Investigating the Impact of Negotiated Task-Based Syllabus on Adult Learners' Oral Fluency

دراسة أثر المنهج الدراسي التفاوضي المعتمد على المهمات على الطلاقة الشفهية لدى المتعلمين الكبار

by

HIDAR MAHMOUD ABU SHAKRA

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

at

The British University in Dubai

July 2019

DECLARATION

I warrant that the content of this research is the direct result of my own work and that any use made in it of published or unpublished copyright material falls within the limits permitted by international copyright conventions.

I understand that a copy of my research will be deposited in the University Library for permanent retention.

I hereby agree that the material mentioned above for which I am author and copyright holder may be copied and distributed by The British University in Dubai for the purposes of research, private study or education and that The British University in Dubai may recover from purchasers the costs incurred in such copying and distribution, where appropriate.

I understand that The British University in Dubai may make a digital copy available in the institutional repository.

I understand that I may apply to the University to retain the right to withhold or to restrict access to my thesis for a period which shall not normally exceed four calendar years from the congregation at which the degree is conferred, the length of the period to be specified in the application, together with the precise reasons for making that application.

_____
Signature of the student

COPYRIGHT AND INFORMATION TO USERS

Abstract

This paper aims at investigating one of the UAE-based private institutes' current syllabus practices against the negotiated task-based learning ones. The present study intends to build a negotiated task-based syllabus and explore the perspectives of learners regarding the impact of a negotiated task-based syllabus on their oral fluency. Competency-based language learning and communicative language teaching have gotten unpredictable popularity over the past four decades. Task-based syllabuses are being advanced in an increasing number of educational settings by researchers in studies exploring the process that drives Second Language Acquisition. A convergent parallel mixed methods approach was employed to analyze quantitative and qualitative data. The study involved eight hours of observations identically to the same group of participants who were homogeneous in their English proficiency. The first part of the observation dealt with the control group in which the current syllabus was normally practiced while the experiment group targeted the task-based learning method where suggested topics were negotiated with the participants. In both groups, the participants were given the same formative assessment procedure. A questionnaire exploring the participants' attitudes and asking their preference of the two types of methodologies was also carried out. At the end of the eight-hour observation, focus group interviews were conducted to further validate the present study. While feedback of the formative assessment in both groups was relatively identical, participants showed better satisfaction to the negotiated task-based syllabus.

Key words: syllabus, curriculum, process syllabus, Task-Based Learning

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في الممارسات الحالية لمنهج يعتمده معهد لغة انجليزية في الامارات العربية المتحدة مقابل ممارسات المنهج الدراسي التفاوضي المعتمد على المهمات كما تهدف الدراسة الى بناء منهج دراسي تفاوضي معتمد على المهمات بالاضافة الى دراسة استطلاع آراء المتعلمين الكبار حول أثر المنهج الدراسي التفاوضي المعتمد على المهمات على الطلاقة الشفهية لديهم حيث اصبح تدريس اللغة الانجليزية القائم على المنافسة والتواصل اللغوي يحظى بشعبية كبيرة خلال العقود الاربعة الماضية كما يشهد المنهج المعتمد على المهمات تطورا واهتماما ملحوظا ومتزايدا في الانظمة التعليمية الحديثة من قبل الباحثين في مجال اكتساب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية.حيث تم استخدام نهج متوازي مختلط الأساليب لتحليل البيانات الكمية والنوعية من خلال ثماني ساعات من المشاهدات داخل الغرفة الصفية لنفس المجموعة من المشاركين بنفس المستوى من اللغة الانجليزية حيث يتعامل الجزء الأول من المشاهدة مع المجموعة التي يمارس فيها المنهج الحالي بينما تستهدف مجموعة التجربة الاخرى واللتي يعتمد المنهج الدراسي التفاوضي فيها على المهمات و تم التفاوض على الموضوعات المقترحة مع المشاركين و في كلا المجموعتين ، تم إعطاء المشاركين نفس إجراء التقييم كما تم تزويدهم باستبيان لاستكشاف مواقفهم ا تجاه النوعين من المنهجيات و في نهاية المشاهدة ، جرت مقابلات مع المشاركين لزيادة التحقق من صحة هذه الدراسة و لكن في حين أن نتائج المشاركين للتقييم في كلا المجموعتين متطابقة نسبيًا ، إلا أن المشاركين أبدوا ارتياحًا أفضل للمنهج الدراسي التفاوضي المعتمد على المهمات .

العبارات الرئيسية: الخطة الدراسية والمنهج الدراسي العام و المنهج الدراسي التفاوضي المعتمد على المهمات.

Dedication

To the very special people in my life who made this possible.

To the soul of my mother, Yusra Al-Khalil, whom I wished to be alive at this moment.

To the soul of my father, Mahmoud Abu Shakra.

To my lovely wife Kouther who made my dreams come true.

To my soul mates Rayyan and Yazan who filled my life with happiness.

To my amazing brother, Nader Abu Shakra who was the continuous supporter in this journey.

To all my siblings, Maher, Mazen, Jafar, Tareq, Ali and Abeer, whom I am always proud of.

To my dear friend, Mohammad Zubaidi who was a great moral support during this journey.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this chance to extent my sincere gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. Emad Abu Ayyash, who lent me a helping hand with my work till the very end. I also owe this to Dr. Sufian Forawi.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Charts

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Designing and introducing a new language syllabus is a concerning issue that does not necessarily relate to questions of its content. Rather, it is an issue of management and implementation of innovation described as central to the design and acceptance of new syllabuses (White 1988).

A Syllabus has been broadly defined. White (1988) defines it as the specification of the work of a certain department in a school, college, or university organized in sections or subsections that define the work of a particular class or group. According to (Richards 2001, p 2), a syllabus is "a specification of the content of a course of instruction and lists what will be taught and tested". Therefore, a syllabus, for instance, for a speaking course specifies the oral skills that will be practiced during the course, the functions, the topics, the other aspects of conversations that will be taught, and then the scope and sequence in which they appear in that particular course. According to (Fraida & Olshtain 1986, p. 3), a syllabus is " more circumscribed document, usually one which has been prepared for a particular group of learners".

(White 1988) summarizes the syllabus features as follows: a syllabus is normally linked to, framed with time, and specifies an opening point that is driven by an ultimate goal. It also specifies some sort of sequence based on:

- A sequence inherent to theories of language learning or to a structure of a particular material that relates to second language acquisition;
- A sequence constrained by administrative needs like materials.

It has been stated that designing syllabuses intrinsically imply sequencing content with the aim of maximizing language learning(Baralt, 2014). Further, a syllabus; according to (White 1988), is a document of administrative convenience that is subject to adjustability and negotiability, specifies what is taught but it does not organize what is learnt, and is a piece of public document and a manifestation of accountability. Elaborately, it has been stated that a syllabus is a more thorough and active statement of teaching and learning principles which interprets the outlook of the curriculum into successive steps geared

towards more narrowly defined goals at each level (Fraida and Olshtain, 1986). Thus, a syllabus is more localized and based on records and accounts of what is actually happening in the classroom (Nunan 1988).

What is the purpose of the syllabus? Faravani, Zeraatpishe & Azarnoosh (2018) list the purposes of the syllabus as follows: to breakdown language into units and offer a functional basis for using text-books or instructional blocks, to offer leaners and teachers with sufficient moral support, to ensure that the course is well-thought-out, to give learners and teachers an idea as to where the course is heading, to act as an inherent statement of the perspectives held by the syllabus designers, to create awareness and inform learners of the course outcomes, to guide the selection and organization of the learning materials, texts; activities; and exercises, to confirm the element of uniformity across educational and institutional system, and finally to assess how successful a student has been during a course by introducing a ground for testing.

1.1.1 Syllabus vs. Curriculum

A prevailing confusion over the distinction between a syllabus and curriculum. They have been differentiated by stating that a syllabus in the British sense "refers to the content or subject matter of an individual subject, whereas curriculum refers to the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system" (White 1988. p. 4). Either Syllabus or curriculum can be named in the American sense (White 1988). (White 1988) defines curriculum as "all the learning which is planned and guided by the school whether it is carried out in groups or individually inside or outside the school" (White 1988 p.4). Curriculum, according to (Luke Allan, Annette, Woods 2013), is defined as relationships in everyday discourse between learners and teachers. Some define the term curriculum as the educational objective of the program (the ends), the content teaching procedures. (Nunan 1988) summarizes the definition of the term curriculum by stating that it is concerned with making wide-ranging statements about language learning, learning aims and experience, evaluation, and the role of relationships between learners and teachers.

1.1.2   Negotiability and Task-Based Syllabus in Second Language Acquisition

As a result of the Task-Based learning eminence in second language acquisition (SLA), both researchers and teachers have increasingly started to elicit examples of language use that represent how students perform when accuracy is not attended (Ellis, 2003). Such examples are believed to offer evidence of students' ability to use their linguistic and nonlinguistic resources which is thought, according to (Ellis 2003), to be a central principle in task-based learning pedagogy; to convey messages in real time communication. It has been stated that "SLA Researchers recognize the importance of such examples for documenting how learners structure and restructure their own interlanguages overtime" (Ellis 2003, p. 1). Teachers, on the other hand, do not see that unless learners are given the opportunity to get involved in such examples needed to convey their message fluently and effectively (Ellis 2003).

In this account of such syllabus examples, issues of negotiability have been raised with the belief that the focus in task-based syllabuses is on selection and organization of content (White 1988).

1.2 Significance of the Study

It has been identified that possessing good communication skills in English is a strong desire among English learners; communicative competence has been demandingly increasing than ever before (Ahmad & Rao 2013). Also, it has been stated that many approaches of English language teaching have been developed. According to (Coskun, 2011), the perfect method is the communicative language teaching. Additionally, it has been recognized that in response to the traditional teaching methods, such as the audio-lingual, and the grammatical teaching methods, the emergence of communicative language teaching started during the 70s and became the leading approach of language teaching; many courses and programs were presented with more focus on communicative language teaching to improve learners' competence (Farooq, 2015). It has been added that the methods of teaching have been shifted from drill-based to communicative based activities (Farooq, 2015). There have always been solid tie ups between the task-based learning approach and the communicative language teaching. (Clarke, 1991)states that the communicative era of language teaching has seen unforeseen development in the field of syllabus design.

In this study, the focus would not be merely on task-based learning that is described as an approach in many studies. Richards & Rodgers (2014) suggest, for instance, that task-based learning is not monolithic; it does not contain one single method. It is an approach with many forms that can be creatively integrated with different syllabuses and purposes. In his proposal to the two types of syllabuses, White (1988) classifies the process syllabus or the negotiated syllabus as named by (Clarke, 1991);and the procedural syllabus under the common basis of approach rather than in content. Nunan (1988) refers to the word task as an approach including separate units of planning rather than objectives. Yet, syllabus content is still of rather significance as it relates to learners' needs, preferences, and interests as stated by (white 1988). Rod Ellis (2003) defines a task as a workplan where learners are required to pragmatically process language to reach an outcome that is evaluated in terms of content. Despite of the plethora of studies underpinning the task-based learning method solely. Yet, the teaching practices of task-based learning lack to negotiate the syllabus content with learners. White (1988) states that "evidence of innovation studies suggest that compatibility with current practices is a characteristic of successful innovation" (White, 1988, P.109).

