

A Case Study of Student Perceptions of Task-Based and Presentation-Practice-Production Approaches to Learning Grammar

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Abstract: This primary research, “A case study of student perceptions of Task-Based and Presentation-Practice-Production Approaches to learning grammar”, offers a critical investigation of the two approaches with specific reference to a study of student perceptions through lessons based on their theoretical principles. The attention of this study was on the student attitudes towards the two approaches in a Thai context. The subjects were male students studying a secondary school level in a Thai boy boarding school, where student centered is promoted and employed through the teaching of all subjects and activities. This study suggests interesting insights of how TESOL Methods and Methodologies could be employed in the present-day English classrooms, which would give contributive applications for creating new dimensions of English Language Learning for learners of the new Thai generations and in other applicable EFL learning environments.

Keywords: TESOL Methods, EFL learning environments, Task-Based Approach, Presentation-Practice-Production Approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the main objective in English Language Learning is to obtain communicative competence to achieve communication. Thus, the notion about English Language Learning is whether grammar should be taught is not the issue to be debated, but more importantly, it is about how (or in which ways) grammar should be learned in order to gain the communicative competence, especially in contexts where the language is not normally communicated or spoken in daily-life situations, meaning that language exposure and input could be mostly served to learners only in classrooms. The essence of grammar for effectiveness of communication is frequently described. Swain (1985 cited in Nunan 1998: 153) notes that grammar is crucial because “learners’ ability to express themselves is constrained by the extent to which they can encode their meanings grammatically”. The importance of grammar implying the types of language learning activities is stated that “there is value in language activities which require learners to focus on from [and that] grammar is an essential resource in using language communicatively” Nunan (1989:13).

The empirical change in English Language Teaching in Thailand has come with the National Educational Reform Act 1999 adopting the Communicative Approach in the new curriculum. According to the new curriculum, the emphasis in teaching and learning has moved from teacher-control to learner-centeredness. One teaching approach which has been widely used in the country is Presentation-Practice-Production. Recently, this approach has been critiqued that although the methodology is communicative in some extent, with the control over the students’ learning, it is not genuinely communicative in practice. Accordingly, it has been questioned that how it could be supportive to the teaching trend to create learner competency to acquire communicative competence. At the same time, Task-Based Approach has been promoted and become popular in the field, as its theoretical principles are agreeable to conditions for language acquisition, and communication skills to take place. For the term “task”, there is still no agreement on a single definition (Kumaravadivelu 2006: 64). A definition which is claimed as a definition encompassing almost all the most fundamental elements that should be included in language pedagogy is proposed by Ellis. The crucial elements are “attention to meaning”, “engagement with grammar”, “inclusion of pragmatic properties”, “use of authentic communication”, “importance of social interaction”, “integration of language skills”, and “the connection to psycholinguistic processes” (Kumaravadivelu 2006:65).

It is noted that “Task-based learning has become orthodoxy in contemporary EFL teaching and in recent years has been exported to many countries around the globe” (Carless 2002:389). However, with the resistance against the approach’s learning methods in many Asian countries, the approach causes uncertainties about its effectiveness. That is, there have been some criticisms about its inappropriateness to local conditions in Asian contexts, in which learners’ learning styles might be blocking the acquisition, rather than promoting it.

Under consideration of the above issues regarding Presentation-Practice-Production and Task-Based Approaches, there was a need to conduct this case study. The study aimed to answer that how the students would feel towards learning grammar through these two approaches. Thus, it questioned which approach would be more appropriate for the students. The supplementary questions included:

I Do the students recognize two different methodologies; Presentation-Practice-Production and Task-Based Approaches?

II If the students recognize the two different methodologies, what differences do they see?

III Which methodology do they prefer?

Findings from all the research questions would recommend how far, with the concern of the student’s perceptions, is the possibility of implementing Task-Based Approach in English Language Teaching and Learning in Thai contexts, in order to promote the learning where learner-centeredness is emphasized. Moreover, the findings would further guide in which direction the teaching and learning could be.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Differences between PPPA and TBA:

Teacher-oriented VS Learner-oriented and Teachers’ roles:

PPPA is teacher-oriented, while the other is learner-oriented learning. In lessons using the first approach, the teacher has control over the students’ learning. The learners are passive in this view, as they have to listen to what the teacher says and be obedient to what the teacher orders. It is that in the process of mastery of language, “the feasibility of teacher control of the language which is going to be learnt, and with a belief that a teacher’s decisions about what is appropriate will prevail as regards what will be presented and focused” (Skehan 2002:294). For teacher roles, Richards and Rodgers (1986: 56) identify “the teacher models the target language, controls the direction and pace of learning and monitors and corrects the learners’ performance.” In contrast, in the view of TBA, learners’ needs are mostly concerned, as they are permitted to control their own learning, and that they “will need to develop individually, since it is their personal language systems that will need development, and personalized feedback that will be the key.” (Skehan 2002:294). Willis (1996:18) cites that tasks remove the complete control over the students, and as a result they can freely and naturally interact with people as they can make their own decisions while learning. In TBA, there are various roles for the teacher. Breen and Candlin (1980 cited in Nunan 1989) identify three main roles for teachers in communicative classrooms; “facilitator of communicative process”, “a participant”, and “an observer and learner”. Moreover, teachers could perform as “sources of linguistic information” to supply vocabulary when needed (Swan 2005: 391). According to the mentioned roles of the teachers in task-based classrooms, teachers’ domination is largely reduced, and teachers co-operate teaching with learners by playing much more equal roles with students.

