EFL learner's Acquisition Due To Activity centered approach

Prepared by

=

Dr.HIBA AHMED BALAL AHMED.

Saudi Arabia

E-mail: hibabalal@hotmail.com

Abstract

To find out the achievement of ESL learners according to activity-focused instruction, It was found that activity-based language teaching developed the students' language skills, demonstrate an appropriate approach to language teaching so that students can develop their abilities, and it was also found that there is a positive case on students' performance through the use of educational materials used in the curriculum factors that have been identified that negatively affect it. Accordingly, the researcher recommends increasing attention to the teaching process, especially in English as a foreign language classes, the researcher also suggested that there is a need for more as a second foreign language.

Keywords: Second language acquisition - Activity centered approach-Activity centered language teaching.

Introduction

Activity entered approach language learning has its origins in communicative language teaching, and is a subcategory of it. Educators adopted activity entered approach language learning for a variety of reasons. Some moved to activity centered approach syllabi in an attempt to make language in the classroom truly communicative, rather than the untrue-communication that results from classroom activities with no direct connection to real-life situations.

Although the students in the Sudan learn English in basic, secondary for a long time, they are unable to reach the expected proficiency level when they join tertiary higher education.

Since the EFL learners are "poor in their English and lack confidence in their ability to operate in their own English that used it as a foreign language. The researcher search for a suitable approach to build student's confidence, here the researcher pays attention to the activity centered approach which solve the problem where learners are developed through performing. Activity centered instruction (ACI) is being used as an alternative approach to tackle the problem stated above. It is developed learners' accuracy and fluency to help them communicate effectively in English. ACI has got some challenges of implementation. Some teachers do not implement it as it was intended. They are tempted to insert a

grammar presentation stage into the lesson before students do the task. Students also feel that they will not be able to perform the task without being taught a particular grammar item beforehand.

Research problem

It necessitates looking for another method to language teaching that enables students to develop their proficiency in English language. Activity centered approach has got great attention of teachers, linguists and researchers.

Activity centered approach instruction is being introduced to a certain extent in universities and colleges. It seems that there are misconceptions with regard to task, activity and exercise among teachers.

Research Objectives

• To what extent English language teachers introduce or use an activity-focused approach to language teaching.
• How does an activity centered approach influence the acquisition or not of EFL learners?
• How activities are being implemented in the actual EFL classroom?
• The constraints that adversely affect the implementation of activity centered approach instruction.

Research questions
1- How effective is the use of task-based teaching in improving language skill?
2- Are teachers' uses of English language teaching materials in educational curricula effective in terms of acquiring skills for students?
3-What is the relationship between activity instructions and activity curriculum?

4-Is an activity centered approach an appropriate approach to language teaching and development?

5-What are the factors that can affect the implementation of teaching activity in Sudan?

Define search terms

Activity
Is a component of task which provides specific procedures of a task about what learners actually do during the activity accomplishment?
ACP
 Activity centered approach.

Activity centered approach Language Learning and Teaching:

In the late 1970s and 1980s, these activities were often called "communicative activities" (Crocs, 1986). The term 'communicative activities' was gradually replaced by 'activities' (By gate et al., 2001). The interest in activities comes from the belief that they are "a significant site for learning and teaching" (By gate, 2000: 186).

ACLT is primarily motivated by the theory of language learning rather than the theory of language itself. However, there are several assumptions about the nature of language that ACLT underlies. The theories of language on which ACLT is based are widely explained in (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 226-228) and are put in brief hereunder.

Language is primarily a means of making meaning, i.e. communication.

- Multiple models of language (structural, functional and interactional) inform TBI. In other words, TBI is not linked to a single model, but draws on the three models of language.

- Lexical units are central in language use and language learning. Students need some vocabularies which are relevant to their task at hand and to report after the accomplishment of the task.

- Conversation is the central focus of language and the keystone of language acquisition. The use of language begins with simple conversation in a real life situation. During this time, the learner's linguistic and communicative resources will be activated and the acquisition of language would be prompted.

It is believed, in ACLT, that activities play a central role in learning language. (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 228-9) put its key theory of learning as follows:

1. Activities provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition.

2. Activity and achievement motivate students to learn and therefore promote learning.

3. Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes.

Richards and Rodgers further explain that specific activities can be designed to facilitate using and learning of particular aspects of language. More difficult,

cognitively demanding activities reduce the amount of attention the learner can give to the formal features of the message, something that is thought to be necessary for accuracy and grammatical development. In other words, sometimes it is necessary to make activities difficult deliberately to shift learners' attention from accuracy to fluency to develop fluency.

