
Task-based language teaching versus traditional production-based instruction: Do they result in different classroom processes?

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ABSTRACT

The study compared the interactional features of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and present-practice-produce (PPP) in classrooms involving young EFL learners in Japan. TBLT was operationalised as a set of input-based tasks that required learners to listen to descriptions and directions and respond non-verbally. PPP was operationalised through a set of production-based activities similar to those employed in course books for young EFL learners. Participants were 24 young learners in a private English school in Japan. Two classes participated a task-based (TB) lesson and another two took part in a PPP lesson. The lessons were designed to introduce 30 new vocabulary items. Six process features were investigated: 1) amount of input and output, 2) the degree to which the input was contextualised, 3) opportunities learners had to search for meaning, 4) learners' discourse control, 5) characteristics of teacher-initiated exchanges and 6) characteristics of the student-initiated exchanges. The results indicated that the interactional processes differed markedly. The discourse in the TBLT lesson

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manifested interactional authenticity while that in the PPP lesson resembled pedagogic discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007) has been developed as an alternative to traditional instruction of the presentation-practice-production (PPP) kind (See Ur, 1996). TBLT draws extensively on theories of L2 acquisition, e.g., Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, Skehan's (1998) cognitive theory of L2 learning and Robinson's (2003) Cognition Hypothesis. The learning principle underlying the task-based approach is that learners will learn a language best if they engage in activities that have interactional authenticity (Bachman, 1990). While performing tasks, a learner's primary attention is on constructing and comprehending messages but their attention is directed to form when the need arises. Negotiation of meaning (Long, 1983, 1996), in particular, is considered to provide the opportunities for learning. These different theories have drawn on somewhat different definitions of 'tasks' but these all refer to a number of key features, summarised in Ellis's (2003) definition, which informed the present study: (1) meaning is primary, (2) there is some type of gap, (3) learners are required to use their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources to communicate, and (4) there is some outcome other than the display of correct language.

Tasks can be designed and operationalised in different ways: focused or unfocused, comprehension-based or production-based. They can also be implemented with or without a pre/post- activity. Focused tasks engage learners in the use of specific linguistic features during the performance of a task while unfocused tasks have no specific feature in mind and any focus on form occurs mainly as a result of corrective feedback. Comprehension-based tasks require learners to demonstrate comprehension of input in the form of descriptions or directions while production-based tasks require learners to produce utterances containing the target feature(s). TBLT can involve a cycle of pre-task, main-task and post-

task activities (Willis, 1996) but a lesson can consist solely of the main task.

Present-practice-produce (PPP) has its origins in audiolingualism. It has been a mainstream approach for second language teaching, as reflected in popular ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) textbooks. More recently, skill-acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 1998, 2007) has come to underpin this teaching methodology by emphasizing practice as central in enabling learners to progress from a declarative stage of knowledge to a procedural stage. Applied to language teaching, this methodology entails (1) presenting learners with explicit information about a target feature to establish declarative knowledge, (2) providing 'practice' in the form of controlled production activities to develop 'procedural knowledge', and (3) engaging learners in free-production activities by means of structure-based production tasks (Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993) to enable them to automatise their declarative knowledge. There are variations on the basic PPP model, for example, Harmer's (1998) ESA (engage, study, activate) and 'task-supported language teaching' (Ellis, 2003) where a task is introduced in the final production stage of the sequence.

Advocates of PPP have been critical of TBLT. Swan (2005), for example, claims that the theoretical rationale for TBLT is typically limited to the acquisition of grammar, vocabulary and phonology are ignored, and that TBLT provides learners with substantially less new language than "traditional" approaches (p.393). Swan also suggests that TBLT is not applicable to beginners, provides limited language input and lacks empirical evidence to support either the hypotheses that construct the theoretical rationale for task-based teaching or to demonstrate that it is superior to traditional 'focus-on-forms' approaches.

To date, the only study that has compared the effects of TBLT and PPP empirically is Sheen (2006). In this study two groups of Grade 6 elementary school students received seven months of either TBLT or PPP. The learners' ability was measured by three tests - an aural

written comprehension test, an oral interview test (scored for correct use of the target structures) and a grammaticality judgement test. Sheen only reported the results of two of the tests (the oral production and the grammaticality judgement tests), which showed that the PPP group outperformed the TBLT group. However, there were methodological problems with this study, in particular from the account of the TBLT instruction Sheen provided it is doubtful whether this approach was implemented properly (e.g., it did not create adequate opportunities for focus-on-form). Sheen's study also failed to investigate the process features of the two classrooms.

