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CODE-SWITCHING VS. ENGLISH-ONLY: A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF TASK-BASED ACTIVITIES ON LEARNERS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

[a]Irum Fatima, [b]Zahid Hussain Pathan, [c]Hina Durrani, [d]Muhammad Imran Bhatti

[a]Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Pakistan.
Email: fatimairum01@gmail.com
[b]Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics & Philology, University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan.
Email: pathanzahid82@gmail.com
[c]Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Pakistan.
Email: hinadurrani111@yahoo.com
[d]Assistant Professor, Department of linguistics and Philology,University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan
Email: simplytell@gmail.com

Abstract

The potentially beneficial role of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in learning the English language is gradually becoming acknowledged in second language acquisition (SLA) research and communication. To this end, few interventional studies have attempted to investigate how to help language learners enhance their WTC in the English language. Drawing on the principles of task-based language teaching, this mixed-methods research primarily aimed to investigate the impact of task-based oral activities on Pakistani undergraduates' WTC in the English language by randomly recruiting three intact classes. By integrating English-only and code-switching practices into the intervention, this study sought to test the effectiveness of two distinct mediums of communication within task-based learning settings for constructing a framework related to learners' WTC. To analyze the quantitative data, Independent Samples t-test, Paired Samples t-test, One-way ANCOVA, and One-way MANCOVA were performed in SPSS (version 24). The findings of the study showed that the mean WTC scores of both experimental groups significantly improved after participating in task-based activities compared to the mean WTC score of the control group. However, the results also showed that the task group with code-switching exhibited greater improvement in their WTC than the task group with English-only. Thus, task-based activities with code-switching exerted a greater impact on learners' WTC than those who participated in task-based oral activities with English-only. Based on the results of this study, Pakistani English language teachers are recommended to adapt or integrate task-based language teaching with existing teaching methods in Pakistan to cultivate learners' WTC

Keywords: *Task-based language teaching, Willingness to communicate, Experimental study.*

Introduction

The potentially beneficial and recognizable role of teaching English as a second language (ESL) is to produce learners with a better understanding, communication, and performance in the target language (Dörnyei, 2001). Similarly, modern teaching and learning have emphasized the overarching importance of cultivating communicative competence among foreign/second language learners. Therefore, ESL classrooms should encourage teacher-student and student-student interaction by implementing "authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks" (Brown, 2001, p.42). Such a milieu is likely to promote learners' willingness to talk and

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learn, which is enormously crucial for learning languages. In a similar vein, Peng (2007) asserts, "Pedagogic goals should be to increase learners' L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) so as to facilitate language learning" (p.33)

It is essential to study language learners' WTC, as it is one of the key factors for ensuring positive English learning outcomes (Lin, 2019), and it refers to a learner's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (Dörnyei, 2001). Despite the growing concern about learners' WTC, what is not yet clear is how to facilitate L2 learners to enhance their WTC for effective L2 acquisition. In this regard, Kang (2005) asserts, "WTC needs to be an important component of SLA and L2 pedagogy" (p. 291), and it needs to be studied in relation to instructional contexts (Mirsane & Khabiri, 2016). Given the extensive existing studies on WTC, there are still relatively few studies on WTC in relation to instructional contexts. For instance, the findings of the experimental study by Cutrone and Beh (2018) revealed that task-based activities had a positive significant impact on Japanese university English language learners' (ELLs) WTC.

Due to its indispensable role in cultivating language learners' communicative abilities, TBLT has lately received considerable attention in research (Cutrone & Beh, 2018; Ellis, 2017). The reason why it has garnered this attention is that TBLT primarily focuses on learners' communicative abilities in the target language rather than form (Ellis, 2018). According to Brown (2001) and Willis (2012), TBLT is defined as a method that includes inquiry-based, meaningful, and real-world activities. The tenets of TBLT require language teachers to design meaningful and real-world language learning tasks to encourage students' communication. In a similar vein, Richards and Rodgers (2004) assert that "engaging learners in task work provides a better context for the activation of learning processes" (p. 223).