The role of learner, teacher and instructional materials are among the basic components of an approach. In line with this, ACLT identified the main role of the student as central who accomplish the task. In fact, through this process, the learner plays a number of specific roles such as group participant, monitor, risk-taker and innovator, strategy user, goal-setter and self- evaluator (Oxford, 2006; (Richards and Rodgers,2001). The instructor also plays several roles. These include selector and sequencer of activities, preparer of learners for task, pre-task conscious-raiser, guide, strategy instructor and assistance provider (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992; Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

According to (Richards and Rodgers2001: 236), "Instructional materials play an important role in ACLT because it is dependent on a sufficient supply of appropriate classroom activities". Since language instruction begins with providing learners with activities, the instructional material that consists of activities is very important to give the context of learning for students. The material can be either pedagogic (meant for classroom use) or authentic (used in real life). However, authentic activities are more favored as they train the learners with real-world activities and skills. Furthermore, they take the learners to the real world where language is used naturally and, in turn; let them feel that what they are learning in the classroom is useful and applicable outside the classroom.

Theoretical side

In Activity centered approach Language Learning (ACLL), learning is fostered through performing a series of activities as steps towards successful activity realization. The focus is away from learning language items in a non-contextualized vacuum to using language as a vehicle for authentic, real-world needs. By working towards task realization, the language is used immediately in the real-world context of the learner, making learning authentic. In an ACLL framework the language needed is not pre-selected and given to the learners who then practice it but rather it is drawn from the learners with help from the facilitator, to meet the demands of the activities.

ACLL relies heavily on learners actively experimenting with their store of knowledge and using skills of deduction and independent language analysis to exploit the situation fully.

In this approach, motivation for communication becomes the primary driving force. It places the emphasis on communicative fluency rather than the hesitancy borne of the pressure in more didactic approaches to produce unflawed utterances. Exposure to the target language should be in a naturally occurring context. This means that, if materials are used, they are not prepared especially for the language classroom, but are selected and adapted from authentic sources.

The Activity centered approach Learning Framework shown below has been adapted from the Willis frame- work (1996).This task is defined as an undertaking that is authentic to the needs of the learners.

Activity centered approach (ACLT) is basically a theory of learning rather than a theory of language. It is a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching. The principals involved are:

1. Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning

2. Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful activities promote learning.

3. Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. ACLT proposes the notion of 'task' as a central unit of planning and teaching. (Nunan 1989) gives the definition "The communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.

Activities have long been part of the mainstream language teaching techniques. ACLT, however, offers a different rationally for the use of activities as well as different criteria for the design and use of activities. The dependence on activities as the primary source of pedagogical input in teaching distinguishes it from other language teaching approaches.

Activity centered approach Learning in language teaching has become an important approach in the last years mainly because it promotes communication and social interaction although 'task' in learning languages dates back to the sixties. A well-known and widely practiced PPP approach to teaching language items follows a sequence of Presentation of the item, Practice of the item and then Production, i.e. use of the item (Harmer, 2001:80). This is the approach currently followed by most commercially produced course books and has the advantage of appearing systematic and efficient. Some researchers, however, argue that PPP

approach only creates the illusion of learning because for any lasting learning to occur learners need much more communicative experience. The disadvantages with PPP that are raised by some members of language teaching community include:

- too simplified approach to learning a language – assuming it consists of rudimentary blocks and manipulated by grammar rules,
- overuse of the target structure,
- usage of existing language resources,
- Failure to produce the language correctly or not produce at all.

Activity centered approach Learning (ACL) refers to activities designed for learners doing authentic activities (Simpson, online). Learners are asked to perform a task without any input or guidance from the teacher. For task completion, learners have to use the language in a similar way as language is used in the real world outside the classroom. ACL approach does not contain predetermined language syllabus. Language items that learners need to complete activities successfully emerge in the process and can be recycled at the end of activities. Among possible advantages of ACL the following have to be mentioned:

a. there is no language control in production stage,
b. learners use their language knowledge and resources,
c. learners experiment with language during task completion,
d. learners' communicate and collaborate during activities,
e. target language emerges from students' needs,
f. ACL offers reflection on language usage.

The main advantage of ACL is language usage for a meaningful communication. In this respect, ACL is closely associated with Content-Based Instruction that combines language learning and content of subject matter. Both methodologies allow integrating all language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening, into development of fluency towards accuracy.

An extensive up-to-date monograph on Activity centered approach Learning and Teaching by Rod Ellis appeared in 2003. According to (Ellis 2003:65), 'ACL is mostly about the social interaction established between learners as a source of input and means of acquisition, and involves the negotiation of meaning, communicative strategies, and communicative effectiveness'. (Ellis 2003:320) also outlines the teaching principles: level of task difficulty, goals, acquisition orientation, students' active role, taking risks, focus on meaning and form, need of self-assessment of progress and acquisition.

Quite a diverse attitude to ACL is expressed by (Nunan (1988:44): 'the focus is on learning process rather than learning product' and 'there is little or no attempt to relate these processes to outcome'.

ACLT has been utilized not only because it has well-grounded assumptions, principles, and theories of second language acquisition, but due to the sound rationale behind its implementation (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). The application of ACLT is really a consequence of a better sense of the nature and procedures of EFL learning and also owing to the insufficiency of other approaches, for example, presentation-practice-product (PPP) (Hui, 2004). The result of employing a PPP model is that learners are still unable to apply the structure accurately though grammatical rules have been accounted for with care (Ritchie, 2003). Apparently, there exists a gap between students' mastering a rule and executing it in communication, and it is doubtful whether the grammar-based PPP model is effective to language acquisition (Ritchie, 2003).

