**The Role of Task Manipulation in Increasing Speaking Quality of Iranian EFL Learners: The Case of Willingness to Communicate (WTC)**

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The importance and effectiveness of task-based instruction for developing speaking skill as one of the most cognitively demanding tasks within the field of ELT is neglected in our local context of language teaching and learning. Borrowing insights from Eliss’ Task language learning theory (2009), the researcher in this study intended to investigate the role of manipulation of task in developing speaking ability. Thus, the current study intended to investigate manipulation of different tasks (divergent and convergent) based on task-based language teaching. Accordingly, 60 female EFL learners at the upper-intermediate level were chosen from among all the upper-intermediate EFL learners in Zabansara Language Academy in Isfahan, Iran. They were divided into three groups: one control group and two experimental groups. One experimental group received divergent tasks while the other received convergence tasks; the control group received tasks neither converging nor diverging on topics. The data were collected through a WTC questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. After the administration of pre-test, treatment was given and post-test was administered. Results indicated that members of the experimental groups outperformed those of the control group and that the treatment was effective. Moreover, it was shown that members of the experimental groups showed inclination toward the application of the tasks in their classes because tasks were more appealing to them as far as communication and speaking ability are concerned. Therefore, it is important to find those effective contributory tasks which best suit the demands of a speaking task.

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**Keywords:** *Convergent Task; Divergent Task; Speaking Ability; Task types; Willingness to Communicate; WTC*