Although there is an extreme shortage of studies talking about conceiving syllabuses made up of other ones; however, the present paper will explore the possibilities of integrating the process or the negotiated syllabus with other syllabuses and here I mean negotiating the desired content between teachers and learners using the task-based learning methods. Clarke (1991) questions this by stating that can the negotiated model be admitted to a large number of learning situations and would it be reconcilable with other existing types of syllabuses? It has been described as a set of topics derived and generated by a group of students and is not either predesigned, externally imposed, centralized, nor management orientated(Clarke, 1991). This is a signal that Clarke (1991) tries to refer to textbooks and that they are all caused by school administrators. In support of this, Penny (1996), in his interpretation to the oppositeness of using a text in classroom refers to the following points: inadequacy irrelevance, lack of interest, limitation, homogeneity, and over-easiness. Also, Richards and Renandya (2002) show little bias against using textbooks in classrooms by stating that there are potential negative impacts on using textbooks in classroom including the inauthenticity of language, learners' needs inappropriateness, and the probability of killing and deskilling teachers' creativity. It has been even gone way further by describing that course books represent a problem and would cause, in some cases,

educational failure (Sheldon 1988). On the contrary, it has been stated that course books are considered the visible heart of any ELT program offering remarkable merits to both learners and teachers (Khodbakhshi 2014).In this matter, Penny (1999) justifies his biasedness towards using text books in classrooms by the following elements: first; framework in which teachers and learners know what they are doing and where they are going, so they both feel there is a sense of structure and content progress. Second, course books contain ready-made texts, tasks and activities where teachers do not need to spend a lot of time designing new tasks and activities. Third, course books are convenient; easy to carry, and aesthetically and easily packed and stacked. Last, in course books; novice and inexperienced teachers are provided with satisfactory guidance and support.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The present study intends to bridge the gap between teachers and learners as to, on one hand, learners' right of opting topics of their interest to be a part of their course syllabuses that is found relatively underprivileged. On the other hand, teachers lack to the thought of topic negotiation with their learners since syllabuses as stated by (White 1988) are traditionally teacher and content-led. In favour of this, it has been stated that teachers are still in control of topic and task selection and organization (White 1988). Also, according to Clarke (1991), there are a number of potential interpretations why syllabuses fail and why learners' expectations are not met other than their views regarding the inadequacy of external syllabuses. Clarke (1991) continues stating the explanations some of which contain laziness, lack of motivation, bad teacher-learner rapport, poor teacher management of learning materials and classroom work, inadequate or inappropriate materials, over large classes, and limited time to cover the content of syllabus.

During my research, I have found dearth of studies trying to approach or evaluate the process or the negotiated syllabus. White (1988) and Van der Wait (2013)state that the major problem is that there is insufficient evaluation of the process syllabus model in practice. I intend, in the present study, to blend the best current teaching approaches of task-based learning with the learners' choice of topics in negotiation with teachers. We, as educators, have been observing teachers using the newest trends of teaching practices of the task-based learning methods with paying little attention to students' needs and interests or rather using a textbook adopting the task-based learning methods into the topic selected from it.

When we mention the process or the negotiated syllabus, the first step is to do the needs analysis. In his description to the process model, White (1988) places the interactively dialectic process between the curriculum guidelines and the syllabus accounts. Moreover, Clarke (1991) suggests that the element of negotiation might be significantly incorporated into any external syllabus where the needs analysis procedure is at the heart and before all other syllabus components which encompass the situations, the roles, the problems, the notions, the tasks, the functions, the structures, the materials, the mode of working, the evaluation, and the procedures. Additionally, it has been well-highlighted that needs assessment as called by (Berwick 1984) has been an essential first step in any valid instructional syllabuses. This is even seen in the most common ESL courses such as the Cambridge CELTA course (Certificate of English Language Teaching For Adults) where the focus is merely on the task-based learning as an alternative approach to lesson design without highlighting the significance of analysing learners' needs based on which both teachers and learners decide on a set of selected topics to be embedded into their course plan (Thornbury and Watkins 2007).

This study has a two-fold purpose: to build a negotiated task-based syllabus and to explore its influence on learners' oral fluency. Therefore, the research objectives that guide this study are as follows:

1- To build a negotiated task-based syllabus.
2- To explore the perspectives of learners regarding the impact of a negotiated task-based syllabus on their oral fluency.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

From all angles, language has been viewed as a vehicle of communication driving teachers to impart knowledge to learners or rather facilitate or manage groups using the newest teaching practices followed by mostly all educators who should be aware of those new trends of teaching practices. Here, we are talking about the circle of all terms that serve the learning process geared towards communicative language teaching, competency-based learning, cooperative learning, collaborative learning and the like.

According to (Farooq, 2015), in the past forty years, communicative language teaching has got unpredictable popularity despite of the oppositeness encountered as to appropriateness, however; feasibility of implementing it has been worldwide discussed. According to (Savignon, 2006), from the communicative language teaching introduction into discussions of language learning in the early of the 70s, the term communicative competence has encouraged noticeable reflection; it has represented a concept attaching researchers and language developers to initiate linguistic theories and research and teaching practices. It has been stated that those experts believed that there was a firm desire on communicative proficiency rather than on sole mastery of structures(Richards and Rodgers, 2014). It has been further stated that the roots of communicative language teaching methodologists. Savignon (2006)took the lead in developing relevant classroom materials that encouraged learners' preference and enhanced autonomy. At the emergence during that time, those methodologists were creating awareness by integrating this method into schools, workshops, novice teachers, teachers in service. They were collecting the exercise types for adopting communicatively-oriented English programs for curriculum change (Savignon, 2006). The design of exercises was based on exploiting variety of social meanings from specific grammatical structures. So, leaners and teachers were able to define their own learning paths through principled choice of pertinent exercises. On another story, (Richards and Rodgers, 2014) state that a group of specialists started to explore the possibility of developing some language course on the basis of a unit-credit system in which learning exercises or tasks are broken down into units, each of which relates to an element of learners needs and is systematically apposite to all other units.

Further investigative projects on communicative language teaching were conducted by Candlin (1978) at his academic home; university of Lancaster (Savignon, 2006).

Another theory that is greatly connected to the purpose of this study which is to build a negotiated task-based syllabus and investigate its impact on learner's oral fluency is represented in the competency-based language teaching where the focus is on the learning outcomes in the development of language programs rather than input. Competency-based language teaching addresses what learners are expected to do with the language. Some of its characteristics represent practicality and specificity of competencies, learners can judge whether the competencies are useful and relevant to their needs, learners know exactly what they have learnt.

According to (Bataineh & Tasnimi 2014), competency has been given different definitions: description of the fundamental skills, knowledge and attitudes required for more effective performance of activity or a task generated from realia. Another definition describes competency as a quality of an individual that makes performance of a job, an activity, or a function successful in an academic or work environment. Thus, competency might be represented in a task, a project, an activity, an exercise, or a function. Again, by defining competency as a task; then the language theory of competency-based language teaching is associated with task-based learning. It has been elaborated that the competency-based language teaching theory is originated from the Competency-Based Education that is an educational movement emerging in the early 70s in the US(Richards and Rodgers, 2014).(Richards and Rodgers, 2014)further state that the educational goals of competency-based language teaching are defined in terms of accurate measurable description of skills, behaviors, and knowledge that students should gain by the end of the course study. One significant characteristic of the competency-based language teaching that is well-connected to this study and particularly to the leaners' needs , according to (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), is that it is defined as an outcome-based and is adaptable to the changing needs of learners and teachers. On the professional and workplace level, it is no longer that employees programs are based on competencies through their work experience; such programs have started to be delivered based on the competencies expected(Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Such programs were suggested on the basis of a performance framework of language tasks and specific skills through which individuals should have mastery and are required to function proficiently in the society they live in. According to (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), supporters of competency-based language teaching see it as a leading and

a positive role in changing education and training norms by stating that competency-based approach to teaching, learning and assessment provide teachers an opportunity to refresh their training and education programs. By following the competency-based language teaching methods, according to (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), quality of assessment and the teaching and learning notions supported by having clearly expected outcomes and progressive feedback of competency-based assessment is guaranteed. These benefits have been evaluated and are seen in all levels of training and education, from the primary stages of school to university programs, advanced academic studies to workplace training (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Since task-based learning draws on many principles such as: activities involved in communication are vital for language learning, activities involved in real meaningful tasks promote successful learning, and language that has meaningfulness supports the process of learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), I shall in the following section talk about the task-based learning concepts and characteristics followed by the ones related to the negotiated syllabus. The task-based syllabus is a logical development and a strong version of the communicative teaching language and the competency-based language teaching. It strongly attached to the strategies of Constructivist and Progressivist teachers who are aware of cooperative learning, collaborative learning, scaffolding, thinking and engagement, and social interaction (Elis 2003). All are linked to the theories of constructivism. According to (Ellis 2003 p. 30), "Recently, this theoretical perspective has led to task-based studies that investigate 'scaffolding and collaborative dialogue' the supportive interactions that arise when learners communicate with others".

The first research question in this paper is to build a task-based syllabus accompanying the notion of constructing knowledge and socially interacting with others. On one hand, it has been stated that constructivism, in the sense of learning, in which individuals build their own knowledge of the world by gathering information and interpreting it in relation to past experiences. On another relevant notion of the constructivism theory, (Pritchard, 2014) suggests that social interaction has a profound impact on learning when individuals socially interact with each other no matter what the relationship between looks like. And in his presentation to the macro and micro social context of interaction, (Adrian, 1994)

maintains that social interaction can be at the level of both inside classrooms or at a wider community outside the classroom.

Progressivism, on the other hand, encourages learners to learn by their own experience and revolves around students' needs. People learn best from what they consider most relevant to their lives. Progressivists should center their curricula on the needs, experiences, interests, and abilities of their students. It has been further stated that progressivism in education should prepare students for active participation rather than being passive (Hayes 2006). Further, it has been theorized that task-based learning approach has been recently in a solid connection with Progressivism when (Ellis 2003) states that when L2 learners have got the chance to communicate with other users of the language, for instance, a native speaker, a teacher, or another user, they can perform functions in the language that they are not able to perform by themselves. By time and practice learners internalize these functions learning to complete them independently. In this way, the learning process entails progression from the inter - to the intra mental as they change from object and other regulation to self-regulation.

It has been stated that there had been a lot of frustration, before presenting task-based learning in the early eighties, framed with the limitations in the teaching methodologies that gave priorities to form and the PPP (Present, Practice Produce) models in which there was massive focus on grammar forms that teacher usually presented in the presentation stage. Very few students at that time were able to use English communicatively with others(Willis, 1996). According to (Willis, 1996), the success of Prabhu's Communicational Language Teaching project carried out in primary and secondary schools in Bangalore where the focus was on meaning rather than on form encouraged its advocates for further research.

2.2 Task-Based Learning

Richards and Rodgers (2014) state that the task-based learning centralizes the notion of task as a unit in planning and teaching. So, what is meant by task? Task has been given a scant number of definitions by every advocate of task-based learning. It has been stated that Breen (1989) defines a task "as a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use during communication" (Ellis 2003, p. 4). According to (Ellis, 2003), Breen refers to a task that can be a brief exercise or a long work plan project that encourages unplanned

communication. (Ellis, 2003) states that Long (1985) refers to the word task as kinesthetic by describing it as a piece of work given to learners for free or for an incentive like painting a wall or a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying groceries, making a ticket reservation, borrowing a book at a library, sending an email or typing a letter, weighing a patient, booking at a hotel, reserving at a table at a restaurant and so on. This means the word task can mean thousands of things that can be physically done in our daily life. Richards, Platt, and Weber, according to (Ellis, 2003), define a task as an action or an activity that is carried out as a result of processing or understanding a certain piece of language, for example; drawing a map while learners are listening to an audio. Tasks may or may not involve production in class but they require teachers to determine the goals of successfully finishing the task. Crookes defines it, according to (Ellis, 2003), as a piece of work or an activity with a set objective taken during a course of education or used to elicit information for research. It has been further stated that Prabhu (1989) defined the word task as an activity that requires learners to reach outcomes from given data through a cognitive process in which teachers are able to control and regulate the process (Ellis, 2003). Nunan defines the word task significantly as a communicative piece of classroom work that allows learners to manipulate comprehend, produce and interact in the target language as their attention is focused on meaning rather than form. Nunan recommends that tasks should have a sense of completeness for learners to have sense of achievement (Ellis, 2003). Skehan, according to (Ellis, 2003), defines a task as an activity in which it must have three elements: meaning is focused on more than form, task completion is prioritized, and assessment is measured against the set outcome. Also, according to (Ellis, 2003), Lee refers to a task as an activity or an exercise in which three components are met: a) the task objective is obtainable only if participants interact among each other, b) a plan for structuring and sequencing the interaction process, c) the meaning is focused on through exchange and negotiation. Furthermore, it has been stated that a task is "a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome. In other words, learners use whatever target language resources they have in order to solve a problem, do a puzzle, play a game or share or compare experiences" (Willis 1996 p. 2).

According to (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), the following assumptions on task-based learning are summarized:

- The focus is higher on the process than the product.

- Its essential components are presented in purposeful tasks and activities where communication and meaning are emphasized.
- Students learn language by communicatively interacting with each other as they are engaged in doing the tasks and activities.
- Activities are of two versions: one version meets the learners' needs relevant to their real life. The second type of activities are those that have a pedagogical objective set for classroom purposes.
- Tasks are usually sequenced according to the level of difficulty.
- The difficulty level of tasks reply on a wide range of elements: the past experience of learners, the task complexity, language content to undertake tasks, and the degree of available resources and support.

