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“Reshaping learners’ perceptions towards grammar through the Task-Based Approach”

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List of Acronyms

CLT: Communicative language teaching

L2: Second Language

EFL: English as a foreign language

TBA: Task-based approach

Abstract

This action research study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the task-based approach in the teaching of grammatical structures based on form and function. For that, three lessons, which reviewed the form and function of the second conditional were implemented following the methodology of the task-based approach. It was conducted online and counted with the participation of six high-school students from different parts of Chile. Through the application of rating scales to explore the effect of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures and a pre-and-post intervention interviews to compare students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar before and after the implementation of the task-based approach, the findings suggest that the task-based approach had a positive effect on students' learning, who showed positive perceptions towards the task-based approach, English and grammar. However, negative perceptions were demonstrated towards the current form of English instruction in their schools. Thus, the task-based approach presents itself as an approach that may encourage students' English learning by enhancing their perceptions towards English instruction.

Key words: Action Research, Grammatical structures, Students' perceptions, Task-based Approach

Este estudio de investigación-acción tiene por objetivo evaluar la efectividad del enfoque basado en tareas para la enseñanza de estructuras gramaticales basándose en forma y función. Para eso, tres clases en las cuales se revisó la forma y función del segundo condicional, fueron implementadas siguiendo la metodología del enfoque basado en tareas. Fue llevado a cabo de manera online, y contó con la participación de seis estudiantes de enseñanza media de diferentes partes de Chile. A través de la aplicación de escalas de calificación para explorar el efecto del enfoque basado en tareas en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes al ser usado para enseñar estructuras gramaticales y una entrevista previa y posterior a la intervención para comparar las percepciones de los estudiantes hacia la enseñanza de la gramática antes y después de la implementación del enfoque basado en tareas, los resultados sugieren que el enfoque basado en tareas tuvo un efecto positivo en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, quienes presentaron percepciones positivas sobre el enfoque basado en tareas, el Inglés y la gramática. Sin embargo, percepciones negativas fueron demostradas hacia la actual forma de enseñanza del inglés en sus colegios. Consecuentemente, el enfoque basado en tareas se presenta como un método que podría incentivar el aprendizaje del inglés por parte de los estudiantes mediante la mejoría de sus percepciones hacia la enseñanza del inglés.

Palabras claves: Investigación-acción, Estructuras gramaticales, Percepciones del estudiante, Enfoque basado en tareas

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Ngwi Focho (2011) stated that “the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in many developing countries has always been problematic because students may fail to see its relevance to their immediate and future needs, except for examination purposes” (p.2). Thus, the author continued explaining students tend to pay little attention to it because they are able to finish high school without achieving a certain level of proficiency in the language. In addition to this, students do not understand the purpose of learning English and they perceive it as a subject imposed by school curriculum. Even though Chile is a developed country, what the author mentioned does not seem to differ from our English teaching reality. In Chile, English is taught as a foreign language. PUNCHIETTI (2013) explained that the term *foreign language* refers to languages that are not connected to the learners’ immediate social or personal environment. Likewise, Harmer (2007) stated that a foreign language such as English, is taught so that it can be used when travelling or to communicate with people from other countries. However, motivation in EFL contexts can be low because the language being taught is not part of the students’ daily lives; hence, they learn the language because it is a requirement of the curriculum (KRIEGER, 2012).

Abrahams and Silva (2017) described Chile’s current English teaching situation by stating that there are a number of factors that prevent Chilean students from reaching a satisfactory level of English by the time they finish high school. For example, the authors mentioned that the policies established by the Ministry of Education, such as the national curriculum guidelines and textbooks, have proven to be ineffective when it comes to achieving a solid proficiency level in the language. In addition to that, the authors claimed that there have been contradictions between the new syllabi communicative expectations and the pedagogical traditions present in schools, such as focus on forms, memorization of vocabulary and teaching in the first language. Actually, Sato and Oyanedel (2019) stated that the implementation of a communicative approach of English teaching in Chile has been unsuccessful, since a strong focus on traditional and decontextualized grammar instruction prevails.

Taking into consideration the previous points, the research problem to be addressed by this action research is to what extent can the task-based approach influence students’ perceptions towards the teaching of grammar. The task-based approach was chosen as a different approach to the current forms of teaching English grammar in Chile, which is mostly based on traditional exercises. Xiaofang (2013) explained that when the task-based approach focusses on form, it emphasizes focusing on forms and meanings simultaneously. Thus, it promotes its communicative function by giving learners the opportunity to fulfill tasks in which they have to imitate real life language functions, yet, it also draws learners attention to specific linguistic forms. Consequently, the objective of this action research is to assess the effectiveness of the task-based approach in the teaching of grammatical structures based on form and function.

**CHAPTER II:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

2.1 Perceptions of English grammar

In the Encyclopedia of the sciences of learning, Seel (2012), defined the concept of *perception* as “the process by which information from the environment is detected by the senses and transformed into meaningful experiences in the brain” (p.2576). And continued to add that perceptions are interpretations of events, while the concept of *student perceptions* referred to the students’ views of their own experiences. Likewise, Jahedizadeg, Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly (2016), defined perceptions as a process by which the person receives and interprets information from the environment, and continued to add that emotions, expectations and needs are reflected through perceptions. Moreover, in the educational domain, the authors explained that students’ perceptions of classroom activities are determinant of their academic achievement as well as students’ goal orientations. Consequently, a supportive environment will improve students’ motivation, while a negative environment will cause their motivation to decrease.

Mirazna and Hikmah (2019) studied students’ perceptions towards grammar in the English classroom. In their study, Mirazna and Hikmah (2019) were able to conclude that students held positive perceptions towards grammar in the English classroom since they agreed with the statements that learning grammar was important in the context of studying English and that it helped when communicating in the language. However, when asked about grammar being very boring, students chose to agree with that statement as well.

Furthermore, Santana (2019) studied advanced English students’ perceptions on grammar usage. From the research, Santana (2019) concluded that the students held negative perceptions towards grammar usage since they believed that English grammar was difficult. The author explained that one of the reasons why students may have had difficulties when learning English grammar, was because they did not recognize all of the elements of a sentence and where to place them correctly.

On the contrary, Sopin (2015) explained that “research literature in foreign language learning situations do seem to indicate that students find error correction and grammar instruction helpful in language learning” (p.68). The same author, Sopin (2015), carried out a research study in which students’ perceptions of English grammar teaching and learning in Libya were studied. The results of this study indicated that most students considered grammar instruction to be very important when learning the English language. However, in spite of having learnt a lot of grammar, they still asked for more grammatical instruction since they did not feel comfortable with it. In addition to this, some students also mentioned that there should not be a strong emphasis on grammar, they felt it should be picked up as the course advances and with experience, also commenting on the fact that in their country, English was not spoken, thus, they needed more practice on the oral component of the language as well. Consequently, the author concluded that students with higher proficiency in the language and that had been taught explicit grammar before, had different needs and requested a more communicative

approach in order to be able to benefit from their educational success and their social life.

2.2 English learning in Chile

Rojas, Zapata and Herrada (2013), explained that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is the one chosen by the Ministry of Education to be implemented in English language lessons throughout the country. As mentioned by the authors, this approach aims at students using the language in an authentic and functional way, with meaningful purposes. Thus, the activities of the CLT approach should give students the necessary tools for them to later, use the language outside the classroom context appropriately and meaningfully.

In order to present a retrospective of Chile's level of English throughout the years, in 2012 the agency EF carried out the English Proficiency Index, in which our country occupied the place 39th out of 54, which according to the agency, corresponds to very low proficiency of English (Education First, 2012). Moreover, the results of the SIMCE Exam in 2010, demonstrated that only 11% reached a required level in order to certify a basic competence in the language, while 89% did not. Furthermore, the results in this test also showed a socioeconomic gap for language learning since 65% of the people who passed the test belonged to a private institution, while only 8% of the students who passed, attended a public educational establishment (Ministerio de Educación, 2010)

Unfortunately, nothing much has changed since then. According to the 2020 English Proficiency Index, Chile now occupies the 37th place (Education First, 2020). In addition to this, only 32% of the students that took the Simce Exam in 2017 were able to reach a basic or intermediate level of English (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2019). And once again, more students from a higher socioeconomic status were able to reach a basic or intermediate level, while fewer students from a lower socioeconomic status were able to reach that same level, 85% versus 9%, respectively.

Rojas, Zapata and Herrada (2013) reflected on the possible reasons of such low results. To do so, they analyzed the videotaped classes from the portfolio of the teachers' performance assessment throughout the years 2008 and 2011. From their analysis, they conclude that teachers' practices are not close to the alignments established by the Ministry of Education in relation to the use of the CLT approach. Actually, according to Sato and Oyanedel (2019), the implementation of the CLT approach in Chilean classrooms has been unsuccessful and traditional and decontextualized grammar instruction still prevails in schools. In fact, Sato and Oyanedel (2019) mentioned a research study conducted in Chile in 2003 that established that teachers tended to feel discouraged when it comes to creating communicative activities because of the difficulties that arranging them entailed. For example, they mentioned difficulties such as lack of time, space, students' motivation

and discipline problems, which are all difficulties that are still present in Chilean education. Furthermore, the authors mentioned that the use of textbooks is another external factor by which grammar is still incorporated into the classroom since they “emphasize decontextualized grammar instruction followed by mechanical production practice activities, such as fill-in-the-blanks or scripted role plays” (Sato and Oyanedel, 2019, p.7).

2.3 Task-based approach

Ellis (2017) defined the task-based approach as an approach used to teach a second or foreign language. This approach aims at encouraging learners to use natural language and it also promotes the acquisition of the language by having students perform different communicative tasks. Thus, it encourages learners to perceive language as a tool for making meaning, instead of perceiving it as an object to be studied, practiced and learned. It also promotes the creation of contexts in order to develop students’ fluency, since learners can use their previous knowledge of the language while communicating. Moreover, Ellis (2017) explained the task-based approach “is a type of teaching that emphasizes learning through experiencing the use of the L2” (p.112), since through the input and interaction that emerges from the tasks, students can acquire new linguistic knowledge. Consequently, the task-based approach allows them to develop their linguistic and interactional competence in the L2.

Similarly, Lin (2009) stated that the task-based approach is a teaching approach that organizes language teaching through the use of tasks. Some of the principles of the task-based approach, the author explained, are the importance of activities for real communication and the use of the language in meaningful tasks in order to promote language learning and facilitate such process. Furthermore, Lin (2009) stated that the task-based approach “advocates learning language knowledge and training skills in the process of completing tasks” (p.5). Consequently, it is a more student-centered approach since teachers have the role of guiding students, while students do not only act as receivers, but also principal agents (Lin, 2009).

Yildiz and Senel (2017) stated that in a course planned according to the standards of the task-based approach, three stages should be incorporated. These stages help teachers plan the teaching process in a more effective way and allow them to control the progress of the course. The three stages that form the task-based approach framework, according to the authors already mentioned, are the following:

- Pre task: this stage aims at preparing students to perform the tasks in ways that will promote acquisition of the linguistic elements to be taught. Thus, the topic and the task are introduced to the students, as well as any other linguistic elements, old or new, that may later help students to perform the task effectively. Also, the authors stated that “the pre task stage prepares students for producing grammatically accurate sentences because it gives them the chance to think about the next stages shortly” (p.201).

