Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching: Potentials and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to analyze and describe how task-based interactional approach to language teaching works with students in the classroom. Using Social Interaction Models as a learning vehicle (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001), different tasks were introduced to two sections of English 1 education students of education students of a sectarian college in the Western Philippines: section 1 (35 participants with twenty-nine [29] females and six [6] males); and section 2 (32 participants with twenty-three [23] females and eight [8] males). Each section was divided into smaller groups comprising students rated as: performing very well (PVW), performing well (PW), and performing poorly (PP) based on their midterm grade to possibly show that other aspects like attitudes and behaviors, and skills were included. Interactions were observed, recorded, and transcribed and were later used to reinforce numerical data derived from the survey. After series of lessons taken from English 1 syllabus, a survey was conducted using questionnaires. Findings show that the teacher and the students performed complementary roles; students recognized the need for listening skills; the impact of task-based interaction to students' confidence to speak in the target language and their involvement in the lesson were very commendable; and the minimal display of linguistic output was due to students' difficulty to speak in English and not because of gender differences. Based on these findings, the following conclusions were reached: (a) The reversal in role paradigm between teacher and students in a task-based interactional approach redounds to greater participation in classroom activities by the students.; (b) The lack of facility in English and the noise that naturally goes with the set-up in a regular classroom site and with the number of students (40–45) are the two

major problems in the implementation of task-based interactional approach.; (c) The integration of social skills side by side with the four language skills were achieved in this approach.; and (d) Gender was not a significant factor of interaction in terms of turn-taking and stroking.

Introduction

Classroom interaction has been considered an important feature in teaching and learning, especially in language classrooms. It increases students' participation in the classroom, helps develop social skills, and provides opportunities to practice the target language. Allwright (1984) sees interaction as a useful classroom pedagogy.

In most cases, interaction takes place when there are questions to be answered, or activities to be done. These opportunities for interaction could be made possible by giving students tasks to perform. A task given in the classroom is a piece of work that engages learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language. Through these tasks, students are more involved in the lesson. (Nunan, 2004)

Such reality provided inspirations to observe, document, and describe how Task-based interactional approach to language teaching works in the classroom. Hence, a study was conducted to possibly find ways for effective classroom interactions.

Through the results, strategies for interaction inside the classroom and greater opportunities for practicing and using the target language to achieve the outcome of the given task were derived. Finally, the results are hoped to increase the potential for students to be active participants and empowered persons inside the classroom and in the world outside.

Purpose of the Research

This study was conducted to find out the following: 1. How is task-based interaction conducted in the following: a) roles of the teacher and the students, b) problems confronted, and c) language skills promoted? 2. Is there a significant difference in the interaction between male and female students in terms of turn–taking and stroking during lessons?

Literature Review

This study on task-based interactional approach to language teaching was prompted by experts' claim on the usefulness of tasks to provide opportunities for classroom interaction. Its main goal is to analyze how this approach works with students in the classroom and to establish a description of this approach. This endeavor found inspiration from the literatures cited in the succeeding paragraphs.

This study was inspired by Nunan (1989 in Seedhouse, 1999) who ascertained the positive attributes of task-based interaction in training learners to use the second language (L2) for practical purposes. He argued that classroom is the social use of language to enact regular activity structures and to share systems of meaning among teachers and students (Nunan, 1992). Sharing similar perspective, Ellis (2003) established the interrelation between task and L2 acquisition and further explained that this form of teaching promotes communication and social interaction.

What's more, the most dynamic element in the process of performing the task is the learner's creativity. Thus, by exploiting that creativity, one makes learning vastly more efficient. According to Seedhouse, (1999), exhausting that creativity among the students inside the classroom is a challenge worthy of effort and attention.

Further, it is believed that students can possibly learn facts, concepts, skills, and organized bodies of content, as a group. In fact, it is found more fulfilling when a teacher trains the students to think on their own and not just help the students to memorize the materials given to them (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001).

Because there is a need to teach 21st century learners to use English not only for the purpose of communicating in the classroom, teachers should recognize the need to promote a language classroom that would engage learners to authentic tasks or problem solving activities in order to help these students acquire or develop language skills they will need in the future (Warschauer , 2001).

Framework of the study

This study was a combination of task-based and interactive approaches. Student-participants were given tasks, where they learned concepts and skills.

To ensure a kind of learning that helps create a team spirit, demonstrate mastery of the concepts and skills being taught, provide equal opportunity for success which means that "all students, regardless of ability or background, can expect to be recognized for their efforts" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001, p. 59), social interaction models were introduced. These are strategies that involve students working collaboratively to accomplish a given task.

The main strength of social interaction models is its emphasis on increasing learner involvement in classroom activities, on providing leadership and decision making experience, on giving students the chance to interact with other students. Social interaction models introduced in the study were: the Group Work Model, the Cooperative-Learning Model, and Discussion Model (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Details are discussed below.

Group Work Model is a strategy that uses students working together to supplement other models. It is a strategy designed to increase involvement when another model is used. This includes strategies such as: think-pair-share, pairs check, and combining pairs.