2.3 Characteristics of a Task

According to (Learver and Willis, 2004), during the examination of task-based learning approach in the US government programs, the following benefits were reported:

- Higher motivation,
- Opportunity for task repetition without boredom,
- Greater flexibility of curricula,
- Promotion of learning how to learn,
- An opportunity for natural error correction,
- Promotion of risk taking and independency,
- Higher results of language proficiency, and
- Increased students' level of satisfaction and better results of program evaluation.

Much more explanation of task-based learning was offered by (Edwards and Willis, 2005) stating that:

- In carrying out tasks, the students' main focus is on negotiating meanings rather than on practicing forms or prespecified patterns.
- Every task has some kind of purpose and learners know that they are expected to reach the purpose by the end of the lesson. For example, write a list of similarities and differences, complete a map of a rout or a picture from given instructions, to report a problem solution, or work out the money needed to buy a set of things.
- The task outcomes of a completed task can be shared with others.

- The four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening can be involved in tasks.

(Nunan, 1988) suggests that good tasks have the following criteria:

- Promote meaning, purpose and negotiation.
- Relevant data is encouraged.
- Objectives should be drawn from learner's needs.
- Flexible approaches are allowed to the task, offering different routes, modes of participation and procedures.
- Within tasks, solutions to problems should be found; different solutions should be allowed depending on the skills and strategies drawn by students.
- Learners' contributions, attitudes, and affects are a major part of task-based learning.
- Create challenge not a threat to promote risk-taking.
- All leaners are required to take part in tasks in terms of skills, knowledge and contribution.
- Define a problem and have learners work it through centered on the leaner but driven by the teacher.
- Language use should be involved in the solving process of the task.
- During the task phases (during the task and post task), co-evaluation should be allowed between the learner and the teacher.
- Develop the students' capacities in question to predict consequences and unintended results of the task.
- Provide opportunities for leaners to talk about communication and about learning.
- Create opportunities for language practice.
- Promote expertise and information sharing.
- Monitoring and feedback of the task and of the learner should be promoted.
- Encourage regular reflection on the task.
- Critical awareness about the process of language learning should be promoted.
- The efforts exerted on mastering the leant aspects of the language should be useful either by encouraging learners to communicate beyond the classroom or in terms of the affective and cognitive development of leaners.

2.4 Task-Based Learning Models

In the later section, I will draw on the common practices of task-based learning framework and the typical task cycle.

(Willis, 1996) draws his framework on the basis of pre-task, task and post task. In the pre-task phase, the teacher introduces the topic and the task; his role is to help students understand the theme and the objectives of the task. For instance, brainstorming ideas with the entire class, using images or miming to introduce the topic to the students. Students, as suggested by (Willis, 1996), can do the pre-task phase by, for example, introducing the topic in the form of a game such as odd-word-out games. It has been also suggested that teacher could pre teach students by highlighting new words or phrases but would not teach whole new units of structures. (Willis, 1996) suggests also that introducing the topic in the pre-task phase may include students hear a recording to a parallel task being done if the task is meant to be about listening. Or students can read a part of a text if the task is a text-based. The initial phase is useful since students are exposed to new words and phrases and would start recalling relevant ones. The preparation time helps students to critically think about the things they would say in the task stage.

In the task stage, according to (Willis, 1996), students work in pairs or in small groups and practice whatever language they have to express themselves. This could be in response to a reading text or a listening activity. The purpose here is to raise learners' confidence and motivation. This stage includes planning and reporting. In planning, students are prepared for the following stage and might be then asked to report briefly to the entire class, how they did the task, and what the outcome of the task was. In reporting, pairs, for instance, start reporting to the whole class and compare findings. The teacher, eventually, monitors the reporting process with immediate corrective feedback without spotlighting students. In the post task stage, (Willis, 1996), gave an example of a listening activity; where students listen to the same task by fluent native speakers and make a comparison. According to (Willis, 1996), this component gives extra exposure to the subject-related materials and increase learners' experience of the target language.

According to (Learver and Willis, 2004), most advocates to the task-based learning approach agree on the same cycle of task-based learning that include there phases (pre-task, the task itself, and post task).

(Learver and Willis, 2004) model of the task-based learning cycle:

- Pre-task where teachers prepare leaners for the task by giving instructions and clarifying the topic, and setting its intended outcomes.
- The Task itself where learners, on their own, work in pairs or groups toward the set outcomes. The focus here is primarily on meaning.
- Post task: drafting, finalizing, and presenting the outcome in public.

Pre-task phase

Introduction to topic and task

Teacher explores the task with students, highlights some useful phrases and expressions. Teacher makes sure instructions are clear. Silent time is given as preparation. Similar tasks might be given as a lead-in.

Task Cycle

Planning

Task

Students initiate the task in pairs or in small groups. Teacher monitors progress with necessary assistance. Teacher encourage communication as possible.

Students prepare to report to the full class orally or in writing. They present how they did the task, what they discovered or created. Since spontaneous presentations are produced, they try to be accurate. Teacher's role is to check language fed correctively.

Report

Students report to the whole class, peer correction and comparisons take place. Teacher acts as a chairman monitoring progress and giving feedback for final sum up.

Analysis   **Language Focus**   **Practice**

Students examine the features of the text or the audio script (consciousness raising activities. Findings with the class are reviewed by teacher. Teacher might bring more phrases and expressions to students' attention.

Teacher conducts practice activities with class for new patterns, words, expressions, and phrases occurring in the data to build confidence.

Figure 1. Leaver and Willis model of task-based learning framework

2.5 Negotiated Syllabus

In the following section, I shall talk about the negotiated syllabus and how it can be integrated into a task-based approach as stated in the research questions. It is worth mentioning here that the word negotiated mentioned repeatedly in this study refers to two norms: first, as an adjective that describes the task-based learning method in this study. Second as an entire suggested syllabus that can be integrated to external syllabuses and as stated in few studies such as (Clarke, 1991).

"Negotiation is rather like a river, arising from a variety of small streams and gathering its own momentum eventually to pour in quite different directions over a flood plain" (Breen

& Littlejohn 2000, P.5). In their explanations to the types of negotiations, (Breen and Littlejohn, 2000) talk about procedural negotiation in which the primary function is managing learning and teaching as a group utilizing the learners' knowledge and experience. Certain decisions have to be made during the process of this model of negotiation. These decisions include the work purposes, its content and particular focus, and the ways in which the content is undertaken in the classroom work. This has been exemplified in the sense of classroom language learning where the teacher leads students through a pre-designed syllabus entailing certain learning outcomes (Breen and Littlejohn, 2000). Elaborately, it has been stated that a classroom based on negotiated knowledge allows learners' autonomy on an equal foothold with others in the group (Ma and Gao, 2011). (Knowles, 1990) further suggests that negotiating a syllabus with students provides great opportunities for reflection of their competencies and needs as well as involvement of selection of their course content. On the contrary, traditional view of syllabuses neither allows any opportunities for students' elaboration nor getting them involved in the planning process (Kaplan and Renard, 2015).

(Clarke, 1991)suggests process syllabus encompasses the abundance of a single textbook, the Bible of many language courses in which the course book equals the curriculum. (Santos, 2015) superficially supports the idea of using textbooks in classrooms by stating that textbooks have been an important part of ELT since they are indicators as to what is happening in the classroom. However, it is non-imaginary to see how a process syllabus would be reconcilable with overreliance of a textbook.

What is a negotiated syllabus? A negotiated syllabus, according to (Clarke, 1991), is not neither externally imposed on learners, nor management-oriented but rather derivative from a group of learners. Namely, a negotiated syllabus is described as rather process-based rather than objectives-based. This is to say that the negotiated syllabus is a means-based rather than ends-based as the ends in a process syllabus can never be accurately predicted. Therefore, the negotiated syllabus does not exist before the teacher meets with the leaners in an environment to establish its parameters. Therefore, the design is no longer external before the execution of process syllabus. Thus, learners are themselves involved in making fundamental decisions as to content, material, methodology, testing, and evaluation.

How is the negotiated syllabus or the process syllabus different from others? A question (Clarke, 1991) tries to answer in his elaborative comparisons between all kinds of syllabuses. A negotiated syllabus as first claimed by (Clarke, 1991) could end up being similar to any kind of syllabus including functional, notional or task-based. This is attributed to that fact that the content in any of those syllabuses is well-known beforehand while the process syllabus outcomes cannot be determined unless both students and the teacher meet. Nonetheless, the negotiated syllabus is later referred to as an extension to the task-based syllabus. According to (Clarke, 1991), " the process syllabus represents an extension of the task-based syllabus. The distinction, however, is that activities and tasks are not sequenced. The activities are categorized in terms of their own objectives, content, suggested procedure, and suggested ways of evaluating outcomes" (Clarke 1991 p. 21). This shows the link the current paper makes between task-based learning as a method and creating learners' autonomy in making their decisions of syllabus content through negotiation. A reason for the researcher of this paper to have a task-based syllabus negotiated in content by looking back at the research questions.

In a study that was carried in this field in China between 2006 and 2008 by (Ma and Gao, 2011) discusses the negotiation procedures of a process syllabus in College English Department-Dalian University of Technology for a group of learners studying Advanced Speaking and Listening Course in the college. That was the first time in the college that teachers initiated this program. It was found out that through negotiating content, purpose, method and evaluation with students in an English medium shifted the power from teachers' hands to learners, whose motivation became higher and admired the theory for being responsible for their own learning. The study was an evaluation-based with three key evaluative elements: group evaluation where students evaluate each other on certain criteria such as completion of tasks, contribution to the design of tasks and other technical aspects such as PowerPoint presentations. The second element was that class members evaluate the teachers based on their observations of teaching performance and the degree to which they complete the tasks and the aims of the tasks. The third element was that teachers evaluate students on their overall performance in class. The study approached the evaluation stage of the process syllabus very well since evaluation has been emphasized in many relevant studies. For instance, (Breen and Littlejohn, 2000) talks about autonomous learners and how they should be critically self-reflect on the learning activities through negotiation. "Classroom negotiation entails evaluation of outcomes from activities and how

they were undertaken as a pivotal moment for such reflection" (Breen & Littlejohn 2000 p. 22).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Observational experiments on 10 to 15 participants (the number of participants started with 15 in the first classes and then fluctuated between 10 and 12 in the rest of the observed sessions) are purposefully sampled from a language institute based in Abu Dhabi in which its own entry testing system determines the learners' proficiency level. The learning system goals of the institute are based on increasing the oral proficiency of its learners. The institute is concerned with teaching adults whose priority is to increase their fluency level. Learners are usually pretested before the enrollment process into the institute leveling system which consists of 12 CEFR-based levels. The participants of the study fell in level 3 according to the institute placement test which is equivalent to A1 or A1+. This experiment intends to investigate the institute current syllabus practices against the negotiated TBL ones. The current syllabus is partially based on using a text-book along with oral presentations and lab sessions. Data is reported through eight hours of observations identically to the same group of participants whose English proficiency is the same according to the institute CEFR-based placement test. The experiment was run on four different class days as the same group has two days a week; two hours per session. Therefore, the observations lasted for two weeks. The course teacher was not asked to change his plan during the first four hours. The second week was a bit deviant from his plan and was asked to inform students that a new topic would be selected based on their choices. Thus, the first part of the observation deals with the control group in which the current syllabus is normally practiced by the teacher while the experiment group targets the TBL method where suggested topics are negotiated with the participants. In both groups, the participants are given the same formative assessment procedure targeting their fluency progress made during the four classes. The form of first formative assessment of which the topic was about restaurants was role-play-based and a vocabulary and grammar gap-fill-based since it had an entire section of grammar targeting definite and indefinite articles. And the form of the second formative assessment in which students are tested on English for airport was an online-based (Kahoot Quizzes) targeting the vocabulary and an exit role-play assessment targeting the dialogues they had previously discussed during the course. A questionnaire of a number of closed questions varying from technical to more general items asking the participants their preference of the two types of methodologies or being neutral is given to further validate the present study. Beside the observation and the questionnaire, focus group interviews were conducted at end of the eight-hour observation

session when the researcher asked the students about their feedback; the interview was audio-taped.