ACLT indicates that language learning is a dynamic procedure facilitating communication and social interaction rather than a product acquired by practicing language items, and that students learn the target language more effectively when they are naturally exposed to meaningful activities (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). Such a view of language learning caused the development of various activity centered approaches in the 1980's e.g., (Breen, 1987; Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987), and during the 1990's, developed into a detailed practical framework for communicative classrooms where students performed activities through cycles of pre-task preparation, task acquisition, and post-task feedback (Skehan, 1996b). In particular, ACLT has been re-examined in recent years from distinct perspectives involving oral acquisition, writing acquisition, and acquisition assessment (Ellis, 2003b).

Despite its educational benefits in the language learning context, a task unnecessarily guarantees its successful implementation unless the teacher as facilitator of task acquisition understands how activities actually work in the language classroom (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). It likewise suggests that ACLT as an instructional approach is more than giving activities to learners and evaluating their acquisition. The teacher, who attempts to succeed in conducting ACLT, is requested to have adequate knowledge on the instructional framework related to its plan, process, and assessment (Hui, 2004).

As any approach of language teaching, Activity centered approach (ACLT) has its own assumptions on which it is based. (Feez 1998), cited in (Richards and Rodgers

2001: 224), and in Edwards and Willis (2005: 16), summarized the six basic assumptions of activity centered approach instruction (TBI) as follows:

The focus of instruction is on process rather than product.

Basic elements are purposeful activities and activities that emphasize communication, i.e. meaning.

Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while they are engaged in meaningful activities and activities. Activities and activities can be either:

- those that learners might need to achieve in real life or,

 - those that have a pedagogical purpose specific to the classroom.

Activities and activities of centered approach syllabus can be sequenced according to difficulty.

The difficulty of an activity depends on a range of factors including the previous experience of the learner, the complexity of the activities, and the degree of support available.

As we can see from the assumptions, an activity centered approach instruction underscores the importance of activities. They are activities that are selected to be the elements of teaching. Activities are considered as core point of the language syllabus.

The general goal of ACA as (Skehan 1996a) says is to enable learners to be more native-like in their acquisition of the target language. In order to reach this level, a learner should have a remarkable acquisition in both accuracy and fluency. Being accurate in using language has a considerable value in the development of fluency. In recent times, according to Leaver and (Willis 2004), there are some linguists that conclude that teaching grammar is not essential.

On the other hand, (Nunan 1989: 13) says, ". . . there is value in classroom activities which require learners to focus on form. It is also accepted that grammar is an essential resource in using language communicatively." This shows that teaching grammar, explicitly or implicitly, accounts for one's development of native-like language use ability like that of using the target language in meaningful way. Based on these, ACLT has three main goals: accuracy, complexity/restructuring and fluency (Skehan, 1996a, 1996b). Skehan elaborates the three goals of ACLT as follows:

Accuracy - concerns how well language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language. It is concerned with a learner's capacity to handle whatever level of intra-language complexity he/she has currently attended.

Complexity/Restructuring - complexity refers to the elaboration or ambition of the target language. Restructuring is the process which enables the learner to produce progressively more complex language. This stage is a little bit further than accuracy. Here the learner expands what he/she realized about the rule of language linking with other underlying systems of the language.

Fluency - refers to the learner's capacity to produce language in real time without undue pausing and hesitation. Here the learner uses his/her language (using the above two) in order to communicate meaningfully in real life situation.

TBI emphasizes fluency in communication but the process proceeds from fluency to accuracy. This can be achieved at the expense of accuracy and complexity (Shehadeh, 2005; Oliveira, 2004). This implies that accuracy and complexity are stepping stones to arrive at fluency. Most of the times, as (Atkins, Hailom and Nuru ,1996) say, foreign language learners are afraid of using the target language (TL) lest they make mistakes and laughed at by their peers. If the students have good knowledge of form as well as use, they can develop their confidence of using TL. Therefore, a task designer should look for the balance between these language aspects when he/she designs language learning activities. Stressing this idea,(Skehan ,1996b: 22) says,

It is fundamental for the designer of activity centered approach instruction to engineer situations which maximize the chances that there will be a balance between these different goals when intentional resources are limited.

It is assumed here that these three goals are in some degree of mutual tension. We cannot give our full attention to each of these goals. This means that the pursuit of one of these goals can easily be at the expense of the others. Since the three goals are inseparable, maintaining balance is very essential. (Skehan and Birch, 2005), gives two suggestions for balancing the three goals: choosing activities which focus on particular goals and implementing activities sequentially so as to establish balanced goals development.

As it has been said so far, language has different aspects which are highly interwoven. Focusing on only one disregarding the other makes the language aspect to be useless by itself. So there should always be balance between accuracy, complexity and fluency. In activity centered approach instruction, activities should

maintain the balance of these three goals so that the learner can have nearly native-like acquisition in the foreign language he/she learns (Leaver and Willis, 2004).

