Using Task Based Learning to Develop EFL Speaking Skills of the Humanistic Studies' Students of Al-Azhar University

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Abstract

The current study aimed at developing the speaking skills of the Humanistic studies Students through a program based on task-based learning. Sixty one students from the first year humanistic studies college, department of foreign languages and Simultaneous Interpretation, Al-Azhar Univesity, Tfahna branch were drawn randomly to represent the study participants during the second term of the academic year 2017-2018. The researcher employed the quasi-experimental design. The experimental group consisted of 31 students and the control group contained 30 students. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher designed speaking skills questionnaire to determine the most important speaking skills needed for the 1st year Humanistic studies students and validated it by a list of jury members. A speaking skills test and a rubric to score the test were designed and validated by the jury members. Then a program of ten sessions grounded on six units from *"Let's talk 2"* was designed and applied to the experimental group whereas the control group received their regular instruction. The speaking skills test was pre- and post-administered to both the experimental and the control groups. Results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in their speaking skills   in favor of the experimental group. Findings from the current study provided evidence for the effectiveness of the program in developing the speaking skills of the Humanistic studies students and were consistent with the researcher's hypotheses. Finally, some recommendations and suggestions for further research were provided.

Key words*: speaking skills, task-based learning**.*

Introduction

Language is considered the most important means of expressing facts, knowledge, attitudes, and culture. By language, people can communicate. While reading and listening are considered the receptive skills, speaking and writing are the other two productive skills necessary to be integrated in the development of effective communication. Learners in an EFL context don't use the language in authentic situation. So they can't produce language outside classroom. This leads to learners' lack of self-confidence and avoidance when communicating using the target language. Therefore, English speaking skills are considered the most difficult skill to acquire.

Scrivener (2005) defined English speaking skills, as an international means of communication that are necessary for effective interactions amongst people across the world. These are highly demanding, complicated and multi-faceted skills, as one cannot communicate effectively unless he/she is equipped with sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, culture, genre, speech acts, register, discourse, and phonology

Kuśnierek (2015, p3) asserts that "speaking is one of the most difficult skills students may possess since it requires first and foremost a great deal of practice and also exposure to the target language. In addition, it may be perceived as a complicated process in which fluency is identified as the most desirable ability when talking smoothly with a native speaker in the target language. Accordingly, to communicate successfully in a foreign language, learners need not only practicing but also understanding some linguistic elements which are important for verbal interaction and communication".

Aspects of speaking skills

Nation & Newton (2009, p151) viewed that "accuracy is not restricted to the planning and delivery of speech but is also extended to the comprehension of speech". For them, fluency has the following characteristics in all of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing:

First, fluent language use involves "the processing of language in real time".   Second, fluent language use does not require a great deal of attention and effort from the learner. Third, as a skill, fluency

depends on the quality of knowledge of the language, and its development involves the restructuring of knowledge and making the best possible use of what is already known. These three characteristics of fluency, message-focused activity, easy tasks, and performance at a high level, are also the main characteristics of activities designed to develop fluency.

Accuracy and fluency are considered the main speaking skills. They include other sub- skills. Accuracy, for example, comprises using correct pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Fluency involves ; competence in language usage, (listening, comprehending, responding, and communicating effectively), language production using markers in spoken discourse, (introducing an idea, developing an idea, transition to another idea, concluding an idea and emphasizing important information), asking for information and making suggestions, making comparisons, planning and organizing information and reacting to others. (Al- Maghrebi,2014)

Speaking skill is considered a means of interaction and communications   Widiati & Cahyono (2006), Houhou (2013), (Akbar, 2014) indicated that the communicative competence comprises four areas: (1) Linguistic/grammar competence which included the knowledge of grammar rules, lexis, syntax, phonetics and vocabulary of the target language and the ability to use them. (2) Sociolinguistic/pragmatic competence that reflected the knowledge of how to express messages in accordance with the relationship between the speaker, the listener, the topic, and the setting. (3) Discourse competence which was identified as the ability to understand the context and to know how to link utterances of language to make coherent whole and meaningful texts. (4) Strategic competence which was recognized as the ability to manage difficulties that may arise in communication.

Concerning the nature and conditions of speech, Bygate (2001) and McCarthy (2001) indicated that speaking is typically reciprocal, physically situated face-to-face interaction and produced 'on line. Hence, time pressure in speech means that the process of conceptualization, formulation and articulation may not be well planned or implemented, and may need pauses and corrections. These

conditions and processes affect the language that is typically produced. Therefore conditions of oral language features include: 1) Adjustments; hesitations, false starts, self-corrections, rephrasing, and circumlocutions. 2) Syntactic features; ellipsis and parataxis. 3) Repetition via expansion or reduction. 4) Formulaic expressions.

Similarly, Donaldson (2011) identified eight characteristics of spoken discourse. They include: ellipsis, use of heads, chunks and tags, conversational contractions, unique discourse markers and reporting verbs, discourse particles, pausing and repeating and structural Flexibility.

As for speech processes, Bygate (2001, p16) indicated "that the development in the study of oral discourse revealed features of oral discourse and speech production processes which the learners need to learn. These processes include conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring. Conceptualization is to plan the message content by drawing on background knowledge, knowledge about the topic, about the speech situation and on knowledge of patterns of discourse. After conceptualization, the formulator finds the words and phrases to express the meanings, sequence them and put them in an appropriate grammatical markers. The third process is articulation. It involves the motor control of the articulatory organs, in English; the lips, tongue, teeth, alveolar palate, velum, glottis, mouth cavity and breath. Self-monitoring is concerned with language users being able to identify and self-correct mistakes".

