

IMPROVING THE UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATION DURING NEGOTIATIONS BY USING FAMILIAR TASKS AND SUBTITLED VIDEOS IN AN ONLINE TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING (TBLL) ENVIRONMENT.

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ABSTRACT

It is via the utilization of subtitled films that this study investigates the influence that task familiarity has on the process of meaning negotiation. is a virtual environment that is designed to facilitate language acquisition through the use of activities that are task-based. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the extent to which individuals who are not native speakers (NNSs) engage in the process of negotiating meaning in order to improve their understanding of information and to boost their ability to learn a second language. Acquiring a new language to learn. Through the utilization of a chat feature in WebCT-Vista and an online task-based language learning (TBLL) environment that was developed expressly for this project, ten pairs of individuals who were not native speakers worked together to accomplish four communication tasks. A total of five pairs of students were shown movies with subtitles before they completed the tasks, whereas the remaining five pairs of students completed the tasks without watching the videos on their own. By utilizing Smith's (2003) modification of Gass and Varonis's (1985) model for negotiating meaning sequences in online communication, we were able to determine the degree of meaning negotiation that had taken place. As a result of the examination of the conversation transcripts, it was discovered that non-native speakers (NNSs) who had a better comprehension of the tasks engaged in longer conversations in order to explain the meaning, in contrast to those who did not have this level of comprehension.

Keywords: *Improving The Understanding Of Communication, Tasks And Subtitled Videos, Task-Based Language Learning (Tbll) Environment.*

Introduction

It is via the utilization of subtitled films that this study investigates the influence that task familiarity has on the process of meaning negotiation. is a virtual environment that is designed to facilitate language acquisition through the use of activities that are task-based. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the extent to which individuals who are not native speakers (NNSs) engage in the process of negotiating meaning in order to improve their understanding of information and to boost their ability to learn a second language. Acquiring a new language to learn. Through the utilization of a chat feature in WebCT-Vista and an online task-based language learning (TBLL) environment that was developed expressly for this project, ten pairs of individuals who were not native speakers worked together to accomplish four communication tasks. A total of five pairs of students were shown movies with subtitles before they completed the tasks, whereas the remaining five pairs of students completed the tasks without watching the videos on their own. By utilizing Smith's (2003)

modification of Gass and Varonis's (1985) model for negotiating meaning sequences in online communication, we were able to determine the degree of meaning negotiation that had taken place. As a result of the examination of the conversation transcripts, it was discovered that non-native speakers (NNSs) who had a better comprehension of the tasks engaged in longer conversations in order to explain the meaning, in contrast to those who did not have this level of comprehension.

Through the utilization of subtitled films, this study undertakes an investigation into the impact that task familiarity has on the process of meaning negotiation. a virtual environment that has been purposefully constructed with the intention of making the process of language acquisition easier. The purpose of this research project is to determine the extent to which individuals who are not native speakers (NNSs) engage in the activity of discussing and clarifying the meaning of material in order to improve their knowledge and enhance their capacity to improve their ability to acquire a second language. The process of learning a new language leads to the acquisition of that language. Using a chat feature in WebCT-Vista and an online task-based language learning (TBLL) environment that was developed expressly for this purpose, ten individuals who were not native speakers of the language formed pairs and collaborated in order to complete four communication tasks. Prior to carrying out the activities, five pairs of students were shown films that were accompanied by subtitles. The remaining five pairs of students, on the other hand, were able to complete the tasks without having to watch the videos on their own. An evaluation of the extent of meaning negotiation that has taken place can be carried out by making use of Smith's (2003) modified version of Gass and Varonis's (1985) theory on the negotiation of meaning sequences in digital communication. The assessment of the transcripts of the conversations revealed that non-native speakers (NNSs) who had a better knowledge of the tasks engaged in more thorough talks to clarify the importance. This was proven by the longer conversations that were recorded.

Purpose of the Study

The students' familiarity with the online task-based language learning (TBLL) exercise that they were about to participate in was increased as a result of the insertion of subtitled videos. The act of obtaining a collective comprehension while doing duties was something that we wanted to make easier for them by familiarizing them with the language and sentence structures that would be immediately applicable. On the other hand, we did not have any intention of doing so in a way that would reduce the level of cognitive difficulty associated with the job. It was for this reason that we moved our attention to the following study question: When compared to individuals who do not have access to subtitled films in an online TBLL, to what extent do non-native speakers who have better access to subtitled films participate in larger meaning negotiation?