In TBLT-based activities, students are required to complete assigned language learning tasks using the English language (Richards & Rodgers, 2004). However, some students in English classrooms employ code-switching between English and their first language due to their limited proficiency in English (Vrikki, 2013). Code-switching is defined as a phenomenon of switching from one language to another within the same discourse (Nunan, 2004). In the present study, code-switching refers to students' code-switching between English and Urdu. Code-switching by students takes place at the sentence level, phrase level, or complete switching in a long narrative (Macaro et al., 2012). Code-switching is also differentiated from code-mixing. Code-switching occurs when a speaker completely switches from one language to another at the sentence level with accurate grammatical structure whereas code-mixing refers to borrowing a single word or phrase from another language with similar semantic and grammatical usage. In other words, in code-mixing, a speaker borrows a word or phrase from another language to convey a message simply alternating within a sentence. However, code-switching is largely employed by English language learners when they experience difficulties expressing themselves in the target language.

In the context of Pakistan, English language learners make use of code-switching regardless of their proficiency level (Syed & Kuzborska, 2018). As code-switching is a common phenomenon in English classrooms whether code-switching facilitates or debilitates students' WTC in task-based activities in English is yet to be studied in the context of Pakistan. The findings of such a study may provide awareness to English language teachers about whether allowing students' code-switching in task-based activities is beneficial in fostering their WTC in English.

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Given the research lacuna, the present study proposes the following research questions:

1. Is there any statistically significant difference between the WTC post-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by task-based activities with English-only and the control group?
2. Is there any statistically significant difference between the WTC post-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by task-based activities with code-switching and the control group?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between the WTC post-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by task-based activities with English-only and the experimental group taught by task-based activities with code-switching?

Literature Review

Task-based language Teaching (TBLT)

TBLT is explained as a pedagogical approach that uses interactive, collaborative, and communicative tasks as a dominant feature of its instructional delivery (Bygate, 2016; Nunan, 2004; Long, 2015). In TBLT, learners are involved in purposeful tasks in order to make their communication meaningful and their language usage real-world and non-linguistic. It is also considered that learners acquire language better if they are helped with task outcomes rather than language forms. Therefore, instead of focusing on language forms and functions, learners are provided with communicative tasks aiming at meaningful and problem-solving activities (Ellis, 2003). Consequently, communicative tasks are thought to be essential components in TBLT syllabus design (Long, 2015). A task is explained as "an activity in which meaning is considered important, real-world activities are introduced, task completion is necessary, and task outcome reveals efficiency in task performance" (Skehan, 1998, p. 95).

The first and leading aim of using tasks in TBLT is to engage and motivate students in actual language use, Second, tasks are helpful in postulating, focusing on, and addressing students' language needs (Long, 2015). Third, tasks allow learners to understand and comprehend how language is used within a given situation and how to incorporate new language meaningfully and communicatively (Bygate, 2016). Lastly, communicative tasks are compatible with processes thought to be involved in SLA (e.g., those relating to incidental and implicit learning) (Long, 2015).

According to Ellis and Shintani (2014), TBLT is a sophisticated extension of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. CLT approaches are considered substitutes for traditional teaching approaches, like the audio-lingual and grammar-translation approaches (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 149). The actual aim of task-based language teaching is to enhance learners' communicative competence by involving them in meaningful communication during task performance and completion. Ellis and Shintani (2014) highlighted that fostering communicative competence growth relates to students' linguistic (i.e., acquiring new language) and interactional competence (i.e., using the target language to participate in discourse). Although TBLT focuses on constructing and comprehending messages, a key principle of TBLT is that students must attend to form to complete the task.

Code-Switching

The central idea of code-switching is the ability to switch between languages. In code-switching, "code" refers to "any kind of system that two or more people employ for communication" (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2014, p. 84). Code-switching is "going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same languages" (Cook, 2001, p. 83). Regardless of the advantages and disadvantages of L1 in EFL classrooms, research also shows that in many countries, there is a significant amount of L1 used in

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classrooms (Lu, 2015). Researchers (e.g., Dong & Zhu, 2007; Turnbull, 2001) argue that, regardless of how little L1 is meant to be used, if there is a chance to use L1, students are likely to take it because of their familiarity with L1 and lack of familiarity with English. At the same time, in many countries, EFL teachers are not native English speakers. Therefore, as bilinguals, they might sometimes switch to L1 if they see that students do not understand what they are explaining. Additionally, teachers might also intentionally use L1 in class to ensure that complex topics are addressed properly.