3.1 Research Design

In order to answer the research questions obtaining reliable and trustworthy data, the current study embraces the mixed-method design; both qualitative and quantitative methods were carried out. The mixed methods research in one study has become the most common and relatively new in the social and human sciences over using a single method (Creswell, 2003). The question today is not about qualitative versus quantitative; it is more on how the study practice lies somewhere in the middle between the two (Creswell, 2003). However, it has been stated that "the decision need not be between qualitative *or* quantitative methods but rather how to integrate the strengths of each study in a mixed methods approach" (Molina-Azorin et al. 2017, p. 180). The nature of the study guides the researcher to adopt both quantitative and qualitative methods and to what the researcher sees appropriate to answer the research questions.

The reason the mixed methods design has been selected in this study is to confirm the expected findings out of different data sources. Another reason is that results from one method can help, develop, and inform the other method (Creswell, 2003). According to (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009b), those who are engaged in this kind of research argue that using both methods presents a much more complete understanding of the research problems than the use of one approach alone. (Molina-Azorin *et al.*, 2017) adds that an increasing methodological trend emerging from the significance of integrating quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study, or employing a mixed-method approach can provide the needed empirical intricacy. The aim of using both methods in a single study is attributed to what (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2007 P. 14) say that "the goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either any of these approaches but rather draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies". I intend, in this paper, to use a convergent parallel methods approach where qualitative and quantitative data is collected concurrently, analyze them independently and

then compares results for any contradictions or incongruence to further investigation throughout the study. This is elaborated by defining the mixed methods approach that "it is an approach to research in the social, behavioral, and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems" (Creswell 2014 p. 2). The data was not conducted sequentially since the observations happens first followed by interviews and a questionnaire. It has been stated that time ordering is an important matter in qualitative and quantitative research and can be carried out concurrently or sequentially(Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The qualitative method necessary for responding the first research question was gathered through eight hours of classroom observations which is becoming way more important than it used to be (Wragg, 2017) followed by audiotaped focus group interviews which would yield to a great deal of significant information in a short period of time as stated by (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 2012). The quantitative method requisite for answering the second research question was used through a questionnaire of single vs. multiple response questions.
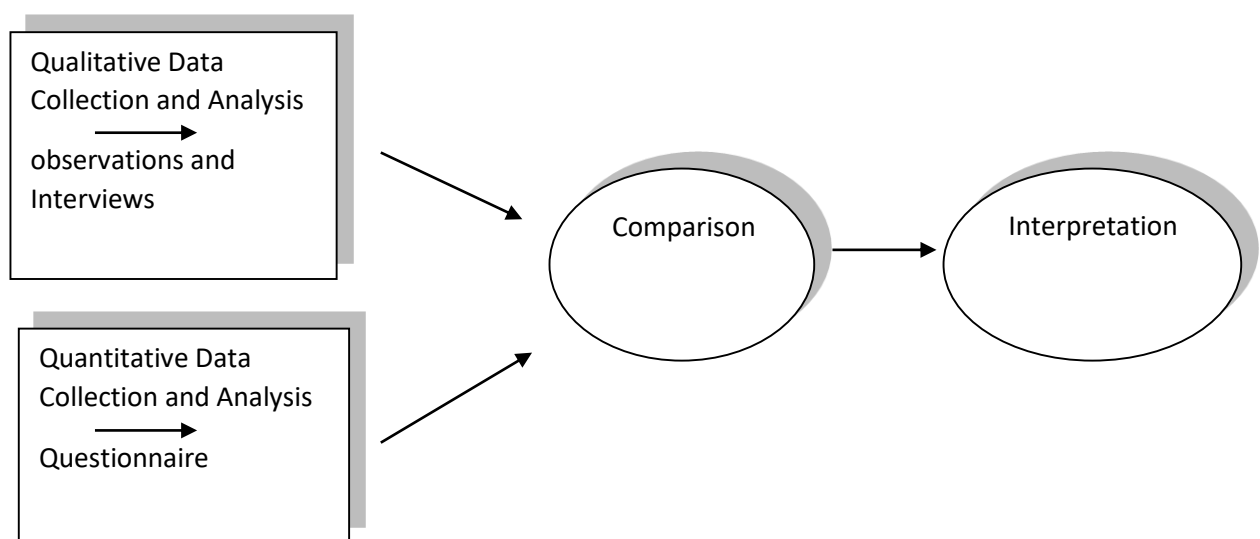

Figure 2: The Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods (Adapted from Creswell 2014, p. 220)

3.2 Philosophical Foundation of the Study

The design method of the current study seems to be theorized from pragmatism which is associated to the mixed methods approach (Creswell 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2007; Feilzer 2010; Harrits 2011; Jamieson 2011) in which pragmatists believe that research methods can be freely selected but they should be adequately appropriate for responding to the research questions (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009a). In the perspective of a paradigm pragmatist, researchers should work in a pluralistic approach in order to obtain knowledge on the research problem. Pragmatist researchers adopt a diverse approach starting from selecting research methods and carrying out the research; they are problem-centered, oriented, believe in consequences not in antecedent conditions(Creswell, 2003). According to (Creswell 2003 p. 12), "for the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study".

3.3 Sampling Procedure

For the current study, the sampling strategy followed is purposive which is the most common used method in research (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 2012). The sampling procedure of the current paper is non-probability (nonrandom samples) which is a method of choice that is preferred for most qualitative researchers and is meant to be the most frequently used method in focus group interviews which is a part of this study (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 2012). The nonprobability and purposive sampling methods of this study were employed to obtain interviews with students (N=10), a number of questionnaires by students as well (N=10), and a total number of eight hours of classroom observations. The researcher pursues a type of sample that drives this study to be trustworthy and richly and thickly described. It has been stated that "Trustworthiness is about alertness to the equality and rigor of a study, about what sorts of criteria can be used to assess how well the research is carried out (Glesne 2006 p. 53). By using the mixed techniques of sampling, the researcher aims at finding a sample that adds significant, rich and in-depth information to the research questions of this study. Yet, it has been suggested that although, the aim of purposeful sampling method is not to generalize but to understand an issue or a topic in adequate details (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 2012).

3.4 Context and Participants

Since qualitative research requires sufficient data at the site where participants encounter the investigated issue, and official permission was obtained by the academic director of the institute located in Abu Dhabi (UAE). And due to the ethicality of this research, I refrain from mentioning the name of the institute. The target population of this study is mainly adults ranging from 17 to 40 years old, already enrollees in the institute, of mixed nationalities, and of a mixed gender. The number of participants in this study ranged from 10 to 15 (the number of participants started by 15 in the first session of the observation and started to fluctuate between 10 and 12 in the rest of the observed classes).According to (Marriam & Elizabeth 2015 p. 101), " in purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new samples units".

3.5 Data Collection Instrumentation

In order to increase the concurrent, convergent, and construct the internal validity of the research and to enhance the trustworthiness of the paper analysis through a fuller, a more rounded count, by decreasing bias and by making up the weakness of one method through showing the strengths of another (Gorard and Taylor, 2004), the instrumentation method followed in the present study is the combined methods triangulation or as it is called as the multimethod matrix (Creswell, 2003). According to (Gorard and Taylor, 2004), triangulation is a methodological research concept between datasets is the use of one or two methods in one study. In the current paper, the researcher carried out three methods concurrently including observations, group interviews, and questionnaires. This, according to (Creswell, 2014), would strengthen the reliability and the internal validity of the research by introducing amass data that answers the research questions of this paper adequately.

Object of Study

A

B

C

Quantitative
Approaches

Qualitative
Approaches
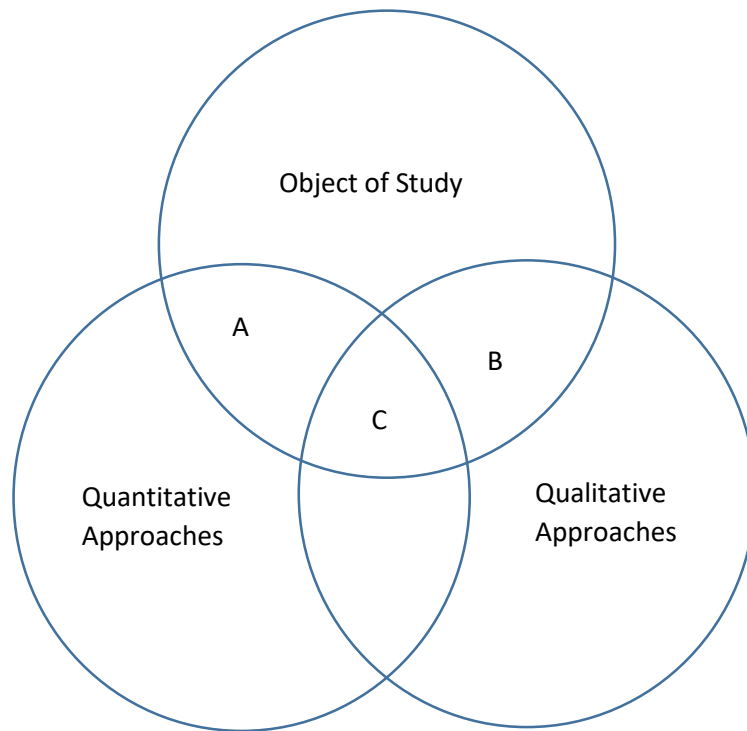
Figure: 3. a complementary combination of approaches

Adopted from(Gorard and Taylor, 2004)

3.5.1 Nonparticipation Classroom Observation

The purpose of participant or nonparticipant observations is to gain an understanding of the conditions and influenced by how it was done, who were the participants, when and where it took place, and how the data was recorded(Baker 2006).Observation studies have been defined as "those that involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behavior in a natural setting" (Baker 2006 p. 173). Other authors, according to (Baker 2006), have defined observation within a wider context of ethnography or a narrower version of participation or nonparticipation observation. However, what is common in these definitions is that observations are meant to better study and understand individuals' behavior within a natural environment. According to (O'Leary, 2003), classroom

observation has become such important mechanism in the modern era of education. It has been stated that using direct observation as a tool of measurement offers a window for a classroom to be differentiated from others. The data of the observation could be used to analyze needs and for assessment purposes (Cassady *et al.*, 2010). As far as research observation is concerned, it has been stated that observation brings the researcher indirect and concentrated contact with individuals(Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 2012). Observations through which the researcher gathers data on tools based on recorded measurements can shape knowledge by information, evidence, and rational reflections (Creswell, 2003).According to (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009a), there are several types of observers: participant observers where full interaction by the researcher with the participants should be taken part. The second category is the partial participation where the observer participates partially in the class and some participants know who the observer is but no explanation is given to any of them as to why the observer is attending the class. The third category is the outlooker who is neither known by the participants nor do they know if there is an observation going on.

3.5.1.1 Pre-observation

The pre-observation stage is the initial contact with the observed participants prior to the pre-determined actual time of observation (Cassady *et al.*, 2010). The teacher of the concerned observation was approached to provide the needed details of the observed class like a copy of the teacher's lesson plan that was based on the institute current syllabus, further information about participants who were adults, currently enrolled in the institute program. Questions like how closely the teacher would be following the plan, how would students respond to such lesson plans were shared with the teacher. Observed class timing and class participants were discussed by the teacher since time is one crucial element for the researcher to consider; "to get rich and in-depth information, it is important for the researcher to know the best times to observe and meet with individual insiders as well as whom he/she would interview"(Baker 2006 p. 182).

3.5.1.2 Observation Period

The length of the time in the field is one of the vital elements in participations. It has been stated that the amount of observation time in the field depends on the research problem and

the researcher's role. The amount of observation time could range from a very short time of thirty minutes to months or probably years(Baker 2006). As far as this paper is concerned, the amount of time spent on observing was eight full hours of observations; 480 minutes of actual audiotaped observation. The data recording tool was the audiotape. According to (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009a), the observer may record his observation using audiotape or videotape. The researcher finds the observation time sufficient and appropriate to answer the research questions aiming at investigating the current syllabus practices (control) against the negotiated task-based syllabus ones (treatment). Each period lasted for two hours that is a two-hour class; the entire observation time was split equally on both groups. It has been suggested that the observation period starts with the standard data collection on the visible features(Cassady *et al.*, 2010). The observer identified the total number of students who were 15 participants, time of observation that lasted for two hours for that particular session. Following this initial record keeping, a system of classifying the activities within the classroom in coordination with the teacher in the pre-observation stage was initiated. A segment of 5 minutes as divergent observation periods was used. "The selection of 5-munite segment was made due to the need to capture realistic snapshots of the classroom environment without presenting the observer with an unrealistic data management task(Cassady et al. 2010 p. 140). This used to happen every period of observation.

