

Comparing the Efficiency of Task-based Interactive Language Teaching (TBILT) & Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) on Morale of Inquiry of the Youth in University Heterogeneous Classes

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Abstract

The present century is the era of information and communication, and learning English language can pave the route; however, some young learners face psychological barriers in English classes. This research was done to compare the efficiency of TBILT and TBLT on the youth's morale of inquiry. The statistical population included all 4200 Babol Azad University students of whom 320 were volunteers to participate in English language classes via public invitation. Then, 90 students were selected using available sampling model and were placed randomly in three groups (two experimental and one control). Before starting teaching, Moslemi and Akbari's Morale of Inquiry Questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha of .786 was administered, and then using three methods namely TBILT in the first experimental class, TBLT in the second one, and Traditional method (GTM) in control group, the teacher taught English in 20 sessions, 90 minutes each. After the post test, the two-way single variable covariance and the Post Hoc Tukey Test revealed that both experimental groups did much better than the control group ($p < .001$). On the other hand, the TBILT group acted much stronger than the TBLT one in giving morale of inquiry skill to the youth ($p < .001$).

Keywords: TBILT, TBLT, Morale of inquiry, Heterogeneous class, Youth.

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1. Introduction

Language is the most outstanding feature of human being and also the center of every one's life. We express our love, hate, anger toward others, and transfer our ideas and experiences to each other as well as to form our personal and social identity through language (Cook, 2016). It is a social phenomenon which at the rate of human's growth and maturity, and in some cases much faster than that, developed and on the side of its development helped, directly or indirectly, the growth of human and whatever related to men's social life (Miyagava, 2017). The close and effective connection of this wonderful phenomenon with the development of psychological (Van Greet, 2017), socio-cultural (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017), political (Martinez, 2015), technology, (Rodriguez, 2018), and a hundred of other manifestations of human development and civilization could cause the creation of such sciences as psycho-linguistics, socio-linguistics, physiology and psychology of language development, and many other components with language.

The importance of learning English as the common international language among the nations in the era of science, technology, and communication is crystal clear. This is an absolute need for the youth, in particular, who are mostly considered the motor power of their societies (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2017). Moreover, English language is nowadays the language of air-line control, letter writing, commerce, international conferences in all over the world. As a result, based on adding its countless speakers in the world and the need to be in contact with the owners of science, technology, and all brilliant thinkers, we need to master this entering key by choosing the best methods suggested by linguists, educational psychologists, and syllabus designers (Brown, 2000).

Although there is a long history in language teaching, the foundation of its new approaches was developed by the appearance of such sciences as linguistics, sociology, some fields of applied psychology as educational psychology in 20th century, and the search to find the best way of language teaching has always been a subject for the teachers and curriculum designers (Stern, Tarone, & Yule, 1983). Hence, there has been a long debate on how to teach language among the linguists, psychologists, and other educational

specialists (Richards, 2014). The written materials and other works related to the history of language teaching in some Asian countries including ours reveals that most young students and teenagers feel a kind of despair, anxiety, worriedness, apprehension, and inefficiency, rather than joy and merits in learning an international language in English classes (Atef & Kashani, 2011; Hashemi, 2011; Sadighi & Dastpak, 2017), except those with high motivation (Oga-Baldwin, Nakata, Parker, & Ryan, 2017), positive attitude (Eshghinejad, 2016), morale of inquiry (Gorsuch, 2001), and enough educational self-efficacy (Mastan & Maarof, 2014).

But it is obvious that there are some young learners who based on a few similar personality traits suffer from the same psychological learning barriers (Chen, 2005). The barriers such as lack of motivation (Kormos & Csizer, 2008), anxiety (Liu & Huang, 2011), the stress resulted from negative thinking of personality evaluation (Sampson, 2018), lack of required emotional intelligence to match with learning situation (Rouhani, 2013), negative attitude toward English language and its native speakers (Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006), lack of educational self-efficacy (Sajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005), lack of morale of inquiry (Gorsuch, 2001), lack of self-confidence (Dornyei, 2003), and many others of which the morale of inquiry was under the scope in this research.

