar-based system stores formulas that exist in the learners’ memories, fostering fluency. The rule-based system, on the other hand, leads to more consciously controlled language use, supporting accuracy. Many researchers label these two systems as dual-modes of processing in language learning. Skehan (1996) and Ellis (2003) further propose that employment of these learning systems together to complete a given task will bring additional effectiveness to task performance.

Finally, tasks have clearly defined communicative outcomes (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, cited in Ellis, 2000). Clarifying the goal of a task and what communicative outcomes learners are expected to achieve at the end of the task increases learners’ performance (Ellis, 2003). Willis (1996) also believes that specifying the outcomes of a given task has a strong influence on increasing learner involvement in the task. Defining

communicative outcomes of a task also guides teachers in determining learners' success level in task achievement (Ellis, 2003). In other words, informing learners concerning the skills to be acquired at the end of the task may increase their performance since learners know that they will be evaluated on the basis of the stated outcomes. Other commentators enlarge the list of task features. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), tasks foster learners' motivation because tasks require learners to draw on their past experiences and involve themselves in variously designed interactions, e.g., tasks requiring physical involvement or cooperative work.

These characteristics of tasks explained above are also accepted as factors distinguishing "tasks" from "activities" or "exercises" (Widdowson, cited in Ellis, 2000). Skehan (1998a) helps clarify what he considers the unique nature of tasks (in TBI) in contrast with "exercises" (in more traditional LT). Table 1 shows how tasks and exercises differ from each other.

Table 1

Distinguishing ‘exercise’ and ‘task’ (Skehan, 1998a)

	Exercise	Task
Orientation	Linguistic skills viewed as pre-requisite for learning communicative abilities	Linguistic skills are developed through engaging in communicative activity
Focus	Linguistic form and semantic (‘focus on form’)	Propositional content and pragmatic communicative meaning (‘focus on meaning’)
Goal	Manifestation of code knowledge	Achievement of a communicative goal
Outcome- evaluation	Performance evaluated in terms of conformity to the code	Performance evaluated in
Real-world relationship	Internalization of linguistic skills serves as an instrument for future use	There is a direct and obvious relationship between the activity that arises from the task and natural communicative activity

Features of tasks as discussed represent an important dimension in task design and use. The other major dimension in TBI is the selection of task type for specific teaching objectives. Task types in their relation to teaching objectives will be examined in the next section.

Task types

In constructing tasks in TBI, designers have a variety of task types to choose from.

Table 2 shows partial lists of task types proposed.

Table 2

Task types

Task designer	Types of tasks
Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993)	1. jigsaw 2. information-gap 3. problem-solving 4. decision-making 5. opinion exchange
Willis (1996)	1. listing 2. ordering 3. comparing, 4. problem solving 5. sharing personal experiences 6. creative
Nunan (2001)	1. Real-world 2. Pedagogic

According to Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), tasks are categorized into these groups: jigsaw, information-gap, problem solving, decision-making and opinion exchange tasks. Jigsaw tasks have learners construct a whole from different informational parts. Each part is held by a different group of students who cooperatively contribute to constructing the whole. Information-gap tasks encourage groups of students who have different sections of a text to share text information with each other in order to form a complete text. Problem-solving tasks provide a problem and some information and instruct learners to find a solution to a problem. In decision-making tasks, learners are given a problem with a set of solutions, and they attempt to make a joint decision by negotiating and discussing these solutions. Finally, opinion exchange tasks also promote discussions among learners. Learners are

expected to share their own ideas and understand others' opinions in regards to some topics. However, learners do not have to come to common opinion.

Willis (1996) mentions six different types of tasks: listing, ordering, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks. In listing tasks, learners collectively try to generate a list according to some task criteria-countries of Europe, irregular English verbs, and world leaders. Task participants brainstorm, activating their own personal knowledge and experiences and undertake fact-finding, surveys, and library searches. Ordering and sorting tasks require four kinds of processes: ranking items or events in a logical or chronological order, sequencing them based on personal or given criteria, grouping given items and classifying items under appropriate categories not previously specified. In comparing tasks, learners are involved in three processes, matching to define specific points and relating them, finding similarities and differences. Problem solving tasks encourage learners' intellectual and reasoning capacities to arrive at a solution to a given problem. In sharing personal experience tasks, learners are engaged in talking about themselves and sharing their own experiences. Lastly, creative tasks are often viewed as those projects in which learners, in pairs or groups, are able to create their own imaginative products. Groups might create short stories, art works, videos, magazines, etc. Creative projects often involve a combination of task types such as listing, ordering and sorting, comparing and problem solving.

A somewhat different categorization of tasks is Nunan's (2001) description of task types as pedagogic and real-world tasks. Pedagogic tasks are communicative tasks that facilitate the use of language in the classroom towards achievement of some

instrumental or instructional goal, whereas real-world tasks involve “borrowing” the target language used outside the classroom in the real world.

In addition to types of tasks, there are distinctions between the variables within tasks. These variables within tasks are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Variables within the task

Variable definers	Variables within the task
Long (1989)	1. open (divergent) vs closed (convergent) 2. one-way task vs two-way task 3. planned vs unplanned
Richards and Rodgers (2001)	1. one way or two way 2. convergent or divergent 3. collaborative or competitive 4. single or multiple outcomes 5. concrete or abstract language 6. simple or complex processing 7. simple or complex language 8. reality-based or not reality-based

According to Long (1989), tasks can be divided into three main categories in terms of task outcomes: (1) open task (divergent) vs. closed (convergent) task (2) two-way task vs. one-way task, (3) planned task vs. unplanned task (cited in Ellis, 2003).

Open tasks are those that are loosely structured and have less specific goals. Learners are aware that there is no certain outcome that they have to achieve. Opinion gap tasks, debates, discussions, free conversation tasks and making choices are all open tasks, where learners are not expected to come to a set of predefined conclusions (Ellis, 2003). Closed tasks, on the other hand, are those that are structured with specific purposes and specific end products in mind. Information gap tasks are examples of

closed tasks. Some of the linguistic forms in closed tasks may be directed to learners' basic needs since these forms are predetermined; however, learners may have to stretch to find more varied language forms according to their needs in more complex task completion (Long, cited in Ellis, 2003). More negotiation seems to be promoted through closed tasks than open tasks because in open tasks learners may not try to negotiate meaning but quit early if the task becomes too challenging (Duff, cited in Beglar and Hunt, 2002; Long, cited in Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, Ellis (2003) thinks that there is not much language challenge in open tasks if teachers allow learners' free choice of the topics they want to talk about and the language they will use.

One way and two-way tasks (e.g., a speech vs. a debate) foster exchange of information by one person or by two more people, jointly. Two-way tasks are said to promote negotiation for meaning more than one-way tasks do through requiring interaction among learners (Foster, 1998; Long, cited in Ellis, 2003; Doughty & Pica, 1986).

The third categorization of tasks based on outcomes is that of planned and unplanned tasks. Planned and unplanned tasks are effective in defining the degree of negotiation for the meaning they provide. Planned tasks are those where learners have time to think of the content of their oral or written performance as in a debate. This type of task thus provides more thinking, organization, and negotiation than unplanned tasks (Long, cited in Ellis, 2003). Foster and Skehan (1996) report that giving planning time for learners has a strong impact on fluency, accuracy and complexity. Ellis (2003) divides planning for task completion into two types: online and strategic planning. In

order to assess the effect of online planning on learners performance Hulstijn and Hulstijn (cited in Ellis, 2003) concentrate on two variables: time and focal attention. In the former, learners can use as much time as they require in order to speak, or they have to speak quickly, as in response to a heated discussion. In the latter, focal attention, learners are instructed to attend specifically to either form or meaning. According to the results of the study, learners who spend more time on the correct use of grammar rules produce more accurate language. However, when they pay more attention to organize what they are going to say, they do not attend to accuracy as well.

The essential role of strategic planning is also highlighted by many studies. Several of these studies have shown that strategic planning fosters fluency (Foster, 1996; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). According to the results of the studies of Foster (1996) and Foster and Skehan (1996), when the task is more challenging, strategic planning promotes greater fluency.

In the list proposed by Richard and Rodgers (2001), the first two task variables, one way or two-way and convergent or divergent are common with the ideas in Long's list. The other variables, as their labels suggest, are concerned with the way students work in the task, the number of outcomes students are supposed to produce, the concreteness of language used, the cognitive skills demanded to complete the task, complexity of language used and level of reality in the task, respectively.

Different types of tasks and variables within the tasks can be integrated in a task-based language teaching class. Apart from the implementation of different types of tasks and their variables, task-based language teaching can be achieved by making slight

changes in the way original textbook materials are used through changing the class management, order of activities, and balance of activities. Moreover, characteristics of task-based instruction can be used as a supplement to existing textbook materials by finding more interesting starting points, extending the activities and specifying the purposes of activities more clearly (Willis, 1996).

Phases of the task-based framework

For task-based instruction, there have been different sequencing frameworks proposed by researchers (Ellis, 2003; Lee, 2000; Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996). They assume three phases in common for task-based instruction. Ellis (2003) names these as ‘pre-task’, ‘during task’, and ‘post-task’, while Willis (1996) divides these into ‘pre-task’, ‘task cycle’ and ‘language focus’.

The task-based framework differs from the traditional teaching (PPP) methods in terms of different sequencing of the instructional phases. In a traditional classroom, the first step is to present the target language function and forms, and then to practice them, and finally to produce examples of these language function/forms (PPP) without teacher support. In a task-based framework, however, learners first perform a communicative task (with the help of any previously learned language structures) after they are introduced to the topic and the task itself. Learners then write or talk about necessary planning to perform the task they have just attempted. At this stage, they might listen to a recording of learners working on the same or a similar task or read something related to the task topic. After they have some sense of the task production, they apply this knowledge to re-try the task. During this stage, they have access to requested linguistic

forms. In short, a holistic approach is used in task-based framework since learners are first involved in the task, and they try to negotiate for meaning using existing resources. Then, they focus on the target language forms they find they need. They have been familiarized with the specific language functions and language forms useful in task completion. Therefore, these functions and forms are contextualized and have become more meaningful for the learners within the focused task (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996).

The pre-task phase

The aim of this phase is first to introduce task and task topic to learners. According to Ellis (2003) and Lee (2000), framing of the task plays an important role before implementing the task since it informs learners about the outcome of the task and what they are supposed to do to fulfill the task. Revealing the purpose of the task in advance also serves as a motivator (Dörnyei, 2001).

After introducing the topic, teachers may need to explain the task theme if learners are unfamiliar with it. In order to do this, they can provide learners with vital vocabulary items and phrases or help them remember relevant words or phrases (Willis, 1996). If the topic is a familiar one, teachers can elicit the known phrases and language related to the topic. In the process, teachers can have an opportunity to observe what learners actually know and what they need to know. However, there is no explicit teaching of vocabulary or language in this model.

The third step is to perform a similar task to the main task. Prabhu's (1987) study was conducted in a whole class context. The teacher asked similar questions that would

be directed to the students in the main task. This demonstration in the pre-task should be counted as an activity that enhances learners' competence in undertaking the real task.

Having learners experience “ideal” performance of the task either by listening to a recording of a fluent speaker or reading a related text to the task, fosters learners' optimal performance in the task (Ellis, 2003, p. 246). Although some researchers find it effective to “prep” learners on the type of task they are going to perform (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996), others urge learners to find their own way through discussion and negotiation with fellow learners in the pre-task phase (Lam & Wong, cited in Ellis, 2003).

The last step in the pre-task phase is to allocate learners time for task planning. Giving time to learners to prepare themselves for the tasks enhances the use of various vocabulary items, complex linguistic forms, fluency and naturalness with which the tasks are carried out (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996). Ellis (2003) calls this session the strategic planning phase. In strategic planning, either the learners decide by themselves what to do in the task or teachers lead them in focusing on accuracy, fluency or complexity. Although teacher guidance is important at this point in order to explicitly inform learners what to focus on during preparation (Skehan, 1996), Willis (1996) argues that learners tend to perform the task less enthusiastically when they are guided by the teacher than when they plan the task on their own.

Foster and Skehan (1999) offer three options for strategic planning, ‘no planning’, ‘language-focused guided planning’ and ‘form focused guided planning’. There is another essential issue related to allowing preparation time for students in this phase. For Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003), the amount of preparation time may change according to

the learners' familiarity with the task theme, difficulty level and cognitive demand of the task. The more complex and unfamiliar the task is, the more preparation time students need.

The during-task phase

In this phase, learners do the main task in pairs or groups, prepare an oral or written plan of how and what they have done in task completion, and then present it to the whole class (Willis, 1996a).

The task performance session enables learners to choose whatever language they want to use to reach the previously defined outcome of the task. Ellis (2003) proposes two dimensions of task performance: giving students planning time and giving them the opportunity to use input data which will help them present what they produce easily.