METHODS

Participants

Twenty individuals who were not native speakers of English and were learning the language at an intermediate level participated in this study. Specifically, they were

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enrolled in a school that was situated in the southern part of the United States of America. The two weeks before to their selection from two portions of an intermediate composition course, they had been enrolled in a variety of English classes at the intermediate level. This was done in preparation for their selection. Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, and Japanese were among the languages that the individuals in question were fluent in. Despite the fact that the most of them were in their early twenties, their ages ranged anywhere from 18 to 21 years old. At the beginning of the semester, the institute assigned students to the composition course that was at the intermediate level. The determination was based on a combination of their scores on the ELPE (English Language Proficiency Exam) conducted by Texas A&M University, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and two internal assessments - a composition test and an interview with the director (K. Clark, personal communication, November 7, 2006). The Virtual Platform for TBLL For the purpose of carrying out this research, a Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) platform that is accessible online was developed (see Figure 1). A change was made to the environment in order to add four challenges, which the students were forced to execute alongside one another.

All of the dyads had access to the "Your Task" control button, which offered comprehensive instructions for each and every task. Activating the "Similar Tasks" option allowed the experimental group to have unrestricted access to the subtitled films that were present in the environment. In the absence of a built-in chat software, dyads were required to rely on the chat tool that was provided by WebCT-Vista in order to complete the tasks that were assigned to them. The completion of the task. These four tasks, which include "Christmas Break Trip," "Compare the Maps," "Gifts for a Family," and "Garage Sale," were developed with the help of Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun's (1993) topology, which is usually considered to be one of the most revealing interactionist framework typologies (Smith, 2003). In the activity known as "Compare the Maps" (see Figure 2), each student in a pair was provided with a map that was identical to the other and had fifteen different structures, six of which were interactive. There were also roads, trees, and automobiles depicted on the map. A certain activity is displayed whenever one of the six structures that can be clicked on shows that activity. There are three acts that are performed concurrently by both members of the dyad, and these three activities are divided between the two of them. (1) a person who is going through the process of repairing his television; (2) a woman who is actively participating in the process of undertaking research. The participants were invited to put themselves in the position of fellow students who were living in a dormitory while they were thinking about the "Garage Sale" (refer to Figure 7). A demonstration of the chamber and its contents is given to the participants (see Figure 7).

The two individuals who made up the dyad traded a photograph of a room at a hostel that was furnished in the same manner as every other room. Students have the ability to magnify objects in the room by clicking on them, and they can retrieve additional information from the major content section that is located in the center of the room. In order for students to raise money for a trip to Niagara Falls, they were

asked to donate four items from their dorm room to be sold at a garage sale. The profits from this sale would go toward funding the trip. The four options were presented to the dyads after they had discussed the value, usability, condition, transportation, and persuasive strategies that may be used to urge others to purchase them. Specific information regarding the treatment Both the experimental condition and the control condition were assigned to various parts of the course in a random fashion. The fact that this study was conducted with intact groups suggests that it ought to be categorized as a quasi-experiment rather than a genuine experiment. There was no random selection used to allocate the pupils to either the experimental or control groups. As an alternative, one set of students was randomly assigned to the experimental group, while the other group was randomly assigned to the control group over the course of the trial.

As was said earlier, each and every participant was chosen from classes considered to be of an intermediate level. On the other hand, in order to prevent any abnormalities or imbalanced groups, the director of the institute carefully analyzed the composition of each group to ensure that the levels of English ability were generally comparable among them. After randomly assigning the experimental and control conditions to the two sections, students were then randomly paired into dyads within each group. This process was repeated until all of the students were equally represented. In total, there were ten dyads involved in the research project, with five dyads assigned to each of the contrasting treatment conditions individually. Access to the TBLL environment that is available online was granted to both parties. Nevertheless, prior to the completion of the task, the experimental group was the only one that was permitted to watch movies in the environment that contained subtitles. Clarifications were provided by the videos with subtitles. Each of the videos, which are accompanied by subtitles, includes a brief chat between two native speakers who are engaged in a task that is comparable to, but distinct from, the assignment that the students are going to do. The videos, which were recorded in authentic environments, were accompanied with subtitles that were displayed below them. The videos were shot in natural settings from where they were taken. When the recordings were being made, there was no prior planning or decision-making that went into the selection of the language that the native speakers would use in the movie. They were given language assignments that required them to use the target language in everyday situations.