Cooperative-Learning Model is a teaching strategy that provides structured roles for students while emphasizing social interaction. Examples of this model are: a) Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) which is a form of cooperative learning that highlights multi-ability teams to teach facts, concepts, and skills. In implementing STAD, the lesson is introduced, the content is explained, and the students are involved in guided practice. STAD comprises these five (5) phases: Phase I - *Instruction*; Phase II - *Transition to Teams*; Phase III - *Team Study and Monitoring;* Phase IV - *Assessment*; and Phase V - *Recognizing Achievement*.; b) Jigsaw II which is a form of cooperative learning in which individual student becomes an expert on one section of the topic and teach that subsection to others. When they work as a team, each member contributes something to complete the whole or the knowledge puzzle. To teach a lesson using Jigsaw, these phases are performed: Phase I - *Information Gathering*; Phase II - *Experts Meetings*: Phase III - *Team Reports*; and Phase IV - *Evaluation and Recognition*; c) Group Investigation which involves five phases: Phase 1 - *Organizing Groups and Identifying Topics*; Phase 2 - *Group Planning*; Phase 3 - *Implementing the Investigations*; Phase 4 - *Analyzing Results and Preparing Reports*; and Phase 5 - *Presenting the Report.*

Discussion Model is a social interaction model designed to help students analyze and integrate ideas through interaction with peers. This model occurs in three stages: Stage I – *Orienting*; Stage II – *Exploration*; and Stage III - *Closure*.

This approach uses student interaction as a major learning vehicle. Learning through interaction particularly in task–based interaction capitalizes on the fact that students are more willing and less anxious to talk or to interact with their fellow students. It is said: "The less the teacher talks and still accomplishes their objective – which is to have students interact both with content and each other – the better" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001, p. 94) A schematic diagram of the research process is presented below.

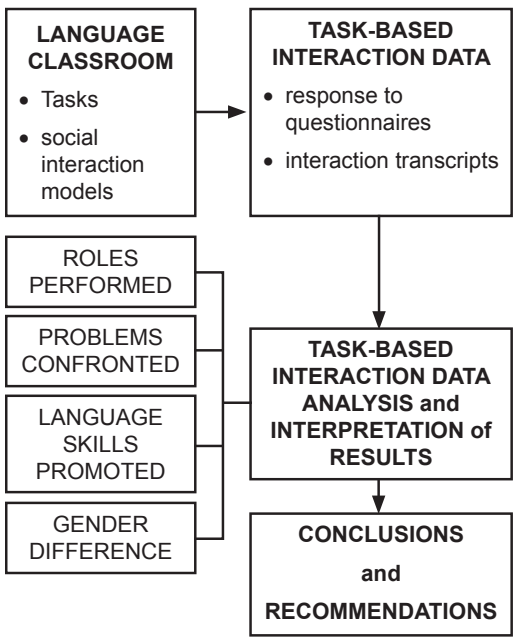

Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Research Process

Methodology

Research participants. In this study, sections 1 and 2 of English 1 education students of a sectarian school in the Western Philippines were the participants. Section one (1) had 35 participants with twenty-nine (29) females and six (6) males; while section two (2) had thirty-two (32) participants with twenty-three (23) females and eight (8) males.

Each section was divided into smaller groups comprising students rated as: performing very well (PVW), performing well (PW), and performing poorly (PP) based on their midterm grade to possibly show that other aspects like attitudes and behaviors, and skills were included.

The research participants attended English 1 regular classes; where they were given similar tasks to perform using social interaction models as a learning vehicle. After a series of 18 sessions, they were asked to answer survey questionnaires.

The research instrument was a researcher–made questionnaire which incorporated ideas coming from Carless (2002), Chavez (2001), Eakins (1978), Nunan (1992), and others. The questionnaire was subjected to content and construct validation by five competent people. The panel of validators evaluated the items in the questionnaire in the scale of 1 to 5. The degree of consistency was determined using the Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, W. Their comments and suggestions were considered in the improvement of the contents and construction of the final copy of the research instrument. Analysis shows that there is a significant degree of agreement among the raters with Kendall's W of 0.422 and with associated significance level of 0.025.

Research Design

Descriptive statistics was mainly used to describe the nature of the approach. The data were derived from the responses of the participants to the survey questionnaires based on a rating scale of 1 to 5 which means never, very seldom, sometimes, most of the time, and all the time, respectively.The research participants were asked to answer the survey questionnaires after they finished eighteen (18) sessions using the same tasks. Analysis included frequency counts, percentages, mode or the most occurring responses. In some cases, transcript of the actual classroom interactions were also

used to reinforce the numerical data. To differentiate gender responses in terms of turn-taking and stroking for two independent means, Wilcoxon formula was used.

Research instrument and data gathering

Actual lessons (18 sessions) based on the English 1 course syllabus were conducted to the research participants. Different tasks, using or adapting Social Interaction Models (Eggens & Kauchak, 2001) like think-pair-share, pairs check, and combining pairs of the *Group work Model,* STAD, Jigsaw II, and Group Investigation of the *Cooperative-Learning Model,* and *Discussion Model* were introduced to the student -participants, individually and in groups.

The given tasks during these eighteen (18) sessions were pedagogical tasks that involved the learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language (Nunan, 1999) using authentic materials - spoken or written language data that has been produced in the course of genuine communication, and not specifically written for purposes of language teaching (Nunan, 1999) and authentic tasks like what will they do if they need some information and what questions will they ask to get this information and others. According to Nunan (1999), successful completion of pedagogical tasks would enable learners to acquire the skills needed to master real-world target tasks.

Using an ordinary audio recorder, actual interactions during tasks were recorded and transcribed. The data provided the actual interaction—specifically, the lines uttered or sounds produced by the student -participants during taken tasks. These data presented a picture of how student-participants negotiated their answers, resolved arguments, expressed encouragements, and even their difficulties in accomplishing the given tasks, and other occurrences during interaction.