Lack of morale of inquiry is the result of the traditional educational system in which the learners were always asked questions and it hardly ever happened that the learners were assigned to ask questions to fill their information gap (Hadfield, 2013). He believes that it can be created an intimate and cooperative teaching framework under which the learners can ask questions to receive the required information with the help of the teacher. Consequently, the participants in any learning atmosphere must be benefited the required morale of inquiry skill, creative mind, and critical thinking in order to ask questions (Heidarpoor, Ahmadabadi, & Yarmohammadian, 2015). In their research on, "The effect of morale of inquiry and learning styles on the rate of learners' learning", Ahmadabadi et al. concluded that there is a connection between the morale of inquiry and learning styles which leads to better learning.

Since the traditional teaching methods could not give the language learners adequate communicative competence and change that into communicative performance (Ellis, 2018; Howat & Widdowson, 2004), the clear question of this research is whether or not TBILT and TBLT are able to remove the young learners' psychological barriers including lack of morale of inquiry? And if so, is there a difference between the two?

To equip the young language learners with adequate communicative competence and change that simultaneously into communicative performance, it really felt need to change the direction from product oriented teaching methods toward process oriented ones, and the recent researches confirmed that one of those methods was Task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2018; Long, 2015; Skehan, 2011). TBLT is a moderately new method of teaching English comparing to other teaching methods. Originally started around the beginning of 1980s; based on Long (2005), though taking its furthering steps, it is passing its embryonic stage in second/foreign language teaching and syllabus designs. Researches done from the beginning of TBLT (1980) shows its superiority over all traditional methods in removing the psychological barriers of language teaching, especially Grammar Translation Method (Ellis, 2018; Long, 2014; Norris & Branden, 2012; Nunan, 2006; Skehan, 2011). But the main concern of this research is, based on the severe heterogeneity of university classes nowadays resulted from letting the doors widely open for everyone to enter the universities in most fields of studies without passing any entrance exams; can Task-based Interactive Language Teaching (TBILT) in the form of cooperative one in smaller round-table groups by getting help from the teacher-assistants chosen from the smartest ones in class be replaced Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) in decreasing the learners' psychological barriers including lack of morale of inquiry?

Despite the researches done in connection with suitability of TBLT, the studies related to using TBLT cooperatively in heterogeneous classes are very few. It seems, based on Vygotsky's view on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and also Bandura's Observational Learning, TBILT can be best used in heterogeneous English classes to remove psychological learning barriers (Zamani, 2016). Thus, the research questions are:

1. Can TBILT and TBLT give the young language learners the required morale of inquiry in English classes?

2. Is there any difference between the two in giving morale of inquiry to young language learners? And, the research hypotheses are:

1. TBILT is effective in giving the language learners the required morale of inquiry.

2. TBLT is effective in giving the language learners the required morale of inquiry.

3. The efficiency of TBILT is more than TBLT in giving the language learners the required morale of inquiry.

2. The Theoretical background of the study

Based on Skehan's view (2003), the negative psychological load (anxiety, stress, apprehension, etc.) which can be a reason to reduce the noticing capacity of the language learners can be changed to a positive factor to pave the way in language learning process. Thus, Skehan states of two available choices for the teachers before performing the tasks. One of them is the emphasis on psychological needs and the other one is linguistic factors in learning. Since the learners' noticing capacity is not adequate to answer both needs, getting involved in activities which lessen the negative psychological loads such as stress, low self-confidence, anxiety, negative self-concept, apprehension, low motivation, and shyness can cause to set the noticing capacity free and; thus, concentrate effectively on linguistic factors.

