

# International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



## The Effect of Task-based and Topic-based Speaking Activities on Speaking Ability of Iranian EFL Learners

[PP: 85-93]

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### ABSTRACT

The current study was conducted to investigate the effect of task-based and topic-based speaking activities on improving the speaking ability among Iranian EFL learners. The study used quasi-experimental design. The subjects consisted of 60 male and female students who were selected from among 90 EFL learners by applying the Nelson proficiency test. 30 subjects formed a control group which received conventional method. The other with 15 subjects formed experimental group A which received the task-based speaking activities. Another 15 formed the experimental group B which received the topic-based speaking activities. Oral interviews were used both as the pretest and posttest in order to evaluate the speaking proficiency of subjects before and after the treatment, the results indicated that task-based speaking activities enhanced speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners, but not significantly enough to reject the stated null hypothesis.

**Keywords:** *Task-based Speaking Activities, Topic-based Speaking Activities, Iranian Learners, EFL*

ARTICLE INFO	The paper received on	Reviewed on	Accepted after revisions on
	15/05/2017	11/06/2017	17/12/2017

### Suggested citation:

Yegani, H. & Jodaei, H. (2017). The Effect of Task-based and Topic-based Speaking Activities on Speaking Ability of Iranian EFL Learners. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 5(4). 85-93.

### 1. Introduction

If we were able to take wing and get a bird's eye view of English language teaching (ELT & EFL) in classrooms, study circles, work shop, lecture theatres, after a sober consideration we can easily understand that a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. It is difficult to achieve the ability to speak a second or foreign language properly. In case of speaking skill, we need to notice that this macro skill involves many different micro skills. There are different functions defined for speaking skill, for example using speaking to make social interaction with other people, to establish rapport, or to chat with our friends in order to spend time with them, to seek or express opinions, to give instructions or to get things done, to describe something, to complain, to make request something, or to say jokes and anecdotes (Richard & Renandya, 2002, p. 201).

Speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners, who try to use it appropriately in interactions

with other EFL and ELF users. Interaction involves linguistic, paralinguistic (e.g. pitch, stress, and intonation), and non-linguistic (e.g. gestures, body language/posture, facial expression) elements. Hence, "there is tremendous variation cross-culturally and cross-linguistically in the specific interpretations of gestures and body language" (Brown 1994 cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, P. 234).

Speaking is one of the four integral elements to connect with others, so it needs to be carefully instructed especially for EFL learners through considering related factors, conditions, and components. There are some factors to achieve fluent speaking such as careful analysis of the area, sufficient language input and speech-promotion activities.

Nowadays a debate has developed over which approaches to structuring and planning and implementing lessons are more effective. Most approaches to language teaching can be described as 'form-based'. Such approaches analyze the language into an inventory of forms which



can then be presented to the learner and practiced in a series of discreet linguistic items, such as points of grammar, lexical items, and functions. It is believed that a direct relationship exists between 'input' and 'intake', that what is presented can be mastered directly and will, as a result of that mastery, become a part of the learners usable repertoire (Nunan, 2002, p. 173) but the functions of spoken language are interactional and transactional. The primary intention of the former to maintain social relationships, whereas the transactional function of speaking is to communicate through expressing your ideas or sharing information. Actually, a significant part of our communication allocate to interactional purposes. So, language teachers must use strategies to improve learners' meaningful communication in relevant topics using learner-learner interaction as "communication derives essentially from interaction" (Rivers, 1987), therefore in order to provide the students with the approaches that lead them to communication in the classroom, two approaches which is named as task-based and topic-based are introduced as follow;

Task-Based language Teaching is one of the most effective and meaningful language teaching approaches in recent years, which emphasizes on 'learning by doing' and 'doing things with language'. Communicative language teaching advocates task-based language teaching. Teachers can provide their students with task-based activities, which will make any syllabus more effective by making it student-centered, relevant and motivational. Task-Based Language Teaching offers an effective means of motivation students to learn and giving them confidence to succeed (Freeman, 2000).