In the control group sessions, the teacher divided his lesson into four sections. The first section was a warm up activity in which he implicitly introduced the topic that was foods and restaurants; one of the textbook topics. The teacher planned for teaching this subject ahead of time and was asked to normally do it as if the observer does not exist. It has been stated that in nonparticipation studies, the observer does not take part in any activity or situation, but does the observation from the sidelines (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009a). The second section covered the presentation of topic where the major and sub language skills were focused on including discussion of relevant vocabulary and its pronunciation, relevant listening dialogues, relevant grammatical points (definite and indefinite articles), most of which were taken from the institute course book. The third section involved group and individual oral production in which collaborative (sometimes in pairs or in groups) activities were prominent. The last section was the formative assessment targeting the learners' oral fluency as well as their general comprehension of the grammatical points discussed during the sessions. The first assessment was purely based on grammar. The test

had 16 items to be completed in 5 five minutes or thereabouts. But the learners' oral fluency assessment was given more attention and were done on two phases. In the pre-assessment phase of the fluency test, the teacher asked the learners, with a certain given time; to practice the dialogues at which they will be tested. The second assessment phase was the physical testing process when the teacher asked the learners to work in pairs. The teacher at this point was recording the number of mistakes made by the learners in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. In the experiment or treatment group, the teacher planned for his class according to the following: topic negotiation with learners where different subjects (airport, job interview, and work) were suggested by students since learners were at different ages and from professional backgrounds. Those interested in the work topic were employees. Those interested in job interviews were university students. The topic all agreed on was airport as it was something that everyone does in life. A needs analysis was developed at the very last period of the first two sessions and the first thing was thought of is needs analysis. "Needs assessment is now considered an essential first step in designing valid instructional syllabuses for learners of additional languages" (Berwick 1984 p. 147). The needs analysis form included students' needs in all language skills and sub skills along with the teacher's plan of approaching these skills. After agreeing on the airport topic out of the suggested ones, a number of group fluency activities purely based on the task-based teaching methodology containing relevant vocabulary discussion and pronunciation, and authentic listening dialogues taken from external resources (out of the institute curriculum) were carried out cooperatively and based on task-based learning methods.

The last section was the formative assessment targeting the learners' oral fluency as well as their general comprehension of the vocabulary and pronunciation contextualized by authentic dialogues. The first assessment was purely based on vocabulary and was an interactive online-grounded through an online game called Kahoot where learners get connected and can choose answers remotely via their mobile phones. The test had 18 items to be completed in 10five minutes or thereabouts. The fluency assessment was done on two phases. In the pre-assessment phase, the teacher asked the learners, with a certain given time; to practice the dialogues at which they will be tested. The second phase of the fluency assessment was the physical testing process when the teacher asked to learners to work in pairs. The teacher at this point was recording the number of mistakes made by the students in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. It is observable here that in the

experiment group, the target language was on the process rather than the product by following the method basis of the activities whether the tasks or the online quiz. The tasks carried out in groups included matching the airport vocabulary with their pictures. This activity was timed to be completed in 5 minutes. The online exercise or if you may wish to call it a task as (Lee, 2000) stated that a task is a classroom exercise or an activity that has a goal which can be only obtained interactively among learners. Here the teacher considered the online exercise as a piece of the vocabulary-based formative assessment. In the eyes of the observer, it can be clearly seen that in the experiment group, grammar was nil neither in teacher's plan nor in the formative assessments that only included contextualized vocabulary and pronunciation.

3.5.2   Learners' Interviews

It has been stated that focus groups have proven to be a very effective research methodology over the past 50 years and with massively increasing usage in the last two decades(Greenbaum, 2000; MacDougall and Fudge, 2001). It has been also stated that "while academic interviews have generally been one-to-one interviews, there is today an increasing use of focus group interviews"(Kvale & Brinkmann 2009 p. 150). A holistic understanding of the key elements that make focus group work effectively offers the basis for identifying the suitable opportunities and for recognizing the main differences between focus groups and the other competing research methods such as one-to-one interviews, computer interviews, etc. (Greenbaum, 2000). Focus group interviews have been paid much attention by many authors. (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 2012) talk about its workable characteristics. Focus group interviews offer diversity and flexibility to both QUAL and QUAN strands. Focus group interviews provide opportunities with direct contact, and interaction with subjects and individuals. Focus group interviews offer distinct merits for collection of rich and in-depth data. The group interview provides candour and highly interactive participation. As previously stated, the aim of carrying out the focus group methodology in the current research paper is not to reach consensus about the issue or seek after solutions but to have different viewpoints on the subject (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). The researcher opted this method in response to the second research question. The interviews were conducted after the observation period when the existing learners at this time of observation were twelve. The interview moderator first made sure that learners

knew they are aware of the two types of the classes (current-based syllabus vs. negotiated task-based learning syllabus) before proceeding with the interview questions. The group interview lasted for 15 minutes approximately. It has been concluded that the length of interviews range from a-15 minute short interview to a 1 to 2-hour long interview; a short interview best suits researchers who pursue inputs on a very limited scope (Greenbaum, 2000).The interview guide list was not closed-ended question-based but rather open-ended where learners were left with space to freely deliver their inputs with the two types of classes.

3.5.3   Questionnaires

One of the most frequent methods of data collection used in second language is questionnaires that are defined as written tools that encompass a set of questions or statements to which a respondent react by writing answers and/or chooses from a list of choices (Dörnyei, 2009). (Lavrakas, 2008) broadly defines it as a systematic method used to collect data to create knowledge to help researchers make decisions. The popularity of questionnaires are because of their convenience of construction, extreme versatility, and their unique capability of gathering a large amount of data in a short period of time in a form which is willingly processable and analysable(Dörnyei, 2009). The students' questionnaire (appendix 2) is a group-administered and gathers data from a predetermined population at one point of time without any intervals (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009a). This questionnaire was designed to yield data that covers the respondents' perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, interests and technical aspects including the grammar and the speaking activities on the impact of oral fluency against the negotiated task-based syllabus which is one of the research aims in this paper. Namely, questionnaires are driven by the research questions and are the information gathering tool. Thus, questionnaires sit between the research questions and the procedure of data collection(Saariaho, 2011). According to (Diem and Burgess, 2002), a pivotal part of a questionnaire is that a good research paper is based on having good and right set of questions. It is a key aspect that should be addressed by the researcher. To be precise, how relevant questions to the research questions are, how long they are, and the time respondents should take is a crucial matter to the researcher (Converse and Stanly, 1986; Saariaho, 2011). The questionnaire has a set of thirteen single

vs. multiple response questions; that are merited, according to (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009a), by their steadiness of responses across respondents, their convenience of tabulation, and their familiarity across respondents. However, they limit respondents' breadth of input, take more time to develop questions, and need more questions to cover the topic of research. Although the number of the survey questions is short; yet, this is attributed to the fact that the researcher has used other research methods (observations and interviews) in order to confirm and re-inform the learners' perspectives on the impact of negotiated task-based learning syllabus. In his introduction to the concurrent triangulation strategy that has been adopted in this study, (Creswell 2003 P. 24) states "This model generally uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method. The thirteen question items are grouped and sequenced thematically to preclude any misinterpretation by the respondents. All questions are consistent having the respondents' thoughts against the two types of classes (the current syllabus class "the restaurant topic class") versus (the negotiated task-based learning syllabus "the airport topic class") with a third box stating both.

3.6   Ethical Considerations

It has been emphasized that educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any person involved in any undertaken research whether being passive or active. Participants should be treated fairly with sensitivity and dignity regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnic background, citizenship and cultural background(BERA, 2011). Prior to the research, informed consent was taken by participants agreeably to observe as a non-participant, interview them and carry out the survey as a researcher with full awareness of the nature of the study and full awareness of the UAE culture and traditions. The researcher fully conforms to the ethics of this research paper.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS, DATA ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, both qualitative and quantitative data gathered via observations, interviews, and questionnaires are analyzed, synthesized, discussed and thematically introduced for the purpose of answering the research questions.

4.1 Formative Assessment Results

4.1.1 Vocabulary vs. Grammar Assessment

Table 1 and charts, 1, 2 and 3 show the results of the first formative assessment done at the end of both sessions: the control group, which received current based-syllabus and the treatment group, which received the negotiated task-based syllabus. As mentioned earlier in the observation section that the formative assessment of the current-based syllabus sessions (referred to as R "restaurant" as a topic suggested by the teacher taken from the institute current syllabus) targeted grammar only while the formative test of the negotiated task-based syllabus sessions (referred to as A "airport" as a topic suggested in negotiation with learners) targeted vocabulary only.

Current-Based Syllabus

Table 1 demonstrates the total number of the question items for each learner with the total number of correct, incorrect items, and the ratio. The overall ratio of the results valued at 70%. In charts 1, 2 and 3, the participants' results of the grammar-based formative assessment of the current-based syllabus groups how that 2 participants scored below < 50%, seven participants scored between 60% and 70% , one student scored between 70% and 80%, and four learners scored between 80% and 90%, and one participant only scored > 90%. It is noticeable that around 50% of the class participants were between 60% and 70% whereas 25% was between 80% and 90%.

In the formative assessment of the current-based syllabus (the grammar-based test), learners' grammatical knowledge is shown relatively high. This would be attributed to the fact that the teacher during the current-based syllabus session was teaching the topic relevant grammatical items intentionally. (Ellis 2003) who is one of the most prominent supporters of task-based learning sees that there is always a case for teaching grammar intentionally or deductively since the traditional teaching method (Present, Practice,

Produce) (PPP) caters for teaching certain items of grammar intentionally. In support of this, (Holmes, Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2007) also view the PPP model as a very successful method in teaching grammar by stating that millions of students and unlimited generations have been taught grammar in this way. Yet, the problem always remains as seen by many detractors to the PPP model as a failure to applying the taught grammar when they are communicating (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

Negotiated-Based Syllabus

Table 2 points out the grand total number of the question items for each individual with the sum of correct, incorrect items and the ratio. The percentage of the entire participants' results was 64.8%. The number of students decreased from 15 to 10 because of holiday coincidence between the classes. In charts 1, 2 and 3, the students' results of the vocabulary-based formative assessment of the negotiated task-based learning syllabus group illustrate lower figures where 2 participants scored < 50% representing 20% of the entire class, 4 learners fell between 60% and 70% representing 40% of the class, and the number scored between 80% and 90% was 3 which represents 30% of the whole class. Table 3 gives us a summary of the number of participants against the score average for each type of syllabus. It is obvious that the number of participants scored between 60% and 70% is two times larger in the current-based syllabus than in the negotiated task-based one whereas the number of participants scored between 80% and 90% in the current-based syllabus is slightly higher than the negotiated task-based one. One participant had only got the highest score in the current-based syllabus while the negotiated task-based syllabus was nil.

Comparing to the grammar-based test in the current-based syllabus, results of contextualized vocabulary formative assessment of the negotiated task-based syllabus are slightly lower. Yet, the overall ratio remains relatively high. During observations, the vocabulary was taught within dialogues. Therefore, the instruction of the targeted vocabulary was within a text. It has been stated that the contextualized format of vocabulary is merited by making testing closer to authentic communicative application of a foreign language and thus has more encouraging implications for the language classroom(Qian, 2013). It has been further stated "Skills should not be taught in isolation" (Thompson, 2001. p. 1)

	Name	Correct	Incorrect	Total	Ratio
1	Falah	13	3	16	81.25%
2	Ebrahim	10	6	16	62.50%
3	Muhammad	7	9	16	43.75%
4	Muhammad Ahmad	10	6	16	62.50%
5	MuhamadYahia	11	5	16	68.75%
6	Erfan	7	9	16	43.75%
7	Usama	13	3	16	81.25%
8	Hassan	14	2	16	87.50%
9	Heba	14	2	16	87.50%
10	Abdulla	10	6	16	62.50%
11	Marwa	10	6	16	62.50%
12	Jihad	15	1	16	93.75%
13	Amna Khalil	11	5	16	68.75%
14	Amna Salem	12	4	16	75.00%
15	Hajar	11	5	16	68.75%
	Total	168	72	240	70.00%

Table 1: results of grammar-based formative
assessment of the current-based syllabus.

|	Name	Correct	Incorrect	Total	Ratio
1	Falah	14	4	18	77.77%
2	Muhammad	7	10	18	38.88%
3	Muhammad Ahmad	11	7	18	61.11%
4	Muhammad Yahia	11	7	18	61.11%
5	ErfanShawky	6	12	18	33.33%
6	Hassan	15	3	18	83.3%
7	Heba Mohie	16	2	18	88.88%
8	Marwa	11	7	18	61.11%
9	Jihad	16	2	18	88.88%
10	Amnah Salem	11	7	18	61.11%

	Total	175	94	270	64.8%

Table 2: results of the contextualized vocabulary-
based formative assessment of the negotiated-based
syllabus.