In Task-based language teaching, the content of the syllabus design and the teaching process is chosen based on the necessity of being in contact outside the learning environment on the one hand, and the theoretical and experiential of those sociological and psycholinguistic process which facilitates language acquisition on the other. This approach in language teaching can be matched with Piaget's cognitive learning theory and also Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (Cheng-jun, 2006). Piaget described general development as the children's interaction with their environment. He claims that the complement of this interaction is the mutual relationship between their cognitive-perceptive capacity developments and linguistic experiences (Brown,

2002). The other cognitive psychologist, Vygotsky, asserts that learning and cognitive development originates from the social context (Eun, 2017). He believes that the higher function such as learning is developed through the interaction among people. Vygotsky informs us the existence of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in which the learned functions are transferred from the social dimension to cognitive dimension. One of the concepts of this theory is that a learner can learn under the supervision of an experienced one who prepares enough help and support for the confrontation of a task (Smagorinsky, 2018). Since an English language class can be considered a kind of social environment, the concept of interaction could be analyzed under the scope of this theory.

The other theory is Bandura's Observational Learning. Observational learning is a kind of learning which occurs as the result of observation, retention, repetition, or imitation of the doer of an action by the observer (Borsa, 2017). Bandura believes that observational learning occurs as the result of a cognitive process and is severely active, judgmental, constructive, but never, as others may think, the mere mechanical imitation (Olson, 2015). Even though observational learning is just a concept in order to study its influence in behavior modification, it is quite often observed that people use it as a central model in marketing and advertisements, in politics by politicians and the leaders in societies, in education, and also by parents and other kids' caregivers (Lebel, Haverstock, Cristancho, Van-Emimeren, & Buckingham, 2018). Consequently, in Task-based language teaching in which the interactive-cooperative model of running of the class is practiced and the language learners are not homogeneous, the observational learning can make the circle easier and the destination more touchable.

3. Methodology

It was a quasi-experimental in pre-test, post-test multi group research. The statistical population included 4200 Babol Azad University students of whom 320 registered in English classes via a public invitation. Using the available sampling model, 90 of them were selected and put randomly in three 30-member groups (two experimental and one control). Based on the aim of the

research and to clarify the learners' level of English knowledge, particularly to choose the teacher-assistants for one experimental class which was supposed to be run under TBILT, the Michigan Examination of Competency in English (MECE) was used. The lowest and the highest scores were 5 and 85 respectively which confirms the vast heterogeneity of the recent university classes. Thus, there were three heterogeneous classes at hand one of which received TBILT as the first independent variable, the second experimental class received TBLT as the second independent variable, and the third class (the control group) received none of the mentioned methods, but the traditional one, Grammar Translation Method (GTM), instead.

4. Instrument for data collection

Morale of inquiry questionnaire – it was developed by Mansroori & Akbari (2014), normed by Naseri (2015) which consists of six sub-scale and 37 questions. This 37-item instrument was a five-point Likert Scale ranged from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1), designed to assess how skillful the language Learners are in morale of inquiry (to ask questions in order to fill their information gap). To estimate the total score of each participant, all the points of those 37 questions must be add up which ranges from 37 to 185. The more points they gain, the more skillful the participants are in morale of inquiry, and vice versa (Akbari, 2014; Akbari, Jafarabadi, Shabani, & Taghavi, 2012; Naseri Tavallae, 2015). Naseri (2015) applied this questionnaire on the school students and made it normative. The reliability of the test based on Cronbach's alpha in this research was .786 which was significant.

5. Results & Findings

As already mentioned, this research aimed to investigate the effects of TBILT vs. TBLT on giving the language learners the morale of inquiry in English classes. The raw data from pre-test/post-test process were summarized, analyzed, and presented in three steps; demographic information, descriptive and inferential findings via the following tables.