The study reported below attempted to examine one of the points that Swan made by investigating vocabulary acquisition by beginner learners. It also attempted to overcome one of the problems in Sheen's study by employing focused tasks rather than unfocused tasks and by providing detailed information about the classroom processes that arose. The research question was:

To what extent do task-based language teaching (TBLT) and presentation-practice-production (PPP) result in different classroom processes in foreign language lessons for young learners of English?

The term 'processes' refers to features of classroom interaction that are hypothesized to be relevant to L2 acquisition.

METHOD

Participants

Twenty-four Japanese learners of English aged between six and eight years old participated in this study. They were in four intact classes in a private language school in Japan. Two classes consisted of first year elementary students with four months English learning experience, and the other two classes consisted of second year students with 16 months experience of learning English (90 minutes per week). The classes were used to form two groups: a task-based (TB) group and a production-practice-produce (PPP) group. Each

group included one first-year class (A class: six students in the TB and three students in the PPP group) and one second-year class (B class: seven students in the TB and eight in the PPP). The research was approved by the University of Auckland Human Subjects Ethics Committee and the consent forms were signed by the participants' parents.

Design

TBLT was operationalised as a set of input-based tasks that required learners to listen to directions and descriptions and respond non-verbally (i.e., there were no pre- or follow-up activities). Such tasks are suitable for participants who have very limited L2 knowledge. PPP was operationalised through a set of production-based activities similar to those employed in many beginner course books for young EFL learners (e.g., Eisele, Eisele, Hanlon, & Hanlon, 2003; Nakata, Frazier, Hoskins, & Graham, 2007). Thirty nouns (e.g., *crocodile*, *ladle*, *radish*), none of which the participants knew prior to the study, were chosen as the target words. The TB group received three listen-and-do tasks which required students to choose the picture cards that corresponded to the teacher's directions. The PPP group performed five activities in each lesson, starting with presentation and followed by controlled and free production activities where students were required to say the target words depicted in the picture cards. The detailed procedures of each task and activity will be presented in the next section. The lesson time for each group was set at approximately 30 minutes. The lesson was repeated five times over three weeks (i.e., there were two lessons each week), but for the purposes of this article, only one lesson was examined. All the lessons for the two groups were taught by the researcher, who had ten years of teaching experience.

Instructional materials and procedures for the TB group

Three tasks were designed for the TB lesson. They constituted what Ellis (2003) input-tasks; that is, they were focused tasks that were designed in such a way that the outcome could only be achieved if

the learners were successful in comprehending the input. Each task involved the participants' listening and responding to the teacher's commands. The tasks were designed to achieve 'interactional authenticity' rather than 'situational authenticity'. That is, although they clearly did not constitute real-world tasks it was expected that they would elicit the kind of language behaviour that learners might experience outside the classroom (Ellis, 2003). At the beginning of each lesson, the goal and task procedures were explained to the participants using the learners' first language (Japanese) if necessary. However, the teacher made every effort to use only English during the performance of the tasks. The three tasks are described below.

Task 1

This task required the learners to listen to the teacher's commands (e.g., "Please take the crocodile to the zoo") and find the cards representing the target items (e.g., 'crocodile'). The participants were informed that the purpose of this task was to help the zoo or the supermarket by finding the right cards and placing them in their holder. The participants who had chosen correctly placed the card in the corresponding pocket on the board, but the participants who had answered incorrectly replaced the card they had chosen on the table and then put the correct card in their 'incorrect' box. After finishing the commands for all 30 items, each student counted the number of cards in his/ her incorrect box. The student with the fewest cards was the winner.

Task 2

The teacher told participants in their L1 that the goal of the task was to help the animals by finding certain cards. The participants were requested to find pairs of cards that corresponded to the teacher's statements. For example, if the teacher said 'The polar bear needs the battery' they had to find the card showing a 'polar bear' and a 'battery'.

Task 3

This task was a form of Picture Bingo. The participants began by choosing nine cards and laying them out in a 3 x 3 formation in front of them. The teacher then called out a word naming one of the pictures. If a student had a card showing the picture of this word, he/she turned it face down. After six words were presented, each participant's Bingo score (the number of turned-over cards) was checked by the teacher.

