Task Design to Task Enactment: How Teacher Interpretations of a Given Task Manipulate its Evolution as a Pedagogical Construct

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This exploratory research tracks the development of a process orientated task-based lesson entitled Deserted in order to identify how materials design can be more ergonomically aligned with and conducive to variability in classroom task enactment. This sequence begins with the visualization of a series of communicative micro-level tasks functioning within the boundary of a larger macro-level task as proposed by a university materials designer. The sequence concludes with the enactment of these micro-level tasks within an EFL classroom environment. Incorporating a dual case-study research design, two university lecturers at a Japanese university were interviewed pre-lesson in order to elicit their attitudes toward the notion of task. They were also required to present a workplan outlining their intended use of the Deserted materials. Subsequently, two 90-minute lessons were observed and field notes were combined with post-lesson interviews. It was found that there were distinct differences in teacher enactment. This not only changed the material designer's visualized enactment procedure but also changed the nature of the task as a pedagogical construct. Detailed reports of each teacher's enactment are presented and the need for further large-scale research looking at the variability between task design and task enactment is called for.

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

BACKGROUND

Shavelson and Stern (1981) suggest that an increase in research describing teachers' pedagogical thoughts, judgments and decisions when planning for instruction is required in order to more clearly understand the enactment process. The majority of prior research focusing on the interpretation of pedagogical tasks has tended to focus on learner-centered interpretations rather than on teacher-centered interpretations (Garret & Shortall, 2002; Lam, 2004). Research into teacher interpretations of pedagogical tasks, especially at the tertiary level has been extremely scarce. Carless (2004) insists that this under-researched area has numerous implications for the future of task-based materials design and classroom enactment procedures. Markee (1997) and Fullen (1999) illustrate one such implication by highlighting the fact that curriculum mandates frequently do not match classroom enactment practices making this an area of immediate concern to language teachers and language institutions. Murphy (2003) stresses the importance of the dynamic interplay between materials designer, pedagogical task and teacher by stating that student-learning outcomes are dependent on three relatively unpredictable interactions - the individual contribution of each student, the pedagogical task, and the manner in which the teacher enacts the task.

The current exploratory research will follow the path from task design to task enactment observing how individual teacher interpretations of a given task manipulate its evolution as a pedagogical construct.

TASK DEFINITION VARIABILITY

Originating from early constructivist theories of learning and communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching (TBLT) focuses on learner centered educational philosophies. In many EFL contexts TBLT as a methodological genre is currently enjoying a vogue period. This is especially true in Asia where students lack authentic opportunities for communication in

the target language outside of the classroom due to the status of the target language within the wider community. Within such environments TBLT offers a novel pedagogical approach as it promotes content-orientated meaningful situations rather than emphasizing linguistic form devoid of sociocognitive rapport and emotion.

Throughout many Asian public school systems EFL education has tended to rely on what Wilkins (1976) terms a *'synthetic approach'* to curriculum design and classroom enactment. This approach views language as a sum made up of various distinctive components. Materials produced require the teacher to teach these components as individual, somewhat isolated segments of knowledge. This approach can be observed through grammar translation and other sentence level deconstruction methodologies. As an alternative to the synthetic approach Wilkins also proposes an *'analytical approach'* in which the purpose for language use, rather than the structural composition of language becomes the driving theme. Typically, the learner receives holistic chunks of language which are then deconstructed into parts based primarily on the psychosocial motivation for acquiring the language. The TBLT ideology can be categorized as representing an analytical approach, in part due to the fact that it is not dependent on a prior structural analysis of language related to the specific task being enacted.

Although enjoying a vogue period TBLT is by no means a new teaching methodology. Despite this, defining what constitutes as a pedagogical task has proven to be a problematic. Many researchers have sought to pinpoint the exact nature of a task by applying lengthy and complex definitions (Candlin, 1987). Others have taken a more vague approach (Skehan, 1998) whilst others have attempted to offer an over-simplified laymanesque definition of task (Long, 1985). Due to the variability in prior task definitions, the current research will work around the six critical properties of a pedagogical task proposed by Ellis (2003). It is believed that these six properties provide a representative basis from which to undertake the current exploratory research project.