- Task cycle: in this stage, through interaction, learners have to complete the task that was given to them using the target language. Thus, an environment in which students are able to improve their communication skills is essential for this stage. Also, in this stage there can be a chance for teacher feedback and support to the learners.
- Post task: the authors explained that this stage can be divided into two. Firstly, on a language focus stage, the target language's rules and usage are explained to the students. Yet, by this stage, students already have an understanding of the linguistic element's language function. On the other hand, on a language practice stage, students are presented to different exercises in order to strengthen their understanding of the linguistic elements studied throughout the lesson.

Furthermore, Xiaofang (2013) stated that there are three types of task-based instruction. Firstly, the author described the task-based approach with a focus on forms and stated that in this case, tasks are designed so that a specific grammatical structure is used when students communicate, thus, they must consciously search for words and expressions to use the structure being taught. Secondly, the task-based approach with a focus on meaning is described. Here, the focus is purely on communication and grammatical structures are left aside. Lastly, the author stated that the task-based approach with a focus on form emphasizes different aspects of language performance, such as accuracy, fluency and complexity, while focusing on both, forms and meaning, simultaneously. According to the author, for language learning to occur in this approach, students must be involved in real communication, using language meaningfully, while also drawing attention to a specific linguistic form.

2.4 Benefits of the task-based approach

After having analyzed misconceptions about the task-based approach, Ellis (2009) named some of the advantages of using this approach:

- a) Firstly, it is stated that using the task-based approach gives students the opportunity of learning the language naturally inside of the classroom.
- b) Even though the task-based approach emphasizes meaning, it still can take into account form.
- c) Through the task-based approach, learners are provided with rich input.
- d) It is motivating.
- e) It is a learner-centered approach, yet also allows guidance and input from the teacher.
- f) It takes into consideration the development of communicative fluency; however, it does not neglect accuracy either.
- g) Lastly, the task-based approach can be used together with a traditional approach.

Similarly, Ganta (2015) also listed and explained some of the strengths that the task-based approach has to offer. Among them, it was stated that the task-based approach allowed for spontaneous interaction, since learners are able to incorporate linguistic elements previously known. Thus, they can communicate more freely and at the same time, benefit from the linguistic elements that their partners may use. Moreover, the author proceeded stating that the task-based approach opens the path for automaticity, since tasks provide opportunities for language use in authentic communicative situations. In addition to this, the task-based approach also provides students with opportunities to use the language purposefully and in cooperation, preparing them to use it in real life situations.

Likewise, Lin (2009) compared the task-based approach to more traditional approaches of teaching and mentioned that the use of this approach can enhance students' initiative, making them more active agents inside the classroom. Moreover, the author explained that in traditional teaching approaches, students have a passive role, while teachers are in control of the contents and there is neither space for a real language environment nor meaningful communication. Yet, on the contrary, the task-based approach allows for the creation of tasks that portray real life situations and where a real language environment can be created, thus, students' interests can be stimulated while teaching them how to communicate and socialize in the target language.

2.5 Task-based approach and grammar

Ellis (2009) studied some of the misconceptions related to the task-based approach, and some of them regarded how grammar is encountered in this approach. One of the critics mentioned made reference as to how tasks in the task-based approach prioritized pragmatic meaning over semantic meaning. In other words, it was stated that tasks focused on the natural use of the language in context while neglecting grammar. However, Ellis (2009) argued that it is not difficult to find tasks in which a specific context is created in order to address semantic meaning. Consequently, the author explained a spot-the-difference task in which students had to describe different ongoing actions to see if they were the same or different from the actions in their partner's picture, and explained that a task such as that one required attention to both pragmatic and semantic meaning.

Moreover, Ellis (2009) continued stating that another criticism that the task-based approach faces in relation to grammar is that there is no grammar syllabus within the approach. The author explained that such misconception might be true if the task-based syllabus consisted merely on unfocused tasks, which are tasks designed to provide learners with opportunities to use the language communicatively. However, there can also be a grammar-oriented task-based syllabus, consisting of focused tasks, which are tasks designed to provide opportunities to use the language communicatively, while focusing on the use of some specific linguistic feature. In addition to this, the author also explained that there can also be a third type of syllabus, a hybrid one, which can consist of a mixture between unfocused and focused tasks. Thus, as explained by Ellis (2009), stating that there is no grammar

syllabus in this approach, would not be entirely true. Closely related to the last point, Ellis (2009) mentioned that a course needs more than a syllabus, it also needs a methodology. Thus, when critics of the task-based approach mentioned that it has an inadequate coverage of grammar, Ellis (2009) counterargued stating that within the methodology of the task-based approach all of its advocates pay attention to grammar in at least one of its stages because it is considered as an essential element for students to notice the language. Hence, the author concludes that depending on the advocate, grammar can be found in the pre-stage, in the main task, or in the post task, and that even though grammar may not be essential in the task-based approach, it plays an important role.

2.6 Teaching grammar communicatively through tasks

Nassaji and Fotos (2011) acknowledged that the reason why approaches used in North America between the 70s and the 80s failed, was because learners continued to make the same output errors despite having had many years of study. Consequently, the authors stressed the importance of making grammatical structures obvious to the students, either through formal instruction, through the manipulation of communicative input in ways that students are made aware of the target forms and are allowed to process them, or both. Tasks, the authors explained, are one way of doing so. According to them, several researchers have agreed on the fact that “task-based instruction has been shown to promote the type of negotiated interaction that leads to noticing and awareness” (p.89). Consequently, they stated that “in task-based instruction, the acquisition of the target structures is promoted through opportunities to hear meaningful input, to produce the target language in response to the input, and to receive feedback on learner production” (p.89)

Hence, Nassaji and Fotos (2011) explained that there are structure-based focused tasks that aim at making grammar forms obvious to learners, but that are also communicative, since learners are engaged in meaning-focused interaction. The authors mentioned three types of structure-based focused tasks that were first coined by Ellis (1995 and 2003). They are the following:

1. Structure-based production tasks: in this type of task, target forms are needed to complete a communicative activity. It may include grammar tasks in which learners are required to practice a certain structure through production exercises. The ultimate goal of this type of task is grammar comprehension. Thus, learners need to identify the meaning given by a specific grammatical feature.
2. Comprehension tasks: learners are expected to notice and process the target forms that have been designed in the input. It may be done through a stimulus that requires learners to answer using the target item. The objective of this type of tasks is “to enhance input in such a way that learners are induced to notice a grammatical feature that they otherwise might ignore” (p.90). Consequently, in order to facilitate noticing, interpretation tasks are designed.

3. Consciousness-raising tasks: in this case, grammatical structures are directly communicated. The presentation of the structures can be done implicitly in communicative contexts or explicitly as part of the tasks' contents.

The authors conclude that “task-based on grammar structures as content have repeatedly been found to be effective in promoting both negotiation of meaning and awareness of the target structure” (p.91). Additionally, the effectiveness of these tasks depends on the nature of the structures being used. Structures that have few rules are better for focused task performance than others with many rules. Also, “focused tasks containing communicative instances of the target form are useful for developing learner awareness of grammar structures which are too complex to be understood through formal instruction alone” (p.92).

2.7 Task-based Activities

Nassaji and Fotos (2011) added that task-based instruction and grammar instruction can be integrated in a variety of formats allowing to combine a focus on meaning and a focus on form. Thus, they mention that a focus on form can be achieved through two different methods: design and process. Firstly, the design method involves creating tasks that have a deliberate focus on form. In this case, the teacher is the one who decides which form to focus on and then designing the task based on the form chosen. On the other hand, the process method allows students to become aware of the form as a result of having completed a task. In this way, in order to complete the task, students are able to use their prior knowledge and incorporate different forms previously learnt.

For example, the authors explained a spot-the-difference activity in which students had to draw attention to prepositions of place in order to express their meaning correctly. The authors mentioned that in an activity such as this one, students would require production and comprehension of certain forms to complete the communicative activity since they should not only use certain forms to complete the task, but also, they must understand and process the form being used by their partners.

2.8 Related Research

2.8.1 Approaches for teaching English in the Chilean EFL classroom

Díaz, Alarcón and Ortíz (2015) carried out a case study in which they analyzed teachers' beliefs about the teaching and learning of English in Chilean public education. Throughout the study, the authors mentioned that the Chilean syllabi for English are aligned with the communicative standards proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Thus, students need to achieve a specific language proficiency level in accordance to the grade they are coursing. However, after having analyzed the teachers' answers, the authors conclude that even though teachers believe English should be taught following the principles of communicative approaches, those approaches have difficulties being implemented

in Chilean public secondary schools. For instance, the authors explained that in communicative approaches the teacher should take a facilitating role, nevertheless, the students' needs are so demanding in such contexts that teachers end up taking a more active role than expected either way.

Moreover, Herrera (2019) explored the perceptions that secondary English language teachers in Chile had about the implementation of the task-based approach and the meaning that those perceptions have regarding English as a foreign language education in Chile. From the analysis of the interviews carried out, the author was able to conclude that some of the benefits of the task-based approach include the development of soft skills, motivation and L2 improvement. Yet, it is brought up that teachers have conflicting perceptions towards the implementation of the task-based approach in the country. Even though teachers acknowledged the benefits of this approach, its implementation seems to hold certain challenges in some context. The author explained that the challenges that the implementation of the task-based approach derived from the approach itself, from education actors (teachers, school administrators and/or students), from the educational system (standardized examinations, learning resources, teacher-training, among others) and from social context. Nevertheless, the author suggests that in order to successfully implement the task-based approach, the following five factors need to be aligned: (1) teachers' understanding of the task-based approach, (2) teachers' positive attitudes towards the approach, (3) teachers' adequate target language level, (4) school administrators' support and (5) positive attitudes of students.

2.8.2 Benefits of the task-based approach

Calvert and Sheen (2014) carried out an action research study in which they reported a teacher's experience developing, implementing, critically reflecting on, and modifying a language learning task in order to better address students' needs. For this, a task was designed and later evaluated through a student-based and response-based evaluations. From the analysis, the authors concluded that creating, implementing and evaluating the tasks created benefited the teachers and researchers involved since they brought a better understanding of the students' needs, their limitations and how to address those needs appropriately. Moreover, the authors stressed the fact that through tasks, enjoyable, beneficial and communicative activities can be incorporated into the L2 classroom.

Furthermore, Azar and Maragheh (2012) decided to apply the task-based approach in a traditional classroom situation in order to find solutions to problems such as poor learner motivation. They used a questionnaire in order to gather their students' opinions and they were able to conclude that not only students, but also teachers, were highly satisfied with the implementation of the task-based approach since it allowed the incorporation of different classroom activities and enhanced students' learning. Moreover, the authors claimed that the implementation of the task-based approach also improved students' motivation and learning. Moreover, students had reported that teacher talking time in their classrooms was predominant, thus, they valued the opportunities for interaction that the implementation of the task-based

approach had given them and also valued the enjoyable classroom atmosphere that developed through the use of the task-based approach.

2.8.3 Task-based approach and grammar

NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh and Pazhakh (2017) investigated the effect of task-based language teaching on motivation and grammatical achievement of EFL junior high school students from Iran. To do so, they divided their participants into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. Both groups were administered a grammar test and a motivation questionnaire before and after the intervention. However, only one group, the experimental group, was taught using the task-based approach. The control group received traditional grammatical instruction. After 12 sessions of instruction and having had analyzed the instruments, the authors were able to conclude that task-based language teaching is an effective approach for the teaching of grammar and the enhancement of motivation. The experimental group was able to outperformed the control group in the post-intervention grammar test and also showed positive attitudes towards the approach in the post intervention questionnaire, demonstrating in this way that the task-based approach was able to enhance students' motivation. Consequently, basing themselves on the results of their study, the authors suggested to incorporate task-based activities into grammar classrooms in order to improve students' grammatical knowledge and enhance their motivation.