The first dimension concerns the effect of time limitation on task completion. Lee (2000) finds that giving limited time to students to complete the task determines students' language use. Yuan and Ellis (2003) argue that learners given unlimited time to complete a task use more complex and accurate structures than the ones in the control group given limited time. On the other hand, time limitation in the control group encouraged fluency. When they are given the chance to use their own time, learners tend to revise and find well-suited words to express themselves precisely. However, Willis (1996a) claims that if learners have limited time to finish the task, their oral production becomes more fluent and natural because of unplanned language use.

For the second dimension, the use of input data during task-performance is discussed. Getting help from the input data means that learners use, for instance, the

picture about which they are talking or the text they have read as background (Ellis, 2003; Prabhu, 1987).

In the last part of the “during-task phase”, some groups or pairs present their oral or written reports. Teachers’ giving feedback only on the strengths of the report and not publicly correcting errors increases the effectiveness of the reporting session (Willis, 1996).

The post-task phase

This phase enables learners to focus on the language they used to complete the task, perhaps, repeat the performed task, and make comments on the task (Ellis, 2003).

The teacher can present some form-focused tasks based on the texts or listening tasks that have been examined. This stage is seen as adding accuracy to fluency since it also involves explicit language teaching (Willis, 1996a; Ellis, 2003). The teacher selects the language forms to present, monitors learners while they are performing the “re-task” and notes of learners’ errors and gaps in the particular language forms they use.

Learners are also given the opportunity to repeat the task. Task repetition helps them improve their fluency, use more complex and accurate language forms and so express themselves more clearly (Bygate, 1996; Ellis, 2003).

Finally, learners are given the opportunity to reflect on the task they have finished. Willis (1996) describes this part as the conclusion of the task cycle, which is “during-task” in Ellis’s (2003) description of the task-based framework. In Willis’s (1996) description, reflecting on the task means summarizing the outcome of the task. Ellis (2003) states that it is also possible for students to report on their own performance and how they can advance their performance, which are all related to developing their

metacognitive skills, such as self-monitoring, evaluating and planning. In addition to self-criticism, learners are asked to evaluate the task as well, which will, in turn, influence their teacher's future task selection (Ellis, 2003).

Conclusion

Tasks play essential roles in classroom learning processes. Task-based instruction is an approach that emphasizes the significance of the role of tasks in learning process. As learners in EFL contexts have fewer opportunities to practice language outside school, classroom activities become primary in language teaching (Nunan, 1989). Therefore, teachers and syllabus designers should pay more attention to the role of tasks and task-based instruction in order to have an effective teaching-learning environment.

In this chapter, background information on the teaching of speaking in historical development to its current place in task-based instruction, more detailed discussion of task-based instruction, its goals, tasks and features of tasks, and instructional components of task-based instruction were discussed. The tasks used for the purpose of this study were also examined in the context of task descriptions in the literature. The next chapter gives information on the participants, instruments, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study explores the effectiveness of task-based instruction in the improvement of learners' speaking abilities. In the study, the answers for following questions are investigated and reported:

1. How effective is the employment of task-based instruction in speaking classes at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in terms of improving students' speaking skills?
2. What are the students' perceptions of task-based instruction in speaking classes at AUSFL?
3. What are the attitudes of the teacher using task-based instruction in her speaking class at AUSFL?

This chapter includes information about participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Participants

The participants are one English teacher working at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) and 45 students of this teacher in two lower intermediate speaking classrooms.

There are one hundred and twelve instructors working at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL). Instructors are free to request the skill concentrations and the levels they wish to teach. In second term, twenty teachers chose to teach speaking to lower intermediate students. In order to make the study more natural, the teacher in the study was chosen on a voluntary basis. The teacher in the study is a Turkish female English teacher with three years of experience in teaching speaking. In order to minimize the effects of teacher variability, the same teacher taught both the control and experimental classes, following the separate lesson designs for each of these classes.

Student participants were 45 lower-intermediate level students in two classes of 25 and 20 students each. Their levels were determined by a standard proficiency test conducted after the first term. Therefore, their language proficiency levels were similar. The willingness of the teacher to take part in the study determined the choice of the two lower intermediate classes serving as subjects in this study. Table 4 shows the participants in this study.

Table 4

The participants of the actual study

Participants	Number
Teacher	1
Students in the experimental group	20
Students in the control group	25

Instruments

In order to collect data in this study, one perception questionnaire, pre- and post-treatment oral tests, and interviews were used. The perception questionnaire (see Appendix A & B) was used to measure perceptions of the experimental group students in response to the use of task-based instruction in their speaking classrooms. The data gathered from the perception questionnaires aimed to answer the second research question exploring students' perceptions of tasks used in the task-based treatment. The same questionnaire was also administered to the control group after three tasks parallel to the ones used in the study. The aim of distributing the questionnaire to the control group as well is to compare the perceptions of both groups towards these similar tasks. The questionnaire also included an informed consent form which informed students about the questionnaires and pre- and post-treatment tests being voluntary and their responses being confidential (see Appendix C & D). The second data collection instrument comprised pre- and post-test oral conversations in which learners' oral language abilities were graded. The aim of these conversations was to observe if learners

improved their communicative language skills by virtue of task-based instruction in their speaking classroom. The data collected through the results of pre- and post-treatment tests were used to respond the first research question investigating the effectiveness of task-based instruction in the study.

Interviews were the third instrument in the study. Pre (See Appendix E) and post treatment interviews (see Appendix F) were conducted with the participating teacher. The purpose of these interviews with the teacher was to have her presuppositions, perceptions and feelings about using task-based instruction. This part of the data aimed to answer the third research question, the perceptions of the study teacher in using task-based instruction. A focus group interview (see Appendix G & H) were conducted with 6 learners, 3 female and 3 male in the experimental group after task-based treatment by the researcher. This interview was conducted in order to have learners' detailed ideas and feelings about task-based instruction after the treatment and after their oral post-treatment test sessions. The data from these focus groups were used to respond to the second research question in respect to student attitudes towards task-based instruction.

The perception questionnaire was administered to the students in the experimental group after each of the 11 tasks in the treatment. The questionnaire was adapted from the perception questionnaire developed by Webster, Trevino, and Ryan (cited in Egbert, 2003). In Egbert's thesis, the questionnaire attempted to measure students' perceptions of 'flow during language classes'. However, in my own study, responses to the questionnaire were used in a more generic way to sample the degree of positive or negative affective student responses to particular TBI lessons. The original

questionnaire has 14 items. In my adapted questionnaire, the number of the items was increased to 16 items by adding 2 additional questions. These items, 8 and 16, were added to investigate students' perceptions of the difficulty of the tasks and use of extended tasks instead of the course book materials. The original questionnaire items were 7-point Likert-scale type questions. However, in my study, a 4-point Likert-scale was used. Since the questionnaire was administered after each task in the treatment, I felt a shorter scale would elicit more spontaneous student responses. Participants were asked to choose from among 4 responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Responses from this questionnaire also addressed the second research question, the experimental group's perceptions of the use of task-based instruction in speaking classes.

The pre- and post-treatment tests consisted of oral tasks related to the topics in both speaking classrooms. The scoring of the oral interviews was prepared in accordance with the standards for the existing oral exams in Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL). These oral interviews were done in student conversational pairs and were conducted and scored by two experienced teachers. In my study the participants were lower intermediate students. Therefore, the pre- and post-treatment oral test tasks in the study were in correspondence with the tasks that participant students studied in their regular classrooms. The procedure for the pre- and post-tests was as follows: The pre-treatment test was designed by the researcher while the post-test was designed by the school administration since it was the actual midterm exam. However, the questions were similar in each test. The tests were run in the school by four scorers. Students took the exam in pairs. The tests comprised role-playing tasks.

Each pair was required to choose a slip from an envelope and read it aloud so that the other member of the pair could know their role. On the slips, there were different situations. Each student on their own was expected to prepare a conversation based on the chosen slip in one minute. When they were ready, they started the conversation and the raters observed them. Students repeated the same procedure for another set of situation slips. After students finished the role-playing and left the classroom, raters scored their performance individually by using the current oral assessment rubric (see Appendix I). Raters then compared their grades and if there was more than 10 points difference between the grades, raters negotiated a common grade through discussing the performance.

Data Collection Procedure

In November, I obtained oral informal permission to conduct my study from the Head of Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages. The formal written permission was given on the first of March.

In the first week of March, I requested four instructors to be the interview raters/interviewers in pre- and post-treatment oral tests. After I assigned the four raters to the student groups, I arranged a schedule of the pre-tests. The oral interviews as pre-tests were administered by the 4 raters to students in pairs after their regular classes in the afternoons on March, 9 and 10, 2005. The interviewers were also in pairs. In order to control inter-rater reliability, to some extent, one half of experimental and one half of the control group students were graded by one pair of raters, and the other two halves of the groups were assessed by the other pair of raters. Raters were unaware whether individual

pairs of students came from the control or experimental classes. Each pair of students was interviewed for 10 minutes by two raters. Following each interview, the raters individually graded each student's performances for 5 minutes. Since there were 45 participants, students formed 22 pairs, (one student was interviewed in a group of three students). One group of raters interviewed 23 students (11 pairs), and the other group interviewed 22 students (11 pairs). Therefore, the whole of the oral conversation interviews lasted 3 hours on each of two days. Table 5 shows the raters and participants in the pre- and post-treatment tests.

Table 5

Raters and participants in pre- and post-treatment test oral conversations

Raters	1 st pair of raters	2 nd pair of raters
Number of students	22 participants in 11 pairs	23 participants in 11 pairs (one group was a group of three students)
Student groups	13 participants from control group 9 participants from experimental group	12 participants from control group 11 participants from experimental group

Table 6 shows the interview schedule in detail that each pair of raters will follow in the pre- and post-treatment oral tests.

Table 6

Interview schedule for each rater for both pre- and post-treatment oral tests

	Number of pairs	Duration of each pair interview	Total time
1 st day	5	15 minutes 10 minutes: actual test 5 minutes: grading	75 minutes
2 nd day	6	15 minutes 10 minutes: actual test 5 minutes: grading	90 minutes

Task-based instruction treatment in the experimental group started on March 11, 2005 and ended on April, 1, 2005. The treatment lasted 4 weeks in the experimental group. The scheme of the tasks in the treatment of the experimental group is displayed in detail in Table 7.

Table 7

Tasks in the treatment of experimental group

Tasks and Task types Name - Dates	Purpose	Description
TASK 1 Pre task- elicitation 11-03-2005	Ordering in a restaurant To convey the meanings of particular vocabulary items in a context	This task is a kind of introduction to the unit.(ordering food) A context is created for learners to elicit the meanings of words. Then they are supposed to act out the given conversation.
TASK 2 Ordering and sorting (Willis) 16-03-2005	Ordering in a restaurant To enable students to work on a jumbled conversation to order it again in a meaningful way	Students are given a conversation between a customer and waiter. They are firstly supposed to categorize the sentences belonging to either the customer or the waiter. Then, they are expected to order these sentences in a meaningful conversation. After they elicit the expressions to order food in a restaurant and take the order.
TASK 3 Real-world (Nunan) *role-play 17-03-2005	Ordering in a restaurant To enhance real life rehearsal on the given topic and build fluency in using the target expressions	Through eliciting the expressions in the previous lesson and using them, they prepare a similar conversation in pairs, and role play it with their pairs
TASK 4 Real-world (Nunan) *role-play 18-03-2005 Problem solving (Willis) *role-play 18-03-2005	Ordering in a restaurant To enable students to practice previously learned structures in contexts they prepare. To foster students' problem solving skills	Reminding the students the target structures through a multiple choice list of questions, students are given different situation cards by which they will prepare their own conversations in a more controlled way. Students are all given the same special situation. According to this situation they are again supposed to prepare a conversation and practice it in pairs.

TASK 5 Real-world (Nunan) *role-play 21-03-2005	Making requests To practice the following linked target structure, offering and refusing something politely.	Students are given situation cards and expected to design a dialogue with their partners. (6 situations used)
TASK 6 Pre task- elicitation 23-03-2005	Making requests To enable learners elicit target language structures through examining sample conversations	Learners are given two sample conversations, one from their book and one from outside sources. They find the similar expressions in both conversations and discuss them in pairs.
TASK 7 Information gap (Willis) 24-03-2005	Giving directions To practice how to ask for and give directions (See Appendix J)	Each student in pairs is given 2 maps. Since it is an information gap activity, one has the information that the other one does not have. Student A asks student B for a direction and the other student give the directions. According to the given directions, St. A finds the place on his/her map.
TASK 8 Pre-task - conversation analysis 30-03-2005	Giving directions To raise students' attention towards the target language functions (asking for and making requests) (maybe a pre task activity)	Students are given different conversations to analyze them according to a checklist called 'request analysis' to see whether certain expressions are used in the conversations or what types of structures are used.
TASK 9 Real-world (Nunan) *role-playing 30-03-2005	Giving directions To enable students practice the elicited target language functions through role playing.	Students are supposed to prepare conversations for the given situations in which they will use target functions elicited in the analysis task.