Native speakers were given these assignments. The work that Breen did in 1985 is the source that is cited. Rather than providing instruction on linguistic structure or demonstrating the mechanics of language, the primary objective of the movie with subtitles is to relate the experiences of native speakers in task contexts that are very similar to those from which the students were expected to complete the assignments. In addition to being able to independently study the subtitles for whatever length of time, the students were provided with control buttons that allowed them to fast-forward, rewind, play, stop, pause, and fast-forward each film. A comprehensive list of the videos that are available. Procedure: At the twice-monthly class meetings that were routinely scheduled, each pair of persons came together for

around two hours. These meetings were considered to be regular. 2. In order to carry out the investigation, computer laboratories were utilized. One individual from each dyad was assigned to each computer facility in order to eliminate the possibility of the members of the dyads interacting with one another in person. Every session, each couple was responsible for completing two tasks, which resulted in a total of A total of four assignments are available to complete. A ten-minute training session on how to use WebCT Vista and the online TBLL environment was provided to each and every student before the beginning of each activity. Immediately after receiving the instruction, every student made their way to the computer center that was designated for them in a manner that was completely arbitrary.

A total of fifty minutes was required for the pupils to finish each exercise. Where did the information come from from? For the purpose of completing the tasks that were assigned to them, the students utilized the messaging program, which resulted in the production of a transcript of their conversations. The absence of any other means of communication ensured that the transcript precisely recorded each and every comment that was made by the individuals who were conversing with each other during the course of their relationship. An investigation was carried out in which the transcripts of each of the 10 pairings were compared with regard to the kind of treatment that was administered. The ratio of negotiated turns to total turns is the dependent variable that will be investigated in this study. The term "turn" refers to the process by which the floor is passed from one student to another at each and every transition. In the context of negotiation, the term "negotiated turn" refers to a type of negotiation that is frequently observed and is characterized by the exchange of significant sequences (Smith 2003, page 39). It is possible to determine the level of significance that was formed through a series of conversations about meaning by adding up all of the exchanges that were agreed upon.

In contrast to Excerpt 2, which only includes two shifts, Excerpt 1 has a total of seven shifts that were resolved through the process of negotiation. Excerpt 1 has a larger density of instances of meaning negotiation than Excerpt 2, despite the fact that both Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 2 are sequences in which meaning is negotiated. Due to the fact that it suggested a probable relationship between the amount of conversation that was generated by the dyads in each group and the number of negotiated turns to total turns, the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns was selected as the dependent variable. To put it another way, it is possible that the dyads that are part of the experimental group engage in meaning negotiation during talks more frequently than they just talk more. It is possible that this will lead to a greater emphasis being placed on traversing meaning sequences. Previous research has shown that students who were provided with captioned videos shown a higher level of participation in discussions compared to students who were not provided with captioned films (Arslanyilmaz, 2007).

A ratio was determined for each pair of persons in order to eliminate the influence of the amount of talk that occurred between the individuals in the pair on the level of meaning negotiation that was produced. First, it was necessary to encode the data and count the occurrences of negotiated meaning sequences, the number of

turns (negotiated turns) that were contained within these sequences, and the total number of turns. This was done so that the proportion of negotiated turns out of the entire number of turns could be determined. The revised model that was developed by Varonis and Gass (1985) and Smith (2003) was utilized in order to make a determination regarding each instance of meaning negotiation. Both the trigger and the resolution are considered to be the two components of meaning sequence negotiation, according to the model.