Concerning Speech functions, many linguists view that spoken discourse is produced for interaction or for communication. Richards (2008) proposes three functions for spoken discourse; interactional functions, transactional functions and performance functions. In interactional functions speaking serves to maintain social relationships and employs conversational routines and it may be formal or casual. Therefore, the speaker can develop the following sub-skills: opening and closing conversations, choosing topics, making small talks, recounting personal incidents and experiences, reacting to others and interrupting other' speech, and using adjacency pairs and turn-taking strategies.

In transactional functions, speech focuses on the exchange of information; obtaining goods or performing public services. Therefore, the main concern of the participants is based primary on

what is said or achieved and to understand clearly and accurately the message conveyed not to interact socially. Examples are; asking someone for directions, booking a ticket in a train station, ordering and serving food menus in a restaurant, making a telephone call to obtain flight information and involving in classroom discussion and problem solving. To achieve the transactional functions the speaker can develop the following sub-skills; explaining a need or intention, describing something, asking for clarification and confirming information, justifying an opinion and making suggestion, making comparison, and agreeing and disagreeing.

Performance or public speech is the third type of talk. According to Richards (2008) in public speech the speaker transmits information before an audience such as morning talks, public announcements and speeches takes the form of monologue rather than dialogue and it has identifiable generic structure with predictable organization and sequencing. Public performance is evaluated according to its meaning and effectiveness and impact on the listener with more emphasis on form and accuracy. Examples of talk as performance include   giving a class report, a lecture or a speech of welcome. Conducting a debate or making a sale presentation are more examples.

Teaching Speaking

For Willis (1996) the progress in second language learning   does not occur when people make a conscious effort to learn only. Yet it occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms, which are activated when learners are involved in communication with the second language. The subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners are focused not on the language itself but on the communication of meaning. Thus, in a communicative task, the students' attention should be focused on the content of what they are saying, rather than the form. Thus, they should use a wide variety of language.

Therefore, oral language learning depends mainly on the exposure to comprehensible input, motivation to practice, manipulating the language in meaningful context and finally a focus on the form. According to Ellis (2006), this can be done by involving learners in performing two types of communicative tasks: focused communicative tasks and unfocused communicative tasks. Both of

these tasks seek to engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language. They seek to develop language proficiency through communication.

"Another key direction for development is to explore further how fluency, accuracy and complexity can be integrated, in particular, through the use of different combinations and sequences of activity types. One sequence would start with complexity and accuracy activities and move to fluency activities, putting students under increased time pressure to formulate and attempting to force them to 'automatize'. An alternative would be to engage learners' fluent processing to begin with and only subsequently lead them to integrate accurate language features into that fluent 'base'" (Bygate, 2001, p19)

For language learning to take place, Al-Hosni (2014) admits that; there are four conditions that should exist, namely; exposure to the target language, opportunities to use the language, motivation, and instruction. Thus, learners need chances or learning contexts to say what they think, feel or experiment how to use the language they have heard or learned in a supportive atmosphere, without threatening feeling.

In teaching speaking, drama techniques are important for enhancing motivation. Bobkina (2015) confirmed that drama activities have the power of blending the classroom environment and the language actually employed in everyday human interactions when reproducing real life situations in classroom tasks. As drama activities involve both the learner's intellectual and emotional sphere, create a meaningful, pleasant and low-stress atmosphere, and provide a range of language functions when recreating authentic communicative contexts.

Donaldson, (2011,p 43) confirmed that Leaners should be taught general conversational structure sequences, such as conversation opening, turn-taking, closings, topic management and negotiation, interrupting or insertion sequences, and repairs. Besides, he suggested some other common pragmatic structures and issues that the second language learners should be taught. These pragmatic structures include: apologies and apology formulas, compliments and compliment responses, conversational implicature, interjections and intensifiers, modality or using modal verbs, refusal formulas, request, and thanking formula.

Techniques for teaching speaking:
Questioning

Behnam& Pouriran (2008) admitted that; questions are the most important strategy used by instructors to enhance speaking and other cognitive skills. Different types of questions include high-level cognitive questions which help students to use higher order thinking or reasoning skills. By using these skills, the students are not forced to memorize only factual knowledge, instead, they use their skills and knowledge to analyze, evaluate and solve the problem using the target language.

According to Alshenqeeti, (2014, p 40), questioning is an essential strategy of the spoken discourse that is used by instructors to foster communication in classroom discourse. In this strategy, the linguistic element of discourse produced by a speaker, or a group of speakers is integrated into a given context and may well affect the manner in which discourse is created and maintained. He investigates various functions for questions such as "information-seeking", "information-checking" and "clarification questions". Other functions for questions include giving information, assurance, or a warning. Finally, in terms of the interactional functions of questions, questions can be requests or elicitations. These functions are the core of classroom work and discussion in the pre stage in a task-based activity.

Role-play activities

To overcome fear of speaking, role-play seems to be an efficient speaking exercise in which much time is devoted only to speaking in the target language either in pair work or in group work. Kuśnierek (2015) acknowledged that role-play activities are of great advantages. They develop learners' fluency in speaking providing them with a wide range of language functions such as apologies, greetings, etc. Therefore, learners' focus is put on the communication of meaning rather than on the appropriate use of language. Role-playing also develops learners" imagination and creative thinking.

Similarly, Saleh (2017) admits various advantages for role play tasks in teaching speaking. The first advantage is that it develops creative thinking which enhances motivation in learning a new

language and is necessary for learning to occur. Second, it introduces real world situations to the learners. Third, a role play is mostly a learner centered as it gives the learner the freedom to take control of the conducted activities and at the same time it is an opportunity for the teacher to co-research the students speaking performance and recognize their mistakes or problems.

