

A Study on the Effectiveness of Teaching the High Achievers in English through Task-Based Method (TBLT) and Bilingual Method at Secondary Level in the Birbhum District

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Abstract: Second Language Teaching in classroom situation is still a process of research and experimentation since no methodological paradigm has proved to be efficacious in ensuring total skill development among the L₂ learners. Nevertheless a persistent attempt is being seen among both the policy makers and the practicing teachers of second language to try out the commonly accepted theoretical paradigms in the L₂ classroom situations. Thus oftentimes it becomes a challenging task for the second language teacher. The teacher has to make hectic effort to generate the four fundamental language skills among the learners in a heterogeneous classroom situation. Generally, in the Indian situation the L₂ teachers are inclined to practice the Bilingual Method to generate competencies among the learners. But the heterogeneous levels of learners due to varied degree of capability cannot be equalized in terms of skill development through this method that makes use of mother tongue equivalent and translation device in teaching English in the classroom situations. On the contrary, if teaching situation is controlled through Task-Based method which is activity oriented and learner-centric, second language learning may be a joyful experience so that the learners get motivated to be associated in the language process. The present Study is an attempt to explore experimentally the comparative effectiveness of the Bilingual Method of teaching and teaching with Task-Based method in the second language classroom situation.

Keywords: Bilingual Method, Task-Based Method, High Achievers, Secondary Learners.

INTRODUCTION

Second language teaching is a complex network of activities. In the traditional ESL classroom situation the second language teacher has to make rigorous effort to promote the process of second language acquisition by mere application of the verbal skills with the help of text books without any conscious and consistent application of the learner-centric method. In the domain of target language learning, the second language teacher seeks to generate productive skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading) among the learners by means of grammar rules and strategy of translation from the second language text to the mother tongue and vice versa. The present paper tends to answer the question whether this long practiced method is really helpful in making the second language learners proficient in the second language in nature and practice or the Task Based Method is more effective than the former in terms of the target language skill development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The investigator undertakes an experimental project to know

1. Whether the application of Tasked-Based Method is more effective in language acquisition process in the rural school than the Bilingual Method in generating those skills among the learners.
2. Whether the application of Tasked-Based Method enhances the requisite degree of learning behaviour in terms of second language acquisition among the high achievers belonging to the secondary level under West Bengal Board of Secondary Education in the district of Birbhum in West Bengal.
3. Whether the Tasked-Based Method are more effective in concept attainment than the Bilingual Method in teaching English texts.
4. Whether second language leaning with the Tasked-Based Method in classroom situation enhances the performances of the high achievers belonging to the rural background in comparison to the Bilingual Method of teaching the same category of learners.
5. Whether second language leaning with the Tasked-Based Method in classroom situation enhances the performances of the high achievers belonging to the urban background in comparison to the Bilingual Method of teaching the same category of learners.

6. Whether Tasked-Based Method increases the retention level of the rural high achievers than the Bilingual Method with regard to second language skill development.
7. Whether Tasked-Based Method increases the retention level of the urban high achievers than the Bilingual Method with regard to second language skill development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Bilingual method proposed by C.J. Dodson tried to incorporate different aspects of the direct method and the grammar translation method to evolve an effective second language teaching method. According to Dodson [1] "... in some countries, where a major world language is being taught as a second language to young children by direct method ...if this type of teaching were successful...the vernacular would disappear within a few generation. It is only possible to teach a second language by direct-method techniques at the expense of the first language and it is sheer hypocrisy to claim that the final aim of such teaching philosophies is bilingualism." Mackey [2] while commenting on the bilingual education calls it as a kind of 'language alteration' in which a message/ lesson/ class is presented first in the native language and then again in the second language. Students know the meaning and flow of an L2 message from their recall of the parallel meaning and flow of an L1 message.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Skehan [3] offers this definition: "the communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right."

The key assumptions of Task-Based Language Teaching are summarised by Feez [4]

- The focus is on process rather than product.
- Basic elements are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication and meaning.
- Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in the activities and tasks.
- Activities and tasks of a task-based syllabus are sequenced according to difficulty.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem under the present study is entitled as:
A Study on the Effectiveness of Teaching the High Achievers in English through Tasked-Based Method and Bilingual Method at Secondary Level in the Birbhum District

Terms Definitions

High Achievers: The specific type of learners who expose more than the expected level of proficiency in the domain of learning. They show advancement in comparison to the average level of learners in terms of acquisition of productive and receptive skills of English. This sort of learners is inspiring for the teachers.

