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THE VALUE AND ACCURACY OF TASK AS A WORKPLAN: VARIABILITY IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE

(ÇALIŞMA PLANI OLARAK ÖDEVİN DEĞERİ VE DOĞRULUĞU: SINIF İÇİ UYGULAMA DEĞİŞKENLİĞİ)

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ABSTRACT
This paper describes a case-study based project which focused on the development of a specially designed single task-based lesson in order to identify how materials design can be more closely aligned with and conducive to variability in classroom task enactment. A series of communicative micro-level tasks functioning within the boundary of a larger macro-level task were given to two university lecturers. The two lecturers then enacted these micro-level tasks within an EFL classroom environment. The two lecturers were interviewed prior to the lesson to elicit their attitudes toward the basic notion of task within an EFL context. They were also requested to submit a workplan outlining their intended use of the given task materials. Two 90-minute lessons were then observed and field notes were combined with post-lesson interviews. Detailed reports of each teacher's enactment are presented and the need for further large-scale research looking at the variability between task design and task enactment is called for based on the outcome of the current project.

Keywords: pedagogical task, materials design, teacher enactment, task-based language teaching,

ÖZ
Bu araştırma ödev temelli dil öğretiminin sınıf içi uygulamalardaki değişkenliğin materyal tasarımı kaynaklı sebeplerini daha yakından belirlemek için yürütülmüştür. Özel olarak tasarlanan ödev temelli dersin gelişimine odaklanmış, örnek olay incelemesine dayalı bir projedir. Bir seri iletişimsel mikro-düzey ödev iki üniversite okutmanına verilmiştir. Bu okutmanlar, yabancı dil (İngilizce) sınıfı ortamında bu mikro-düzey ödevleri işlemişlerdir. İngilizce dili öğretimi bağlamında bu iki okutmanla, ödevin temel yapısına ilişkin tutumları hakkında bir ön görüşme yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, verilen ödev materyalini nasıl kullanacaklarını belirten bir çalışma planı sunmaları da istenmiştir. Daha sonra 90 dakikalık ders gözlemlenmiş ve alınan notlar ders sonrası görüşmelerden elde edilen verilerle birleştirilmiştir. Her okutmanın işlediği dersin ayrıntılı raporları sunulmuş, ödev dizaynı ve ödevin işlenmesi arasındaki değişkenliğe dayalı olarak daha geniş ölçekli çalışmaların yapılması gerekliliği vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: pedagojik ödev, materyal dizaynı, canlandırma, ödev temelli dil öğretimi

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INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that an increase in research describing teachers' pedagogical thoughts, judgments and decisions when planning for instruction is required in order to more clearly understand the enactment process (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Prior research focusing on the interpretation of pedagogical tasks has tended to focus on learner-centered interpretations rather than on teacher-centered interpretations (Lam, 2004). Carless (2004) argues that neglecting the viewpoint of the teacher has a variety of implications for the future of task-based materials design and classroom enactment procedures. Fullen (1999) points out that curriculum mandates usually do not match classroom enactment practices, making this an area of immediate concern to both language teachers and language institutions.

The current project seeks to identify the degree variability which exists between two teachers who are given the same pedagogical task to enact within the same institutional setting. Although not seeking to promote overly prescriptive teaching procedures, the current project will attempt to explain how variability in teacher enactment procedures can be reduced in order for the original task to remain true to the materials designer's intention. The task designed and used in this project shall be outlined below.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT TASK

The pedagogical task used in the current project is a semi-focused task comprising of five micro-level tasks functioning within a larger macro-level task. Each of the five micro-level tasks requires different skills from both the student and the teacher. The task is themed as a story of survival, character analysis, problem solving and life or death decision-making. It represents a typical task-based holistic activity and conforms to the definition of task given by Ellis (2003, pp. 9-10). Furthermore, this task was created with a number of practically orientated principles in mind. The task content should reflect a social environment, the task should function as a dynamic entity from which communication can blossom, the task should be stimulating for both teacher and student, and, the task should emphasize analytical decision making and decision justification.