Negotiation as a main factor to develop EFL speaking skills

Bygate (1987) argues that, in speech, mutual understanding is assumed to have taken place by the end of conversation as a result of negotiation in which speaker follow certain procedures to insure comprehension and understanding of meaning. The most important of these procedures are; checking understanding, paraphrasing and using metaphor and vocabulary to give examples or analogies so as to vary the degree of precision with which we communicate. Giving and receiving feedback is another important characteristic of interaction routines used to check understanding of meaning and to negotiate it.

Nation & Newton (2009 p 109) admits that; the integration of active listening and speaking while the listener negotiates, provides feedback and shapes the spoken message is very important for developing EFL speaking skills. As part of the skill of listening is learning how to take an active role in providing feedback to the speaker, this feedback and questioning is called negotiation.

The role of the teacher in teaching speaking

In teaching speaking, the role of the teacher varies from a controller, a guide and a facilitator. According to Houhou (2013), a teacher can act as a controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, and observer or investigator. She views that a teacher should act as a controller just in a few stages of the lesson such as introducing or announcing new language/rules, restating directions/orders, explaining things, giving feedback or providing learners with opportunities to learn and practice easily in the communicative activities, otherwise learners will lose the desire to learn.

An organizer is another role for the teacher when teaching speaking. The organizer has different roles allocated with different stages with the activity. He engages, then instructs, after that, initiates and finally organizes feedback. In the introductory stage, he engages or familiarizes the learners with the new topic or activity by

discussion or brainstorming. In the instruction stage, the organizer gives precise demonstration and check students' understanding of the instruction. In the initiation stage, the organizer just reminds the students of the instructions or time and the students do the activity without any intervention of the teacher. In the feedback stage, the organizer gives the organized feedback or comment on the oral activity. (Harmer, 2001) cited by Houhou (2013)

The role of the teacher as an assessor is to give feedback to the learners concerning their performance, and to correct them and grade them. The prompter is to encourage the learner to participate when they are in lack of vocabulary and/or inspire them with ideas when they are confused while playing roles in the activities. The role of the teacher as a participant is not limited only to offering feedback and correcting mistakes, yet he may participate in the activity (role-play, discussion) under the condition that they do not dominate the session.

As a resource, the teacher gives the learners needed help during the activity. He may provide them with information, vocabulary meaning or pronunciation. As a tutor, the role that can be performed by the teachers when the learners are engaged in an individual work or project work combines both prompter and resource roles. In addition, he guides provides care and support.

Finally as an observer or investigator, a teacher observe what is going on around him in the classroom such as observing the effectiveness of activities, grouping, techniques, procedures, evaluations, and learners' behavior. The teacher is acting as an investigator in order to improve and promote his own skills and work as the learners and to give feedback or judge the success of the different materials and activities. (Houhou,2013)

Types of speaking activities:

In terms of the number of students involved, EFL speaking activities can be classified into individual and group activities. Individual activities such as story-telling and public speech are usually transactional, while group activities such as role-plays, paper presentation, debates, small group/panel discussions are interactional. (Widiati & Cahiano, 2006) Spoken interaction activities include discussions, communication, pre-planned questionnaire and finally, an interview. (Kuśnierek, 2015)

Testing speaking

In testing speaking, the standards of students' speaking proficiency are used. These standards indicate how the students have good command of English and   they include what functions of language should be mastered by students and what type of evaluation should be used to assess students speaking proficiency. Widiati & Cahiano (2006) indicated that; once the standards for students' speaking proficiency have been determined and the language functions included in the instructional materials, the next thing to do is to test the students speaking proficiency. Then they assert that an important part of assessment is what criteria is used to judge students' performance (e.g., students speech comprehensibility, organization of the spoken materials, and the ways the messages are delivered) and the quality categories of the students' performance are; (e.g., superior, advanced, intermediate, and novice)

Richard & Rogers (2001 p 223) view that Task-Based Language leaning (TBLl) refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. And it is a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching since it draws on several principles that formed part of the communicative language teaching movement from the 1980s. These principles are; activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning, and finally language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Ellis (2003:64) acknowledged that Task-based Language Learning refers to teaching a second/foreign language that seeks to engage learners in interactional authentic language use by having them perform a series of tasks. It aims to both enable learners to acquire new linguistic knowledge and to procedure their existing knowledge. Its main characteristics are; 'Natural' or 'naturalistic' use of language, Learners- centered rather than teacher controlled learning, and focus on form (attention to form occurs within the context of performing the task; intervention while retaining 'naturalness'

She identifies three different approaches to using tasks in language pedagogy;:

1- The initial approach to the design of task-based teaching is

humanistic language teaching.

2- Another approach to task-based teaching is the 'procedural syllabus. It includes a series of meaning-focused activities comprising of pre-tasks, which the teacher carried out with the whole class, preceded by tasks where the learners performed with comparable activities on their own.

3- The final approach to the design task-based teaching is called the process syllabus. Although the procedural syllabus offers a description of tasks to be implemented in the classroom, the process syllabus is built up through negotiation between the instructor and the learner

Hassan (2014) acknowledges the essence of task-based learning is to actively engage learners in authentic learning activities and to put learners in the kinds of situations in which they need to use these skills. As educators, the more they participate in the learning process, the more they learn. And the more they use the foreign language (written or oral), the more they retain and improve their language skills. Moreover, task based instruction provides comprehensible input and promotes communicative interaction among the learners using the target language. This can be done by providing learners with natural context for language use. By this way the task-based approach along with content-based instruction provides the learners with meaning-full input and an opportunity to acquire the language through interaction.

Pedagogical task is also defined by Nunan (2004) as a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

According to Skehan (1998) & Nunan,(2004) there are five key characteristics of a task. First, the linguistic output represents the outcome of the task and basically relates to meaning that is based on real word activities. Second, meaning is primary so learners are not given other people's meaning to regurgitate. Third, there is some sort

of relationship to comparable real-world activities. Fourth, task completion has some priority, and finally the assessment of the task is conducted in terms of outcome.

