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# A Formative Evaluation of a Task-Based Conversation English Program

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## Abstract

A task-based approach to second language learning and teaching has been advocated by a number of contemporary authors, but has received little attention in terms of program evaluation. This study presents a formative evaluation of a three-year task-based conversation program designed for tertiary students in the Republic of Korea. Three task-based textbooks were produced, which (as with every other aspect of the program) were the subject of continuous reflection and modification, in which program design, implementation, and evaluation were a single formative process. A humanistic view of language learning as education was found to be appropriate for the student-centred emphasis of the task-based approach, and program goals promoted acquisition of long-term learning skills through development of student confidence, motivation, independence, and communicative competence. Assessment reflected these goals via self-evaluative and reflective methods. The program evaluation used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research, focusing on affective aspects of language learning and on the importance of student beliefs, perceptions and attitudes in the learning process. Research questions focused on positive attitude change in students and teachers as a marker of program success.

## I. INTRODUCTION

When the president of Andong National University (ANU – Republic of Korea) commissioned a Credit English Conversation Program (1996) for all university students in their first three years of study<sup>1</sup>, and in view of the writer's positive experiences using task-based methodology in ANU (1991-1994), this seemed an excellent opportunity to design and document a program that would address a problem identified by Long & Crookes:

No complete program that we know of has been implemented *and evaluated*<sup>2</sup> which has fully adopted even the basic characteristics of TBLT<sup>3</sup> ..., much less the detailed principles for making materials design and methodological decisions

*(Long & Crookes, 1993, p. 43).*

## II. PRINCIPLES

Examination of the literature reveals that choice of the task as the unit of syllabus analysis (Crookes & Gass, 1993) implies a shift from “synthetic” to “analytic” syllabi (White, 1988), from “Type A” to “Type B” syllabi (see Table 1 below), and from a “propositional” to a “process” syllabus paradigm (Breen, 1987a), the whole involving a student-centred focus on *performance*, *problem-solving* (learning skills), and *reflection* (self-evaluation). The task, rather than being a unit of grammar to be digested, or a collection of lexical items to be remembered, is a means of *using* the language (Widdowson, 1978) in order to learn the language (Allwright, 1984a). The task has *meaning* for students (Skehan, 1996a, p. 38) who have to solve communication problems, and that meaning, along with the authenticity in the use of real-life situations, becomes internalised as *linguistic competence*. Lastly, the *process* of understanding, performing and reflecting on the task produces a wealth of ‘real’ use of the target language (e.g., agreeing, suggesting, questioning, explaining, checking for understanding, asking for clarification), fostering learning in a cyclical, ongoing manner.

Teaching and learning concepts inherent in the ‘task-based’ approach have been summarised by Williams & Burden (1997) in terms of basic principles of education:

1. There is a difference between learning and education
2. Learners learn what is meaningful to them
3. Learners learn in ways that are meaningful to them
4. Learners learn better if they feel in control of what they are learning
5. Learning is closely linked to how people feel about themselves
6. Learning takes place in a social context through interactions with other people
7. What teachers do in the classroom will reflect their own beliefs and attitudes
8. There is a significant role for the teacher as mediator in the language classroom
9. Learning tasks represent an interface between teachers and learners
10. Learning is influenced by the situation in which it occurs

*(adapted from Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 204).*

## III. CURRICULUM

### 1. Issues

The problem for the author as program designer was how to build these considerations into a curriculum which would serve the affective needs and learning

preferences of students and teachers, which would provide ample learning content, which would be amenable to co-operative negotiation, and which would encourage development of the whole person. These issues were addressed by adapting a model of van Lier (1996), for whom the language curriculum is “a process of assisting learning” (1996, p. 4), with basic educational ideals and beliefs as “the central determining factors” (1996, p. 188). This model adopts the developmental psychology of Vygotsky (1978; 1986), in which learning occurs most effectively in the individual’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)<sup>4</sup> and is driven by social interaction with more capable peers or adults, equal peers, or less capable peers<sup>5</sup>. Thus students can benefit from working with peers of similar levels, as well as with the teacher. This concept is similar to Bruner’s (1966b) process of scaffolding, Piaget’s (1976) “grasp of consciousness”, work on intrinsic motivation by Deci *et al.* (1985), on achievement motivation by Heckhausen (1977), and on autotelic learning as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