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The current task seeks to promote social connectivity by providing an insight into the personal reality of each of the six characters in the story. Students have a visual character (profile picture) as well as a textual character represented through biographic data. Gernsbacher (1990) supports a theory of structure building in relation to reading tasks which stresses the importance of not limiting the process to textual information only. Lave & Wenger (1991) further suggest that such connective authenticity is a critical element for active student participation, modeling and decision making which permits learners to negotiate, create meaning and develop understanding.

The current task was designed to be conducive to the use of comparative rhetoric, prioritization, opinion giving, persuasive talk, justifying a standpoint as well as defending individual and group decisions. Additionally, the teacher and the student are required to formulate critical questions throughout the micro-level task process. Richards (1987, p. 212) argues that 'one characteristic of effective teaching is the teacher's use of questions', the quality and quantity of questions has a direct effect on student learning outcomes. Indeed, Wright (1987) shows that all pedagogical tasks must include two principal elements in their design; these elements being termed 'input data' and 'instructional questions'. A task can only be designed in terms of these two elements due to the fact that all tasks have 'discourse potential'. A task cannot be designed in terms of specific 'output data' but rather through the creation of opportunities to produce a desired output response via questioning and interacting with the material.

As is the case with many EFL materials, the current task was designed with a specific enactment procedure in mind. The idealized enactment described below focuses on the role of process over content.

Micro-Level Task 1: Framing the Social Context

This stage requires the teacher to create a believable social reality through the presentation of the task. The teacher must set the macro-level task by engaging the students by stressing the element of social responsibility and the severity of the situation. The students are required to listen to the story presented by the teacher and ask questions where misunderstandings occur.

Micro-Level Task 2: Primary Textual Analysis

This second stage requires the teacher to allow the students to have a primary look through the six character descriptions instructing them to pay attention (but not overly focus on) new vocabulary and difficult words. The students must read the six character descriptions so that a basic understanding of each character is possible as well as identify and clarify difficult vocabulary.

Micro-Level Task 3: Sociocognitive Textual Analysis

Here, the teacher must instruct the students to analyze the six characters in relation to the macro-level task. Reading should be analyzed within the previous set social context. The teacher needs to encourage the development of each character and promote the use of the character pictures. Promoting critical comparisons and active discussion is also required. The students should analyze each of the six characters in relation to the macro-level task previously introduced by the teacher and discuss opinions with other group members.

Micro-Level Task 4: Negotiated Decision Making

The teacher should visit each group eliciting opinions and offering counter opinions as well as continuing to develop each character. Additionally, the teacher should push the students to reflect on their decisions whilst seeking a solid justification for each decision made. The students should continue sharing opinions with other group members on who should stay on the island. They should be allowed to negotiate until a group consensus is reached.

Micro-Level Task 5: Social Justification and Defense

The teacher must ask critical questions in order to make the presenter defend their group decision. The teacher also needs to manage and facilitate questions emphasizing that the skills which the students require here are the norm in western academic life. The students must present a justification and defense of the group decision by constructing reasons why the group made the choice which it did. Also, they must answer critical questions from classmates with a defense based within the social context of the task.

The social processes involved in the current task are representative of numerous everyday activities such as choosing a meal from a menu or deciding which TV program to watch. The primary difference is in the unexpected story content and character information (drugs, alcohol, adultery, homelessness and other social stigmas are touched upon which are often absent from mainstream EFL textbooks). This realistic engagement or connectivity is intended to function as a motivational tool. This can only be successful if the burden of social responsibility is emphasized during the framing of the social context. This is vital for the creation of a sociocognitive rapport with the materials. Foster (1998) confirms that for group work to be effective, students must be convinced that the task is worthwhile and not just an opportunity for some fun.

Although the current task features a large amount of textual information, Brown & Yule (1983) state that text-based descriptions such as profiles and character biographies are the easiest kind of text for students to process. Descriptive text was selected as it lends itself to the creation of internal representations or mental models. Johnson-Laird (1983) argue that internal representations consider the text beyond the literal meaning thus lending itself to the flexible development and multi-faceted interpretations possible for each of the six characters.