After these series of lessons, a survey was conducted using questionnaires. The survey questionnaires – primary source of data - elicited the roles of the teacher and the students during the sessions or lessons; implementation problems encountered such as noise and discipline, use of mother tongue, and student involvement; language skills promoted; and male - female students' turn-taking and stroking.

Transcripts derived from recorded interactions were also used to reinforce numerical data, which provided a picture of the interactions that took place during lessons.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study and the discussion are outlined as follows: 1. how task-based interaction was conducted; and 2. how interaction between male and female students took place in terms of turn-taking and stroking.

Conducting task-based interactions: Teachers' Roles

Table 1 (shown in the previous column) presents a summary of how the student - participants perceived and/or experienced the roles of the teacher during the lessons. The roles were categorized into: a) not promoted roles–those that are not preferred or encouraged in Task-based Interactional approach to Language Teaching; b) promoted roles–those that jibe with the idea of the approach introduced.

The data show that Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching portrayed the teacher as a facilitator and guide (37.3%) in providing information or knowledge, not the agent or giver; the judge (41.8%) of the students' output, not the performer; the organizer (49.3%), not the prime mover in the learning process; the resource (46.3%), not the source of

Table 1

The Roles of the Teacher

Roles	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
NOT PROMOTED							
dominance over the learner							
	17 (25.4%)	10 (14.9%)	24 **(35.8%)**	11 (16.4%)	5 (7.5%)	2.7	3
learners totally in charge of the class							
	10 (14.9%)	16 (23.9%)	19 **(28.4%)**	12 (17.9%)	10 (14.9%)	2.9	3
PROMOTED							
encouragement giver							
		2 (3.0%)	5 (7.5%)	35 **(52.2%)**	25 (37.3%)	4.2	4
judge of students' contribution							
	3 (4.5%)	5 (7.5%)	18 (26.9%)	28 **(41.8%)**	13 (19.4%)	3.6	4
organizer of classroom activities							
	2 (3.0%)	5 (7.5%)	14 (20.9%)	33 (49.3%)	13 (19.4%)	3.8	4
facilitator							
	1 (1.5%)	2 (3.0%)	13 (19.4%)	28 (41.8%)	23 (34.4%)	4.1	4
guide in learning the subject matter							
	1 (1.5%)	4 (6.0%)	15 (22.4%)	25 **(37.3%)**	22 (32.8%)	3.9	4
resource of knowledge							
		3 (4.5%)	13 (19.4%)	**31** **(46.3%)**	20 (29.9%)	4.0	4

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

knowledge; the supporter, not the player or implementer of lessons.

Based on the data shown in Table 1, majority of the respondents experienced that the teacher did not dominate the class. Instead, the teacher performed supporting roles to the learners who portrayed the major roles during lessons. These portrayals were the results of the strategies promoted by task-based interactional approach which brought into focus not the roles of the teacher, but of the students.

However, this reality does not mean, allowing the teacher to "go on vacation" while the students are performing their tasks. It was observed that the teacher assists the students while they performed. Hence, the teacher needs to be present even if his/her role is superseded by students' roles during task.

Students' Roles

In a Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching, student – participants were organized into smaller groups to perform learning tasks. To facilitate the learning process, they were introduced to a particular Social Interaction Model (Eggen & Kauchank, 2001) used as a

learning vehicle introduced by the teacher. This particular Social Interaction Model was deemed necessary and appropriate based on the topic and the objectives of the lesson indicated in the syllabus.

Table 2 presents students' roles perceived and/or experienced by the participants. The roles were categorized as a) roles portrayed often by the student-participants; and b) portrayed least during task or lesson.

The data show that the respondents (53.7%) expressed that they were responsible *most of the time* for their own learning during the lessons. The data also show that group tasks provided the respondents (41.8%) some motivations to actively respond *most of the time* to the need called out by the teacher or by their fellow students. This motivation was concretized in their (41.8%) willingness *most of the time* to carryout and accomplish the given task.

Table 2

The Roles of the Students

Roles	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
PORTRAYED OFTEN							
listener		2 (3.0%)	22 (32.8%)	38 **(56.7%)**	5 (7.5%)	3.7	4
active respondent	3 (4.5%)	4 (6.0%)	21 (31.3%)	28 **(41.8%)**	11 (16.4%)	3.7	4
task-oriented		2 (3.0%)	21 (31.3%)	28 **(41.8%)**	16 (23.9%)	3.9	4
observer and analyzer		1 (1.5%)	17 (25.4%)	31 **(46.3%)**	17 (25.4%)	4.0	4
group-oriented			11 (16.4%)	34 **(50.7%)**	21 (31.3%)	4.2	4
responsible learner			12 (17.9%)	36 **(53.7%)**	18 (26.9%)	4.4	4
PORTRAYED LEAST							
negotiator	3 (4.5%)	5 (7.5%)	35 **(52.2%)**	19 (28.4%)	5 (7.5%)	3.3	3
opposition/ adverse party	6 (9.0%)	30 **(44.8%)**	21 (31.3%)	8 (11.9%)	2 (3.0%)	2.6	2
passive recipient	4 (6.0%)	12 (17.9%)	37 **(55.2%)**	12 (17.9%)	1 (1.5%)	2.9	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

Aside from that, they (46.3%) showed *most of the Time* their interest in doing the task by observing and analyzing in what ways they could extend their help to others. The data presented in Table 2 strongly affirm that task-based interactional approach offered better opportunities in developing a variety of skills not just academic or intellectual, or language skills in particular, but social skills, as well.

