



# EFL Learners' Negotiation of Meaning

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating EFL learners' frequency of negotiation of meaning when performing focused and unfocused communication tasks. The sample consists of thirty learners divided into ten groups. Three research instruments were used to collect data; communication tasks, field notes and interviews. Data analysis revealed that there is no significant difference in the frequency of negotiation of meaning between the two task types. This is due to the fact that, learners performed both task types as unfocused tasks and they were able to use some communication strategies to keep communication flowing and to go round the target structure. Amazingly, despite the existence of the trigger of negotiation, the indicator of misunderstanding, an important negotiation phase, was absent in many cases from the conversations in both task types. Subsequently, the research findings suggest providing learners with opportunities that urge them to perform as language users rather than language learners.

**Keywords:** communication; focused communication tasks; unfocused communication tasks; negotiation of meaning

## 1. Introduction

The use of English as a foreign language (EFL) in oral communication is, without a doubt, one of the most common, but also highly complex activity which is essential to include when implementing an English language curriculum. This is because we "live at a time where the ability to speak English fluently has become a must, particularly, for those who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor" (Al-Sibai, 2004, p.3). Krashen (1982) believes that L2 acquisition is similar to L1 acquisition and thus it does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules. What it requires is communication rich environments which provide comprehensible input in order to enhance acquisition. Input is given by means of meaningful and communicative activities supplied by the teacher, and plenty of opportunities for oral interaction in the target language. In other words, language teaching tasks in the classroom should aim at maximizing individual language use (Haozhang, 1997).

Subsequently, classroom tasks should aim at increasing the frequency of negotiation of meaning which refers to the modification of interaction that occurs when learners experience difficulties in message comprehensibility. However, the frequency of negotiation of meaning triggered by each task type might not be the same. This paper aims to shed some light on how different oral communication tasks such as focused and unfocused communication tasks influence the frequency of negotiation of meaning and what language structures that are triggered by each task type.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Focused and unfocused communication tasks

Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen (2002) & Ellis (2003) have identified two types of communicative tasks that encourage the meaningful use of language and they are focused and unfocused communication tasks. Focused communication tasks are communicative tasks that have been designed to elicit the use of a specific linguistic form in the context of meaning-centered language use. An example of this type of task is a task that necessitates learners to use 'at' and 'in' in order to determine whether two pictures are the same or different without being aware that these two forms are targeted because learners are expected when they perform the task to function primarily as language users rather than as learners.

According to Nobuyoshi & Ellis (1993) a focused communication task does result in some linguistic feature being made prominent, although not in a way that causes the learner to pay more attention to form than to meaning. This type of tasks can become focused either through design or through methodology. On the other hand, unfocused communication tasks are communicative tasks designed to elicit general samples of the language rather than specific forms. These types of tasks can be performed without any attention to form (Ellis, 2003).

### 2.2 Negotiation of meaning and second language acquisition

As Krashen (1986) advocates, learners must be given opportunities in the classroom to interact with both the teacher and fellow learners through turn-taking, giving feedback to speakers, asking for clarification, and starting and ending conversations. In other words, learners should be able to express, interpret and negotiate meanings.

Based on the output hypothesis, it would seem that, for interaction to facilitate second language acquisition (SLA), learners need to have opportunities for output during interaction. In many second language classrooms, learners often observe the output of others without producing their own output. Nevertheless, it seems that opportunities to produce output are crucial in improving learner's use of the target structure, and negotiation promotes output production (Cheon, 2003).

Pica (1994, p.494) has stated that negotiation of meaning (NfM) refers to "the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and interlocutors perceive or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility" According to Gass (1997, p.107) negotiation of meaning refers to "communication in which participants' attention is focused on resolving a communication problem as opposed to communication in which there is a free flowing exchange of information". Consequently, meanings are not simply transferred from one person to another but 'negotiated' (Ellis, 1988).

"The negotiation of meaning has been proposed as the key to second (and /or foreign) language development" (Allwright, 1998) because it appears to facilitate comprehension and successful communication among learners (Pelletieri, 1999; Blake, 2000). Pica (1994) claims that negotiating meaning, as a particular way of modifying interaction, can accomplish a great deal of SLA by helping learners make input comprehensible and modify their own output and can provide opportunities for them to access the second language (L2) form and meaning. These negotiations tend to increase input comprehensibility through language modifications such as simplifications, elaborations, confirmation and comprehension checks, clarification requests, or recasts. These language modifications provide the L2 learner with feedback to facilitate L2 development (Gass, 1997; Long 1996).