Although the macro-level task represents a clearly definable communicative outcome, the content and form of this outcome may be less clearly definable as to allow for originality in target language production. Any outcome can be rendered meaningful on a number of different levels (cognitive, linguistic, psychosocial) by a number of different people (teacher, materials designer, student). In considering the communicative outcome of the current task, the materials designer attempted to avoid the pitfall highlighted by Seedhouse (1999) who suggests that students often overly focus on the completion of a task and as a result they only produce a modest amount of language, usually the minimum amount to complete the task.

Methodology

A case study design was employed at a private Japanese university. This approach was chosen as it provides an immense amount of data which can be probed though face-to-face interviews. Data was primarily gathered using pre and post lesson focused interviews which lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, classroom observations of a single 90-minute lesson preformed by each teacher, and field note-taking as well as audio/video recordings to use as cross-referencing tools. The pre and post lesson interviews were considered vital in assessing the pedagogical intentions of the teacher, something highlighted as crucial during the task as a workplan property identified by Ellis (2003, pp. 9-10).

Participants

The participants were two randomly selected lecturers from the English Department of the university. They were both male with a mean experience level of 7.5 years teaching EFL in Asia. Both teachers were native English speakers and had been working under a communicative language teaching classroom philosophy.

Procedure

A week before the scheduled pre-lesson interview, each teacher was presented with a task information pack. The pack included one airplane wreckage picture (A3 size), one desert island picture (A3 size), one rowing boat picture (A3 size), six character sheets (A3 size) as well as 30 student copies of each character presented in an A4 sized booklet. The pack also contained a blurb intended to guide the teacher without explicitly instructing them how to enact the materials enclosed:

The current task is the story of six people who survive a plane crash and come to be on a remote desert island. Each person on the island has good and bad points as well as different background stories which the students can read and analyze. Just as all six people have given up hope of a rescue, a small rowing boat appears on the island. Unfortunately, this boat is only able to hold five of the people. The students should select a person to stay on the island and ultimately die. The five others will try and row to safety although they have no idea where they currently are. This task could be attempted as a small group activity, each group should agree on one person to stay and then present their ideas to the class. It is important to consider the following words; scene, context, theme, analyze, justify and defend. It is important that the students challenge each other in order to impose the belief that their decision is the correct one whilst at the same time ridiculing the decisions made by other groups. You may need to function as a facilitator.

During the pre-lesson interview the questions were generally closed but each teacher was encouraged to give any additional information where appropriate. The questions were formulated considering the six properties of task proposed by Ellis (2003, pp. 9-10) in order to provide a basic overview of the teachers' attitude toward task, the materials and how they would structure a communicative lesson using the given task. The pre-lesson interview questions were:

1) As a teacher in an EFL context, how do you define a pedagogical task?
2) What is the main purpose (openly defined) of the given task?
3) How would you enact a lesson using the given task within a typical freshman class?
4) What communicative skills does the given task require from the students and teacher?
5) What genre of language is the given task likely to activate or require?

6) What problems do you anticipate with the given task for the students and yourself?
7) Do you think that the given task relates to the development of any academic skills?
8) What strengths and weaknesses do you see in the given task?

After the observation and analysis of a single 90-minute lesson enacted by both teachers they were again interviewed using the post-lesson interview questions set out below:

1) Why did you introduce the given task in the manner which you did?
2) What did you want the students to understand before undertaking the given task?
3) When the students were working in groups, how did you assist them?
4) Did you expand on the character biographies or develop the story plot?
5) Did students ask questions about each of the characters?
6) Did you suggest alternative opinions to the students regarding each character?
7) What was the purpose of having students explain their choice to the class?
8) What did you believe your role to be at that (presentation) point?
9) Did you encourage students to ask questions? Why or why not?
10) Is the given task an appropriate task-based lesson for university freshman?
11) Is there anything you would change if you could perform the lesson again?