A task-based approach for teaching speaking tries to encounter learners with a natural authentic context. One of good practices to provide interaction opportunities for learners is their group work to complete a task, as they must interact with each other, understand each other, express their own ideas, check their own comprehension, seek clarification, and assimilate the language that they listen and may be beyond their present ability. As Candlin and Murphy (1987, p. 1) note, "The central purpose we are concerned with is language learning, and task present

this in the form of a problem-solving negotiation between knowledge that the learner holds and new knowledge".

It is thus argued that the topic or theme based approach can be helpful to improve integrated skills approach, as they provide cohesion and coherence in the use of language rather than isolated fragment. This type of practice integrates knowledge, language, and thinking skill. (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 208).

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

The case for a social participatory structure that allows students to interact with each other was successfully stated by Dewey (1916, p. 302) many years ago: 'some of the individual's capacities only manifested through cooperation with others'. Building on long and porters account (1985) of the advantages of group/pair work for language pedagogy, Jacobs (1998) provides a comprehensive list of ten potential advantages comparing the typical characteristics of group work with those of teacher-centered instruction.

*Table 1: Ten Potential Advantages of Group Activities (Jacobs, 1998)*

Comment	Advantage
In teacher-fronted classrooms, the teacher typically speaks 80% of the time; in group work more students talk for more of the time.	1- the quantity of learner speech can increase
In teacher-fronted classrooms, students are cast in a responsive role, but in group work they can perform a wide range of roles, including those involved in the negotiation of meaning.	2- The variety of speech acts can increase
In teacher-fronted lessons, teachers shape their instruction to the needs of the average students but each student's needs must be considered in group work.	3- There can be more individualization of instruction
Students feel more relaxed when they speak in an L2 in front of their peers than in front of the whole class.	4- Anxiety can be reduced
The group work efforts make less competitive atmosphere and more cooperative attempts between students.	5- Motivation can increase
Students are social animals and thus enjoy interacting with others in groups; in teacher-fronted classrooms student-student interaction is often proscribed.	6- Enjoyment can increase
Group activities help students to become independent learners.	7- Independence can increase
Group activities enable students to get to know each other.	8- Social integration can increase
In typical teacher-fronted classrooms, students are discouraged from helping each other; group work helps students to learn collaborative skills.	9- students can learn how to work together with others
Learning is enhanced by group work because students are willing to take risks and can scaffold each other's efforts.	10- Learning can increase

Sarıçoban and Karakurt (2016) conducted a study using task-based activities to improve listening and speaking skills in EFL context. The results of the study showed that B1 groups did not get significant results from listening test and get nearly significant scores from speaking test while the listening and speaking results of B1+ groups through task-based learning after the implementations were highly significant, which shows that their participation in the task-based activities in the classroom reflected the results positively. Also the students' opinions about task-based learning and teaching activities were respectively positive.

Farahani (2009) investigated "The Effects of Task-Based Techniques, Gender, and Different Levels of Language Proficiency on Speaking Development". The purposes of the study were to investigate (1) the effects of TBLT on male and female learners; (2) the speaking proficiency differences between male and female learners; (3) the degree of progression differences between intermediate and advanced English learners of the same gender under task-based approach.

Ismail and Meryem (2009) carried out a study to explore "the effects of task-based group activities on students' collaborative behaviors in EFL speaking classes." The aims of the research were (1) to investigate different influences of task-based activities and topic-based activities on students and (2) to explore the potential effects on promoting collaboration among students.

Tseng (2006) conducted a research "The Effect of Task-Based Instruction on Primary School EFL Students" in Changhua-Taiwan in two months. The objectives of the research were to investigate (1) whether the students who learnt with TBLT performed four skills better than students who learnt with traditional teacher-led method; (2) what the primary school students' perceptions on TBLT were; (3) what factors influenced the implementation of TBLT at primary school.