Feature- focused Activity VS Focused communication activity:

In identifying options of learner performance, it is suggested a choice which “consists of whether to opt for a feature-focused activity or for focused communication activity” (Ellis 2001: 81). The two types represent Long’s a clear difference between a focus on forms and a focus of form (Ellis 2001:81). It is illustrated that feature-focused activity or focus on forms is “the practice of ‘isolating linguistic items, teaching and testing them at a time’” (Ellis 2001:81), while the other, focused communication activity or focus on form is referred to an effort to “direct learners’ attention to specific grammatical properties during the course of meaning-based activities” (Ellis 2001: 81). From the descriptions of the two, it could be stated that the focus of learning within PPPA is on forms as the belief underlying the approach is that “competence is primary, and performance will emerge as a by-product” (Widdowson 2003: 128). In contrast, the learning within TBA is the other type, focused communication activity as its attention is to “get performance right and competence

will, with some prompting, take care of itself” (Widdowson 2003:128). With the view of language learning of TBA, it is believed the meanings learners want to convey are governed by the way the task is completed, and importantly the learners should be able “to express such meanings with appropriate forms” (Skehan 2002:292). Supporters of task-based language teaching have claimed that the teaching is a perfect instrument for “implementing *focus on form*, a methodological principle in which learners’ attention is down to form in the context of meaning” (McDonough and Chaikitmongkol 2007: 208). Long and Norris (2000: 599) illustrates the integration of meaning and form as:

Task-based language teaching...is an attempt to harness the benefits of a focus on meaning via adoption of an *analytic* syllabus, while simultaneously, through the use of *focus of form* (not forms), to deal with its known shortcomings, particularly rate of development and incompleteness where grammatical accuracy is concerned.

Semi-controlled language production VS Free language production:

In PPPA, it could be claimed that the students’ ability to produce a wide range of language use is restricted. It is because of the belief that “exercises should not contain items that were not learnt before”, and learners have to “learn the same things at the same time in the very same way” since varied learning backgrounds and individual differences are not taken into consideration (Locke and Kristof 1996 cited in Van Den Branden 2006:89). Language production in this approach is semi-controlled as during the first two stages, learners’ practices are controlled for accuracy while in the last stage, they are allowed to freely speak by using the model which was previously taught and practiced in a new given situation. Contrarily, TBA offers students to perform the language by using their own linguistic resources or language knowledge they have acquired, without worries about language forms. It could be confirmed by Willis (1996: 24) as:

An important feature of [TBI] is that learners are free to choose whatever language forms they wish to convey what they mean in order to fulfill, as well as they can, the task goals. It would defeat the purpose to dictate or control the language forms that they must use. As the need arises, words and phrases acquired previously but as yet unused will often spring to mind.

Investment of mental energy and discovery of knowledge:

As have been previously demonstrated, with the domination of the teacher, opportunities for students to invest mental energy in learning within APPA are minimal, since they usually follow the teacher’s instructions and mostly do not have to make sentences of their own, as they do in task-based classrooms, but are given a language model to practice. In Task-Based Language Teaching, putting efforts in thinking and interacting during completing and performing a task is more crucial than “the absolute correctness and uniformity of the product”, although a particular outcome of the task is the goal (Van Gorp and Bogaert 2006: 103). Investing mental energy is very necessary in learning within Task-Based Approach, as it is believed that invested mental energy leads learners to comprehension while they try to “bridge the gap and overcome the difficulties the task poses (Van Gorp and Bogaert 2006: 91) during social interaction. That is, “meaning negotiation can contribute to L2 contribution, namely through the feedback that learners receive on their own productions when they attempt to communicate and through the modified output that arises when learners are pushed to reformulate their productions to make them comprehensible” (Long 1996 cited in Ellis 2000: 199).

Options in dealing with language errors and mistakes:

An outstanding teaching method in PPPA is error avoiding option that prevents the learners from producing the language incorrectly. In TBA, learners are allowed to make mistakes while communicating. This difference is underlined by the difference between focus on accuracy and focus on fluency between the two methodologies. During TBA lessons, students can freely speak without an interruption of the teacher’s error correction in order to encourage learners to produce their language and to allow flow of meaning-based communication.

Ur (1996:85) describes the theoretical view about language errors of TBA as:

Mistakes may be seen as an integral and natural part of learning: a symptom of the learner’s progress through an ‘interlanguage’ toward a closer and closer approximation to the target language. Some would say that it is not necessary to correct at all: as the learner advances mistakes will disappear on their own...Even if you think-as most learners do – that grammar mistakes need to be corrected, it is important to relate them not as a sign of inadequacy (you have failed to teach something, the students failed to learn it), but rather as a means to advance teaching and learning.

Limitations of TBA:

The first issue regarding limitations of TBA is about the questioned effectiveness, as it is evident from some authors about its failure in obtaining language competence through tasks. Accordingly, Pica (2000: 6) describes the problem as:

When attention is focused solely on communication of message meaning, learners are drawn almost exclusively to the meaning and comprehensibility of input, and only secondarily to the structures, sounds that shape input. Such communicative experiences weaken opportunities for learners to notice how L2 sounds and structures relate to the meanings of messages that encode, how social norms are observed and maintained linguistically, and how concepts such as time, action and activity, space, number, and gender, are expressed lexically and/or morphosyntactically. Such communicative experiences can also limit access to L2 features such as functors and particles, that convey grammatical information, but carry little semantic meaning.

The other issue is that, the view which claims that TBA serves “rich input” seems controversial to reality. It is pointed out that actually the approach “puts great emphasis on output: the approach centrally involves learners deploying and refining their use of language to solve communicative problems”, therefore meaning that, when it is compared with conversational courses loaded with material focusing on reading and listening, as well as “typically supply ‘analysed’ new language material in the form of word-lists and examples of grammatical regularities”, Task-Based Instruction (TBI) does not provide the rich input if the term implies quantity rather than quality, and this point is a very problematic weakness (Swan 2005:392). Swan (2005:397) further clarifies the problematic situation that “The naturalistic communication-driven pedagogy characteristic of TBI has serious limitations, especially as regards the systematic teaching of new linguistic material. Its exclusive use is particularly unsuitable for exposure-poor contexts where time is limited – that is to say, for most of the world’s language learners”.

3. METHODOLOGY

This case study was a classroom-based research in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. The reason for conducting the case study was its distinctive qualification compared to other types of research which helped the researcher “see a phenomenon in its context” (Punch 2005:259).