TASK 10 Creative (Willis) 30-03-2005	Making requests Requestions (jazz chant) To familiarize students with the target language structures through rhythmic chants of these structures, and enable them to practice the pronunciation and intonation of these structures.	Teacher firstly practices the jazz chant of the particular structures and then let learners practice it in pairs.
TASK 11 Problem solving (Willis) 01-04-2005	Free theme To foster cooperative learning, to give the opportunity to negotiate for meaning, to enhance their creative thinking skills.	Learners are given a short tale jumbled and lacking the ending. Then in pairs they are given the parts of the incomplete story in a randomized way and expected to reorder them and create an ending for it.

All tasks were designed by the researcher with the participation of the class teacher. During treatment courses, students were given one or two tasks in a class hour based on the task-based approach. After each task, perception questionnaires were administered to the students. By the end of the treatment, they had completed 11 questionnaires. On each questionnaire, students were directed to write the number of the task and the date. The class teacher distributed the questionnaires after each task and collected them back. Each questionnaire was tagged by a student code. She also filed these questionnaires chronologically. The researcher analyzed all the questionnaire responses at the end of the study.

At the end of the treatment, post-treatment paired oral conversations tests, similar to the pre-treatment tests, were administered to the 2 groups of 45 students on April, 7 and 8, 2005. The same procedure as in the pre-treatment test was followed in the post-treatment tests. Students took the oral conversation tests in pairs after their courses in the

afternoon as they did in the pre-test oral conversations. The post-test trials lasted for ten minutes each over a 3-hour period on each of two days, as in the pre-test oral conversations.

The test tasks used in the pre- and post-tests are direct performance-referenced test tasks. They are simulations of real-world tasks that are accomplished through role-plays. Test takers are given one minute of planning time to organize their speech. The simulation situations for which students are assigned to improvise a small conversation with their pairs are purposeful and authentic because they are given real-life situations in which they negotiate. The topics are appropriate to students' age and culture, and they aim to be focused on students' interests. Raters are two non-native, English teachers, one male and one female. They are interlocutors for the tasks with the face-to-face pairs. The setting is their regular classrooms. Some artifacts used in task performance are considered helpful to build a more realistic environment. For example, students make use of a menu in order to role-play ordering in a restaurant simulation in one task test. As input data, test-takers are given role slips on which their roles and situations are conveyed. Attention is paid to explain the instructions by raters according to test-takers' language proficiency. As the assessment criteria, analytic criteria are used consisting of these components: task achievement, grammar and structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, intelligibility and comprehension. The two raters assess each test-taker individually after students leave the classroom. Following each test task, raters negotiate a common mark for each student's performance.

At the end of the post-treatment test oral tests, a focus group interview with six of the experimental group students, predetermined on a voluntary basis, were held in

order to learn more about learners' feelings and attitudes toward the use of TBI. The data collected from the focus group interview contributed to answering the second research question, concerning the perceptions of students of task-based instruction in their speaking courses.

At the completion of the study, the teacher was also interviewed in order to investigate her perceptions of using task-based instruction in her classroom. In the interview session, I brought all the materials used in the task-based treatment, using these to stimulate recall. I noted her feelings, ideas and suggestions regarding the task-based treatment sessions.

During the treatment, the control group had their usual speaking courses. They were also instructed in the same target language functions stated in Table 7-ordering in a restaurant, making requests and giving directions. However, the way these functions were taught in the control group was different from the way they were presented in the experimental group. The control group did only role-play tasks as specified in the course book. The experimental group did a variety of task types included in the researcher-designed lesson plans. Other task types comprising the treatment instruction (listed in Table 7) included elicitation, ordering and sorting, information gap, analysis, creative and problem-solving tasks. These were not included in the current syllabus of the control group. Since the purpose of this study was to explore student reactions to task-based instruction, only the experimental group completed perception questionnaires after each task experience. However, for the purpose of comparing the reactions of the control group towards tasks, after three textbook activities which were similar to the tasks

implemented in the control group, questionnaires on those tasks were administered to the control group.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the study were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences, 13.0 (SPSS). In measuring the quantitative data collected after the study, means and standard deviations of the pre- and post-treatment oral tests in the experimental and control groups were compared using t-tests. Also, the data from students' responses to the perception questionnaires was analyzed quantitatively. Lastly, the interviews with study teacher and students were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively by the researcher.

The statistical data obtained from the Likert scale questionnaires completed by the students were also examined using SPSS programs. Means and standard deviations for all student responses for all tasks were compiled. Individual student responses were inspected for patterns of responses to individual tasks as well as to task-based instruction more generally. Total mean responses for the 11 tasks were ranked from most favored to least favored task. This gave a measure of student affective response to particular tasks and task types.

Qualitative data collected from the student focus group discussions as well as from the pre- and post-treatment teacher interviews were compiled and coded by the researcher (See Appendix H). Analyses of these were also directed to responses to research questions two and three.

Conclusion

This chapter gives general information about the aim of the study, listing the research questions the researcher attempts to answer, the participants in the study, instruments used, data collection procedures and data analysis. In the next chapter, the data analysis done using the above-mentioned statistical and qualitative methods to answer the research questions will be detailed.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The major focus of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of task-based instruction on the development of learners' speaking skills in speaking classrooms, their perceptions of task-based instruction and teacher's attitudes towards this approach.

This study aims to address the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. How effective is the employment of task-based instruction in speaking classes at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL) in terms of improving students' speaking skills?
2. What are the students' perceptions of task-based instruction in speaking classes at AUSFL?
3. What are the attitudes of the teacher using task-based instruction in her speaking class at AUSFL?

This study was conducted with two groups of lower intermediate students in their speaking courses. The first group was the control group and the other was the experimental group. While the control group followed their current speaking syllabus,

the experimental group had two hours of their eight-hour speaking classes per week based on task-based instruction with task-based exercises created by the researcher and the experimental class teacher.

This chapter includes the findings about the effects of task-based instruction in developing lower intermediate learners' speaking skills at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages, and teacher's and students' perceptions of TBI. The data analysis will cover both qualitative and quantitative data collected.

Quantitative data

The quantitative data for this study were gathered through two kinds of instruments. The first set of instruments comprised oral tests which were administered to both the experimental and the control groups before and after the task-based treatment. The pre-test was designed by the researcher while the post-test was designed by the administration since it was the actual midterm exam. However, the questions were similar in each test. The tests were run in the school by four scorers. Students took the exam in pairs. The tests comprised role-playing tasks. Each pair was required to choose a slip from an envelope and read it aloud so that the other member of the pair would know their role. On the slips, there were different situations. Students on their own were expected to prepare a conversation based on the chosen slip in one minute. When they were ready, they started the conversation and the raters observed them. Students repeated the same procedure for another set of situation slips. After students finished the role-playing and left the classroom, raters scored their performance individually by using the current oral assessment rubric. Raters then compared their grades and if there

was more than 10 points difference between the grades, raters negotiated a common grade through discussion of the conversations. A second set of instruments for collecting quantitative data comprised perception questionnaires. The questionnaire was distributed to the experimental group during the treatment after each of 11 tasks. Also, three questionnaires were distributed to the control group after three tasks from the current course book tasks which were similar to the tasks used in TBI treatment. The aim was to compare the affective responses of both groups on these three tasks. In the perception questionnaire there are 16 statement items. Items were designed on a four-point Likert-scale and were assessed with values ranging from 1 to 4. The scoring for the positive statements were as follows: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1. The negatively stated items, 3, 4, 11, 13, 16, were reverse scored. Responses were sorted according to mean values. Mean values from 1.00 to 2.00 were considered negative, values from 2.01 to 3.00 were considered neutral and values from 3.01 to 4.00 were considered positive for the purpose of the perception questionnaire analysis.

In order to analyze the data gathered through the results of pre- and post-treatment oral tests of the two groups, a paired samples *t*-test was run to investigate the effects of TBI treatment and standard instruction within the experimental group and within the control group respectively.

The data collected through the 11 perception questionnaires distributed to the experimental group were analyzed by calculating the mean values and standard deviations. The purpose was to explore the students' interest in each task and to investigate which tasks students liked most in terms of the mean values for the tasks.

The three questionnaires administered to the control group after three similar tasks in TBI treatment were analyzed in the same way. Mean values of both groups for these three tasks were compared to investigate whether the tasks used in TBI treatment were responded to more or less positively than in the control group.

The results of pre- and post-treatment oral tests

In order to analyze the data gathered through the pre- and post-treatment tests, four paired samples t-tests were computed. Two paired samples t-test examined within group comparisons, and two of the t-tests comprised between groups comparisons.

Within groups comparison

The purpose of the within groups comparison was to explore the effects of TBI treatment on the experimental group and the existing treatment on the control group. Therefore, pre- and post-treatment test results for both groups were compared within the groups.

Table 8

Within group comparison results for the experimental and control groups

Groups	N	M	MD	sd	t	Sig.
Pre-experimental	20	68.30	7.05	15.12	-2.02	0.058
Post-experimental	20	75.35		7.64		
Pre-control	25	62.24	6.84	12.14	-2.58*	0.016
Post-control	25	69.08		9.58		

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

*p < .05

Table 8 shows that experimental group averaged 68.30 on the pre-test, and 75.35 on the post-test. The mean difference of the experimental group's exam results was 7.05, and this difference is not at a significant level.

Table 8 also shows the pre- and post-test results of the control group. As can be seen from the table, control group scored 62.24 on the pre-test, and 69.08 on the post-test. The mean difference of control group was 6.84. The t-test result shows that the control groups' improvement was statistically significant.

Between groups comparison

The purpose of the two paired samples t-test between groups was to investigate the impact of task-based treatment on the subjects' oral test scores. These t-tests were computed to compare the groups in terms of their pre- and post-test scores. Table 9 demonstrate the between groups comparison t-test results for the pre- and post-treatment tests.

Table 9

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

Groups	N	M	MD	sd	t	Sig.
Pre-experimental	20	68.30	6.06	15.61	1.30	0.207
Pre-control	25	62.24		12.14		
Post-experimental	20	75.35	6.27	7.64	1.45	0.163
Post-control	25	69.08		9.58		

Note. N = Number; M = mean; sd = standard deviation; t = T value

*p < .05

Table 9 shows that the experimental group scored 68.30 on the pre-test while the control group scored 62.24 on the pre-test. The T result shows that the difference between both groups' pre-test scores was not significant.

Table 9 also shows that the experimental group scored 75.35 while control group scored 69.08 in the post-test. The t-test results display that the difference between the improvements of both groups in the post-test was also insignificant.

Finally, when the Tables 8 and 9 showing the within groups comparison and between groups comparisons were examined, it can be seen that control groups' improvement was significant. However, when the significance level of the experimental group's improvement was taken into consideration, it can be accepted as a noticeable improvement, only slightly above the p value. Therefore, it may be further claimed that experimental group benefited by the task-based treatment at a noticeable degree, but not at a significant level.

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

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

The results of perception questionnaires

As the second data collection instrument, the perception questionnaires were analyzed to investigate the level of effective responses of the experimental group students to the tasks used in the treatment. According to the mean values and standard deviations of students' affective response in the questionnaires, a rank order of tasks in terms of their mean values was developed. Table 10 shows the rank order of the tasks in the study.

Table 10

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

Rank	Task number	M	sd
1	11	3.11	0.70
2	9	2.98	0.79
3	4	2.94	0.69
4	1	2.81	0.77
4	3	2.81	0.72
6	2	2.75	0.75
7	8	2.72	0.74
8	6	2.71	0.77
9	7	2.70	0.79
10	10	2.66	0.73
11	5	2.51	0.77

Note. M: mean; sd: standard deviation

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

Table 10 shows that when examining questionnaire responses to all the tasks, only Task 11 has a positive mean value, being over 3.01. In other words, students responded to this task more positively than to any other task. Additionally, in the focus group interview, Task 11 was the first task the students recalled. This task was viewed as the most interesting and appealing task for the students based on their commentaries in

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

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

Table 11

Mean values for the responses in Tasks 1, 2, 3 and 4 to Item 6

Statement in Item 6	Task	M
This task was fun for me.	1	3.04
	2	3.04
	3	3.19
	4	3.16

Note. M: Mean

Table 11 indicates that Tasks 1, 2, 3, and 4 were responded positively in terms of students' finding these tasks as "fun" activities. The commonalities of these tasks were that they were pair-work activities and required role-playing. These first four activities were also related the topic 'ordering in a restaurant'.

