AN ONLINE LEARNING TOOL AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS ON ENHANCING NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

by

Adeel Abbas

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of

Computing and Information Systems

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

May, 2012
AN ONLINE LEARNING TOOL AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS ON ENHANCING NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

ADEEL ABBAS

I hereby release this thesis to the public. I understand that this thesis will be made available from the OhioLINK ETD Center and the Maag Library Circulation Desk for public access. I also authorize the University or other individuals to make copies of this thesis as needed for scholarly research.

Signature:

________________________________________________________________________
Adeel Abbas, Student Date

Approvals:

________________________________________________________________________
Dr. Abdurrahman Arslanyilmaz, Thesis Advisor Date

________________________________________________________________________
Dr. John Sullins, Committee Member Date

________________________________________________________________________
Suzan Harper, Committee Member Date

________________________________________________________________________
Peter J. Kasvinsky, Dean of School of Graduate Studies and Research Date
Abstract

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first purpose was to describe a prototype for an online task-based language learning (OTBLL) tool designed and developed for Turkish as a foreign language. The second purpose was to investigate the effectiveness of the OTBLL tool with respect to negotiation of meaning. More specifically, the experimental study examined the role of teaching approach in foreign language acquisition by comparing task-based instruction through the online task-based language learning tool to multimedia-based form-focused tool on the amount of negotiation of meaning. Two intermediate-level Turkish classes consisting of 28 high school students participated in this experiment. The classes were randomly assigned to two treatment groups: a control group with multimedia-based form-focused foreign language instruction and an experimental group with online task-based foreign language instructions. Instruction lasted for 10 days. The dependent variable was the amount of negotiation of meaning sequences in Turkish language produced by students in two conditions. Statistical analyses revealed that students with the online task-based instructions produced significantly more negotiation of meaning sequences than students with multimedia-based form-focused instructions. Based on those results, it was concluded that online task-based foreign language learning was more effective than multimedia-based form-focused instruction in increasing the amount of negotiation of meaning students produced.
Acknowledgements

I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Abdurrahman Arslanyilmaz, for his continuous support, help, invaluable assistant and encouragement throughout this study. I would also like to thanks my committee members, Dr John Sullins and Ms. Suzan Harper, for their helpful suggestions, comments and feedback on various parts of this thesis. I would also like to thank the CSIS department for providing me the support and the equipment I needed to produce and complete my study as well as the financial assistance.

I dedicate this thesis to my family without them this would have not been possible. I am much obliged to my dad (Dr. Abbas Ali), my Mom (Dr. Naheed Abbas) and my sisters for providing constant support throughout, proper guidance and helping me provide all the necessities. I would also like to thank Dr. Shakir Hussain and his family for all their help and support during my stay at Youngstown. Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all my friends who supported me in all respects during the completion of this thesis.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ..................................................................................................................................................... iii

Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................................. iv

Table of Figures....................................................................................................................................... vii

List of Tables .......................................................................................................................................... viii

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Second Language Learning............................................................................................................... 1
      1.1.1 Cognitivism ................................................................................................................................ 2
      1.1.2 Direct and Natural Language Learning...................................................................................... 2
      1.1.3 Communicative Language Teaching ............................................................................................ 3
      1.1.4 Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL)........................................................................................ 5
         1.1.4.1 The Essential Elements of Task-Based Learning ............................................................... 6
         1.1.4.2 TBLL General Framework ................................................................................................. 7
            Pre-task Phase ............................................................................................................................. 7
            Task Phase .................................................................................................................................. 9
            Post-task Phase.......................................................................................................................... 10
      1.1.4.3 Interaction (Negotiation of Meaning) in TBLL ................................................................. 10
      1.2 Online Learning .............................................................................................................................. 12
      1.2.1 Online TBLL and Its Effects on Student Interaction ............................................................... 12
      1.3 Form-Focused Learning .................................................................................................................. 13
         1.3.1 Type 1: Focus on form ............................................................................................................. 13
         1.3.2 Type 2: Planned focus on form ................................................................................................ 14
         1.3.3 Type 3: Incidental Focus on Form ........................................................................................... 14
      1.4 Task-Based Instruction versus Form-Focused Instruction ............................................................. 14

2. Problem Statement and Research Question ..................................................................................... 16

3. Methods ................................................................................................................................................ 17
   3.1 Context and Settings/ Procedure and participants ............................................................... 17
   3.2 Materials: Online Task-Based Language Learning Environment ........................................... 17
      3.2.1 Task 1 description .................................................................................................................... 20
      3.2.2 Task 1 Pre-task section ........................................................................................................... 21
      3.2.3 Task 1 Task completion ........................................................................................................... 22
      3.2.4 Task 1 Videos .......................................................................................................................... 24
      3.2.5 Task 2 description .................................................................................................................... 25
      3.2.6 Task 2 Pre-task section ........................................................................................................... 26
      3.2.7 Task 2 Task completion ........................................................................................................... 27
      3.2.8 Task 2 Videos .......................................................................................................................... 30
   3.3 Materials: Multimedia-Based Form-focused Instruction .......................................................... 30
   3.4 Procedures and Methods ................................................................................................................. 32
# Table of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1: Login Page</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: OTBLL Application Splash Page</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Task 1 Pre Task Phase (Family Information)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Task 1 Pre Task Phase. Clicking on a member displays member name, age, relationship and location. Students were also provided audio and can listen to the information.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5: Task 1 Task Completion. Student’s needs to assign their family members based on the criteria.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6: Task 1 Videos. Two native Turkish speakers completed the task on a whiteboard. Subtitles were also included.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7: Task 2 Pre Task. Students had access to the info and visual family tree</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8: Task 2 Task Completion. Students have to work together to fill in the family tree.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9: Task 2 Task Completion. Students need to enter the member information to place them on the tree.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10: Task 2 Task Completion. Check tree button displays the number of correct &amp; incorrect entries. In case of incorrect entries it gives a 'Try Again' option.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

TABLE 1: TOTAL NEGOTIATION OF MEANING SEQUENCES, TOTAL TURNS, NEGOTIATED TURNS IN TBI & FFI GROUPS .......................................................................................................................... 36

TABLE 2: RANGE OF NEGOTIATION OF MEANING SEQUENCES, TOTAL TURNS, NEGOTIATED TURNS, AND RATIO OF NEGOTIATED TURNS TO TOTAL TURNS IN TBI & FFI GROUPS............................. 37