CHAPTER III:
METHOD

3.1 Type of research

Burns (2010) explained that action research is related to reflective practice since it involves self-reflecting and problematizing the teaching context to improve what could be done in a better form. Furthermore, Burns (2010) continued to add that the main aim of action research is to identify a situation that may be problematic in the teaching practice, and intervene on it so that changes or improvements can be made. Similarly, Mertler (2009) acknowledged that one of the characteristics of action research is that it is carried out by teachers since it allows them to study their own classroom, paying attention to their students, their practices, their form of assessment; thus, action research gives them the possibility of having a better idea of their classrooms and improving their quality and effectiveness.

Taking into consideration all of the above, it can be concluded that this study is action research since a problem situation was first identified and measurements were taken to improve said situation. The problematic situation related to this action research is the fact that in Chile, grammar tends to be taught in a traditional manner, through decontextualized grammar exercises (Sato and Oyanedel, 2019), such as fill in the gaps, multiple choice, among other formats. Consequently, it was decided to implement the Task-Based approach as a form to innovate the teaching of this English subskill since it is an approach which focuses not only on form, but also on meaning (Xiaofang, 2013).

3.2 Participants

The participants involved in this action research were high school students from different cities of Chile: Valdivia, Yumbel, Lebu and Concepción. In total, six students participated, they were 3 females and three males. Concerning their ages and school grades, all of them were 17 years old and were starting 12th grade, except for one female student who was 16 and doing 11th grade. As for the type of school in which they were enrolled, four students stated that they were in partly-subsidized schools, while two of them mentioned being in public schools. Regarding their level of English, students took a short online Cambridge test and their results vary between pre-A1 and B2: two students were pre-A1, two were A2, one was B1 and one was B2.

3.3 Research question and objectives

To what extent can the Task-Based approach influence students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar?

The objective of this action research is to assess the effectiveness of the Task-Based approach in the teaching of grammatical structures based on form and function. Furthermore, the specific objectives related to this research are the following:

- To explore the impact of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures.

- To compare students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar before and after the implementation of the task-based approach

3.4 Research problem

When it comes to English teaching in Chile, grammatical instruction plays a major role. English instruction in our country has a strong focus on grammar and it tends to rely mainly on traditional grammatical exercises such as fill-in-the-gaps, multiple choice, among others. In my personal opinion as a teacher, I believe that grammar should be approached in a more communicative way so that students are able to use the structures properly when communicating in the language. Thus, this action research proposes the use of the task-based approach as one that focuses not only on form, but also on meaning (Wang, 2019). According to Wang (2019), through the Task-based Approach, tasks need to be completed in a communicative way, thus the deficiencies of the traditional grammar methods are avoided and students are able to communicate successfully while having an understanding of language structures.

3.5 Stages of the action research

This action research consisted of 5 sessions. The first and the last session aimed at interviewing students to obtain data regarding their perceptions towards grammar and the English class. On the other hand, throughout sessions two, three and four, the task-based approach was implemented in relation to the second research objective, which was to explore the impact of the task-based approach upon students' beliefs towards grammar.

All of the sessions in this action research were carried out online, through the app Zoom, because of the current pandemic. Consequently, the 6 participants involved in the study were divided into groups of 2 so as to conduct the videocalls and the activities smoothly. Hence, intervention sessions were repeated for each pair. Additionally, the pre and post intervention interviews from sessions one and five were carried out individually with the participant in a private videocall, while sessions two, three and four were carried out in pairs so that students could interact with one another while performing the tasks.

The sessions and what they consisted of are further explained in Table 1 below:

Session one: Pre intervention Interview
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<p>The first session was related to the second specific objective, since it aimed at identifying students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar. Each interview lasted approximately 10 minutes.</p>	
<p>Session two: Task 1</p>	
<p>This session aimed at students being able to give advice using the structure of the second conditional. It lasted approximately 50 minutes.</p>	
<p><i>Pre task</i></p>	<p>In this stage, the teacher showed a clip from the series <i>Drake and Josh</i> in which their little sister, Megan, played them a prank. Then, the teacher asked the students what they would do if they were Drake and Josh and what advice they would give them. The teacher proceeded to model the structure by suggesting what she would do if she were Drake and Josh (Ex. If I were Drake and Josh, I would tell my parents what she did / If I were Drake and Josh, I would plan my revenge). Finally, the teacher explained the function of the second conditional, which was giving advice, and reinforced its structure.</p>
<p><i>Task</i></p>	<p>The main task was named "A truth and a lie". Students were given different situations and took turns to be the ones who read and answered them. The student who read had to ask the other participant what he/she would do in the given situation. The one who answered had to create two pieces of advice using the second conditional. One of the pieces of advice was the truth, what they would actually advise someone doing, while the other piece of advice was something they would not advise someone doing, hence the lie. The student who read the situation had to guess what piece of advice was the truth and what piece of advice was the lie.</p>
<p><i>Post Task</i></p>	<p>In the last stage of this session, students had to put sentences in order so that they could guess what was the piece of advice given. Then, they would have to think of a problem that led to that piece of advice in the first place.</p>
<p>Session three: Task 2</p>	
<p>The objective of this session was for students to be able to talk about hypothetical situations using the structure of the second conditional. It lasted approximately 60 minutes</p>	
<p><i>Pre task</i></p>	<p>During this stage, the teacher showed a clip from the series <i>Friends</i> in which the characters asked themselves what they would do if they were omnipotent. Once the clip was over, the teacher and the students discussed the meaning of their conversation and the function of the structure that they were using. Next, the teacher continued to introduce the new function of the second conditional: giving advice, and explained its structure by presenting examples to model.</p>
<p><i>Task</i></p>	<p>For the main task, students were given two different charts. Student 1 had to give a command, and Student 2 had to look for that command in their chart. With the statement in that command, Student 2 had to create a question following the correct structure of the second conditional and the pattern "What would you do if...?" Next, Student 1 had to answer the question using his/her own ideas and the structure of the second conditional as well.</p>

<i>Post task</i>	Lastly, in the post task, students played a game in which they had to answer different questions that followed the structure “What would you do if...?” Each question had three alternatives, thus, they had to discuss which alternative was the one that accommodate them the best.
Session four: Task 3	
The objective of the last session was for students to be able to give advice and talk about hypothetical situations and to recognize both functions when used orally. It lasted approximately 60 minutes.	
<i>Pre task</i>	In this stage, students were given a link to the app <i>Edpuzzle</i> in which they would find a video with compilation of short clips from music videos. Students had to listen to each bit of the songs and recognize whether the lyrics were giving advice or talking about hypothetical situations.
<i>Task</i>	The main task aimed at students creating sentences using the second conditional and any of the functions that they had learnt in the previous sessions. Thus, they were presented Gifs (images that move) and they would have to give advice or talk about a hypothetical situation using the second conditional.
<i>Post task</i>	Using the app <i>Image Reveal</i> from the webpage <i>classtools.net</i> , an image with a secret message was covered by 9 blocks. Each block had a number and the teacher associated a question or situation to each of them. Students had to say a number and respond to the question or situation by giving advice or talking about a hypothetical situation using the second conditional. As they answered, the blocks were removed. Once there were no more blocks left, students had to discover the secret message below. It was a jumbled sentence which in the end read “If I were you, I would keep studying English”.
Session five: Post intervention interview	
Finally, the last session aimed at collecting students’ perceptions towards the form in which grammar was taught throughout the lessons, so that they could be then compared to the perceptions they had to the teaching of grammar before the intervention. Each interview lasted approximately 10 minutes.	

Table 1: Stages of the action research

3.6 Data collection techniques

Three data collection techniques were used throughout this action research: pre and post intervention interviews, three rating scales and video observation of lessons.

3.6.1 Pre and post intervention interviews

As explained above, the pre intervention interview (See appendix 8.2.1) aimed at identifying students’ perceptions towards the teaching of grammar. This interview was adapted and translated into Spanish from the study Second language Learners’ Beliefs About Grammar Instruction and Error Correction (Loewen, Li, Fei, Thompson, Nakatsukasa, Ahn and Chen, 2009). It consisted of six categories:

1. Subject’s relation with English and grammar (Relación del sujeto con el inglés y la gramática)

2. Efficacy of Grammar
3. Priority of Communication
4. Importance of Grammar
5. Attitudes to Grammar Instruction

In the case of the pre-intervention interview, the first, second and fourth categories consisted of three questions, while the third and fifth category consisted of two questions. On the other hand, the post intervention interview aimed at collecting students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar throughout the lessons to compare them with their perceptions before the intervention. The post intervention interview had different questions from the pre intervention interview, yet, the categories remained the same. Just as in the pre-intervention interview, the number of questions per category in the post-intervention interview were the same. Thus, the first, second and fourth categories consisted of three questions; while the third and fifth categories consisted of two questions.

3.6.2 Rating scales

This instrument aimed at getting to know students' perceptions of the lessons that had just taken place. They were applied after each task, thus, there were a total of 3 rating scales, one after each task (See Appendix 8.1). They consisted of 7 statements in which students had to indicate to what extent they agreed with them, being 4 in agreement, 3 partial agreement, 2 doubtful and 1 in disagreement.

Three dimensions arose from the rating scales. The first one, Perceptions of the TBA lessons, is related to the participants' perceptions of the class and it arose from the first three statements in each rating scale. The second dimension, Participants' learning in the TBA lessons, concerns participants' perceptions of their learning process throughout the lessons and it arose from statements four, five and six, of each rating scale. Lastly, the third dimension, Participants' personal views, tackled the participants' voluntary comments about their perceptions towards the TBA lessons. This derived from the last section of each rating scale in which they were able to leave voluntary comments.

3.7 Data analysis techniques

To analyze the data gathered from the intervention, the techniques of frequency and thematic analysis were used. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) explained that through thematic analysis, one can identify, analyze and report patterns, or themes, within data. Also, they stated that thematic analysis, such as responses from surveys or transcribed interviews, allows to explore the context of teaching and learning in a deeper level than quantitative analysis since the last one lacks flexibility and interpretation when analyzing data. Consequently, the participants' answers to the different instruments used throughout the intervention were first analyzed. From the thematic analysis, different themes and subthemes arose and the frequency with

which those themes and sub-themes appeared was determined by how many times the participants referred to them in their answers.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Throughout this chapter, the data gathered from the intervention will be presented in accordance to the specific objectives.

4.1 Specific objective 1: To explore the effect of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures

The data collected and analyzed for this specific objective was gathered through rating scales that participants answered after each of the three tasks. Each rating scale consisted of six statements to which participants had to indicate their level of agreement, being 4 Agree, 3 Doubtful, 2 Partly agree and 1 Disagree. Additionally, in the seventh section of the rating scales, the participants were free to leave any comments regarding the tasks they had just participated in. From the analysis of the answers to the rating scales, three dimensions emerged: *To the class*, *Participants' learning* and *Free comments*. All of these are explained below.

4.1.1 Dimension 1: Perceptions of the TBA lessons

The first dimension deals with the participants' perceptions of the TBA lessons they took part of. Below, the findings of the participants' answers to each of the statements in each of the three tasks carried out throughout the intervention are presented.