Score Average	Number of Participants Current-Based Syllabus (R)	Number of Participants Negotiated Task-Based Syllabus (A)
≤50 %	2	2
≥ 50% – 60%	0	0
≥ 60% – 70%	7	4
≥ 70% – 80%	1	1
≥ 80% – 90%	4	3
≥ 90%	1	0

Table 3: comparisons between the two syllabuses in terms of the number of participants against the average ratio.

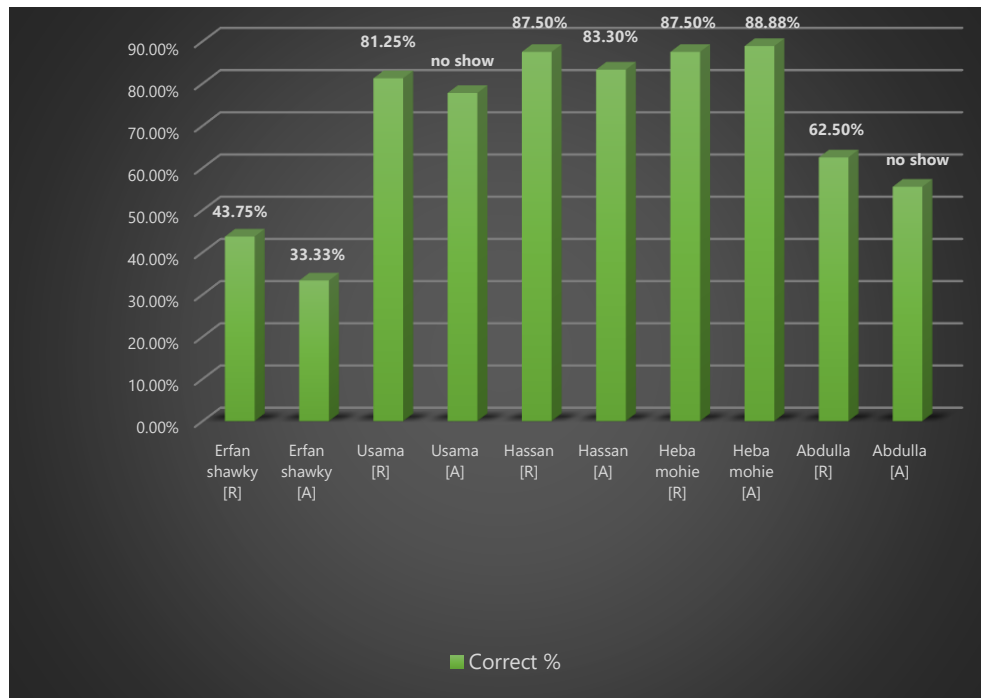Chart 1: results of formative assessment of the current-based syllabus
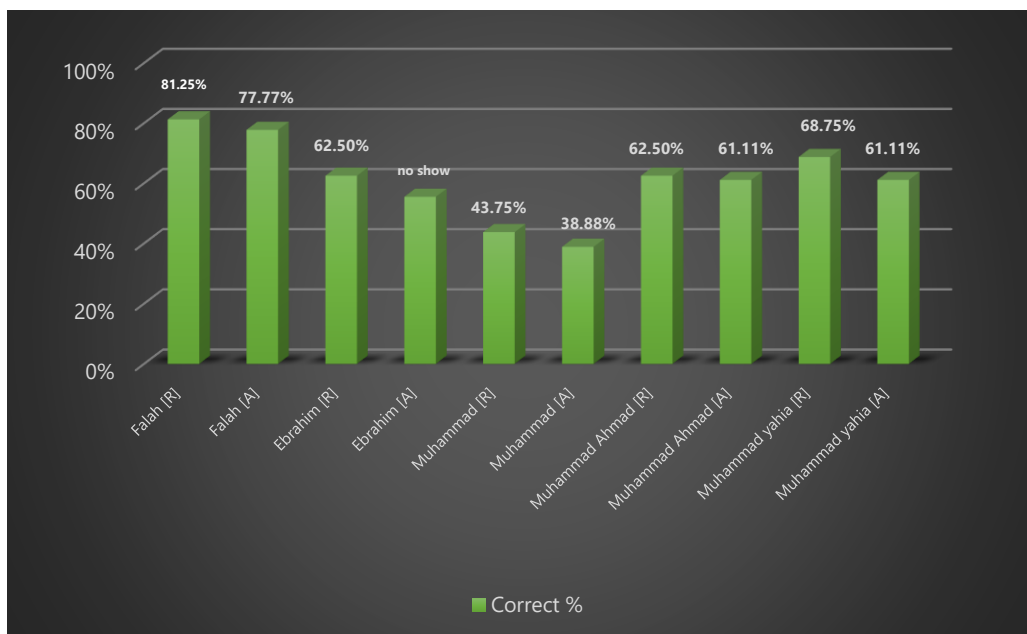
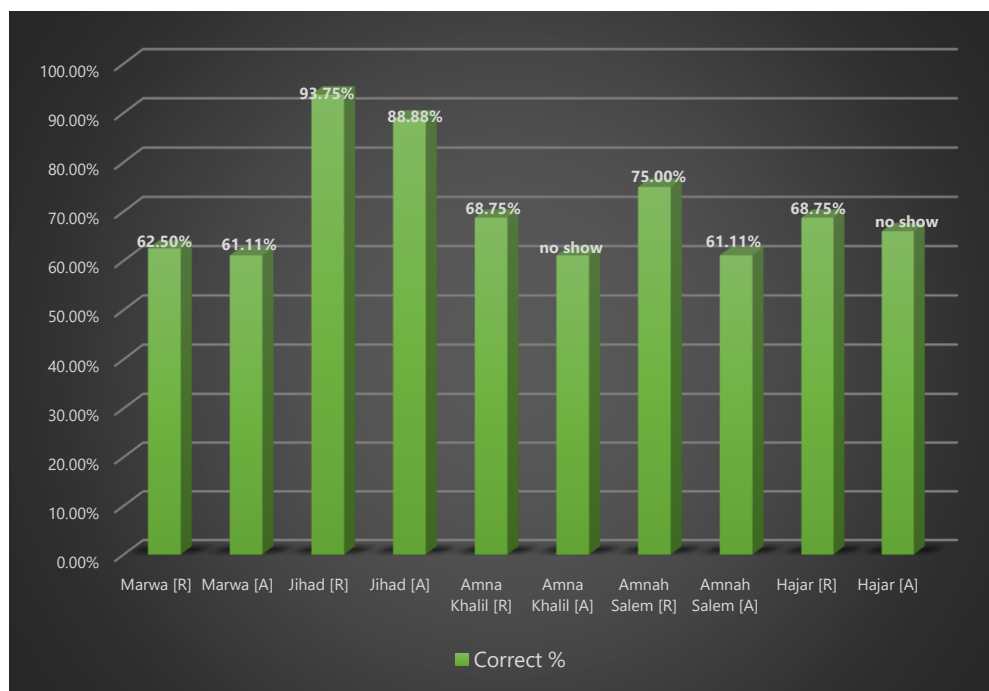Chart 2: results of formative assessment of the current-based syllabus

Chart 3: results of formative assessment of the current-based syllabus

4.1.2. Oral Fluency Assessment

Current-Based Syllabus

Unlike the first assessment which segmented the grammar sub skill only and individually in the current-based syllabus, the oral fluency assessment was grounded on assessing pairs in terms of the contextualized vocabulary and the pronunciation sub skills. My observation here is that the grammar sub kill was entirely disregarded and dropped from the assessment rubrics as it was neither taught nor was the target language in the negotiated task based syllabus. The number of pairs was six with a total of 12 individuals. Chart 4 points out the ratios broken down by language sub skill. It can be seen that the mistakes breakdown ratios of the six pairs of the current-based syllabus (referred to as R "Restaurant") range between 10% and 25% where pair 1 (Hasan and Mohammad) is 25%, pair 2 (Mohammad Yahia and Erfan) makes 15% noticing that Erfan was not doing well in the first type of formative assessment; yet the teacher followed the mixed-ability strategy with Mohammad Yahia who scored relatively high in the first formative assessment, pair 3 (Mohammad Ahmad and Falah) has the least ratio of 10% only, pair 4(Heba and Shaikha) has got 15% in the vocabulary sub skill and 0% in the pronunciation, pair 5 (Jihad and Marwa) gets one of the lowest ratios with 20%, and the last pair (Ahmad and Noor) has got the two sub skills equally of 20% in total. The question stays what are these rations based on? The have been imported from the number of mistakes made by each pair out of the total number of the vocabulary and the pronunciation items taught during the current-based syllabus sessions (Table 4).

Consequently, the mistakes ratios of the language sub skills were almost equal in both syllabuses. In the current-based syllabus sessions, vocabularies were contextualized and the notions of phonetics teaching practices have been emphasized largely in many studies. It has been stated that the spoken form of a language should be the primary focus, the new findings of phonetics should be applied in language teaching practices, teachers must have intensive training in teaching phonetics, and students should be given phonetic training to develop good speech conducts (Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Donna M, & Brinton 1996).
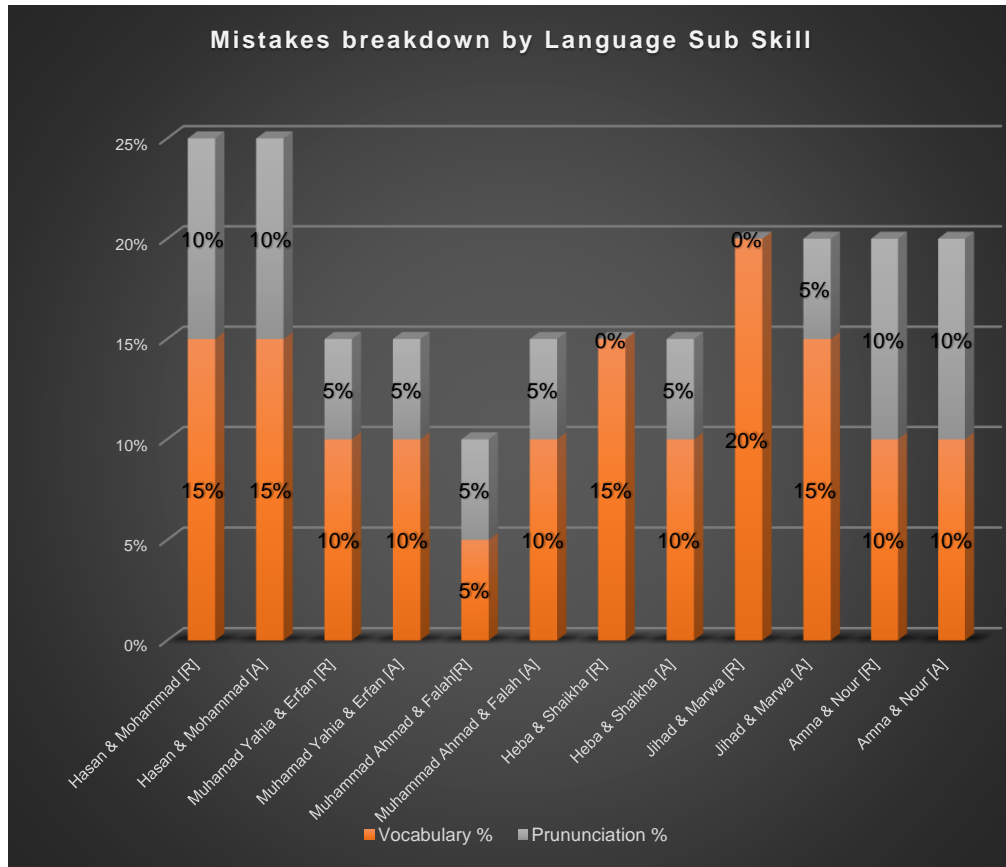
Chart 4: ratio of mistakes breakdown by language sub skill

Pair	Participants	Vocabulary Out of the total number of items taught during the current-based syllabus sessions	Pronunciation Out of the total number of items taught during the current-based syllabus sessions	Total Mistakes
Pair 1	Hasan & Mohammad	3	2	5
Pair 2	Muhamad Yahia&Erfan	2	1	3
Pair 3	Muhammad Ahmad &Falah	1	1	3
Pair 4	Heba&Shaikha	3	0	3
Pair 5	Jihad & Marwa	4	0	4
Pair 6	Amna&Nour	2	2	4

Table 4: Number of mistakes made by learners in the fluency assessment in the current-based syllabus

Negotiated Task-Based Syllabus

The same assessment procedure of the current-based syllabus was followed in the negotiated task-based one where all pairs have almost got the same ratios reported in the current-based syllabus with the exception of pair 3 (Mohammad Ahmad and Falah) that is at percentage of 20%. As mentioned previously, the rations have been generated from the total number of mistakes made by each pair out of the grand total number of vocabulary and the pronunciation items delivered throughout the sessions of the negotiated task-based syllabus (table 5).