The research participants were involved in a social activity which prompted them to portray different roles such as performer, observer, analyzer, negotiator, etc. These various roles surfaced may be because these roles were needed in order to accomplish the task which brought them together as a group.

In other words, student roles may evolve as the need arise. And since therewas no major conflict or disagreement during discussion, the role as a negotiator was portrayed least even if it was considered vital during task.

Their eagerness in accomplishing the task compelled them to learn how to adjust. Indeed, Wright (1987) is correct when he stressed that classroom language learning is a group activity—an activity where knowledge will be gained in the process or during interaction. While the activity is in progress, students display different behaviors, portray and change roles in the light of the contributions of others because group activity is dynamic.

Giving a task to the learners provided greater opportunities for students' involvement during lessons. The teacher, therefore, need not take the center stage; but rather, he/she must give way to students to assume more active roles. Nunan (2004) stated that the roles portrayed by the teacher and the students are "two sides of the same coin" (p. 67). He pointed out that the roles the teacher and the students perform should contrast each other otherwise, conflict may arise.

Problems Confronted

Noise and discipline, use of mother tongue, and student involvement were considered as very obvious problems and needing attention in the implementation of Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching. Tables 3 on noise and discipline, Table 4 on the use of mother tongue, and Table 5 on students' involvement summarize these problems.

Data summarized in Table 3 (shown above) indicates that noise during task was very evident. It was brought *sometimes* by unclear instructions according to 43.3 % of the research participants. And *most of the time*, it was due to difficult tasks as indicated by 43.3 % of the student-participants. They (41.8%) also confessed that noise could *sometimes* lead to inability to learn. This reality was evident in this interaction:

Dulce Amor: Ok…so beware… so what is the title of the short story …

(The sound of students' reaction is very loud.)

Again…again.. I'm sorry…I'm sorry… I'm sorry… I'm sorry… again..ok…

(The whole class is very noisy.)

Liezl: The title of the story we just read …[sic] A Silent love.

(The students are talking at the same time… The whole class is very noisy.)

Teacher: (interfered) Repeat the question…

Dulce Amor: Yeah…I will now repeat the question…

The session, where this extract was derived, manifested listening problems experienced by the student. Such condition was manifested in the following: a) the student-participants reacted loudly, b) they were talking at the same time, and c) the whole class was very noisy. Indeed, noise was a learning problem.

Table 3

Noise and Discipline

Effects/ Results	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
POSITIVE							
active participation							
	14 (20.9%)	15 (22.4%)	20 **(29.9%)**	13 (19.4%)	4 (6.0%)	2.7	3
NEGATIVE							
inability to learn							
		5 (7.5%)	28 **(41.8%)**	20 (29.9%)	13 (19.4%)	3.6	3
indiscipline due to difficult tasks							
		8 (11.9%)	18 (26.9%)	29 **(43.3%)**	11 (16.4%)	2.7	3
indiscipline due to easy tasks							
		12 (17.9%)	22 (32.8%)	24 **(35.8%)**	8 (11.9%)	2.4	3
unclear instructions							
	8 (11.9%)	13 (19.4%)	29 **(43.3%)**	13 (19.4%)	3 (4.5%)	2.9	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

Listening, in task-based interaction, is quite difficult because noise cannot just be avoided especially during discussions, and sharing of ideas and opinions. There were times when the purpose of learning was affected because they were no longer listening—they were already talking at the same time.

According to Nunan (2004), noise and indiscipline happen among the learners because either the task is too difficult or the students sometimes do not get the question or the instructions. Noise also happen when students get so excited about something being discussed that the raise of voice becomes inevitable.

Apart from the noise, the extract shows the eagerness of the students to answer the question. They exerted effort to get the attention of the student in-charge so they would be given the chance to share their answers. Thus, noise can also be perceived as the result of students' eagerness to participate and share their ideas and opinions.

The researcher affirms this reality saying that it felt so good to see the students so alive inside the classroom - students who were so enthusiastic to impart to others what they know, students who were so eager to earn points for their group in order to win the game, and students who took courage to take the big responsibility to handle the big group.

However, too much noise could definitely affect learning. Hence, this condition should be thought out carefully by the teacher to ensure a balance between active participation and effective learning.

Table 4 presents instances or reasons for the use of mother tongue. The use of mother tongue was inevitable despite the

Table 4

Use of the Mother Tongue

Reasons	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
clarification on what the teacher said							
	5 (7.5%)	8 (11.9%)	23 **(34.3%)**	23 **(34.3%)**	7 (10.4%)	3.3	3 & 4
due to over-excitement or due to distraction							
	2 (3.0%)	12 (17.9%)	32 **(47.8%)**	17 (25.4%)	3 (4.5%)	3.1	3
lacking proficiency in English							
	2 (3.0%)	10 (14.9%)	30 **(44.8%)**	20 (29.9%)	4 (6.0%)	3.2	3
awkwardness to speak in English during interaction							
	2 (3.0%)	5 (7.5%)	35 **(52.2%)**	19 (28.4%)	5 (7.5%)	3.3	3
Efficiency in carrying out the task efficiently							
	4 (6.0%)	10 (14.9%)	25 **(37.3%)**	17 (25.4%)	10 (14.9%)	3.3	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

instructions to use the target language—English for that matter. The data presents some reasons why mother tongue was used.

Mother tongue was used probably by the students in order to get the job done based on the instructions of the teacher. *Most of the time* (34.3%) and *sometimes* (34.3%) student resort to using the mother tongue because they need to clarify what the teacher said.