It is suggested that the methodology for a case study is “hybrid” as it combines different methods for data collection and analysis, rather than relying on a single technique (Nunan 1992:74) and this reconfirms the need to employ both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The benefit of using the two types was for gaining more validity and reliability of the results.

Questionnaire:

The first reason to use questionnaire in collecting the data was that the information to be elicited is governed by questions and therefore could help the researcher to obtain the required information which is accurate and clear (McDonough and McDonough 1997:171).

Each type of questionnaire was written based on suitability and potential of the questions to elicit accurate answers for each supplementary research question. The first type, open-ended questionnaire (put in Appendix C) includes 4 sets of sheets that were distributed to the participants in the end of each lesson. The questions were written in order to answer the first and second supplementary questions which are “Do the students recognize two different methodologies; Presentation-Practice-Production and Task-Based Approaches?” and “If the students recognize the two different methodologies, what differences do they see?” For the close-ended (put in Appendix C), scaled questions with the type of ‘Likert Scale’ were used. The students were required to tick one box which best expresses their feeling towards each statement (as a teaching and learning feature of an approach between the two). Five different boxes represent five different degrees of agreement ranging from strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree and I don’t know. The questionnaire contains 20 questions aiming to answer the research question “Which methodology the students prefer?” The questions were written based on distinctive features of both methodologies. Since the students were young learners, the researcher had been concerned about some limitations of their ability to interpret and understand the questions. Therefore, the researcher wrote the questions with simple language and translated them into the Thai version.

Focus-Group Interview:

The researcher decided to conduct focus-group interviews since the interview “offer the opportunity to interview a number of people at the same time and to use the interaction between a group as a resource of further insight” (Nunan 1992:172).

The researcher selected altogether 20 participants to participate in the interview, as considering the quality of the given answers in the open-ended questionnaires. The students were grouped into 4-5 people to discuss the topics given by the teacher (as the interviewer). The interviews were semi-structured as a set of questions (which is put in Appendix E) which was previously prepared by the teacher, but additional information could emerge while new topics were developed through conversations flow.

The method to record the interview data is ‘audio recording’. Every group interview was digitally recorded and then the researcher listened through the recorded interviews, transcribed (for her own transcriptions), summarized, and analyzed them for more important information. Although this method is very time-consuming, the technique “ensures an accurate and detailed record of actual language data” which is not only a means, in by which thoughts and feelings could be expressed, but also information to be processed (McDonough and McDonough 1997:186). Beneficially, as pointed out, using such method allows the researcher to be able to concentrate on the process of the interview” as the researcher could focus on the attention to interact with the interviewees both verbally and non-verbally, with the confidence that all words have been recorded (Nunan 1992:172).

Participants, time and lessons:

The Pilot Study:

In the pilot study, the participants were 38 secondary school students aged 11-12 studying in Pratom 6 (grade 6) at Samesen Primary School in Bangkok, Thailand. The study was designed for a short period of time which was one week. Normally, the students attended 3 one-hour-periods of studying per a week. The two lessons taught were intended to teach past-tense verbs. Each lesson was based on each methodology which lasted for 60 minutes.

The Case Study:

The participants in the study were 42 students studying the English language in Mattayom 2 (grade 8), aged 13-14 at Vajiravudh College, a private boy boarding school, in Bangkok, Thailand. The first group of 21 students was studying in Mattayom 2/1 in which most of the students were highly competent (top students), while the students of the other class which was Mattayom 2/3 were lower competent language learners. For the English class as a compulsory subject, they normally had to attend the class for 5 forty-five-minute studying periods weekly.

Teaching Materials:

In the pilot:

In the pilot study, the first lesson was based on PPPA. Firstly the teacher initiated the students to answer several questions in order to contextualize the teaching. After that, it required the students to listen to the teacher speaking out a set of conversation of asking and answering about what the character did over the weekend for the first picture. Later the teacher let the students practice the language using choral repetition or individual urging. Next, the teacher assigned the students to practice all the learned items with their partner. Then, the students were given a small task, in which they had to get information about what their friends did on weekends.

For the lesson based on TBA, the students were assigned to work in group of 3 to 5 people. The task required them to rearrange all the provided pictures to make a story. The students were also required to write the story in the sheet given. After that, they had to come in front of the class to tell the story to their classmates.

In the Case Study:

Two lessons based on PPPA:

The first lesson of PPPA (lesson 1) aimed to teach Present-Simple Tense verbs. The teaching was contextualized with the introduction of a character that normally did different activities at different times on the weekend. The procedure and techniques for presentation, practice, production stages of this lesson were the same as the one’s used in the pilot.

The second lesson of PPPA (lesson 2) aimed to teach Present-Continuous Tense verbs. To contextualize items to be taught, it was illustrated that there are 15 people living in a big house doing different activities in an afternoon. The procedure and techniques for presentation and practice stages of this lesson were the same as the one's used in the pilot. For the production stage, the students had to imagine that they were staying in their house. For a small task, they had to tell the rest of the class about the activities of the people in their house might be doing at the time.

Two lessons based on TBA:

The task of the first lesson based on this methodology (lesson 3) was intended to teach Present-Continuous Tense verbs. It is a pedagogic task in which two students working together, as each was holding a different picture. They were required to communicate orally without showing their picture to the partner, to find out some differences and similarities between the two pictures. In addition, they had to write the identified differences and similarities in complete sentences in the sheet provided. In the final stage, the students reported their outcomes orally to the rest of the class.

The second task (lesson 4) was intended to teach Present-Simple Tense verbs. It is an authentic task in which the students had to fill in their information in a table (in the form of complete sentence) about what they liked, disliked and what they did or did not do according to the topics given. Next, they were assigned to have conversations with a partner to get the information about the partner's friend and family member. During this stage they were not required to write complete sentences but just take notes in the tables. In the final stage, as the same as previous lessons based on this approach, the students went out to tell their classmates about the information.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and discussion of the collected data which are represented numerically in tables, as well as descriptive and interpretative ones which are necessary for qualitative data. In the first section, results are from open-ended Questionnaires 1-4. The results of the later section are presented in tables with numeric frequencies in percentage from the close-ended Questionnaire 5. The last section represents additional information from focus-group interviews.