- Task 1:

The aim of this task was for participants to give advice using the structure of the second conditional. With regard to the participants' answers to Task 1, the following results were obtained:

Concerning the first statement, *I liked this class*, the six participants marked the highest level of agreement, which was agree. Additionally, regarding the second statement, *This class was fun*, the six participants also manifested the highest level of agreement. Lastly, as for the last statement in this dimension, *This class was useful*, in agreement was also the answer of the six participants. Thus, from the participants' answers to this dimension in Task 1, it can be concluded that the participants had positive perceptions of the first TBA lesson.

- Task 2:

The aim of Task 2 was for participants to talk about hypothetical situations using the structure of the 2nd conditional. Regarding participants' answers to the rating scale for this task, the following findings were disclosed:

Just as in the previous task, the six participants demonstrated the highest level of agreement with each of the three statements in this dimension. Thus, the six participants showed agreement with the statements *I liked this class*, *This class was fun* and *This class was useful*. Consequently, it can also be concluded from their

answers to this dimension in Task 2 that the participants had again positive perceptions of the second TBA lesson.

- Task 3:

The objective for Task 3 was for participants to distinguish the functions of the second conditional and give advice and talk about hypothetical situations using the same structure. Below are the findings of the participants' answers to the rating scale assigned to the task just described above:

Likewise, the same level of agreement was reached by the six participants when answering the first three statements to the rating scale associated with Task 3. Hence, participants fully agree with the statements *I liked this class*, *This class was fun* and *This class was useful*. As a consequence, it can be concluded once again that the participants had positive perceptions of the third lesson of the TBA intervention.

In Table 2 below there is a summary of the levels of agreement found in each of the statements for each category.

Statements	Levels of agreement	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Statement one: I liked this class	Agree	6	6	6
	Doubtful	0	0	0
	Partly agree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
Statement two: This class was fun	Agree	6	6	6
	Doubtful	0	0	0
	Partly agree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
Statement three: This class was useful	Agree	6	6	6
	Doubtful	0	0	0
	Partly agree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0

Table 2: Summary for Dimension 1: Perceptions of the TBA lessons

4.1.2 Dimension 2: Participants' learning in the TBA lessons

The second dimension tackles the participants' perceptions of their learning process after each of the TBA lessons they took part of throughout the intervention. Below there are the findings given by participants' answers to each of the statements in the rating scales associated to each of the three tasks. It is important to acknowledge that only statement four was different in each of the rating scales since it dealt with the objective of the lesson, and each lesson had a different objective.

- Task 1

Concerning statement four, *I was able to give advice using the structure of the second conditional*, four participants fully agreed with it. However, two participants partly agreed with the statement. It is believed that the participants who partly agreed with the statement might have felt insecure at the moment of speaking and participating, thus, they did not feel confident enough when giving advice using the

structure of the second conditional. Moreover, regarding the fifth statement: *The class promotes the learning of grammar through communication*, the total number of participants fully agreed with this statement. Lastly, as for the sixth statement: *The type of tasks carried out in this class helped me improve my English more than fill-in-the-gaps exercises*, the six participants also designated this statement as the highest level of agreement. Consequently, it can be concluded that even though two participants felt they not able to give advice using the structure of the second conditional, the majority of the participants felt that the lesson was communicative and more dynamic than what they are used to.

- Task 2

With regard to the fourth statement, *I was able to talk about hypothetical situations using the structure of the second conditional*, only one participant partly agreed with it, while the other five participants designated it as the highest level of agreement. Once again, it is probable that the participant who partly agreed with this statement might not have felt secure enough to express himself in English, thus, he was not fully able to talk about hypothetical situations using the structure of the second conditional. Furthermore, regarding the fifth and sixth statements: *The class promotes the learning of grammar through communication* and *The type of tasks carried out in this class helped me improve my English more than fill-in-the-gaps exercises*, the total number of participants fully agreed with both of them. Therefore, it can also be concluded that the majority of the participants thought of this lesson as a communicative and dynamic one.

- Task 3

Regarding the fourth statement in Task 3, *I was able to distinguish the functions of the second conditional and give advice and talk about hypothetical situations using the same structure*, and the other following statements: *The class promotes the learning of grammar through communication* and *The type of tasks carried out in this class helped me improve my English more than fill-in-the-gaps exercises*, all of the participants designated the three statements with the highest level of agreement. In this way, it can be concluded that according to the participants, the third lesson fully achieved its objective, it was communicative and dynamic.

The analysis given above of the three rating scales for the second dimension of the first specific objective, is summarized in Table 3 below.

Statements	Levels of agreement	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Statement four (Different for each task)	Agree	4	5	6
	Doubtful	0	0	0
	Partly agree	2	1	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
Statement five: The class promotes the learning of grammar through communication	Agree	6	6	6
	Doubtful	0	0	0
	Partly agree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Agree	6	6	6

Statement six: The type of tasks carried out in this class helped me improve my English more than fill-in-the-gaps exercises	Doubtful	0	0	0
	Partly agree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0

Table 3: Summary for Dimension 2: Participants' learning in the TBA lessons

4.1.3 Dimension 3: Participants' personal views

The last section of the rating scales in each task aimed at participants writing voluntary comments about their perceptions of the TBA lessons they had participated in. Thus, from the analysis of their comments, different themes and subthemes emerged.

1. The class

From the first theme, four subthemes emerged: *Was fun*, *Was very good/excellent*, *Was useful* and *Had a nice learning environment*. Regarding the first subtheme, it was mentioned four times in total that the participants had had fun while taking part in the TBA lessons. Furthermore, with regard to the second subtheme, it was mentioned four times that the lessons had ranged between very good and excellent. Moreover, regarding the third subtheme, it was stated three times in total that the lessons had been very useful. Lastly, as for the fourth subtheme, it was mentioned three times in total that the learning environment throughout the TBA lessons was very nice.

2. My learning

As for the second theme, three subthemes derived from it: *I felt I learnt a lot*, *I enjoyed the games* and *It was an easier process*. Concerning the first subtheme, the participants mentioned three times throughout the free comments the rating scales that they had felt that they learnt a lot. Moreover, regarding the second subtheme, participants mentioned two times that they had enjoyed the games, referring in that way to the tasks in the lessons. Finally, concerning the last subtheme, it was mentioned two times that the participants considered that the TBA lessons made their learning process easier.

In Table 4 below, the themes and their corresponding subthemes are presented as well as the frequency in which they were found in each of the three tasks.

Theme	Subtheme	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Total Frequency
The class	Was fun	3	0	1	4
	Was very good/excellent	0	2	2	4
	Was useful	1	0	2	3
	Had a nice learning environment	1	2		3
My learning	I felt I learnt a lot	2	0	1	3
	I enjoyed the games	1	1	0	2

	Was an easier process	1	1	0	2
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Table 4: Summary for Dimension 3: Participants' personal views

4.2 Specific objective 2: To compare students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar before and after the implementation of the Task-based approach

For this specific objective, the participants' answers to the pre-intervention and the post-intervention interviews were analyzed and compared to study their perceptions towards the teaching of grammar before and after the implementation of the task-based approach. Both interviews consisted of the same five dimensions, yet they had contrasting questions. Different themes and subthemes derived from each of the dimensions in the pre-intervention and post-intervention interviews, and the frequency in which the subthemes emerged in each of the participants' answers was also taken into consideration.

4.2.1 Dimension 1: Participants' relation with English and grammar

- Pre-intervention interview:

Three themes derived from the analysis of the participants' answers to the questions in the first dimension of the pre-intervention interview. Each theme has different subthemes that will be explained below.

1. Attitudes towards the English language

Two subthemes derived from this theme: *Likes English* and *Useful tool*. Concerning the first subtheme, positive attitudes were noticed throughout the analysis towards English since six times participants stated that they actually liked the language. Moreover, regarding the second subtheme, it was mentioned three times throughout this dimension that English was considered as a useful tool by mentioning its importance in today's globalized world and future purposes in life.

2. Attitudes towards grammar

Three subthemes derived from this theme: *Likes grammar*, *Becomes difficult at times* and *There are boring and tedious exercises*. With regard to the first subtheme, the participants mentioned five times that they had positive attitudes towards grammar. However, concerning the second subtheme, it was also mentioned four times that grammar learning became difficult sometimes. Lastly, as for the third subtheme, two times it was mentioned that the types of exercises they are accustomed to when learning grammar were boring and tedious.

3. Features of their grammatical learning process

Two subthemes emerged from this theme: *Emphasis on grammatical structures* and *Emphasis on traditional exercises*. Concerning the first subtheme, it was mentioned six times that the forms of teaching grammar in their personal experience have a strong focus on explicit teaching of grammatical structures. Moreover, with regards to the second subtheme, the use of traditional exercises, such as fill-in-the-gaps or putting words in order, was mentioned five times.

- Post-intervention interview:

As a result of the participants' answers to the post-intervention interview in the first dimension, three themes were originated.

1. *Reasons for disliking English*

Two subthemes derived from this theme: *Way it is taught at school* and *Tedious learning process*. In this case, students were asked whether they would recommend the TBA lessons to someone who did not like English. Thus, some participants commented on the reasons why someone would not like learning English. Concerning the first subtheme, two times it was mentioned that the fact that people who did not like English was because of the way it was taught at school, arguing that the exercises were always the same and that the lessons were boring. Additionally, one time a participant stated that people might not like English because learning it might be considered as a tedious process.

2. *Perceptions towards the task-based grammar lessons*

Four subthemes were originated from this theme: *Dynamic, fun and purposeful nature*, *Appreciation for communicative purpose*, *Tasks resemble games* and *Different from what they are accustomed to at school*. Concerning the first subtheme, the participants mentioned at least nineteen times throughout this dimension that they thought the lessons or the tasks in which the TBA was used were dynamic, fun or didactic. Moreover, regarding the second subtheme, at least eight times participants made comments on how they appreciated having the chance to communicate in English, since they did not have much practice at school. Additionally, with regards to the third subtheme, four times participants mentioned that the grammar tasks resembled games, thus, they were able to concentrate better and have fun while learning. Lastly, regarding the last subtheme, three times participants mentioned that the lessons and tasks they had taken part of were different from what they are accustomed to at school, mentioning that they are habituated to more traditional exercises.

3. *Features of English teaching at their schools*

Three subthemes derived from this theme. *Traditional, repetitive and boring exercises*, *Boring classes* and *Lack of communicative practice*. The most frequently mentioned subtheme was the first one. A total of nine times participants commented on how the exercises that were done at school were repetitive and boring. Also, they stated that traditional exercises, such as fill-in-the-gaps, were very frequently used in classes. Moreover, the second subtheme was *Boring classes*. It was mentioned seven times throughout this category that English classes at school were perceived as boring by the students. Lastly, regarding the last subtheme, four times it was mentioned that there was a lack of communicative practice; participants stated that because of the type of grammar exercises frequently used in class, they were not able to use the language communicatively.