Moreover, Long & Robinson (1998) argued that SLA is crucially enhanced by having L2 learners negotiate meaning and therefore it is considered very important for L2 teachers to construct an interactive learning environment in which learners can associate with each other in the target language and negotiate meaning through interaction. Mackey (1999) also highlights the importance of the learner's active participation in the interaction, considering participation as one of the features that facilitate language development. The negotiation of meaning has been taken as the basis for the provision of comprehensible input (Gass & Varounis, 1994; Holliday, 1995; Long, 1996; Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987).

Some other SLA researchers have argued for the importance of the negotiation of meaning for the production of comprehensible output as well. They state that negotiations of meaning in interaction are important, not just because they provide non-native speakers (NNSs) with an opportunity to receive input that they have made comprehensible through negotiation, but also because they provide them with an opportunity for inter-language modification and comprehensible output (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, Berducci & Newman 1991; Pica, 1994; Branden, 1997; Shehadeh 1999). Similarly, Lyster & Ranta (1997) maintain that negotiation encourages self-repair, involving accuracy and precision and not merely comprehensibility. Although, negotiation of meaning can push the interlocutors to identify and then attempt to resolve a communication breakdown, it may or may not result in mutual understanding (Ellis, 2003).

Braden (1997, p. 626-627) argues that L2 learners' enhanced performance is primarily determined not by their level of language proficiency, but by the frequency of negotiation routines that they are engaged in. He emphasizes that negotiation pushes the learners' production level significantly higher. According to Braden's claim (1997, p.630) "during negotiations learners can be pushed to the production of output that is more complete and accurate, far more than merely comprehensible".

### *2.3 Varonis and Gass model for negotiation of meaning*

Varonis and Gass (1985b) developed a model that shows how the discourse structure unfolds during the negotiation of meaning. This model proves to be a useful tool to characterize and understand a particular type of interaction that is said to facilitate SLA. According to this model, the discourse of conversation advances in a linear fashion, represented by a horizontal line in their model. When an instance of non-understanding occurs, speakers may engage in a series of exchanges with the purpose of resolving that particular breakdown in the conversation. These instances are viewed as vertical sequences along the horizontal line.

In Varonis and Gass's model (1985b), a negotiation routine consists of two parts: a trigger and a resolution. The trigger (T) is an 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 hearer. The second part of the routine, the resolution, consists of two primes: an indicator (I), by which one of the conversational partners lets the other know that something was not clear, and a response (R), which acknowledges the request for information. An optional prime, the reaction to the response (RR), may tie up the routine.

In addition, Varonis and Gass model has offered a useful analysis of the types of primes used within a negotiation routine. This analysis reveals how interlocutors employ their linguistic resources in order: (a) to let each other know that something has not been successfully understood and (b) to solve the communication problem. It also can help to find out the frequency of negotiation of meaning routines that exists within a certain conversation. Excerpt 1 shows an example of the two parts of negotiation routines.

Excerpt 1: Example of the two parts of the negotiation routines.

**Example: model for non- understandings (Varonis and Gass 1985b, p.74):**

S1. And your what is your... mmm... father's job?	
S2. My father now is retire.	T
S1. Retire?	I
S2. Yes	R
S1. Oh, yes.	RR

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 The sample

The sample of this study is represented by one intact class of grade 10 female learners from one school in Batinah North Governorate in Oman. The total number of the participants is thirty learners divided into ten groups. Each group consists of three mixed ability learners. The learners' arrangement was based on their assessment of the previous semester (semester one). The English teacher of that class has arranged learners according to their general level of English, which is out of 100. Learners between 0-50 have been classified as low achievers, learners between 51-75 have been classified as average achievers and learners between 75- 100 have been classified as high achievers. This resulted in having three learners from three different levels in each group: low, average and high level.

Accordingly, no group consists of learners of the same level. Thus, if any difference in oral production of learners has occurred or established, it can't be attributed to the level of the learners.