Results of open-ended Questionnaires 1-4:

The results from the open-ended Questionnaires 1-4 are based on interpreting the data from altogether 37 out of 42 participants as 5 were absent from some of the lessons. The data needed to be qualitatively processed to get the results. That is, the students' ability to recognize the two different methodologies was investigated individually, otherwise the results would not be valid if they were numerically processed in frequencies overall.

In representing the results, it is necessary to refer to all the four lessons in the study. Lessons 1 and 2 are based on Presentation-Practice-Production Approach, while the last two lessons which are 3 and 4 are based on Task-Based Approach. The researcher put all the lessons to orderly teach this way with some reasons. That is, putting the first two lessons based on a same approach, and followed with the other two based on the other approach would give the participants more chances to get familiar with each approach's teaching principles, thus could be able to recognize their differences.

For the ability to recognize the two different methodologies, the participants were expected to correctly identify similarities between lessons which were based on the same approach, as well as differences between lessons based on the two different approaches. The results were summarized with fundamental circumstances as follows.

Of overall, there were only 9 participants who could be able to recognize the two methodologies. At times, most of the students expressed that any two lessons were different or similar but they failed to correctly identify a difference or similarity which reflects an actual teaching and learning feature of them. Instead, the students frequently mentioned the content and explanation of procedure in the lessons (which did not indicate their recognition) as a reason why they thought the lessons were similar or different. For example, some students expressed that Lessons 2 and 3 were similar because they were teachings for Present Continuous Tense verbs. Another circumstance, it was found that, for each methodology to be recognized, it took a bit more time for some students, as a particular feature of the approach previously taught was not stated in the beginning but finally mentioned when the students expressed it as a difference to a feature of a later lesson which represented the other approach. For example, a student did not state any crucial characteristic of lessons 1 and 2 (based on PPPA), in Questionnaires 1 and 2, but after the teaching of the last lesson (lesson 4). In Questionnaire 4, he expressed that he thought that lesson 4 was different from the first two lessons, as he mentioned the

teacher's control as perceived through the role of the teacher to control the students to repeat after in lessons 1 and 2, as opposed to freedom to practice the language through tasks where the teacher performed the role of a helper. Furthermore, at times, the students could identify a feature in a lesson but could not recognize it in the other lesson of the same approach, and could not identify similarities or differences between the lessons.

Apart from the circumstances describing in which ways showing that the participants did not recognize the two different methodologies, it was also worth looking at some issues which give some valuable insights.

What the students expressed about what they had learned, what they liked, what they did not like and to identify the different approaches, about the lessons have shown that most of the students were aware of grammar teaching of the lessons and generalized that all the lessons emphasized on oral accuracy. That is, in addition to "grammar", most of the time the participants described the knowledge gained from the lessons with other two different descriptions; the ways to use sentences (or the language) with correctness, formation of sentences, also identified the lessons as practices of conversations. Therefore, it pointed out that why most of the time the student did not recognize between focus on accuracy of one approach (lessons 1 and 2), and focus on fluency of the other (lessons 3 and 4) which underlie theories and imply applications of how differently the language should be taught and learned within each methodology. The lack of such recognition might be a good explanation why most of them failed to identify distinctive features between the two approaches to make a difference. The illustrated circumstances about the inability to recognize the methodologies might confirm the assumption about what is taught is not always what is learned (teaching \neq learning). One instance is when some learners wrongly stated the verb tense intended to teach, as they identified another verb tense different from the tense taught in a particular lesson. Another is when some participants gave comments for teaching of lessons 3 and 4, as they did not like the teaching in which they hardly had opportunity to practice speaking, since writing was integrated in these lessons, and that they interpreted that the lessons heavily emphasized on writing. Therefore, the objective of intended language practice of the lessons was altered by the way the learners perceived thus practiced it in another way.

For the teaching and learning features of each methodology identified, the most frequently identified feature of Presentation-Practice-Production Approach is repeating after the teacher. As the students expressed, there were two dimensions of the identified feature. First, repeating after the teacher to signify the teacher's superior control over the students' learning. The other signifies controlled practice for language accuracy. In distinguishing the two methodologies, the students mostly referred to their freedom given by the teacher to accomplish their work, as opposed to the teacher's control in lessons 1 and 2. As illustrated from students' opinions, the freedom given by the teacher to accomplish the assigned work on their own in lessons 3 and 4 implied two insights. The first one is the notion in which the students had to rely on their own linguistic resources (acquired knowledge) in struggling to communicate. The other illustrates the situation in which they could perform the language with more confidence to take risks, without the pressure from the teacher's control. The other feature which was the most second frequently stated is about roles of the teacher. Some students could identify different roles of the teacher, as what they expressed indicates that, for lessons based on TBA, most of the time they perceived the teacher as a helper who explained for comprehension. In addition, performing the role of linguistic sources was perceived by fewer students, as the teacher supplied the students with vocabulary when asked. Other features referred to, were putting efforts in thinking, exchange of information, and focus on fluency for the lessons of TBA.

Results of close-ended Questionnaires 5:

For the close-ended Questionnaire 5 to get the answer for Research Question 3, first of all, the results of the whole population irrespective to group are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 represents the student perceptions towards teaching and learning features of Presentation-Practice-Production Approach.