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF MEAN PERCENTAGE OF NEGOTIATED TURNS TO TOTAL TURNS ACROSS GROUPS IN TBI & FFI GROUPS ....................................................................................................... 37
1. Introduction

1.1 Second Language Learning

From about fifties till eighties, one of the characteristics of language teaching was the structure of a language. The focus was on learning and memorizing how the language mechanism works, how positives, negatives, interrogatives, contracted forms, short answer forms are made. The way the mechanism was taught was with “plenty of practice in manipulating these structures, until their use becomes almost automatic” [83]. After the mechanism was learned, learners are expected to use this mechanism when they read or listen to decode the input by translating. “Complicated rules were mastered and this mastery then tested by means of translation. Success was measured in terms of accurate use of grammar and vocabulary rather than effective communication” [7]. The translation, hence, was accomplished with the light of the memorized language mechanism in small pieces, word by word. The emphasis was on structuring accurate sentences without considering communicative abilities, contextual nature of a language, and cultural feelings that languages carry out. “There was no emphasis on the development of fluent speech: it was better to get things right slowly than say them fast and effectively, but incorrectly” [7]. Even though rules were memorized they cannot be transferred in future instances due to the fact that they were learned isolated from their contextual surroundings, which learners do not have yet. “A rule will not become internalized until the learner’s developing language system can accommodate it” [63]. The second language practice tasks do not assist learners to comprehend the input so that they could boost learners’ performances. The book Cognition and second language instruction (2001) asserts:

“Task qualities in themselves do not have automatic influences on performance, since such performance is mediated by what happens before and after the task itself. This interaction between the task and task conditions is not unpredictable, but it cannot be taken for granted either. It is to a consideration of task condition effects.”[81]
1.1.1 Cognitivism

Cognitivism has played a major part in second language learning and learning theory in general [85][86]. The development and research has significantly improvised second language learning in significant ways as the basis of cognitive psychology is information processing system. For cognitivists, some mental operations must be performed in order to accomplish learning, assuming that a most appropriate sequence of mental activities exists. “These activities are externally manipulated by the teacher or the instructor” [20]. Cognitive learning models separate mental operations from the body and the environment in which learning occurs. For them, there is a most efficient way of mental operations for learning and encoding the external reality into learners’ minds. “Designers use their objective tools to determine an objective reality, which they then try to map onto learners through embedding instructional strategies that control learning behavior” [20]. Early second language teaching courses were designed to come up with the best strategy to help the learner memorize the language mechanism and practice with drills to internalize this external information. The cognitivism philosophy requires acceptance of the one reality, and one perfect way of understanding that reality for everyone. This disposition assumes that everyone gain the same reliable knowledge about the objective reality. This reality is external and manipulated by teachers or instructors to transmit it into learners’ mental storages. “The role of education is to help students learn about the real world. Students are not encouraged to make their own interpretations of what they perceive; it is the role of the teacher or the instruction to interpret events for them” [20].

1.1.2 Direct and Natural Language Learning

As result of new developments, a new method, called direct method was invented, “in which the students’ own languages were banished and everything was to be done through the language under instruction” [7]. The direct method established a concept of language learning very different from that implicit in grammar-translation. Language is no longer learned by comprehending rules, and
memorizing lexical items. “Success was to be measured instead by the degree to which the learner’s language proficiency approximated to that of the native speaker, a goal which was not at that time seen as problematic [7].

The next method of language learning was called natural language learning. In this method, learning would take place without explanation or grading. There was no explicit instruction, nor conscious learning according to the tenets of this method. Learners would simply learn the target language by being exposed to meaningful input.

1.1.3 Communicative Language Teaching

At roughly the same time as the development of the natural method, around eighties, a new method was emerged, called as communicative language teaching (CLT). The focus of CLT was primarily and necessarily social, concerned as it was with the goal of successful communication [7]. The emphasis was shifted from structural competence to communicative competence.

In this language teaching perspective, language need to be learned holistically without breaking up to the rules and examining language in detail. “In CLT, language is best handled all at once, as it would be in real world, as this is the learner’s ultimate goal. Consequently there is little point in breaking things down artificially-better to get started straight away” [7]. Moreover, the primary goal of learning would be emphasized as having a successful communication rather than learning the structure so that learners would be motivated by constantly emphasizing the relevance of classroom activity to their goals. Learners would gradually comprehend the language without consciously realizing. To create and maintain relationship through communication, teaching activities would be contextualized in the culture, where the target language is used and the learner would be able to express his/her own individual and social meanings. For successful communication, Hymes (1972) suggested that there are four types of knowledge: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and attestedness. Possibility is that the learner
knows what is formally possible in a language, i.e. whether an instance conforms to the rules of grammar and pronunciation [7]. Feasibility is that the learner knows what is feasible [7]. Cook (2003) describes appropriateness as:

“Appropriateness concerns the relationship of language or behavior to context, and as such covers a wide range of phenomena. Something might be, for example, inappropriate to a particular relationship (calling a police officer “darling” or tickling them as they reprimand you); to a particular kind of text (using slang or taboo words in a formal letter); to a particular situation (answering a mobile phone call during a funeral); or generally inappropriate to a particular culture (not showing deference to the elderly)” [7].

Attestedness is the knowledge of whether something is done.

“Take, for example, the phrase ‘chips and fish’. From one point of view this is possible (it does not break any grammar rule), feasible (it is easily processed and readily understandable), and appropriate (it does not contravene any sensitive social convention). Nevertheless, it does not occur as frequently as ‘fish and chips”’ [7].

“A typical ‘communicative’ activity might involve simulating the successful ordering of a meal in a restaurant in London or New York, or knowing how to make polite requests and apologies at a party” [7]. Communicative language teaching is not only concerned with the correct use of language structure, but also using the correct mechanism at the correct situation. Applied Linguistics (2003) describes language learning success as:

“Language-learning success is to be assessed neither in terms of accurate grammar and pronunciation for their own sake, nor in terms of explicit knowledge of the rules, but by the ability to do things with the language, appropriately, fluently, and effectively. Consequently communicative pedagogy shifted its attention from teaching and practice of grammar and
pronunciation rules, and the learning of vocabulary lists, to communicative activities.”[7] “It is a shift away from the study of language seen purely as a system; away from the study of ‘the possible’. It is a shift towards the study of language as communication; towards the study of (among other factors) ‘the appropriate’.”