Task-Based Language Teaching: Task-Based Language Teaching focuses on purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication and meaning. Here Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in the activities and tasks.

Bilingual Method: In this method mother tongue is used to explain the meanings of words, phrases, idioms, sentences structures and grammatical rules. This method carries the merits of Translation-cum-Grammar method, direct method and structural approach.

Hypotheses

In order to test the comparative effectiveness of second language teaching with Task-Based Language Teaching and Bilingual Method the following null hypotheses are formulated:

1. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental group and control group on pre-test (urban school)*
2. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental and control group on post-test. (urban school)*
3. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of experimental and control groups on retention-test. (urban school)*
4. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on previous achievement tests. (rural school)*
5. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on post-test, (rural school)*
6. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of experimental and control groups on retention-test. (rural school)*

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Keeping in mind the objectives of the present research the researcher has devised the necessary design which comprises the following components:

- 1) Method of Study
- 2) Population of Study
- 3) Sample of the Study
- 4) Sources of collection of data

- 5) Procedure for investigation and data collection
- 6) Data treatment

METHOD OF STUDY

The present study has been designed under experimental method. It attempts at evaluating the comparative effectiveness of the second language teaching with Task-Based Language Teaching and Bilingual Method to the high achievers in English at secondary level classroom situation under West Bengal Board of Secondary Education in India. For the proper implementation of experimental design two schools, one from the rural backdrop and other from the urban backdrop have been selected. The two schools have been taken from two different blocks of the Birbhum district. Class IX has been chosen for the purpose of experimentation of the teaching methods.

Population of the Study

The two schools belonging to two different blocks, namely, Suri I, and Suri II have been deliberately selected for the specified purpose of investigation. The school from the urban background under Suri I block is, Ramkrishna Vidyapith and The rural school under Suri II is Adda S.P. High School. Thus the pupils of the two schools constitute the population of the present study.

Sample of the Study

The 9th class of the two schools has been fixed up for experimentation. On the basis of their previous achievement records sixty students were isolated from the class IX of the rural school. Since their performance level was above the average they may be termed as the high achievers. Again on the basis of their performance in the pre-achievement tests sixty students who perform highly and above the average level were regarded as the high achievers of the urban school. Thus taken together total 120 students constitute the sample of the present study.

Sources of Collection of Data

In order to achieve necessary results of the present study the following tools were employed for collection of data:

- 1) Pre-test of the students of the urban school
- 2) The previous achievement records of the pupils of the rural school
- 3) The post-tests of the high achievers of both the schools
- 4) The retention tests of the high achievers both the schools

The following scores will constitute the data for the present experiment

- 1) The scores of the pre-test of the 9th class students under urban schools
- 2) The scores of the previous achievement records of the 9th class students belonging to rural school

- 3) The scores of the post-test of the 9th class high achievers of the rural school
- 4) The scores of the post-test of the 9th class high achievers of the urban school
- 5) The scores of the retention-test of the 9th class high achievers of the rural school
- 6) The scores of the retention-test of the 9th class high achievers of the urban school

Investigation Procedure and Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, sixty students 9th class of an urban school and 60 students of the 9th class of a rural school are the target groups for the present experimental research. A pre-test of the 9th class students of the urban school is taken. On the basis of the scores of the pre-test of the pupils of the said class of the urban school the high achievers of the pupils are segmented and they are divided into Experimental and Control group by using pair random sampling technique. 60 high achievers of the rural school are also divided into Experimental and Control group on the basis of the previous achievement test by using the same pair random sampling technique. It is to be mentioned at the outset that the number of pupils under each group is 30. The Solomon Four Group Design is selected as the proper design for the present research. The design is as follows:

- 1) Pupils are randomly assigned to four Groups (R)
- 2) Two groups will receive Experimental treatment (X)
- 3) Two groups will receive Control treatment (C)
- 4) One Experimental Group will receive a Pre-test (O₁)
- 5) One Control Group will receive a Pre-test (O₂)
- 6) All the four groups will receive Post-tests (O₃O₄O₅O₆)