It appears that Prabhu's Communicational Teaching Project in Bengalore (Prabhu, 1987) was a major milestone in the process of "changing winds and shifting sands" (Brown, 2000: 13) towards this new language teaching paradigm (Leaver and Willis, 2004). In reality, the results of this project indicated that ACLT might represent a promising alternative to existing methods of the 1980s, as suggested by (Tarone andYule (1989).

Cathcart and Chaudrun 1988: 98) was one of the language oriented researchers who performed ACLT with empirical examinations. After observing eight Spanish-speaking kindergarten children in various activities for a year, Cathcart pointed out that "an increase in utterance length or complexity was found in those peer-peer interactions".

The results of a study conducted by (Rulon and McCreary's, 1986),which compared between teacher-fronted and group work negotiation for meaning also endorse the reliability of ACLT. The point they made was that through group work focused on meaning, interaction is promoted, and, eventually L2 learning ensues.

(Fotos and Ellis, 1991) demonstrated that the adoption of "activity centered approach language teaching" to communicate about grammar is conducive to both learning and communication. They also found that communicative grammar-based activities helped Japanese college-level EFL learners increase their knowledge of difficult grammatical rules and facilitated the acquisition of implicit knowledge.

Bygate (1996) found evidence that repetition of a task affected accuracy in some interesting ways that were consistent with this account. Without any prior warning or indication that the task was to be repeated, and without any use of reference to the task in class of repeating a video narrative task, the speaker showed significant adjustments to the way she spoke. According to several experienced judges, her lexical selection, selection of collocates, selection of grammatical items, and her ability of self- correct was better when the task was repeated. During the first acquisition, the speaker was likely to have been more taxed by the task of holding meanings in memory, transferring the meanings into words and articulating them, under time pressure. During the second acquisition, the speaker was likely to have been able to take advantage of the familiarity of the content and with the processes of formulating the meanings, and was able to devote more attention to the lexicon-grammatical selection. Bygate also concluded that repetition of similar activities is more likely to provide a structured context for mastery of form-meaning relations than is a random sequencing of activities.

(Pica-Porter, Paninos and Linnel (1996) investigated the effect of interaction during the implementation of a task on promoting the process of comprehension

between L2 students. The participants of this study were sixteen English-speaking intermediate students of French as a foreign language at the University of Hawaii. The findings of this study showed that the language produced by participants during the simulation was typical of negotiation for meaning. The results also indicated that the interaction between L2 students offer data of considerable quality, but may not provide the necessary input that would result in reconstruction of the learners' language. The study concluded that L2 students can be a source of modified and limited input and the interaction between them is not as rich as the interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers. (Pica et al. 1996) recommended that negotiation for meaning may have a beneficial role when used in combination with other pedagogical principles that promote language acquisition.

Lochana and Deb's (2006) project in a school run by the Basaveshwara Education Society in India also revealed evidence in support of a task- based approach to language teaching and learning. They developed an experiment in which non-activity centered approach textbook activities were converted into activity centered approaches in order to test two hypotheses: (1) ' Activity centered approach teaching enhances the language proficiency of the learners' and (2) 'Activities encourage learners to participate more in the learning processes'. Their findings suggest that ACL is beneficial to learners not only in terms of proficiency enhancement but also in terms of motivation.

(Joen and Jung, 2006) explored EFL teachers' perceptions of ACLT in Korean secondary school context. The data for their study were collected through questionnaires from a total of (228) teachers at (38) middle and high schools in Korea. The overall findings of their study revealed that despite a higher level of understanding of ACLT concepts, many Korean EFL teachers retain some fear of adopting ACLT as an instructional method because of perceived disciplinary problems related to classroom practice. They also concluded that teachers had their own reasons to use or avoid implementing ACLT. Based on the overall findings, they gave three important implications for teachers and teacher trainers: First, since teachers' views regarding instructional approach have a great impact on classroom practice, it is necessary for the teacher, as a practical controller and facilitator of learners' activities in the classroom, to have a positive attitude toward ACLT in order for it to be successfully implemented. Second, given the research finding that teachers lack practical application knowledge of activity centered approach methods or techniques, teachers should be given the opportunity to acquire knowledge about ACLT related to planning, implementing, and assessing. They suggested that teacher education programs, which aim at in-depth training about language teaching methodologies, should properly deal with both the strengths and

weaknesses of ACLT as an instructional method ranging from basic principles to specific techniques. Third, when taking into account that one of the major reasons teachers avoids implementing ACLT is deeply related to a lack of confidence, much consideration should be given too overcoming potential obstacles that teachers may come across in a task- based classroom. They also recommended that teachers consider alternative solutions for classroom management such as leveled activities, peer assessment, and a variety of various task types including two-way information gap activities as well as one-way activities such as simple asking and answering.