## 2. An adaptation: CMI

**Table 1**  
Language Syllabus Design: Two types (White, 1988, p. 44)

Type A (Formal Syllabi): <u>“What is to be learnt?”</u>	Type B (Process Syllabi): <u>“How is it to be learnt?”</u>
Interventionist	Non-interventionist
External to the learner	Internal to the learner
Other-directed	Inner-directed or self-fulfilling
Determined by authority	Negotiated between learners and teachers
Teacher as decision-maker	Learner and teacher as joint decision-makers
Content = what the subject is to the expert	Content = what the subject is to the learner
Content = a gift to the learner from the teacher or knower	Content = what the learner brings and wants
Objectives defined in advance	Objectives described afterwards
Assessment by achievement or by mastery	Assessment in relationship to learners’ criteria of success
Doing things to the learner	Doing things for or with the learner

Van Lier’s curriculum model was adapted for the program at Andong by substituting “Confidence, Motivation, Independence” for van Lier’s primary “AAA” triad (*awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*), and “Consciousness, Meaning and Interaction”<sup>6</sup> for his subsidiary “AAA” triad (*achievement, assessment, accountability*). Where the primary triad acts on the “global level” of basic program principles, the subsidiary triad is concerned with the “local” learning environment (i.e., what happens in the classroom) and with short-term learning issues<sup>7</sup>. As with van Lier’s model, this new version addressed issues of curriculum content and “person-

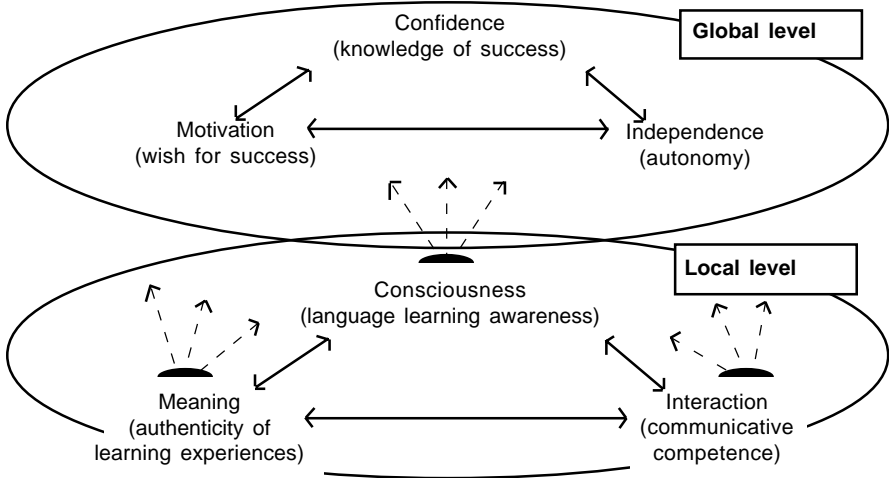
centred” curriculum design (Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Williams & Burden, 1997) by: i) following a process approach to learning; ii) being based upon a humanistic view of language learning as education; iii) emphasising interaction; and, iv) being founded in theory as well as practice (van Lier, 1996, p. 214).

The CMI curriculum is not a sequenced and pre-selected collection of linguistic goals, but a *process* (cf. White, 1988, p. 34), in which pedagogic decisions are referred to the first CMI triad on the “Global” (long-term, learning-for-life) level and to the second CMI triad at the “Local” (short-term, immediate task/interest/problem) level. It is an infrastructure in which teachers and students have freedom (and responsibility) to negotiate the syllabus and to decide how to implement it, assessing educational decisions for their potential to encourage and facilitate *confidence*, *motivation* and *independence*, and measuring learning activities by whether they promote *consciousness*, *meaning* and *interaction*. Elements in each triad interact with others at both levels, variously becoming input, process and outcome. On the long-term “global level” of the primary CMI triad, a general direction (learning awareness, goal-setting, using of learning strategies, communicative competence, self-direction - “Where am I going?”) emerges, but at the “local” subsidiary CMI level of immediate language-learning issues (“How am I getting there?”), changes and developments are unpredictable, as risk-taking, hypothesis-testing or assimilation of new language results in (for example) an increase in errors. Figure 1 (below) represents this CMI/CMI learning infrastructure as a collection of interacting processes, each of which can influence and be influenced by all (or any combination of) the others.

## IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS

In view of West’s (1994, p. 14) observation that “most needs analysis procedures do not begin to handle the leap between needs analysis and methods/materials selection or development”, and following Tudor’s (1996) suggestion that students and teachers explore learning needs together, the aim of needs analysis in this program was to help the students become aware of learning processes and to handle the “leap” of application through negotiation with the teacher (cf. Bloor & Bloor, 1988, p. 66-7). A number of instruments were used to monitor student needs and adapt the program accordingly (cf. research instruments 2, 4 & 5). However, a review of the literature suggested a continuous, cyclic approach, in which ongoing reflective instruments and learning strategies would match program principles by encouraging students to become aware of and continually reflect on their learning needs. In the gradual realisation of this approach, “objective” needs analyses in the first year of the program grew into a focus on study skills in the second year, and into more “subjective” analyses in the third year, by which time learning-awareness, objective-setting, and reflection were an integral part of the learning situation.

**Figure 1**  
The CMI curriculum



\*dotted lines represent various interactions between levels.

## V. THE SYLLABUS

### 1. Syllabus design

Breen & Candlin's (1990) syllabus design issues (Table 2, below) were addressed in an ongoing manner (learner training, reflection, self-assessment, teacher development, program feedback, etc.), the needs and opinions of the students being constantly monitored, and appropriate program adjustments made.

### 2. Syllabus goals

Willis (1996) offers five principles for the implementation of a task-based approach. These provide input, use, reflection on the input and use, and some attention to affect:

1. There should be exposure to worthwhile and authentic language.
2. There should be use of language.
3. Tasks should motivate learners to engage in language use.
4. There should be a focus on language at some points in a task cycle.
5. The focus on language should be more and less prominent at different times.

(Adapted from Willis, 1996)

Skehan (1998) also proposes five principles for task-based instruction, paying greater attention to affect, but still largely ignoring socio-cultural aspects:

1. Choose a range of target structures (learners do not simply learn what teachers teach. It is ineffective to choose a particular structure to be learned).
2. Choose tasks which meet the utility criterion (the teacher can only create appropriate conditions and hope the learners will avail themselves of the possibilities).
3. Select and sequence tasks to achieve balanced development.
4. Maximise the chances of a focus on form through attentional manipulation.
5. At initial stages of task use, conditions need to be established to maximise the chances of noticing.

*(Adapted from Skehan, 1998, p. 129-32)*

Willis' and Skehan's principles (above) provided a benchmark for the design of the interactive learning materials in this study. Desired learning outcomes of the syllabi were not specifically knowledge-based, but centred on the two affective/psycho-social/strategic (CMI) triads (section III), which were addressed (mostly implicitly) through the textbooks (section VI), themselves embodiments of the syllabi. There were notional, functional and grammatical "signposts" in the tables of contents of these books, which provided more "familiar" direction for teachers and students, but these were a means to an affective/humanistic/communicatively-competent end, rather than being an attempt to re-cover in scant classroom time linguistic content that had been previously studied in middle school and high school.

## VI. TEXTBOOKS

In-house texts using TBLT principles were designed and produced for each year of the program by the author and the then Director of the Language Centre at ANU, and were further adapted in consultation with teaching staff during the first three years of the program (1997, 1998, 1999). These books can be viewed online: <http://www.hogusan.com/tmm>; <http://www.hogusan.com/nyt>; <http://www.hogusan.com/twa>.

**Table 2**

Freshman syllabus design issues (based on Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 93-4)

<u>Syllabus design issues</u>	<u>Freshman students at ANU</u>
i) What communicative knowledge – and its affective aspects – does the learner already possess and exploit?	Students arriving from high school typically possess little communicative knowledge, and exhibit language-learning anxiety, along with lack of confidence, motivation and independence.
ii) What communicative abilities - and the skills which manifest them – does the learner already activate and depend upon in using and selecting from his/her established repertoire?	Communicative abilities and skills are generally undeveloped, and subject to a need to be “correct” according to grammatical rules.
iii) Can the performance repertoire of the learner’s first language be employed?	Use of “on-task” L1 performance repertoire is valid in problem-solving tasks.
iv) Can existing knowledge of and about the target repertoire be used?	Students typically possess an extensive vocabulary in the L2, though mostly unable (unwilling) to access it in conversation.
v) What is the learner’s own view of the nature of language?	Code-based, conforming to definable grammatical rules.
vi) What is the learner’s view of learning a language?	Grammar-translation approach. Learning a language means constructing utterances from discreet units and producing grammatically “correct” sentences.
vii) How does the learner define his/her own learning needs?	Development of oral skills, acquiring more grammar and vocabulary, improving pronunciation.
viii) What is likely to interest the learner both within the target repertoire and the learning process?	Conversation with native speakers; discussion of “authentic” topics such as

## VII. ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the students recognised research findings that learners do not “learn” what teachers “teach” (Allwright, 1984b) and that learner beliefs and perceptions determine the content and efficacy of learning, representing reality for the students (Rogers, 1951:484; Williams & Burden, 1996, p. 205; Cotterall, 1998; 2000). It was therefore decided to incorporate self-evaluation and reflection into the curriculum and to encourage students to monitor their progress through the program. In this way, a record of changes in perceptions would be constructed, providing information on how learners perceived their own learning progress and the program’s effectiveness.