The researcher has decided to have tasks to be performed in groups because most of the activities of grade 10 English for Me (*EFM*) textbook are required to be performed in groups, so the researcher preferred to be consistent with the textbooks. Grade 10 is chosen to represent the sample of this study because it is considered to be the last level of Basic Education in Oman and one of the learning objectives of Basic Education at this level is to " use English for social communication" (Ministry of Education, 2009).

#### 3.2 Research instruments

This is a multidimensional study in which both quantitative and qualitative data are obtained. Quantitative data are obtained through learners' oral production while performing the focused and unfocused communication tasks. It is represented by the frequency of negotiation routines that are found from the transcripts of the learners' oral production. On the other hand, the qualitative data is obtained through learners' oral production when performing the focused and unfocused communication tasks and through the interviews from which the relevant language aspects such as the language produced by learners while performing the focused tasks, the communication strategies used by learners to keep communication flowing, the existence of the indicator as an essential phase of negotiation and focus on form versus focus on meaning are investigated. Thus three research instruments were used and they are the tasks, the semi structured interviews and the field notes.

##### 3.2.1 Tasks

Two task types were used as an instrument for collecting the data of the present study. The first type is the focused communication tasks and the second type is the unfocused communication tasks. Two tasks of each type were implemented in the study which resulted in a total of four tasks as a whole; two focused and two unfocused communication tasks.

##### 3.2.2 Field notes

A decision is made to include field notes as a data collection instrument because learners have refused to be videotaped while performing the tasks. The researcher considered field notes to be useful in noting down any non-verbal language produced by the learners while performing the tasks.

##### 3.2.3 Semi structured interviews

In the present study, the researcher has conducted the semi-structured interviews with the ten groups of learners immediately on the next day after they have performed all the four tasks. The learners have been interviewed group by group during the first three lessons of the school day. While one group is being interviewed, other groups are in their class having their usual daily lessons. Copies of all the tasks have been given to the learners before the start of the interview to help them remember their work on the tasks and respond to the interview questions. Each interview lasted 5-10 minutes and they all have been recorded and transcribed. It worth mentioning that the researcher has conducted the interview basically in English but she shifted to Arabic sometimes when learners were noticed not getting the idea.

#### 3.3 Research design

This study follows the 'repeated measures' design'. According to this design, the same subjects are used with every condition of the research. Consequently, the researcher takes measurements on the same subjects over time or under different conditions. It requires fewer participants, since data for all conditions derive from the same group of participants (Shuttleworth, 2009). In the present study the researcher measured the two types of communication tasks, the focused and the unfocused, on the same group of learners which is the one intact class.

### 4. Data Analysis

The present study was designed to address the following main questions:

1. To what extent do focused and unfocused oral communication tasks increase negotiated interaction between Grade 10 learners in relation to:

- a. Frequency of negotiation of meaning.
- b. Language structures used while performing the focused tasks.

Both quantitative and qualitative data are obtained. The quantitative data which is represented by the frequency of negotiation of meaning, is analyzed using the Varonis & Gass (1985b) model of negotiation of meaning. According to this model, the routines of negotiation of meaning (T, I, R, RR) are identified for both focused and unfocused communication tasks. Then Independent Sample T- Test is administered to find if there is any significant difference in the frequency of negotiation of meaning between the two types of tasks.

On the other hand, the qualitative data which is represented by the scripts of the learners' performance of the four tasks (language produced) are analyzed using Holiday's (2002) approach that suggests organizing data using a thematic approach. According to this approach, data is taken holistically and rearranged under themes according to the questions and the issues which are brought by the researcher to the research.

## 5. Finding and Discussions

### 5.1 The difference in the frequency of negotiation

Table 1. Means of the frequency of negotiation of meaning (Independent Sample t- test)

Group	N	Mean	St. Dev	T- Value	Sig
Focused communication tasks	10	3.20	3.120	1.174	.256
Unfocused communication tasks	10	4.80	2.974		

Table (1) illustrates the means and standard deviation of the two task types and the level of significance of the difference in the frequency of negotiation of the two task types. It shows that the level of significance is at .256 which indicates that there is no significant difference in the frequency of negotiation of meaning between the two task types. This could be due to the fact that learners performed both task types; the focused tasks and the unfocused tasks as unfocused communication tasks. In both task types, learners produced general samples of language, even when performing the focused tasks in which the structures are pre-determined without paying any attention to form. This might indicate that the meaning- focus aspect of the focused tasks overrides the infused forms in them.