Table 1: Student perceptions towards teaching and learning features of PPPA collective groups

Features of teaching and learning	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	I don't know %
1. I like to learn by listening and repeating	9.5	35.7	14.3	33.3	7.1
	45.2		47.3		
2. I feel that the more I repeat the sentences taught, the better I remember their grammatical rules	9.5	45.2	7.1	11.9	26.2
	54.7		19		

3. I like to learn speaking by imitating the teacher.	9.5	42.9	9.5	16.7	21.4
	52.4		26.2		
4. I think that learning by imitating the teacher helps me speak fluently.	7.1	54.8	4.8	9.5	23.8
	61.9		14.3		
5. I like the teacher to give a model which I can practice.	19	61.9	4.8	9.5	23.8
	80.9		14.3		
6. I feel panic when the teacher presses me to repeat and produce the language correctly.	16.7	19	21.4	28.6	14.3
	35.7		50		
7. I do not like when having to make sentences of my own in a new situation given by the teacher, after being practiced with control of the teacher.	14.3	14.3	9.5	40.5	21.4
	28.6		50		
8. I like the teacher to always correct my language mistakes.	35.7	47.6	7.1	2.4	7.1
	83.3		9.5		
9. I like to avoid making grammatical mistakes because it identifies my poor learning.	11.9	11.9	33.3	31	11.9
	23.8		64.3		

In general, the results show the students positively felt towards PPPA as the average percentage of the most of students agreeing on all the features is 55.8 %. The highest percentage which is 83.3 % appears in the students' expression of preference for the teacher to always correct their language mistakes. That indicates that in general the students were concerned of language accuracy. In statement 9, most of the students (64.3%) did not like to avoid making grammatical mistakes, and that is controversial to the results in statement 8. Apart from that, 80.9 % illustrated the need of providing a language model by the teacher, and this shows their need for the teacher's support. Significantly to mention, there were more students who thought that learning by imitating the teacher helped them improve fluency in speaking (61.9 %), than who felt that repetition of sentences after the teacher helped improve their competence in accuracy (54.7 %). Although the percentages referred to the amount of the students who were concerned of the gain in language improvement in accuracy and fluency the approach could serve are above 50 %, results in statements 1 and 3 reveal that there were less students who liked to learn by listening and repeating, as well as who liked to learn speaking by imitating the teacher. As notably pointing out, the percentages occurring within each feature of features numbers 1 and 3 spots the difference between them. The results in statement 1 show the students' acceptance of the learning by imitating the teacher, as the percentage of preference is 52.4% while 26.2% disagreed to learning with such a way. In contrast, the percentage of the students who agreed on learning by listening and repeating (45.2%) is less than the percentage of ones who did not like the learning feature (47.3%). It means that in fact the students did not enjoy learning by listening and repeating and it could be problematic.

Table 2: Table 1: Student perceptions towards teaching and learning features of TBA collective groups

Features of teaching and learning	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	I don't know %
1. I like to discuss or share my ideas in pair or group work.	28.6	26.2	4.8	19	21.4
	54.8		23.8		
2. I like to speak freely to my classmates without worrying that I would make mistakes.	38.1	38.1	4.8	4.8	14.3
	76.2		9.6		
3. I like to try to have a conversation with my classmates without the teacher telling me what to say.	21.4	31	9.5	16.7	21.4
	52.4		26.2		
4. I like to put effort in thinking by myself while learning.	31	52.4	0	2.4	14.3
	83.4		2.4		
5. I feel nervous when working on tasks with classmates.	0	4.8	28.6	35.7	31
	4.8		64.3		
6. I do not like doing tasks.	7.1	16.7	11.9	40.5	23.8
	23.8		52.4		
7. I like to talk in front of the class	4.8	28.6	21.4	23.8	21.4

	33.4		45.2		
8. I like to listen to my classmates presenting their work in front of the class.	26.2	57.1	4.8	0	11.9
	83.3		4.8		
9. I think it is fun to use creative thinking while completing group or pair work.	35.7	54.8	2.4	2.4	4.8
	90.5		4.8		
10. I like the tasks because they practice me to speak fluently.	19	47.6	7.1	2.4	23.8
	66.6		9.5		
11. I like the tasks because they practice me to speak with grammatical correctness.	23.8	42.9	2.4	7.1	
	66.7		9.5		23.8

According to Table 2 showing the results of students' attitudes towards teaching and learning features within Task-Based Approach, the average percentages indicate that 66.8 % of the participants liked the learning within the approach while there are only 14.94 % disagreeing and 19.2 % who were not sure if they liked the learning. That means, the students generally felt comfortable towards this approach.

Looking for more detail, obviously seen that the highest percentages take place in statements 4 and 9, and that indicates the students' enjoyment of their contribution of thoughts while learning, as the large amount which is 90.5 % illustrated that it is fun to use creative thinking while completing group or pair work, and 83.4 % agreed to put effort in thinking while learning. Another point which is worth identifying is that 83.3 % liked to listen to their classmates when the classmates present their work in front of the class. However, it seems that the students had problem with presenting their work in front of the class as 45.2% did not like it, and that is a larger amount than the amount of students who liked it. Apart from that, 76.2 % liked to speak freely to the classmates without worries to make mistakes. Most of the participants agreed that the tasks helped them speak both fluently and accurately (66.6% and 66.7 % orderly).

Apart from representation of the results irrespective of group, it is necessary to show the results within each group and make comparisons between them. The results are put in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Student perceptions towards teaching and learning features of PPPA within each group

Features of teaching and learning	Strongly agree		Agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		I don't know	
	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3
1. I like to learn by listening and repeating.	0	19	33.3	38.1	19	9.5	42.9	23.8	4.8	9.5
2. I feel that the more I repeat the sentences taught, the better I remember their grammatical rules.	0	19	47.6	42.9	9.5	4.8	4.8	19	38.1	14.3
3. I like to learn speaking by imitating the teacher.	4.8	14.3	38.1	47.6	4.8	14.3	19	14.3	33.3	9.5
4. I think that learning by imitating the teacher helps me speak fluency.	4.8	9.5	47.6	61.9	0	9.5	4.8	14.3	42.9	4.8
5. I like the teacher to give a model which I can practice.	19	19	61.9	61.9	4.8	4.8	9.5	9.5	4.8	4.8
6. I feel panic when the teacher presses me to repeat and produce the language correctly.	14.3	19	19	19	19	23.8	38.1	19	9.5	19
7. I do not like when having to make sentences of my own in a new situation given by the teacher, after being practiced with control of the teacher.	9.5	19	19	9.5	14.3	4.8	42.9	38.1	14.3	28.6