Evaluative procedures in the present study thus began (1997) with criterion-referenced task-based oral tests of recently-studied learning content and (following teacher-led feedback and discussion) metamorphized through 1998 and 1999, gradually becoming integrated into the learning environment. Evaluation became a process of ongoing self-assessment and peer assessment, and “final” oral tests in years 1 & 2 (freshmen & sophomores) took on principles of “authentic testing” (Kohonen 1999), being designed to promote learning as well as providing feedback on that learning. In year 3 (juniors) the learner training emphasis was more pronounced, and “evaluation sessions” occurred four times during the year, taking the form of “learning conversations” (cf. Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991, p. 6) in which students discussed their goals and achievements and their learning plans for the future. These “final” tests and “conversations” were marked according to “range/fluency/delivery/ attitude/interaction” criteria (Lee, 1991, p. 280), but their share of the final grade was reduced (from 25% [1997] to 15% [1999]) and their purpose was acknowledged as providing information *for* the students rather than *about* them.

## VIII. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Teacher training is essential for the running of any program. In the pilot year of this study (1997) this meant offering training to teachers who had not applied to be members of a task-based team when they took their posts (prior to the setting up of the program). As the program expanded and progressed (1998, 1999) however, new applicants were able to browse the LC website (<http://plaza1.snut.ac.kr/~lc>) for information on the program, and training grew into development. Both functions were carried out in a non-prescriptive manner, providing the opportunity for explanation and direction, rather than imposing it, and applying the main goals of the program to the teachers themselves, by concentrating on confidence, motivation and independence (i.e., *confidence* in TBLT ideas and in their ability to use them, *motivation* to use them, and *freedom* to adapt them in their own ways).

## IX. EVALUATION

Given that “there is no innovation that is ‘teacher-proof’ or ‘student-proof’ ” (Parlett & Hamilton, 1975:153), it seemed appropriate to employ a multiple-research-method evaluation that could feed back into the teaching/learning process, helping to achieve the optimum learning environment, while attempting to describe the situation. Evaluation, in a formative and illuminative context, could thus be a valuable tool of program design, contributing to the growth of the evaluated program in an ongoing way. The program-evaluation method chosen was therefore “formative” (Breen & Candlin, 1980) and to some extent “illuminative” (Parlett 1981), since the program designer was also the evaluator, involved in the day-to-day running and development of the program:

A genuinely communicative use of evaluation will lead towards an emphasis on *formative* or ongoing evaluation rather than summative or end-of-course evaluation

(Breen & Candlin, 1980:105-6) .

Qualitative and quantitative results triangulated through questionnaires, interviews, learner journals and self-assessment instruments provided data on whether students became (i.e., perceived themselves as) more confident, motivated and independent as a measure of program success.

Six instruments were used to triangulate data over the years 1998-1999. These consisted of four quantitative/qualitative<sup>9</sup> questionnaires and two interviews/verbal reports (Cohen 1996). In addition to their research role, instruments 1, 2 and 3 were also integral formative components of the program, being consciousness-raisers (helping participants progress from awareness of beliefs to reflection on and modification of those beliefs, and to more efficient and effective learning) and providing data for the ongoing evaluation and transformation of the program. The research instruments are listed below:

1. Research instrument 1: "My abilities" (self-assessment), Appendix A.
2. Research instrument 2: Internal questionnaire (students), Appendix B.
3. Research instrument 3: Internal questionnaire (teachers), Appendix B.
4. Research instrument 4: External questionnaire, Table 3.
5. Research instrument 5: Student interviews, Appendix C.
6. Research instrument 6: Teacher interviews, Appendix D.

## X. RESULTS

### 1. Research instrument 1 (Appendix A)

Due to lack of space, examination of the research instruments and their implications is limited in this paper to a discussion of the results.