Suxiang (2007) explored the effects of combining Activity centered approach with online English language teaching on Chinese university non-major English graduate students. He examined whether this combination promoted the students' interest in English learning and if it improved the students' basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The results of the study showed that the students' interest in English gradually increased, and it stimulated the students' potential ability in English learning, particularly their reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Hitutozi (2008) investigated Liberal Arts TEFL undergraduates from the Federal University of Amazonas. A study was designed and implemented to experiment with clustered activities as a means of maintaining peer-peer oral/aural interaction in the classroom levels. The results indicated that the learners were kept engaged in the meaningful interactions in the classroom for an extended period of time. A key assumption underlying the experiment is that the longer learners use the target language to communicate in the classroom, the more their interlanguage is enhanced.

Birjandi and Ahangari (2008) examined the effects of task repetition and task type on fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The researchers assigned 120 students to six groups. The results and the analysis of variance indicated that task repetition and task type, as well as the interaction between these variables, resulted in significant differences in subjects' oral discourse in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity. Reports of research findings such as these are likely to encourage teachers to feel comfortable applying ACL to their classrooms. It also fulfills fundamental conditions for learning a second language, namely exposure, meaningful use, motivation, and language analyses, as pointed out by Willis (in Willis and Willis, 1996)

Narita (2008) conducted research in an elementary school in Japan where she taught English as a foreign language. The classes were given lessons and activities in which they experienced realistic communicative situations, such as shopping activities and interview activities. The results showed that many students had a

feeling of contentment and strong willingness to continue to study English in the future after completing the activities.

Methodology

Sources of Data

The main objective of this study was mainly focuses on To what extent English language teachers introduce or use an activity-focused approach to language teaching., In order to achieve the objectives of the research, University Juba - college of education were decided to be target of the study. They were chosen on the basis of their relative proximity to the researcher and on the researcher's belief that adequate information can be obtained as this college has long years of experience. The target population of the study was English language instructors.

Research Design and Procedures

The design of the study was experimental. To conduct the present study, two procedures were taken into consideration: First, the questionnaire of ACPLT view with trivial changes was prepared and an attempt was exclusively made to invite the teachers with MA degree in EFL teaching. The reason for this was, first of all, to control some of the variables threatening the validity and reliability of the research, and second of all, to make sure of the fact that the teachers will be able to deal consciously with the questionnaire and to assist their learners with the items and statements of the questionnaire.

Instruments Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect data from the samples of the target population, one questionnaire was employed as instrument of data collection.

Subjects

Since the research aims to explore, whether English language teachers use an activity-focused approach to language teaching.the researcher tries to achieve the objectives of the research, through one of the strongest institution, which is college of education in Juba University teachers. Researcher's belief the adequate information can be obtained as this college have long years of experience. The main population of the study is English language teachers and third year students. It is decided to collect the required data from (20) instructors.

Data Analysis

Once the teachers who participate in the study had been identified, the questionnaire was distributed to the teachers

The data collected by questionnaire is presented in tabular form,

To achieve the objectives of the study and to verify the hypotheses, following statistical methods will be used:
1- Descriptive statistics including the techniques that will use to summarize and describe numerical data for the purpose of easier interpretation. The suitable measures needed in this analysis are mean, median.
2- Standard deviation as a measure of comparison

The Discussion of the Analysis of the Teacher's Questionnaire

Instructors' questionnaire has three main sections. The first one deals with activity types used in English classes. The second and the third sections are about the roles of instructors during different activities cycles and factors that influence implementation of activities respectively.

Question 1: Item (1) Instructors' academic qualification

Table (1-1)
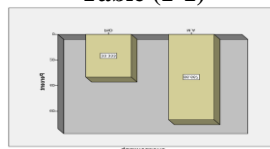
From the above graph 67% of the teachers have master degree; while 33% have PhD.

Table (1-2)
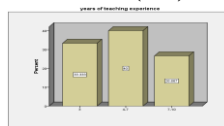
Years of teaching experience for 33% about 3 years out of the total number of respondent, while 40% have experience ranged from4-7 years, and26% from have experience ranged from7-10 as seen in the above graph.

Table (1-3)

Table (1-4)

course(s) you attended currently
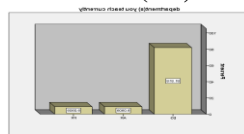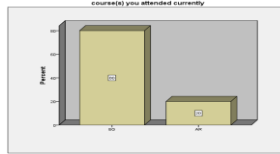
As you seen about 82% of respondent are teach in English department, while 18% are distributed in Arabic and French department, while 80% of samples attended course is English, 20% attended course is Arabic.

Item (2) Instructors' Responses to Whether Their English Language Course

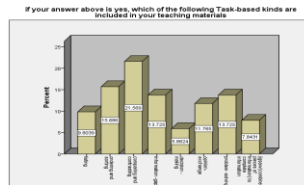### Materials Have activities

Table (2)

are there tasks/ activities in any of your English language teaching materials

100% shows, all of the respondents reported that the English language course materials they use have activities, this activities usage by teacher of the activity centered teaching effect on student's performance in terms of improving their speaking skills, so there is positive effectiveness on student's performance through the usage of English language teaching materials.

Question 2: If your answer in question one above is yes; which of the following Task-Based kinds are included in your language teaching materials?