Communicative language teaching method leads to the development of Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), in which learning is organized around tasks related to real-world activities, focusing the student’s attention upon meaning and upon successful task completion.

**1.1.4 Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL)**

Prabhu (1987) had different views about how to develop communicative competence with communicative activities. Based on her views, she started a project in Southern India. This exploratory teaching project began in June 1979 and ended in 1984. The project consisted of teaching English to a small number of classes in primary and secondary schools in Southern India. They called the project as ‘Communicational Teaching Project’. The main goal of the project was to see the success of an innovative instructional design for second language learning in face to face classroom environment. The design consisted of three phases: task, pre-task, and post-task phases. After one year the project team had the feeling that the project was working and the students were learning with this innovative design [63]. After this first appearance of task-based teaching in classroom environments, there were many others including Long (1981).

Later through 1990s, the focus of task based second language learning was on negotiation of meaning, and its contribution in increasing comprehension of input and production of output. As the book, Cognition and Tasks (2001) states:

“Engaging in a task with one or more partners will typically lead learners into episodes of communication breakdown in which either they do not properly understand what is being said, or
they themselves are not properly understood by the others. At such moments, negotiation of
meaning devices such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, and the like are seen as
triggering vital ‘comprehensible input’ for learners at precisely the point where they may have
realized that there is a gap in their knowledge of the target language. In such a negotiation of
meaning approach, there is no attempt to ‘seed’ such tasks with particular structures deemed ripe
for attention. Indeed, the teacher has no part at all in determining where a learner’s attention
should be directed; this depends entirely on where communication breakdown occur during the
task. It is therefore considered important to design tasks which increase the chances that
meanings will have to be negotiated among the task participants, producing plenty of
comprehensible input.” [81]

1.1.4.1 The Essential Elements of Task-Based Learning

The essential elements for learning a second language, which are included in task based learning, are
given by Willis (1996) [76]. It states:

“These are exposure to a rich but comprehensible input of real spoken and written language in
us, use of the language to do things (i.e. exchange meanings), and motivation to listen and read
the language and speak and write it (i.e. to process and use the exposure). There is also one
additional condition that is desirable, though not essential: Instruction in language (i.e. chances
to focus on form)” [76]

Ellis (2003) defined a task based on some criteria: the scope of a task, the perspective from which a task
is viewed, the authenticity of a task, the linguistic skills required to perform a task, the psychological
processes involved in a task performance, and the outcome of a task. The scope of a task is whether the
task is meaning-focused or form-focused [18]. Ellis (2003) said that tasks are activities that call for
primarily meaning focused language use. The distinction between meaning-focused and form-focused is relating to the role of the participants. Ellis (2003) further explained:

“A task requires the participants to function primarily as ‘language users’ in the sense that they must employ the same kinds of communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities…An ‘exercise’ requires the participants to function primarily as ‘learners’; here learning is intentional” [18].

Ellis (2003) said that a task needs to be designed as work-plan that is intended to engage the learner in meaning-focused language use. The task needs to represent a real-world activity, which will be likely to be carried out in second language learners’ lives. Ellis (2003) said,

“Such tasks, however, can be said to manifest ‘some sort of relationship to the real-world in that they could possibly occur outside the classroom but more especially because the kind of language behavior they elicit corresponds to the kind of communicative behavior that arises from performing real-world tasks” [18].

Oral, written, listening, and reading, or combination of some of these are the linguistic skills required to perform a task.

1.1.4.2 TBLL General Framework

Researchers agree that there is a pre-task, task, and post-task phases in a task based language learning.

**Pre-task Phase:** Prabhu (1987) suggests that the pre-task phase is conducted as a whole class activity, which involves a parallel task to the actual task performed as a whole class session under the guidance and control of the teacher. In this phase, the teacher acts based on the inquiries from learners in the form of questions. This phase is an opportunity for learners to ask questions when they have difficulties, and practice with the teacher to develop their task completion skills. Based on the difficulties that learners
are facing with the parallel task, teacher would be able to engage in appropriate interaction by breaking down the efforts needed into smaller steps.

This phase is considered as the preparation time to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition by Willis (2003), Prabhu (1987), and Ellis (2003). This is the time for teachers to ensure that learners understand what the task involves, what the goal(s) of the task is, and what the students will be required to do, and what the nature of the outcome they will arrive at. “They will want to know how they should begin, exactly what each person should do, how much time they have and what will happen once they have finished” [76].

From the cognition perspective, information processing theory, the pre-task phase serves for rehearsal, activation/foregrounding, and task interpretation [81]. Rehearsal is helps learner to bring the information into working memory from long term memory. “They are rehearsed so that they can be accessed virtually instantly during task performance” [81]. Teachers will help students recall and activate topic related words and phrases. The pre-task activities can help reduce the cognitive load on the learner by observing others perform a task, claimed by both Skehan (1996) and Willis (1996).

The book, Cognition and Second Language instruction (2003) gave some examples for pre-task activities such as planning, teaching, implicit learning activities, parallel or modeled pre-tasks, and consciousness-raising activities [81]. Ellis (2003) listed the types of activities to be performed in this phase as: [18]

1. Supporting learners in performing a task similar to the task they will perform in during task phase of the lesson

2. Asking students to observe a model of how to perform a task

3. Engaging learner on non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task
4. Strategic planning of the main task performance

**Task Phase:** The second phase, called task phase, in contrast to the pre-task was to be attempted by each learner individually (or sometimes in voluntary collaboration with a fellow-learner) with assistance sought from the teacher when necessary on specific points” [63]. In this stage, the learners are on their own trying to complete the task based on their own knowledge supported by their previous experiences. The pre-task phase will supposedly prepare learners for this phase.

During task completion learners need to engage in conversational discourse by taking linguistic risks. Learners need to focus on meaning conveyance to understand the other participant(s). Lee (2000) recommended setting a time limit for this task completion process, on the other hand Yuan and Ellis (2003) found that giving students an unlimited time to perform a narrative task resulted in language that was both more complex and more accurate in comparison to a control group that was asked to perform the same task under time pressure [18]. In general, time limit helps to increase the fluency while unlimited time lead to more complex and accurate negotiation.

Willis (1996) listed the teacher’s role during the task cycle phase: [76]

1. To make sure that all pairs or groups are doing the right task and are clear about the objectives.

2. To encourage all students to take part, no matter how weak their language is.

3. To be forgiving about errors of form (remember how positively parents react to their young children’s attempts to use new words and phrases).