Experimentation

After careful observation of the teaching learning situation of the Birbhum district two schools from two different blocks are selected. The rural school, namely, Adda S.P. High School, belongs to Suri II block, whereas, Ramkrishna Vidyapith is the urban school belonging to Suri I block. Two English teachers, one belonging to rural school and one from urban school, having equal qualification are selected to teach the Experimental group and the Control group. The teachers were provided with necessary orientation regarding the following points on the use of Task-Based Language Teaching:

- Basic elements are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasize communication and meaning.
- Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in the activities and tasks.
- Activities and tasks of a task-based syllabus are sequenced according to difficulty
- Students are engaged in practical tasks that relate to real world uses of English.

- Realistic and communicative uses of language are given priority.
- Maximum use is made of pair work and group work activities in which students complete tasks in a collaborate manner.
- There is an appropriate balance between accuracy-focused and fluency-focused activities.
- Teachers serve as facilitators of learning rather than as presenters of information.
- Assessment procedures reflect and support a communicative and skill-based orientation to teaching and learning.

The following prose texts of the English text book prescribed by the W.B.B.S.E. for class IX are selected to teach the students. 1) Tales of Bhola Grandpa, 2) All About a Dog 3) A Day in the Zoo 4) All Summer in a Day

The Experimental group is taught with the techniques and strategies based on the tenets of Task based Teaching Method to help them gather concepts on the above mentioned texts and also to gather productive and receptive skills in English. Mostly and basically the teachers followed a learner-centred approach to motivate the students to be engaged in the language learning process. The learners are engaged in the task of reading and comprehending specific reading portion so that they gradually develop skills of reading and listening. To develop the language skills individually the teachers consistently and rigorously followed the principles of the communicative approach and encouraged the pair work and group work techniques so that the learners can gather skills through the tasks of writing and speaking. The teachers triggered the interaction process so that the pupils can share and exchange their views in a mutual manner and develop the basic skills with the minimum help but active supervision of the teachers. The teachers were tolerant enough not to over criticize the errors committed by the learners but helping them find out their areas of linguistic deviations and at last providing them necessary guidance so that concept formation becomes possible among the pupils.

The Control Group, on the other hand, is taught with rigorous application of the Bilingual Method. Basically the teacher followed the traditional strategy of teaching by translating the texts into Bengali

and followed the strategy of supplying mother tongue equivalents of the target language in terms of vocabulary and structures. While teaching the target language texts they explained the rules of English grammar in a deductive manner encouraging the learners to memorize the rules with the assumption in mind that they will be able to use the rules for the purpose of constructing English structures.

Test Construction

After the experimentation of teaching comprising four weeks duration is over, a teacher-made post-test is taken to compare the effectiveness of the experimental method and that of the Bilingual Method. The investigator constructed both the pre-test and post-test after a detailed survey of the techniques of the principles of test construction on relevant sections of selected prose units. In addition, the consent of the class teachers and teaching experts were also taken into consideration in the construction of the tests. Each test comprises 50 multiple choice type items based on the selected prose units of 9th class. While constructing the texts the dimensions of the language and structures are taken into consideration.

Reliability of the Test

Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula is used to determine the reliability of the pre-test and post-test. Here the reliability is estimated by comparing the halves of the pre-test and post-tests. In this way the reliability co-efficient is found to be 0.76.

Analysis of Data

Raw scores obtained from pre-tests, school record, and post-tests and retention tests were presented in a tabular form for the purpose of interpretation. For the manipulation of data the means, standard deviations, and differences of means were calculated for each group. Significances of difference between the mean scores of both the experimental and control groups on the variables of pre-test scores, school record scores and post-tests and retention tests scores was tested at 0.05 level by applying *t-tests*.

H₀1: *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on pre-test. (urban school)*

Table-1: Significance of difference between the mean scores of Experimental and Control groups on pre test.

Group	N	M	SD	SE _D	T-value
Experimental	30	60.32	15.06	3.99	0.28
Control	30	62.19	15.31		

df =58

Table-1 indicates that the difference of mean scores of the high achievers of the Experimental and Control Group is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted so that both the groups could be treated as equal on the variable of pre-test.