Instructional materials and procedures for PPP group

A set of five activities representing the three phases of the PPP instruction (present - practice - produce) were designed. Prior to each PPP lesson, the goal of the activities - to learn new vocabulary - was made explicit to the students. The researcher used English during the activities but Japanese was used to explain the procedures for each activity whenever necessary. The five activities were:

Activity 1

This activity served as the 'present' phase. The teacher presented each flash-card in turn to the class, naming the item represented on the card. The participants were requested to repeat the word after the teacher chorally.

Activity 2

Activities 2 and 3 served as the 'practice' phase. The teacher asked all the participants, in English, to name each flash-card while displaying and placing it face up in a holder.

Activity 3

All the flash cards were placed in the holder face down and numbered. One of the participants threw a dice. The teacher then picked up the card corresponding to the number shown on the dice and asked the participant to name the item.

Activity 4

Activities 4 and 5 served as the 'produce' phase. Activity 4 was a form of Picture Bingo. The students were instructed to choose nine cards and to lay them out in a 3 x 3 formation in front of themselves. The teacher also had a set of identical cards. The teacher asked one of the participants to pick up one card from her set of cards and to show it to the other participants. Then all the participants named it chorally and turned over the same card from their own set.

Activity 5

The two sets of flash-cards were spread randomly on the table face down. The participants took turns to turn over one of the cards after which the participants together said the word shown on the card. When a student turned a card over that was the same as one of the cards already face up, he/she was allowed to keep the pair of cards.

Recording and transcribing of lessons

In the lesson, students sat around a square table. One video-camera was focused on the students, positioned at one side of the classroom where the teacher mostly stayed during the lesson. The audio-recorder microphone was attached to the teacher. All the audio-recorded data was transcribed for the analyses. The video-recorded data was used to identify the individual student's utterances.

Data analysis

The learners' private speech was identified by analysing the transcribed audio-recorded data. As the audio-recorder was placed on the table where the students were working on the activities, identifying individual students' private speech was not problematic and thus not attempted. Reliability was assessed by the researcher coding the data on two separate occasions and establishing that there were no major differences. The coded data were analysed using the Chi-square test to compare the occurrence of particular process features in the TB and PPP classrooms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research question asked to what extent task-based language teaching (TBLT) and presentation-practice-production (PPP) result in different classroom processes in foreign language lessons for young learners of English. In order to answer this question, six process features will be considered in this section. They are: 1) the amount of input and output, 2) the degree to which the input was contextualised, 3) how the meanings of the target words were presented, 4) the level of discourse control, 5) teacher-initiated exchanges, and 6) student-initiated exchanges.

The amount of input and output

The number of target word tokens produced by the teacher and the participants indicates that TB group received more input from the teacher than the PPP group while the PPP group had more opportunity for production than the TB group (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Teacher's and students' production of target words

	PPP group		TB group	
	Class A (n=3)	Class B (n=8)	Class A (n=6)	Class B (n=7)
Teacher's target word tokens	235	202	323	328
Students' target word tokens	192	252	84	62
Total target word tokens	427	454	407	390

As the students were exposed to the target language produced by the other students and the teacher, student tokens were added to the teacher tokens to estimate the total amount of input, which, is shown as total target word tokens. There was no significant difference between the two groups for the total target word tokens ($\chi^2 = 2.100$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$), indicating that both groups were exposed to similar amounts of vocabulary input during the lesson. However, the

amount of output (i.e., the number of student target tokens) differentiated the two groups. The output in the PPP group was significantly higher than that of the TB group ($\chi^2 = 75.258$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

Studies indicate that frequency of exposure is one of the major factors in vocabulary learning (e.g., Elley, 1989; Palmberg, 1987). The results show that both groups received a similar amount of input. The PPP lesson created more opportunity for the learners to produce the L2, reflecting the characteristics of this type of instruction. An important finding, however, is that the comprehension-based tasks also created opportunities for L2 output even though the instruction did not force the participants to do so. The amount of the produced by the TB students is not insignificant (73 tokens on average in the 30 minute lesson).

Degree to which the input was contextualised

The teacher produced the target words in the TB lesson in a way that differed from the PPP classrooms. In the PPP lesson, the teacher typically produced the target words in order to demonstrate their phonological form (Excerpt 1) or when providing feedback on learners' erroneous production (Excerpt 2). In both cases, the teacher's production of the target word (line 1 in Excerpt 1 and line 3 in Excerpt 2) focused just on the form. That is, the target words were decontextualised.