4. To interrupt and help out only if there is a major communication breakdown.
5. To notice which student seems to do more talking and controlling and if anyone seems to be left out (next time you might change these groupings, or give specific roles within groups to even out the interaction).

6. To notice is and when any pairs or groups switch to mother tongue, and, later perhaps, to find out why.

7. To act as time keeper.

**Post-task Phase:** The third component is post-task phase. Willis (1996) called it language focus phase. This phase consists of the outcome of the task and accompanying report. “This activity was integrated to give students some feedback on their level of success and, equally, to give the teacher some idea of the level of challenge the task has presented” [63]. The activities in this phase involve conscious-raising activities, language awareness activities, meta-communicative activities, and so on.

“The aim is to get students to identify and think about particular features of language form and language use in their own time and at their own level. This will help them to recognize these features when they meet again, both inside and outside class, and will lead to a deeper understanding of their meanings and uses” [76].

**1.1.4.3 Interaction (Negotiation of Meaning) in TBLL**

Interaction theories view language learning as an outcome of interaction between speakers. According to the interaction hypothesis by Long (1983), comprehensible input that arises when the less competent speaker provides feedback on his/her lack of comprehension assists acquisition [35, 36, 37]. Therefore, comprehension of input is claimed to be the key feature for language acquisition in TBLL [24, 25, 26].

According to this hypothesis, comprehension of input is obtained through interaction among students, which is demonstrated by many researchers. For example, Teressa et al (1987) explored two different conditions, in one of which, learners did not interact with each other; instead the modified input was
prepared in advance and given to one of the students in the dyad so as to provide to the other student as requested. This group was called pre-modified group. In the other condition, students interacted with each other in order to modify input so that they comprehend what they want to say with the purpose of task completion. This group was called unmodified group. The researchers reported that the students in unmodified group scored significantly higher overall comprehension than students in pre-modified group. In addition, Terassa (1987) reported that when students negotiate meaning in order to modify their output to increase comprehension of input, they produce two times more repetitions of content words as compared to the students where they are not allowed for meaning negotiation, but use pre-modified and simplified language. Furthermore, Long (1983) conducted a study with 34 foreign students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He divided the participants into two groups, one of which was exposed to a lecturette, which is adjusted for foreign students in terms of the length of sentences, length of words, complexity of sentences, and the number of restatements and rephrasing. The second group is exposed to a lecturette, which is designed for an undergraduate native English spoken audience. The sentences and words were longer, and more complex. It did not contain many rephrasing and restatements. After these two groups are exposed to the lecturettes, they are given a multiple choice test to measure their comprehension of the content of the lectures. The results indicated that the average comprehension score of the foreign talk group was significantly higher than the average for the group hearing the native speaker version of the lecturette. This support the Interaction hypothesis that NNSs perceive their own comprehension to be higher when faced with spoken discourse adjusted for NNSs than when confronted with speech intended for a native speaker audience. As a result of this study, Long (1983) claimed that there is a causal relationship between conversational and linguistic adjustments for NNSs and their comprehension input [37]. Moreover, Long (1981) found that the best way of having comprehensible input is through modification of interaction through clarification requests, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, and recasts. In his research, Long (1981) used TBLL as the
method of instructions, and reported that modification of interaction during TBLL facilitates input comprehension, and thus second language acquisition [35].

1.2 Online Learning

Online learning has been on the rise in the last decade with many advantages over traditional classroom learning. For example, online environments can provide activities such as simulations with animations, audio, text, graphic, and video that cannot otherwise be possible in traditional classrooms [7]. In addition, the internet allows access to the online material regardless of the time and place of the students trying to access the material. Furthermore, online materials would be a low-cost publication venue for the language learning instructions.

1.2.1 Online TBLL and Its Effects on Student Interaction

Because many advantages of internet and computer technology, several researchers have attempted to examine the interaction of students in computer mediated communication based on TBLL. Some of the reported benefits were that it forced students to be active and involved in the task completion process promoting a fertile learning environment in addition to be fun, helpful, and/or conducive to improving learners’ communication skills [2], that it offered more equal interactions without turn taking competition [23], that students were able to scroll back and re-think what was discussed and re-formulate their own utterances before sending them [23], that the web was making each individual much more accountable because all the evidence of participation was there [66], that students externalized their thinking through chat tools [79], that the quantity of participation in online discussion increased as compared to face to face discussions [51], and that students did not feel stressed during online communication [70]. The aforementioned studies examined TBLL approach, where students used communication tools, but all other components of TBLL approach were given to the students in traditional classroom setting. The instructional method was similar to face-to-face teaching, where the computer served as a communication tool for students’ interaction.
1.3 Form-Focused Learning

Form focus learning has become a widely used and a common technique in second language learning. This concept of second language learning was proposed by Michael Long (1991) in which in context to communicative interaction, the attention of learners learning a second language is drawn to the form of specific language features [43]. According to Ellis (2001), form focused instruction refers to any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form [15]. Ellis (2001) further added that Form focused instruction primarily includes two factors [15]:

1- Traditional approaches to teaching forms based on syllabi.

2- More communicative approaches, where attention to form arises out of meaning-focused activities.

According to Long (1991), “learners need to attend to a task if acquisition is to occur, but their orientation can best be to both form and meaning, not to either form or meaning alone” [44]. Further research by Loewen (2004) found that when students pay attention briefly to linguistic items which arise spontaneously in meaning-focused activities, the focus on form takes place [82]. This focus on form can be either student-initiated, allowing students to “seek information about linguistic items as the need arises during meaning-focused activities”, or teacher-initiated.

There are three main types of form focused learning [51].

1.3.1 Type 1: Focus on form

Type 1 of form focused instructions implies that both the students and teacher are aware that the purpose of the activity is to learn a preselected form. So, the learner’s focus is on some specific form. In this type, the primary focus remains on form rather than meaning.
1.3.2 Type 2: Planned focus on form

The type 2 of form focused instruction relates to enriched input. The aim is to induce noticing of the target form in the context of meaning-focused. Learners are invited to focus on meaning (incidental rather than intentional) and the acquisition occurs as a result of frequent exposure to the target feature.