To investigate the effect of the TBLT on learners' oral interaction, Murad (2009) conducted a study "The Effect of a TBLT Program on Developing the Speaking Skill of Palestinian Secondary Students and Their Attitudes towards English." The purposes of the study were to investigate (1) the statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the both tests and (2) the students' attitudes towards English due to the interaction between the teaching procedure and subjects' gender.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Participants**

To accomplish the present research, 90 students who were taking English classes at participatory culture house science and technology Quarter English language institute were selected. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 30, but the sex and the age of the participants were not considered in this study. For the researcher to make sure that the participants were at the same level of proficiency, a Nelson language proficiency test including

grammar (30) items, vocabulary (10) items and reading comprehension (10) items was administered to subjects. After analyzing the data, 60 participants whose scores were at the modified percentile level, nearly from 70 to 80 percent, were selected. Finally, they were divided into three groups, 15 subjects as experimental group A from participatory culture house science and technology Quarter and another 15 as experimental group B from same English language institute, and 30 as control group were selected, The rest of participants, whose scores were not at this range of the test, were dropped from the study. As a result, 60 subjects participated in this research and finally the. Researcher called one class as control and the other as experimental groups.

#### **3.2. Instruments**

To do this survey the researchers utilized the following instruments. First, Nelson language Proficiency Test including; (30) grammar items, (10) vocabulary items and (10) reading comprehension items, was administered to both groups, to find out the homogeneity of the groups. Then all groups received G questionnaire as a pretest of speaking proficiency, these G questionnaires were selected randomly among the 8 questions which are supposed to be used as questionnaire of pretest and post-test speaking proficiency.

The third test was a post-test of speaking proficiency, which was developed by the researchers, and included G questionnaire, which was administered as the posttest of speaking ability.

#### **3.3. Procedures**

In order to conduct the research and to verify the research hypothesis the following steps were taken: nelson language proficiency test was administered to the subjects to find out the homogeneity of the groups. after data analyzing 60 participants whose scores were at the modified percentile level were selected as two experimental groups and one control group; the rest of the participants, whose scores were not at this modified range were dropped from the study, therefore three classes, one with 30 subjects as control group and the other with 15 subjects as experimental group A who were taking English classes at participatory culture house science and technology Quarter and another 15 as experimental group B were selected, in order to make sure that three groups homogenized, the



researcher has given a pretest of speaking to three groups and the result was computed, then experimental groups received treatment which are fully mentioned below, and finally three groups received posttest in order to consider the effects of treatments in experimental groups.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data in this study consisted of three sets of score which were obtained from administering three types of test, nelson language proficiency test pilot group, and an oral interview for both pretests and posttest. To interpret the results of the tests administered, the difference between the mean of the post-test of control group score and the mean of the post-test of experimental group scores was used for statistical significance and the researcher used the t-test, which is according to Hatch and Farhady (1981) an excellent statistical procedure to use in comparing two means in order to get any possible relationship between two set of score and final logical answered to the research question. At last, the researcher collected all scores including; proficiency test, pretest and posttest, pilot group, to analyze them and see the results.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Homogeneity of the Subjects

The first step to do this research was to pilot the proficiency test. For this, a test of 70 items of Nelson language proficiency test was conducted and administered among 30 learners of the same population. And the coefficient correlation equaled to .7767 but after omitting 20 items which showed low item facility and weak distracters, coefficient reached at .8906.

Afterward, this test was administered to 90 students at participatory culture house science and technology Quarter Mehrane Province, in order to have homogenous samples on the basis of language proficiency. The descriptive data of the above mentioned standardized test, including Mean, Standard Deviation, and variance, were measured by data gathered.

### 4.2. Pilot study

At first, in order to determine the reliability and validity of Nelson language proficiency test, the test was given to a group of 30 students in a pilot study and then the researcher studied the reliability of them using the reliability coefficients and this correlation coefficient is a measure of strength of the relationship between two

set at scores or data and the more the Alpha getting close to 8906 the more reliable the test is. Table 2 shows reliability in pilot group before and after omitting the 20 items.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients of Pilot Study before omitting the 20 items

Reliability Coefficients	
N of Cases = 30.0	N of Items = 70
Alpha = .7767	

Table 3: Reliability Coefficients of Pilot Study after omitting the 20 items

Reliability Coefficients	
N of Cases = 30.0	N of Items = 50
Alpha = .8906	

### 4.3. Simple Random Sampling

Mousavi (1997) defines simple random sampling as type of probability sampling in which all members of the population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. In other words, for every pair of elements X and Y, X's chance of being selected equals Y's chance, and the selection of X in no way affects Y's probability of selection. The steps in this type of sampling comprise the following.