### 5.2 The language produced while performing the focused tasks

In the present study learners have performed two focused tasks; task2 (an imaginary problem description) and task 4 (giving advice). Each task of the two tasks targets a certain structure that is expected to be produced by the learners. Excerpt 1 shows the target structures by the focused task 2 (An imaginary problem description) and examples of the actual structures that are produced by the learners while performing this task.

Excerpt 1: The pre-determined language structure that is targeted by the focused task 2 (An imaginary problem description) and examples of the language structures produced by the learners when performing this task.

#### **Task2: An imaginary problem description**

##### **The pre-determined language structure**

'If I were.....I would+ infinitive...'

##### **Examples of the language structures produced by learners:**

- If I had the smoke ...errr... my.. errrrr.. brother used the smoking.
- Overweight. I will eat lets (lots) food
- If I had this problem..errr... I walk...errr... lost (lots) of time and...errr... eating healthy food.
- I have problem overweight.. I will ...errr... play footballs and ...
- you should do some exercise in your free time..
- go with your friends to anywhere to leave the smoking.
- The smoking is very dangerous. I will advise you to keep this smoking and stop to smoke.
- I'm overweight. I will ...errr... eat healthy food and ...errr... don't eat junk food.
- Also, I will play sports.
- Did you try to stop smoking?
- I exercise ev..every morning

In the focused task 2 (an imaginary problem description) the 'second conditional' is the target structure. Learners are expected to produce this structure while describing an imaginary situation of having a health problem and suggest a

solution to solve it. As it is shown in excerpt 1, the second conditional is not produced at all by learners while performing this task. Instead, learners have produced different samples of language. Excerpt 2 illustrates the pre-determined language structure that is targeted by the focused tasks 4 (giving advice) and examples of the language structures produced by the learners when performing it.

Excerpt 2: The pre-determined language structure that is targeted by the focused tasks 4 (giving advice) and examples of the language structures produced by the learners when performing it.

#### **Task 4: Giving advice**

##### **The pre-determined language structure**

The modals of obligation, 'you must /not, should/not...'

##### **Examples of the language structures produced by the learners:**

- you should take fluple at... err... four times
- you shouldn't take folo...foloble ...err... when you dra...errr... when you driver because it is very danger.
- don (Don't) canno' (cannot) cannot ...errr... take ...errr... take...errr...
- you shouldn't take couple of days because sometimes it ...errr... it.. its mean...errr..
- it is wrong because add balling (boiling) and the true ...errr... should ...errr... be ...errr...wote.. should be water hot not balling (boiling).
- I think wrong in take fa...errr... fife (five) time ...errr...true take four time.
- You should stop white (What) your doctor said.
- we should go to the doctor before get... take this medicine
- Don't give child ander (under) twelve years. Your information is ...errr... is ...errr...wrong because it's this medicine very strong.
- Yes! In your opinion, what the advice.
- you should ...errr... take ...errr...four lobble... four take flobble..
- I give my baby sister help.. hel..helf (half) a bucket .
- Take boxixilin for.. before mid.. errr.. before mells (meals). Okay?

As it is shown in excerpt2, the pre-determined structure of the focused task 4(giving advice) is the ' modals of obligation'. Learners are expected to produce the following structure; 'you must /not, should/not...'. By looking at the examples of language produced by learners while performing task 4(giving advice), it can be noticed that the pre-determined structure ' you should / should not' is produced in few situations but the structure' you must/ must not' is not.

Producing the pre- determined structure ' you should/should not' in task 4 (giving advice) and not producing the pre-determined structure' if I were...I would...'. in task 2 (an imaginary problem description) could be attributed to two reasons. The first reason is the familiarity of the learners with the structure' you should...'. more than the structure' if I were...I would...'. and the second reason is the complexity of the second conditional structure more than the modals of obligation structure.

Although the pre-determined structure ' you should/ should not' is produced, other samples are produced as well in many cases when this structure is expected to be produced. It have been noticed that learners were able to go around using the target pre-determined structure and still keep the communication moving. Excerpt 3 shows an example of how learners go around using the target pre determined structure of the focused task4 (giving advice).

Excerpt 3: Example of how learners go around using the pre-determined structure.

S1: I am thinks a driver. And..err am ill..errrr...flobber../flu:bAr/ (means: Flupol).