RESULTS

Task Enactment as Realized by Lecturer A: Lecturer A had a large class and began by dividing the twenty-seven students into three groups. These groups were formed by random selection after assigning numbers to each student. Although this method is economical, research suggests that it is not the most preferential for language learners. Gass & Varonis (1985) argue that grouping students based on mixed ability and language background is the most preferential way to form groups. Similarly, Mahenthiran & Rouse (2000) suggest that the optimal method of grouping students is to create a mixture of friendship pairs and mixed ability levels.

Lecturer A initiated the given task by showing the students the rowing boat picture (A3 sized). He asked the students as a group to say what the object was and then confirmed this by telling them that it was a rowing boat. He then gave each of the groups one of the pictures (either the rowboat, the plane crash, or the island) and gave them the directive, 'Look at the pictures and tell me what you think is happening here'. In his post-lesson interview, Lecturer A justified this procedure by stating that, 'I just wanted them to generate interest in the lesson'. At this point students were not sure how or why they should be connecting the three pictures together. Skehan (1996) insists that it is vital to make students specifically aware of where their focus should be. After further prompting, one group stated that there had been some kind of accident, after further elicitation a different group shouted out 'plane crash'. This elicitation was not backed-up by Lecturer A. Consequently, the students were framing their own social context which had the effect of trivializing the situation and shattering any illusion of reality or sense of responsibility.

The students were then given the student booklet containing all six-character biographies. They were instructed not to read the first page which summarized both the social context and the macro-level task. The materials designer included this to support those students who did not fully understand or who were not confident in listening to the teacher description of micro-level task one. Due to the fact that Lecturer A had not framed the social context as he indicated he would in his pre-lesson workplan, he could not allow the students to read this first page.

Nunan (1991) supports the notion that in lower level students, closed directed tasks stimulate more interaction than open, multi-directional tasks. For reasons unspecified the students were instructed to look at only two of the six characters. They were not informed as to what they were reading for, or that they should be looking for anything specific within each character. Reading without a clearly definable outcome not only goes against the definition of a pedagogical task (Ellis, 2003, pp. 9-10) but also added a new dimension to micro-level task two. This task slowly veered toward an exercise in factual recall rather than a contextual based interaction. The belief that the focus of this micro-level task was a kind of memory test was alluded to in Lecturer A's pre-lesson interview. He states, 'The biographies about each of the characters are quite long and there is a lot of detail, there is a lot of stuff they need to remember such as new vocabulary'. This preliminary text negotiation had been reduced to a strong obsession with vocabulary acquisition and memory recall with many students overly focusing on individual word meaning and sentence level translation into

the L1. Newton (1991) advocates three methods in which teachers can target new vocabulary; 1) brainstorming or predicting meaning, 2) cooperative dictionary searches, and 3) word to definition match-up activities. Newton adds that such activities will prevent the struggle with new words overtaking other important goals such as fluency or content learning. Unfortunately, this was clearly observable within Lecturer A's class. He illustrates in his post-lesson interview that students did not ask any questions about the characters but rather, they wanted to know about 'Just the vocabulary'. When Lecturer A was asked whether he helped students with the plot or character development, he responded by saying, 'No, not at all'.

Students were then paired with classmates who had focused on two different characters and instructed to share information through memory recall without looking at the character biographies. During the recall activity many students reverted to their L1, other groups simply sat in silence after a communication breakdown based on an inability to recall information. Comparing Lecturer A's enactment to the idealized enactment procedure of the materials designer, at this point the class was somewhere between micro-level task two and three yet it was only at this point that Lecturer A began to frame the social context of the given task. This is despite the fact that in his pre-lesson interview he states, 'I need to introduce the task clearly, if you just throw it at them the students won't know what to say and will have nothing to contribute and it will just fall flat'.