Instances when the mother-tongue was used in speaking to clarify may be evident in this interaction:

Extract 1

Mark: Uhm. Can I ask?

Is Ibong Adarna one of the characters? And where does it belong?

From [sic] the main character or minor character?

Elena: *Ang ano?* (The what?)

Extract 2

Jeomer: Why should General Aguinaldo have to flee to the mountain? General Aguinaldo had to flee to the mountain because (pause), so that (pause), because (pause), because (pause) so that (pause) he won't be caught, he won't be caught by the enemies. *Basaha* (Read).

Jean Pearl: Number three, Where [sic] is the place where Tandang Sora was find [sic] by the Spanish government?

Jeomer: Spanish, *Basaha na* (Read that.). (giggles) *Basaha na* (Read that.).

In extract 2, the male participant used the mother tongue when he was asked to give or say the question. This extract shows that the male participant received more requests for clarification and confirmation from the female participant.

According to Chavez (2001), this kind of interaction may appear that the discussion task worked to the advantage of the male participant and to the disadvantage of the female participant. The male participant was given more opportunities to clarify or confirm his output in this task.

Chavez (2001), on her part, presents an alternative saying that the results may be argued that females in interaction experienced more success in communication as such did not require as much clarification and confirmation as did the males.

Speaking in dialect was a spontaneous response of the participants called to answer questions by explaining or by giving a reason. The researcher perceived this code switching as a natural act for a non-native speaker of English which is not considered alarming.

As suggested, "for as long as there is greater quantity of total utterances in the target language than in the mother tongue, the task has probably been reasonably successful" (Carless, 2002, p. 393). The weighted mean of **3** in all items included in Table 4 (previous column) shows that there was greater use of English language during interaction.

Table 5, presents the perceived impact of task-based interaction to students' involvement. The participants (41.8%) indicated that because of the task given to them, they were involved in classroom interactions *all the time*. This data show that students' involvement was guaranteed during lessons. According to them (47.9%), it happened because doing a task encouraged active participation in the lessons *most of the time*, thus, greater opportunities for students' involvement. Involvement through task would mean

Table 5

Students' Involvement

Students' Involvement	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
POSITIVE MANIFESTATION							
involve themselves in classroom interaction							
	2 (3.0%)	2 (3.0%)	8 (11.9%)	26 (38.8%)	28 **(41.8%)**	4.2	5
participate actively in the lesson							
		1 (1.5%)	9 (13.4%)	32 **(47.9%)**	24 (35.8%)	4.2	4
learn while observing							
		1 (1.5%)	24 (35.8%)	25 **(37.3%)**	16 (23.9%)	3.8	4
NEGATIVE MANIFESTATION							
restrict language production							
	5 (7.5%)	5 (7.5%)	19 (28.4%)	32 **(47.8%)**	5 (7.5%)	3.4	4
produce minimal display of Linguistic output							
	2 (3.0%)	5 (7.5%)	30 **(44.8%)**	19 (28.4%)	10 (14.9%)	3.5	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

interaction—to engage in speaking. Thus, they (44.8%) said that producing minimal display of linguistic output and restricting language production (47.8%) are negative manifestations to students' involvement.

Language Skills Promoted

This study was aimed to describe and analyze how the participants manifested and/or learned these language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

Table 6 indicates some of the effects of giving tasks to student participants.

The responses were grouped into: a) opportunities to develop listening skills, and b) problems or difficulties in listening.

The research participants (38.8% and 31.3%) believed that group tasks enhance listening comprehension *most of the time* and *all the time*, respectively because they needed to concentrate on what others are saying. They (58.2%) also realized the need to pay attention, *most of the time,* not only to verbal messages but also to non-verbal communication.

While the participants experienced the positive effects of Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching to listening skills, they (38.8%) also recognized the difficulty of listening in a group task, *sometimes*. Apparently, opportunities to enhance listening skill was more prevalent than recognizing the problem of listening in a group task.

Djiwandono (2006) is affirmed in this study when he said that group activity trains the learners to listen in order to comprehend spoken discourse. This training promotes a skill needed to build relationship with in the group, needed to carry out the task assigned. He concluded that cooperative listening promotes a learning atmosphere

Table 6

Listening Skills

Opportunities and Problems	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	2 very seldom	3 sometimes	4 most of the time	5 all the time		
OPPORTUNITIES							
paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal messages							
			15 (22.4%)	39 **(58.2%)**	12 (17.9%)	4.0	4
focusing on the message of the speaker							
			14 (20.9%)	36 **(53.7%)**	16 (23.9%)	4.0	4
asking questions for clarification							
			14 (20.9%)	36 **(53.7%)**	16 (23.9%)	4.0	4
enhancing listening comprehension							
		1 (1.5%)	18 (26.9%)	26 **(38.8%)**	21 (31.3%)	4.0	4
PROBLEM							
listening with difficulty in a group task							
	1 (1.5%)	12 (17.9%)	26 **(38.8%)**	18 (26.9%)	9 (13.4%)	3.3	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

Table 7
Reading Skills

Opportunities	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
interaction with the text and with each other							
		1 (1.5%	14 (20.9%)	26 **(38.8%)**	25 (37.3%)	4.1	4
interest in reading							
		1 (1.5%)	17 (25.4%)	23 (34.3%)	25 **(37.3%)**	4.1	5
link to other language skills							
			14 (20.9%)	31 **(46.3%)**	21 (31.3%)	4.1	4
oral practice or reading of the text individually or by group							
			16 (23.9%)	28 **(41.8%)**	22 (32.8%)	4.0	4
application of the steps for comprehension							
		2 (3.0%)	14 (20.9%)	18 (26.9%)	32 **(47.8%)**	4.2	5

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.
2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.
3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

conducive to feelings of togetherness among the students.