The Formulation of the Current Task and its Pedagogical Basis

The pedagogical task used in the current research is entitled *Deserted.*[1] Deserted is a semi-focused task comprising of five micro-level tasks functioning within a larger macro-level task. Each of the five micro-level tasks require different skills from both the student and the teacher. Contextually, it is themed as a story of survival, character analysis, problem solving and life or death decision-making. It represents a typical task-based holistic activity and conforms to the definition of task given by Ellis (2003). In addition, Deserted was created with a number of practically orientated principles in mind. The task content should reflect a social environment, the task should function as a dynamic entity from which communication can blossom, the task should be stimulating for both teacher and student, and, the task should emphasize analytical decision making and decision justification.

Deserted promotes social connectivity by providing a hypnotic window into the personal reality of each of the six characters in the story. This represents the kind of social voyeurism found on the immensely popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace and MIXI. Students have a visual character *(profile picture)* as well as a textual character represented through biographic data. Gernsbacher (1990) supports a theory of structure building in relation to reading tasks which stresses the importance of not limiting the process of to textual information only. Information from a variety of knowledge sources *(pictures, story telling, sharing of information with classmates)* helps create a mental image of the textual information. Lave & Wenger (1991) suggest that such connective authenticity is a critical element for active student participation, modeling and decision making which permits learners to negotiate, create meaning and develop understanding. As a skill-based lesson Deserted is conducive to the use of comparative rhetoric, prioritization, opinion giving, persuasive talk, justifying a standpoint as well as defending individual and group decisions. Additionally, the teacher and

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[1] The Deserted lesson booklet can be downloaded in PDF format from the author's website at http://www.eapstudy.com/Deserted.pdf.

the student are required to formulation critical questions throughout the micro-level task process. Richards (1987, p. 212) argues that *'one characteristic of effective teaching is the teacher's use of questions'*, the quality and quantity of questions has a direct effect on student learning outcomes. Indeed, Wright (1987) shows that all pedagogical tasks must include two principal elements in their design. These elements being termed *'input data'* and *'instructional questions'*. A task can only be designed in terms of these two elements due to the fact that all tasks have *'discourse potential'*. A task cannot be designed in terms of specific *'output data'* but rather through the creation of opportunities to produce a desired output response via questioning and interacting with the material. Deserted also represents what Long (1981) describes as a two-way interactant task in that all members of the group have unique information to contribute, furthermore, he adds that this type of task stimulates significantly more modified interactions than one-way interactant tasks. This two-way interactivity centers on the negotiation of problems - both problem-solving and problem-posing. Deserted is primarily a problem-posing task requiring a problem-solving solution. From a general neuropsychological perspective problem solving of any kind entails performing in a new situation *(the social context of Deserted)* with information acquired and knowledge learned from past situations *(various psychosocial sources)*. This Vygotskian approach requires students to search along various solution paths within the problem until an acceptable solution is found.

As is the case with most EFL materials, Deserted was designed with a specific enactment procedure in mind. The idealized enactment focuses on the role of process over content. The visualization below shows the series of five micro-level tasks in relation to the overall macro-level task *(represented by the most outer circle)*. The process is presented using an analogy of an ocean with each group of students being in control of their own boat. The teacher must assist the students in navigating their boat to the outer edges of the ocean *(macro-level goal)*. The students are relatively free in how they direct their own boat to this location. This location is not pinned down to a singular point, thus illustrating that even though Deserted has an idealized

process, this process is not overly prescriptive, and clearly allows for teacher modification within the boundaries of the framework presented. The teacher can drop buoys in to this ocean to try to influence the student route. Such buoys may come in the form of a suggestion, a critical question or some other form of contextually framed intervention. Each student in the group must pass through the same series of micro-level tasks in order to reach their macro-level goal. Variation between idealized task enactment and actual task enactment is the fundamental issue and not the notion of right versus wrong.
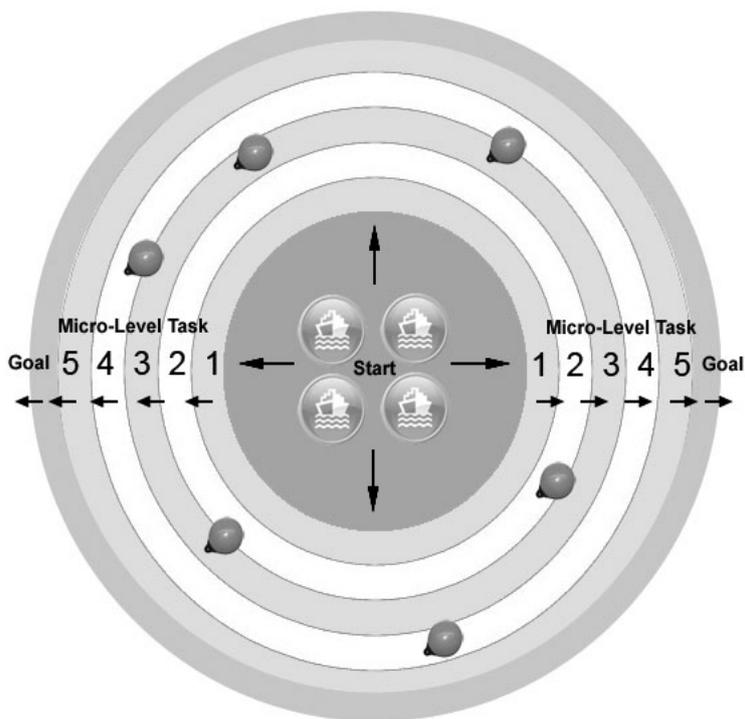