According to the information presented in Excerpt 3, the trigger is the specific utterance or segment of speech that is delivered by the speaker that leads the audience to exhibit signals of perplexity (Varonis & Gass, 1985, page 74). There is a vast range of stimuli that have been documented in the published research. There are a variety of triggers that fall under this category. These triggers include task-related, lexical, syntactic, content, and task-related triggers (Smith, 2003); Doughty's theories on task complexity, phonetics, language, and discourse (as mentioned in Gonzalez-Lloret, 2003); and any aspect of the discourse, including its question-like nature (Varonis & Gass, 1985). The following five unique categories of stimuli were discovered by this study: There is a problem with the speaker's vocabulary, as evidenced by the fact that the listener misunderstood one of the words in Excerpt 3. An issue with the content was brought to light by the fact that the overall meaning of the prior message was either ambiguous or problematic in Excerpt 4. Due to the structure or grammar of the speaker's message, the listener was unable to comprehend what was being said in Excerpt 5. There is a difficult part of the assignment that is highlighted in excerpt 6, which illustrates that the task was challenging.

Last but not least, the discourse in Excerpt 7 was not coherent, which resulted in the speaker referring to the wrong pronouns or the audience and the speaker having different points of view. An signal, with the possibility of a response, a reaction to the response, a confirmation, and a reconfirmation are the components that make up the resolution phase of a negotiation of meaning sequence (Smith, 2003; Varonis & Gass, 1985). Written signals that conveyed a sense of confusion to the recipient were the indicators that were represented by the code I>. Responses that are indicated with the code show that the speaker made an effort to provide extra clarification regarding the issue that they were uncertain about. The responses that indicated a level of knowledge were labeled as RR+>, whereas the responses that indicated continuous difficulties in understanding the speaker's response were labeled as RR->. With the allocation of the code C> to confirmations, it was made clear that the audience member had reached a particular level of comprehension. Furthermore, the code RR+> was utilized in order to signify a good response. In the event that a confirmation received even a minimal response from the responder, the code "RC>" was applied to the confirmation.

In this study, the number and identification of each dyad's negotiation of meaning sequences were determined. These sequences included a T-I-R, T-I-R-RR, T-I-R-RR-C, and T-I-R-RR-C-RC. It was not included in the analysis of the data that the negotiation of meaning sequences that simply consisted of a T-I was performed.

In order to tabulate the total number of turns and negotiated turns for each dyad, the identified negotiated meaning sequences were utilized. The results of this tabulation are presented in Excerpts 1 and 2. For the purpose of calculating the ratio, the total number of turns was subtracted from the number of turns that were agreed upon.

Assurance of dependability

An independent rater used the same procedures that are described in this work to classify a random selection of ten percent of the language that was produced by dyads participating in either of the two treatment conditions. The purpose of this classification was to detect sequences of meaning negotiations. During the process of negotiating meaning sequences, the experimental group and the control group reached a consensus on 85 percent and 90 percent of the ratings for the turns that were negotiated, respectively.

Methodology for the Analysis of Data

For this particular investigation, a single independent group t-test with two tails was utilized. It is included as a dependent variable the percentage of total turns in each group that are negotiated in comparison to the entire number of turns. Within the context of the two-tailed t-test, there is a single dependent variable that is shared by both the experimental group and the control group. A two-tailed independent group t-test is utilized in order to compare the two sets of dependent variables. These dependent variables include the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns produced by students in the experimental group, as well as the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns created by students in the control group. Because distinct students in two different groups are responsible for determining the overall number of turns and the number of negotiated turns in each group, these two categories of dependent variables are not related to one another.

Results and Discussion

The metrics that pertain to the number of meaning sequence negotiations, total turns, negotiated turns, and the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns that were created by each dyad in the experimental group and the control group, respectively, are presented. Regarding more information. There are two components that make up the spectrum of negotiated meaning sequences: the ratios of negotiated turns to total turns, and the individual counts of negotiated turns and total turns. The data presented in Table 2 reveals that discussions of meaning sequences are responsible for 17% of the total turns that were produced by dyads belonging to the control group. The experimental group, on the other hand, was responsible for around thirty percent of their total turns by engaging in discussions of meaning sequences. Students engage in negotiated discourse for around twenty-five percent of their interactions when films with subtitles are displayed, as opposed to the reverse scenario when subtitles are not provided.