- Define the population;
- List all members of the population; and
- Select a sample by employing a procedure where sheer chance determines which members on the list are drawn for the sample.

Table 4: The Performance of All the Prior Subjects on Proficiency Test

Frequencies	
Measurements	Statistics
N	90
Missing	0
Mean	73.5556
Std. Error of mean	1.23849
Median	72.0000
Mode	72.00
Std. Deviation	11.74936
Variance	138.04744
Skewness	-1.137
Std. Error of Skewness	.254
Kurtosis	3.971
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.503
Range	74.00
Minimum	22.00
Maximum	96.00
Sum	6620.00

The subjects whose score were in the range of 70 up to 80 participated in this study and the others whose scores were not in this range did not participate in this study.

Table 5: The Performance of the Subjects with Score in the Range of 70 Up to 80 on Proficiency Test

Measurements	Statistics
N	60
Missing	0
Mean	73.2000
Std. Error of mean	.38090
Median	72.0000
Mode	72.00
Std. Deviation	2.95044
Variance	8.70508
Skewness	1.125
Std. Error of Skewness	.309
Kurtosis	.481
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.608
Range	10.00
Minimum	70.00
Maximum	80.00
Sum	4392.00

In order to have the homogenous subjects based on language proficiency the scores were located on a normal curve (figure1.)

Figure 1: Normal Curves of the Score of the Subjects on Proficiency Test

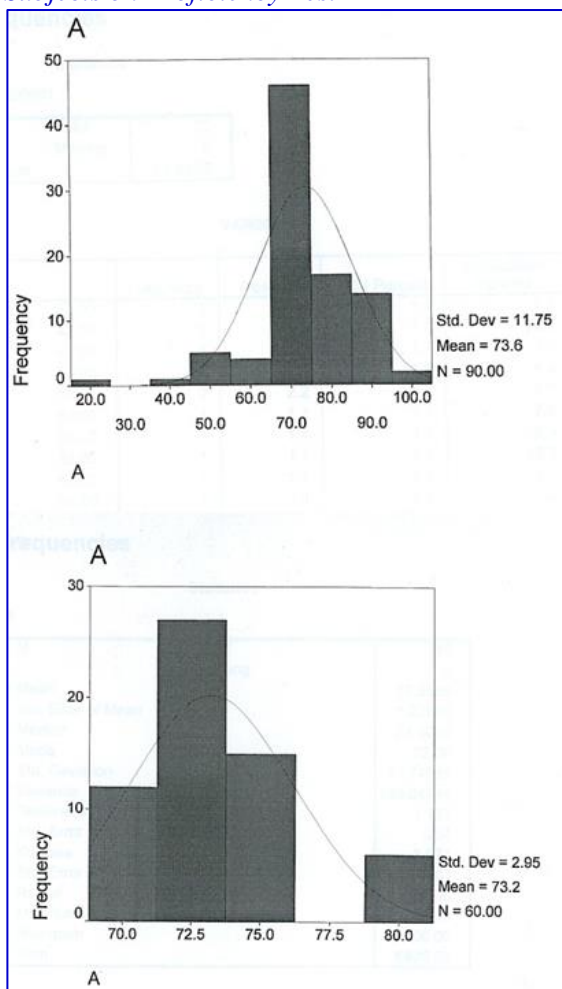


Table 6: Descriptive Statistics Pretest Speaking

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	t	df	sig
Control	30	52.8000	10.44328	-	43	.816
Task	15	53.6667	14.00850	.234		

As displayed in the Table 6 the t-observed value is .23, this amount of the t value at 43 degree of freedom with significant level of .05 In the speaking pretest is lower than the critical value of t,i.e (2.21)

Thus it can be claimed that there is no any significant difference between the two groups mean score on the pretest of speaking. The mean score of experimental group which is dealing with task-based speaking activities is 53.6667 and mean score of control group is 52.8000; therefore, no special difference is seen between two groups.