FIGURE 1
The Process of Task Enactment as Idealized by the Materials Designer

Pedagogical Task	Teacher Enactment	Student Role
Micro-Level Task 1 *Framing the Social Context*	Create a believable social reality through the presentation of Deserted and the current predicament of the six characters in the story. Set the macro-level task by engaging the students by stressing the element of social responsibility and the severity of the situation.	**Listen** to the story presented by the teacher and ask questions where misunderstandings occur.
Micro-Level Task 2 *Primary Textual Analysis*	Allow the students to have a primary look through the six character descriptions instructing them to pay attention *(but not overly focus on)* new vocabulary and difficult words.	**Read** the six character descriptions so that a basic understanding of each character is possible. Identify and clarify difficult vocabulary.
Micro-Level Task 3 *Sociocognitive Textual Analysis*	Instruct students to analyze the six characters in relation to the macro-level task. Reading must be analyzed within the previous set social context. Encourage the development of each character and promote the use of the character pictures. Promote critical comparisons and active discussion.	**Analyze** each of the six characters in relation to the macro-level task previously introduced by the teacher. Discuss with other group members.
Micro-Level Task 4 *Negotiated Decision Making*	Visit each group eliciting opinions and offering counter opinions as well as continuing to develop each character. Push the students to reflect on their decisions whilst seeking a solid justification for each decision made.	**Discuss** with other group members sharing opinions on who should stay on the island. Negotiate until a consensus is reached. Debate and ridicule in cases where disagreement is present.
Micro-Level Task 5 *Social Justification and Defense*	Ask critical questions in order to make the presenter defend their decision. Manage and facilitate questions emphasizing the skills required here are the norm in western academic life.	**Present** a justification and defense of the group decision by constructing reasons why the group made the choice which it did. Answer critical questions from classmates with a defense based within the social context of Deserted.

Macro-Level Task Achievement

FIGURE 2
The Pedagogical Nature of Each of the Micro-level Tasks within Deserted

According to Ellis (2003) a task should focus on meaning, involve real world processes of language' use, and, involve any of the traditional four language skills. These properties suggest that language is both psychosocially and interpersonally interpreted. Although the choice students are required to make in Deserted is not bounded to a replicable experience of choosing someone to remain on a desert island, the social processes involved in the task are representative of numerous everyday activities such as choosing a meal from a menu or deciding which TV program to watch. The primary difference being in the unexpected story content and character information *(drugs, alcohol, adultery, homelessness and other social stigmas are touched upon which are often absent from mainstream EFL textbooks).* This realistic engagement or connectivity is intended to function as a motivational tool. This can only be successful if the burden of social responsibility is emphasized during the framing of the social context. This is vital for the creation of a sociocognitive rapport with the materials. Foster (1998) confirms that for group work to be effective students must be convinced that the task is worthwhile and not just an opportunity for some fun. Whilst there is a significant amount of textual analysis in Deserted the nature of the textual information given is appropriate for low-level university freshman. Brown and Yule (1983) state that text-based descriptions such as profiles and character biographies are the easiest kind of text for students to process whereas text based around arguments or opinions is the most difficult. Descriptive text was also selected as it lends itself to the creation of internal representations or mental models. Johnson-Laird (1983) argue that internal representations consider the text beyond the literal meaning thus lending itself to the flexible development and multi-faceted interpretations possible for each of the six characters.