Code-switching has been widely studied in two different fields: bilingual studies and SLA studies (Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003). In the field of bilingual studies, code-switching is studied in naturalistic contexts and viewed as an asset and a valuable addition to bilingual speakers (Macaro, 2005). In an early study on naturalistic code-switching, Poplack (1980), who followed a bilingual Puerto Rican community in New York City, identified three different types of code-switching. The first was inter-sentential switching, occurring between clauses. More specifically, inter-sentential switching occurs when a whole sentence is expressed in one language and the following sentence occurs in another language. The second type of code-switching was intra-sentential code-switching, which occurs within clauses. An intra-sentential switch is when a sentence begins in one language and finishes in another. Finally, the third type of code-switching identified by Poplack (1980) was tag-switching, which refers to instances where a tag from a different language is included. This is similar to inter-sentential code-switching, with the difference being that the tag is free from syntactical constraints. However, the problem with this distinction of types of code-switching is that they refer to clauses or sentences rather than utterances that people usually speak in. In naturalistic contexts, it is less likely to encounter conversations consisting of full sentences.

The use of code-switching is a quite frequent phenomenon in second or foreign language learning classrooms. Both teachers and students greatly employ code-switching due to its various functions. In a similar vein, Lu (2015) also assert that “the use of code-switching is commonly found even in learning milieus where language-in-education policies are designed to promote the English language and ‘control or eradicate’ students’ use of their L1” (p. 169). Drawing on this evidence, some studies have attempted to explore the functions of code-switching that seem to benefit English language learners. According to Macaro (2005), there are similarities in the functions of code-switching explored in different learning contexts. Table 1 presents an overview of the six functions of code-switching summarized by Sampson (2011, p. 5):

Table 1 *Functions of Code-switching*

Functions	Description
Equivalence	‘Equivalence’ code-switches are those that appear to be triggered by the absence of the lexical item in the learners’ interlanguage.
Metalanguage	While learners usually perform tasks in English, discussion about the tasks and other procedural concerns are often articulated in L1.
Floor holding	This code-switching function is used by learners wishing to continue without pausing or being interrupted, and so a switch from L2 to L1 occurs because the item can be retrieved more quickly in L1.
Reiteration	L1 is used when messages have already been expressed in L2, yet are highlighted or clarified in L1, particularly in cases where they are perceived to have not been understood.
Socializing	These switches appear to develop a sense of group solidarity, often occurring in gossip and jokes.

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L2 avoidance	These switches occur when a learner appears to have the linguistic resources to convey the message in L2, but instead chooses to do so in L1.

As bilinguals are considered to have more metalinguistic awareness than monolinguals, teachers should be tolerant toward students' use of code-switching and exploit their students' L1 knowledge for the sake of performing contrastive analysis between L1 and English. Similarly, Macaro (2005) asserts that teachers being strict with students' use of L1 would impede students' learning because they would not be able to use their available L1 repertoire to learn the target language. Hence, students will surely benefit from developing their translation ability because that is a competence that students will require outside a typical language learning context as well (Macaro, 2005). In fact, students strive to gain proficiency in the English language rather than becoming like native speakers. Thus, code-switching should not be banned since L2 users tend to code-switch on a daily basis.

Therefore, the role of code-switching is to facilitate rather than debilitate learners' English language learning. Similarly, Uys and Van Dulm (2011) state that code-switching also seems to serve numerous academic functions in language classrooms, such as helping students with limited proficiency in the target language, clarifying complex and difficult sentence meanings, and managing classrooms.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

In the beginning, WTC was regarded as a personality-based predisposition to communicate with others in native English speakers. McCroskey (1997) defined WTC as "an individual's predisposition to initiate communication with others" (p. 77). WTC is an individual's volitional act or behaviour to initiate communication (McCroskey, 1997). Earlier, the concept of WTC was associated with one's behavioral predisposition to initiate communication with others. Initially, the concept of WTC was studied among native speakers of the English language and was defined as "an individual's predisposition to initiate communication with others" (McCroskey, 1997, p. 77).

Previous research has largely studied L2 WTC that supports MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model. Recent studies have also explored the dynamic nature of L2 WTC by conceptualizing it with both individual and situation-specific non-linear variables.