Data obtained from this instrument indicate a general enthusiasm for the program in the first year, with general self-perceptions of stepwise improvements in oral skills and a "cooling off" in the sophomore year. This could be attributed in some part to the fact that Korean university students typically become disillusioned with the university system in their second year and explore their new social situation, prior to renewing academic efforts in the junior year. However, there was also some feeling among teachers that students who had successfully taken on the innovations in learning in the first year were ready for the project-based approach of the third year<sup>10</sup>. The general can hide the specific, however, and closer examination of the data for research instrument 1 showed some interesting learning profiles: from the totally *unconfident* student (scoring 14 to 20 over the year) gradually discovering

that he/she *can* improve, to the 20-22 student who sees him/herself on a learning plateau, and to the 99-96 student whose (perhaps unrealistic) perceptions are gradually being revised. All of these scores provide useful information for the teacher, whose role is to talk to the student about them, discuss learning plans, and promote attitude modification.

## *2. Research instruments 2 & 3: student and teacher questionnaires (internal) (Appendix B)*

Apart from the general consensus that the program was helping students to speak in English (Item 34, section D, Appendix B), major differences in student/teacher opinions were apparent in various items from these two research instruments, confirming Hills' conclusion (1976, p. 28) that "students and teachers not only see their own needs in ways which differ from each other, but they also see each other's needs in a somewhat different light." Thus teachers in general saw more evidence of communication and participation (section A, Appendix B), greater development of learning strategies (section C), more confidence and enjoyment (section D), and less need for direction (section B). Students saw themselves as more punctual (section A), needing more communication activities, games, correction and grammar (section B), showing poor comprehension of the teacher (section C), lacking learning strategies (section D) and preferring streaming (section E). Given the focus on positive attitude change in the program, these results can seem disappointing, since it is evident that students in general did not perceive notable progress. However, the change in teacher attitude was marked, and it could be said that positive attitude change had begun with them.

## *3. Research instrument 4: student questionnaire (external).*

The university administered a course-assessment instrument to all students in all subjects in semesters 1/1998 and 2/1998, so that comparison with other programs in the university became a possibility for the present study, though it had not been included in the author's original plans<sup>11</sup>.

Immediately noticeable in Table 3 (above) is the fact that the Language Centre received the highest average score in the University (3.93) in June 1998 and that it increased that score to 3.99 in December 1998. This external instrument provides reassuring evidence on the perceived value of the language program, its methods and teachers, since it was administered to every student and was independent of the Language Centre. Results showed that students placed conversation classes above all other classes in the university in terms of the assessed topics, with only the Music/Arts/Physical Education Department matching scores in the second semester. While this instrument gave no specific information in terms of CMI, it made it evident that students valued the English program highly.

#### *4. Research instrument 5: student interviews (Appendix C)*

Results for research instrument 5 (student interviews) showed evidence of:

1. intrinsic motivation for learning English. “Get a job” was first in the list of long-term goals, and English was an increasingly popular means of doing this. Studying English was also seen as important because of its international nature (question 3);
2. awareness of the importance of confidence and motivation. It was notable that some students chose “lack of confidence” and “lack of effort” as their learning problems (question 4), since these reflected goals of the program;
3. language-learning awareness. Also interesting were the responses to question 5, in which students talked of “speaking, listening, reading”, “trying and trying”, and “continue studying”. Although these ideas show general non-directed study-skills ideas, the fact that they were more popular than “studying TOEIC<sup>12</sup>”, “studying vocabulary” and “go to an institute”, was notable in the Korean situation, and indicative of gradual rejection of generally accepted “truths” about language learning;
4. favourable perception of teaching methods. It was notable that responses concerning the English class itself were consistently positive (question 7), despite students’ low perceptions of their abilities (question 6);
5. lack of direction in terms of learning strategies. It was evident that teachers had noticed their students becoming more confident, motivated, independent, and communicatively competent, but also evident that students were not noticing this.

#### *5. Research instrument 6: teacher interviews (Appendix D)*

Structured interview sessions with all teachers on the program were conducted in semesters 1 & 2 of the 1999 academic year. These examined changing perceptions of the program and its efficacy, using a 9-point research instrument (Appendix D). Topics on this instrument reflected issues which had been identified in teachers’ meetings, informal conversations with teachers, and reflective teacher-observations, as relevant to the program. Positive attitude change on the part of the teachers was evident in research instrument 3, but it was especially noticeable in research instrument 6, question 5: “Have you noticed any attitude changes in yourself during the program?” Not only did teachers notice their opinions and attitudes changing in favour of the program ethos, but they were happy to acknowledge this:

I think my role as a teacher has certainly changed from controller to the other side of the spectrum.