Excerpt 1

Teacher: (Showing the picture card) crocodile.

Students: Crocodile.

(PPP-A)

Excerpt 2

T: (Pointing to the picture card the student turned over), what's this?

S: Pea..

T: Peacock.

S: Peacock.

(PPP-A)

In the TB instruction, on the other hand, the teacher contextualised the target words as shown in Excerpt 3. Here 'crocodile' is contextualised pragmatically through the commands in lines 1) and 3). The children needed to respond to the meaning of the item.

Excerpt 3

T: Please take the crocodile to the zoo.

S: Crocodile?

T: Yes. Can you find the crocodile?

(TB-A)

The teacher's target word tokens were classified as 'contextualised' (e.g., Excerpt 3) or 'decontextualised' (e.g., Excerpts 1 & 2) and counted. As Table 2 shows, the target words were mostly contextualised in the TB classes (i.e., the teacher provided 225 contextualised tokens and 98 decontextualised tokens in Class A and 271 contextualised and 57 decontextualised tokens in Class B). In contrast, they were predominantly decontextualised in the PPP classes (i.e., there were no contextualised and 235 decontextualised tokens in Class A and 19 contextualised and 187 decontextualised tokens in Class B). There were significant differences between the two groups in the number of the contextualised tokens ($\chi^2 = 2.196$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$) and the decontextualized tokens ($\chi^2 = 66.794$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

The results indicate that the teacher contextualised the target vocabulary more in the TB classes more than in the PPP classes. Context plays a critical role in helping learners to achieve new intake by establishing how form and function work together (Batstone, 2002). The results indicate that the TB instruction in this study seems

to have provided such a learning environment to a greater extent than the PPP instruction did.

TABLE 2
Number of isolated / embedded target word tokens by teacher in Lesson 3

	PPP group		TB group	
	Class A (n=6)	Class A (n=3)	Class A (n=3)	Class B (n=7)
Contextualised	0	19	225	271
Decontextualised	235	183	98	57

Presentation of the meaning of the target words

The TB and the PPP instruction differed in how the meaning of the target words was presented. In the PPP instruction, the teacher explained the meaning of a word in the L1 at the beginning of the lesson, and then the learners were asked to produce the words during the lesson.

Excerpt 4

T: [Pointing a picture card] What's this?

S: Hip..

T: Hippopotamus. Hippopotamus.

S: Hippopotamus.

(PPP-A)

The TB learners were required to comprehend the oral form of the target words and choose appropriate cards from the given selection of picture cards as following example shows.

Excerpt 5

T: Please take the crocodile to the zoo.

S: [*Looking for the card on their table*] Crocodile?

(TB-A)

The TB learners needed, therefore, to search for the word meaning whilst the PPP learners did not. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) argued for the importance of 'search' (i.e., the learner searching for the lexical form to express or comprehend a meaning). The TB instruction created situations where the learners had to find the meanings of unknown words, and thus may have involved a deeper level of cognitive processing.

Level of discourse control

A number of studies of first and second language learners (e.g., Ellis, 1999; Ernst, 1994; Johnson, 1995; Wells & Montgomery, 1981) have produced evidence to show that acquisition is more likely to occur when learners can exercise some degree of discourse control. In the PPP classroom, students frequently produced the target words in an exchange where the students just repeated after the teacher (Excerpt 1), or answered questions initiated by the teacher (Excerpt 2). The teacher also initiated exchanges by indicating a student should take a turn (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6

T: *Okay, your turn.*

S: [*Turning over one card on the table and naming the item on the card*] Seal.

(PPP-B)

In the TB classes, students' target word production was predominantly student-initiated in either private speech (Excerpt 7) or social speech (Excerpt 3). In both cases there was no discursal requirement for them to speak.