Table 7 shows that reading tasks used in the lessons was recognized *most of the time* by the research participants (38.8%) to provide opportunities for interaction with the text and with each other. Further, they (37.3%) expressed that group task encouraged them to read so they could participate in the accomplishment of the task given. The weighted mean of 4 in all items in the reading skills indicate that learning and social interaction were promoted in group reading task.

Apparently, the opportunity to share and discuss ideas and opinions in the group provided some motivations to develop appreciation for reading. Students needed to read so they can share and discuss ideas and opinions with their classmates. This activity was a requirement to be able to concretely show cooperation and participation. Thus, it is considered fair to say that Task - based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching triggers some motivation to act as their response to an arising need – part of what can be considered their group responsibility.

Table 8, summarizes the opportunities to exercise writing skills. Writing experience increased students' (43.3%) motivation and enthusiasm *most of the time*. Writing activities promoted the participants' (38.8%) ability to discriminate relevant ideas from the irrelevant by clarifying first their answers before they put them into writing. This skill could be gleaned in these extracts:

Extract 1
Rosalie: Is that [sic] story realistic? Can you think of a school situation similar to this incidents [sic] from your own experience? Yes.

Table 8
Writing Skills

Opportunities/ Skills	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
opportunity for creativity							
		1 (1.5%)	17 (25.4%)	28 **(41.8%)**	19 (28.4%)	4.0	4
increase in motivation and enthusiasm							
			21 (31.3%)	29 **(43.3%)**	15 (22.4%)	3.9	4
enhancement of vocabulary building							
		3 (4.5%)	15 (22.4%)	27 **(40.3%)**	20 (29.9%)	4.0	4
opportunity to interact to deal with specific problems							
		1 (1.5%)	22 (32.8%)	25 **(37.3%)**	17 (25.4%)	3.9	4
ability to descrimate relevant from irrelevant ideas							
	2 (3.0%)	7 (10.4%)	26 **(38.8%)**	23 (34.3%)	7 (10.4%)	3.4	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.
2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.
3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

Extract 2
Kennedy: I believe love is blind.
Dulce Amor: Love is blind… How can you say that love is blind? How can you say that love is blind?

The extracts may show how a female student – participant initiated an opportunity to clarify confusion. Perhaps, the effort was to show that this memberof the group was given an opportunitytoclarify his side needed for the decision for acceptance or rejection

The process used in this interaction highlights Nunan (1999) idea on the social and collaborative nature of writing. The student participants, during interaction, carried out the task by discussing, deciding, and eventually, writing their group output. Such experience promoted the skill of being able to discriminate relevant ideas from the irrelevant. Further, they were able to do it in a collaborative manner. Thus, such context promoted the development of social skills.

In particular, the line spoken by Rosalie indicated in extract 1 for number two question, highlights Nunan (1999) idea about the social nature of writing. It was an indirect question suggesting politeness which was found appealing in building relationship and also effective in motivating people to participate or talk.

Writing task appeared more demanding for the students compared to other skills because of the intellectual expectation that it entails. However, this opportunity also gave the learner a chance to process his/her own understanding of the reading material.

Research - participants (40.3%) recognized task–based approach as an opportunity for enhancement of vocabulary. Since comprehension would require unlocking of difficulties, students learn new words as they work to produce the written output required.

Like reading, writing can also be made fun and exciting when it is carried out as a group task. When contributions and ideas during discussions were accepted

Table 9

Speaking Skills

Opportunities	Scale					Weighted Mean	Mode
	1 never	**2** very seldom	**3** sometimes	**4** most of the time	**5** all the time		
allows practice or use of the Language in a social context							
		2 (3.0%)	14 (20.9%)	23 (34.3%)	27 (40.3%)	4.1	5
motivates one to respond to different speech acts or							
		1 (1.5%)	25 (37.3%)	26 (38.8%)	24 (20.9%)	4.6	4
Encourages students to interact and to react							
		1 (1.5%)	11 (16.4%)	34 (50.7%)	20 (29.9%)	4.1	4
motivates students to speak interact and to react							
		3 (4.5%)	20 (29.9%)	27 (40.3%)	16 (23.9%)	3.8	4
does not inhibit the student to speak because focus is on content rather than form							
	1 (1.5%)	5 (7.5%)	28 (41.8%)	26 (38.8%)	6 (9.0%)	3.5	3

Note: 1. Mode refers to the most occurring response.

2. Weighted mean measures the central tendency where observations tend to cluster.

3. Number enclosed in parenthesis is the associated percentage.

and incorporated in the written product, the proponent(s) of the idea(s) gained confidence and the group experienced achievement.

To sum it up, group tasks may give excitement and a lot of fun to the learners because it allows creativity, acceptance in the group, learning together, and sharing responsibilities. In other words, task-based interaction could offer excitement and enjoyment of learning together.

The data in Table 9 (above) shows that 66.7% used the English language *all the time* and 33.3% confirmed that they used the English language *most of the time* during interaction.

Speaking is another language skill. In a group task, verbal communication is basically important. It is through words that instructions can be explicitly or clearly explained and confusions may be clarified.

The researcher observed that students spoke longer when they were asked to give pieces of information based on their opinions or analysis of the situation. The figures imply that the students were motivated to speak longer in English despite their limitation or lack of proficiency in it because they were asked to answer opinionated questions.