Although the macro-level task represents a clearly definable communicative outcome the content and form of this outcome may be less clearly definable as to allow for originality in target language production. Any outcome can be rendered meaningful on a number of different levels *(cognitive, linguistic, psychosocial)* by a number of different people *(teacher, materials designer,*

student). In considering the communicative outcome of Deserted the materials designer attempted to avoid the pitfall highlighted by Seedhouse (1999) who suggests that students often overly focus on the completion of a task and as a result they only produce a modest amount of language, usually the minimum amount to complete the task. The fifth micro-level task in Deserted not only aims to *raise the bar* in terms of minimum language production required to complete the task but also to accommodate for the specific nature of the Japanese EFL learner. Ellis, Tanaka and Yamazaki (1994) demonstrate that Japanese learners who traditionally, are culturally resistant to interacting in whole class tasks can be encouraged to do so by those tasks which demand interaction in order to be completed successfully.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A duel qualitative case study was employed at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Chiba Prefecture, Japan. KUIS is a four-year university focusing on foreign languages, intercultural communication, Japanese culture, linguistics, and international studies. As the nature of this research was exploratory the case-study design was selected as it permits an in-depth analysis. It also provides an immense amount of data which can be probed though face-to-face interviews. It is thought that this approach will facilitate a working hypothesis for further large-scale research efforts (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Data was primarily gathered using pre and post lesson focused   interviews which lasted between 30 and 60-minutes, classroom observations of a single 90-minute lesson preformed by each teacher, field note-taking as well as audio/video recordings to use as cross-referencing tools. The pre and post lesson interviews were considered vital in assessing the pedagogical intentions of the teacher, something highlighted as crucial during the task as a workplan property identified by Ellis (2003).

PARTICIPANTS

The participants were two English teachers from the English Department at KUIS. They were both male with a mean age of 32 years and 7.5 years teaching experience in Asia. Both teachers had been working at KUIS for 3-months under a communicative language teaching classroom philosophy. This was underpinned by the institute wide belief that *'language is acquired through communication'* (Howatt, 1984). The two teachers were randomly selected from a pool of volunteers after a department wide call for participants was sent out via email. The demographic data of the two teachers is shown in the table below.

Teacher *(Alias)*	Age	Qualification	Experience	Students	Classroom Type
Martin	29	MA App Ling	7 years	27	Regular
Stephen	35	MA TESOL	8 years	26	BLS

PROCEDURE

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

> Deserted is the story of six people who survive a plane crash and come to be on a remote desert island. Each person on the island has good and bad points as well as different background stories which the students can read and analyze. Just as all six people have given up hope of a rescue a small rowing boat appears on the island. Unfortunately, this boat is only able to hold five of the people. The students should select a person to stay on the

island and ultimately die. The five others will try and row to safety although they have no idea where they currently are. This task could be attempted as a small group activity, each group should agree on one person to stay and then present their ideas to the class. It is important to consider the following words; scene, context, theme, analyze, justify and defend. It is important that the students challenge each other in order to impose the belief that their decision is the correct one whilst at the same time ridiculing the decisions made by other groups. You may need to function as a facilitator.

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

1) As a teacher in an EFL context how do you define a pedagogical task?
2) What is the main purpose *(openly defined)* of Deserted?
3) How would you enact a lesson using Deserted within a typical freshman class?
4) What communicative skills does Deserted require from the students and teacher?
5) What genre of language is Deserted likely to activate or require?
6) What problems do you anticipate with Deserted for the students and yourself?
7) Do you think that Deserted relates to the development of any academic skills?
8) What strengths and weaknesses do you see in Deserted?

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

1) Why did you introduce Deserted in the manner which you did?
2) What did you want the students to understand before undertaking Deserted?
3) When the students were working in groups how did you assist them?

4) Did you expand on the character biographies or develop the story plot?

5) Did students ask questions about each of the characters?

6) Did you suggest alternatives opinions to the students regarding each character?

7) What was the purpose of having students explain their choice to the class?

8) What did you believe your role to be at that *(presentation)* point?

9) Did you encourage students to ask questions? Why or why not?

10) Is Deserted an appropriate task-based lesson for university freshman?

11) Is there anything you would change if you could perform the lesson again?