Furthermore, Tasks 4 and 9 received positive mean values for another statement in the questionnaire: Item eight. Table 11 shows the mean values of Tasks 4 and 9 for the eighth item.

Table 12

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

Statement in Item 8	Task	M
This task helped me extend myself.	4	3.22
	9	3.47
<u>Note.</u> M: mean		

Table 12 shows that Tasks 4 and 9 were responded positively as being challenging tasks for students that helped them extend themselves in terms of language use. Task 4 (see Table 7) was a real-world activity, and in this task students were given different situation cards about ‘ordering in a restaurant’ around which they would prepare their own conversations. Task 9 (see Table 7) was again a real-world task in which students were supposed to prepare conversations for the given situations in which they would use target structures for the function ‘giving directions’.

Table 11 and 12 show that Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9 were responded to positively in terms of particular questionnaire items. It should be also noted that there were no negative responses for these tasks for the rest of the questionnaire items.

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

Table 13

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

Task number	Group	N	M	sd	t
5	Experimental	25	2.51	.46	0.52
	Control	22	2.44	.31	
6	Experimental	21	2.53	.54	-0.80
	Control	23	2.65	.39	
9	Experimental	23	2.85	.48	0.29
	Control	23	2.81	.47	

Note. N: number of students; M: mean; SD: standard deviation; t = T value

As Table 13 shows, there is no significant difference in mean values for any of the tasks between groups. For Tasks 5 and 9, the experimental group's mean values are slightly higher, while for Task 6 the control group's mean value is slightly higher. However, in each task, the standard deviation is higher for the experimental group. Higher standard deviations in the experimental group show that there is more variation and perhaps more individual students who are more interested in the task in the experimental group.

In order to investigate the individual attitudes towards the three tasks, mean values for these tasks as responded to by both groups were compared. Table 14 shows the distribution of students' responses in both groups towards the three tasks.

Table 14

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

Task Number	Groups	Responses		
		Negative (1.00-2)	Neutral (2.01-3)	Positive (3.01-4)
5	Experimental	2	19	4
	Control	2	19	1
6	Experimental	2	13	6
	Control	2	18	3
9	Experimental	1	14	8
	Control	0	17	6

As can be seen in Table 14, in each task, more students were interested in the task in TBI than in the existing treatment. Students mostly responded to the tasks in a neutral way and few students responded to the tasks negatively in either group.

Individual students who responded to the tasks with high positive interest in the experimental group were analyzed. The results showed that 2 students were interested in all three tasks, 4 were interested in two of the tasks, and 4 were interested in one of them. This indicates that 16 students did not indicate positive interest in these particular tasks. The distribution of interest is thus not random. Particular students might be thought to have positive attitudes towards the tasks and TBI.

According to these results, it might be concluded that TBI can be used in some parts of the curriculum with standard textbook-based instruction in order to motivate the students who respond to TBI and the employment of the tasks positively. Moreover, based on the students' answers in the focus group interview, attitudes towards the tasks used in the treatment were positive. Students even reported that they would prefer to

have the treatment through the end of the term, since they felt the tasks increased their participation in the speaking classes. However, it is necessary to identify each student's preferences and try to accommodate task-based instruction or spread the task-based activities throughout instruction so that all students get some TBI instruction. In terms of identifying personal preferences, the theory of multiple intelligences may help the teacher to follow a teaching pedagogy that appeals to each person's individual language learning style (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, a needs analysis might be conducted to identify those specific kinds of tasks which appeal to particular student profiles.

Qualitative data

The purpose of the interview questions which were directed to the study teacher before and after the study and to six students from the experimental group after the study was to investigate the perceptions of the teacher and students towards the employment of task-based instruction in the speaking classes. The results of the interviews will be presented in two parts: pre- and post-interviews with the study teacher and the focus group interview with the students.

Pre- and post-interviews with the study teacher

The pre-interview with the study teacher was conducted by the researcher before starting the study. The interview included questions concerning the teacher's ideas about task-based instruction, her presuppositions about how the task-based treatment would take place in the experimental group, her ideas about the existing course book, the possible changes anticipated in her teaching methods and techniques, her ideas about the possible differences in the experimental and control groups during and after the study,

and her ideas about using questionnaires after each task in the treatment. After the pre-interview, she was briefed further on task-based instruction by the researcher.

The post interview with the study teacher covered almost the same questions as in the pre-interview. There were 2 extra questions in the post-interview related to the post-test results of groups after the treatment and soliciting her final comments on the implementation of task-based instruction. The data was analyzed in terms of the similar and dissimilar points raised in the pre- and post-interviews.

Ideas about task-based instruction in general, during and after the treatment

Before starting the treatment on task-based instruction, the study teacher had a few of her own ideas about TBI. She thought that TBI is an uncommon approach in the field and that there are few textbooks based on TBI. However, she supposed that the existing speaking course book might be adapted to TBI. She said:

The tasks in the textbook were **available to change** and extend, so they were **beneficial** for this purpose, TBI treatment. They really **increased the interaction** among students.

When the study finished, she maintained the idea that the standard course material was appropriate for adapting into a TBI approach. She said that even after the study period finished, she adapted two of the lessons in the course book to a TBI approach, and students responded to the tasks with higher motivation in both classes. She revealed:

TBI enabled me to be more **flexible**.

...

In terms of modifying the activities. I started to **put the activities** in a **different way**. For instance, I tried to adapt two tasks in the book into task-based activities.

I redesigned the activity myself. They really liked the way it was. In the original activity, students were supposed to produce sentences according to the pictures in the book; however, I changed it into a personal experience task. Therefore, it **attracted students' attention** more because it required them to use their own experiences about the topic. Consequently, they got **more involved in the task**. (T)

TBI in the experimental group

Her presupposition about the implementation of TBI in the experimental group was also positive since the group was harmonious, and students had good communication with her and with each other. Considering the good communication with the study group, she said that she felt comfortable in this class and that no problems would arise during the treatment. Also, she expected high interest in the study as the class dynamic of the group was strong. She reported:

Well, the group we chose for the experimental study is a **harmonious classroom**. The class members have a **good communication**. Therefore, I think the treatment will be implemented in the group well. I feel **more comfortable with this group** while teaching. (T)

After the treatment, she stated that class participation significantly increased, and that even some indifferent students became interested in the class. Communication in the target language among the students increased. She said:

As I said before, **students' participation increased** to a great extent. Even the **most indifferent student started to participate** the lessons. **Communication among students** also **increased**. Actually, the purpose of the tasks was that.

She reported on the tasks used in the treatment and students' reflections on them. In the task-based treatment courses, students seemed eager to start to do the tasks without waiting for her instruction. She also revealed that students were aware of the

fact that tasks increased their speaking time and communication in the lesson and provided them with peer and self-correction.

...Students even got used to starting the tasks **before** I gave the **instructions** for the tasks. Also, through the tasks they experienced **peer and self-corrections** and found the opportunity to practice the language. (T)

Through the treatment, students' class participation grades increased as well. In the focus group interview, students also mentioned this increase in their class participation grades. One of the students regarded having higher marks in participation as a rewarding motivational factor, which in turn increased students' attention towards the speaking lesson.

S6: But when we **received higher grades** the study seemed better to us, I think.

S5: This is a **reward**, teacher, for us (Laughing).

S6: For instance my first in-class participation grade was 22. Then after the study, I started to speak more and my following grades were 25 and 25. **Seeing that I got top grades is a good thing.**

For an overall evaluation of tasks, she said tasks were liked more than she expected. She also emphasized that students responded positively to most of the tasks except for one of the tasks. ('Requests' / Task 10). This task was an example of a Jazz Chant type task. In the task, students were expected to repeat particular statements and questions of 'making requests' to practice the natural stress and intonation patterns of these structures. The study teacher, as a model, read these sentences. Then students were asked to read these statements in the same way in pairs. This task might have been unusual and unfamiliar to them. As well, repetition after the teacher might have been seen as unchallenging. The quantitative data analysis showed that in the rank order by means, Task 10 came tenth among the 11 tasks (see Table 9).

Administration of questionnaires in the groups

Prior to the study, the teacher was curious about the frequent administration of the questionnaires in the experimental group. She suggested that they might affect the flow of the course and lower students' attention towards the tasks themselves. However, she felt that reminding the students of the rationale and importance of the questionnaires for the study should motivate them to fill in them.

Students' attitudes towards questionnaires were as the teacher expected. She reported that students in the groups found filling in the questionnaires odd and somewhat tedious. She indicates her views of the students' reactions to filling in the questionnaires:

They (experimental group students) **did not like the questionnaires** at all. I think the reason was that in normal classes there **was not such a thing** related to **criticizing the course book materials**. They found **filling in the questionnaires odd**. This was the first time they did such a thing, I mean reflected on the task they did. However, when I said that this was necessary for collecting data for the study, they understood the rationale and did it.

She further claimed that the control group was not as resistant to filling in the questionnaires since they were asked to do this only three times, after completing the three tasks thought to be parallel to tasks in the experimental instruction.

Teacher's role before, during and after the treatment

In the pre-interview, the teacher expected to be less active during the study than she was in the current speaking classes and that classes would be more learner-centered. She was also aware that the presentation of particular language functions would be different in the TBI treatment. Trials using new functions and structures take place first in TBI. She said:

Since the treatment will be based on tasks, it will be good for me. It will be good for learners as well, also for their learning, because they will see the **target language forms in a context**, and they will **elicit these forms** from the context on their own. **Before** I do **teach** them **explicitly**, they will have made their own meanings by examining the forms in a context. It is better for them to see the target forms in a context, where and how they are used, rather than an isolated way. For this reason it will be fruitful for students' learning.

She thought some students might not feel comfortable with more learner-centered classes and with the disappearance of presentation, practice and production stages of typical instruction:

However, some **students might not like the sequence in the treatment**, I mean the elicitation, practice and presentation of the target language functions.

However, in the focus group interview, only one of the students voiced dissatisfaction with the different presentation style of instruction in TBI. The teacher reported that during the study she experienced some changes in her pedagogical expectations and teaching style and that students were more active than she was in the classroom. Her role was more one of observation and facilitation than of direct instruction. She presented her idea by stating that:

I was **not dominant** in the classes. I had the **role of observing** students. **Students** played a **more active** role than me. I observed them while practicing the language and detected their mistakes. After practice we together **did the explicit presentation** of the specific structures and then corrected their mistakes that they did in the course of practicing.

She further explained that she became more flexible in terms of designing activities after the treatment finished. Namely, the TBI treatment enabled her to gain insight into different possible kinds of implementation of activities in the course material. She said:

Plus, this study contributed to me in terms of **gaining a different point of view in the task design**... For instance, I tried to **adapt two tasks in the book into task-based activities**. I redesigned the activity myself.

Differences between the experimental and control groups

When the teacher compared the two groups, she was expecting high class participation through the help of tasks in the experimental group. She reported that there would be fewer changes in the control group. Her ideas after the study remained the same since, to her, the tasks in the study enabled learners to participate more actively than the students in the control group. Therefore, the experimental group was seen to be more motivated than the control group. Also, the classes in the control group were more teacher-centered when compared to the experimental group. She thought the reason for this might be the dominance of listening rather than speaking activities in the course material for the control group. She indicated this idea by saying that:

They showed that they were **more motivated**, the experimental group. Even though the listening tasks were more dominant, we **spent more time on speaking in the experimental group** than the control group. Therefore, the speaking time of the students was longer in the experimental group. In other words, they found **more opportunities to practice the language**.

Post-test exam results

The teacher was asked about the non-significant increase in the post-exam results of the experimental group. She reported that despite their positive attitudes to the treatment, the experimental group (being the *experimental* group) might feel exam anxiety at a higher level than the other group. Besides, since the post-treatment oral test represented the lower intermediate students' actual midterm exams, the study group might have been more anxious about scoring higher grades. She expressed her beliefs

about the reasons for the lower post-treatment test results of the experimental group by stating the following:

The first reason might be that the **exam anxiety the experimental group might have experienced**. In the **first exam**, they did not have this exam anxiety and they were **not curious about their grades**. However, in the post-exam they were **cautious about having good grades** and **more nervous**. Another reason may be that raters might have been more strict in the post-test since this test was the official midterm exam, but this is just a guess.

Focus group interview with students

Part of the data on students' perceptions of TBI was gathered through a post-treatment focus group interview with six students from the experimental group. These six students were chosen on a voluntary basis and were "successful students" in terms of their post-treatment oral test scores as well as in terms of teacher judgment. Thus, their comments may not have been fully representative of the larger treatment group of students. However, their reflections in the interview helped the researcher gain insight into the effects of tasks and TBI treatment on individual students and generalize some of their comments to the whole group. This data was analyzed in terms of the commonalities in students' reflections.