In an attempt to suggest a pedagogical package to cultivate learners' WTC, Roohani, Forootanfar, and Hashemian (2017) explored the effect of input vs. collaborative output tasks on Iranian EFL learners' grammatical accuracy and their WTC. To do so, the study utilized 3 input tasks (i.e., textual enhancement, processing instruction, and discourse) and 3 collaborative output tasks (i.e., dictogloss, reconstruction cloze task, and jigsaw) and compared their effects on 5 English grammatical structures (used to, too, enough, wish, and past tense). Data were collected through the administration of a grammar test and WTC questionnaire to 50 intermediate students in Iran as a pre-test and post-test. The results of inferential analyses showed that students in both groups showed significant improvement in their grammatical accuracy. However, the experimental group that received output-based instructions exhibited a more significant increase in their WTC than those who received input-based instructions. These results suggest that learners' WTC can be significantly boosted when they are exposed to communicative activities in English classrooms.

Notwithstanding a plethora of research on L2 WTC, very little is known about how TBLT actually influences the EFL classroom in practical terms. In a quasi-experimental study conducted in the Japanese context, Citroen and Beh (2018) examined whether TBLT was effective enough to boost EFL students' WTC. For this purpose, they formed two groups: one experimental group that received TBLT-based instruction and a control group that received other instruction. The results suggested that experimental group students who received TBLT-

based instruction showed a more significant increase in their WTC than the control group students, who showed a slight, insignificant change in their WTC score on the post-test. This study yielded results that support the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing English language learners' WTC. The findings of this research are important for the present research. As TBLT seems to bolster WTC, the extent to which TBLT is effective in enhancing learners' WTC in other contexts is not known. Therefore, studies need to be carried out in different social and learning contexts to produce more evidence regarding the role of TBLT in increasing L2 learners' WTC (Citroen & Beh, 2018).

In another study, Vrikki (2013) investigated the potentially beneficial role of code-switching and English-only in task-based activities in enhancing L2 learners' WTC. This study examined whether code-switching could be used as a tool within task-based learning settings for the development of second language (L2) oral fluency. It was hypothesized that by allowing learners to code-switch during task completion, their WTC could be enhanced. In this quasi-experimental research, the students were allocated to three groups. The code-switching group was allowed to switch to Greek while completing the tasks. The English-only group completed the tasks strictly under L2 conditions and repeated them with feedback on accuracy. The findings of the study showed that the code-switching group performed significantly better than both the other two groups on the L2 syllables measure after the intervention. On the contrary, the English-only group did not perform better than the other two groups in terms of accuracy; it was concluded that feedback on accuracy is not an effective way to increase accuracy in L2. In other words, learners' WTC was enhanced with the incorporation of code-switching in performing language learning tasks.

Vrikki's (2013) study was the first of its kind to examine code-switching in task-based activities to enhance learners' WTC. Although this study found that the experimental group with code-switching exhibited higher WTC than the other two groups, these findings cannot be generalized in other contexts, particularly in the context of Pakistan. Most importantly, Vrikki's (2013) study was carried out on school students; therefore, its findings cannot be generalized to tertiary-level students. Therefore, the current study fills this gap by investigating the impact of TBLT on university students' WTC in the context of Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This study followed the quasi-experimental research design to examine the impact of task-based activities on English language learners' WTC. To this end, three groups were constituted, i.e., two experimental groups and a control group. The two experimental groups participated in task-based activities with different instructions. The first experimental group was instructed to use English only in performing the task-based activities, whereas the second experimental group (code-switching group) was allowed to use code-switching between Urdu and English in carrying out the task-based activities. The third group was the control group, which did not receive any intervention or treatment and followed their routine practices of learning the English language in a traditional way. The quasi-experimental research design followed in the present study is illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2 *Pre-test and Post-test Group Instructional Format*

Group	Pretest	Intervention Approach	Posttest
C	Y_1	-	Y_2
E_1	Y_1	X_1	Y_2
E_2	Y_1	X_2	Y_2

Note: C = control group; E_1 = Experimental group one; E_2 = experimental group two 2; X_1 = treatment following task-based language learning activities with English-only; X_2 = treatment

following task-based language learning activities with code-switching; Y_1 = pretest; Y_2 = posttest.

Participants

The population for the present study was undergraduate students enrolled in a public university situated in Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan, Pakistan. This study involved a total of 163 student participants. The present quasi-experimental research randomly recruited these students from three intact classes in three different departments of a public university in Quetta, a metropolitan city in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. The three intact classes were randomly divided into three groups: an experimental group with English only, an experimental group with code-switching, and a control group. All three departments offered a compulsory English course titled "Communication Skills". Although no random sampling procedure is involved in quasi-experimental research design (Creswell, 2012), the present study randomly selected the three groups (a control group and two experimental groups), which also introduced an element of randomization into the study.