The previous analysis is summarized in Table 5 below:

Pre-intervention Themes	Pre-intervention Subthemes	Pre-intervention Frequency	Post-intervention Themes	Post-intervention Subthemes	Post-intervention Frequency
Attitudes towards the English language	Like for English	6	Reasons for disliking English	Way it is taught at school	2
	Useful tool	3		Tedious learning process	1
Attitudes towards grammar	Likes grammar	5	Perceptions towards the task-based grammar lessons	Dynamic, fun and didactic	19
	Becomes difficult at times	4		Appreciation for communicative purpose	8
	There are boring and tedious exercises	2		Tasks resemble games	4
Different from what they are accustomed at school				3	
Grammatical learning experience	Emphasis on grammatical structures	6	Features of English teaching at their schools	Traditional, repetitive and boring exercises	9
	Emphasis on traditional exercises	5		Boring classes	7
Lack of communicative practice				4	

Table 5: Themes and subthemes for Dimension 1: Participants' relation with English and grammar before and after the intervention

4.2.2 Dimension 2: Grammatical efficacy

- Pre-intervention interview

Three themes derived from the analysis of the participants' answers to the questions of the second dimension in the pre-intervention interview. The themes and their corresponding subthemes are further explained below:

1. Value of grammar

Two subthemes emerged from this theme: *Importance of grammar* and *Importance of natural communication*. Concerning the first subtheme, six times participants mentioned that grammar is a very important aspect of the English learning process. In fact, they tend to agree on the idea that learners need to be grammatically efficient to master the language and to deliver or understand a message properly. However, regarding the second subtheme, participants also awarded an importance to natural communication. Actually, one participant explained that when communicating, native speakers would not pay attention to the grammatical structures being used or whether mistakes were made; thus, in her opinion, communication needed to occur in a more natural way.

2. Grammar efficacy while communicating

The subthemes emerged from this theme are: *Remembers structures, Does not pay attention to structures or forgets about them* and *Uses other strategies*. Concerning the first subtheme, it was mentioned three times that when the participants were communicating in English, they would remember grammatical structures to express themselves properly. As for the second subtheme, it was brought up three times that they either did not pay attention to the grammatical structures when communicating

or they would just forget about them and would try to produce more natural language. Also, concerning the third subtheme, the use of other strategies was mentioned two times. Among the strategies used were translating and using fixed expressions.

3. Grammar efficacy and the message

Two subthemes derived from the last theme of this dimension: *Delivering a correct message* and *Understanding the message*. With regards to the first subtheme, throughout the dimension, it was mentioned four times that being grammatically efficient in the language would help the learner deliver a message properly. In the same way, concerning the second subtheme, participants mentioned two times throughout the dimension that being grammatically efficient would help the learner understand the message in a better way.

- Post-intervention interview:

As for the participants' answers to the questions of the second dimension in the post-intervention interview, two themes derived. These themes and their corresponding subthemes will be further explained below.

1. Grammar Tasks and the TBA lessons

Two subthemes arose from this theme: *Oral practice as a key for learning* and *Communicative and fun tasks for memorable learning*. Regarding the first subtheme, it was mentioned eight times by the participants that being able to practice the structures with their partners in a communicative way allowed them to learn the grammatical structures being taught more efficiently. Similarly, concerning the second subtheme, the participants mentioned six times that the communicative and fun aspect of the tasks run in the TBA lessons helps them learn the grammatical structure in a better way, arguing that they are now easier to remember and that they were able to concentrate more because of this.

2. Usage of grammatical structures

As for the second theme of this dimension, two subthemes emerged: *Feels confident to use them in an oral conversation* and *Had studied them before, but did not feel confident to use them until now*. Concerning the first subtheme, six times the participants stated that after having participated in the TBA lessons, they would now feel confident to use the structures learned in an oral conversation. In fact, one participant stated that this was because he had learnt not only how the structures function, but how to apply them as well. Regarding the second subtheme of this dimension, four times participants mentioned that the same grammatical structure had been taught to them before, but they had not learnt it properly.

The previous analysis is summarized in table 6 below:

Pre-intervention Themes	Pre-intervention Subthemes	Pre-intervention Frequency	Post-intervention Themes	Post-intervention Subthemes	Post-intervention Frequency
Value of grammar	Importance of grammar	6		Oral practice as a key for learning	8

	Importance of natural communication	5	Grammar tasks and the TBA lessons	Communicative and fun tasks for memorable learning	6
Grammar efficacy while communicating	Remembers structures	3	Usage of grammatical structures	Feels confident to use them in an oral conversation	6
	Does not pay attention to structures or forgets about them	3		Had studied them before, but could not use them until now	4
	Uses other strategies	2			
Grammar efficacy and the message	Delivering a correct message	4			
	Understanding the message	2			

Table 6: Themes and subthemes for Dimension 2: Grammatical Efficacy before and after the intervention

4.2.3 Dimension 3: Priority of communication

- Pre-intervention interview

With regard to the participants' answers to the questions of the third dimension of the pre-intervention interview, two themes originated from the analysis. The themes and their subthemes are further explained below.

1. *Grammar and getting the message across*

Two subthemes derived from this theme: *Problems in communication* and *Communication without much grammatical knowledge*. Regarding the first subtheme, five times participants mentioned that communication could still happen if someone does not master grammatical rules perfectly; yet, participants tend to agree that only simple messages could get across. On the other hand, concerning the second subtheme, the participants mentioned three times that if the person does not use grammatical rules correctly when trying to communicate a message, then problems in communication may occur and the message might be difficult to understand or it could also be misunderstood.

2. *Communicative practice vs traditional exercises to learn grammar*

Two subthemes derived from this theme: *Values communicative practice* and *Values traditional exercises*. Concerning the first subtheme, eight times it was mentioned that communicative practice was more meaningful than traditional exercises. Some of the arguments given by the participants were that in real life situations, one is not going to use traditional exercises to express their ideas. On the contrary, three times it was said that traditional exercises were important. Actually, one participant commented that in his opinion, traditional exercises were useful practice to gain confidence in the language. However, another participant that stated that traditional exercises were important for practice, also claimed that they were not more important than communicative practice.

- Post-intervention interview:

Concerning the participants' answers to the questions of this dimension in the post-intervention interview, the following themes and subthemes were created from the analysis:

1. *Grammatical functions and the TBA lessons*

Two subthemes emerged from this theme: *Functions of the 2nd conditional before the TBA lessons* and *Functions of the 2nd conditional after the TBA lessons*. As for the first subtheme, six times it was mentioned that if they had had the opportunity of giving advice or talking about a hypothetical situation before the TBA lessons, they probably would have tried to communicate their ideas but they would have had some problems when doing so, such as being misunderstood or grammatically incorrect. On the contrary, regarding the second subtheme, two times it was mentioned that after the TBA lessons they now feel confident to use the structures of the second conditional when giving advice or talking about a hypothetical situation.

2. *Traditional exercises after TBA lessons*

Two subthemes derived from this theme: *Would prefer more communicative and didactic tasks* and *Would use them, but they should not be prioritized*. Concerning the first subtheme, six times it was mentioned that after having participated in the TBA lessons, they would like more communicative and fun tasks rather than keep doing traditional exercises such as fill-in-the-gaps. One of the participants argues that she would like more communicative tasks since the traditional ones are boring, they do not call her attention and learning is not achieved. Furthermore, regarding the second subtheme, three times it was mentioned that traditional exercises should still be used in English classes, but they should not have as a strong emphasis as they do now, arguing that they might serve as practice, but communication should be prioritized.

The previous analysis is summarized in table 7 below:

Pre-intervention Themes	Pre-intervention Subthemes	Pre-intervention Frequency	Post-intervention Themes	Post-intervention Subthemes	Post-intervention Frequency
Grammar and getting the message across	Communication can still happen without much grammatical knowledge	5	Grammatical functions and the TBA lessons	Problems communicating functions of the 2nd conditional before the TBA lessons	6
	Problems in communication	3		No problems communicating functions of the 2nd conditional after the TBA lessons	2
Communicative practice vs Traditional exercises to learn grammar	Values communicative practice	8	Traditional exercises after TBA lessons	Would prefer more communicative and didactic tasks	6
	Values traditional exercises	3		Would use them, but they should not be prioritized	3

Table 7: Themes and subthemes for Dimension 3: Priority of communication before and after the intervention

4.2.4 Dimension 4: Importance of grammar

- Pre-intervention interview

After the analysis of the participants' answers to the questions for this dimension in the pre-intervention interview, two themes originated. The themes and their corresponding subthemes are explained below.

1. *Features of a grammatically competent learner*

From this theme, two subthemes emerged: *Manages structures correctly* and *Delivers a message appropriately*. Concerning the first subtheme, it was mentioned three times by the participants that someone who is grammatically competent in the language, is someone who manages grammatical structures perfectly. Likewise, as for the second subtheme, it was mentioned three times as well that a grammatically competent learner is someone who can deliver a message correctly.

2. *Grammatical rules and communication*

As for this theme, two subthemes emerged from the analysis: *Knowing grammatical rules helps in the delivery of the message* and *Knowing grammatical rules would make natives respect you more*. With regard to the first subtheme, seven times it was mentioned that being aware of grammatical rules and using them correctly in a conversation helps deliver a proper message. Furthermore, concerning the second subtheme, participants mentioned six times that knowing grammatical rules and using them properly would make native speakers respect them more.

- Post-intervention interview:

The analysis of participants' answers to the questions for the fourth dimension in the post-intervention interview, led to the theme and subthemes explained below:

1. *Results of the TBA lessons*

From this theme, four subthemes originated: *Feels confident to use what was learnt in real life situations*, *Was able to improve grammatical competence*, *Was able to improve pronunciation and/or vocabulary range* and *Was able to communicate better in English*. Concerning the first subtheme, when asked if the participants would feel confident using the structures learned of the second conditional in a conversation with a native speaker, six times it was mentioned that they would feel capable of doing so. Among their arguments, they stated that the TBA lessons had given them enough practice of the structures to be able to actually use them in real life situations. Also, regarding the second subtheme, participants mentioned six times that they believed their grammatical competence had improved because they were able to practice a new grammatical structure. Likewise, concerning the third subtheme, participants mentioned four times that either their pronunciation or their vocabulary range had improved because the TBA lessons had given them the opportunity to communicate in English. Lastly, with regard to the fourth subtheme, it was mentioned

three times that the TBA lessons gave students the chance to communicate in English. In fact, one participant stated that even though she likes English, she was not able to practice it orally with anyone else, and was thankful that the TBA had given her the opportunity to do so.

The previous analysis is summarized in Table 8 below:

Pre-intervention Themes	Pre-intervention Subthemes	Pre-intervention Frequency	Post-intervention Themes	Post-intervention Subthemes	Post-intervention Frequency
Features of a grammatically competent learner	Manages structures correctly	3	Results of the TBA lessons	Feels confident to use what has learnt in real life situations	6
	Delivers a message appropriately	3		Was able to improve my grammatical competence	6
Grammatical rules and communication	Knowing grammatical rules helps in the delivery of the message	7		Was able to improve my pronunciation and vocabulary range	4
	Knowing grammatical rules would make natives respect you more.	6		Was able to communicate better in English	3

Table 8: Themes and subthemes for Dimension 4: Importance of grammar before and after the intervention

4.2.5 Dimension 5: Attitudes towards the teaching of grammar

- Pre-intervention interview

After the analysis of the participants' answers to the questions for this dimension in the pre-intervention interview, one theme arose. The theme and its subthemes are explained below:

1. Teaching grammatical rules

Four subthemes arose from this theme: *Thinks grammatical rules are taught in traditional and boring ways*, *Thinks it is useful when grammatical rules are taught*, *Thinks it is difficult to learn explicit grammatical rules* and *Thinks grammatical rules should be taught in a more effective way*. Concerning the first subtheme, the participants mentioned six times that they consider that grammatical rules are taught in either traditional or boring ways. In fact, one participant commented that they should be taught in a more dynamic way so that all learning styles are addressed. Moreover, regarding the second subtheme, four times the participants mentioned that they think it is useful when grammatical rules are taught since they were able to comprehend them better. Furthermore, with regard to the third subtheme, three times it was stated that learning explicit grammatical rules was considered hard for the participants. Lastly, concerning the fourth subtheme, it was mentioned three times that grammatical rules should be taught in a more effective way. Some

participants stressed that they would like them to be taught in a more communicative and didactic way.