Recalling tasks in the study

The first task students remembered was Task 11 (see Table 7), which scored the highest mean value in the rank order of tasks (see Table 9). They reported that this task enhanced their creativity and imagination, and thus aroused their interest. One of them said:

We told our part to our partners and in the end we tried to **create an end** for it. We came up with different endings. (S1)

Another student also agreed that:

It (referring to Task 11) made us to **use our creativity and imagination**. I mean we experienced to think in English. (S2)

The other most commonly tasks recalled tasks were the activities related to the ‘Ordering in a restaurant’ lessons. They found these tasks useful since they built on authentic, daily language use. Moreover, they were content that they had variety of chances to practice newly learned vocabulary related to another topic, ‘making requests’. They supported these ideas by stating that:

I liked this ordering in a restaurant tasks best because it was really one of the tasks that we can **use in our daily lives outside**. (S3)

...

And also there was a task about a tenant and landlord. It was nice. We **extended our vocabulary**, like what tenant, landlord, or real estate is, how we can look for a house. Also, we learned a lot about the **language forms in this topic**. These were good for us. (S1)

One of them also mentioned that having the chance to practice the language through tasks should help them do well in the post-test, which was their actual midterm exam:

They were also very **helpful for our midterm exam**. It was one of the reasons which helped me **increase** my exam **grade**. (S4)

They made similar comments on tasks related to the language used in making requests and giving directions. These tasks enabled students to practice language in different real-life contexts, which re-enforced the learning of particular language structures. They supported these ideas by stating that:

In my opinion, the classes should be like this, the speaking classes. If we learn something related to **daily use of language**, this learning becomes more permanent. Otherwise, we forget these things. (S2)

...

I think these giving directions tasks were **useful**, because when we try to find and go somewhere the very first thing that we will ask is about directions if we don't know how to go there. It was **useful to learn these forms to ask for directions**. (S6)

Specific oral skills fostered through tasks

Students all agreed that tasks helped them practice “live” language and thus improve their speaking ability. They revealed that they gained or improved different language skills through tasks. The common skills they mentioned were related to the speaking sub-skills of fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and vocabulary growth. One of them stated:

For example, I learned how to order in a restaurant in ordering tasks. When I learned these it affected my **fluency, the vocabulary growth, the grammatical structures**. In daily life, it is very important how we behave the person we interact with. (S4)

...

For instance we now can decide on the language we **use in daily life**. We know which one to use, “may or can”, while speaking to a specific person. We **realized this kind of differences** through these tasks. (S3)

Pair work tasks

Tasks were designed mostly as pair work activities. These tasks were intended to increase the communication between students. According to students' reflections on pair work tasks, they pursued this goal and increased interaction among themselves and practice language more. One student said:

In pair work if you know about that topic, you also strengthen what you know while telling what you know to your pair, and in other words you **repeat the things in your mind**. If you don't know anything about the topic, then you **learn** specific things you don't know **from your partner**, such as the pronunciation of

a word. She learns from you, as well, and in the end you **complete each other**. Meanwhile, we **speak English** with **each other**. Therefore, pair work were really **useful**. (S5)

Pair work tasks created contexts for learners to share and exchange ideas in a more comfortable environment and practice with lower language anxiety.

Teacher, I think **working in pairs** is generally **advantageous** because my pair and me are at the same proficiency level, so I do **not get shy** with her, I am rather **comfortable** with her in terms of using language either accurately or inaccurately, etc. (S2)

However, students recognized some negative effects of pair work activities. They mentioned that sometimes in pair work one of the pairs might have been unwilling to participate, and this situation might have in turn discouraged the other pair member. Another point mentioned was that one member of the pair might be careless in performing the task and mislead the other partner, resulting in mistakes and lower motivation. They reported their negative views on pair-work tasks as follows:

In my opinion there is a **disadvantage** of pair work. Sometimes your pair does not want to complete the task, he is **unwilling** to do that. When he is to do it, he **does it carelessly**, I mean in order to get rid of this task as soon as possible. This may also **affect** us in a **negative** way and **lower our motivation**. (S6)

Reflections on the TBI treatment

Students' ideas about the advantages in the study were similar to what the teacher reported in the post-interview. They also agreed that they became more active in the classroom and could score higher class participation marks. They seemed happy to see their improvement in language learning. Comparing with their classes before the study, students realized that their speaking time increased in the treatment, adding to the listening activities in the course material. Also, they reported that classes were so

interesting and entertaining that they were unaware of the passage of time. They supported these ideas by stating that:

S2: I think we started to **actively participate**.

S2: **Shyness disappeared**. I mean when I use inaccurate language, will the others make fun of me or ... I no more care about this kind of things.

S4: Let me give you another example: my **class participation grades** were 18 and 18 before the study started, and I am **not a shy person** I like speaking. After the study they increased and became 22. I became a **more active person** in the classroom.

R: You mean it is also effective on the increase in your grades.

S1: Teacher, plus: we played a **more active role** in the lessons. If we were to do the tasks only in the course book, then we would have done only these tasks and the rest of the class will pass through listening to the teacher's instruction.

However through these tasks we could have practiced English more, and **helped** us in terms of **improving speaking**.

S2: Because the book includes listening activities dominantly.

S3: **Speaking** is actually **more important** for me.

S4: Also the lessons were entertaining and this helped the classes **flow smoothly and fast**. I think learning through entertaining is the best learning style. We didn't realize the class was over.

To the different sequencing of TBI lessons (Presentation with elicitation–Practice–Re-presentation) in contrast to traditional PPP lessons students reflected positively, except for one. They revealed that they liked starting the lesson by eliciting the target functions from a meaningful context. They felt they profited from practicing these functions in different situations in the tasks before the teacher presented the particular language function formally. They also pointed out that although they might have made mistakes while practicing the language before explicit training, this helped them realize and correct their mistakes on their own or with the help of their partners.

S4: In fact, **firstly** we **elicit the forms** on our own. I mean from the conversations distributed to us. When we had difficulty in these language structures, teacher also helped us. We also **empowered our imagination** through

this task (meaning eliciting), by the way there was a question concerning imagination in the questionnaire.

R: It has also a relation to (hesitation) imagination, yes.

S4: To find out how these structures are used, it is like solving crosswords.

S3: When we **find out the mistakes** we did on our own, we learn better. If the teacher writes down the specific structures of the day on the board explicitly, it cannot be a permanent learning for us. We cannot get it directly.

R: Of course, it is **more meaningful to see the structures in a context and elicit them** from it.

The student who disagreed with this kind of instruction favored the PPP format, but she still thought PPP was slightly spoon-feeding. She revealed her feelings by voicing:

S2: But I **don't agree** with you at this point. I think just the opposite is valid for me (meaning PPP method)... otherwise we are shy while practicing the language, we are **curious about** whether the **language** we use is **accurate**. It is better to see the structures before practicing... Maybe this is the easiest way to learn them, but I prefer so.

Furthermore, students said that they wished to continue with these tasks through the end of the term. One of them suggested that the syllabus should include these tasks for the following years:

S2: I would prefer to **go on with the tasks**.

S5: I agree because they were like giving additional information for us. It is **beneficial** for us to gain one more word through these activities. Also, the better English we learn here while graduating from the preparatory class, the better it is for us, so I would like to **go on with this method**.

On the other hand, one of them added that the treatment was not so effective as building communication with a native speaker in a natural context by stating a solution for that:

S6: ...But, I still think that although I learned a lot of topics in English, I am **not able to speak with a native** speaker. In my opinion **we have to have native instructors** to practice only for one hour a week.

Ideas about the pre- and post- tests

Students all agreed that they had higher exam anxiety in the post-test compared to pre-test. Some of them complained about their mood and health problems on the exam day. Another problem was that they exaggerated the issue of having an oral exam and got more nervous because of this. Also, they were not content with their results in the post-test since they expected higher performance and better grades. Although the raters encouraged them to speak a lot and produce a “conversation”, they emphasized that they could not show their real performance in the exam because of nervousness. Their ideas can be reported as follows:

S4: Actually, each of us should have got higher grades after the study, but most of us were **extremely nervous** in the exam...The degree of exam anxiety may change from person to person. Most of us were really excited. In fact, these people can speak English easily outside the exam environment, but the atmosphere in the exam may affect people negatively or positively. They are actually at the level of scoring higher grades.

S5: Teacher, as my friend (referring to S4) stated the common reason might be the **exam anxiety**. Moreover, people may be sick on the exam day. For example, I was **in a bad mood** on Friday, so my exam on that day was also **bad**. Another point is that we **exaggerate the speaking exams**. It is just a chat with two teachers, and these teachers will not make fun of our English.

S2: For instance, our interview teachers were a female and a male. I **received positive messages** from the female teacher while getting negative messages from the male teacher. This really **affected** me. Maybe that was because of me. In the post-interview I was again with these teachers.

S2: I think the interview teachers might **affect** our **performance** and the level of **excitement**. I cannot even smile in the exam because of **the nervousness**.

S3: In the morning of the exam day, while waiting for my turn, **everybody around** me was **asking questions** to people who had their exam about the **exam questions** and the **atmosphere in the interview** room. That also caused me to get more and **more nervous**.

In informal interviews with the raters, the researcher found that they noted that even the student who performed well in the pre-treatment test could not perform at their

actual language proficiency level. The raters indicated that the reason for this might be high nervousness because of these post-tests being actual mid-term examinations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of task-based instruction on the improvement of students' oral skills. In order to explore the possible effects of TBI in students' oral abilities, pre- and post-oral tests were conducted and perception questionnaires were distributed. Mean values for the experimental group's post-test results did not show significant changes, although this group reflected somewhat positively on the TBI treatment in the questionnaires and more positively in the focus group interview. There was a significant increase in the control group's post-test exam results even though they did not receive any training. Although there is limited positive quantitative data on students' reactions to tasks and TBI in general, there is evidence in the qualitative data that experimental group students were interested in the tasks and functioned well in class in using the speaking skills anticipated by the tasks. Both the students and the teacher stated that they wanted to continue with task-based instruction after the experimental period was completed.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

In the literature, quantitative research has been conducted on the comparison between competing methods in second language instruction. Brown and Rodgers (2002, p. 215) state that results of these ‘method-comparison studies’ were unpersuasive. Since the quantitative results of these large-scale studies failed to resolve the ‘which is the better method question’, recent attention has focused more on qualitative data in addressing the question of the effectiveness of instructional approaches. Since these early studies, comparative approach studies thus have tended to be based on collection of quantitative results as well as rich collections of qualitative data. This study can be regarded as a small-scale method-comparison study that aimed to investigate the effectiveness of task-based instruction in the development of learners’ speaking skills. In keeping with recent practice, both quantitative and qualitative results were collected and analyzed.

This study was conducted with two groups of lower intermediate students in speaking courses at Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages. One of the groups was the experimental group. The other group was the control group. The experimental group received task-based treatment. In order to collect data, pre- and post-

treatment tests were administered, perception questionnaires were distributed after the tasks in the treatment, and interviews were conducted with the study teacher before and after the treatment and with six students from the experimental group after the treatment.

This chapter includes the findings and discussion, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the paired samples *t*-tests for pre- and post-treatment test results showed that the control group improved significantly when compared to the experimental group. This result, while surprising and perhaps disappointing, is leveled by the fact that the control group had much lower mean scores overall on the pre-test and thus had much more room at the top for improvement. This unfortunate imbalance of class scores between control and experimental group prior to the start of the study is a consequence of the ‘intact classes’ design. The statistical finding that the control group progressed more significantly between the pre-treatment test and post-treatment test but still had a lower total mean score on the post-treatment test than did the experimental group is statistically problematical and probably should not be unduly emphasized in summarizing findings.

The questionnaire results showed that tasks used in the treatment were responded to positively or neutrally; there were no tasks that were responded to negatively. Moreover, the results of independent sampled *t*-tests run to compare students’ responses to 3 similar tasks in two groups showed that there were more students in the experimental group who responded positively to these particular tasks than in the control group. Although the experimental group improved their scores between pre-test and

post-test and was moderately positive towards the tasks and TBI, their oral interaction improvement was non-significant according to the analysis of pre-treatment and post-treatment test results.

There are a number of possible explanations for the lack of significant improvement in tested speaking skills in the experimental group. Both researcher and teacher were novices in TBI and were learning the approach as the students were learning to perform the tasks. Not all students may respond positively to the TBI format and some students may feel more familiar with and successful in a more teacher-directed PPP format. The treatment period was short; only a quarter of the experimental speaking classes were based on task-based instruction, and the post-test proved unexpectedly threatening in that it was the actual midterm exam of the students.