The first experimental group with English only as a medium of communication included 54 students from the Department of Microbiology, whereas the second experimental group with code-switching as a medium of communication included 55 students from the Department of Economics, and a total of 54 students from the Department of Psychology participated in the control group. The age of all the participants ranged from 19 to 22 years, with a mean age of 20.3. Additionally, students' experience of studying the English language ranged from 9 to 11 years, with a mean experience of 10.6 years.

Instruments

The 20-item probability-estimate scale on students' WTC in the target language was adapted from McCroskey's (1992) study and was used as a pre-test and post-test. In the questionnaire, eight of the items are fillers, and 12 are scored as part of the scale (McCroskey, 1992, p. 17). The scale yields a total score of WTC and also produces subscores according to the types of receivers (i.e., strangers, acquaintances, friends) and four subscores based on types of communication contexts (public, meetings, group, dyad). The student participants were asked to indicate their WTC from 0 = never to 100 = always. Example items of this scale include "Present a talk to a group of acquaintances" and "Talk in a small group of friends". Additionally, McCroskey (1992) reported good reliability of the WTC scale (i.e., $\alpha = .92$). This scale has also been widely used in ESL/EFL settings to measure English language learners' WTC (Cutrone & Beh, 2018).

Procedure

As described earlier, this study aimed to investigate the impact of task-based language teaching on English language learners' WTC. To this end, a control group and two experimental groups (i.e., an experimental group with English only and an experimental group with code-switching) were formed to examine and compare the extent to which task-based language teaching impacted students' WTC compared to students' WTC in the traditional group (control group). Additionally, a comparison between the experimental group with English only and the experimental group with code-switching also highlighted whether English only or code-switching facilitated or debilitated English language learners' WTC.

Three intact classes from three faculties were randomly assigned to a control group and two experimental groups. Prior to the intervention, the researcher sought permission from the concerned heads and also obtained student participants' prior consent to take part in the study. All participants were assured that the proposed study would not pose any physical, mental, or academic threat and that they would have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without giving any explanation.

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Concerning the implementation of the intervention, the English language instructor in the control group was guided to teach communicative skills through traditional instructional practices at the university. Normally, English language instructors heavily rely on a teacher-centered approach (i.e., the grammar-translation method (GTM)). Regarding the experimental group with English only, the researcher explained the nature of teaching and learning tasks to the concerned English language instructor. Given that Pakistani university students use code-switching while performing learning tasks in English classrooms (Syed & Kuzborska, 2018), it was a challenging task to make students work under the imposed language conditions (Vrikki, 2013). To maintain fidelity to the imposed conditions, the concerned instructor was instructed to ensure that student participants used the English language while performing assigned tasks and that the instructor herself should also stick to using English only in the classroom.

As for the experimental group with code-switching, the concerned English language instructor followed similar task-based language teaching and learning tasks as prescribed for the experimental group with English only. However, the learning activities were performed using a different medium of communication (i.e., code-switching). Fidelity to the imposed language conditions was not a problem, as Pakistani university students generally switch between their L1 and the English language while performing tasks in English classrooms (Syed & Kuzborska, 2018). In fact, the concerned English language instructor also encouraged students to use the Urdu language while performing tasks, if necessary, to express complex ideas that they could not express through the English language. The study lasted for ten weeks. In the first week of the study, the pre-test was administered across the three groups. All student participants were required to give honest responses, as their responses did not affect their final grades.

The intervention lasted for eight weeks. During the implementation of each intervention task, teachers were aware of how to carry out the tasks. As described earlier, the task-based language teaching and learning tasks designed in the present research encompassed a problem-solving approach to meaningful, real-world tasks that involved pair work, group discussions, and role-play. After the proposed intervention plan, the post-test was administered across the three groups.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 24). Prior to running the descriptive and inferential tests, data were checked for missing values (Creswell, 2012). The data were password-protected and accessed by the researcher and supervisor. The student participants' names were deleted from the final database to maintain the confidentiality of their responses. The quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including paired-samples t-test, independent-samples t-test, one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA).

Results

To answer the first research question of the study, “Is there any statistically significant difference between the WTC post-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by task-based activities with English only and the control group?”, an independent-samples t-test was performed to examine if there was homogeneity between the two groups on the pre-test. The findings of the independent-samples t-test in Table 3 showed a statistically significant difference between the control group ($M = 47.98$, $SD = 6.72$) and the experimental group with English only ($M = 50.01$, $SD = 3.29$; $t = -1.99$, $p < 0.05$).