Item (3) Tasks Found in English Language Course Materials

Table (3)

if your answer above is yes, which of the following Task-based kinds are included in your teaching materials

According to the above graph we can understand that almost all English language course materials have opinion exchange, decision making, comparing and contrasting, and problem solving activities. So the most important task-based which teachers included in their teaching material are comparing and contrasting (22%) of them said their material have, followed by ordering and sorting (15%), information-gap & problem-solving (14%), opinion-exchange (11%), listing(10%), only (7%)said there are jigsaw activities.

In general one can conclude from table (7) that the most common types of tasks found in Sudanese' English course materials are opinion exchange, decision making, comparing and contrasting, and problem solving tasks. Listing, and ordering and sorting activities are also included to some extent.

Item3: Do you create and use tasks of your own/ from different sources to teach English language?

Item (4) Instructors' responses to activities types they use out of their course materials
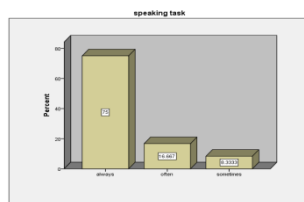
Table (4)
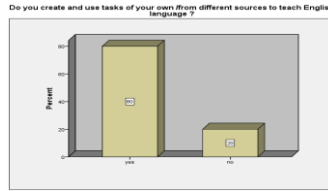
80% of the instructors create and use activities of their own from different sources to teach English language, while 20% of them don't create and use tasks from their own, thus greatly percentage reflect the ability of the teachers for creating suitable ways or approaches to teach the students. So, there is positive effectiveness on student's performance through the usage of activity –centered approach.

Question 4: If your answer in question three is yes, how often do you use the following Kinds of activity-centered material? `

Item (5) activity Instructors use out of Their Course Materials

(Table5-1)

Table (5-2)
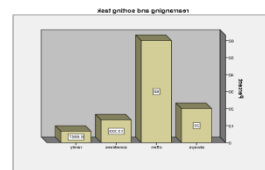
According to the percentage represented in the above 2 graphs respectively 26% out of the instructors always used these kinds of activity centered materials, 31% of them often used these kinds of activity centered materials

Question5- How often do you give/assign the following exercises whenever you execute activities?
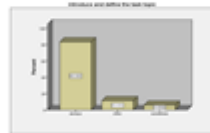
 Item 6: Assesses instructors' roles during three cycles of task: pre-activity, activity and post-activity (language focus). The data gathered about the three cycles are presented in one table to analyze it easily.

The following five graphs assess the instructors' role during pre- task phase
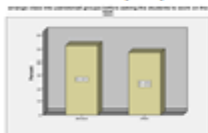
Table (6-1)   **Table (6-2)**   **Table (6-3)**   **Table (6-4)**   **Table (6-5)**
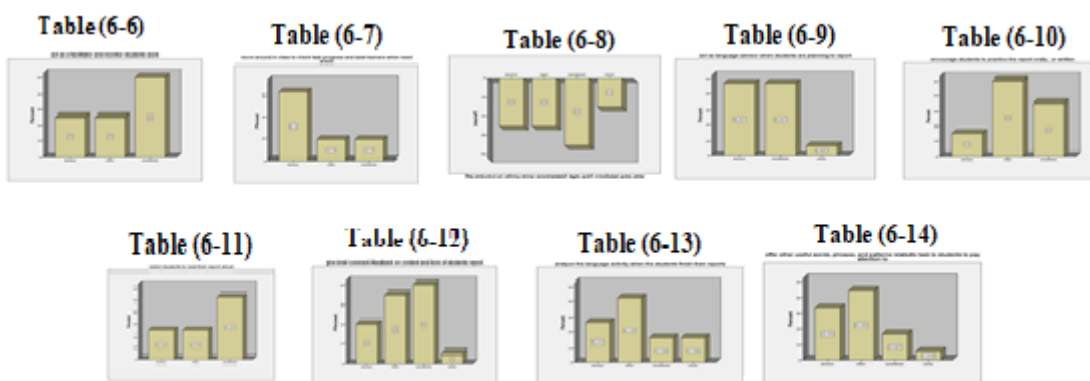

Concerning teacher's roles during pre-task cycle 45% of the respondents (according to the above 5 graphs) always arrange the class into pairs/small groups before students start doing the activity, introduce and define the activity topic, assist student to understand the message and objective of the activity, or use exercise to help the learners by

using useful words and phrases, while41%reported often, and 14% said they sometimes do that roles. So the teacher roles that introduce in this section of instructor's questionnaire reflect the approaches usage by teachers, these approaches develops the students language proficiency.

When we compare instructors' responses to that of students' (table 4), we can see some disagreements. Most of the instructors reported that they always play the above roles, except giving activities to help learners recall/learn useful words and phrases. However, students' responses show that most of the instructors do not always ensure that all students understand what to do.