The main reason for the non-significant changes may be that the duration of the study was short. Considering that it is difficult to expect immediate improvement in students' oral skills, it is arguable that a four-week treatment time was simply not long enough to measure positive changes in their oral abilities. Even though there were some individual students who improved significantly in the experimental group, total results did not show the same significant improvement. Again, this suggests that some students will thrive in the more student-directed TBI format and others will thrive in a more traditional teacher-directed PPP format. Another possible reason for the non-significance in the treatment and students' improvement is that students might have not been able to perform well in the post-test. Based on the evidence revealed in the focus group interview, students were not content with their performance in the exam although they were competent at doing tasks in class.

The lack of intensity of exposure of task-based classes in the study can be another reason for the non-significance of the changes in the study. Students are taught speaking for eight hours per week. In the study, in only two hours of the eight hours were students learning via TBI exercises. The reason for this was that students were required to follow the current syllabus. Although the tasks in the study were designed parallel to the activities in the current course material, TBI could not be implemented for all “speaking instruction” hours in a week due to administrative constraints.

According to students’ reactions in the focus group interview, students complained about the higher exam anxiety on the post-treatment test due to the fact that the results of this test comprised their mid-term marks as well as being part of the research study. When individual differences are taken into consideration, some of the students appeared to be affected negatively by their anxiety and failed to show their best performance.

In spite of the non-significant differences in the improvement of students’ oral skills before and after the treatment, students in the experimental group were positive towards the tasks and TBI. Also, the study showed that students in the control group responded to similar tasks in the course book less positively than the students in the experimental group based on the perception questionnaire analyses.

An interesting result is the lower SD’s in the post-tests for both groups compared to the SD’s in the pre-tests for both groups. The students in both groups became more alike in their responses and display of oral skills. Whether this was a result of increasing student familiarity with each other over the course of the term, an incidental mirroring

affect of pair and group work, or an artifact of scoring is difficult to say. This could be a focus for study in a future investigation.

The data analyses of the perception questionnaires show that the experimental group responded to the tasks mostly in the neutral range. While one of the tasks was responded to positively in the study, none of the tasks were responded to negatively. Also, the discrete item analyses of two statements in the questionnaire (Items 6 and 8) show that Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9 were fun and/or challenging for the students. The reason for these tasks being favored as fun and challenging activities might be that these tasks were real-world tasks where students worked with a partner and did role-playing. The way these particular tasks were designed can be a guideline for creating new tasks for future studies.

In spite of positive responses to particular statements in the questionnaire, overall analysis of the questionnaire reveals that tasks used in the treatment received dominantly neutral, partially positive, but no negative responses. The reason for this can be that although students might have liked the tasks, filling in the questionnaires might have been distracting and regarded as an extra burden for them. The results may, in fact, reveal a generally modest interest in TBI and the tasks within the study. Even though the focus group responded positively to the idea of TBI and individual tasks, it is arguable that the ideas of six “volunteer” students in the interview might not be generalizable to the rest of the group.

The analyses for the comparison of 3 similar tasks between the groups also proved that there were more students who responded positively to the tasks designed in TBI treatment than to the similar tasks in the current course book. The reason for that

can be explained in two ways: students might really have liked the tasks or it might have been only the novelty effect which caused students to respond positively.

The qualitative data gathered through the focus group interview indicated that students were interested in the tasks and the TBI treatment classes. They noted that the treatment helped them use language more by expanding the course book activities, participate more actively in the lesson and communicate with their friends more in English. Again, these were results reported by the students in the volunteer focus group who benefited from the treatment most and were among those whose exam results increased in the post-treatment test.

Pedagogical implications

Although the results of the study did not show any statistically significant changes in the improvement of students' oral abilities, they indicate that tasks used in the treatment aroused students' interest in the speaking classes and increased oral communication in the classroom, which was the aim of the treatment. This study shows that it is worth experimenting further with task-based instruction in classrooms and exploiting the role of tasks in students' higher motivation in classroom language learning.

In this study, TBI treatment was based on the adaptation and the extension of the materials existing in the speaking syllabus at AUSFL. In order to follow the current syllabus, TBI was implemented only in one fourth of the speaking classes per week. The implementation was for four weeks. In spite of the short period of the study and low rate of TBI treatment in the study, the results show that students' attitudes towards the tasks and the implementation were either positive or neutral.

Also, in the post-interview, the study teacher reported that students' reactions to the tasks in the course of treatment were positive. Changes occurred in the TBI classroom in a positive direction in terms of student's interest in the lesson and the rate and complexity of language produced by the students through the help of tasks.

Based on these results, this study may contribute to the course and syllabus design in schools and institutions. The curriculum and the syllabus designers may make use of the findings of the study when constructing educational programs. The idea of adapting course material to a task-based approach can be considered as a contribution to the development of alternative methods for creating more effective learning environments. It may be that some students work better in some instructional formats than others and should be supported in working in that format which best suits their learning style. It may be that some combination of TBI and other presentational mixes such as ESA (Engage-Study-Activate) or PPP (Present-Practice-Production) or CRA (Clarification – focus-Restricted Use – Authentic Use) may provide an appropriate instructional mix for all students (Harmer, 1998).

Related to program design, implementation of TBI as an alternative teaching method can be a part of the teacher training program as well. Teachers, especially novice teachers, may not be familiar with this kind of instruction or its implementation within current approaches. Therefore, teachers should be trained about procedures for adapting course materials in their current syllabi into tasks and about mastering the phases of a task-based instruction. Like teachers, students should also be informed about task-based instruction, the tasks, their aims, what students are expected to do as a result of tasks

when students are taught through this approach. Namely, consciousness-raising about the use of tasks and the TBI approach is necessary for both teachers and students.

Limitations

This study had certain limitations in examining the effects of task-based instruction on the improvement of students' speaking skills. The limitations of this study resulted from the duration of the study, the selection of the groups, the inadequacy of implementing full task-based instruction through the whole eight hours of instruction each week, the design of the tasks, the inability of the researcher to observe the implementation of the treatments, and the limited amount of qualitative data.

The length of the treatment was short, which is an important limitation of the study. Excluding the week of piloting given only to the experimental group, the experiment lasted for four weeks, which is a short time for this kind of experimental study. As well, only two hours a week out of the four weeks was devoted to TBI. Thus the whole experimental period lasted only eight hours.

The selection of the groups was another important limitation for this study. The groups were chosen based on the intact classes of the class teacher who was teaching the two classes. The groups chosen for the study were not identical in their oral language proficiency level before the treatment started. The students in the experimental group had significantly higher mean values for the pre-treatment test results. This situation might have affected the statistical findings and the qualitative data analysis as well.

Another limitation of this study is the inadequacy of implementing full task-based instruction in the whole eight hours in the experimental group. The reason for this was that all the lower intermediate classes had to have equal language training at school.

In other words, there are ethical constraints as dictated by the university in terms of providing all students with equal language learning opportunities. Therefore, the researcher was able to implement task-based instruction only in one fourth of speaking classes per week.

In the design of the task-based lessons in the study, not all the three recommended phases of task-based instruction were followed because of the parallel syllabus expectations of all classes. For instance, in the “idealized” post-task phase of task-based instruction, learners are given the opportunity to repeat the task; however, in the study, students did not repeat the completed tasks. Another example from the study was that students did not reflect on the task they had completed although it is a part of post-task phase in most TBI design sequences.

Because of the time constraints, the researcher could not observe the implementation of the treatments in the experimental group. How the teacher carried out the treatments was not recorded. Even though the study teacher was trained in task-based instruction by the researcher, because of both the inexperience of the researcher and the study teacher, there might have been some inadequacies in the training and treatment.

Lastly, collecting more qualitative data could have given the researcher the chance to gain more insight into students’ individual ideas about the effects of the TBI treatment. The qualitative data which was gathered from the focus group interview was not enough to make a strong statement about the whole process. Conducting interviews with all the students in the experimental group would have been useful for more reliable

evaluation of the tasks and the treatment. However, due to time and scheduling constraints, the focus group interview included only six students from the experimental group.

Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the study, several suggestions for further research can be made. Studying task-based training in speaking again with a larger number of participants at different levels of proficiency over a longer period of time, emphasizing qualitative research, and investigating other teachers' interest in task-based approaches could be interesting areas of research. As well, implementing mixes of approaches appropriate to student needs and styles and teacher preferences might be a more realistic approach to introducing new pedagogical ideas and would not be so subject to the "all or nothing" perspective typical of trialing new pedagogical enthusiasms.

First of all, because the results of the study show patterns of change in students' speaking skills and their interest in the speaking lessons, task-based instruction as an alternative teaching method is worth exploiting in educational contexts. In the study, adapting the existing course book material contributed to the development of the positive student attitudes towards the speaking course. It is also important to note that, the limitations of this study might be a reason of the non-significant mean value improvements in the post-test results of the experimental group. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to make the claim that the processes in the treatment are ineffective for developing learners' speaking skills. If the implementation of the procedure was carefully planned over a longer period of time, the results might prove to be more

positive. Therefore, in future research, a similar study could be replicated with a larger number of participants for a longer period of time. Also, future research might examine the effects of task-based instruction on different proficiency levels. This study included students who were all at lower intermediate level. Future research with students of different language proficiency levels is necessary to be able to generalize the findings of further studies.

Future research is also necessary to investigate the effects of task-based instruction on students' oral skill improvement from a more qualitative point of view. The experiences of the students who are involved in task-based instruction can provide valuable information about the implications of the processes. More interviews with different groups of students or one-to-one conferences with the participants would provide insights concerning the effects of tasks and task-based instruction. This process of gathering individual reflection can even be integrated into the implementation process. Along with the perception questionnaires distributed right after each task in the treatment, reflection papers on the tasks could be asked of the participants. Having the written form of participants' ideas on the effect of this treatment in terms of developing their speaking skills would provide important contributions to the literature. As well, the qualitative research might focus on the relationship between the students' backgrounds and their attitudes towards speaking. Whether students like speaking in their native language, the syllabi they follow in their departments and their personal characteristics and other possible background features may have important influences on students' participation in the treatment processes.

Lastly, another interesting research area would be to explore the attitudes of instructors towards the employment of task-based instruction in speaking or other skills. However, before investigating their ideas about this subject, instructors need to be informed about what task-based instruction is, how it could be implemented, what kinds of strengths and weaknesses it may have, and be presented with multiple examples of task types and their designs. After the training, early research could be carried out through use of perception surveys as well as by conducting interviews with instructors.

Conclusion

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

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Task number:

Date:

Please consider the task that you have just completed. Please indicate your answer by circling the appropriate number and give **only one** answer for each statement. Please do not leave any **unanswered** questions.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	This task excited my curiosity.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
2.	This task was interesting in itself.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
3.	I felt that I had no control over what was happening during this task.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
4.	When doing this task I was aware of distractions.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
5.	This task made me curious.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
6.	This task was fun for me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
7.	I would do this task again.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
8.	This task helped me extend myself.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
9.	This task allowed me to control what I was doing.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
10.	When doing this task, I was totally absorbed in what I was doing.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
11.	This task bored me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
12.	During this task, I could make a decision about how to study to complete the task.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
13.	This task was too long.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
14.	This task aroused my imagination.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
15.	I would do this task even if it were not required.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
16.	I would prefer doing the tasks in the book as they are.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

APPENDIX B
ALGI ANKETİ

Algı Anketi:

Lütfen aşağıdaki cümleleri okurken öğretmeninizin az önce derste kullandığı aktiviteyi göz önünde bulundurunuz. Her bir cümle için **tek cevap** veriniz ve cevabınızı uygun rakamı yuvarlak içine alarak belirtiniz. Lütfen **cevaplanmamış** soru bırakmayınız.

İsim:

Aktivite numarası:

Tarih :

(1) Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

(2) Katılmıyorum

(3) Katılıyorum

(4) Kesinlikle katılıyorum

No	İfadeler	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1.	Bu aktivite bende merak uyandırdı.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
2.	Bu aktivite kendi içerisinde ilginçti.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
3.	Aktivite boyunca olanlar üzerinde kontrolüm olmadığını hissettim.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
4.	Aktiviteyi yaparken dikkat dağıtan şeylerin farkındaydım.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
5.	Bu aktivite beni meraklandırdı.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
6.	Bu aktivite benim için bir eğlenceydi.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
7.	Bu aktiviteyi tekrar yaptım.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
8.	Bu aktivite sınırlarımı aşmama yardımcı oldu.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
9.	Bu aktivite yaptığım şeyin kontrolümde olmasına fırsat verdi.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
10.	Bu aktiviteyle uğraşırken dikkatim yaptığım işe yoğunlaşmıştı.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
11.	Bu aktivite sıkıcıydı.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
12.	Bu aktivite boyunca, aktiviteyi nasıl tamamlayacağıma dair kararlar alabildim.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
13.	Bu aktivite çok uzundu.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
14.	Bu aktivite benim hayal gücümü geliştirdi.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
15.	Zorunlu olmasaydı bile bu aktiviteyi yaptım.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
16.	Kitaptaki aktiviteleri oldukları gibi yapmayı isterdim.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear students,

My name is Barış Kasap, I am a student of the MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. I am conducting a study about the effectiveness of task-based instruction in developing your speaking skills and your perceptions of this instruction and the tasks used in this study. This questionnaire is designed for this study. It will be administered after each task in two hours of your speaking course for four weeks.