1.3.3 Type 3: Incidental Focus on Form

The type 3 of form focused instruction is mainly derived from studies related to classroom processes. There are two kinds on incidental focus or form: Preemptive focus on form and reactive focus of form. Preemptive focus on form relates to taking time out to give attention to a form that is perceived to be problematic. This is used most frequently when learners request assistance. The reactive form focuses on providing implicit and explicit negative feedback.

1.4 Task-Based Instruction versus Form-Focused Instruction

The difference between the two instruction techniques is important but very little research has been done comparing form focused instructions as compared to task based instructions on their effects on the negotiation of meaning aspect of language production. Previous researches have shown that the interaction process in the TBI and FFI are quite different. According to Fuente (2006), he observed significant differences between task based instruction and form focused instruction. According to his research, TBI students used most of the words during the task completion activities while the FFI group did not show the use of new words and produced target words in a very restricted way.

Doughty and Pica (1986) reported that information gap tasks in particular resulted in significant increase in interaction and promoted negotiation of meaning as compared to the form focused approach. In a similar study, Pica et al. (2006), showed that task based approach resulted in more interactions and a much improved language.
Rahimpour (2011) reported that TBI group led to more interactions than their FFI counterparts while a study by Farley (2004) implies that learners in form-focused instruction and meaning-focused instruction were technically on the same level. Rahimpour (2011) also claimed that task based and form focused teaching approaches have different impact on quality and quantity of interactions.
2. Problem Statement and Research Question

This study aims to contribute to the literature by comparing multimedia-based form-focused instructions to online task-based language instruction. Specifically, it assesses the role of the instructional method on students’ negotiation of meaning in Turkish as a foreign language by comparing form-focused instruction to task-based instruction. The research questions are as follows:

1) Do Turkish, as a foreign language, learners get involved in more negotiation of meaning sequences using the multimedia-based form-focused instruction as compared to online task-based instruction?
3. Methods

3.1 Context and Settings/ Procedure and participants

The experiment was conducted at Horizon Science Academy (HSA) in Cleveland, Ohio, where Turkish language is officially taught. At HSA, there were 38 students enrolled in the intermediate level Turkish course with a full-time dedicated Turkish teacher. These subjects were 5th and 6th grade students, aged between 9-15 years and a mix of males and females. This study was performed using quantitative research method, that is, research involving a pretest–posttest control and experimental group. Two sections of the intermediate level Turkish course were randomly assigned to control and the other two sections were assigned to experimental group. After the formation of the groups, students in the experimental group were randomly paired to form dyads. Because the intact groups will be utilized, this study will be characterized as a quasi-experimental rather than a strict experimental design.

Both the experimental and the control groups had the same course curriculum throughout the academic year. Two weeks between 05/02/11 and 05/13/11, the experimental group used the online TBLL while students in the control group used the multimedia-based form-focused instruction. Students’ interactions in the control group were recorded using a tape recorder, and students’ interactions in the experimental group were automatically recorded in the online TBLL environment. These recorded interactions were transcribed and coded in order to calculate the amount of negotiation of meaning sequences. Specifically, amount of negotiation of meaning sequences were calculated by the ratio of negotiated turns to total number of turns.

3.2 Materials: Online Task-Based Language Learning Environment

An online application was constructed following the patterns used in the textbook: ACILIM TURKCE DERS KITABI [89]. The recognition that students encounter difficulties with processing and interpreting authentic language input and the desire to provide scaffolding to learners at every possible step was the main idea behind developing this application (Murphy, 2003). This application was designed keeping in
mind specifically the requirements of participants to exchange information. This application consisted of completely web-driven tasks which further included:

1. Multimedia elements (video and audio).
2. Login (Figure 1), welcome and logout pages.
3. Splash Page (Figure 2), clearly describing the task definitions, activities and goals.
5. Notepad tool.
6. Interactive Media Player.

Two individual tasks were developed for intermediate level based on the Textbook chapters 8 & 9 that included listening, reading and writing activities for each task. Both tasks were designed using the concept that two-way information gap tasks produce optimal conditions for the negotiation of meaning [14][58]. Each task consisted of three sections: Pre-task section, task-completion section and video section. Furthermore, chat and notepad tool were always available to students to take notes and chat with their respective partner.
In this task, you are a member of an extended family. Information about your family members including their full names, ages, and the cities where they live is given in the “Pre-task” section. You are assigned to a partner, and your partner is also a member of another extended family. The task that you and your partner have is to assign two family members, one from each extended family, into each one of the 24 rooms on a cruise ship. You will complete the task in the “Task Completion” section. To help you learn the language used to complete this type of task, you are provided with videos in the “Videos” section where native Turkish speakers are completing tasks similar to your task.

To increase the interaction between the members of your family and the members of your partner’s family, and to increase the comfort during the trip, the two family members assigned to each room on the ship need to carry the following criteria: (1) The age difference between the family members cannot be greater than 6, (2) the cities where the family members live need to be neighboring cities, (3) the gender of the two family members staying in the same room on the ship needs to be the same.
3.2.1 Task 1 description

A cruise was being organized to familiarize student’s family to the family of their partner student. To increase the interaction between the members of their family with the members of their partner’s family and to increase the comfort in the ship, student and their partner were asked to assign one member of each family to a room in the ship. Hence, two members of different families were staying in the same room of this cruise ship.

To help students get familiarized with their family members, a pre-task section was created in the environment, where they found information about the relationship of your family members to the student, their ages, and the cities where they live.

After learning about their family, students were supposed to go to the task completion section. In this task-completion section, they need to work with their partner, and assign one member of each family to the rooms of this cruise ship. Students were interacting with your partner in writing in an attempt to assign the members of the two families to each room in the ship. The rooms were interactive. The member they assigned to the rooms of the ship was visible to their partner, and vice versa. There were certain criteria they needed to be aware of when assigning members to the rooms of the ship, which are as follows:

1- **Limit**: Two and only two guests should be able to stay in each room.

2- **Gender**: Male will be able to stay only with a male guest, and female will be able to stay only with a female guest.

3- **Age**: Each guest assigned to a room should be at most 6 years older or younger than the other one.

4- **Location**: The guests should be coming from the same or neighboring cities.
3.2.2 Task 1 Pre-task section

In the pre-task activities section, each student of a pair was able to get information about his/her family and relatives. In this section, student was able to see all the family members together on one screen (Figure 3). Upon clicking a family member, the member zooms in and speaks out his/her name, age, relationship to student and location along with the textual representation of what that specific member said and a map of Turkey with the current and neighboring cities highlighted(Figure 4).