5. 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Table 1. Frequency distribution of two experimental groups and one control group based on gender

Gender	TBILT		TBLT		Traditional (GTM)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	25	83.3	25	83.3	24	80
Male	5	16.7	5	16.7	6	20
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100

Table 2. Frequency distribution of two experimental groups and one control group based on age

Age	TBILT		TBLT		Traditional (GTM)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
18-25	28	93.3	26	86.7	27	90
26-35	2	6.7	4	13.3	3	10
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100

5. 2. Descriptive Findings

Table 3. The mean and standard deviation of the morale of inquiry scores in pre-test – post-test

Dependent variable	Pre-test		Post-test		Groups
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Morale of inquiry	93.73	5.58	133.26	6.66	TBILT
	94.10	12.60	117.90	4.68	TBLT
	92.13	14.39	84.86	16.67	GTM

It can be observed from table 3 that the mean scores of the three groups (two experimental and one control) is almost the same in pre-test, but different in post-test. On the other hand, the mean scores of the two experimental groups are also different in post-test.

5. 3. Inferential Findings

To study the efficiency of Task-based Interactive Language Teaching (TBILT) on morale of inquiry of the learners (the first hypothesis), the one-way single variable covariance of the groups in dependent variable was used by controlling the pre-test on the scores of the post-test.

Table 4. The result of one-way single variable co-variance analysis of the groups in dependent variable

	Variable	SSt	Df	MSt	F	P	Effect size
Group	Morale of inquiry	8164.165	1	8164.165	233.483	0.000	0.812
Error	Morale of inquiry	1888.210	54	34.967			
Total	Morale of inquiry	1306718.000	60				

The result of table 4 confirms that the F ratio of one-way co-variance analysis in TBILT (the first experimental group) and GTM (the control group) on Morale of Inquiry is 233.483; $P \leq 0.000$ which indicates the significant difference of the two groups. The effect size indicator also shows that 80% of the changes in the scores was due to Task-based Interactive Language Teaching (TBILT).

To study the efficiency of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) on morale of inquiry of the learners (the second hypothesis), the one-way covariance of the groups in dependent variable was used.

Table 5. The result of one-way single variable co-variance analysis of the groups in dependent variable

	Variable	SSt	Df	MSt	F	P	Effect size
Group	Morale of inquiry	3081.441	1	3081.441	116.982	0.000	0.684
Error	Morale of inquiry	1422.426	54	26.341			
Total	Morale of inquiry	1231344.000	60				

The result of table 5 confirms that the F ratio of one-way co-variance analysis in TBLT (the second experimental group) and GTM (the control group) on Morale of Inquiry is 116.982; $P \leq 0.000$ which indicates the significant difference of the two groups. The effect size indicator also shows that 68% of the changes in the scores was due to Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT).

To detect whether there is any difference between TBILT and TBLT in giving the language learners morale of inquiry or not (the third hypothesis), the Post Hock Tukey Test was used.

Table 6- The result of Tukey Test to compare the two experimental groups

Dependent variable	Groups	TBILT	TBLT	Traditional (GTM)
Morale of Inquiry			15.36	48.4
	TBILT	-----	P<0.001	P<0.001
		-15.36		33.03
	TBLT	P<0.001	-----	P<0.001

Based on the resulted information of the Tukey Test in table 6, there is a significant difference between TBILT (the first experimental group) and GTM (the control group) in learners' morale of inquiry (48.4; $P<0.001$). This finding indicates that TBILT could add the learners' morale of inquiry (the mean scores in experimental group is 133.26, but in control group is 84.16). The result is related to the first hypothesis which is the same as the research findings by Putri, Ermanto, Manaf, and Abdurahman (2019); Cerdan, Perez, Vidal, and Rouet (2019); Kurkul and Corriveau (2018); Litman and Greenleaf (2018); Demlew and Davidson (2018); Kastl and Romeik (2018); Van Valin (2017); Buck, Bulian, Ciaramita, and Gajewski (2017); Francis, Haines, and Nagro (2017); Rowe, Leech, and Cabrera (2017); and Hsu-Chia (2007). TBILT can strengthen the verbal logic of the language learners by presenting various inputs from the side of teacher-assistants to low proficient learners in smaller round-table groups; particularly, through information question planning, and thus, boosts their ability of learning English both in written and oral skills (Rowe, Leech, and Cabrea (2017).