Nunan (2004) views that tasks and functions are obviously closely related and any task and will be supported by at least one (and sometimes several) functions. Therefore, tasks can be thought of as functions in addition to context. They allow for functions (and grammar) to be activated in a particular communicative context. For him, there are seven principles underlying the instructional sequence of tasks. They are scaffolding, task dependency, recycling, active learning, integration, reproduction to creation and reflection.

Nation &Newton, (2009, p6) indicated that; producing the language spoken or written as a task outcome is essential and has three functions. (1) the noticing/triggering function, (2) the hypothesis testing function, and (3) the metalinguistic (reflective) function. **The noticing/triggering function** occurs when learners are attempting to produce the second language and they consciously notice gaps in their knowledge. So they search for and produce a word form, whereas receptive learning involves having to find a meaning for a word form. Then generative use involves meeting or using previously met language items and produces deeper learning than the simple retrieval of previously met items.

The second function of output is **the hypothesis-testing function**. This involves the learner trying out something and then confirming or modifying it on the basis of perceived success and feedback. This hypothesis-testing function is particularly important in interaction when learners negotiate with each other or with a teacher to clarify meaning. The feedback provided in negotiation can improve not only the comprehensibility of input, but can also be a way for learners to improve their output.

The third function of output is **the metalinguistic (reflective) function.** This involves largely spoken output being used to solve language problems in collaboration with others.

A fourth function involves **strengthening knowledge of language items** through the way they are used. The most effective use is called "generative use" where the learners use the language items in ways that they have not met or used before. Additional functions

involve developing discourse skills such as turn-taking and skills for dealing with communication problems, developing a personal voice or manner of speaking. These are skills that can only be acquired through active participation in meaning-focused speaking. (Nation &Newton, 2009 p6)

Principles for Task based Approach

Richard &Rodgers (2001, p226) view that task based learning relies on three principles that are essential for second language acquisition, they are;

1- Tasks provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition. So, adequate opportunities for productive use of language are critical for full language development. SLA research on negotiation and interaction along with task-based language teaching (TBLT) proposes that the task is the pivot point for stimulation of input–output practice, negotiation of meaning, and transactional focused conversation. This view focuses on the critical importance of conversation in language acquisition.

2- Task activity and achievement are motivational. That means tasks improve learner motivation and therefore promote learning. This is because they require the learners to use authentic language, and they have well-defined dimensions and closure.

3- Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes. Another claim for tasks is that specific tasks can be designed to facilitate the use and learning of particular aspects of language.

In addition to the former principles, Richard &Rodgers (2001, p172) admit that   task-based learning is founded on the communicative view of language and language learning which is based on the fact that Learners learn a language through using it to communicate. Besides, authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities. Another important factor in task-based learning is that fluency is an important dimension of communication which involves the integration of different language

skills, and finally learning is a process of creative construction that involves trial and error.

Pedagogically, Nunan (2004) points out that task-based language teaching has strengthened six principles and practices;   a needs-based approach to content selection, an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation, the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself, an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning and finally the linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

Task based learning frame work

The stages and the learning conditions of the task-based learning:

Willis (1996) indicates that Tasks can be used as the central component of a three part framework:

1- "pre-task," as an introduction to the topic and the task,
2- "task cycle," which focuses on fluency and 3-"language focus" which is for accuracy and can be maintained in the post-task phase." These components have been carefully designed to create four optimum conditions for language acquisition, and thus provide rich learning opportunities to suit different types of learners. These learning conditions in task-based approach are:

Learners get **exposure** to the target language at the pre-task stage, and a chance to recall things they know.

The task cycle also gives students opportunities to ***Practice and use*** whatever language they have, both in private (where mistakes, hesitations, and approximate renderings do not matter so long as the meaning is clear) and in public (where there is a built-in desire to strive for accuracy of form and meaning, so as not to lose face). Another important condition is **motivation** which is provided mainly by the need to achieve the objectives of the task and to report back on it. Success in doing this can increase longer term motivation.

Finally, a focus on form is beneficial in two phases in the framework; in the planning stage before the private task and in the

public report which promotes close attention to language form. As learners strive for accuracy, they try to organize their reports clearly and check words and patterns they are not sure of. In the final component, language analysis activities also provide a focus on form through consciousness-raising processes.

Analyzing Tasks for Task-Based Teaching and Learning:

Nunan (2004) analyzed tasks in terms of several components, such as: *goals* (to be expressed as micro-behavioral outcomes), *input* (spoken, written, or visual; it can be in a range of input authenticity, as long as it stimulates language learning), and *procedures* (related to task types, which covers fluency versus accuracy, skill getting versus skill using, and procedural authenticity). Other features of Nunan's (2004) analysis of tasks are *teacher and learner roles* and *instructional settings* in which task occurs.

Whereas Oxford (2006,p97) analyzed tasks to include the following dimensions: task goals, task types, high versus low stakes, input genre and modality, linguistic complexity, cognitive load and cognitive complexity, interaction and output demands, amount of planning allowed or encouraged, timing, teacher and learner factors, and (as influenced by prior factors) overall task difficulty

Task type

Ellis (2003) proposes four types of tasks; (1) A focused task can be either a consciousness raising activity, where the focus is on examining samples of language to explore particular features of it or a task used to encourage the comprehension of, and/or the use of, particular language forms (i.e., a citation or simulation activity.(2) Unfocused tasks that encourages the learners to use freely any language they can master, without concentrating on just one or two specific forms.(3) Pedagogical tasks which have a psycholinguistic basis in SLA theory and research but do not necessarily reflect real-word tasks, Pedagogic tasks could be Rehearsal task such as role- play and activation tasks such as spot the difference in role-play. (4) Real word tasks.