I think I’m more positive towards letting the students make decisions in class. ... It’s been really weird for me to do that. ... Sometimes I feel bad

**Table 3**  
University student questionnaire, June 1998

Questions	Depts.								
	Fine Arts	Social Sciences	Education	Natural Sciences	Engineering	Living Science	Music, Arts, Phys. Ed.	Lang. Centre	Computer Studies
1. Students understand the overall course plan.	*3.43	3.45	3.39	3.54	3.42	3.45	3.49	<b>3.52</b>	3.25
2. Teachers explain the object of each class.	3.62	3.65	3.48	3.69	3.63	3.63	3.7	<b>3.83</b>	3.55
3. Teachers explain the contents of each class.	3.66	3.66	3.56	3.72	3.62	3.65	3.68	<b>3.89</b>	3.52
4. Teachers try to develop motivation in the students.	3.58	3.61	3.56	3.54	3.56	3.51	3.63	<b>4.05</b>	3.31
5. The teacher does his/her best in class.	3.95	3.95	3.84	3.92	3.84	3.86	3.87	<b>4.21</b>	3.6
6. Lesson preparation.	3.86	3.87	3.84	3.98	3.79	3.86	3.83	<b>4.18</b>	3.52
7. Teachers use the full 50 minutes of the lesson.	3.99	4.01	3.99	3.9	3.97	3.96	3.91	<b>4.28</b>	3.4
8. Teachers respect the students' opinions.	3.91	3.72	3.63	3.65	3.73	3.55	3.72	<b>4.03</b>	3.45
9. The text and teaching materials are appropriate.	3.51	3.56	3.50	3.62	3.53	3.54	3.6	<b>3.85</b>	3.29
10. The grading/assessment method is appropriate.	3.65	3.68	3.6	3.7	3.66	3.55	3.77	<b>3.87</b>	3.41
11. The teacher informs students of the assessment methods.	3.57	3.59	3.66	3.76	3.7	3.56	3.69	<b>4.1</b>	3.49
12. Student interest and attention in the classes is improving.	3.4	3.38	3.27	3.36	3.35	3.39	3.57	<b>3.68</b>	3.36
13. The students feel that they are learning new things.	3.71	3.75	3.66	3.68	3.69	3.47	3.76	<b>3.71</b>	3.65
14. The students are satisfied with the classes.	3.59	3.59	3.48	3.56	3.51	3.54	3.67	<b>3.81</b>	3.41
15. The classes are valuable.	3.7	3.71	3.64	3.63	3.67	3.65	3.77	<b>3.94</b>	3.61
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.675</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.606</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.611</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.45</b>

*\*Mean scores from 0 (minimum) to 5 (maximum)*

because I'm not standing in front of the class talking to them. ... I'm still working on that paradigm shift in my head.

At first I didn't really buy into your ideas ... This year I am really happy with the program.

Concepts such as student confidence, motivation and independence figured prominently in these conversations, with teachers speaking of students being "always willing to speak English":

I've seen noticeable increases in their willingness to have conversations in English, and some classes have gone from not being particularly interested ... to being pretty hungry for it. Now they always come to class on time and are very enthusiastic and are rightfully proud of their accomplishments.

There was little focus on teaching methods or personalities, and more talk of the program achieving its goals: "The way the program is organised, the content helps to achieve these goals anyway". Teachers agreed that CMI goals were being achieved, especially for freshman students (though there were reservations in terms of sophomore students), and a number of statements indicated that teachers subscribed to the value of CMI as teaching/learning goals. One teacher linked the three in a causal relationship, with trust at the starting point:

I see trust in the students. The trust inspires confidence, the confidence inspires motivation, and the motivation inspires learning.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

### *1. Findings*

The task-based English Conversation program, which is the subject of this study, used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research, focusing on affective aspects of language learning, and on the importance of student beliefs, perceptions and attitudes in the learning process. There were four major findings of the investigation:

1. The task-based approach to teaching and learning is effective in developing communicative competence in "false beginner" students in Korea.
2. Language learning is positively affected by: i) promotion of learner autonomy; ii) attention to affect; iii) a sensitive classroom environment; and, iv) participant relationships built on mutual trust and respect.

3. Learner (and teacher) beliefs are important determiners of learning and can be positively modified through learner training and teacher training.
4. Formative evaluation is an effective method of program development.