8. I like the teacher to always correct my language mistakes.	28.6	42.9	52.4	42.9	4.8	9.5	4.8	0	9.5	4.8
9. I like to avoid making grammatical mistakes because it identifies my poor learning.	9.5	14.3	0	23.8	47.6	19	33.3	28.6	9.5	14.3

Table 4 Table 4: Student perceptions towards teaching and learning features of TBA within each group

Features of teaching and learning	Strongly agree		Agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		I don't know	
	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3	2/1 %	2/3
1. I like to discuss or share my ideas in pairs or group work.	33.3	23.8	23.8	28.6	9.5	0	9.5	28.6	23.8	19
2. I like to speak freely to my classmates without worrying that I would make mistakes.	38.1	38.1	42.9	33.3	0	9.5	4.8	4.8	14.3	14.3
3. I like to try to have a conversation with my classmates without the teacher telling me what to say.	23.8	19	28.6	33.3	4.8	14.3	19	14.3	23.8	19
4. I like to put effort in thinking by myself while learning.	28.6	33.3	47.6	52.4	0	4.8	4.8	0	19	9.5
5. I feel nervous when working on tasks with classmates.	0	0	4.8	4.8	28.6	28.6	33.3	38.1	33.3	28.6
6. I do not like doing tasks.	0	14.3	19	14.3	14.3	9.5	28.6	52.4	38.1	9.5
7. I like to talk in front of the class.	9.5	0	28.6	28.6	19	23.8	9.5	38.1	33.3	9.5
8. I like to listen to my classmates presenting their work in front of the class.	33.3	19	57.1	57.1	4.8	4.8	0	0	4.8	19
9. I think it is fun to use creative thinking while completing group or pair work.	38.1	33.3	57.1	52.4	0	4.8	0	4.8	4.8	4.8
10. I like the tasks because they practice me to speak fluently.	14.3	23.8	42.9	52.4	14.3	0	0	4.8	28.6	19
11. I like the tasks because they practice me to speak with grammatical correctness.	19	28.6	38.1	47.6	4.8	0	4.8	9.5	33.3	14.3

When looking within each group to make a comparison, it is noticeable that Group 1 (M. 2/1) tended to more positively feel towards the learning based on Task-Based Approach, than Group 2 (M. 2/3). It is that the difference between the percentages of positive attitudes towards PPPA and TBA of Group 1 is greater than Group 2's. As it can be seen, the

percentage of the students of Group 1 who positively felt towards PPPA's features is 51.32 % while the percentage of ones agreeing on TBA's features is 64.5 % and thus the difference of percentage between preference of the two approaches is 13.18 % (64.5 % - 51.32 %). In case of Group 2, the difference of percentage is less than Group 1 (66.65 % - 60.31 % = 6.34 %). This implies that there tended to be more resistance against PPPA when used it with students in Group 1 than with Group 2.

According to the results of the two groups for PPPA, it is worth discussing some points which make fundamental notices for implications. The highest percentages occur in statement 8, as the majority of both groups (81 % for Group 1, 85.8 % for Group 2) expressed they need for the teacher to always correct their language mistakes. This reconfirms about the students' concern of accuracy. However, it seems controversial as seen in statement 9, as the students stated they did not agree on the learning in which they had to avoid making grammatical mistakes because it identified their poor learning. However, the percentages in statement 9 between the two classes make a difference as there were more students in Group 1 who did not like to avoid producing the mistakes, than in Group 2 (Group 1 = 80.9 %, Group 2 = 47.6 %). Moreover, in Group 1 the difference of the percentage between who did not agree, and who agreed on statement 9 is bigger than Group 2 (Group 1 - 80.9 - 9.5 = 71.4 %, Group 2 - 47.6 - 38.1 = 9.5 %). That indicates that the students in Group 1 tended to take more risks than Group 2, and would feel much more uncomfortable if having to be pressed to avoid making grammatical mistakes. The second highest percentages (80.9 % equally of both groups) are found in statement 5 illustrating that both of the classes liked the teacher to give a language model which they could practice. For learning by listening and repeating, Group 2 preferred the learning within this feature than the students in Group 1 did, as well as they were more realized of the benefit they had gained for grammatical knowledge than Group 1, as it could be seen from higher percentage of the Group's preference for it (Group 1 = 47.6 %, Group 2 = 61.9 %). Similarly, the amount of the participants of Group 2 who liked to learn by imitating the teacher and thought that learning with such a way helped them improve their oral fluency, is also greater than Group 1. It means that students in group 1 might tend to more negatively react to learning by listening and repeating, as well as learning to speak by imitating the teacher. There are more students who were aware of the gain they have obtained from learning by imitating the teacher than ones who wished to learn with the way in both Groups.

Next, discussion of the results of the participants' attitudes towards teaching and learning features of Task-Based Approach within each group is demonstrated. Generally, the results show that the students of both groups could get along with this approach well, except the feature in statement 7 which informs the same problem as found in the results irrespective to group, as the students did not like presenting the work in front of the class. Outstanding percentages appear in features of the students' wish to invest their mental energy while learning. That is, the majority of both groups (Group 1- 95.2 % agreeing on statement 9, 76.2 % agreeing on statement 4, Group 2- equal of 85.7 % agreeing on statements 9 and 4) expressed that they enjoyed using creative thinking while completing group or pair work (statement 9), as well as attempting to think by themselves while learning (statement 4). The second highest percentages are ones in statement 8 informing (Group 1- 90.4 %, Group 2- 76.1 %) that the students found it was enjoyable when listening to their classmates presenting the completed work in front of the class. Nevertheless, the results indicate that not many of the students liked to perform oral presentation in front of the class (Group 1- 38.1 %, Group 2 - 28.6 %), and it shows that Group 2 had much more resistance against this learning feature than Group 1 did (as the percentage of disagreement is 61.9 % for Group 2, while is only 28.5 % for Group 1). Another feature which shows outstanding percentages is in statement 2 in which the students would like to freely speak to their classmates without worrying to make mistakes. (Group 1- 81 %, Group 2 - 71.4 %). This disproves the previous assumption found in the results of PPPA that Group 2 preferred to avoid mistakes. In concerning about the students' feeling towards tasks, most of the students of both groups believed that they benefited from the tasks as the tasks helped them improve both oral fluency and accuracy, but the amount of Group 2 students agreeing on these two features is greater than Group 1.