Task components

The definition of a language learning task requires specification of six components: the goals, the input (linguistic or otherwise), the

activities derived from this input, and finally the roles implied for teacher and learners and the setting.(Willis,1996) (Nunan,1989 ,2004) ,(Oxford,2006), and(Ellis,2006)

Goals

The communicative goals according to one early version of a task-based curriculum, the Australian Language Levels (ALL) project, are subcategorized into three goal areas, they are establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, acquiring information from more or less 'public' sources in the target language and listening to, reading, enjoying and responding to creative and imaginative uses of the target language. (Nunan,1989 ,2004)

Task goals may differ according to whether there is a single, common task goal or multiple task goals. According to Oxford (2006) potential task goals fall into three main groups (1) Focus on meaning in which learners receive chunks of ongoing, communicative L2 use, presented in lively lessons with no presentation of structures or rules and no encouragement for learners to discover rules for themselves. (2) Focus on form within a communicative, meaningful context by confronting learners with communicative language problems (breakdowns) and causing them to take action to solve the problems, this is an analytic syllabus. 3) Focus on forms by means of presenting specific, preplanned forms one at a time in the hope that learners will master them before they need to use them to negotiate meaning. In addition, potential task goals include learning how to learn, that is, learning to select and use particularly relevant learning strategies and understanding one's own learning style.

Task input

'Input' refers to the spoken, written and visual data that learners work within the course of completing a task. This data can be provided by a teacher, a textbook or some other source. So it refers to the language data which the learner is exposed to. Nunan,(2004) indicates that; task input can be generated by the learners themselves. Influenced by Krashen's hypothesis, comprehensible input was a necessary and sufficient condition for SLA. Although it is widely recognized that comprehensible input is very essential for language acquisition, it is not sufficient if not followed by interaction and

production. When input is negotiated and learners produce output in interaction, they selectively take in portions of comprehensible input and choose a correct linguistic form to express themselves. This process makes it possible for the learners to internalize what they have learned and experienced

Task activities

Nunan (1989) acknowledged that designing activities for tasks is related directly to the input as they specify what learners will actually do with the input in the task. There are three ways of characterizing activities; rehearsal for the real world; skills use; and fluency/accuracy focused. According to one early version of a task-based curriculum, the Australian Language Levels (ALL) project, three principal activity types are used in task-based learning: information *gap*, reasoning gap, opinion gap.

Willis (1996: 149) proposes the following types of tasks of TBLT; (1) Listing: including a brainstorming and fact-finding. (2) Ordering, sorting: including sequencing, ranking and classifying. (3) Comparing: this type of task includes matching, finding similarities, or differences. (4) Problem solving: this type of task includes analyzing real situations. (5) Sharing experience: these types of tasks include narrating, describing, exploring and explaining attitudes, opinions, and reactions reasoning, and decision-making. (6) Creative tasks: these include brainstorming, fact finding, ordering and sorting, comparing and many other activities

Task output

Nunan (1989), (2004), (2006), Willis (1996) Ellis (2003), emphasized the importance of students' providing comprehensible output in task situations, often through interaction with others. Task interaction may be one-way, as in one person talking and the other listening or writing notes. It may be two-way as in two individuals engaged in an information-gap task or sharing personal experiences. It may be multi-way, as in a group discussion, role-play, or simulation. Thus, the nature of negotiation of meaning varies qualitatively according to different tasks of different types of interaction

The learners' role:

'Role' refers to the part that learners are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants.

Richards & Rodgers (2001, p 235) propose a number of specific roles for learners for TBL. Some of these overlap with the general roles assumed for learners in Communicative Language Teaching while others are created by the focus on task completion as a central learning activity. Primary roles that are implied by task work are: Group participant, Monitor, Risk-taker and Innovator

Based on the communicative view of language learning, learner has an active, negotiated role and can contribute as well as receive. Therefore, good language learner is critical, reflective and autonomous strategy-user, goal-setter, self-evaluator and task-analyzer. (Oxford, 2006)

The instructor's role:

Teachers can take many different roles in regard to L2 tasks. Nunan, (1989), Willis (1996), Richards and Rodgers (2001) Oxford (2006) mentioned the following task roles for teachers: selector/sequencer of tasks, preparer of learners for task, pre-task consciousness raiser about form, guide, nurturer, strategy-instructor, and provider of assistance.

Settings :

Settings' refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task. It also requires consideration of whether the task is to be carried out wholly or partly outside the classroom. Learners might be grouped physically within the classroom in different ways. Therefore the setting of the classroom varies according to the type of task and it changes within different stages of the task procedures. So the learners may be arranged to perform individual work, pair work, small group work, interaction group work, or whole class work in one task chaining - procedures. (Nunan, 2004)

Task stages and procedures

In the framework of task-based learning, Willis (1996) recommends a sequence of three stage-procedures; pre-stage, task cycle and language focus, each stage consists of several steps. First,

the **pre stage** which focuses on task and topic introduction through brainstorming ideas using personal experience, using topic-based odd-word-out games, reading a text on which the task is based or by teacher highlighting words and phrases related to new structures .

Second, in the **task cycle** stage, students will perform the task while the teacher monitors, encourages and supports the students' performance without correcting errors. The last step in the task cycle is the post task listening to recordings of fluent speakers doing the same task.