S2: No. It's wrong. Why you eat that? You don't eat that because....errrrrrrrr...because your drive.

In this example, student2 (S 2) is expected to produce the pre- determined structure of task 4 (giving advice) which is 'The modals of obligation': 'you must not, should/not...'. However, instead of producing the target structure, S2 produced a different structure "*No, it's wrong. Why you eat that? You don't eat that...*" which indicates the same meaning of showing that something wrong is done and it should not be done. This finding is consistent with Jeremy (2010) findings when learners of his study did not use the Pre-determined language structure as well and the focused task turned to be an unfocused one.

#### *5.3 The communication strategies used by learners*

Learners tend to use communication strategies to compensate for their lack of appropriate target language knowledge when expressing the meaning of their intended utterances (Cohen, 1998). They can always use communication strategies to get round using the target structure (Ellis, 2003). One of the communication strategies that learners of the present study have used to compensate for their lack of appropriate language is circumlocution which according to Celce-Murcia M, Dörnyei Z, Thurrell S (1995) means that the speaker describes characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language structure. Excerpt4 shows an example of the use of a circumlocution strategy by the learners of the present study.

Excerpt4: An Example of the use of the circumlocution strategy while performing the focused task 2(an imaginary problem description)

S1: now what's your problem?

S2: errrrrrr... when you can't listen and when you can't see others. Do you have any ideas because you help?

S1: Maybe you play sport and you..errr.. go to friend. Okay?

S2: yes

In this example we can see that S2 was unable to produce the word 'disability', so instead she produced a description of that word which is " *when you can't listen and when you can't see...*".

Time gaining is another strategy that the learners have used a lot. It is a strategy that learners use while communication in order to gain more time for thinking (Celce-Murcia et al, 1995). The use of time gaining strategy by the learners of the present study is represented by the use of fillers. Fillers such as, errrrrrrrrrrr & mmmmm are used a lot by learners to gain more time for thinking. The researcher believes that this is a strong indication of the learners' low level of English language proficiency.

#### 5.4 The absence of the indicator

It is noticed that the indicator which is an important negotiation phase is absent from most of the learners' discussions (oral production) of both task types; the focused and the unfocused. As it is mentioned previously, the indicator refers to the utterance which indicates the misunderstanding. It is usually produced to get more clarification of an unclear utterance. However, in many cases, a trigger that causes a misunderstanding is produced but not followed by an indicator. As a result, all the parts of the learners' speech that misses this phase (the indicator) are not considered as negotiation of meaning routines in both task types. Examples of missing 'indicators' are shown in excerpt 5

Excerpt 5: Examples of missing indicators.

S 1: Drink medicine in the **drifings**, / **drifjz** / ( means driving) car. This is the problem. What you can help?

S2: He can...errrrrrrrr (**cuss...**, / **kʌs** / (means cause)...errrrr... **brooshing**, / **bru:ʃŋ** / (means drowsiness).

S3: Do no **drifing**, / **drifŋ** / (means drive) or use this medicine. This advice for you.

S 1: yes

As it is shown by this example, the trigger that might cause misunderstanding occurs four times and no expression of misunderstanding is produced to indicate that misunderstanding. Maybe the learners were able to guess the word 'driving' and drive' and that why trigger 1 and 2 are not followed by indicators. However, an indicator of misunderstanding is really expected after trigger 2 and 4, but is not produced. Instead, speaker 3(S3) has produced a response to the question of speaker 1(S1).

There are some factors that may contribute to the frequent absence of the 'indicator' in particular. One of these factors is the learners' low language proficiency which could be the main reason behind the absence of the 'indicator' in many cases. Interviews have revealed that, although learners could not understand a certain utterance, they are unable to express their misunderstanding because they lack the vocabulary items required to do so. Learners' high tendency to shift to L1 (first language/Arabic) several times during the communication indicates their low language proficiency as well. Besides, through the observation of the learners' performance of the tasks, it is noticed that some learners tend to give more attention to the accomplishment of the outcome of the task. Consequently, even when they do not understand an utterance, they just continue to produce any language they have in their inter-language system (a response) neglecting the misunderstood utterance.