This discovery was made possible by the observation that students participate in negotiated discourse. The association between the percentage of turns that were negotiated and the groups that represented the independent variable was investigated using a t-test, which was carried out on samples that were independent of one another. When compared to dyads who did not have access to subtitled videos,

the table reveals that dyads that were provided with subtitled movies generated a significantly higher percentage of negotiated turns. The low variance within each group, which reflects the level of disparities among students prior to the experiment, can be attributed to the significant outcome, despite the fact that there were only a few people who participated in the study. At the very least, this can be attributed, at least in part, to the method of sample selection, which consisted of selecting individuals from a group of English language learners who were comparable to one another. The substantial conclusion is further strengthened by the significant range that exists between groups, as well as the discrepancies that exist in the average proportions of negotiated turns to total turns between students who watched the subtitled movies and those who did not. The students' lengthy exposure to the treatment resulted in a considerable increase in the effect size ($d = 2.82$) and created the observed large between-group variance.

This was the case because the students were continuously exposed to the therapy. In other words, the students were able to effectively complete four exercises within a total time investment of two hundred minutes, with each individual assignment receiving fifty minutes of their attention. During this period of time, the students who were part of the experimental group were provided with unfettered access to watch films with subtitles as many times as they desired. When compared to individuals who do not have access to subtitled movies in an online Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) environment, non-native speakers who have access to subtitled movies engage in a greater amount of meaning negotiation. This appears to provide an answer to the research inquiry that we have been conducting. Students are able to engage in more meaningful conversations during Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) when they familiarize themselves with the tasks by watching films with subtitles, according to the findings of the study. The findings presented here indicate that interventions aimed at increasing task familiarity either had no effect (Yule et al., 1992) or led to better performance for a control group that did not receive the intervention (Hardy & Moore, 2004; Robinson, 2001). This is in contrast to previous studies that have only explored this topic to a limited extent on a limited scale. On the other hand, these findings are in line with a growing body of research that suggests that the utilization of films for language teaching can be advantageous for a variety of purposes (Borras & Lafayette, 1994; Garza, 1991; Gass et al., 1999; Neuman & Koshinen, 1992; Révész & Han, 2006; Taylor, 2005). The usage of subtitled movies is a demonstration of how the capacity to communicate successfully can be improved.

This is because the use of subtitled movies enables students to concentrate their mental and attentional resources on comprehending the content rather than on the structure and meaning of the language. As a consequence of this, students chose to concentrate more on debating the significance of the task and developing the language that was required to describe their thoughts and feelings while they were working on the assignment. This result is consistent with the suggestions that were put up by Skehan (1996, 1998), Willis (2000), Robinson (2005), Ellis (2003), and Robinson (2001). These findings suggest that pre-task interventions may have a

negative impact on the efficacy of Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), which is an approach to language classroom instruction. Furthermore, other researchers have posed questions regarding the extent to which task-familiarization strategies reduce the cognitive complexity of tasks. As a result, they lessen the need for learners to participate in meaning negotiation, which may make it more difficult for them to achieve their subsequent learning objectives. According to the findings of our study, the utilization of subtitles in films has the potential to raise the amount of language that students produce and as well as boost their readiness to engage in comprehension through meaning negotiation.

The enhanced familiarity with the work that is obtained through the use of subtitles is probably the cause of this. When it comes to Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), the impact of task familiarity on students' participation and self-assurance may vary depending on the specifics of the activity as well as the learners themselves. When pupils are more familiar with a task, it can either increase their degree of involvement and confidence in the task, or it can reduce the amount of difficulty to the point where they no longer need to actively seek insight or comprehension. It is necessary to do additional research in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the potential of interventions that are designed to enhance task familiarity in Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) for a wide range of learners and types of tasks. It is necessary to do additional research in order to ascertain the conditions that are most conducive to the utilization of subtitled films in Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL). As an alternative to showing native speakers taking part in the same activity as the students, the research utilized subtitled films that focused on activities that were equivalent to those being performed by the students.

This decision was reached on the basis of the notion that utilizing activities that are similar to one another, as opposed to jobs that are identical, will assist in maintaining the complexity of TBLL. Nevertheless, in order to validate this concept, it is essential to do empirical research. Throughout the course of history, the process of producing films and using them as instructional tools for the purpose of teaching a second language has been fraught with considerable challenges. Despite this, the recent developments in technology have made it possible for language teachers to efficiently create films and incorporate them into virtual teaching sessions in a seamless manner. In addition, children have the ability to easily incorporate themselves into language learning tools that have been developed by specialists. Through the acquisition of a greater level of expertise in the utilization of this instrument within virtual language learning environments, our capacity to acquire knowledge through efficient methods such as Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) will be enhanced.

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