This study may show that despite difficulty in speaking the target language, the research - participants still managed to speak using English as instructed. This reality showedhow speaking skill was promoted in a Task-based Interactional Approach.

Male – Female Participants' Interactions

Turn-taking

In this male—female participants' interactions, two smaller groups were organized. Each group was composed of two males and two females each with a total of eight participants.

In Table 10, male participants (50%) said that they *never* changed the topic even if it got increasingly serious; whereas, the female participants (75%) confessed they did, but *very seldom*. This reality suggests

Table10

Turn-taking Between Male-Female Interaction

Manifestations of Turn-taking	Male				Female			
	Scale	Frequency	%	Rank	Scale	Frequency	%	Rank
creates diversion when topic gets serious								
	1	2	**50**	1	2	3	**75**	1
	2	1	25	2.5	1	1	25	2
	3	1	25	2.5				
tends to be essential- minded								
	1	1	**25**	2.5	4	4	**100**	1
	2	1	**25**	2.5				
	3	1	**25**	2.5	4	1	**25**	2.5
Interrupts a conversation								
	3	2	**50**	1	2	2	**50**	1
	1	1	25	2.5	1	1	25	2.5
	2	1	25	2.5	3	1	25	2.5
controls the conversation								
	3	3	**75**	1	2	2	**50**	1
	1	1	25	2	3	1	25	2.5
					4	1	25	2.5
keeps silent most of the time								
	1	2	**50**	1.5	1	2	**50**	1
	3	2	**50**	1.5	2	1	25	2.5
					3	1	25	2.5

Note: 5 – all the time, 4 – most of the time, 3 – sometimes, 2 – very seldom, and 1 – never.

that female participants (100%) *most of the time* were essential-minded; while, the male participants were divided (25% for each participant) in their answer – each took this issue differently.

Another finding is that female participants were not inhibited by the presence of their male classmates. Half of them (50%) answered that they were *never* made silent by overlap, interruption, and delayed listening response during interaction. What is surprising is the fact that their male-counterparts (50%) were affected by turn – taking violations so they became silent, *sometimes*.

In terms of interruptions and overlaps, the figures also show the minimal difference between male and female participants. The male participants (50%) said that they had taken over or had interrupted a conversation but it happened only *sometimes* and on the aim to take control of the conversation, the male respondents (75%) said they did, only *sometimes*; while the female participants (50%) said that all of these turn-taking violations were *very seldom* done by them.

Generally, men are known to be essential-minded and less serious; while, women are detail-minded and more serious. In this study, male participants expressed that they were more serious, than their female counterparts during discussion.

As to turn-taking violations, the results affirm the observations of Coates, 1986 and Holmes, 1994 (in Chavez, 2001) that men have the tendency to dominate conversation and interrupt the other party during talk. In this present study, female violations during interaction were also evident; however, these were seldom done. As indicated in the result, male violations were a little bit higher compared to females' in terms of percentage.

Table11

Stroking Between Male-Female Interactions

Manifestations of Stroking	Male				Female			
	Scale	Frequency	%	Rank	Scale	Frequency	%	Rank
openly expresses admiration, agreement, etc.								
	4	2	**50**	1.5	4	3	**75**	1
	5	2	**50**	1.5	1	1	25	2
asks for opinions, suggestions								
	5	2	**50**	1	4	3	**75**	1
	4	1	25	2.5	5	1	25	2
	3	1	25	2.5				
listens attentively, and sympathizingly								
	4	3	**75**	1	4	4	**100**	1
	5	1	25	2				
teases the person when he/she begins to open up								
	1	2	**50**	1	4	2	**50**	1
	3	1	25	2.5	2	1	25	2.5
readily agrees to support								
	4	1	25	2.5	5	1	25	2.5
	4	3	**75**	1	1	1	**25**	1.5
	3	1	25	2	2	1	**25**	1.5
					3	1	**25**	1.5
					4	1	**25**	1.5

Note: 5 – all the time, 4 – most of the time, 3 – sometimes, 2 – very seldom, and 1 – never.

But the data also show that turn-taking violations between male - female students' interaction were minimal.

Findings show that reality contradicted what was generally believed that males dominate females during conversation. This finding runs contrary to what Shehadeh (1999) explained about mixed-gender conversation where males are expected to dominate and are more likely to speak up even if they have no idea what the correct answer is, contrary to females (Chavez, 2001).

There are researchers claiming that disparities between male-female interactions are prevalent. They say that these differences are found in their interaction style (Chavez, 2001), in the roles they portray during interaction (Chavez, 2001), in their participation in the conversation (Shehadeh, 1999). Hence, turn-taking events between male and female may vary depending on their context.

Stroking

Table 11 (above) shows that female participants (75%) were more expressive in words when it comes to their admiration, appreciation, support, agreement or conformity to another's point of view, *most of the time* during conversation. While the male participants said that they also gave encouragement or affirmed other participants *all the time* (50%) and *most of the time* (50%), Female participants were obviously more expressive compared to male participants.

Figures in Table11 also show that both male and female students were closely alike in terms of giving encouragement because the male participants (50%) indicated that they also did verbal stroking *all the time* by asking for opinions, for suggestions, for clarifications.

The stroking role is perceived as most evident or most appropriate for a female

person. In other words, listening, using affirmative words, appreciating, giving words of encouragement are more likely to come from a woman, rather than from a man.