Figure 3: Task 1 Pre-Task Phase (family information)
3.2.3 Task 1 Task completion

In the task completion section, students in pairs were exchanging information about their family members so that they can assign the best two people, one from each other’s family, to a room of the cruise ship.

In this section, students were able to complete their assignments. The tasks were completed by students in pairs. While students in pairs were doing this, they talked to each other by writing in the chat tool.

This section included an interactive ship with rooms for its guests. The rooms had labels (e.g., numbers) so that students were easily able to identify them. By the ship being interactive means that the students were able to drag and drop member icons into the rooms, and they were able to remove the member icons from them. However, each student was able to drag, drop, and remove only one member icon.
into/from each room. Thus, only two guests were able to stay in each room, and each student had to assign one and only one guest to each room. When the students dropped the member icons on the rooms, the member icons were positioned appropriately, and were visible and recognizable as to which member icon is assigned to each room. Each student was able to see who the other student dropped into the room or removed from the room. Students were also able to see the member name of the guests (family members assigned in the ship by partner, for easier communication).

If students were not able to finish the task, they were given an option for force submission of the task on the mutual consent of both partners’. As the task is submitted, the pre-task and task-competition sections for task 1 are disabled, and students are not allowed to work on this task.

Figure 5 shows the design of task completion section. Green windows were used by students to place their member icons and red windows displayed the member icon of the partner’s entry. Mouse over on a partner entry also displayed member’s name.
3.2.4 Task 1 Videos

The video section included a flash web player and 8 buttons. An hour long video, was divided into 8 parts, ranging from 4-12, minutes describing to students how to successfully complete the task. These tutorial videos were made by native Turkish speakers in Turkish language where two individuals were working together, sharing information and trying to complete the task on a whiteboard. The videos also had subtitles in Turkish language.
3.2.5 Task 2 description

In this task, students needed to complete the family tree. Students had information about some members of their extended family, and their hypothetical brother/sister (partner student) had information about other members of your extended family. There were three sections in this environment that they need to visit. In the section called pre-task section, they were able to find information about the name, age, demographics, and immediate relationships of the members of your extended family members that they had access to. Their hypothetical brother/sister (partner student) had access to information about the name, age, demographics, and immediate relationships of the members of their extended family
members that they has access to. Students were supposed to examine the pre-task sections very carefully and in detail.

After learning everything about the members of their extended families, students went to the task completion section where they completed a family tree. In that family tree, students were given pictures of extended family that their partner student had access to and vice versa. Both students worked together to snap these pictures in the appropriate branches of the family tree. Students were also asked to put information about their ages, their names, their relationship to you, and the city where they live.

Before going to the above mentioned sections, students were required to go to the task videos section, where they saw the native Turkish speakers completing a similar task on a whiteboard by talking to each other. These similar task videos were subtitled so that students could take notes, and use the forms when completing their own tasks. They were also provided with a notepad tool to take notes.

3.2.6 Task 2 Pre-task section

The task 2 pre-task section was similar to the task 1 pre-task section. The only difference was that instead of displaying all the family members only half of the members were shown to each student and the remaining family members were displayed on their partner’s end. In this section, students were able to see half of the family members together on one screen. Upon clicking a family member, the member zoomed in and spoke out his/her name, age, relationship to student and location along with the textual representation of what that specific member said and a map of Turkey with the current and neighboring cities highlighted.
3.2.7 Task 2 Task completion

In the task-completion section, students were given a shared family-tree schema. In the tree, they were asked to put the family members in correct order. The images of the partner’s family members were provided, with names, on one side of the window. They needed to drag and drop these images to the family tree. The students didn’t have any information about the family members in the task completion section as they were the members of their partner. So, the students had to ask their partner and get details via chat tool, to place the members in the tree.
Figure 8: Task 2 Task Completion. Students have to work together to fill in the family tree.

However, each student was able to drag, drop and remove only one member icon into/from each room. Each student had to assign one and only one member to each tree branch. When the students dropped the member icons on the rooms, the member icons were positioned appropriately and were visible and recognizable as to which member icon is assigned to each room. Each student was also able to see who the other student dropped into the room or removed from the tree.

Furthermore, in the family tree, after placing the member icon in the tree the students were asked to fill in information about where the family member lived, how old the family member is, his/her name and relationship to the student (Figure 9).
Once all 24 family members were placed in the tree, there was an option to check the tree if it is correct or not. If all entries were correct, a congratulatory message is displayed in Turkish and the task was finished. In case of incorrect entries, they were told the number of correct and incorrect entries and given the ‘Try Again’ option.
3.2.8 Task 2 Videos
As in task 1, the video section included a flash web player and 8 buttons. An hour long video, was divided into 8 parts, ranging from 4-12, minutes describing to students how to successfully complete the task. These tutorial videos were made by native Turkish speakers in Turkish language where two individuals were working together, sharing information and trying to complete the task on a whiteboard. The videos also had subtitles, which were also in Turkish language.

3.3 Materials: Multimedia-Based Form-focused Instruction
The control group used a multimedia tool, which included listening to audio recordings, video recordings, communicative activities, exercises and reading materials. The instruction was a combination of the multimedia tool and form-focused classroom teaching. The learning objectives for both the experimental and control groups were the same: Family. The textbook and the accompanying multimedia-based tool provided some concern for meaning with the main focus on

1-"Names of the family member",

2-"Relationship of members",

3-“Asking the ages of the Family Members,”

4-“Asking where the Family Members Live,”

The classroom activities involved readings and listening, group work, communicating with teacher (request-response) to give learners opportunity to produce their language through negotiation of meaning as they exchange information. Instructional materials, the textbook and the multimedia-based audio/video materials, were developed to provide learners with the opportunity to practice producing the target language in the context of family. At the beginning of each class session, the teacher explicitly used the target language forms and wrote them down on the blackboard in an attempt to teach students
about the context. However, the students were not explicitly told that the purpose was to get involved in communication to produce language by negotiation of meaning.

The computer-based video and audio materials were provided audio samples of native speakers, sometimes in conversations and sometimes repeating samples of family references. Students were asked to listen to them in class. These audio/video clips were sometimes listened twice, and repeated by the teacher. The teacher also translated them into English explaining the meaning of each relationship, and writes them down on the board. Students were expected to notice the target language forms in question and to process the meaning of the input from the audio/video recordings. Then, the students were asked to do any related book exercises in pairs. The students were further engaged in conversations by the teacher asking students to translate the language into English. Some audio/video materials were accompanied by some exercises on students’ textbooks asking them to respond to what they heard by checking “true” or “false” on their textbooks.