Pair	Participants	Vocabulary Out of the total number of items taught during the current-based syllabus sessions	Pronunciation Out of the total number of items taught during the current-based syllabus sessions	Total Mistakes
Pair 1	Hasan & Mohammad	3	2	5
Pair 2	Muhamad Yahia&Erfan	2	1	3
Pair 3	Muhammad Ahmad &Falah	2	1	3
Pair 4	Heba&Shaikha	2	1	3
Pair 5	Jihad & Marwa	2	1	3
Pair 6	Amna&Nour	3	1	4

Table 5: Number of mistakes made by learners in the fluency assessment in the negotiated task-based syllabus

Comparisons between the two syllabuses in terms of total mistakes rations

It has been clearly seen in table 5 that all grand rations are equal between the two syllabuses excepting pair 3 where the mistakes rations are marginally different.

Pair	Current-Based Syllabus	Negotiated-Based Syllabus
Pair 1 (Hasan & Mohammad)	25%	25%
Pair 2 (Mohammad Yahia&Erfan)	15%	15%
Pair 3 (Mohammad Ahmad &Falah)	10%	15%
Pair 4 (Heba and Shaikha)	15%	15%
Pair 5 (Jihad and Marwa)	20%	20%
Pair 6 (Ahmad and Noor)	20%	20%

Table 6: Comparisons between the two syllabuses as to the total mistakes rations.

Comparisons between the rations of two syllabuses with respect to language sub skill

According to chart 4, the data reports that pairs 1, 2 and 6 made the same number of mistakes reflecting the same amount of percentage with regards to the vocabulary and the pronunciation sub skills whereas differences are shown in pairs 3, 4, and 5 fluctuating between 0% and 20% and showing no better results in either skill.

4.2   Assessment and Examination

Although the results of the grammar based test in the current-based syllabus group show better performance over the vocabulary-based test in the negotiated task-based syllabus,

the fluency assessment of the contextualized vocabulary and pronunciation sub skills show relative equality whether in the grand mistakes ratios or in the mistakes breakdown of language sub skills reported in both types of syllabuses.

4.3   Learner-Related Interview Interpretations

The majority of the twelve learners who participated in the experiment preferred the negotiated task-based syllabus sessions as to the importance and need of such topics, enjoyment of the method used, and the benefit obtained. Although the learners were asked closed questions like which of the following classes do you feel more important to you? Which of the following classes did you enjoy? Which of the following classes did you learn more of? Which type of classes would you like to do in the future? Respondents elaborated on each question by giving reasons behind selecting either restaurant (current-based syllabus), airport (negotiated task-based learning) or both. For instance, a learner said: *"I feel that the second class is more dynamic. We work in groups, we can speak more and there is no grammar…. I hate grammar; I want to learn grammar by default. Also the airport topic is more important than restaurant. I know how to order at a restaurant but the vocabulary I learned from the airport class was brand new to me. "* Some other leaners were extremely supporting the second class attributed by their personal reasons like: *"For me, the airport subject is really important. I travel a lot for work with clients. I sometimes look unprofessional when I don't seem I understand what people say at the airport….."* Other respondents commented emphatically on the task-based method used in the airport topic. A student said: *"The second class method was really interactive; I don't like to work individually. The first class was very good but we were not working in groups…..we can practice English and that is why we are learning English. We were not used to this way of teaching when we were at school. The teacher was spoon-feeding us with information, we were learning to pass the test only….this method is new to us".* Some other young students aged between 14 and 16 said: *"The airport topic is a nice topic for us, I am still young I have not traveled yet. Knowing the steps and procedures of airport and traveling are new*

to me. I have never known about them before". On the other hand, there were respondents who interruptedly defended the restaurant topic without commenting on the method followed by saying: *"We also need to know about restaurants, how to order food, and read the food menus…when you travel you also need to eat, right?"* Some few respondents were in agreement as to the importance of the current-based syllabus topic by providing comments like *"I don't travel much. Here in the UAE, I go to restaurants a lot; most of the servers speak English. So I think we need it more.* Some individuals were neutral in selecting both with few comments on the method used in both types of syllabuses. One learner was completely unbiased with all questions asked during the interview by commenting "*I think both topics were perfect. The first class was grammar and vocabulary focused and the second class focused on speaking. I think we need both grammar and speaking".*

4.4   Learners' Perceptions of Negotiated Task-Based Learning Syllabus

This section demonstrates the overall ratios for each question of the thirteen survey questions for each type of syllabus. Table 7 shows the ratios according to the number of participants who selected that particular option. As mentioned formerly, the total number of individuals participated in the survey is 12 and the number of questions of the survey is 13. 69.3% of the participants believe that the topics of both types of syllabuses are of a high significance whereas 30.7% think that the negotiated task-based syllabus topic is more important than the topic of the current-based syllabus. On the time extension deservedness, 61.6% of the participants reflect their tendency towards the negotiated task-based syllabus sessions while 38.4% still believe that both syllabuses deserved to have an extra class time. Undoubtedly, all participants believe that the grammar use was prominent in the current-based syllabus sessions. This is attributed to the fact that grammar in the negotiated task-based syllabus sessions was neither the target language nor was in the teacher's plan. As to the learners' oral productivity, 61.6% were in favor of the negotiated task-based syllabus, 30.7% agreed that in both syllabuses they were productive, whereas one participant (7.7%) believes that he was orally more productive in the current-based syllabus. The next three questions were asking the participants about the speaking activities. On the abundance of the speaking activities, 92.3% overwhelmingly agreed that the negotiated task-based syllabus had more speaking activities while 7.7% believe that

both had sufficient speaking activities. The same number of participants responded to the question about the usefulness of those speaking activities with the overwhelming majority towards the negotiated task-based syllabus. Again the same respondents with the same ratios think that the negotiated syllabus tasks improved their speaking way more than the current-based syllabus. About the contextualized vocabulary improvement, most of the participants' perspectives were in favor of both syllabuses with a ratio of 61.6%, 30.7% were definite on the negotiated task-based syllabus, and 7.7% only support the current-based syllabus. With regard to the difference in methodology between the two syllabuses, 100% of the participants recognized that the teaching method in the negotiated task-based syllabus was obviously dissimilar. Yet, 30.7% believe that both syllabuses had the same good quality of teaching while the majority (69.3%) agreed the negotiated task-based syllabus was a better teaching method. Concerning the more enjoyable method, the negotiated task-based syllabus had the highest percentage by 84.6% comparing to the "both" option that represents 15.4%. With respect to the overall benefit of either syllabus, 69.3% agreed that the negotiated task-based syllabus was more beneficial comparing to 30.7% who believe that both syllabuses were as useful as each other. The last question is about their preference of adopting prospective syllabuses, the overwhelming majority was in support of the negotiated task-based syllabus by 92.3% against 7.7% who believe that a combination of both would be a better option. As it can be seen in table 7, the average constitutes an overall view of the three options where the current-based syllabus represents 6.8% of the total number of participants, 26.7% responded to the negotiated task-based syllabus, and 23.6% of the respondents were interested in both syllabuses.

	Current-Based Syllabus (Restaurant)	Negotiated Task-Based Syllabus (Airport)	Both
Which of the following classes do you feel more important to you?	(0) 0.0%	(4) 30.7%	(9) 69.3%
Which of the following classes do you think it deserved to have more class time?	(0) 0.0%	(8) 61.6%	(5) 38.4%
Which of the following classes do you think it had more usage of grammar?	(13) 100%	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%
Which of the following classes do you think you were more orally productive in?	(1) 7.7%	(8) 61.6%	(4) 30.7%
Which of the following classes do you think it had more speaking activities?	(0) 0.0%	(12) 92.3	(1) 7.7%
Which of the following classes do you think it had more useful speaking activities?	(0) 0.0%	(12) 92.3	(1) 7.7%
Which of the following classes do you think it improved your speaking skill?	(0) 0.0%	(12) 92.3	(1) 7.7%
Which of the following classes do you think it improved your vocabulary?	(1) 7.7%	(4) 30.7%	(8) 61.6%
Which of the following classes do you think it had a different teaching method?	(0) 0.0%	(13) 100%	(0) 0.0%
Which of the following classes do you think it had a better teaching method?	(0) 0.0%	(9) 69.3%	(4) 30.7%
Which of the following classes did you enjoy?	(0) 0.0%	(11) 84.6%	(2) 15.4%

	(0)	(9)	(4)
Which of the following classes did you learn more of?	0.0%	69.3%	30.7%
	(0)	(12)	(1)
Which type of classes would you like to do in the future?	0.0%	92.3	7.7%
Average	6.8%	26.7%	23.6%

Table 7: Questionnaire Ratios. Descriptive Analysis

4.5. Building a Negotiated Task-based Syllabus

In this section, the researcher shall explain the steps of building a unit of a negotiated task-based syllabus and how they are followed. As it is shown in table 8, building a syllabus consists of three major steps. The first step is to determine a global standard. In this research paper case, the standard selected from Anchor speaking standards is concerned with comprehension and collaboration (Lang, 2014) as the language focus in the negotiated task-based syllabus was on interaction and communication. The standard says "prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners." The second step is to determine the learning targets for instruction and assessment including the knowledge targets, reasoning targets, performance targets, and product targets. In the task-based learning syllabus, the product is not a target since the instruction focuses on the means rather than the product. According to the common core state standards, the targets are simply interpreted by (know/concepts and skills, think, and do). The third step is to start deconstructing the learning targets using Bloom's taxonomy verbs and matching assessments according to five criteria: what to teach, what to assess, the tasks used for assessment, the language to be developed, and the learning resources you will be using during teaching. In the negotiated task-based syllabus, as mentioned formerly, the target language was contextualized vocabulary and pronunciation. Thus, in the knowledge learning target, the verbs start with describe, match, and recite. In the reasoning learning target, the verbs used are explain and interpret. And in the application or performance learning target, the verb used is complete. All are entailed by the big standard. The second criterion is the assessment areas that included the airport procedures, expressions, vocabulary, and phrases what would be assessed through different formative

assessment tools. The assessing tools selected here encompassed role plays, KIM (Key Information Memory) vocabulary organizers, and exit assessments. The fourth criterion is the language development which is meant grammar. The grammar was not the language target in this unit. Finally a variety of resources used in this unit including online games, online images and videos, handouts from a book called English aviation.

| Step One: |
| Standard: SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners. |

Step Two:

Type: ⊗ Knowledge Reasoning ⊗   Performance ⊗

Product ◯

Step Three:

Learning Targets

What are the knowledge, reasoning, performance, or product targets underpinng this objective?

	What to teach	What to assess	Assessment task	Language To develop	Resources
Knowledge Targets	-Describe the images of airport procedures. -Match the airport pictures with words.	Airport procedures	Role play (act as a passenger vs. an airport officer)	-	- Online games - Online images and videos - Handouts from aviation English (Macmillan)

	-Recite airport words.				
Reasoning Targets	-Explain the airport procedures. -Interpret Airport Images.	Airport Vocabulary	Key Information Memory (KIM) organizer	-	- Online images and videos - Handouts from aviation English (Macmillan
Performance Targets	-Complete the dialogues with the missing phrases.	Airport expressions and phrases	Exit Assessment	-	- Handouts from travel English. - Online images and videos - Handouts from aviation English (Macmillan

Table 8: a mapped unit of a negotiated task-based syllabus. Adopted from Bloom's Taxonomy(Krathwohl and Anderson, 2009) and (White, 1988).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the absence of empirical research studies on negotiated task-based learning (White 1988), this paper aimed at investigating one of the UAE-based private institutes' current syllabus teaching practices against the negotiated task-based syllabus one. The present paper had a two-fold purpose encompassing building a negotiated task-based syllabus and exploring the perspectives of learners as to the impact of a negotiated task-based syllabus on their oral fluency. Competency-based language learning and communicative language teaching have witnessed unpredictable popularity over the past four decades in the applications in the classroom practices. Task-based syllabuses are being developed in a growing number of educational settings by researchers in studies discovering the process that drives second and foreign language Acquisition. A convergent parallel mixed methods approach was employed to examine quantitative and qualitative data. The study involved eight hours of observations identically to the same group of participants who were homogeneous in their English proficiency. The first part of the observation dealt with the control group in which the current syllabus was normally practiced while the experiment group targeted the task-based learning method where suggested topics were negotiated with the participants. In both groups, the participants were given the same assessment procedure. A survey exploring the participants' attitudes and beliefs and asking their preference of the two types of methodologies was also carried out. At the end of the observations, focus group interviews were conducted to further validate the present study.