## 2. *An extension of the process paradigm*

The study can be seen as a feasibility study, in that a program was designed according to learner-centred principles, implemented in a holistic language-as-education setting, and formatively evaluated, all of these processes interacting and producing a workable framework for learning which continued (with the same books) after the author left the establishment. However, what has also emerged from this study is a new way of looking at the language classroom: not only an affective extension of the process paradigm described by Breen (1987b), but also a complex, or “chaotic” extension of the education paradigm in general (cf. Houghton, 1989). In this dual-extension, higher structures of learning (CMI) emerge in a dynamic, complex, trust-based learning environment, in which linguistic aspects (accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, etc.) are important as media for acquisition of learning (and social) skills (Aoki, 1999, p. 154), and which are demonstrated in changing perceptions and beliefs regarding the nature of learning and of language.

If we ask to what extent this was generalisable (i.e., would another research team, dealing with similar students/teachers/conditions/etc. have similar results?), complexity theory (Waldrop, 1992) tells us that minimal differences in input can produce large differences in outcome, and that the question, in this form, is meaningless. If we examine the question in broader terms, however, asking whether a similar approach would produce equivalent growth and positive attitude change, then observations, beliefs and perceptions built up over the period of research suggest an affirmative response – that a task-based program which recognises the special *process* nature of task-based learning, which sees the language classroom as a dynamic complex learning environment, which sees “education-of-the-whole-person” as implicit in TBLL<sup>13</sup> (Finch, 1999), which reflects upon and transforms itself through formative evaluation, *and* which fosters unconditional trusting relationships between participants, will be in continuous transition (growth), and will encourage attitude change (including beliefs and perceptions) in its participants. This change will be positive in terms of learning effectiveness (for the students) and in terms of professional practices (for the teachers), though outcomes will be unpredictable at the local level, and the changes in learner-teacher relationships will probably involve a politic reappraisal of “power of control in interpersonal relationships” (Rogers, 1980, p. 294; cf. Aoki, 1999, p. 154; van Lier, 1996, p. 167) and of the hegemony of ideas that native speakers of English often take for granted (cf. Phillipson, 1992:72).

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Undergraduates in Korea are required to study for four academic years before graduating, though most male students do their compulsory military service (six months to two years) during this time, and can therefore take up to six years to graduate.*
- <sup>2</sup> *Original italics.*
- <sup>3</sup> *Task-Based Language Teaching.*
- <sup>4</sup> *The ZPD represents the next stage in the learning process for any given individual: “the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish with support from someone else and/or cultural artefacts (Lantolf 2000:17). in the belief that we learn by teaching.*
- <sup>6</sup> *The similarity of van Lier’s AAA/AAA symmetry and the CMI/CMI repetition is unintentional.*
- <sup>7</sup> *The two CMI triads were found appropriate for ANU students after preliminary needs analyses and a survey of Korea-based literature.*
- <sup>8</sup> *The website has been moved to Seoul National University of Technology and further developed. i.e. questionnaires giving quantitative data about qualitative perceptions.*
- <sup>9</sup> *This idea is currently being researched by the author.*
- <sup>10</sup> *This was the first time such an instrument had been administered in the university.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Test Of English for International Communication*
- <sup>12</sup> *TBLL = Task-Based Language Learning*
- <sup>13</sup> *The number of wrong guesses is used to indicate the strategy of guessing. The investigator assumes that guessing correctly also occurred, but because these items could not be determined, only the number of wrong guesses is used to indicate guessing. Given the likelihood that correct guesses were also made, guessing may be the most frequently utilized strategy.*

## The Author

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# Appendix A: Research instrument 1

## “My English ability” - 20 Questions

In the following table, please check (i) the answers which suit your English abilities best.

A = “This would not be a problem.”

D = “I would find this very difficult.”

B = “I could answer after some thought.”

E = “I wouldn’t be able to do this at all.”

C = “I would need a little time to think.”

### **A If I meet an English Native-Speaker, .....**

**A B C D E**

- 1 I can greet him/her.
- 2 I can introduce myself.
- 3 I can talk about my family.
- 4 I can talk about my school/job.
- 5 I can talk about my hobbies.
- 6 I can talk about my room/office.
- 7 I can talk about my hometown.
- 8 I can talk about my country.
- 9 I can give directions.

### **B If I visit an English-speaking country, .....**

**A B C D E**

- 10 I can ask for directions.
- 11 I can buy a train/bus/plane ticket.
- 12 I can buy food from the supermarket.
- 13 I can buy clothes.
- 14 I can order a meal at a restaurant.
- 15 I can reserve a room in a hotel.
- 16 I can ask for information on the phone.
- 17 I can use the Post Office/Bank.
- 18 I can talk to native speakers.
- 19 I can read English newspapers.
- 20 I can understand road maps and signs.