Table 7: Pretest Group Statistics Control & Task

CODE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GROUP	30	52.8000	10.44328	1.90667
Control	15	53.6667	14.00850	3.61698

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances			
		F		Sig.	
GROUP	Equal variances	3.870		.056	
	Assumed Equal variances				
	Not assumed				

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
GROUP	Equal variances	-2.234	43	.816	-.8667
	Assumed Equal variances	-.212	22.040	.834	-.8667
	Not assumed				

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
GROUP	Equal variances	3.70736	-8.34326	6.60993
	Assumed Equal variances	4.08876	-9.34534	7.61200
	Not assumed			

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics Pretest Speaking

Group	N	Mean	Std. D	t	df	sig
Control	30	52.8000	10.44328	-.207	43	.837
Topic	15	53.6000	15.22123			

As displayed in the Table 8 the t-observed value is .20, this amount of the t value at 43 degree of freedom with significant level of .05 In the speaking pretest is lower than the critical value of t,i.e (2.21)

Thus, after sober consideration we can easily understand that control group and experimental group B which is dealing with topic-based speaking activities are homogeneous in terms of speaking proficiency, and the mean score for the experimental group B and control group are 53.6000 and 52.8000. So, there is not any significant difference between two groups mean score on pretest of speaking.

Table 9: Pretest Group Statistics Control & Topic



CODE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
GROUP	30	52.8000	10.44328	1.90667	
Control	15	53.6000	15.22123	3.93010	
<b>Topic</b>					
<b>Levenes Test for Equality of Variances</b>					
		F		Sig.	
GROUP	Equal	2.706		.107	
variances	Assumed				
variances	Equal				
variances	Not				
assumed					
<b>Levenes Test for Equality of Variances</b>					
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
GROUP	Equal	-.207	43	.837	-.8000
variances	Assumed				
variances	Equal	-.183	20.809	.856	-.8000
variances	Not				
assumed					
<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>					
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of the Difference		
			Lower	Upper	
GROUP	Equal	3.85987	-8.58417	6.98417	
variances	Assumed				
variances	Equal	4.36819	-9.88923	8.28923	
variances	Not				
assumed					

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics Pretest Speaking

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	t	df	sig
Task	15	53.6667	14.00850	-	28	.990
Topic	15	53.6000	15.22123	.012		

As displayed in the table 10 the t-observed value is .012, this amount of the t value at 28 degree of freedom with significant level of .05 In the speaking pretest is lower than the critical value of t,i.e (2.21)

It must be noted that two groups are homogeneous is terms of speaking proficiency and mean score of experimental group A and B are 53.6667 and 53.6000 Consequently, any further differences among the experimental groups at the end of instruction could be attributed to the effect of the type of treatment which is given.

Table 11: Pretest Group Statistics Task & Topic

CODE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
GROUP	15	53.6667	14.00850	3.61698	
Task	15	53.6000	15.22123	3.93010	
<b>Topic</b>					
<b>Levenes Test for Equality of Variances</b>					
		F		Sig.	
GROUP	Equal	.002		.962	
variances	Assumed				
variances	Equal				
variances	Not				
assumed					
<b>Levenes Test for Equality of Variances</b>					
		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
GROUP	Equal	.012	28	.990	.0667
variances	Assumed				
variances	Equal	.012	27.809	.990	.0667
variances	Not				
assumed					
<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>					
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of the Difference		
			Lower	Upper	
GROUP	Equal	5.34118	-10.87425	11.00759	
variances	Assumed				
variances	Equal	5.34118	-10.87764	11.01097	
variances	Not				
assumed					

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics Posttest Speaking

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	t	df	sig
Control	30	54.0667	11.35306	-	43	.002
Task	15	68.2000	16.85315	3.337		

As displayed in the table 12 the t-observed value is 3.33, this amount of the t value at 43 degree of freedom with significant level of .01 In the speaking posttest is greater than the critical value of t,i.e (2.70)

By paying attention to the mean scores of control group and experimental group A, we can easily understand that there is a difference between control and experimental group A on the posttest of speaking proficiency.