Although you are required to write your names on the questionnaires, the purpose is merely to compare your responses to the following questionnaires. Your signature on the consent form below will be held separately from the completed questionnaires in order to ensure your anonymity.

Another part of this study is the oral interviews which will be administered on March 7-11. However, the results of this interview will not absolutely affect your speaking grades.

In order to collect reliable data, it is very important that you respond to all questions in the questionnaire each time they are distributed. Please read the questions carefully and choose the best response for you. Your answers and your attendance to the oral interview will contribute to my study. Thank you for your participation.

Barış Kasap

MA TEFL

Bilkent University, ANKARA

bariskasap@anadolu.edu.tr

I have read and understood the above and agree to participate in this study.

Name:

Signature:

APPENDIX D
BİLGİ VE KABUL FORMU

Sevgili öğrenciler,

Adım Barış Kasap ve Bilkent Üniversitesi'nde İngilizce'nin Yabancı Dil olarak Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programında öğrenciyim. Sizlerin konuşma dersinde, ders kitabındaki aktivitelerin değişik işlenmesine yönelik görüşlerinizi ve bu tarz aktivitelerin sizlerin konuşma becerilerinizin gelişmesindeki etkisi üzerinde bir araştırma yapıyorum. Elinizdeki anket bu araştırma için hazırlandı. Bu anket, 4 hafta boyunca haftada 2 ders saatinde yapılan her aktivitenin sonrasında verilecektir.

Anketi cevaplarken adınız istense de, bunun nedeni yalnızca cevaplarınızı devam eden anketlerdeki cevaplarınızla karşılaştırabilmektir. Kimliğinizle ilgili hiçbir bilgi, anket sonuçlarından elde edilen verilerde açıkça belirtilmeyecektir.

Bu çalışmanın bir diğer parçası da yapılan aktivitelerin konuşma yeteneklerinizi ne kadar geliştirdiğini ölçecek olan konuşma mülakatlarıdır. Mülakatlar 7-11 Mart 2005 tarihleri arasında yapılacaktır. Ancak mülakat sonuçları sizin bu dersteki notlarınızı kesinlikle etkilemeyecektir.

Güvenilir veri toplayabilmek için size şu anda ve daha sonra verilecek olan anketlerin tüm seçenekleri cevaplandırmanız çok önemlidir. Lütfen ankette yer alan ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyunuz ve size en uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Cevaplarınız ve mülakatlara katılımınız araştırmaya büyük ölçüde katkıda bulunacaktır. Katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Barış Kasap
MA TEFL Programı
Bilkent Üniversitesi, ANKARA
bariskasap@anadolu.edu.tr

Bu formdaki belgeleri okudum ve arařtırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Çalıřmanın sonunda hibir raporda arařtırmacı tarafından adımın kullanılmayacađını biliyorum.

Adı ve soyadı:

İmzası:

Tarih:

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS OF THE PRE-INTERVIEW

WITH STUDY TEACHER

- 1) What kind of an approach do you think task-based instruction is? What do you think about task-based instruction?
- 2) How do you think TBI treatment will be in the experimental group? Do you have some presuppositions about it?
- 3) Do you think TBI will cause a change in your teaching techniques?
- 4) What kind of differences do you expect between the experimental and control groups?
- 5) What do you think about the course book?
- 6) Do you think the perception questionnaires after each task may affect the course flow?
- 7) Any more comments?

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONS OF POST-INTERVIEW

WITH THE STUDY TEACHER

- 1) How do you think the study was in the experimental group?
- 2) What kind of changes did you observe in the study group?
- 3) Did the students seem content with the tasks? What do you think they feel about them?
- 4) How do you think the perception questionnaire affected the course flow?
- 5) What do you think about the course book? Are the activities available for adapting into TBI?
- 6) Did your presuppositions before the study occur in the study? Were your expectations fulfilled in the study?
- 7) Did TBI cause some changes in your teaching methods?
- 8) When you compared the changes in the experimental group and the control group, what kind of differences did you observe?
- 9) What was your role in the control group?
- 10) What do you think about the performance of the study group in the post-test?
- 11) What about your last comments on TBI and the study?
- 12) Do you ever think of implementing this approach in your classes?

APPENDIX G

QUESTIONS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

WITH STUDENTS

- 1) Are there any specific tasks you remember? What do you have in your minds?
- 2) How did the tasks in the study help you improve your speaking skills, or could they achieve this?
- 3) Did you complete these tasks individually, in pairs or groups?
- 4) What about the advantages and disadvantages of pair work? What is your opinion?
- 5) Were you comfortable with the pair work?
- 6) What kinds of differences did you realize in the classroom after the study started?
- 7) What do you think about the sequence of the tasks in the lesson? Let's remember a specific task.
- 8) Would you like to continue the speaking classes like this, I mean with these activities and tasks?
- 9) What do you think the reason was for some of your friend lower grades in the post-test?
- 10) Do you have further comments?

APPENDIX H
TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
WITH STUDENTS (SAMPLE)

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	CODING
R (Researcher): Welcome. S (Students): Thank you. R: Now, I am going to ask you some questions about the study. Please feel free to say what you think frankly and how you feel while answering the questions. We will go back to the start of the study 4 weeks ago. We will try to remember the 4-week study we did in your speaking courses. You did some tasks prepared by me and conducted by your class teacher during four weeks. Are there any specific tasks you remember? S1: I have, Ma'am. There was an Angora Rabbit task. I liked that activity, for example. A story which lacks its end is divided into two parts and distributed to my partner and me. We told our part to our partners and in the end we tried to create an end for it. We came up with different endings. Nobody could guess the correct ending. S2: That was not the aim, in fact. It made us to use our creativity and imagination. I mean we experienced to think in English. S3: There were different kinds of endings. R: I agree with you. S3: I liked this ordering in a restaurant tasks best because it was really one of the tasks that we can use in our daily lives outside. R: For example, when you go abroad. S3: We almost learned all the forms in that task. S4: They were also very helpful in our midterm exam. It was one	Recall of tasks A creative task Different outcomes by each pair Fostering creativity Real use Structural knowledge

of the reasons which helped me increase my mark. S1: And also there was a task about a tenant and landlord. It was nice. We extended our vocabulary, like what tenant, landlord, or real estate is, how we can look for a house. Also, we learned a lot about the language forms in this topic. These were good for us. S2: In my opinion, the classes should be like this, the speaking classes. If we learn something related to daily use of language, this learning becomes more permanent. Otherwise, we forget these things. R: (to the other students) Do you want to add some other things? S5: I agree with the others. S6: I think these giving directions tasks were useful, because when we go somewhere the very first thing that we will ask is about directions if we don't know how to go some directions. It was useful to learn these forms to ask for directions. R: Plus, when the person you asked for directions answered your question, it is important to understand it properly, in order not to get lost, right? You remembered most of the tasks you did. In fact, the common thing you did in most of the tasks is that you were supposed to elicit the target language functions from a given text or conversation, for example the special structures for asking for directions, ordering in a restaurant, making requests. So how did these tasks help you improve your speaking skills, or could they achieve this? S2: Absolutely, they helped us to gain certain specific structures. S4: For example, I learned how to order in a restaurant in ordering tasks. When I learned these it affected my fluency, the vocabulary growth, the grammatical structures.	Real language Lexical/Structural Knowledge Long-term learning Beneficial structures Daily language use Fluency, various vocabulary items and grammar structures
--	---

APPENDIX I
ORAL ASSESSMENT RUBRIC
FOR PRE- AND POST-TESTS

Interviewer:.....
Student 1:.....
Student 2:.....

COMPONENT		S1	S2
Task Achievement (20)	20		
Topics dealt with comprehensively & relevantly with appropriate details.	16		
Topics dealt with comprehensively with limited details.	12		
Moderate success with topics; some details; some irrelevant data / ideas.	8		
Limited success with topics; some details; includes irrelevant data / ideas.	4		
Inability to deal with topics; includes irrelevant data / ideas.			
Vocabulary (20)	20		
Use of vocabulary & idiomatic expressions accurate and appropriate.	16		
Appropriate terms used, but student must rephrase ideas due to lexical inadequacies.	12		
Communication limited from inadequate & inappropriate vocabulary.	8		
Frequent misuse of words & very limited vocabulary.	4		
Communication impaired from inadequate vocabulary.			
Grammar & Structure (20)	20		
Makes few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar or word-order.	16		
Some errors of grammar & / or word-order, but meaning not obscured.	12		
Some errors of grammar & / or word-order which obscure meaning.	8		
Use of only basic structures and simple sentences, and / or frequent errors of grammar and / or word-order which obscure meaning.	4		
Many errors, even in basic structures, causing impaired communication.			
Intelligibility (15)	15		
Fully understandable, even with influence from mother-tongue.	12		
Some mispronunciations attract listeners attention, yet do not affect understanding.	9		
Frequent pronunciation deviations demand listener's attention / effort.	6		
Hard to understand due to pronunciation deviations; great listener effort required.	3		
Not understandable due to numerous pronunciation deviations.			
Fluency (15)	15		
Speech is fluent and effortless with wide range of expressions used.	12		
Occasional brief hesitations or searching for words, but they do not disturb the listener or prevent communication.	9		
Noticable hesitations which sometimes disturb listener or prevent communication.	6		
Hesitations and fragmentary speech often demand great patience from the listener.	3		
Fragmentary and disconnected speech results in disrupted communication.			

Comprehension (10) <i>(native Turkish speaker preferred).</i>			
Student appears to understand everything said; easy for listener to understand student's intention and general meaning.	10		
Student understands most everything said, yet repetition & clarification necessary; student's intention and general meaning are fairly clear to listener.	8		
Student has difficulty understanding what is said & requires frequent repetition; many of student's more complex sentences cannot be understood by listener.	6		
Student has great difficulty understanding what is said despite frequent repetitions; only simple sentences can be understood by listener.	4		
Overall, what is said by both student and listener is mutually misunderstood.	2		

APPENDIX J
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

ASKING FOR AND GIVING DIRECTIONS

Aim: To introduce the topic ‘giving and asking for directions’, enhance students to think of the topic through guiding questions in the warm-up session and have students to complete the given tasks.

Pre-task (3-4 min)

1. Starting points: Teacher asks:

- Have any of you traveled abroad? If yes, what are the problems you experienced?
- If no, what can be the possible problems you may come across?

Think of the problems you experienced in any city you visit in Turkey you don’t know.

- Is going to the places you don’t know a problem for you? How do you get help when you have problems?

This part is from the course book.

Presentation of new vocabulary in the beginning of the unit:

Aim: To familiarize students with new words and have students learn the correct pronunciation of these words

give (me) a ride	run errands	drop off sth/sb	dry cleaners
do laundry	convenient	cash a check	have got to
jaywalking			

Using the first conversation below: (It exists in the course book.)

- Sts guess the meanings of underlined phrases.

- With the guidance of the teacher, students do a brainstorming about some other errands to run downtown on the board. Two of the students may help the teacher to note them on the board. (e.g. paying your credit cards, do shopping, having a hair-cut, having your hair dyed, buying (bus, plane, train) tickets, etc.)
- Choosing some of the errands from the list on the board, students are supposed to practice the given script by changing the errands in the conversation however they wish.

2. **Introducing the topic:**

- Teacher lets students elicit the expressions about directions looking through the following two conversations. (First one will be listened to, and second one will be handed out)
- Brainstorm words/phrases related to the topic onto the board prepositions/verbs/questions etc.

The first conversation: (*Typescript of the listening text in the book*)

K: Peter, are you going downtown today?

P: Uh-huh. Why?

K: Can you give me a ride? I have to run some errands.

P: Where do you need to go?

K: Well, a lot of places. First, I've got to go to the bank. Could you drop me off at the corner of King Boulevard and Second Avenue?

P: King and second? Oh, sure. I know where that is. But why are you going to the bank? Why don't you use the ATM machine on campus?

K: 'cause I need to cash a check my dad sent me. And the cleaner's is next to the bank. I have to pick up some clothes there anyway.

P: There's a laundry room right here on the first floor. You can do your laundry there

much cheaper.

K: I'm not picking up laundry. It's dry cleaning. By the way is there a photo shop there? I need to drop off some film to develop.

P: A photo shop? Oh, yeah. There is probably one in the drugstore across the street from the bank.