- Post-intervention interview

The analysis of the participants' responses to the questions for this dimension in the post-intervention interview originated two themes. The themes and their corresponding subthemes are detailed below:

1. *Perceptions about the TBA lessons*

Three subthemes derived from the analysis of this theme: *Prefers TBA lessons than school lessons*, *Has positive perceptions* and *Values communicative aspect*. Concerning the first subtheme, three times it was mentioned that the participants would prefer the TBA lessons they took part in, rather than the lessons that they are used to at school. Moreover, as for the second subtheme, positive perceptions to the TBA lessons were mentioned eight times. Among them, participants stressed how much they liked the lessons, stating that they considered them to be fun, didactic and purposeful. Lastly, concerning the last subtheme, the communicative aspect of TBA tasks was valued six times by the participants, who commented that they enjoyed the opportunities to practice the language orally and that they also allowed them to actually become aware of how much English they knew

2. *Adopting TBA in schools*

Three subthemes emerged from this theme: *Better learning*, *Usage of English* and *Difficulty implementing it*. Concerning the first subtheme, it was mentioned six times that using the TBA in schools could lead to a better learning experience. Among the participants' answers, they mentioned that using the TBA in schools would make learning faster and students would be more motivated to learn. Moreover, as for the second subtheme, three times it was mentioned that the TBA would allow students to actually use English in class, given the communicative aspect of it. However, concerning the third subtheme, it was also mentioned two times that they believed it could be rather difficult to implement an approach like the TBA in Chilean schools considering the large number of students that are in each classroom, adding that there are not enough teachers for such a large amount of students.

The previous analysis is summarized in Table 9 below:

Pre-intervention Themes	Pre-intervention Subthemes	Pre-intervention Frequency	Post-intervention Themes	Post-intervention Subthemes	Post-intervention Frequency
Teaching grammatical rules	Thinks grammatical rules are taught in traditional and boring ways	6	Perceptions about the TBA lessons	Prefers TBA lessons to school lessons	9
	Thinks it is useful when grammatical rules are taught	4		Has positive perceptions	8
				Values communicative aspect	6
	Thinks it is difficult to learn explicit	3	Adopting TBA in schools	Better learning	6

	grammatical rules			
	Thinks grammatical rules should be taught in a more effective way	3		Usage of English
				Difficulty implementing it
				3
				2

Table 9: Themes and subthemes for Dimension 5: Attitudes towards the teaching of grammar before and after the intervention

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The following discussion emerged from the previous analysis of the data collected during the intervention of this action research study. It will be organized in accordance to the specific objectives and further insight on the limitations and implications of the study will also be presented.

5.1 In relation to Specifics objective 1: To explore the effect of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures

Three dimensions arose from this specific objective: *Perceptions of the TBA lessons*, *Participants' learning in the TBA lessons* and *Participants' personal views*. The analysis of the results for each dimension are explained below.

5.1.1 Dimension 1: Perceptions of the TBA lessons

Concerning the first dimension analyzed in this specific objective, it can be concluded that the participants' had positive perceptions towards the TBA lessons since they all agreed to the statements *I liked this class*, *This class was fun* and *This class was useful*, used to get their impressions on each of the three tasks carried out throughout the intervention. Jahedizadeh, Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly (2016) explained that positive perceptions can influence students' achievement and performance. Additionally, they stated that attention, memory, effort and achievement can be promoted if there is interest and joy towards a particular issue, such as tasks in this case. Moreover, it was also specified that perceiving their learning environment positively can boost students' motivation to master their learning goals. Likewise, Li Echeverri and Lane (2019) conducted a research study in which they examined different variables such as student learning attitudes, perceptions on task-based interactive activities, satisfaction level and perceived learning outcomes. The findings of their research suggested that there was "a strong and positive significant correlation of student attitude and use of interactive tasks to student satisfaction and perceived learning" (p.7). These studies support the conclusion that the effect of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures is positive since it can be used to promote students' positive perceptions towards the lessons and at the same time, it can benefit students' learning process by enhancing their achievement level, performance, motivation, among others.

5.1.2 Dimension 2: Participants' learning in the TBA lessons

The first statement that was analyzed in this dimension concerned the learning aims of each of the TBA lessons that were carried out during the intervention. For the first task, the learning aim was for participants to be able to give advice using the structure of the second conditional. On the other hand, the aim of the second task was for participants to talk about hypothetical situations using the structure of the second conditional. Lastly, the aim of the third task was for participants to distinguish

the functions of the second conditional they had just learn and also, being able to give advice and talk about hypothetical situations using the same structure. When asked if they considered they were able to achieve these aims, most students agreed. Consequently, it can be inferred that, through the TBA lessons, participants were able to not only focus on form, but also on meaning. In other words, participants considered they were able to form grammatically correct sentences using the structure of the second conditional, but they also understood the meaning they were conveying while doing so, either it being giving advice or talking about hypothetical situations. To support the previous point, Nassaji and Fotos (2011) mentioned that even though communicative tasks push learners to focus on meaning, grammatical structures also need to be reviewed. They continued to explain that since communicative competence involves interpreting and using utterances correctly in a determined context (pragmatic competence), grammatical instruction needs to be supported by numerous opportunities of interpretation and production of the language. Thus, they recommend using communicative and problem-solving grammar tasks in order to provide opportunities for free and guided practices.

Moreover, in the analysis of this dimension, the participants agreed to the statements that mentioned that the class promoted the learning of grammar through communication and that the tasks carried out in the lessons helped them improve their English more than fill-in-the-gaps exercises. These ideas are closely related to what Long (1998) stated when describing *Focused on Form* tasks. Tasks that focus on form, Long (1998) explained, are those in which students' attention is briefly drawn to certain linguistic elements, such as words, collocations, grammatical structures, among others, but in context, since they are part of a lesson in which the focus is on meaning or communication. Thus, the focus on the linguistic element, being the structure of the second conditional in this case, is only temporary and it is done with the purpose of helping students comprehend better and to solve production problems (Long, 1998). Likewise, Nassaji (2010) studied the ways in which focus on form could occur in the classroom. On one hand, reactive focus on form occurs when the teacher responds to the learners' mistakes when an interaction is taking place. On the other hand, pre-emptive focus on form occurs when the teacher anticipates that a particular form can be problematic, thus it is previously explained to the students. The findings in Nassaji's (2010) study show that both forms had positive effects on the participants' learning. However, it is also mentioned that pre-emptive focus on form was more effective when improving the learners' post-test scores.

Taking the previous points into consideration, it can be stated that the effect of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures is positive. By having an approach that merges form and function, students' grammatical competence can be improved, since they will have a better understanding of the forms they have to use when interaction takes place in

communicative tasks, thus, they will be able to produce grammatically correct sentences while delivering a meaningful message.

5.1.3 Dimension 3: Participants' personal views

The personal views that participants shared in the third dimension strengthens the results in the first dimension since they all shared positive comments towards the TBA lessons and their learning process. From their comments, it can be concluded that the TBA lessons used to teach grammatical structures had a positive effect on them in terms of enjoyment of the lesson and purposefulness, since comments such as *The class was fun* and *I felt like I learnt a lot* were made. This belief can be supported by Roy's (2019) study, in which the effect of the Task-based approach on motivating learners to acquire language structure was studied. The results of this study indicated that the students acknowledged a positive relation between the TBA and their motivation to learn language structures.

Moreover, an interesting comment that was frequent throughout the intervention, was that the participants referred to the tasks carried out in the lessons as games. Franciosi (2011) argued that the definitions of games and tasks differ because they are formulated from different perspectives. While games are defined from the point of view of the learners, tasks are commonly defined from their pedagogical use. However, after having analyzed different definitions of tasks, Franciosi (2011) came to the conclusion that, as seen from the learners' point of view, "a task can be considered an activity with a projected outcome and a set of procedural guidelines to follow in the pursuit of that outcome" (p.14). Consequently, the *goals* in games, can resemble *tasks objectives* in tasks, and at the same time, *rules* in games, can be similar to the *procedures* in tasks. Thus, the concepts of games and tasks, become similar since they are both goal oriented and rule-driven activities (Franciosi, 2011).

Figure 1 below shows a summary of participants' answers to the pre and post intervention interviews related to the first specific objective.

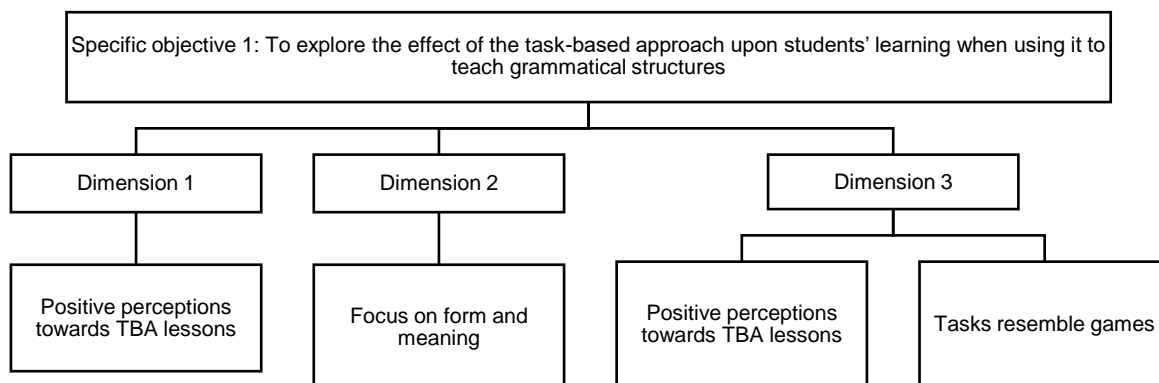


Figure 1: Summary of answers to the pre and post intervention interviews related to the first specific objective.

5.2 In relation to Specifics objective 2: To compare students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar before and after the implementation of the Task-based approach

For this specific objective, the findings provided by the pre and post intervention interviews in each dimension will be further analyzed. There are five dimensions related to this specific objective and from each of them different themes and subthemes emerged.

5.2.1 Dimension 1: Participants' relation with English and grammar

The comments given by the participants throughout this dimension demonstrated that even though they have positive attitudes towards English and grammar, their perceptions towards their previous language instruction are not encouraging since it is associated to a more traditional and grammar focused approach. For example, during the pre-intervention interview, the participants commented on how difficult grammar became at times and how boring and tedious the exercises were. Moreover, during the post-intervention interview, when asked why their peers would not like English, the reasons they gave concerned the way it was taught at school, describing it as a tedious process of learning. Furthermore, when describing their own personal experiences regarding English teaching at their schools, they commented once again on the traditional, repetitive and boring exercises, boring classes and lack of communicative practice.

Concerning this point, Sato and Oyanedel (2019) stated that national policies regarding foreign language education in Chile have been unsuccessful because although the national curriculum promotes communicative teaching, the reality is different and traditional and decontextualized grammar instruction continues to happen. In the same way, Muñoz (2010) explored the policies on foreign language education in Chile. Along the study, it was explained that the policies focused on the development of abilities and vocabulary, yet grammar was only a content used to support comprehension and production of the language. Nevertheless, when the participants of Muñoz's (2010) study were asked about their teachers' practices, 75% of them stated that grammar was frequently taught in classes.