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Table 3 *Pre-test Mean Scores of Two Groups*

	Instructional Group	M	SD	t-value	p
Pre-test	Control Group	47.98	6.72	-1.99	.049
	Experimental Group with English-only	50.01	3.29		

To control the pre-existing differences across the two groups on the pre-test, a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed in SPSS, in which the pre-test served as a covariate. ANCOVA is an appropriate statistical test that produces results after removing the effects of covariate(s) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). ANCOVA excludes the influence of the covariate (i.e., the pre-test) from the overall results of the post-test. Prior to performing the one-way ANCOVA, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of regression slopes, and equality of variances were assessed and found viable. Table 4 shows that the mean score for the experimental group with English only (M = 61.00, SD = 5.39) was higher than that of the control group (M = 49.79, SD = 5.57).

Table 4 *WTC Post-test Mean Scores of the Two Groups*

Post-test	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control group	49.79	5.57
Experimental group with English-only	61.00	5.39

To determine whether the difference in the mean scores between the experimental group with English-only and the control group was significant, the results from the one-way ANCOVA output were interpreted.

Table 5 *One-way ANCOVA Post-test Scores between the Groups*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3706.28	2	1853.14	67.663	.000	.563
Intercept	1905.30	1	1905.30	69.567	.000	.399
Time1	314.67	1	314.67	11.490	.001	.099
Group	2894.98	1	2894.98	105.703	.000	.502
Error	2875.72	105	27.38			
Total	338004.49	108				
Corrected Total	6582.01	107				

Table 5 above reveals that there was statistically significant difference between the post-test WTC scores of participants who participated in task-based activities with English-only intervention versus participants in the control group [F(1,105)=. 105.703, p < .001, partial eta squared=.502]. Task-based activities with English-only explained 50.2% of the variance in English language learners' WTC. This result denotes that task-based activities with English-only influenced Pakistani university English language learners' WTC more than those who did not participate in such activities.

To answer the research question, "Is there any statistically significant difference between the WTC post-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by task-based

activities with code-switching and the control group?" The mean WTC scores of the pre-test for the experimental group with code-switching and the control group were analysed through Independent-samples t-test to examine if the two groups were homogeneous. The results in Table 6 showed a significant difference in the mean WTC scores of the control group (M = 47.98, SD = 6.72) and the experimental group with code-switching [M = 50.17, SD = 4.30; t = -2.02, p= .045].

Table 6 *Difference between Control group and Experimental Group on Pre-test*

	Instructional Group	M	SD	t-value	p
Pre-test	Control Group	47.98	6.72	-2.02	.045*
	Experimental Group	50.17	4.30		

*p<0.05

To control the pre-existing differences across the two groups on the pre-test, a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed in SPSS, in which the pre-test score was the covariate. Table 7 displays that the WTC mean score of the post-test for the experimental group with code-switching (M = 67.60, SD = 5.09) was greater than the control group's mean WTC score (M = 49.79, SD = 5.57).

Table 7 *Descriptive Statistics for Control and Experimental Group with code-switching on WTC Post-test*

Post-test	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control group	49.79	5.57
Experimental group	67.60	5.09

To further analyze whether the difference in the WTC mean scores of the post-test for the two groups was significantly different, the results generated in the one-way ANCOVA output were interpreted.

Table 8 *One-way ANCOVA Post-test Scores between the Groups*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	9056.95	2	4528.47	181.90	.000	.774
Intercept	2421.09	1	2421.09	97.25	.000	.478
Pre-test	408.84	1	408.84	16.42	.000	.134
Group	7632.58	1	7632.58	306.59	.000	.743
Error	2638.85	106	24.89			
Total	388320.92	109				
Corrected Total	11695.80	108				

Table 8 above shows that the difference in the WTC mean scores on the post-test between the two groups was statistically significant [F(1,106)=. 306.59, p < .001, partial η^2 squared=.743]. These results signify the importance of task-based activities with code-switching in enhancing and fostering undergraduate students' overall WTC score.