H₀2: *There exists no significant difference between the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on post-test. (urban school)*

Table-2: Significance of difference between the mean scores of Experimental and Control groups on post-test.

Group	N	M	SD	SE _D	T-value
Experimental	30	76.22	9.43	2.53	8.93
Control	30	53.21	10.31		

df = 58

The table 2 exhibits that the obtained *t-value* is 8.93 which is greater than the statistical table value which is 2.04 at 0.05 level. So we can assert that that there exists significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group on post-test. So the null hypothesis is rejected and we can say that the high achievers of the experimental group

have performed better since they were taught by the Task Based Method.

H₀₃: *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control group on retention-tests. (urban school)*

Table-3: Significance of difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control group on retention-test (urban school)

Group	N	M	SD	SE _D	T-value
Experimental	30	72.7	9.21	2.39	8.88
Control	30	51.4	10.08		

df = 28

The table 3 exhibits the obtained *t-value* is 8.88 which is greater than the statistical table value which is 2.04 at 0.05 level. So we can assert that that there exists significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental and the control group on retention-test. So the null hypothesis “There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental and control group on retention-tests” (urban school), is rejected and we can say that the high achievers of the

experimental group of the urban backdrop have performed better and have developed the ability to retain the learning experiences more than those of the control group since they were taught by Task Based Method..

H₀₄. *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on previous achievement tests (rural school).*

Table-4: Significance of difference between the mean scores of Experimental and Control groups on previous achievement test

Group	N	M	SD	SE _D	T-value
Experimental	30	58.1	15.62	4.06	0.18
Control	30	57.55	15.33		

df = 58

Table 4 indicates that the difference of mean scores of the Experimental and Control Group of the rural backdrop is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted so that both the groups could be treated as equal on the variable of previous achievement test.

H₀₅: *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on post-test (rural school).*

Table-5: Significance of difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control groups on post-test

Group	N	M	SD	SE _D	T-value
Experimental	30	72.35	9.67	2.64	5.58
Control	30	57.21	11.03		

df= 58

The table 5 exhibits that the obtained *t-value* is 5.58 which is greater than the statistical table value which is 2.04 at 0.05 level. So we can assert that that there exists significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group on post-test. So the null hypothesis is rejected and we can say that the students of the experimental group have

performed better since they were taught by the Task Based Method.

H₀₆: *There exists no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on retention-test (rural school).*

Table-6: Significance of difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control groups on retention test

Group	N	M	SD	SE _D	T-value
Experimental	30	72.52	9.23	2.64	5.23
Control	30	56.82	10.95		

df= 58

The table 6 exhibits that the obtained *t-value* is 5.23 which is greater than the statistical table value which is 2.04 at 0.05 level. So we can assert that there exists significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group on post-test. So the null hypothesis is rejected and we can say that the students of the experimental group have performed better since they were taught by the Task Based Method.

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RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

After systematic analysis of data six hypotheses were experimentally verified and necessary results were drawn. The H₀₁ exhibits that there exists no significant difference between the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group on pre-test. H₀₁ indicates that the high achievers of the Experimental and the Control group of the urban school can be treated as equal on the basis of I.Q. level. The hypothesis test of H₀₂ states that there exists significant difference between the experimental and the control group on post tests in the urban school. The testing of H₀₃ states that there is significant difference between the level of the high achievers of the experimental and control group on retention test taken in the urban school. The H₀₄ exhibits that there exists no significant difference between the high achievers of the experimental group and the control group of high achievers on pre-test in the rural school. H₀₄ indicates that the high achievers of the Experimental and the Control group of the rural school can be treated as equal on the basis of I.Q. level. Again the H₀₅ upholds that there is significant difference between the experimental and the control group on post-test at the rural school. The testing of H₀₆ states there is significant difference between the level of the high achievers of the experimental and control group on retention test taken in the rural school. The experimental study conducted at both the rural and the urban school exhibits that the second language skills of the high achievers at both rural and urban level can be developed considerably if they are taught with Task Based Method. The Bilingual Method on the other hand is least effective in terms of second language skill development of the learners.

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