On the other hand, the participants' answers to the post-intervention interview for this dimension, show favorable perspectives towards the implementation of task-based teaching as an approach that enhances communication and social interaction instead of internalization of language items (Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu, 2011). This is reflected on participants' declaring their appreciation for the communicative purpose of the lessons by stating that they valued the opportunities given to actually use the language in meaningful interactions with their peers. Furthermore, positive perceptions were shown towards the implementation of the task-based approach when participants mentioned that they considered the lessons to be dynamic, fun and didactic. This relates to the results in Chen (2016)'s study, who implemented the task-based approach in order to get to know the learners' perceptions of practicing oral English in a virtual second language class. Chen (2016) denominated *Fun factor*

to the frequent use of the terms fun and interesting in the participants' responses and explained that the learners' new experience concerning language learning transformed the previous perceptions originated in traditional classrooms. It is believed that the task-based approach had the same effect in this study, since the participants no longer referred to the instruction as boring or tedious, and greatly emphasized how much they had liked the lessons, how much fun they had had while participating and how, in their opinion, the tasks resembled games and were completely different from what they were accustomed to at school.

5.2.2 Dimension 2: Grammatical efficacy

Regarding this dimension, in the pre-intervention interview, participants commented on the value grammar had in communication, the different strategies that they used in order to be grammatically efficient while communicating and how important it was to be grammatically efficient in order to deliver an understandable message. This may suggest that participants have favorable perceptions towards grammar instruction, even when their answers in the first dimension did not show promising perceptions towards the form of instruction they received in the past. Jean and Simard (2011) called grammar a *necessary evil*, because their participants also worshiped grammar instruction, even when they expressed their dislike towards it.

Furthermore, concerning participants' responses to the post-intervention interview in this dimension, auspicious perceptions were demonstrated towards the implementation of task-based teaching as an approach that draws students' attention to a particular linguistic element within a communicative lesson (Long, 2014). The participants mentioned that given the communicative and fun aspects of the lessons, they were able to understand the grammatical structures and their functions properly, and they felt confident enough to use the structures learnt in future interactions. Additionally, some of them even mentioned that they had reviewed the structure of the second conditional before at school, but were not able to remember it, thus, it may be suggested that the possible traditional approach used, did not encourage long term learning. Consequently, it is believed that task-based teaching is an advisable approach to implement if the learners' aim is to be grammatically efficient while communicating with others in the target language.

5.2.3 Dimension 3: Priority of communication

The participants' responses towards the priority of communication in the pre-intervention interview show that they perceive grammar as fundamental in order to deliver complex messages. During the pre-intervention interview, the participants stated that even though communication could still happen without much grammatical knowledge, they emphasized the fact that only simple messages could be delivered correctly, but being grammatically incorrect could create problems in communication. However, they also emphasized the value communicative practice has over the traditional exercises frequently used in their classes. However, Long (2014) explained that the reason why purely communicative approaches fail, is because they are inefficient and ineffective when it comes to dealing with learners' persistent grammatical errors. Thus, Long (2014) recommends the task-based

approach as one that focuses on form, which means that attention is briefly drawn to a particular linguistic element that may be considered problematic within a lesson that aims at being communicative. Consequently, after having participated in the task-based lessons, the participants' answers to the post-intervention interview show positive perceptions to the use of the structures learned and their preference towards communicative tasks rather than grammatical exercises.

5.2.4 Dimension 4: Importance of grammar

The participants' answers to the pre-intervention interview for this dimension support the previous claims that participants do indeed award importance to grammar even when they dislike grammatical instruction. Among their answers, they mentioned that the features of grammatically competent learners are that they manage structures correctly and at the same time, they are able to deliver a message properly. Moreover, in relation to the mastering of grammatical rules and communication, the participants stressed one more time the fact that knowing grammatical rules helps to deliver a message correctly and also, it will make natives respect you more.

Considering the previous points, Nassaji and Fotos (2011) explained that in order to promote L2 learner accuracy and high levels of target language attainment, formal instruction of grammatical forms is necessary. Additionally, Willis and Willis (2013) stated that focusing on grammar does not mean that meaning and communication are ignored, because then learners are provided with opportunities to use the grammar that they have learned in meaningful situations. Consequently, as a result of the TBA lessons, the participants' perception towards their learning process is promising, since they commented in the post-intervention interview that they now feel confident to use the structures learned in real-life situations, they felt their grammatical competence improved, as well as other features of language learning such as pronunciation and vocabulary due to the opportunities for practice that they were given.

5.2.5 Dimension 5: Attitudes towards the teaching of grammar

The participants' answers to the pre-intervention interview for this dimension, clearly demonstrate negative perceptions towards the form of instruction they have been receiving. They mentioned thinking that grammatical rules are taught in traditional and boring ways, that learning grammatical rules explicitly is difficult and that they should be taught in a more effective way. However, as it was proposed before, they still claim the usefulness of learning grammatical rules. Kourieos and Evripidou (2013) concluded that if participants' views are taken into consideration, then it is necessary for language teachers to move from traditional focus-on-form approaches to more communicative ones.

On the other hand, once the intervention was completed, participants' answers to the post-intervention interview suggest favorable perceptions towards the task-based approach for language instruction. Participants said that they preferred this type of lessons rather than the lessons they usually have at school, they posed positive perceptions towards this new approach and valued once again its

communicative aspect. The participants from Chen's (2016) study demonstrated the same perceptions, describing tasks as realistic, interesting, communicative and different from their experiences in a traditional English class. Chen (2016) explained that these perceptions towards TBA lessons encouraged participants' engagement and motivation in language instruction.

Moreover, when asked if they would like the implementation of the task-based approach in their schools, they agreed by stating that it would improve their learning process and it would encourage the usage of the language. In fact, it is believed that their positive perceptions towards TBA instruction on their learning achievement also leads to an improvement in their English proficiency (Chen, 2016).

Figure 2 below shows a summary of the participants' perceptions related to the second specific objective.

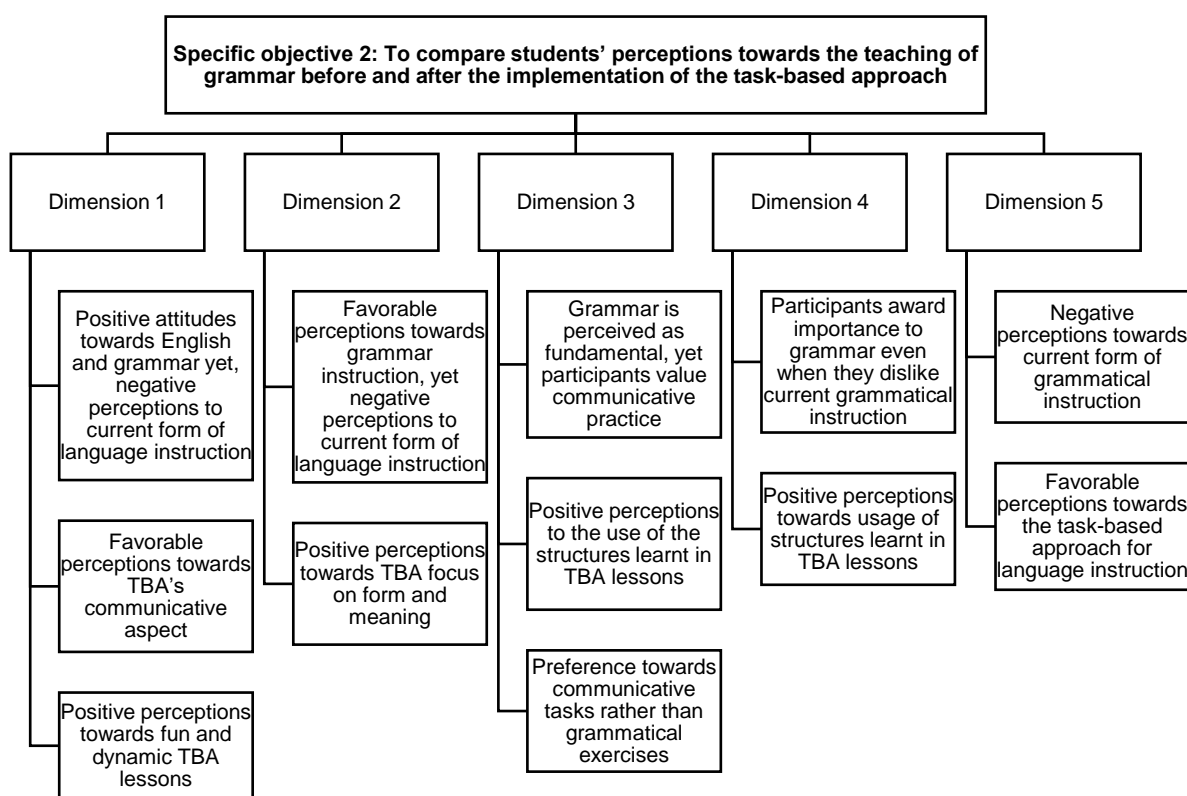


Figure 2: Participants' perceptions regarding the second specific objective

5.3 Limitations

The limitations of this study rely on the modifications that had to be made throughout the process of intervention. Originally, the setting of this action research was a traditional Chilean classroom; however, due to the current pandemic, this was not possible and it had to be implemented in an online setting. Consequently, the effectiveness of the task-based approach in the traditional Chilean classroom cannot be fully certain, given that the intervention could not be implemented under a real

context. Thus, possible problems such as disruptive students, students' fear of participating in front of the class, number of students, among others, were not actually faced. Additionally, because of its online setting, only two participants and the teacher could be present in each lesson. Thus, each lesson had to be repeated three times, taking into consideration that there were three pairs involved in the study. Consequently, their learning process was much more guided.

5.4. Implications

This study aimed at examining the effectiveness of the task-based approach when used to teach grammar. To do so, the learners' perceptions towards the current approach used in their classrooms, was compared to a new form of instruction, the task-based approach. From the findings of the study, it can be suggested that the participants' actual form of language instruction is linked to a more traditional and grammar-driven approach. Even though the participants' perception towards grammar learning was demonstrated as positive, their perceptions towards their current form of instruction was negative, mentioning that the exercises that they were frequently exposed to were boring and tedious. On the contrary, their perceptions towards the task-based approach demonstrated to be positive, they referred to the lesson with favorable comments and valued the opportunities for practicing the language.

As it has been stated before, the national curriculum in Chile promotes communicative language learning; however, the reality in the Chilean classrooms is very much grammar oriented, with decontextualized exercises (Sato and Oyanedel, 2019). Consequently, the task-based approach is presented as one that could potentially benefit Chilean students' language learning process, since it involves the study of grammar, by focusing on form, as well as giving opportunities to practice the language through communicative and meaningful tasks.

In spite of working with participants that belong to the Chilean educational system and having favorable results, this study cannot fully represent the reality of the Chilean classroom. Consequently, as a matter of further research, it would be interesting to propose the task-based approach for a more extended period of time in a traditional Chilean classroom and see if the results are as positive as in this study, taken into consideration all of the variables that these online lessons could not represent, such as the number of students, disruptiveness, among others.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary of the main findings

Norton (2018) explained that action research involves reflecting on some pedagogical issue or problem and creating a plan in order to take action and address the problem. The problem that was addressed in this action research was the strong focus that grammatical instruction has in Chilean English classrooms. The grammatical domain that English classes have in Chile, has led to negative consequences in our students' perceptions towards the English class, demotivating them and creating a general dislike for language learning. This can be supported by comments such as "the class is boring", made by the participants of this study when asked about their English classes in the schools. Consequently, as a solution for the previous problem, this action research aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the task-based approach in the teaching of grammatical structures based on form and function. Thus, the structure of the second conditional and two of its functions, giving advice and talking about hypothetical situations, were chosen as the contents to be taught for the purpose of this study.