RESULTS

Task Enactment as Realized by Martin

> *'A task is something that has an outcome which is non-linguistic. The outcome should be a decision or a picture or something so the students aren't focused on the language.'*

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

Martin initiated Deserted by showing the students the rowing boat picture (A3 sized). He asked the students as a group to say what the object was and then confirmed this by telling them that it was a rowing boat. He then gave each of the groups one of the pictures *(either the rowboat, the plane crash or the island)* and gave them the directive, *'Look at the pictures and tell me what you think is happening here'*. In his post-lesson interview Martin justified this procedure by stating that, *'I just wanted them to generate*

interest in the lesson'. At this point students were not sure how or why they should be connecting the three pictures together. Skehan (1996) insists that it is vital to make students specifically aware of where their focus should be. After further prompting one group stated that there had been some kind of accident, after further elicitation a different group shouted out *'plane crash'*. This elicitation was not backed-up by Martin. Consequently, the students were framing their own social context which had the effect of trivializing the situation and shattering any illusion of reality or sense of responsibility.

The students were then given the student booklet containing all six-character biographies. They were instructed not to read the first page which summarized both the social context and the macro-level task. The materials designer included this to support to those students who did not fully understand or who were not confident in listening to the teacher description of micro-level task one. Due to the fact that Martin had not framed the social context as he indicated he would in his pre-lesson workplan he could not allow the students to read this first page. Nunan (1991) supports the notion that in lower level students closed, directed tasks stimulate more interaction than open, multi-directional tasks. For reasons unspecified the students were instructed to look at only two of the six characters. They were not informed as to what they were reading for, or that they should be looking for anything specific within each character. Reading without a clearly definable outcome not only goes against the definition of a pedagogical task (Ellis, 2003) but also added a new dimension to micro-level task two. This task slowly veered toward an exercise in factual recall rather than a contextual based interaction. The belief that the focus of this micro-level task was a kind of memory test was alluded to in Martin's pre-lesson interview. He states, *'The biographies about each of the characters are quite long and there is a lot of detail, there is a lot of stuff they need to remember such as new vocabulary'(page number?).* This preliminary text negotiation had been reduced to a strong obsession with vocabulary acquisition and memory recall with many students overly focusing on individual word meaning and sentence level translation in to the L1. Newton (2001) advocates three methods in which teachers can

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

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

Although the students were not familiar with all six characters, nor had they been given the opportunity to negotiate a decision as required in micro-level task four, one person from each group was invited to stand up and tell the class who they choose to stay on the island and why. When asked why this procedure was followed Martin states, *'Originally, I got the idea from the pre-lesson blurb but generally I do not do presentations in class because they produce no real interaction'*. As interactive learning is a key condition which TBLT should aim to create (Long & Crookes, 1992; Nunan, 1989) it seems that this attitude towards presentation neglects their function as a tool for the creation of further discussion and interaction. Martin also identified the class size as a reason why presentations were problematic, *'The class was too big.*

I couldn't have one big circle and one class discussion because with 27 students it would not of worked'. This neglect of the social justification and defense micro-level task removed the primary link between Deserted and general academic skills development. Although Martin states in his pre-lesson interview that discussion and interaction were fundamental at this stage, *'Once they have presented their ideas I want there to be more discussion and more disagreement. The teacher is responsible for creating this environment, I need to have a clear process, so after the presentation I need to ask the students to write something to facilitate interaction.'* Despite this pre-lesson intention when Martin was asked about his role during the presentation stage in his post-lesson interview Martin did not view his role as a facilitator or initiator of discussion instead he remarks, *'I was not really doing anything. I was just listening and making sure that other students were listening. I did not prompt them or ask them for any more information about their choice further than what they gave'.*

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

Task Enactment as Realized by Stephen

> *'A task is something that is connected with a real world activity and has a beginning, middle and an end. There is something produced at the end of the task, whatever that may be.'*

Before the beginning of the lesson, Stephen hung the six A3 sized character biographies around the classroom. He also wrote the words *'justify'* and *'defend'* on the whiteboard. As Stephen was teaching in a Blended Learning Space (BLS) equipped with projectors, computers and other digital technologies he began his lesson by projecting the word *'Deserted'* on to the large screen at the front of the room. This focused the students' attention

although the meaning of the word was not clarified. Stephen proceeded by proclaiming, *'Let me tell you a story. There was a plane going from Los Angeles to New Zealand but on the way there was an accident'*. At this point Stephen changed the slide being shown on the screen to a large colour picture of an airplane wreckage, upon seeing this image the students were immediately engaged and socially connected, there were many loud groans of surprise and anxiety. Stephen told them that the plane had crashed onto an island and only six people had survived. The students immediately made the connection that the six survivors were the six character biographies hanging around the room. Stephen then showed the slide of the desert island stressing that although it looked nice there was no food so the six people really wanted to get off the island. He continued by showing the boat slide stating, *'One day a boat came to the island, but it was a very small boat and there was only space for five people'*. The students showed their understanding and appreciation of the severity of the story by releasing a louder grown of interest and curiosity. The students were visually very keen to learn more. At this point, the lesson was very much in accord with the materials designer's idealized enactment of micro-level task one as well as with Stephen's own pre-lesson workplan. In his workplan he states, *'I could probably use the pictures as introduction props. Personally, I would prefer to use a projector rather than holding up the pictures in class. I would introduce the idea of a crash, the island, the boat and then introduce the people'*.