Third, in the last stage which is the **language focus**, text and context **analysis** are provided by the teacher to select, highlight and elicit from the students words, phrases and structures used in the task and related to the topic. Finally, the last step in the language focus is **practice** in which teacher conducts practice activities as needed, based on the language analysis work already on the board, or using examples from the text or transcript. (Willis, 1996)

Evaluation techniques
Initial evaluation

Before instruction, the students are pre-tested. This initial evaluation is to determine the learners' level of proficiency and to know their difficulties concerning language skills in the target language. Their performance will be judged using speaking skills rating scale rubric.

Formative Evaluation

During instruction, the students will be guided while practice, and given feed-back and evaluation in the task realization stage. Then, in the post-task stage, their performance will be assessed with reference to (according to) task output and the speaking skills on which the task has focus.

Summative evaluation

Finally, at the end of the instruction, the learners will be post-tested. They will produce oral speech individually (in presentation), in pairs (in an interview or in conversation), and in groups (in group presentation, or in discussion). Assessment and evaluation can be done by audiotaping the learners' performance that will be judged using speaking skills rating scale rubric.

Reviewing literature related to teaching EFL speaking skills and task based learning, the researcher conducted the current study and designed a program based on task-based learning to develop EFL speaking skills of the Humanistic Studies Students Al-Azhar University. Throughout the program, the discussion led by the instructor was focused on authentic situations where learners were given comprehensive input within classroom environment that was free of anxiety and stress. Therefore, learners were motivated, self-confidant to express themselves, and acquire the language. This helped them to succeed in communication using the target language and hence developed their speaking skills.

The context of the problem

In the pilot study, an EFL speaking test was administered by the researcher to a randomly chosen group of EFL students from the 1st year of the Humanistic Studies College. The test was designed to measure students' speaking performance concerning accuracy and fluency. The results of the test indicated that most of the students had difficulties in accuracy skills (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and fluency skills (competence in language usage, proficient language production and performing a range of functions)

The statement of the problem

It was remarkable that the 1st year students of the Humanistic Studies College, Al-Azhar University are unable to communicate or organize their speech to express their knowledge using the English language. This weakness in their speaking performance is due to their little exposure to the target language. Moreover they are not involved to practice the language in authentic situations or linguistic tasks inside classrooms.

The questions of the study

The present study attempted to answer the following main question:

�ખ **What is the effect of using a task based learning program on developing EFL speaking skills of the 1st year students of the Humanistic Studies College, Al-Azhar University?**

Three sub- questions were derived from this question:

1- What are the most important EFL speaking skills required for

communication for the 1st year students of the Humanistic Studies College, Al-Azhar University?

2- What are the features of the program based on task based learning that will be used in teaching EFL speaking skills for the 1st year students of the Humanistic Studies College, Al-Azhar University?

3- How can task-based learning be effective in teaching EFL speaking skills for the 1st year students of the Humanistic Studies College, Al-Azhar University?

The sample of the study:

The sample of the study included 61 girls from the first year Humanities College department of Foreign Languages and Simultaneous Interpretation El Azhar University and they were divided into the experimental and the control groups.

The instruments of the study

1- EFL speaking skill checklist.
2- EFL Speaking skill test.
3-A rubric for scoring the test

The hypotheses of the study:

1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the first speaking skill (fluency) favoring the experimental group.

2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the second speaking skill (accuracy) in favor of the experimental group.

3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the third speaking skill (pragmatic skills) favoring the experimental group.

4- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the fourth speaking skill (discourse skills) in favor of the experimental group.

5- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the fifth speaking skill (conversation skills) favoring the experimental group.

6- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the whole speaking skills test favoring the experimental group.

The study procedures

The procedures of the study ran as follows:

1- Revising pertinent literature relating to the research variables; English speaking skills and task-based learning.

2- Preparing a checklist of speaking skills and validating it by a panel of jury members

3- Preparing the study instruments; the speaking skill test and a rubric for scoring the test.

4- Submitting the study instruments to jury members to be validated

5- Designing a program based on task-based learning.

6- Selecting the participants of the study: 31 girls for the experimental group and 30 girls for the control group.

7- Administering the pre-test to the control and the experimental groups.

8- Applying the proposed program to the experimental group only.

9- Administering the post-test to the control and the experimental groups.

10- Performing statistical analysis of the data collected to test the hypotheses.

11- Interpreting results and providing conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research

Finding of the study

The current study aimed at developing the most important EFL speaking skills required for the 1st year students of the Humanistic Studies College, Al-Azhar University through a task- based learning program. The results of the study were presented in the light of testing the hypothesis of the study using the following Techniques of data analysis.

1- T-test was used to assess the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group performance and the control group performance in the post administration of the speaking skills test as a whole and in each skill.

2- To test the effectiveness of the program based on Task-based Learning, the following formula was calculated:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df} \qquad \text{(Cohen,1992)}$$

T= t-test value   df =degree of freedom

3- To determine the effectiveness of the program based on Task-based Learning using the results of the whole speaking skills test and those of each skill, the following formula was calculated:

$$Es = d = \sqrt[2]{\frac{\eta^2}{1 - \eta^2}} \qquad \text{(Cohen,1992)}$$

Es=D=Effect size η^2 =Effeciveness of the program

The hypotheses of the study

Hypothesis (1)

The first hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration in the first speaking skill (fluency) favoring the experimental group. To test this hypothesis, independent samples t-test was used. Table (1) T-test results comparing in the post speaking performance in the first skill (Fluency) of the experimental and the control group students.

Group	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig.(2-tailed)	η^2	Es
Experimental	31	3.93	.62905	59	5.9	.01	.37	1.53
control	30	3.	.58722					

Table (1) shows that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post administration of the first speaking skill (fluency) This is obviously clear in the significant t-value being (5,9) and η^2=.37 being the effectiveness of the program and the effect side of the program Ef =(1,53)

Hypothesis (2)

The second hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental

and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the second speaking skill (accuracy) favoring the experimental group. To test this hypothesis, independent samples t-test was used. Its results were indicated in table (2) as follows:

Table (2)

T-test results comparing the experimental and the control group students in the post speaking performance of the second skill (accuracy).