Consequently, it is proved that task-based speaking activities enhanced the speaking ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics Posttest Speaking

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	t	df	sig
Control	30	54.0667	11.35306	-	43	.002
Topic	15	68.0000	16.97477	3.277		

As displayed in the table 13 the t-observed value is 3.27, this amount of the t value at 43 degree of freedom with significant level of .01 In the speaking posttest is greater than the critical value of t,i.e (2.70)

Therefore, by considering the mean scores of control group and experimental group B, it is proved that topic-based speaking activities enhanced the speaking ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. the mean score of experimental group B.68.000 is greater than the mean

score of control group 54.0667 so, based on these evidences all above mentioned points has been proved.

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics Posttest Speaking

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	t	df	sig
Task	15	68.2000	16.85315	.032	28	.974
Topic	15	68.0000	16.97477			

As displayed in the table 14, the t-observed value is .032, this amount of the t value at 28 degree of freedom with significant level of .05 In the speaking posttest is lower than the critical value of t,i.e (2.042)

At the first glance it seems that there is no difference between experimental group A and B. but by paying close attention to the mean scores in both groups we can see that there is some differences between two groups mean score on the posttest of speaking, but these differences are not significant. In other words the null-hypothesis proposed in this study is supported. The mean score for the experimental group A and B are 68.2000 and 68.0000 respectively. Although the experimental group A performed better than experimental group B, but the differences is not statistically significant enough to reject null hypotheses.

Table 15: Posttest Group Statistics Control & Task

CODE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GROUP Control	30	54.0667	11.35306	2.07278
GROUP Task	15	68.2000	16.85315	4.35146

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
GROUP variances	Equal	6.909	.012
	Assumed Equal		
	Not assumed		

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
GROUP variances	Equal	-3.337	43	.002	-14.1333
	Assumed Equal				-14.1333
	Not assumed				

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of the Difference		
			Lower	Upper	
GROUP variances	Equal	4.23558	-22.67520	-5.59147	
	Assumed Equal	4.81992	-24.16990	-4.09677	
	Not assumed				

Table 16: Posttest Group Statistics Control & Topic

CODE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GROUP Control	30	54.0667	11.35306	2.07278
GROUP Control	15	68.0000	16.97477	4.38287

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
GROUP variances	Equal	5.609	.022
	Assumed Equal		
	Not assumed		

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
GROUP variances	Equal	-3.277	43	.002	-13.9333
	Assumed Equal	-2.874	20.469	.009	-13.9333
	Not assumed				

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of the Difference		
			Lower	Upper	
GROUP variances	Equal	4.25137	-22.50703	-5.35964	
	Assumed Equal	4.84829	-24.03187	-3.83480	
	Not assumed				

Table 17: Posttest Group Statistics Task & Topic

CODE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GROUP Task	15	68.2000	16.85315	4.35146
GROUP Task	15	68.0000	16.97477	4.38287

		Levenes Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
GROUP variances	Equal	.013	.910
	Assumed Equal		
	Not assumed		

		t-test Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
GROUP variances	Equal	.032	28	.974	.2000
	Assumed Equal	.032	27.999	.974	.2000
	Not assumed				

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval Of the Difference		
			Lower	Upper	
GROUP variances	Equal	6.17614	-12.45126	12.85126	
	Assumed Equal	6.17614	-12.45129	12.85129	
	Not assumed				

4.4. The Inter-rater Consistency of the Oral Interview

After the experiment was provided, the subjects were presented with the posttest which was an oral interview. The inter-rater consistency of the oral interview was checked by using correlation procedures.

In other words, in order to find out whether the oral interview was reliable or not, the inter-rater reliability was estimated.