Concerning specific objective 1, to explore the impact of the task-based approach upon students' learning when using it to teach grammatical structures, it can be concluded that the task-based approach had a positive impact on students learning. Firstly, this is proven by the participants' answers to the rating scales that were carried out after each of the tasks. Throughout the rating scales, there was a general tendency to agree with statements that reflected positive perceptions towards the lessons. For example, all of the participants agreed to statements such as *I liked this class*, *this class was fun* and *this class was useful*. This clearly reflects that the participants enjoyed the TBA lessons, which encouraged and motivated them to participate and learn the language. Moreover, in addition to showing positive perceptions towards the TBA lessons, participants also showed positive perceptions towards the impact that the TBA lessons had on their learning process, since most of them considered they were actually able to achieve the objective of each of the lessons. In addition to that, they considered that the class promoted the learning of grammar through communicative tasks and that the tasks carried out in the TBA lessons were more helpful for language learning than traditional exercises such as fill-in-the-gaps. Lastly, the participants' personal views shared in the rating scales only help to support the two previous points: the participants generated positive perceptions towards the TBA lessons and the TBA lessons had a positive impact in their learning process. The reason for this, is that participants were inclined to describe the class positively, saying that it was fun, good, excellent, useful and recognizing the positive learning environment that was arisen throughout the lessons. Furthermore, regarding their learning, they mentioned that they felt they were able to learn a lot, they compared the tasks carried out with games and said that their learning process had become easier.

Regarding specific objective 2, To compare students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar before and after the implementation of the task-based approach, it can be concluded that even though participants reported having positive perceptions towards English and grammar in the pre-intervention interview, they also mentioned disliking their current form of instruction, since, in their opinion, it had a strong emphasis on grammatical structures and traditional exercises. However, once the TBA lessons were implemented, participants demonstrated positive perceptions toward them, they valued the opportunities to use the language that the TBA lessons gave them and emphasized on the fact that tasks resembled games. Moreover, participants also showed appreciation for the grammatical aspect of the language and its importance to deliver an appropriate message. Thus, after the action plan was implemented, they valued the incorporation of tasks that involved grammar learning and communicative practice. In the same way, they commented on their preference towards more didactic and communicative tasks, like the ones carried out in the TBA lessons, instead of traditional exercises for grammar learning, such as fill-in-the-gaps type of exercises. Also, the TBA lessons allowed students to feel confident to use the structures learnt in real life situations, mentioning that they were able to improve different aspects of language learning such as their grammatical competence, pronunciation, and vocabulary range. Lastly, when comparing traditional teaching features to the TBA lessons, participants showed their preference towards TBA lessons saying that they would like for this approach to be implemented in their schools.

With regards to the research question of this study, to what extent can the task-based approach influence students' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar? it is believed that the task-based lessons influenced participants' perceptions towards the teaching of grammar in a positive way. Even though participants mentioned having positive perceptions towards English and grammar, it was also stated that they disliked the form of instruction that they received in their respective schools: a grammar focused one, lacking communicative practice and overusing traditional exercises such as fill-in-the-gaps. Actually, participants would often describe their classes as boring and tedious. Consequently, it was concluded that the participants had positive perceptions towards English and grammar, but they had negative perceptions towards the current form of instruction. It may be argued that participants' positive perceptions towards English and grammar may be because they are aware of the benefits that learning English has nowadays. Actually, one of them mentioned that he was learning English because it was necessary for the degree that he wanted to pursue, while another participant mentioned that learning English was important in today's globalized world and that it opened a door to future opportunities. After having implemented the task-based lessons, it was clear that it had had a positive impact on them since they evidently enjoyed the lessons, describing them as fun and useful, comparing the tasks to games, and valuing the opportunities for communicative practice that they had had throughout the lessons.

The two figures below result from the thematic analysis of both, the pre-intervention and the post intervention interviews. They represent a summary of the most frequent concepts and ideas given by the participants throughout their responses.

6.2. Personal Reflections

After carrying out this study, I was able to acknowledge how fundamental students' perceptions are for the teaching and learning process. I believe that it is important for teachers to take into consideration these perceptions, taking into account that, if students have negative perceptions towards the lessons, then their motivation and willingness to learn will undoubtedly affect the teaching and learning process negatively. Yet, if students show positive perceptions towards them, everything changes. In this case, changing from a traditional approach, to a more communicative one, was a form to acknowledge the common dislike for the strong grammar-oriented English instruction in Chile. This action research unquestionably showed the effectiveness of the task-based approach in the teaching of grammatical structures based on form and function. After implementing the TBA lessons and analyzing the findings, it was clear that the participants' motivation and willingness to participate had increased, the learning environment that arose from the TBA lessons was a positive one, students were able to confidently use the language, and lastly and most importantly, they were actually able to enjoy their process of learning through the TBA lessons.

6.3. Recommendations

I hope this action research can influence in-service teachers and future teachers to adopt different approaches that suit the learning needs of their students. In my short experience as a teacher, I have been able to notice that traditional grammar-based approaches used in today's classrooms are not working, and they are demotivating our students to learn the English language. It is necessary to adopt new approaches that suit our students' needs and that actually allow them to communicate, without fully disregarding the grammatical aspect of the language, such as the Task-Based approach. Hopefully, by doing this, positive perceptions towards language learning will arise in our students and they will undoubtedly benefit from that, making the teaching and learning process a much more enjoyable and enriching experience.

CHAPTER VII
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CHAPTER VIII

APPENDIX

8.1 Rating Scales

8.1.1 Rating Scale Task 1

Task 1

Evaluación Task 1

Por favor indica mediante las estrellas el grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones, siendo 4 de acuerdo, 3 medianamente de acuerdo, 2 dudoso y 1 en desacuerdo.

1. Me gustó esta clase

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

2. Esta clase fue entretenida

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

3. Esta clase fue útil

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

4. Fui capaz de dar consejos en inglés utilizando la estructura del 2do condicional

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

5. La clase promovió la enseñanza de la gramática a través de la comunicación

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

6. El tipo de actividades de esta clase me ayuda a mejorar más mi inglés en comparación a actividades como completar oraciones

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De Acuerdo
★	★	★	★

7. Si deseas agregar algún comentario, por favor hazlo aquí

8.1.2 Rating Scale Task 2

Task 2

Evaluación Task 2

Por favor indica mediante las estrellas el grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones, siendo 4 de acuerdo, 3 medianamente de acuerdo, 2 dudoso y 1 en desacuerdo.

1. Me gustó esta clase

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

2. Esta clase fue entretenida

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

3. Esta clase fue útil

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

4. Fui capaz de hablar sobre situaciones hipotéticas en inglés utilizando la estructura del 2do condicional

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

5. La clase promovió la enseñanza de la gramática a través de la comunicación

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

6. El tipo de actividades de esta clase me ayuda a mejorar más mi inglés en comparación a actividades como completar oraciones

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De Acuerdo
★	★	★	★

7. Si deseas agregar algún comentario, por favor hazlo aquí

8.1.3 Rating Scale Task 3

Task 3

Evaluación Task 3

Por favor indica mediante las estrellas el grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones, siendo 4 de acuerdo, 3 medianamente de acuerdo, 2 dudoso y 1 en desacuerdo.

1. Me gustó esta clase

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

2. Esta clase fue entretenida

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

3. Esta clase fue útil

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

4. Fui capaz de distinguir las funciones del 2do condicional además de dar consejos y hablar sobre situaciones hipotéticas en inglés utilizando la estructura del 2do condicional

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

5. La clase promovió la enseñanza de la gramática a través de la comunicación

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
★	★	★	★

6. El tipo de actividades de esta clase me ayuda a mejorar más mi inglés en comparación a actividades como completar oraciones

En desacuerdo	Dudoso	Medianamente de acuerdo	De Acuerdo
★	★	★	★

7. Si deseas agregar algún comentario, por favor hazlo aquí

8.2 Interviews

8.2.1 Pre intervention interview

DIMENSIÓN 1: RELACIÓN DEL SUJETO CON EL INGLÉS Y LA GRAMÁTICA

1. ¿Te gusta el inglés?
2. ¿Te gusta estudiar gramática?
3. ¿Cómo te enseñan gramática usualmente? O ¿Cómo has aprendido gramática?

DIMENSIÓN 2: EFICACIA GRAMATICAL

1. ¿Crees que la gramática es esencial para dominar un segundo idioma como el inglés?
2. ¿Tratas de recordar reglas gramaticales mientras te comunicas en inglés?
3. ¿Crees que saber las reglas gramaticales te ayuda a comprender de mejor manera el inglés?

DIMENSIÓN 3: PRIORIDAD DE LA COMUNICACIÓN

1. ¿Crees que alguien se puede comunicar en inglés sin saber las reglas gramaticales?
2. ¿Crees que situaciones irreales, como completar oraciones o textos, preguntas de verdadero o falso, ejercicios de selección múltiple, etc, son más valiosas para aprender gramática que situaciones reales, como una conversación? ¿Por qué?

DIMENSIÓN 4: IMPORTANCIA DE LA GRAMÁTICA

1. ¿Crees que un hablante competente es quien maneja estructuras gramaticales perfectamente?
2. ¿Crees que saber reglas gramaticales te ayuda a comunicarte en inglés?
3. ¿Crees que un hablante nativo te respetará más si tienes buen dominio de estructuras gramaticales?

DIMENSIÓN 5: ACTITUDES A LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA GRAMÁTICA

1. ¿Te gusta cuando se explican reglas gramaticales en clases?
2. A tu parecer, ¿Se debería enseñar de forma explícita las estructuras gramaticales?

8.2.2 Post intervention interview

DIMENSIÓN 1: RELACIÓN DEL SUJETO CON EL INGLÉS Y LA GRAMÁTICA

1. ¿Le recomendarías este tipo de clases a una persona que no le guste el inglés? ¿crees que puedan cambiar su opinión?
2. Después de estás clases ¿crees que la gramática se puede enseñar de forma más didáctica?
3. ¿Qué diferencias y/o similitudes puedes establecer entre el cómo te enseñan gramática usualmente en el colegio versus estas tres últimas clases?

DIMENSIÓN 2: EFICACIA GRAMATICAL

1. Después de estas clases, ¿Crees que podrías usar estas estructuras correctamente en una conversación en inglés?
2. ¿Crees que te es más fácil recordar estas estructuras después de haberlas usado comunicativamente en clases?
3. ¿Crees que tras estas clases puedes comprender de mejor manera las funciones del segundo condicional y su estructura?

DIMENSIÓN 3: PRIORIDAD DE LA COMUNICACIÓN

1. ¿Crees que podrías haber dado consejos o haber hablado sobre situaciones hipotéticas sin saber esta estructura?
2. Tras estas clases ¿crees que ejercicios como completar oraciones o textos aún se deben llevar a cabo dentro de la clase de inglés?

DIMENSIÓN 4: IMPORTANCIA DE LA GRAMÁTICA

1. ¿Crees que tu competencia gramatical ha mejorado tras estas clases?
2. ¿Crees que estas clases te han ayudado para poder comunicarte mejor en inglés?
3. Si pudieses hablar con una persona de habla inglesa, ¿serías capaz de ofrecerle un consejo o hablar de situaciones hipotéticas?

DIMENSIÓN 5: ACTITUDES A LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA GRAMÁTICA

1. ¿Qué te pareció esta forma de enseñanza de la gramática?
2. ¿Te gustaría que se adoptara esta forma de enseñar gramática en los colegios?