Another factor that can explain the absence of the 'indicator' could be a cultural or psychological one. The culture of asking questions to get more information or more clarification is not really widespread enough, among our learners, in

our school communities and as a result learners seem to be reluctant to ask questions when more clarification is needed. Furthermore, some learners might feel shy to ask questions as they think they will be underestimated if they do so.

### 5.5 Focus on Form versus Focus on Meaning

As previously mentioned, focused communication tasks are communicative tasks that have been designed to elicit the use of a specific linguistic form in the context of meaning-centered language use and the unfocused communication tasks are communicative tasks have been designed to elicit general samples of the language rather than specific forms. Using the language in a meaning centered context is the focal and shared point between the two task types. In the present study, one of the target structures in task 4(giving advice), which is a focused task, (You should...) is produced by learners. However, different and general samples of language are also produced while performing the two task type. The interviews have revealed that while performing the four tasks, learners' attention is focused on understanding and conveying the meaning and not on the form. This is implied in the learners' responses when they stated that they have not faced any problems with grammar, although there are many grammatical mistakes in their oral sentences. An explanation for this could be that the learners are unconscious of those mistakes while they are speaking because their attention is focused on conveying the meaning only. Focusing on form requires learners to stop for thinking and checking forms which indicates a kind of conscious learning that has not been reflected in learners' performance in the present study. This is consistent with Krashen (1982) who has argued that there are two processes operating in language development, subconscious acquisition and conscious learning, and that form-focused instruction is aimed at conscious learning which does not necessarily feed into subconscious acquisition.

Further evidence of focusing on meaning and not form is that most of the triggers involved in negotiation were lexical ones which requires clarification of the meaning of some vocabulary items and no negotiation of any grammatical form has occurred. Excerpt6 shows an example of a lexical trigger.

#### Excerpt 6: Example of a lexical trigger

##### Focused task 2 (An imaginary problem description)

Speaker1: I have...errr...overweight.

Speaker2: Overweight! Oh! It is very important. Why shoes (choose) this problem?

Speaker1: because I see it is...err...any building, / bildŋ /. ← **Lexical trigger**

Speaker1: Any places? ← **Indicator**

Speaker2: yes, any places. This problem every every places ← **Response**

This example shows a part of conversation of the focused task 2(An imaginary problem description) that planned to elicit the form 'if I were...I would...'. However, that structure is not produced by any one of the learners and in this example an incorrect structure is produced instead: 'I have overweight'. Yet, learners have not negotiated the grammatical form that is intended to be used when at the same time they have negotiated lexical items like the word 'building' in this example.

Taking all these facts in consideration, it can be concluded that, learners are focusing on conveying the meaning only and they are using the language freely. This is consistent with what is believed by some researchers (for instance, Littlewood 1984; Scrivener 1994; Willis, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Zhang, 2009; Jeremy, 2010) that language is best learned when the learners' attention is focused on understanding, saying and doing something with language, and not when their attention is focused explicitly on linguistic features. According to them language must be used freely in a situation where meaning is paramount, so the learners will try to get it across, making use of whatever words and phrases they have at their disposal in order to be learnt.

## 6. Conclusion

Second language research has highlighted that progress does not always or necessarily occur when people make a conscious effort to learn. Progress occurs as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms, which are activated when learners are involved in communication with the second language. The subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners are focused, not on the language itself, but on the communication of meaning (Littlewood, 1984). So, "language is best learned when the learners' attention is focused on understanding, saying and doing something with language, and not when their attention is focused explicitly on linguistic features" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.27). Therefore, communication tasks should encourage learners to use language in a meaningful way that lead to having learners' attention to be focused on the content of what they are saying, rather than on the form (Harmer, 1982; Littlewood, 1984; Nunan, 1989, 2001; Willis, 1996; Ellis et al 2002; Ellis 2003). Communication tasks should also aim at maximizing individual language use (Haozhang, 1997).The researcher believes that maximizing language use can positively influence learners' language proficiency.

Therefore, learners should be provided with tasks that encourage them to perform as language users. They should be encouraged to use language to convey meaning and to do things in a meaning centered context because by this their language acquisition is expected to be facilitated. Moreover, since the absence of the indicator is a sign of the lack the skill of questioning. Therefore, the researcher strongly suggests developing learners questioning skill and encouraging

them to be inquisitive through providing them with opportunities and tasks that focus on this skill in particular. They should be encouraged to ask questions when they do not understand things or when they need more information or clarification.

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