Although the students were not familiar with all six characters, nor had they been given the opportunity to negotiate a decision as required in micro-level task four, one person from each group was invited to stand up and tell the class who they choose to stay on the island and why. When asked why this procedure was followed, Lecturer A states, 'Originally, I got the idea from the pre-lesson blurb but generally I do not do presentations in class because they produce no real interaction'. As interactive learning is a key condition which TBLT should aim to create (Nunan, 1989; Long & Crookes, 1992) it seems that this attitude towards presentation neglects their function as a tool for the creation of further discussion and interaction. Lecturer A also identified the class size as a reason why presentations were problematic, 'The class was too big. I couldn't have one big circle and one class discussion because with 27 students it would not have worked'. This neglect of the social justification and defense micro-level task removed the primary link between the given task and general academic skills development. Lecturer A states in his pre-lesson interview that discussion and interaction were fundamental at this stage, 'Once they have presented their ideas, I want there to be more discussion and more disagreement. The teacher is

responsible for creating this environment, I need to have a clear process, so after the presentation I need to ask the students to write something to facilitate interaction.' Despite this pre-lesson intention, when Lecturer A was asked about his role during the presentation stage in his post-lesson interview, Lecturer A did not view his role as a facilitator or initiator of discussion. Instead, he remarks, 'I was not really doing anything. I was just listening and making sure that other students were listening. I did not prompt them or ask them for any more information about their choice further than what they gave'.

As a final summary in his post-lesson interview, Lecturer A states, 'I think even though the texts about the different characters were difficult for the students, if you staged the lesson properly then they can do it. If you lead them into it step by step then they can handle these concepts but they just need the vocabulary to be able to talk about the different people'.

Task Enactment as Realized by Lecturer B: Before the lesson began, Lecturer B placed the six A3 sized character biographies around the classroom. He also wrote the words 'justify' and 'defend' on the whiteboard. As Lecturer B was teaching in a Blended Learning Space (BLS) equipped with projectors, computers and other digital technologies, he began his lesson by projecting the word 'The given task' onto the large screen at the front of the room. This focused the students' attention although the meaning of the word was not clarified. Lecturer B proceeded by proclaiming, 'Let me tell you a story. There was a plane going from Los Angeles to New Zealand but on the way there was an accident'. At this point Lecturer B changed the slide on the screen to a large colour picture of airplane wreckage. Upon seeing this image the students were immediately engaged and socially connected, there were many loud groans of surprise and anxiety. Lecturer B told them that the plane had crashed onto an island and only six people had survived. The students immediately made the connection that the six survivors were the six character biographies hanging around the room. Lecturer B then showed the slide of the desert island stressing that although it looked nice, there was no food so the six people really wanted to get off the island. He continued by showing the boat slide, stating, 'One day a boat came to the island, but it was a very small boat and there was only space for five people'. The students showed their understanding and appreciation of the severity of the story by releasing a louder grown of interest and curiosity. The students were visually very keen to learn more. At this point, the lesson was very much in accord with the materials designer's idealized enactment of micro-level task one as well as with Lecturer B's own pre-lesson workplan. In his workplan he states, 'I could probably use the pictures as introduction props. Personally, I would

prefer to use a projector rather than holding up the pictures in class. I would introduce the idea of a crash, the island, the boat, and then introduce the people'.

Lecturer B proceeded to tell the students what their macro-level task was for the lesson in a manner which stressed social responsibility and the severity of the task, 'Your task today is to decide who will die'. The students again reacted with a loud gasp of surprise. It was possible to feel the students' anticipation of the task ahead as the story leading to this point was clear, concise and presented in a visually attractive and stimulating manner. Lecturer B added that all students would initially be working in groups and that each group would have to justify their decision.

Students were then able to go around the room and look at each of the six characters individually. The students found this interesting and were very pro-active. After 10 minutes, nine groups of three people were created and the students were given the character booklet. Although the procedure was affective, it deviated from Lecturer B's pre-lesson intention, 'I would put them into six groups and have them analyze one character per group. I would give them two minutes for each character and then swap, then I would give them the character booklet and get them to move on to the justification activity'. Lecturer B did not reconfirm any further instructions and the students began to talk about each character hastily.