The following five graphs assess the instructors' role during activity phase

Table(6-6) Table (6-7) Table (6-8) Table (6-9) Table (6-10)

Table (6-11) Table (6-12) Table (6-13) Table (6-14)

The above (14) graphs assess the instructors' role during activity phase and post- activity in instructions, by considering the percentage on the bars 31% out of the instructors always apply the activities in their instructions, such as facilitating and monitoring students work, move around the class to check task progress for assessment, get learners to report work, act as language advisor, encourage in practice orally though this is very important for students to reduce tension and be ready how to speak as soon as the reporter complete ,select student to read aloud, give brief feedback on content, analyze the language activity, while 28% of them said often, 34% said sometimes, and 7% of them rarely do the same instruction role.

As the information in the above three tables, though some instructors play the roles expected from them during each task phase, there are also many instructors who do not play their roles adequately during the three task phases. Since, in ACA not only the language aspects students learn but also the process of learning is very important (Skehan, 1998), teachers are advised to help their learners pass through different phases and stages of tasks.

Question 6: What are the factors that impact the implementation of activity- centered language teaching in Sudan?
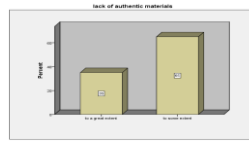
Item (7) Factors that Affect Implementation of ACA

(Table 7-1)
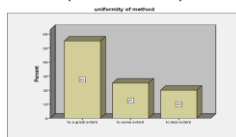
55% of instructors think that uniformity of method is a factor influence the implementation of activity centered oriented teaching with great extent, while 25% think some extent, and 20% think less extent.
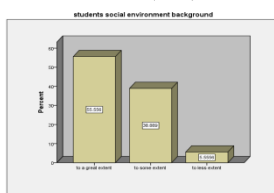
Table (7-2)

Lack of authentic materials with great extent 35% of instructors saw that, while 65% think to great extent.
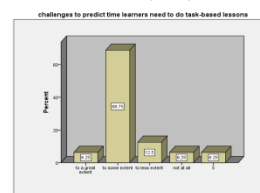
Table (7-3)

Shortage of time prepare lessons one of the factors that influence the implementation of the task-based teaching 60% of instructors saw that to great extent, also 25% saw to great extent, and 15% saw to less extent.

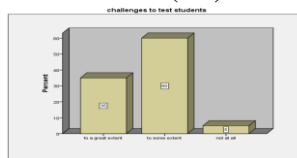**Table (7-4)**   **Table (7-5)**


The challenges to predict time learners need to do activity-centered lessons also is factor influence the implementation of task-based teaching 69% of the instructors think that to some extent.

Table (7-6)

Also we think the challenge to test students is another factor influence the implementation of activity-centered teaching to some extent.

Table (7-7)

teachers willingness to carry the work
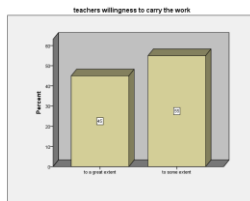
According to the above graphs the sample of the study believed that to some extent all these factors mentioned on the questionnaire neither negative nor positive effect on the implementation of the task-based English class.

Conclusion

Rather than try to know what "to do to" learners, as instructors, we must work with them to deepen their existing inherent motivation and knowledge. Seeing learners as unique and active, we emphasize communication and respect, realizing that through understanding and sharing our resources together we create greater energy for learning.

ACL aims at motivating language use and providing a variety of learning opportunities for students of all levels and capabilities.

The role of activities is to encourage learners to stimulate and use whatever language they already have, both for comprehension and for speaking and writing.

The language focus constituent enables learners to study exposure, and organize their knowledge of language structure.

The initial point of organization of the learners' work is the task, and the language is not an end in itself but an instrument to complete the task.

In the first place, the teacher must create the global objectives. The teacher's job at this phase is to increase the learners' awareness and make them realize what talents and strategies independent learners own and use when they investigate a certain subject, when they seek information and are successful in finding it.

The students, who are familiar with learning information only for the sake of being tested, should be directed towards a practical acquisition or use of their knowledge.

In its natural form, that a curriculum should be based on activities and that learning should come out of the activities rather than preceding them, it perfectly reveals an approach to learning illustrated by supporters of focus-on-form, rather than those who base their curriculum on teaching a series of pre-selected forms. But the

claims made for it sometimes appear more like theories than facts. Having learners carry out meaning-related activities is good for language development and for giving them opportunities for trying out language and getting feedback on their language use.

Activity centered approach to learning is advantageous to the student because it is more student-centered, allows for more meaningful communication. Although the teacher may present language in the pre-task, the students are ultimately free to use what grammar constructs and vocabulary they want. This allows them to use all the language they know and are learning, rather than just the 'target language' of the lesson. Furthermore, as the activities are likely to be familiar to the students (e.g.: buying a ticket), students are more likely to be engaged, which may further motivate them in their language learning.

There have been criticisms that an activity centered approach to learning is not appropriate as the foundation of a class for beginning students. Others claim that students are only exposed to certain forms of language, and are being neglected of others, such as discussion or debate. Teachers may want to keep this in mind when designing an activity centered approach learning lesson plan.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following

1. EFL classes should be given attention in light of the use of an activity-focused approach

2. Giving students adequate opportunities to practice activities for in EFL classes.

3. Revise curricula and English language course materials to add some new activities to teach the activity centered approach.