Table 18: Inter-rater Reliability of Oral Interview of Group A

Task	Correlation	R1	R2
R1	Pearson Correlation	1	.877(**)
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	15	15
R2	Pearson Correlation	.877(**)	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	15	15

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 19: Inter-rater Reliability of Oral Interview of Group B





Topic	Correlation	R1	R2
R1	Pearson Correlation	1	.781(**)
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	15	15
R2	Pearson Correlation	.781(**)	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	15	15

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Table 20: Inter-rater Reliability of Oral Interview of Control Group*

Control	Correlation	R1	R2
R1	Pearson Correlation	1	.752(**)
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	30	30
R2	Pearson Correlation	.752(**)	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	30	30

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Findings

After analyzing the data, 60 participants whose scores were at the modified percentile level, nearly from 70 to 80 percent, were selected.

As soon as the homogeneity of the subjects was ensured, they were divided into three groups, 15 subjects as experimental group A from participatory culture house science and technology Quarter and another 15 as experimental group B from same English language institute, and 30 as control group were selected. Then an oral interview test was administered as the pretest. After the end of the instruction period which lasted around two months and a half for the both above-mentioned groups, they received the oral interview test, and then the data gathered from the students' scores were compared and analyzed by statistical analysis.

According to the result of t test which is used to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the means on three sets of scores, it could be concluded that the experimental group A and B who experienced task and topic -based speaking activities showed superiority over that of the control group and achieved better result in oral interview than those who participated in control group, but the mean score for the experimental group A and B are 68.2000 and 68.0000 respectively. Although the experimental group A performed better than experimental group B, but the differences is not statistically significant enough to reject null hypotheses

All in all, it can be concluded that task and topic -based speaking activities could be helpful for the learners who are shy and less confident in speaking and I think that, One of the reasons that students fail to

speak and discuss is the lack of positive affective classroom climate in the classroom and Many students are not exposed in positive affective speaking situations, therefore task and topic -based speaking activities can get students motivated to have discussion about their feelings, preferences, and their ideas about the subjects to be discussed because task and topic-based speaking activities will be done in small groups and it can enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and provide opportunities for speaking activities through the use of group activities finally, using task and topic-based speaking activities get the students motivated to negotiate in order to complete an activity in the classroom. And it should be used for long period of time because it cannot have a significant result within short period of time.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the result of t-test used to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the means on three sets of scores, it could be concluded that the experimental group A and B who experienced task and topic -based speaking activities showed superiority over that of the control group and achieved better result in oral interview than those who participated in control group, but the mean score for the experimental group A and B are 68.2000 and 68.0000 respectively. Although the experimental group A performed better than experimental group B, but the differences are not statistically significant enough to reject null hypotheses.

All in all, it can be concluded that task and topic -based speaking activities could be helpful for the learners who are shy and less confident in speaking and it is supposed that, one of the reasons that students fail to speak and discuss is the lack of positive affective classroom climate in the classroom and many students are not exposed in positive affective speaking situations, therefore task and topic -based speaking activities can get students motivated to have discussion about their feelings, preferences, and their ideas about the subjects to be discussed because task and topic-based speaking activities will be done in small groups and it can enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and provide opportunities for speaking activities through the use of group activities. Finally,



using task and topic -based speaking activities get the students motivated to negotiate in order to complete an activity in the classroom. And it should be used for long period of time because it cannot have a significant result within short period of time.

The findings of the current study are in line with the results of the study conducted by Sariçoban and Karakurt (2016) who found that using task-based activities improves listening and speaking skills in EFL context. Also, these findings are in line with the results of Farahani and Nejad (2009) who found the positive effects of task-based techniques, gender, and different levels of language proficiency on speaking development. Erten and Altay (2009) also reached to similar findings in their study carried out to explore the effects of task-based group activities on students' collaborative behaviors in EFL speaking classes.

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**Appendix A: Sample of Nelson proficiency test (350A)**

Choose the correct answer. Only one answer is correct.