After 15 minutes, many of the groups had made their decisions but it was clear that these decisions were based on superficial points rather than thinking more about each character's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the social context of the given task. This was confirmed when every group choose Marco to stay on the island. This can be attributed to the fact that the class was predominantly female, therefore his playboy, selfish nature was an immediate and easy target for them. Lecturer B attempted to intervene by offering counter arguments suggesting that Marco would be a positive person in the boat, 'Initially when they all started choosing Marco I did point out some of the other characters' deficiencies but I would not say that I did that in any detail'. Lecturer B was thrown off by the fact that students chose Marco and he seemed unsure what to do next. Instead of listening to each group's justification and promoting critical questioning, Lecturer B changed the theme slightly through what turned out to be a positive intervention, 'Once they all chose the same person, I had to intervene by selecting people (characters) randomly. I tore the character profiles out and wrote numbers on them and then the students chose one of the sheets so they ended up with different people. I then told them that they had to justify that person staying on the island'. He assigned one character to each group and told them that they would need to defend their assigned characters. This activity

prompted the students to analyze the characters in more detail and from an alternate perspective. This analysis was closely connected to the task of survival and rowing a boat. Lecturer B then paired groups together. Although the instructions were not clear, the students continued to talk and discuss their opinions with some degree of enjoyment and motivation. Lecturer B was still operating within the boundary of the macro-level task yet with enough teacher autonomy to respond flexibly within his class based on the individual circumstances.

After a while students were informed that they would now be required to present at least one justification for their character not staying on the island. The other class members would have to ask at least one critical question about the reasons to share with the class. The idea was that every person in the group would speak at least twice and use different communicative skills on each occasion. The groups began this task standing up, so that after each person had completed their share, they could sit down. This information was also written on the whiteboard for clarification. The presenter was not only presenting to the other group members but also to the rest of the class. Each group member was justifying and defending the same character so new information needed to be formulated by each person. This had the effect of the story developing beyond the textual biographies presented. One student commented, 'Marco must have many girlfriends at home who probably do not like him so I think maybe they would like him to die on the island'. This evidence of textual context development was also apparent in a number of other justifications. The students also exhibited some of the more commonly-used terms associated with academic debate. A number of students used terms such as, 'According to the passage….' and 'In the booklet it states that….'. There was also evidence of students understanding the justifications by turning the information they heard into critical questions. Lecturer B facilitated this student interaction well and did not dominate communication, 'My role was to check if the students had done enough to sit down, apart from this I was not offering anything else'. Students were speaking freely and enjoyed the challenge of not being the last person to sit down, there was a lot of laughing and the stories were being taken to extremes by some students although the questioning was always structured in a way which put the original presenter under pressure to answer. The students kept their concentration well and the lesson ended just as the last group was finishing up.

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CONCLUSION

Through the analysis presented, it is apparent that the enactment procedures observed by Lecturer A and Lecturer B were significantly different from each other. This is despite the fact that the two teachers were demographically very similar and were both working under the same instructional classroom policy. There was also a fair degree of variability between the two enactment procedures and the idealized enactment procedures of the materials designer. The series of micro-level tasks set forth by the materials designer were scrambled, and often neglected with the final product being very distant from the materials designer's intention. While the teacher should have a certain amount of autonomy in their decision making, in terms of task enactment this should not be at the expense of the underlining principles of the original pedagogical task. Additionally, this research has further highlighted that a task as a workplan which elicits teacher intentions is not a reliable source to predict task as a process or teacher enactment procedures. Although Lecturer A's pedagogical intentions measured through his pre-lesson workplan were closely aligned to the materials designer's idealized enactment, his lesson did not reflect this. Breen (1989) supports such an outcome stating that the task as a workplan may or may not match the task as a process. Murphy (2003, p. 353) stresses the importance of the dynamic interplay between materials designer, pedagogical task, and teacher by stating that student-learning outcomes are dependent on the individual contribution of each student, the pedagogical task, and the manner in which the teacher enacts the task.