4. EFL teachers should focus equally on the different activities used in the course materials

5. Teachers should adopt an activity-centered approach to teaching speaking to their students.

6. English language trainers have to carry out all phases of activities, including planning and reporting phases for the assignment cycle, in order to effectively implement the activities that students can have the opportunity to learn the language in accuracy and fluency.

7. Students should be able to plan their activities in advance to reduce the burden on their cognitive ability during acquisition.

8. Adequate activities should be provided aimed at helping students acquire new skills and test hypotheses about the language skills of learners of English as a foreign language.

9. Students should be at the center of the learning process and should share more responsibilities in their task-based learning.

10. Students should be encouraged and motivated by (a) allowing some students to repeat the task in front of the rest of the class, (b) asking students to report on the task's outputs and outcomes.

11. Supportive feedback should be offered throughout the task cycle, not only to help students identify their weaknesses in practicing asks and ways of overcoming them, but also to encourage their strengths and consequently increase their motivation and involvement in language learning.

12. English teachers should always move around the classroom during student discussion to check if all students are participating in the group discussion

13. Ministry of Education, the college administration and other concerning bodies should arrange refreshment courses, workshops, panel discussions and the like for instructors and material developers in order to let them introduce to current innovations of language teaching.

14. Do further research to find out why high school students have poor background when they come to college.

Suggestions

The researcher suggests the following

1. Research to explore more in the effectiveness of EFL learner acquisition.
2. Further research to investigate the effectiveness of similar programs in developing students' listening, writing, reading and speaking skills.
3. Research to explore the effectiveness of other task-based education programs in middle and high school.

References

1.Birch, J. (2005)."**Balancing Fluency, Accuracy and Complexity Trough Task Characteristics**". In Edward, C. and Willis, J. (Eds.) 2005. Teachers Exploring Tasks in English Language Teaching. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

2.Breen, M. (1989). **The evaluation cycle for language learning tasks**, In Johnson, R.K. (Ed.). The second language curriculum. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3.Candlin**, C.N**. (2001). **Afterword: taking the curriculum to task**. In Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (Eds.) (2001). Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching and testing. Longman: Harlow.

4.Cross, C. (1986). **"Towards Activity-centered Language Learning**". In Candlin, C. and Murphy, D. (Eds.) .1987. Language Learning Tasks . Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice- Hall.

5.Ellis, R. (1992). **Second language acquisition & language pedagogy**. Bristol: Multilingual Matters Ltd

6.Ellis, R. (1994). **The Study of Second Language Acquisition**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7.Ellis, R. 2003. **Task-based Language Learning and Teaching** . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8.Feez, A. (1998). **The activity approach Classroom in Practice**. A Paper presented at PAC2 Conference, Seoul, Oct 3, 1999.

9.Foster, P.; Skehan, P. **(1999). "The Influence of Source of Planning and Focus of Planning on Task-Based Performance**". Language Teaching Research. V.3, n.3, Pp: 215–247.

10.Harmer, J**. **(2001). **The Practice of English Language Teaching**. Edinburgh: Pearson Education limited. .

11.Jeon, I., & Hahan, J. (2006). *Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching*: A case study of Korean secondary school classroom practice. Retrieved March 5, 2011, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/March06_ijj&jwh.pdf.

12.Leaver, B. L and Willis, J. R. (Eds.) 2004. **Task-based Instruction in Foreign Language Education: Practices and Programs**. Washington, D. C: Georgetown University Press.

13.Nunan, D. (1999). **Second Language Teaching and Learning**. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

14.Oxford, R.(2006). "**Task-based Language Teaching and Learning**: An Overview". Asian EFL Journal . Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 250-270.

15.Pica, T, Kanagy, R. & Falodum, J**. **(1993). "**Choosing and Using Communicative Tasks for Second Language Instruction**". In G. Crookes and S.

Gass (Eds.). Tasks and Language Learning: Integrating Theory and Practice, (Pp: 9-34). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

16.Prabhu, N**. (1987). Second Language Pedagogy**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Rahimpour, M. (1997). "Task Complexity, Task Condition, and Variation in L2 Oral Discourse". Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, University of Queensland, Australia.

17.Ritchie, G. (2003**). Presentation-practice-production and task-based learning in the light of second language theories**. The English Teacher, 6, 2, 112-12.

18.Scarcella, R. C. and Oxford, R. L. (1992). **The Tapestry of Language Learning: The Individual in The Communicative Classroom** . Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

19.Skehan, P. (1996). "*A Framework for the Implementation of Task-based Instruction*". Journal of Applied Linguistics. Vol.17, No.1, pp.39-59.

___. 1996b. "Second Language Acquisition Research and Task-based Instruction". In Willis, J. and Willis, D. (Eds.) 1996. Challenge and Change in Language Teaching. Oxford: Heinemann.

___. 1998. A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

20. Willis, J. & Willis, D. (1996) **"Consciousness Raising Activities**". In J. Willis & D. Willis (Eds.) Challenge and Change in Language Teaching, (Pp: 63-76). Oxford: Heinemann ELT.

21.Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). **Doing task-based teaching**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.