Students' suggestions for development in learning:

Moderate degree of the teacher's control and support:

The need of the students was stated in some answers given when discussing related language learning features. One is that, most of the students required the learning in which they would be given freedom to manage their own learning most of the time. That is desire to be allowed to practice the language by constructing sentences from their own competence, finding the answers and thinking by themselves and being able to freely speak to classmates. However, they still required the learning in which they repeat sentences taught after the teacher (as acceptable for few times for difficult items),

learning instructions and grammar explanation are clearly explained in the beginning of each class, language error correction as feedback for the whole class (not individually) in the end of a lesson.

More practices of listening and speaking were needed:

It was informed that the teaching of the school emphasized on writing and reading for acquiring grammar. Most of the students accepted they had benefited from learning through writing. A student said that “We’ve got a lot of vocabulary as we memorize them while learning. The more we write, the better we will become. The more we write, the more vocabulary we gain as we gradually absorb the knowledge”. Yet, it was illustrated that the opportunity to practice speaking was minimal. Practices of listening and speaking normally occurred while foreign teachers taught, asked the students to give answers in an exercise, or during some listening activities.

Learning motivation is superior and should be enhanced:

The majority of the students wished to study in a relaxing learning atmosphere. In building up the atmosphere, being a kind teacher with a sense of humor was the most frequently referred characteristics the students wanted. In addition, it was recommended that the teacher should be understanding and be able to do whatever to make the students wish to learn. Those characteristics of teachers would encourage the students to have trust for the teachers and want to express the problems they had encountered. Apart from the teacher’s characteristics, the learners wanted to enjoy while learning with various kinds of teaching materials, techniques and activities, to make the learning interesting. Another suggestion which would help increase motivation is the need for explicit explanations for clearer understanding of lessons. It was pointed out that sometimes techniques based on teaching theories are not necessary, rather the teacher could just explicitly explain the items to be taught.

Language performance is crucial:

As already seen in the numeric results, a lot of the students preferred to perform their language, as concerned that language performance was needed as it made them and the teacher notice the how competent they were, and beneficial for mistakes and problems to be later fixed. Therefore, avoiding making language mistakes by keeping quiet or avoiding producing the language might bring negative effects on the learning. The fundamental role of language performance in improving learning competence was referred to benefit the students when listening to the classmates.

Learning through tasks requires active learning of all parts:

Many of the students liked doing the tasks, yet there were problems impeding productivity of the learning. It was informed about non-participation and lack of co-operation of some students in completing the tasks. A student illustrated as he accepted that he gained improvement from doing tasks, but he did not like to learn through tasks, because of all the he had to work hard while others did not help completing the tasks as group or pair work. Another student told that when assigned the tasks, he put efforts to get the assigned work done through struggling to communicate with his pair, but the partner did not speak the language with him. It was confirmed by some participants that benefits would be gained by ones who invest mental energy in task performance and vice versa.

5. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The results of all methods presented in the previous part are combined for an analysis for implications from the study, limitations and conclusion.

Implications:

Notions behind Postmethod Condition:

The results showing that the students did not recognize the two methodologies prove the ideas of Postmethod Condition. In what sense Postmethod Condition is proved by the answer, first of all, concept of post-method condition needs to be described. The rationale behind the Postmethod Condition is the concept citing that “method is dead” (Alwright 1991; Brown 2002 cited in Kumaravadivelu 2006:67). The condition declares attempts of a number of scholars to gradually drive the TESOL profession to be aware of the fact that “method has only a limited and limiting impact on language learning and teaching” (Kumaravadivelu 2006:67). This could recommend that “method should no longer be considered a valuable or a viable construct, and what is needed is not an alternative method but an alternative to method” (Kumaravadivelu 2006:67). It is suggested by a lot of researchers that limitations of method are due to complexity of language teaching and learning that makes any particular method unable “to remain effective for an extended period of time” (Kumaravadivelu cited in Pica 2000:3).

The key words “an alternative to method” provide an information that “language learning and teaching needs, wants, and situations are unpredictably numerous” and in order to effectively deal with this, Kumaravadivelu (1992:41) advises helping teachers to improve their ability to find out ways “within a general framework that makes sense in terms of current pedagogical and theoretical knowledge”, which are compatible and suitable for specific situations. In other words, the postmethod condition “motivates a search for an open-ended, coherent framework based on current theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical insights that will enable teachers to theorize from practice and practice what they theorize” (Kumaravadivelu 1994:27).

As most of the students could not recognize the two different methodologies, it proved Postmethod Condition. The results guided that in order to gain more productive learning outcomes, the best condition should follow teaching and learning in which different methods appropriate to learners’ needs and learning behaviors from different theoretical frameworks are combined, rather than sticking to a single teaching methodology. An evidence to support the point is the participants’ positive attitudes towards the two approaches of the overall participants. Another is the results within each group indicating that the two groups differently felt towards some features of each approach. Another is the participants’ suggestions in the interviews of using various kinds teaching techniques, materials and activities. Moreover, needs for some other teaching methods, were requested in the interviews. All of these further recommend that different groups of learners should be differently treated if concerned they have different backgrounds, require different needs, and behave differently in the learning, thus reactions to any same teaching method are not the same.

Preference of TBA indicated from the results:

The higher percentages of students’ preference for Task-Based Approach informed that this approach was more appropriate in providing conditions to promote the students’ learning than Presentation-Practice-Production Approach, in the students’ points of view. However, there is a need to look into this point within different dimensions of details. The information based on the results as evidence suggests that the students should get more involvement in learning the language with TBA.