The research question, "Is there any statistically significant difference between the WTC post-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by task-based activities with

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English-only and the experimental group taught by task-based activities with code-switching?" aimed to examine the impact of two different interventions on students' WTC mean scores, namely task-based activities with English-only and task-based activities with code-switching. Prior to investigating the differences between the two interventions, the mean scores of the pre-test for both the experimental groups were examine to check if they were equivalent before the intervention.

Table 9 *Comparison of the Two Experimental Groups' Pre-test Scores*

Dependent Variables	Instructional Group	Pre-test Mean (SD)	df	t-value	p
WTC	Experimental Group with English-only	50.01 (3.29)	107	.218	.828
	Experimental Group with Code-switching	50.17 (4.30)			

*p<0.05, **p<0.001

The results of the independent-samples t-test summarized in Table 9 above show that there was homogeneity across the two groups. There was no significant difference between the experimental group with English only (M = 50.01, SD = 3.29) and the experimental group with code-switching [M = 50.17, SD = 4.30; t(107) = 0.218, p = 0.828] in terms of mean WTC scores. As both experimental groups were equivalent in their pre-test scores, independent-samples t-test was used instead of one-way MANCOVA.

Table 10 *Comparison of the Two Experimental Groups' Post-test Scores*

Dependent Variables	Instructional Group	Post-test Mean (SD)	Df	t-value	p
WTC	Experimental Group with English-only	61.00 (5.39)	107	6.57	.000
	Experimental Group with Code-switching	67.60 (5.09)			

*p<.01 level, **p<.001

Table 10 illustrates that there was statistically significant difference between the two groups on the post-test mean scores. The experimental group with code-switching significantly obtained higher WTC mean scores (M= 67.60, SD = 5.09) than the experimental group with English-only [M = 61.00, SD = 5.39; t(107) = 6.57, p = .001].

Discussion of the Findings

The results of the present study showed that the experimental group with English only showed a significant improvement in WTC when compared to their pre- and post-test results. The findings of the present research provide empirical evidence that the use of English only in task-based activities provides a ground for students to gain confidence in communicating in the English language (Vrikki, 2013). Although there is an ongoing debate about whether the use of English only is suitable for a learning environment where English is taught as a second or foreign language (Swan, 2005), Ellis (2014) argues that students with limited proficiency and grammatical knowledge in the target language can manage to communicate.

In another study (Carless, 2004), it was reported that elementary students experienced difficulties in speaking the English language when performing assigned tasks. These findings

seem to highlight the drawbacks of TBLT at the elementary level, where learners with limited English proficiency are not able to perform tasks in the English language. Conversely, the findings of this study indicate that the use of English-only in language learning tasks can be implemented at the tertiary level. At the tertiary level, as in the case of Pakistan, students have experience studying the English language for an average of 10 years; therefore, they make untiring efforts to communicate in the English language despite having limited linguistic competence. The significant impact of task-based activities with English only on students' WTC can also be attributed to the ways in which language learning tasks were implemented in the intervention (Ellis, 2018). For example, the pre-task planning phase paved the way for students to plan and organize themselves to speak in the English language before the task began. It also facilitated learners' preparation to speak in the English language (Willis, 2012).

Prior research also shows that the pre-task planning phase of task-based activities fosters learners' fluency and complexity in the production of the target language (Ellis, 2009). In a similar vein, Ellis (2014) holds that the pre-task phase also cultivates students' confidence in using the target language communicatively. The qualitative part of the present study also supports Ellis's (2014) claim, in which learners expressed that the use of English only in task-based activities did not proscribe their communication in the target language; rather, it enhanced their self-confidence and benefited them in attaining proficiency in the English language.

The results also showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental group with code-switching and the control group in terms of mean WTC score on the post-test, where task-based activities with code-switching had an impact on experimental group students' WTC. These results support Macaro et al.'s (2012) hypothesis that allowing students' code-switching can bring about a significant improvement in their WTC. In addition to this, these results also corroborate Vrikki's (2013) study, in which task-based activities with code-switching motivated students' WTC. It seems plausible to argue that the implementation of task-based activities with code-switching assisted learners in maintaining the flow of their conversation and expressing more complex ideas that were difficult to convey in the target language.