Excerpt 7

T: *Please take the cutting board to the supermarket.*

S1: *Cutting board.*

S2: *Cutting board.*

(TB-A)

In order to investigate the levels of learners' discourse control, the students' target word tokens shown in 6.1 were further categorized into 'teacher-initiated' and 'student-initiated'. As Table 3 shows, the teacher-initiated tokens occurred only in the PPP lesson but the student-initiated tokens took place more in the TB group than in the PPP group. There was a significant difference between the two groups in the number of the student-initiated tokens ($\chi^2 = 27.379$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

TABLE 3
Students' target word tokens initiated by teacher / students

	PPP group		TB group	
	Class A (n=3)	Class B (n=8)	Class A (n=6)	Class B (n=7)
Teacher-initiated	172	229	0	0
Student-initiated	20	23	84	62

The learners in the TB group experienced higher levels of discourse control than those in the PPP group. In the following two sections, the typical discourse patterns of the teacher-initiated conversation (i.e., initiate - respond - follow-up exchanges) and the student-initiated conversation (i.e., negotiation of meaning) will be investigated.

Teacher-initiated exchange - IRF

The typical classroom discourse initiated by teachers involved IRF (i.e., initiate - respond - follow-up) exchanges (Lemke, 1990; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Wells, 1999). IRF exchanges account for 70% of all classroom talk (Wells, 1993). A restricted type of IRF forms typically a three-turn exchange where the teacher takes on the role of both

'initiator' and 'primary knower' (Berry, 1981) and the follow-up move does not give learners opportunity to respond further to it (Lerner, 1995). This type of IRF exchange was frequently observed in the PPP classes (see Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

T: [Showing a picture card] What's this?

S: Plate.

T: Good. Plate.

(PPP-B)

In the first turn, the teacher initiated the question to request the student to produce the word, which the teacher is the primary knower. In the next turn, the student responded by producing the word form which led to the teacher's followed-up with the evaluation ('good') and repetition of the target word ('plate').

An IRF exchange can be more conversational if the follow-up move serves to extend the student's response. Berry (1981) argues that such exchange can be possible if the exchange involves an open request for information where the initiator is the secondary knower and the responder is the primary knower. In this study, this type of exchange occurred when the teacher requested the information about the students' achievement as shown in the following example:

Excerpt 9

T: How many bingos have you got?

S: Five.

T: Five? Who else have got five [raising her hand]? No one? Then you are the champion.

S: Champion, champion.

(TB-A)

In the first turn, the teacher asked an open question. The student's response led to the teacher's extended follow-up turn in line 3, which led to the student excitedly repeating the word 'champion'. This example is clearly more conversational than Excerpt 8.

In order to examine the occurrence of the two different types of IRF (i.e., initiate - respond - follow-up) exchanges, the teacher-initiated IRF exchanges were categorised as 'restricted' (the primary knower was the teacher) and 'conversational' (the primary knower is the student) and counted As Table 4 shows, IRF exchanges occurred rarely in the TB lesson but frequently in the PPP lesson where they were predominantly of the restricted type. Restricted IRF exchanges were common in the PPP classes (59 in the Class A and 121 in the Class B); that is, they occurred every 19 seconds on average. Restricted IRF did not occur at all in the TB classes. The conversational exchanges, on the other hand, occurred equally in both groups. There was no significant difference in the frequency of the two types of IRF ($\chi^2 = 1.140$, $df = 1$, $p = .286 > .01$).

TABLE 4
Number of IRF exchanges

	PPP group		TB group	
	Class A (n=3)	Class B (n=8)	Class A (n=6)	Class B (n=7)
Restricted	59	121	0	0
Conversational	6	12	6	19

Table 4 shows that IRF exchanges occurred rarely in the TB lesson but frequently in the PPP lesson where they were predominantly of the restricted type.

Student-initiated exchanges - negotiation of meaning

Although most of the student-initiated tokens in the two groups involved private speech (i.e., speech that is not the intended for a

listener), there were some student talk aimed at negotiating meaning. Negotiation of meaning takes place through the collaborative work which speakers undertake to achieve mutual understanding when there is a communication problem (Ellis, 2008, p.224). In this study, negotiation often occurred when students used their L2 to obtain the meaning of a target word (see Excerpt 10).

Excerpt 10

T: Please take the ladle to the supermarket.

S2, S3: Ladle? Ladle?

T: Yes. Can you find the ladle?

S1: Fruit?

T: It's not fruit.

S2: Ladle?

T: It's not fruit. Ladle...

S1: Miso soup? Miso soup? No?

T: When you eat miso soup, maybe you need a ladle.

S1: Okay?

T: Maybe, yes.

S1: Okay?

T: Okay? ... I don't know. Okay, ladle. ... Three, two, one.

All Ss: [showing the correct card].

T: Ladle. Everyone is correct. Put the ladle into the supermarket.