While the data reported through convergent parallel mixed methods approach employed to analyze qualitative and quantitative data containing observations for the two types of syllabuses, focus group interviews, and a survey of questions asking the learners about their viewpoints of the two syllabuses, the learners' response slightly leaned towards the negotiated task-based syllabus for the strategies noticed differently from the current-based syllabus ones. The learners' opinion output was made towards negotiated task-based learning syllabus despite of the relatively identical results of the formative assessments targeting grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in the two kinds of syllabuses.

The learners' grammatical knowledge is noticed to be high due to the methodology followed in the current syllabus, which was based on the deductive approach justified by (Ellis 2003) that explicit cases of teaching certain items of grammar would be taught intentionally clear of incidental settings. Nevertheless, integrating grammar into spoken

forms of language has been always the missing part. In both syllabuses, results of the formative assessments targeting the contextualized vocabulary and pronunciation were almost similar. The items of pronunciation and vocabulary were not taught in isolation neither in the current-based syllabus nor in the negotiated task-based syllabus, which led to see some progress in their lexical knowledge.

The learners' attitude towards the two types syllabuses were to some extent in favor of the negotiated task-based syllabus, although in few positions; the learners preferred certain teaching strategies and language items to be considered in both types of syllabuses.

5.1 Recommendations for Further Research

Further investigation and ideas on situation-based teaching studies is recommended; since the traditional teaching method of language items (Present, Practice, Produce) has been entirely shifted to more focused-communicative approach resulted in having learners focus on meaning rather than form (Holmes, Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2007). Further studies in relation to topic negotiation with learners repelling the imposition of syllabuses on learners and neglecting their needs or interests is also recommended which would result in better and more satisfactory learning outcomes.

5.2 Study Limitations

The sample population size is one of the study's considerable limitations; a larger and more diversified sample would have elucidated other variables on the part of generating more interpretations on both types of syllabuses. Another considerable limitation was the consistency of learners' attendance during the eight hours of observations where the first observed session had the biggest number of participants. In the second, third, and fourth observed sessions, the number of participants began to decrease. Maintaining the same number of participants all the way would have generated more precise results.

References

Adrian, H. (1994) *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*. Cambridge University Press.

AHMAD, S. and RAO, C. (2013) 'Applying Communicative Approach in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: a Case Study of Pakistan', *Porta Linguarum*, 20, pp. 187–203. doi: 1697-7467.

Baker, L. M. (no date) 'Observation : A Complex Research Method', 55(1), pp. 171–189.

Baralt, M. (2014) 'An Introduction to Theory and Research in Task Sequencing and Instructed Second Language Learning', *Task Sequencing and Instructed Second Language Learning*, pp. 1–34. doi: 10.5040/9781472593665.ch-001.

BERA, U. (2011) 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational', *British Educational Research Association*, pp. 1–11. doi: 978-0-946671-32-8.

Berwick, R. (no date) 'THE NORMATIVE BASES OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS : A CRITICAL RE-EXAMINATION'.

Bodegas, I. D. . (2007) 'From curriculum to syllabus design: The different stages to design a programme', FONAEL, 27.

Breen, M. and Littlejohn, A. (2000) *The Significance of Negotiation*. Cambridge University Press.

Cassady, J. C. *et al.* (2010) 'The differentiated classroom observation scale On Gifted Students in School The Differentiated Classroom Observation Scale', 3193. doi: 10.1080/02783190409554259.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Donna M. Brinton, and J. M. G. (1996) *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge University Press.

Clarke, D. (1991) 'The Negotiated Syllabus: What is it and How is it Likely to work', Applied Li, pp. 13–28.

Converse, J. and Stanly, P. (1986) *Survey questions: Handcrafting the standardized questionnaire*. Sage Publications.

Coskun, A. (2011) 'Investigation of the Application of Communicative Language Teaching in the English Language Classroom – A Case Study on Teachers ' Attitudes in

Turkey', *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching (JLLT)*, 2(1), pp. 85–110.

Creswell, J. W. (2003) 'RESEARCH DESIGN Qualitative, Quantitative. and Mixed Methods Approaches SECOND EDITION SAGE Publications International Educational and Professional Publisher Thousand Oaks London New Delhi'. Available at: https://ucalgary.ca/paed/files/paed/2003_creswell_a-framework-for-design.pdf.

Creswell, J. W. (2014) *A concise inroduction to mixed methods research*. Sage Publications.

Diem, K. G. and Burgess, T. (2002) 'Guide to the Design of Questionnaires', *Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension*, 2003(October 8, 2003), p. 29. doi: 10.5923/j.economics.20120001.22.

Dörnyei, T. (2009) *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. Routledge.

Edwards, C. and Willis, J. (2005) *Teachers Exploring Tasks in English Language Teaching*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ellis, R. (2003) *Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning*. Oxford.

Faravani, A., Zeraatpishe, M. and Azarnoosh, M. (2018) *Issues in Syllabus Design Akram Faravani , Mitra Zeraatpishe , Maryam Azarnoosh and*.

Farooq, M. U. (2015) 'Creating a communicative language teaching environment for improving students' communicative competence at EFL/EAP University level', *International Education Studies*, 8(4), pp. 179–191. doi: 10.5539/ies.v8n4p179.

Feilzer, M. Y. (2010) 'Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: Implications for the rediscovery of pragmatism as a research paradigm', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(1), pp. 6–16. doi: 10.1177/1558689809349691.

Fraenkel, J. and Wallen, N. (2009a) *How to Design and Evaluate Research in education*. 7th edn. McGraw-HIll.

Fraenkel, J. and Wallen, N. (2009b) *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. Seventh. McGraw-HIll.

Fraida, D. and Olshtain, E. (1986) *Course design: Developing programs and materials for language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Glesne, C. (2006) *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: an introduction*. 5th edn. Pearson

Education.

Gorard, S. and Taylor, C. (2004) 'Triangulation and combining methods across studies'.

Greenbaum, T. (2000) *Moderating focus groups : a practical guide for group facilitation*.

Harrits, G. S. (2011) 'More than method?: A discussion of paradigm differences within mixed methods research', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 5(2), pp. 150–166. doi: 10.1177/1558689811402506.

Holmes, J., Holmes, J. and Meyerhoff, M. (2007) *The Handbook of Language and Gender: Blackwell handbooks in linguistics 13*. Available at: https://www.dawsonera.com:443/abstract/9780470756706.

Jamieson, M. (2011) 'Chap. 6', *Education for Primary Care*, 22(2), p. 123. doi: 10.1002/ev.

Johnson, R. B. and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2007) 'Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come', *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), pp. 14–26. doi: 10.3102/0013189x033007014.

Kaplan, D. M. and Renard, M. K. (2015) 'Negotiating Your Syllabus: Building a Collaborative Contract', *Journal of Management Education*, 39(3), pp. 400–421. doi: 10.1177/1052562914564788.

Knowles, M. (1990) *The Adult Learner*. Gulf Publishing Company.

Krathwohl, D. and Anderson, L. W. (2009) *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives.* Longman.

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann (2009) *Interviews Learning The Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*.

Lang, J. (2014) *Common core state standards: Background and issue*. Nova Science Publishers, Incorporated,.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003) *Teaching language: From grammar to grammaring*. Boston: Thomson/Heinle.

Lavrakas, P. (2008) 'The Role of Methods and Statistics in the Field of Survey Research', *Sage Publications*.

Learver, B. and Willis, J. (2004) *Task-based Instruction in Foreign Language Education*. Georgetown University Press.

Lee, J. (2000) *Tasks and communicating in language classrooms*. McGraw-HIll.

Luke Allan, Annette Woods, and K. W. (2013) *Curriculum, syllabus design, and equity: A primer and model*. Routledge.

Ma, Z. and Gao, P. (2011) 'Promoting Learner Autonomy through Developing Process Syllabus—Syllabus Negotiation: the Basis of Learner Autonomy*', *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(6), pp. 901–908. doi: 10.4304/jltr.1.6.901-908.

MacDougall, C. and Fudge, E. (2001) 'Pearls, pith, and provocation: planning and recruiting the sample for focus groups and in-depth interviews', *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(1), pp. 117–126.

Marriam, S. and Elizabeth, T. (2015) *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.

Molina-Azorin, J. F. *et al.* (2017) 'Mixed Methods in the Organizational Sciences: Taking Stock and Moving Forward', *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(2), pp. 179–192. doi: 10.1177/1094428116687026.

Nunan, D. (1988) *Syllabus Design*. Oxford Univeristy Press.

O'Leary, M. (2003) *Classroom Observation: A guide to the effective observation of teaching and learning.* Routledge.

Pritchard, A. (2014) *Psychology for the Classroom: Constructivism and Social Learning*, *Psychology for the Classroom: Constructivism and Social Learning*. doi: 10.4324/9780203855171.

Qian, D. D. (2013) 'From Single Words to Passages: Contextual Effects on Predictive Power of Vocabulary Measures for Assessing Reading Performance', *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 5(1), pp. 1–19. doi: 10.1080/15434300701776138.

Richards, J. C. (2001) *Curriculum development in language teaching*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.

Richards, J. and Rodgers, T. (2014) *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Third edit. Cambridge.

Saariaho, K. (2011) 'S U Rvey of Electro-Acoustic', *Screen*, pp. 1–14.

Santos, D. (2015) 'Nigel Harwood (ed.): English Language Teaching Textbooks: Content, Consumption, Production', *Applied Linguistics*, 37(1), pp. 128–132. doi:

10.1093/applin/amv006.

Savignon, S. J. (2006) 'Communicative Language Teaching: State of the Art', *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), p. 261. doi: 10.2307/3587463.

Teaching, C. L., Bataineh, K. B. and Tasnimi, M. (2014) 'Express , an International Journal of Multi Disciplinary Research Available at : www.express-journal.com Available at : www.express-journal.com', 1(7).

Thompson, M. C. (2001) 'Vocabulary and grammar: Critical content for critical thinking', *Journal of secondary gifted education*, no. 2(13), pp. 60–66.

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S. and Sinagub, J. (2012) 'Why Use Focus Group Interviews in Educational and Psychological Research?', *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*, (c), pp. 12–21. doi: 10.4135/9781452243641.n2.

Van der Wait, J. L. (2013) 'Theory and practice in second language syllabus design', *Per Linguam*, 6(1), pp. 71–80. doi: 10.5785/6-1-358.

White, R. (1988) *The ELT curriculum: Design, innovation and management*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Willis, J. (1996) 'A flexible framework for task-based learning An overview of a task-based framework for language teaching', *Oxford*, (Prabhu 1987), pp. 52–62. Available at: http://www.intrinsicbooks.co.uk/title_by_title/framework.html.

Wragg, T. (2017) 'An Introduction to Classroom Observation', *An Introduction to Classroom Observation*. doi: 10.4324/9780203018958.

Appendix 1

List of Survey Questions

#	Question	Restaurant Class	Airport Class	Both Classes
1	Which of the following classes do you feel more important to you?			
2	Which of the following classes do you think it deserved to have more class time?			
3	Which of the following classes do you think it had more usage of grammar?			
4	Which of the following classes do you think you were more orally productive in?			
5	Which of the following classes do you think it had more speaking activities?			
6	Which of the following classes do you think it had more useful speaking activities?			
7	Which of the following classes do you think it improved your speaking skills?			
8	Which of the following classes do you think it improved your vocabulary level?			
9	Which of the following classes do you think it had a <u>different</u> teaching method?			
10	Which of the following classes do you think it had a <u>better</u> teaching method?			
11	Which of the following classes did you <u>most</u> enjoy?			
12	Which of the following classes did you <u>most</u> learn more of?			
13	Which type of classes would you like to do in the future?			