**Now make your score. A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2; E = 1**

A		B		C		D		E	
How many		How many		How many		How many		How many	
X 5		X 4		X 3		X 2		X 1	

My total score is ..... points.

## Appendix B: Research Instruments 2 & 3 (originally in Korean and English):

### A. My contribution in class:

Always Sometimes Never

1. "I speak in English in class."
2. "I give ideas to my group."
3. "I participate in the activities."
4. "I ask the teacher for help when I need it."
5. "I ask classmates for help when I need it."
6. "I help my classmates when they ask me."
7. "I come to class on time."
8. "I do the homework."
9. "I visit the teacher's office."
10. "I send emails to the teacher."

### B. The Lessons (1).

#### "Do we need more of anything?"

We need  
more

This  
is OK

We need  
less

11. Talking in English (discussion)
12. Communication activities  
(pair-work, information gap)
13. Listening activities
14. Language games
15. Help from the teacher
16. Correction from the teacher
17. Grammar
18. Discussion
19. Homework
20. Advice from the teacher

### C. The Lessons (2) (The teacher)

Yes Maybe No

21. "The teacher works hard to help us speak English."
22. "The teacher knows our learning needs."
23. "The teacher respects us as people."
24. "The teacher makes interesting classes for us."
25. "The teacher wants us to study hard."
26. "The teacher emphasizes punctuality."
27. "The teacher shows us our mistakes."
28. "The teacher shows us our successes."
29. "The teacher talks to us out of class."
30. "The teacher shows us how to be good learners."
31. "I can understand everything the teacher says."
32. "My teacher makes it easy for me to learn English."
33. "I am satisfied with my teacher."

## Appendix B (continued)

- | D. "The English lessons in the Language Center ....        | Yes | Maybe | No |
|--|-----|-------|----|
| 34. "...help me speak English.                             |     |       |    |
| 35. "...help me for my future life (career, study abroad). |     |       |    |
| 36. "...help me understand other cultures."                |     |       |    |
| 37. "...give me confidence to use English."                |     |       |    |
| 38. "...give me a chance to talk to foreign teachers."     |     |       |    |
| 39. "...help me study English by myself."                  |     |       |    |
| 40. "...help me think about my learning goals."            |     |       |    |
| 41. "...help me become a good learner."                    |     |       |    |
| 42. "...make me want to continue studying English."        |     |       |    |
| 43. "...help me in my other studies."                      |     |       |    |

- | E. General.   | Yes | Maybe | No |
|---|-----|-------|----|
| 44. "The textbook is OK for my level."                      |     |       |    |
| 45. "The textbook is too easy for me."                      |     |       |    |
| 46. "The textbook makes English interesting."               |     |       |    |
| 47. "I have improved my English speaking skills this year." |     |       |    |
| 48. "I am more confident about speaking English now."       |     |       |    |
| 49. "I enjoy English more now."                             |     |       |    |
| 50. "I want a special "High-level" English class."          |     |       |    |
| 51. "I want a special "Basic-level" English class."         |     |       |    |
| 52. "I want classes to be chosen by the level of the        |     |       |    |
| 53. "I want many different levels in one class."            |     |       |    |
| 54. "I want English to be a selective course."              |     |       |    |
| 55. "I want English to be a required course."               |     |       |    |
| 56. "I want more English classes."                          |     |       |    |
| 57. "I want fewer English classes."                         |     |       |    |

### Appendix C: Research Instrument 5 (originally in English and Korean)

1. What are your long-term goals?
2. What are your short-term goals?
3. Why do you need English?
4. What are your learning problems?
5. How can you solve your learning problems?
6. How do you feel about your speaking skills?
7. How do you feel about your English class?
8. How do you feel about pair-work in the class?
9. How do you feel about group-work in the class?
10. How do you feel about the classroom?
11. How do you feel about homework?

## Appendix D: Research instrument 6

1. Is the program achieving its goals (student confidence, motivation, independence)?
2. How do you feel about these goals?
3. Is the program helping the students to develop their oral skills in English?
4. Have you noticed any attitude changes in the students during the program?
5. Have you noticed any attitude changes in yourself during the program?
6. What do you need more of as a teacher on this program (support, training, etc.)
7. How important is supportive management for this program?
8. Have you noticed problems that need to be addressed?
9. How can the program progress from this point?