There is a significant difference between TBLT (the second experimental group) and GTM (the control group) in learners' morale of inquiry (33.04; $P<0.001$). This finding indicates that TBLT could add the learners' morale of inquiry (the mean scores in experimental group is 117.90, but in control group is 84.16). The result is related to the second hypothesis which is the same as

the research findings by Li, Miller, Chobra, Ranzato, and Weston (2016); Eskildsen (2015); Love, Hodge, Corritore, and Ernest (2015); and Hadfield (2013). TBLT puts the language learners under the situation of ‘for and against’ by planning and preparing tasks or activities with the nature of ‘why and how’ of the phenomena which cause the learners to think logically, to plan and to answer the questions consciously about the cause-result of the phenomena (Kastl and Romeik, 2018). In other words, TBLT which causes to boost the language learners’ inquiry skill was founded based on the logic that the language learners should debate and ask questions to learn, and also they should learn to debate and ask questions, that is, a mutual activity of which the output is gaining communicative competence and changing that simultaneously into communicative performance (Litman and Greenleaf, 2018).

There is a significant difference between TBILT (the first experimental group) and TBLT (the second experimental group) in learners’ morale of inquiry in favor of TBILT (15.36; $P < 0.001$). The finding indicates that TBILT could play a better role than TBLT in giving the language learners the morale of inquiry skill (the mean in TBILT is 133.26 while it is 117.90 in TBLT). The result is related to the third hypothesis.

6. Discussion

One of the most important product of educational experts is that the learners learn to do team work because the young learners today would be the future men and women who are supposed to work in a larger environment called the community where most activities are done cooperatively in groups. As a result, it is really important to emphasize the cooperative learning in such a way that the learners would be volunteers to enter in group working tasks. The foundation of cooperative learning is to have the learners infer that they have all one common goal via this kind of learning, thus help them cooperate for the success of the group. This kind of cooperation among the heterogeneous learners makes a national reunion among them who were forced to get apart from each other in real life for their cultural differences, belonging to different social-economic classes, political and ideology beliefs, various ethnic groups;

hence, let them practice a kind of democracy and motivates all the participants to move towards a shared goal and to live together peacefully in future.

The studies done related to the morale of inquiry on learners' side does not consider the inquiry skill just a mere mechanical surface changes of the subject-verb combination, but relates the production and creation of the questions to cognitive theories in educational psychology (Yao and Zhang, 2010). As a result, in a learning class where the inquiry skill is under emphasis, there would be great interest from the learners' side to acquire the verbal behaviors of their peers by watching what they do and act likewise in their turns. In fact, many studies can be addressed in which development and expansion of the learners in such language skills as reading, speaking, writing, oral production of diaries or stories could happen by training, in the first step, how to ask questions (Ciardiello, 1998; Craig, Sullins, Witherspoon, & Gholon, 2006; Davey & McBride, 1986; Foos, 1994; King, 1989, 1992, 1994; Odafe, 1998; and Wong, 1985).

Inquiry skill is one of the most important ways to reach the knowledge and to fill one's information gap. Asking questions can open a channel for knowledge gap filling which couldn't be done if no questions were asked (Chinn & Brewer, 1993). Another side of the coin is that the model and the content of the questions which are asked by the young learners contain educational and instructional points. Still, despite the importance of the issue, no thorough studies in terms of the morale of inquiry from the learners' side have been done based on socio and psycholinguistic points of view. The available literature related to inquiry in the history of teaching-learning process is the philosophy of asking questions by the teachers and receiving responses by the learners (Tuangrat, 2007).