Sometimes, students read passages of written text followed by some fill in the blank exercises focusing on meaning. The teacher sometimes asked students to translate the text into English. After these repeated exercises on the textbooks and with the teacher, students were asked to get involved in conversations using the language forms in questions. The students were then involved in classroom activities with their partners. They were instructed to do related exercises in pairs where they were involved in meaningful activities about family while producing language through negotiation of meaning. However, the type of language that the students were able to produce was limited to the type of input they were exposed to through the textbook, audio/video materials and the teacher.

Many times, the teacher’s talk dominated in the classroom leaving very limited opportunities for students to speak and engage in language production through negotiation of meaning. The teacher asked students to repeat after him when he corrects a student. The type of language produced by students in
Turkish language was controlled by the examples from the audio recordings and text from the textbooks in addition to the teacher’s language output. Sometimes the teacher used to ask random related questions and students were picked to answer the questions.

3.4 Procedures and Methods
Students from one section were randomly assigned to the ‘Task Based Instruction (TBI)’ and the other section was assigned to the ‘Form Focused Instruction (FFI)’. The experimental group consisting of randomly assigned 19 students used the online TBLL environment for Turkish, while the control group consisted of randomly assigned 19 students which used traditional learning methods (printed materials and media). But 5 students in each groups were absent in the study period and hence were excluded from the study which resulted in 14 students in each group to make a total of 28 students. The study consisted of 40 minutes sessions daily over a seven day period. Students’ language produced in dyads during task completion activities were analyzed for negotiation of meaning as an indication of input comprehension.

The groups were further divided in pairs. A computer lab was used for the students in the TBI group while the FFI group was working in the traditional classroom settings with the aid of multimedia and print resources. The computer lab order was arranged to avoid students communicating directly, in accordance to the method applied. Also the keyboards were changed to Turkish language. To that end, the assistance of the school teacher was sought.

The students were provided with usernames and passwords of TBLL environment followed by a brief about the application and given complete freedom to use any method they would like to successfully complete the tasks. The students were advised to watch the task videos first to understand the goal and correct methods of successfully completing the tasks. Although the students were working independently, an instructor was always present in the classroom for technical difficulties.
Students were asked to make notes about their family members in both tasks, exchange ideas how to complete the task and to provide information to their partners and how to use the information. Following the exchange of information, the chat and students notes were recorded daily, for two weeks. Parts of the class were also video recorded. For the monitoring purposes, the students were given an ID starting with HSAXa and partners were HSAXb (x is a whole number).

3.5 Data Collection
The communication done by the task-based instruction (TBI) group using the chat tool was recorded in text files on the server. In addition to that, all the notes made by the students using the myNotes in the application were also recorded periodically on the server. These chat scripts were used for analysis and scoring for the dependent variables of the TBI group, used in the study.

For the form-focused instruction (FFI) group, all their in class communicative activates were recorded. These audio recordings were made during class times under normal class conditions. These communications included conversions with the teacher (request and response) and the output of practice activities from print and visual media. Similarly as the TBI group, these recordings were transcribed and used for the scoring and analysis for the dependent variables used in the study.

3.6 Instruments
In this study, the main focus was on the negotiation of meaning. Both the FFI and TBI groups were analyzed and measured in terms of negotiation of meaning. The negotiation of meaning was measured by the number of negotiation sequences, negotiated turns and the number of total turn students produced.

3.7 Measurement: Negotiation of Meaning to Measure Interaction
Negotiation of meaning sequence is used as criteria to account for interaction among students. Sometimes a non-understanding happens at some point while students engage in conversational discourse in order to complete the task. When one of the students signals a comprehension problem, they
get involved in a sequence of negotiations where they spend some time to ensure that they understand each other and they adopt the same understanding with each other. This sequence is called as negotiation of meaning sequence or non-understanding routines. The negotiation of meaning sequence is controlled and directed by interlocutors, and the teacher has no part in it. As a result of this negotiation of meaning sequences which promotes interaction between learners, students come to understand each other by means of producing comprehensible inputs.

The model to measure the amount of negotiation of meaning was developed by Varonis and Gass (1985), which is called negotiation of meaning sequence [71]. The negotiation of meaning sequence consists of two parts. The first part is called trigger (T). The trigger is that utterance or portion of an utterance on the part of the speaker which results in some indication of non-understanding on the part of the listener [71]. The listener can ignore the trigger if he/she chooses to. When the listener reacts to the trigger in some way, the second part of the model starts, which is resolution. Resolution consists of three primes. The first prime is an indicator (I), which is the listener’s signal that understanding has not been completed. The listener pushes down the conversation to acquire an understanding. The second prime is a response (R), which is the original speaker’s attempt to clear up the unaccepted input (this is often referred to as a repair). The third prime is a reaction to the response (RR), and optional element that signals either the listener’s acceptance or continued difficulty with the speaker’s repair. The listener or the speaker can ‘pop’ out this sequence at any time, which means he/she does not recognize that the conversation needs to be negotiated for a complete comprehension of input [71].

Trigger can be initiated by any part of the discourse, such as lexical item, phonetic error, language complexity, and task complexity [19]. Indicators can be in the form of an echo, rising intonation, explicit statement of non-understanding, no verbal response, inappropriate response, repetition, paraphrase, some comments such as hmmm, and wh-tag questions. Indicators can also be in the form of confirmation checks, clarification requests, and a comprehension check [19]. Responses can be a
repetition of the previous utterance, an expansion or an elaboration, reduction of the input, reformulation, and rephrasing as a response. A reaction might be a exclamation, non-verbal, and correction [19]. Varonis and Gass (1985) claimed that this model allows us to measure and compare the depth, i.e. the complexity of these non-understandings before the non-understanding is resolved or attempt to resolve it is abandoned [71].

3.8 Data Coding
The chats and notes produced by the TBI group was already in written format while the audio recordings of the FFI group was transcribed. Seven audio conversations, ranging from 20 to 40 minutes, were converted in text format and coded to examine the negotiation of meaning aspect of language produced by students in both groups.
4. Analysis and Discussion

In order to analyze the effect on interaction, this study used one 2-tailed independent group t-test. The dependent variables are the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns in each group making it one dependent variable in the 2-tailed t-test.