K: Oh, that's convenient. So what are you gonna do downtown?

P: I'm going to the courthouse. I've gotta pay a traffic ticket.

K: No kidding! I'm going there, too. I also got a ticket.

P: But, Kenji, you don't drive!

K: I know, I got a ticket for jaywalking.

P: Really!

K: Yeah, MAN, sometimes I miss living in Japan. I could cross the street and not worry about stupid rules like 'jaywalking'.

The second conversation: (Not from the book)

Teacher gives students the situation below.

"Amanda calls Jeff on the phone to ask him out for dinner. She wants to eat at Mario's pasta."

Then, teacher distributes the following conversation.

A: Hello.

B: Hi, Jeff. It's Amanda.

A: Hi, Amanda. What's up?

B: Well, I was wondering if
you'd like to go for a bite?

(get something to eat)

(have dinner)

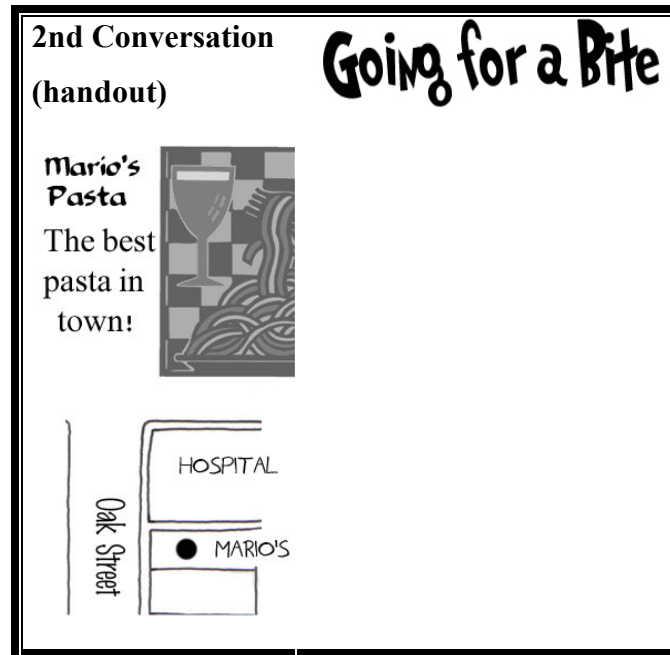
A: Sure. What did you have in mind?

B: I'm in the mood for Italian.
(feel like)

A: I wouldn't mind Italian.
(could go for)

I know a really good place downtown.

B: What's the name of it?



3. Pre-task language activities:

Teacher introduces the listening of a speaker giving directions on the map in the course book and students follow the directions given by the speaker. Play it 2 or 3 times, first time to find the places and second time to note down some language functions on the topic.

Task cycle:

1. Task (2 min): This is an information-gap task. Each student in pairs is given 2 maps (Map A and Map B). Since it is an information gap activity, one has the information that the other one does not have. Teacher gives the instruction that student A is required to ask student B for a direction stated below their maps and the other student give the directions. According to the given directions, student A finds and marks the

place on his/her map. Then, they check the marked places. During the task, students can get help from the sample conversation and use the phrases stated there.

2. Planning (8-10 min): Students in pairs start to complete the task. Teacher can tell them that students can also use body language to give directions to make their conversations more real-like. Then they are supposed to create conversation in the information-gap activity. During this phase, teacher walks around, helps them if they need it and notes down any language points to be highlighted later.

3. Report (8-10 min): Volunteer pairs act their conversation out. Teacher gives feedback on the content and quickly reviews what was suggested.

Language Focus (10-15 min):

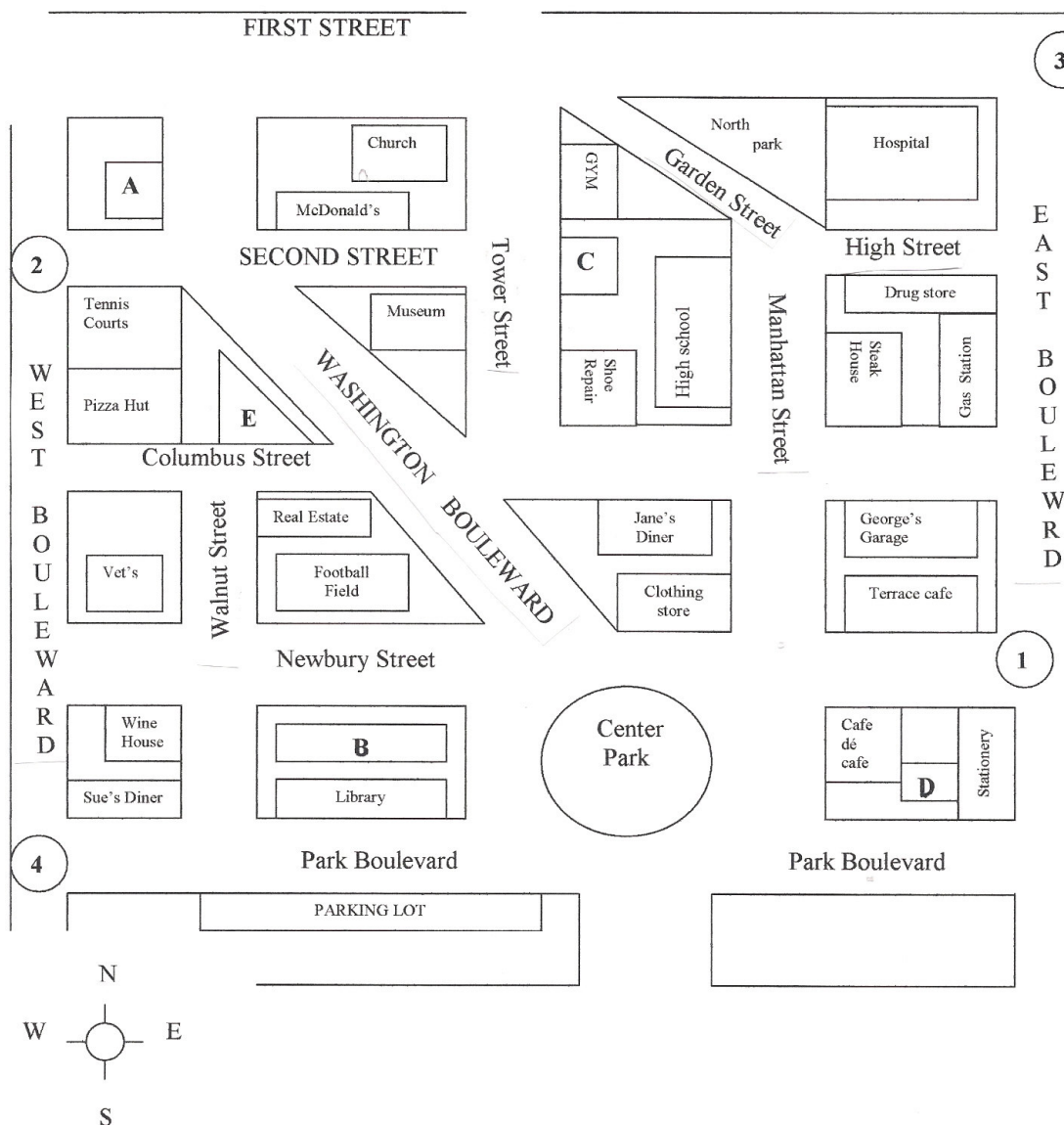
Analysis: Teacher writes on the board five good phrases used by the students during the task and five incorrect phrases/sentences from the task without the word that caused the problem. Students discuss the meaning and negotiate how to correct the wrong expressions.

Then teacher presents the chart below and talk with the students. In fact, they will have already been aware of these expressions; however, to make them clear teacher focuses on each of them.

Expressions for asking for and giving directions:

Asking for directions	Giving directions
How do I get to ...? What's the best way to ...? *** Where is ...? Do you know how to get to ...? How do I get to? I'm looking for.... I'm trying to find....	Go straight on (until you come to ...) Turn back./Go back. Turn left/right (into ...-street). Go along Cross ... Take the first/second road on the left/right It's on the left/right. straight [streɪt] on opposite ['ɒpəzɪt] near [nɪə] next to between [brɪ'twi:n] at the end (of) on/at the corner behind [brɪ'hænd] in front of (just) around the corner traffic lights crossroads, junction [dʒʌŋ(k)(ə)n]

Practice: After covering the list of expressions on asking for and giving directions, they are supposed to practice them with the map in their book on page 71. (If there is enough time and if students' interest is high.)

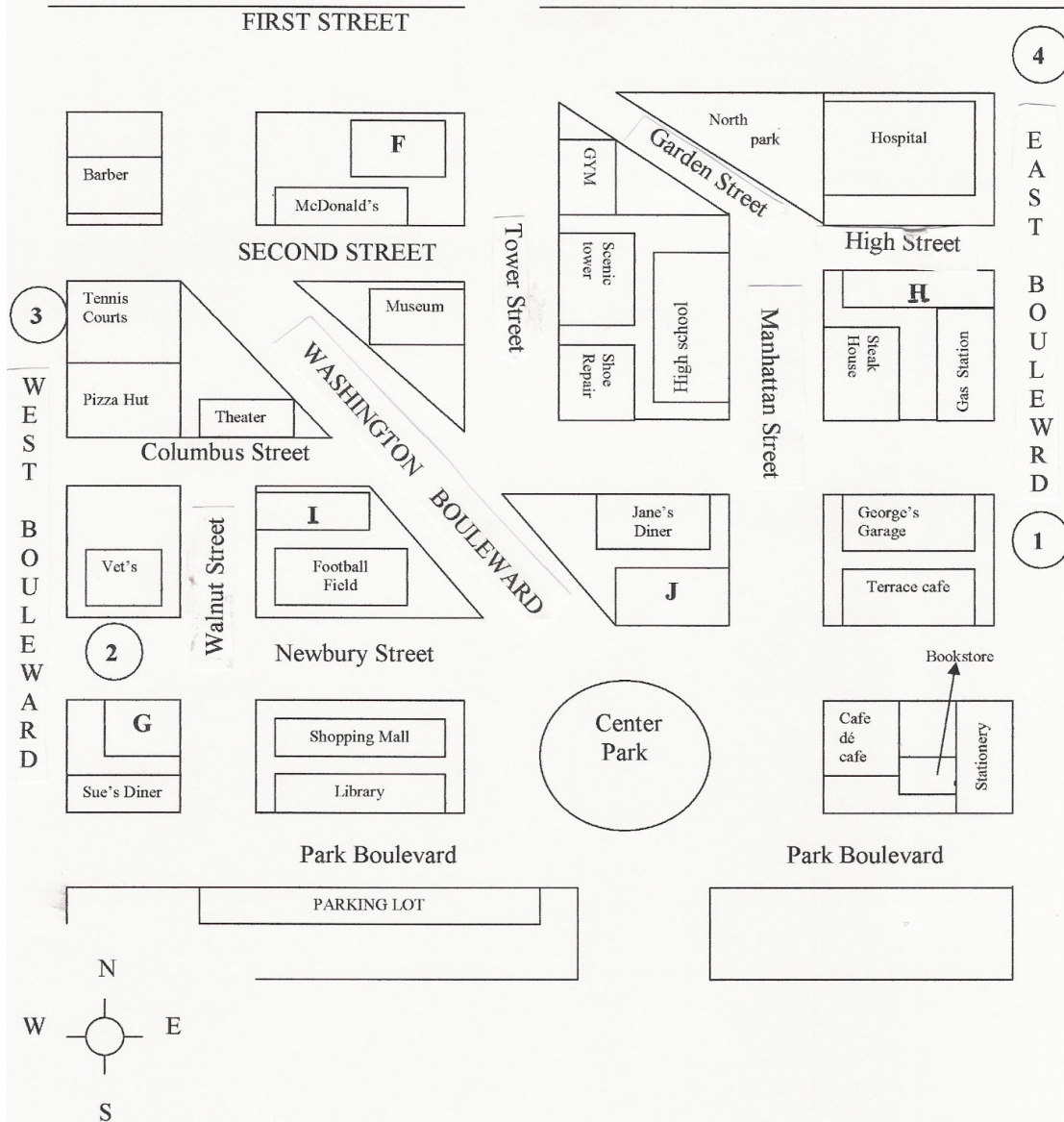


Directions: You want to go to the places stated below, and you are standing on the places marked by numbers. Ask for directions to these places to your friend on the phone.

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
1	Barber
2	Bookstore
3	Shopping Mall
4	Scenic Tower

STUDENT B

MAP B



Directions: You want to go to the places stated below, and you are standing on the places marked by numbers. Ask for directions to these places to your friend on the phone.

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
1	Church
2	Drug store
3	Clothing store
4	Real Estate