Although it is easy to take a critical tone in such limited case studies, the enactment demonstrated by Lecturer A was more reflective of a synthetic approach to enactment rather than a communicative analytical approach. The student-driven emphasis on sentence level grammar, new vocabulary acquisition and direct translations between the L1 and L2 placed Lecturer A in an invidious position. Despite the good intentions of a teacher in dealing with student problems, the students in Lecturer A's class had derailed his task as a workplan, something Lecturer A was unable to recover from. On the other hand, Lecturer B's enactment was very similar to the materials designer's visualized enactment procedure. Although Lecturer B changed the format of the lesson based on an unexpected student response, in reality, the students performed all five of the micro-level tasks according to the principles of the analytical approach which TBLT adheres to. This serves as a positive example that teachers can have autonomy and freedom to modify task-based materials but this should be done within the objectives of the original task according to the materials designer.

Despite the fact that synthetic and analytical approaches toward classroom enactment are theoretically and contextually different, representing polarizations on the teaching methodology spectrum, the given task permitted both to materialize. This could indicate that future task designs need to be more tightly focused so that such variation is not possible. Whilst this is certainly possible, it would take away the freedom which typical holistic tasks such as the given task permit the teacher. A more logical approach would be to make more explicit to the teacher the key stages or elements of a particular set of tasks. In the case of the given task, it could have been stressed that the framing of the social context (micro-level task one) was vital and that the teacher was not free to change or manipulate this micro-level task because without it (as in Lecturer A's class) the lesson would quickly lose its focus. Implementing such semi-prescriptive procedures at the beginning of the lesson would also protect the teacher from unexpected student responses and mixed levels of interest. It could also be hypothesized that during the early stages of classroom enactment, student reaction and student response influenced the enactment procedure of each teacher. Although this is typically viewed as a sign of a quality teacher, one who is able to react and adapt in the ever-changing classroom environment, it could also be an indication that students were confused and misunderstood what was happening due to the teacher straying from the enactment process as idealized by the materials designer.

Aligning classroom enactment procedures closer to the materials designer's idealization requires a considered approach. This approach should consider the implementation of semi-prescriptive teaching procedures. Unfortunately, within TBLT any mention of the term 'prescriptive procedures' is usually rejected outright as an infringement on teacher creativity and freedom. Despite endless variables in student level, educational context, teacher preference and institutional methodology, freedom to improvise teaching materials is considered very much as a teaching right. The implications for standardization and consistency between classes are something which TBLT and communicative language teaching all too often blanket over. One area where a possible compromise exists lies within the realm of cognitive psychology. Wartofsky (1973) sets forth the notion of artifacts as tools which guide communication, action and behaviour. If pedagogical tasks, lesson materials, curriculum mandates and institutional policies are considered as artifacts, then the teacher is never working entirely from conscious 'free' thought but rather through the following of a fate-driven reality. This is one possible explanation for the variation in task as a workplan and task as a process which was observed. Norman (1988) argues

that artifacts are designed with the capability to cue activity through constraints and affordances. The implication being that it is possible to craft or create tasks and lesson materials in a manner which will bring about a certain type of response from a teacher. This is already observable in the constraints which direct student behavioural/linguistic responses to a task in the 'discourse potential' identified by Wright (1987). Although (as seen in the current research) this response cannot be guaranteed (unless specifically instructed), the probability of observing a certain response can be maximized. This further strengthens the claim that the insistence on prescriptive teaching at certain points of a lesson may be beneficial, especially in cases where process is favoured over content. The aim would be not to advocate the widespread implementation of over-prescribed, drone-like enactment procedures, but rather to seek ways to ensure that the key pedagogical points of a task are indeed followed during a process-based lesson.

Future research in this field would be wise to conduct much larger scale enquiries and perhaps the use of multiple task-based lessons would reveal more. The concepts of teacher offloading (the preference of relying on the teaching materials in class) and teacher improvising (the preference for expanding upon teaching materials in class) would also be useful areas for exploration, as would a look at the notion of teacher as designer rather than consumer of instructional materials. Assigning responsibility to any one of the variables within the dynamic process of teaching based on this limited effort alone would be a step backwards; teacher individuality and flexibility are both highly valuable concepts which should not be sacrificed, yet designing materials which are then enacted in a limitless number of ways does not bode well for the integrity of TBLT or the EFL teacher profession. A compromise should be found, but where this compromise lies remains unknown.

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