More opportunities for implementing TBA:

Firstly, the notion about what is taught is not what is learned occurring in the results supports learning theoretical framework within TBA. The theoretical assumption underlies that “language learning is largely determined by learner-internal, rather than external factors” (Shehadeh2005:15), thus students “do not simply acquire to the language to which they are exposed” (Skehan 1996:18).

Secondly, the concern of grammatical competence as a basis for ability to effectively communicate together with seeing importance of language for communication signals awareness of essence of both accuracy and fluency for communication. This implies that the students saw English Language Learning as acquisition of communicative competence.

According to communicative competence, as Alptekin (2002:57) cites, involves four competencies which are “grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence”. Alptekin (2005:57-58) explains all the four defined terms as follows. When referring to grammatical competence, it refers to the ability to “produce well-formed words and sentences” by using the knowledge of “syntactic, lexical, morphological, and phonological features of the language” in ways as native speakers use. The second, sociolinguistic competence, is the ability to use the language with appropriateness with “an understanding of the social context in which language is used”. It is described that social context refers to “the culture-specific context embedding the norms, values, beliefs, and behavior patterns of a culture”. Next, discourse competence deals with the ability to understand the intended messages communicated when the use of language is extended in context, by support of “the connection of a series of sentences or utterances to form a meaningful whole”. That is, “ideas are linked to each other based on general knowledge of the world as well as familiarity with a particular context”. The last one is strategic competence which is defined as capacity to solve problems in real-life situations by using “communication strategies” to “keep the communicative channel open”, and to reduce difficulties according to grammatical mistakes, or other factors, “which limit the application of such rules”.

In order to gain communicative competence, the learning in classrooms should reflect language use in authentic situations in real life. The students illustrated that learning within TBA provided them with competence to perform the language in real-life situations. Generally speaking, the practices in which they had to perform the language by constructing sentences by themselves using their acquired knowledge were unlike the practices in PPPA lessons which limited the ability to produce a wide range of language use. Furthermore, the practices in which they had free conversations with peers were

much more similar to the real situations which provide them more opportunities to obtain the four competencies through social interaction where negotiation of meaning occurs.

Thirdly, there was a move from teacher-oriented to learner-oriented learning in this context. The move indicated that the students tended to be more active learners that could be at least noticed from the large amount of the participants expressing their needs to get involved in learning activities where they were permitted to invest their mental energy, rather than being passive to be always input by the teacher. In addition to the higher percentages of preference for TBA, the interpretation of results of some features for PPPA in the questionnaires gave the notion which strengthened the need of TBA for the learning when combined with some other information in the interviews. Here, the results in statements 5, 8 and 9 (in PPPA) in the close-ended questionnaire needed to be clarified. In fact, in the interviews, the students clarified the need of a language model provided by the teacher, to mean the first stage of TBA, rather the feature of PPPA. Accordingly, they commented that there should have been an explanation of the grammatical items to be taught or examples of language to use in completing the tasks. When discussing about error correction, they gave more details that the correction they preferred was one that the teacher gave in the end of the lesson after practicing and learning through conversations with peers. The other piece of information was within PPPA, the result in that most of the students (from numeric results) did not like to avoid making grammatical mistakes is relevant with the result of TBA as that the majority of them liked to speak without worrying to make mistakes. The clarified features reflected teaching and learning conditions which they genuinely desired.

In sum for, all the results of the study imply that there was a need to implement Task-Based Approach in language learning practices. However, the approach should be adapted to be more appropriate to students' learning styles and culture. A recommendation is to combine TBA with some others methods which are needed for the students if they could be productive to the learning. The other recommendation is to teach the students learning strategies, and give them support to better facilitate the learning, thus they can be performing tasks more successfully. That would provide more opportunities to gain productive language outcomes for the students.

Limitations of the Research:

The first limitation was time constraint. It was considered as an impact on the students' ability to perceive differences between the two methodologies. As claimed before in the part of methodology about the participants, one studying period lasted for 45 minutes. For PPPA, the researcher used 1 period per a lesson while 60 minutes per a lesson of TBA were required. Task-Based lessons could not be continuously taught as each lesson could not be finished in one period, so the researcher had to teach each lesson on one day and continued it on another day. Furthermore, sometimes, the students needed to participate in the school's activities, and the teachings of a day or more were canceled. It could be claimed that two lessons per an approach might be not enough for the students to get familiar with the patterns of the teaching methodology, and the limited time of the teaching which could not be continuous might effect on the students' capacity to perceive things.

The second limitation was related to the open-ended questionnaire which consists of 4 sets of sheets. Completing the questionnaire was very time-consuming and tiring for the subjects who were young learners. Consequently, there could be loss of information, as the students might want to spend a lot of time and mental energy for answering the questions. Therefore, the data collected might not truly inform all about the ability of the participants to recognize the approaches.

Conclusion:

According to this primary research "A case study of student perceptions of Task-Based and Presentation-Practice-Production Approaches to learning grammar", the findings proved validity of the notion of the Post-Method Condition. That suggested teachers to adapt and combine different teaching methods and methodologies in Teaching English considering different teaching and learning contexts with concerns for learners' needs, learning behaviors and styles. Apart from that, as TESOL theories have proven and given credibility to both accuracy and fluency for effectiveness of provision for communication skills, thus calling teachers' attention for training and teaching professional development to adopt and adapt the methodologies in which the communicative competence is promoted.

The results revealed the students' preference for Task-Based Approach as the approach offered the students freedom to manage, perform and develop their own English competency informing teachers to implement the approach to be suitable and appropriate within particular learning settings. In implementing the approach, the results suggested teachers to maintain moderate degree of the teacher's control together with support, provide practices of listening and speaking skills along with the occupied emphasis on reading and writing, create the teaching and learning atmosphere where

students' motivation is enhanced, and offer student's opportunities to more freely perform their language as they can get involved in learning activities where they are allowed to invest their mental energy, rather than being controlled under teachers' complete domination. All these suggestions are for more possibilities to make lessons become more communicative practices for realistic real-life communications.

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