Group	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	η^2	Es
Experimental	**31**	**3.9355**	**.72735**	**59**	**5.617**	**.01**	**.35**	**1.46**
control	**30**	**2.9000**	**.71197**					

Table (2) indicated   that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post administration of the second speaking skill (accuracy). This is clearly obvious in the significant t-value at (,01) level which is (5,6) and the effectiveness of the program, η^2=.35 and the   effect   side   of   the   program   being   Ef   =(1,46)

Hypothesis (3)

The third hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the third speaking skill (pragmatic skills) favoring the experimental group. This hypothesis is verified by the results of the independent samples t-test in the following table.

Table (3)

T-test results comparing the experimental and the control group students in the post speaking performance of the third skill (pragmatic skills)

Group	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	η^2	Es
Experimental	**31**	**4.64**	**.55066**	**59**	**6.47**	**.01**	**.42**	**1.69**
control	**30**	**3.53**	**.77608**					

It is indicated from Table (3) that the experimental group performed better than the control group in the post administration of the third speaking skill (pragmatic skills). This is clearly shown in the significant t-value at (.01) level which is (6.47), the effectiveness of the program η^2=.42 and the effect side of the program which is indicated; Es=1.69.

Hypothesis (4)

The fourth hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the fourth speaking skill (discourse skills) favoring the experimental group. This hypothesis was tested using independent sample test results that were indicated in Table (4) as follows:

Table (4)

T-test results comparing the post speaking performance in the fourth skill (discourse skills) of the experimental and the control group students

Group	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	η^2	Es
Experimental	31	3.67	.87129	59	4,18	.01	.23	1.09
control	30	2.80	.76112					

Table (4) indicates that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post speaking test in the fourth skill (discourse skills). This is clearly shown in the significant t-value at ,01 level which is (4.18) and the effectiveness of the program being η^2=.23 and the effect side of the program is Es=1.09.

Hypothesis (5)

The fifth hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the fifth speaking skill (conversation skills) favoring the experimental group. Independent sample t-test results in table (5) provide evidence for this hypothesis as follows:

Table (5)

T-test results comparing the post speaking performance of the fifth skill (conversation skills) for the experimental and the control group students

Group	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	η^2	Es
Experimental	31	3,70	.69251	59	5.80	.01	.36	1.51
control	30	2.76	.56832					

Table (5) shows that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post speaking performance of the fifth skill (conversation skills). This is obvious in the significant t-value at (,01) level which is (5,8) and the effectiveness of the program, η^2=.36 and the effect side of the program, Es=1.51.

Hypothesis (6)

The sixth hypothesis stated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the whole speaking skill test favoring the experimental group. This is clearly proved by the statistics found in table (6) as follows:

Table (6)

T-test results comparing the experimental and the control group students in the post speaking performance of the whole speaking skills test

Group	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	η^2	Es
Experimental	**31**	**19.90**	**2.89058**	**59**	**6.679**	**.01**	**.43**	**1.738**
control	**30**	**15.0**	**2.84059**					

The above table shows that the estimated t-value (6,67) was statistically significant at .01 level between the main scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the whole speaking post-test administration in favor of the experimental group. Therefore, the program based on task-based learning is effective in developing the speaking skills of the Humanistic studies students. This is also indicated by η^2=.43 being the effectiveness of the program and the effect side of the program which is Es=(1,738). Based on the previous findings, it can be claimed that the program based on task-based learning developed the speaking skills supporting the sixth hypothesis.

To sum up, the results of the present study reveal that:

1- There is a statistically significant difference at (0,01) level between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the first speaking skill (fluency) favoring the experimental group.

2- There is a statistically significant difference at (0,01) level between

the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the second speaking skill (accuracy) favoring the experimental group.

3- There is a statistically significant difference at (0,01) level between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the third speaking skill (pragmatic skills) favoring the experimental group

4- There is a statistically significant difference at (0,01) level between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the fourth speaking skill (discourse skills) in favor of the experimental group.

5- There is a statistically significant difference at (0,01) between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the fifth speaking skill (conversation skills) favoring the experimental group.

6- There is a statistically significant difference at (0,01) between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in their performance of the post administration of the whole speaking skills test favoring the experimental group.

From the previous results, it is obvious that, the experimental group students achieved great progress in their speaking skills. This is due to their involvement in communicative tasks which enhanced their accuracy and fluency skills during the program. In addition they were engaged in real conversations in which they managed turn-taking and used a wide range of structures and discourse markers to express an idea and transition to another idea and show relationship of time and indicate cause, contrast and emphasis.

Interpretation of results

Statistics of the independent samples t-test indicated significant difference at (,01) level between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in the post speaking test favoring the experimental group. These findings were also asserted by the effect size of the program which was estimated as (1,73). This indicates that the student's performance of the experimental group in the speaking post-test outperformed that of the control group in the speaking post-

test and this   provides evidence for the effectiveness of the program of the current study and confirms its efficiency in developing the speaking skills of the humanities students compared to the traditional way in teaching speaking.