(TB-A)

The above sequence is notably longer than the sequences in Excerpts 1-8. This longer sequence arises because the students repeatedly attempt to negotiate meaning by means of confirmation checks. Such conversational exchanges only figured in the TB lesson.

The number of the negotiation sequences in the two groups was identified (see Table 5). A total of 25 negotiation sequences took place in the TB-A class while none occurred in the other three classes. The TB-B students may have failed to negotiate because they treated the task as a one-way task while the TB-A students treated it as a two-way task.

TABLE 5
Number of negotiation of meaning sequences

	PPP group		TB group	
	Class A (n=3)	Class B (n=8)	Class A (n=6)	Class B (n=7)
Negotiation of meaning	0	0	25	0

Although the number of negotiated utterances was small, negotiation of meaning led to successful comprehension by both the negotiator and the other students. In Excerpt 10, Student 1's negotiation (line 4 and line 8) led to this learner's successful comprehension and also that of the other students (line 14). This example of negotiation is similar to that reported in previous studies (de la Fuente, 2002; Ellis & He, 1999; Ellis & Heimbach, 1997; Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994; Van den Branden, 2000).

The above excerpt also shows that the TB learners negotiated by sometimes repeating the target words (lines 2 and 6) and sometimes by using their own words (e.g., 'fruit', 'miso soup', 'no' or 'okay' in lines 4, 8, 10 and 12). These utterances were fundamentally different from those of the PPP students in Excerpt 1 or 2 in that the TB learners were using language as a tool for communicating rather than as an object to be learned.

Summary

The results show that the interactional processes in the TBLT and PPP lessons differed markedly as shown in Table 6.

The TB and the PPP groups were exposed to similar amounts of input but that the PPP group had greater opportunity for output than the TB group. However, interaction the TB lesson created was substantially different from that in the PPP lesson. The target vocabulary items were contextualised in the teacher's production in the TB lesson while they tended to be decontextualised in the PPP lesson.

TABLE 6
Differences in process features for the two groups

	TBLT	PPP
Amount of input and output	Same input as PPP but less opportunity for output	Same input as TB but more opportunity for output
Degree to which the input was contextualised	Target words were mostly contextualized	Target words mostly decontextualised
Opportunities that the learners had to search for meaning	The tasks generally required the learners to 'search' for meaning.	The activities did not require the learners to 'search' for meaning.
Learners' discourse control	The learners' production was generally student-initiated.	The learners' production was generally teacher-initiated.
Characteristics of teacher-initiated exchanges	Very few IRF exchanges occurred.	Restricted types of IRF exchanges frequently occurred.
Characteristics of student-initiated exchanges	Longer sequences than teacher-initiated exchanges. Negotiation took place in one of the two classes.	No negotiation took place.

The TB learners were required to search for the meanings of the target words while the PPP learners were not as the word meanings were presented to them. The TB students had greater discourse control than the PPP students. Restricted IRF exchanges frequently occurred in the PPP lesson while negotiation of meaning (sometimes quite lengthy) occurred in one of the TB classes. The negotiation of meaning enabled both the speaker and the other students in the class to complete the task successfully. Overall, the process features in the

TBLT lesson manifested interactional authenticity while those in the PPP lesson were more characteristic of pedagogic discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study was motivated by the need to investigate whether the classroom processes involved in task-based teaching and PPP for young learners were similar or different. The detailed comparison of the process features of the TB and the PPP has shown that the TB lesson achieved interactional authenticity and provided opportunity for the negotiation of meaning which is presumably profitable for acquisition. In contrast, the PPP lesson involved decontextualised input and restricted IRF exchange which are typical features of classroom discourses.

This study offers a successful example of how TBLT can be implemented. The tasks were designed for use in a teacher-class participatory structure, which is highly practical for young beginners such as those in this study. The study also showed that a simple listen-and-do task can engage such learners actively in processing input.

Interestingly, negotiation of meaning occurred in only one of the TB classrooms, where the learners treated the task as an interactive task. No negotiation occurred in the other TB class. This finding supports the claims of sociocultural theorists (e.g., Coughlan & Duff, 1994) that the same workplan can result in very different kinds of activity. It also shows the important role played by the teacher in helping to guide students' attention to form-meaning relationships in the activity that results from a workplan (See Samuda, 2001, for a more detailed exposition of this point). Finally, this study demonstrated the importance of examining process feature as well as the product of learning in method comparison studies.

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