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

Students were then able to go around the room and look at each of the six characters individually. The students found this interesting and were very

pro-active. After 10-minutes nine groups of three people were created and the students were given the character booklet. Although the procedure was effective it deviated from Stephen's pre-lesson intention, '*I would put them into six groups and have them analyze one character per group. I would give them two minutes for each character and then swap, then I would give them the character booklet and get them to move on to the justification activity*'. Stephen did not reconfirm any further instructions and the students began to talk about each character hastily.

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

enjoyment and motivation. Stephen was still operating within the boundary of the macro-level task yet with enough teacher autonomy to respond flexibly within his class based on the individual circumstances.

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

CONCLUSION

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

Although it is easy to take a critical tone in such limited case studies, the enactment demonstrated by Martin was more reflective of a synthetic approach to enactment rather than a communicative analytical approach. The student driven emphasis on sentence level grammar, new vocabulary acquisition and direct translations between the L1 and L2 placed Martin in an invidious position. Despite the good intentions of a teacher in dealing with student problems, the students within Martin's class had derailed his task as a workplan, something Martin was unable to recover from. On the other hand, Stephen's enactment was very similar to the materials designer's visualized enactment procedure. Although Stephen changed the format of the lesson based on an unexpected student response, in reality, the students performed all five of the micro-level tasks according to the principles of the analytical

approach which TBLT adheres to. This serves as a positive example that teachers can have autonomy and freedom to modify task-based materials but this should be done within the objectives of the original task according to the materials designer.

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

Aligning classroom enactment procedures closer to the materials designer's idealization requires a considered approach. This approach should consider the implementation of semi-prescriptive teaching procedures. Unfortunately within TBLT any mention of the term *'prescriptive procedures'* is usually rejected outright as an infringement on teacher creativity and freedom. Despite endless variables in student level, educational context, teacher preference and institutional methodology, freedom to improvise teaching

materials is considered very much as a teaching right. The implications for standardization and consistency between classes is something which TBLT and communicative language teaching all to often blanket over. One area where a possible compromise exists lies within the realm of cognitive psychology. Wartofsky (1973) sets forth the notion of artifacts as tools which guide communication, action and behaviour. If pedagogical tasks, lesson materials, curriculum mandates and institutional policies are considered as artifacts then the teacher is never working entirely from conscious *'free'* thought but rather through the following of a fate driven reality. This is one possible explanation for the variation in task as a workplan and task as a process which was observed. Norman (1988) argues that artifacts are designed with the capability to cue activity through constraints and affordances. The implication being that it is possible to craft or create tasks and lesson materials in a manner which will bring about a certain type of response from a teacher. This is already observable in the constraints which direct student behavioural/linguistic responses to a task in the *'discourse potential'* identified by Wright (1987). Although as seen in the current research this response cannot be guaranteed *(unless specifically instructed)*, the probability of observing a certain response can be maximized. This further strengthens the claim that the insistence on prescriptive teaching at certain points of a lesson may be beneficial, especially in cases where process is favoured over content. The aim would be not to advocate the widespread implementation of over-prescribed, drone like enactment procedures, but rather, to seek ways to ensure that the key pedagogical points of a task are indeed followed during a process based lesson.

Future research in this field would be wise to conduct much larger scale enquiries and perhaps the use of multiple task-based lessons would reveal more. The concepts of teacher offloading *(the preference of relying on the teaching materials in class)* and teacher improvising *(the preference for expanding upon teaching materials in class)* would also be useful areas for exploration, as would a look at the notion of teacher as designer rather than consumer of instructional materials. Assigning responsibility to anyone of the

variables within the dynamic process of teaching based on this limited effort alone would be a step backwards, teacher individuality and flexibility are both highly valuable concepts which should not be sacrificed, yet designing materials which are then enacted in a limitless number of ways does not bode well for the integrity of TBLT or the EFL teacher profession. A compromise should be found, but where this compromise lies remains unknown.

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