I had been sitting ... 1 ... in my usual compartment ... 2 ... at least ten minutes , waiting ...3 ... The trains from little bury never seemed to start ... 4 ... and I often thought that I could have ... 5 ... in bed a little longer or had ... 6 ... cup of tea before ... 7 ... suddenly I heard someone shouting ...8 ... the platform outside . A young girl was running towards the train. The man ...9 ...put out his hand to stop her but she ran past him and opened the door of my compartment. Then the whistle blew and the train started. I nearly missed it, ...10 ... ?" the girl said " How long does it take to ... 11 ... London? " It depends on the ... 12 ... " I said. " Some days it's ... 13 ...others." "I'll have to ...14 ... , ... 15 ... late again tomorrow , " she said. " It's my first day... 16... with a new firm today and they told me that the man ... 17 ...is very strict . I ...18 ...him yet so I don't know ... 19 ...but he sounds a bit frightening . " She talked about her new job ...20 ...the way to London and before long, I realized that she was going to work for my firm. My ...21 ...secretary had just left so I must be her new boss. ... 22 ...only fair to tell her . " oh, dear, " she said. " ... 23 ...mistake ! I wish I ...24 ... " " never mind " , I said. "At least you'll know when your train's late that ...25 ... "

1. A. for myself B. only myself C. by myself D. in my own
2. A. for B. during C. since D. mean while
3. A. the train to start B. for the train to start C. the train's start D. for the train to start
4. A. on their hour B. on time C. at their hour D. at time
5. A. lain B. laid C. lied D. lay
6. A. other B. some other C. another D. one other
7. A. I had left the home B. leave from home C. leaving home D. to leave home
8. A. at
- B. by
- C. in
- D. on
9. A. at place
- B. on duty
- C. for control
- D. in post

**Appendix: B Interviews questions**

**Pretest**

- A. What is your first name?
- B. What is your last name?
- C. How are you?
- D. Where are you from?
- E. Are you fine and relaxed and comfort table?
1. How do you spend your time?
2. How did you spend your last summer?
3. What is the best way in order to overcome a problem in the family?
4. What is the best solution to the transportation problems in Tehran?

**Posttest**

- What is your first name?
- A. What is your last name?
  - B. How are you?
  - C. Where are you from?
  - D. Are you fine and relaxed and comfortable?
  1. How do you spend your money?
  2. How did you see the last semester?
  3. Express your opinion about different ways to end controversial issue in the classroom?
  4. How can we reduce poverty in the society?

**APPENDIX C: Checklist of speaking proficiency**

Checklist of speaking proficiency		Behavioral Statement
Guidelines for assigning Rating		
Scale	Point	
Accent	6	Phonemically acceptable pronunciation throughout
	5	Few phonemic errors but never hindering comprehension
	4	Occasional phonemic errors necessitate attentive listening.
	3	Frequent phonemic errors require frequent demands for repetition.
	2	Constant phonemic errors make comprehension very hard.
Structure	1	Severe errors make understanding virtually impossible
	6	Almost no error
	5	Few insignificant errors only
	4	Occasional petty but no problem with understanding
	3	Frequent errors occasionally interfere with meaning
Vocabulary	2	Constant errors interfere with understanding.
	1	Severe errors make understanding virtually impossible.
	6	Appropriate and extensive use of words in any domain
	5	Appropriate use of adequate vocabulary to discuss general topics and special interests.
	4	Occasional use of inappropriate words which do not, however, affect the message.
Fluency	3	Frequent uses of inappropriate words distort the message.
	2	Constant use of wrong words, limited vocabulary
	1	Inadequate basic vocabulary
	6	Fluent and effortless speech like a native speaker
	5	Natural and continuous speech with pauses at unnatural points.
Comprehension	4	Fluent speech with occasional problems
	3	Frequent problems hinder fluency and demand greater effort.
	2	Slow speech, hesitant, and sometimes silent
	1	Virtually unable to make connected sentences
	6	Comprehends everything
	5	Comprehends everything except for very colloquial or rapid speech or low-frequency items.
	4	Comprehends nearly everything but needs occasional rephrasing
	3	Comprehends slower-than-normal speech
	2	Comprehends only slow and simple speech
	1	Comprehends very little of even simple and slow speech