The results of the present study also showed that task-based activities benefited the WTC of the code-switching group more than the English-only group. Vrikki's (2013) study also underpins these results, suggesting that language learning activities with code-switching lead to students' higher WTC than language learning activities with English only. These results assert that students' code-switching in communication can be a mediating source to facilitate their task performance in the target language (Ellis, 2014). Drawing on the findings of the qualitative part of the present study, it can also be inferred that students' code-switching helped them communicate fluently in the English language, convey the meaning of complex ideas, and compensate for their lack of English vocabulary. Thus, language learning tasks with judicious use of code-switching can facilitate students' L2 production. Furthermore, students' L1 resources serve them in enhancing their engagement in the target language despite limited proficiency.

Implications

The results garnered in this study showed that task-based activities exerted a significant positive impact on students' WTC, thus suggesting a pedagogical package for Pakistani English language teachers to adopt a more communicative teaching method in English communication classes rather than GTM. The results involving the comparison of students' WTC in task-based activities group and GTM group also provide instructors with insights into how to foster students' engagement and interest in English language learning activities. Additionally, the proposed pedagogical package also seems to be in line with Peng's (2007) recommendation

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that teachers' pedagogical goals should focus on facilitating students' language learning by increasing their WTC.

The study results also call for teachers to adapt classroom learning activities while embarking on the tenets of task-based language teaching, such as role-plays, group debates and discussions, problem-solving, information gap, and opinion exchange activities on real-world topics to increase students' WTC. Most importantly, English language teachers can benefit from the steps involved in the implementation of these activities in the intervention phase of the study, in which students were engaged in group discussions and were also required to prepare a report of their discussion and present it to the class. A wide array of existing research has studied learners' WTC in the English language (Cao, 2014), but there is a paucity of research on how to help learners increase their WTC. Additionally, prior research has also attempted to unravel the possible effects of task-based language teaching on learners' English language learning, but few studies have attempted to investigate how task-based teaching interacts with English language learners' WTC (Cutrone & Beh, 2018; Vrikki, 2013). The present study fills this gap by investigating the impact of task-based activities on Pakistani students' WTC in the English language. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first of its kind in Pakistan to examine the interaction of task-based activities with students' WTC. Therefore, the results of the present study significantly contribute to the existing knowledge on WTC in general and in particular in Pakistan.

Limitations and Future Directions

The first limitation of the study is related to the study participants' proficiency level. The study participants' varying levels of English proficiency may influence the outcomes of task-based activities on WTC. However, attempts were made to control for pre-existing differences across the groups on the pre-test by treating them as covariates in the equation of one-way ANCOVA and one-way MANCOVA. Controlling for covariates or confounding variables is useful in research (Pallant, 2020). Drawing on this limitation, future research is recommended to delve into causal-comparative research to examine if task-based activities exert a different impact on learners' WTC according to their varying English proficiency levels. Specifically, the results of the research question, “Do task-based activities show a different impact on English learners' WTC according to their proficiency levels?” would inform academics to adapt appropriate teaching methods to cater to the individual learning needs of students instead of relying on a one-size-fits-all strategy.

Another limitation of this research is that it did not control for gender. Therefore, future research is also advised to close a gap in the existing literature to test if task-based activities with English-only and code-switching exert a different impact on learners' WTC according to students' gender. Future interventional research may also implement focused language learning tasks alongside unfocused language learning tasks to determine their effectiveness on learners' grammatical competence and communicative ability (WTC) in L2 production. Such studies are likely to provide academics with insights into whether task-based teaching only facilitates students' communication or also enhances their grammatical competence in the target language.

Conclusion

Given the results of the present study, limiting students to using English exclusively or the notion of teaching English in English can proscribe students' available L1 repertoire to learn the target language. Reflecting on students' experiences in task-based activities with code-switching, it was learned that students' code-switching did not interfere with their L2 learning; rather, such activities enhanced their WTC and interest in English learning. Although the participants of the present study managed to perform learning tasks in the English-only condition and exhibited a significant improvement in their WTC, the use of code-switching

was more effective than English only in enhancing their WTC; therefore, these results call for language-in-education policymakers to promote students' L1 in learning the target language. In a similar vein, the findings of previous research (Lee, 2010; Macaro et al., 2012) also support a similar stance that students' mother tongue has a more facilitative role than English only in learning the English language.

WTC is a driving force for learners to seek out opportunities to communicate in the target language (Dörnyei, 2014). Peng (2007) asserts, "Pedagogic goals should be to increase learners' L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) so as to facilitate language learning" (p. 33). To date, there is a dearth of research studies on the means to help learners improve their WTC in the target language. The present study also tested whether task-based activities with English only or code-switching were effective enough to account for English language learners' WTC.

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