The common feature of the few studies about the inquiry done by the researchers is that it was considered as an independent variable to study its educational, instructional, and psychological effects. Therefore, this kind of view about the inquiry in present century led to a kind of educational philosophy in which inquiry in educational settings is used as an important criterion to the strength and continuation of the scientific activities (Rop, 2002). But the most important aspect of inquiry as the dependent variable

(psychological barrier) in this research is not how to answer the questions, rather it is how to ask questions in order to fill the knowledge and information gap. While answering the questions in computer science attracted attention toward itself (Voorhees & Dong, 2005); nowadays, asking questions from learners' side in educational and psychological settings is considered really important (Beck, Mckeown, Hamilton, & Lucan, 1997; Rus & Graesser, 2009; Schank, 1999; Zimmerman, 1989). In the process of inquiry, this is the inquirer who directs the speech circle; thus, if he does not know how to conduct the issue because of psychological barriers including lack of the morale of inquiry in English classes, he will not be able to take any share of that particular class.

There are different views in the studies done in the past decade about cooperative learning and the model of running the classes. Some researchers believe that learning can be developed when it is practiced as a construct and a social activity, and if the learners consist of different types who are searching for a common goal, the cooperative learning method can be the best one to achieve that goal (Gillies, Ashman, & Terwel, 2008). Based on Barros and Verdejeo's points of view (2000), cooperative learning which originates from social constructivism of Vygotsky and which is considered as a main approach in teaching-learning process tries to make the instruction more and more perceptible and manipulative, and the learners more responsible. On the opposite side, some others believe that cooperative learning and moving at the speed of the weak learners in heterogeneous classes can prevent the speed and the success of brilliant learners (Matthews, 1992; Santrock, 2004).

One of the subject under discussion in cooperative learning classes is the model of class types, that is, the preference of heterogeneous over homogeneous or vice versa. The question is whether the heterogeneous or homogeneous group can best match with cooperative learning model. In definition and distinction of the two groups, Baer (2003), states that a homogeneous group is the one which all its members are placed in based on their common abilities, genders, ethnic groups and the same socio-cultural levels. The opposite side is for heterogeneous group which consists of the learners from various socio-cultural classes, different abilities, and different

genders who try together towards one common goal (here learning English language communicatively).

7. Conclusion

Since the ability of communication among the nations make them close together, the human being, especially the young, in present century needs to equip themselves with the international language. Nevertheless, there are some young learners in all English classes who have some tensions and psychological barriers to move along the route. These tensions and barriers, in turn, cause them to feel anxious, fearful, inferior, inefficient, and makes learning so difficult and in some cases impossible for them. The fear and anxiety of inquiry in English classes can have a destructive effect on the learners' self-dependency, self-monitoring, and self-confidence in their performances of what they have learned. The studies done by Chen and Wang (2019); Liu, Huang, and Xu (2018); Philip and Duchesne (2016); and Eddy (2015) all confirmed that doing the tasks in groups via interactive cooperative model in smaller round-table groups and sharing the knowledge paves the way for self-expression and the outcome was much more successful than the class who work on their own.

This research was started on the purpose of comparing the efficiency of TBILT and TBLT on removing or decreasing the psychological barriers, in particular, lack of morale of inquiry in university heterogeneous classes among the youth. The presupposition of the research was that if TBLT, which based on the recent researches could have better result than other traditional teaching methods including GTM, is replaced with TBILT in which the learners do the tasks cooperatively under the supervision of the knowledgeable students as the teacher-assistants in small round-table groups, the result would be much more satisfying. The clue was taken from Vygotsky's social constructivism theory and ZPD development and also Bandura's observational learning theory. Consequently, teaching English was done after pre-test in three classes (two experimental benefitting from TBILT and TBLT, and one control class benefitting GTM) for 20 sessions, ninety minutes each. After the post-test, the one-way co-variance and the Post Hock Tukey Test revealed that both TBILT

and TBLT could do better than traditional method (GTM) in giving the young learners morale of inquiry. On the other hand, in comparison between TBILT and TBLT, the first experimental class (TBILT) acted much stronger than the second experimental class (TBLT) for the above purpose which in turn leads to better English learning.

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