According to the figures, female participants were fond of positive stroking. This reality may be observed in this example:

Rosalie:	Mr. Eagle [sic] to to help us to visit the place, certain place where the monkey's son played
Joerocel:	And the third [sic] uhm, we can, we can, we can visit the place and so uhm, [sic] Mr. Eagle to visit the place and to get [sic] an investigate [sic]
Geralden:	So we will so so [sic] ask Miss, Mister Eagle to investigatetheir what [sic], their [sic] where wherewhere their son is playing sometimes [sic]…
Rosalie:	Yeah!
Geralden:	So, I think that's all, that's all we can…

In this extract, the male participant interrupted the female participant without repercussions. As a result, he seemed to dominate or to control the interaction rather than to support the development of topic initiated by the female participant.

This reality affirms what Kramarae,1981 and Troemel – Ploetz, 1992 (in Chavez, 2001) about women's style of interaction. According to them, women's style of interaction is encouraging, affirming unlike male style which is interrupting, and ridiculing.

Gender Differences during Turn-taking and Stroking

Table12 presents the data on gender differences during turn - taking and stroking. The data were derived from the responses of the student – participants to the questionnaires on turn – taking.

Table 12, shows that male and female responses in all items included in this study on turn-taking and stroking are not significantly different. Since the associated probability of the Mann – Whitney test is higher than the significance level 0.05 or **5%**, the research hypothesis which states that there is no gender difference between male and female interaction in terms of turn-taking and stroking should be accepted.

According to the data, female participants were more expressive in words when it comes to their admiration, appreciation, support, agreement or conformity to another's point of view, *most of thetime* during conversation. The results seem to contradict the point of contention

Table 12

Test Statistics[b] for Turn-taking

	T-t 1	T-t 2	T-t 3	T-t 4	T-t 5
Mann-Whitney U	7.500	6.000	6.500	7.500	7.000
Wilcoxon	17.500	16.000	16.500	17.500	17.000
Z	-.158	-.661	-.458	-.155	-.316
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.874	.508	.647	.877	.752
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	. 886[ns]	.686[ns]	.686[ns]	.886[ns]	.886[ns]
	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S5
Mann-Whitney U	3.000	7.500	6.000	4.00	7.000
Wilcoxon W	13.000	17.500	16.000	14.000	17.000
Z	-1.667	-.158	-1.000	-1.176	-.310
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.874	.317	.240	.757
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.200[ns]	.886[ns]	.686[ns]	.343[ns]	.886[ns]

Note: a. T-t stands for turn-taking
b. S stands for stroking.
c. Figures are not corrected for ties.
d. Grouping variable is gender.

raised by many researches on male – female interaction. While it is widely accepted that there is gender difference between male-female interaction, this study arrived at a conclusion that there is none and the presence of differences is insignificant.

This reality may be explained by the gender composition of the group which was highly dominated by female students. Since male students comprised less than 1/8 only of the total population, the female students had better opportunities to interact. Evidence also shows that male students engaged in cooperative talk; thus, they more likely modified their speech and behaviors in response to the conversation initiated by their female counterparts.

Chavez (2001) summarized that in a traditional competitive classroom, male students seem to be advantaged. While, in a cooperative learning organizations or environment, women participate more, than in traditional teacher-centered classes. Chavez (2001) further explained that female students enjoy exploring the feelings and opinions of others in a cooperative, non - hierarchical setting. For this reason, female student - participants were not totally left out during interaction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the study highlight a description of Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching used during lessons. Included in the description are the following:a) the complementary roles between the teacher and the students, b) problems confronted during the implementation of this approach c) commendable promotion of language skills, and d) the breaking of a traditional competitive classroom, where male students seem to dominate, to a cooperative and non - hierarchical setting.

The findings of the study imply that a) the reversal in role paradigm between teacher and students in a task-based interactional approach redounds to greater participation in classroom activities by the students.; b) the lack of facility in English and the noise that naturally goes with the set- up in a regular classroom site and with the number of students (40-45) are the two major problems in the implementation of task-based interactional approach.; c) the integration of social skills side by side with the four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking are achieved in this approach.; and d) gender is not a significant factor of interaction in terms of turn-taking and stroking.

This study brings awareness of the following necessities in order to greatly benefit Task - based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching: a) teachers should be open to necessary “paradigm shifts”;and be willing to portray supporting roles so that students, the lead characters during lessons, will assume more active roles; b) the students, like the teacher, should learn and practice the language of appreciation and recognition in words and in deeds because motivation takes place in an environment where encouragement is present; c) students’ problem of feeling inadequate to contribute something or to share ideas and opinions due to lack of proficiency in the target language should be addressed; and d) The teacher must find ways to promote situations that provide equal opportunities for involvement and participation between male and female students in the classroom.

What this study promotes is a language classroom where students interact as necessitated by thegiven task. Students engaged in tasks, using social interaction modelsand learnedas they perform . Since this approach was primarily focused on process,it was observed that language focus received secondary, if not lesser attention. This reality appeared or perceived to be a limitation. Thus, the emerging concern is to make a balance between the two: process and content.

Congruent to the aforementioned limitation, the correction needed in the output of the students may vary between or among classes since identification of errors would depend on what will surface during task. Thus, disparity in the language focus during correction is possible. Meaning, classes may not receive the same input - content. This scenario sees the need to look into a way which will deal similar language focus regardless of varying performance.

Finally, this research also envisions alanguage classroomthat will not just focused on the promotion of language and social skills, but a classroom that promotes a kind ofperspective and an attitudeof concern for mother earth and other global issues. The quest nowis to find waysto make Task-based Interactional Approach to Language Teaching, a Greening English language teaching.

■ ■ ■

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