This may be due to:

1- Task-based learning provided the learners with meaningful tasks using familiar language drawn from the previous linguistic knowledge or the target language manipulated and negotiated   in the pre-task stage through discussion or brain storming activities. This provided the learners with more exposure to the target language and an opportunity to use the learned language in real life situations which in turn motivated them to produce the language and develop their fluency and accuracy skills

2- In the pre-lead discussion the instructor used negotiation strategies as well as questioning techniques to engage students in language production   so as to develop their accuracy skills through corrective feedback

3- The instructor tried to prepare learners for conversation in the target language and target culture in which the learners are able to express ideas, thoughts, and opinions. Hence, the learners will develop their pragmatic skills

4- The instructor provided the learner with more opportunities to prepare for monologue speech as public performance or presentation to different genres of speech and practice in classroom tasks. Preparing for public speech or for role-plays or conversations encourage students to participate in oral speech with more motivation and confidence

Conclusions:

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions can be made. In the process of interaction and communication, effective speaking demands four skill areas of speaking competence to be mastered by the speaker. The first is the linguistic skills which mean the knowledge of the grammar rules and the ability to use them, the appropriate use of vocabulary and the intelligible pronunciation. The second is the pragmatic skills which claim the ability to achieve specific communicative functions in social and transactional

exchanges. The third is the interactional skills in which the speaker regulates turn-taking, negotiates meaning, and achieves topic management in face-to-face conversations. The fourth is the discourse skills which mean the ability to structure discourse coherently and plan or organize information in discourse thematically or within a particular genre. Therefore, fluent speaker has the ability to process and integrate all the former skills on-line and spontaneously without pauses or hesitation when producing the foreign language.

Recommendations

With reference to the results of the present study, the following recommendations could be suggested:

For EFL curriculum designers:

1- The current study presented a list of speaking skills that are suitable for the first year Humanities studies students, Foreign Languages and Simultaneous Interpretation college, Al-Azhar University and so curriculum designers can take it into consideration when designing curriculum.

2- Curriculum designer are recommended to include and apply pedagogical and real life tasks for developing learners speaking skills in English text books and allocate the needed time for accomplishing these tasks within syllables programs.

For EFL Teachers:

1- In order to maximize students' participation in classroom activities, teachers should make a previous assessment of the students' interests and needs so as to choose topics and activities that are more engaging for the particular group of students they have in charge.

2- It is of the utmost importance to create a safe and comfortable environment where the teacher avoid the traditional role of instructor, and gradually adopt a facilitator role.

3- Providing the learners with language focus and feedback of their speaking performance in the post task phase corrects their mistakes and improves their performance and consequently their accuracy skills

4- Teachers should time classroom activities to develop fluency skills in addition to other conversational or interactional skills.

5- Teachers should provide learners with comprehensible input and linguistic structures in real context to enhance discourse skills.

6- Teachers should support and push learners to produce spoken output in a variety of appropriate genres for examples, telling a story, giving a presentation or using role plays

For EFL students:

1- EFL students should recognize that they are responsible for acquiring the English Language through positive participation in classroom tasks.

2- Students in EFL context needs to listen to more audio texts of real spoken discourse and watch more videos in the target language.

3- Preparing tasks before oral involvement in the preparation stage by students under teacher guidance will help them overcome difficulties in speaking performance.

Suggestions for further research

Suggestions for further research in teaching EFL speaking skills:

1- Investigating the effect of the communicative approach in teaching EFL speaking skills.

2- Using classroom action research in developing the EFL speaking skills.

3- Identifying the effect of teaching literature in improving learners EFL speaking skills.

4- Distinguishing the effectiveness of blended learning in teaching speaking skills

Suggestions for further research in Task-based learning area:

1- Identifying the effectiveness of task-based learning in developing the linguistic competency.

2- Investigating the effect of task-based learning in teaching reading comprehension.

3- Determining the effectiveness of task-based learning in developing the communicative competence of the EFL learners

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ملخـــــص الدراســـــة

برنامج مقترح قائم علي التعلم باستخدام المهام الموجهة لتنمية مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية لدي طلبات كلية الدراسات الإنسانية جامعة الأزهر

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلي تنمية مهارات التحدث لطالبات كلية الدراسات الإنسانية من خلال برنامج قائم علي التعلم باستخدام المهام الموجهة. وقد تكونت مجموعة الدراسة من ٦١ طالبة من طالبات الصف الأول شعبة اللغات والترجمة الفورية كلية الدراسات الإنسانية جامعة الأزهر فرع تفهنا الأشراف، وقد تم تقسيمهن بشكل عشوائي إلي مجموعتين إحداهما تجريبية وعددها ٣١ طالبة والأخري ضابطة وعددها ٣٠ طالبة وذلك في العام الدراسي ٢٠١٧م – ٢١٠٨م في الترم الثاني، وحتي تتمكن الباحثة من تحقيق الهدف من الدراسة، قامت بالعديد من الإجراءات تضمنت: تصميم استبيان لأهم مهارات التحدث اللازمة للصف الأول شعبة اللغات والترجمة الفورية بكلية الدراسات الإنسانية جامعة الأزهر، وعرضها علي المتخصصين بقسم المناهج وطرق التدريس للتحقق من مناسبتها للعينة والهدف من الدراسة، وبناءً عليه قامت بتصميم اختبار لمهارات التحدث لنفس العينة ومفتاح تصحيح لهذا الاختبار وعرضه أيضاً علي المتخصصين. وأيضا صممت الباحثة برنامجا مكونا من ١٠ محاضرات تتضمن ٦ وحدات من كتاب (Let's talk to) وتم تطبيقه علي المجموعة التجريبية، بينما درست المجموعة الضابطة نفس المنهج بالطريقة المعتادة، وأيضاً تم تطبيق اختبار مهارات التحدث قبلياً وبعدياً علي كل من المجموعة الضابطة والتجريبية، وبعد تجميع البيانات وتحليلها إحصائياً أثبتت النتائج فاعلية البرنامج القائم علي التعلم باستخدام المهام الموجهة في تنمية مهارات التحدث لطالبات الفرقة الأولي شعبة اللغات والترجمة الفورية كلية الدراسات الإنسانية جامعة الأزهر.