Negotiation of meaning was measured by determining the number of negotiation moves i.e. negotiation of meaning sequences, negotiated turns and total turns by the dyads in TBI and FFI groups. Table 1 shows the numbers of negotiation of meaning sequences, total turns, negotiated turns and ratio of negotiated turns by each group. This table shows that negotiation turns comprised of 11% of the total turns by the FFI group. On the other hand, negotiated turns accounted for about 58% of the total turns by the group which were using the online task based learning environment. The ratio of negotiated turns to total turns shows a massive difference between the two groups. The results indicated that the group working with the TBLL environment engaged in a negotiated interaction of less than two-thirds of their total interactions while students in the FFI group resulted in a negotiation interaction of about one-tenth of their total turns. In addition to that, these results also indicate that students in the TBI group produced more negotiation of meaning sequences and negotiated turns but produced less total turns than the students involved in traditional multimedia classroom training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups*</th>
<th>Negotiation of meaning sequences</th>
<th>Negotiated turns</th>
<th>Total turns</th>
<th>Ratio of negotiated turns to total turns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TBI</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*TBI = Task Based Instruction  FFI = Form Focused Instruction

Negotiation of Meaning Sequences, Total Turns, Negotiated Turns, and Ratio of Negotiated Turns to Total Turns to make both groups comparable are given in Table 2. These data suggest that the range of
negotiation of meaning sequences was much higher for the TBI group than the FFI group. In fact, the starting range of the negotiation of meaning sequences for the TBI group is equal to the maximum range for the FFI group. Similarly, the negotiated turns for the group using online task based learning environment was 5-48 while it was 0-4 for the FFI group.

Table 2: Range of Negotiation of Meaning Sequences, Total Turns, Negotiated Turns, and Ratio of Negotiated Turns to Total Turns in TBI & FFI groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Range of negotiation of meaning sequences</th>
<th>Negotiated turns</th>
<th>Total turns</th>
<th>Negotiated turns to total turns ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TBI</td>
<td>2-20</td>
<td>5-48</td>
<td>17-67</td>
<td>0.25-0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFI</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-11</td>
<td>0-0.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*TBI = Task Based Instruction  FFI = Form Focused Instruction

Table 3 shows the results of independent samples t test with the percentage of turns negotiated as the dependent variable and groups as independent variable. This tables shows that groups using the task based tool produced a significantly higher percentage of negotiated turns than the dyads that were using the traditional multimedia medium [87].

Table 3: Comparison of Mean Percentage of Negotiated Turns to Total Turns across Groups in TBI & FFI groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group*</th>
<th>N (Dyads)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
<th>99% Conf. Int.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TBI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>2.98 2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*TBI = Task Based Instruction  FFI = Form Focused Instruction;  
**t-value significant, p<0.01
5. Conclusions and Suggestions

When we look at the research question, this study suggests that the TBI group produced much better negotiation of sequences as compared to the students in the FFI group which was reflected by negotiation of meaning sequences.

Results of this study are in line with previous findings on negotiation of meaning aspect of second language acquisition research. The results are consistent with the findings of Müller-Hartmann (2000) who reported that the quantity of interaction increase in an online task based environment as compared to face to face discussions as the students in the TBI group produced significantly more negotiation of meaning sequences. Based on these data and the statistics, it can be concluded that the online task based environment promoted negotiation of meaning in the learners which corroborates the findings of Doughty et al (1986) and Pica et al (2006).

As reported in table 2, we can say that the range of negotiation of meaning sequences was much wider even though both groups were obliged to exchange information. These results are the consequence of the fact that TBLL students has self centered environment while the FFI group was teacher dominant.

Although it was not the objective of this study, it was observed that the TBI group produced shorter and more accurate sentences as compared to their FFI counterparts which were due to the use of specific terms multiple times throughout the study and the information being displayed and exchanged in an easy to understand way.

Our results are consistent with the findings of Long (1983) who reported that non-native speakers produced significantly more negotiation of sequences, negotiated turns and a much better negotiated turns to total turns ratio using a task based language learning environment. The above results provide enough evidence to prove that using online task based teaching approach increase the amount of
negotiation of meaning as compared to the students using traditional classroom teaching method using multimedia and textbook.

Results of this study also suggest that using an online task based learning tool can promote negotiation of meaning while teaching second language. The students should be involved in online task based activities to promote negotiation of meaning which will ultimately result in a visible improvement in second language acquisition.

**Future Work**

These results were based on a total of 28 students which is statistically an insignificant sample and no concrete conclusions can be made from these results. The study with a larger group can be conducted to make the data more conclusive.

My personal opinion is that the same study conducted on 9th and 10th grade students will produce much better results because those students will have better decision making and analytical skills as compared to students in this study which were a little hesitant in communicating because of the fear of incompetency. As Aston (1986) suggested that group tasks designed to maximize negotiation for meaning may end up de-motivating and discouraging students by making them feel unsuccessful and ineffective which can be possibly improved by using an old age group.

Due to lack of resources and environment restrictions, the use of voice as the primary means of communication was not used. Future research should be done using voice as the main communication source to find whether voice produces a significant improvement in negotiation of meaning in the task-based language learning environment.
6. References


April 18, 2011

Dr. Abdurrahman Arslanyilmaz, Principal Investigator  
Mr. Adeel Abbas, Co-investigator  
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems  
UNIVERSITY

RE:  HSRC PROTOCOL NUMBER: 136-2011  
TITLE: Investigating the Effects of Online vs. Face-to-face Foreign Language Learning on Input Comprehension and Language Production Based on Task-based Approach

Dear Dr. Arslanyilmaz and Mr. Abbas:

The Human Subjects Research Committee of Youngstown State University has reviewed your response to their concerns regarding the above mentioned protocol and determined that your protocol now meets YSU Human Subjects Research guidelines. Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that your project has been fully approved.

Please note that your project is approved for one year. If your project extends beyond one year, you must submit a project Update form at that time.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Human Subjects Research Committee and may not be initiated without HSRC approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the Human Subjects Research Committee.

We wish you well in your study.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Kasvinsky  
Associate Provost for Research  
Research Compliance Officer

PJK:cc

c: Mr. Thomas Bodnovich, Chair  
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems