Development of A CLT and TBL Integrated Teaching Method to Enhance English Conversation Skills in Grade 9 Monastic High School Students at Phaung Daw Oo Temple, Mandalay, Myanmar

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to: 1) identify the existing challenges in English conversation skills among Grade 9 students at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School in Mandalay, Myanmar; 2) develop and implement an integrated teaching method combining Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL) to enhance the English conversational skills of these students; and 3) evaluate the effectiveness of the integrated CLT-TBL teaching method in improving students' English conversation skills in a real classroom setting. The study was conducted with 30 Grade 9 monastic students at Phaung Daw Oo High School in Mandalay. A quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, framed within a Research and Development (R&D) approach, was employed to ensure both the practical development of the teaching method and the rigorous evaluation of its outcomes. Research instruments included an English conversation pretest and posttest, lesson plans integrating CLT and TBL activities, student feedback questionnaires, and semi-structured interview guidelines. All instruments were validated by a panel of experts using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index to ensure content relevance and accuracy. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired *t*-tests, and effect size (Cohen's *d*), while qualitative data from surveys, interviews, and observations were analyzed through thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that the post-intervention mean conversation test score (14.1) was significantly higher than the pre-intervention mean (8.3), with a p-value < 0.001 indicating a statistically significant improvement. Students' fluency, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, comprehension, and speaking confidence all showed notable increases. The effect size was large ($d \approx 1.9$), suggesting that the integrated CLT-TBL approach had a strong impact on improving speaking skills. Furthermore, survey and interview responses indicated that students were more engaged and motivated during communicative tasks, and they felt more confident in using English. Teachers also observed greater classroom participation and practical communicative competence among the students. Overall, the integrated CLT and TBL teaching method was found to be effective in enhancing English conversation skills for Grade 9 learners in a monastic school context, offering a promising model for learner-centered English instruction in similar educational settings.

Keywords: communicative language teaching; task-based learning; conversation skills; monastic education; Grade 9; Myanmar

Introduction

Mastery of spoken English is crucial for students in today's interconnected world. English serves as a global lingua franca, providing access to vast resources of knowledge and opportunities for international communication. According to Halim (1999), English is used in over 85% of scientific reference materials, underscoring its role as the primary language of academia and global information exchange. In the era of globalization, proficiency in English—especially in speaking and listening—enables individuals to engage in international discourse, pursue higher education abroad, and improve career prospects in multinational environments. As Myanmar integrates with the ASEAN community and the global economy, strong English communication skills have become increasingly important for its citizens (Kirkpatrick, 2012). English has therefore been included in the national curriculum from primary school through university in Myanmar, reflecting its significance for national development and global participation.

The importance of education in Myanmar has long been recognized, with a historical emphasis on monastic schooling. Traditionally, young males received their early education in monastery schools, where they learned the Burmese language, basic arithmetic, and Buddhist teachings in a teacher-centered environment. During the 19th century, under King Mindon's reign (1853–1878), Myanmar saw the introduction of modern education through missionary-led schools, initiating a gradual transition toward a Western-style education system. Despite these developments, many monastic schools continued to focus primarily on moral and religious instruction, with limited exposure to interactive pedagogy or foreign languages. Historically, female students had far fewer opportunities for formal education, often learning domestic skills at home, although this gap has narrowed in the modern era. The legacy of Myanmar's monastic education system means that even today, teaching methods in monastic schools may lean toward traditional approaches that prioritize discipline and rote learning over communicative competence.

In Myanmar's contemporary context, there is growing recognition that effective English teaching requires more interactive and student-centered approaches. Acquiring a second language like English has been associated with cognitive and academic benefits, such as improved problem-solving abilities, creativity, and critical thinking skills. However, many classrooms in Myanmar—including those in monastic schools—have historically followed the Grammar Translation Method or other teacher-centered methods (Khin Su Su Win, 2021). These traditional methods often emphasize grammatical knowledge and reading/writing skills, with less attention to developing students' speaking and listening abilities. As a result, students may excel in written exams yet struggle to communicate effectively in real-life conversations. In the monastic school setting, this challenge is compounded by large class sizes and a cultural emphasis on teacher authority, which can limit student interaction and speaking practice. Recent studies of English teaching in Myanmar have highlighted that teachers face challenges in adopting communicative approaches due to limited training and resources, as well as cultural expectations of teacher-centered classrooms (Khin Su Su Win, 2021). Addressing these challenges is essential for improving students' English proficiency to meet academic and professional needs.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL) have emerged as influential approaches that prioritize communication and active language use in the classroom. According to Brown (2001), a variety of teaching approaches can be employed in language learning, and modern methodologies increasingly favor those that engage students in meaningful use of the target language. CLT is an approach focused on developing learners' communicative competence by using language in context through interaction, conversation, and real-life communication activities. It was inspired by the concept of language as communication (Hymes, 1972) and gained prominence as educators sought methods beyond rote memorization of grammar rules. Typical CLT activities include role-plays, group discussions, interviews, and problem-solving tasks that encourage students to speak and listen in authentic scenarios. TBL is a closely related approach where students learn language through the process of performing tasks. In Task-Based Learning, class activities are organized around engaging tasks—such as solving a problem, creating a plan, or sharing information—that require students to communicate to complete the task. Language learning is thus driven by the need to convey and comprehend messages during these tasks, aligning with real-world language use. Both CLT and TBL shift the focus from teacher lectures to student participation, reflecting a learner-centered paradigm. These methods also align with key second language acquisition theories: for example, Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes exposure to comprehensible input, while Swain's Output Hypothesis highlights the importance of learners producing language to solidify their skills. By integrating opportunities for both input and output, CLT and TBL create a rich environment for language development.

Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School in Mandalay serves a diverse body of students, including many who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a monastic school, its educational approach has traditionally been teacher-centric, emphasizing religious values and discipline. While moral education remains a cornerstone, there is a growing need to improve practical English skills to prepare students for the demands of higher education and employment. Recognizing this need, the present study responds to the gap between the existing teaching practices and the desired outcomes in English conversational ability. The preliminary observations at Phaung Daw Oo indicated that Grade 9 students had limited opportunities to practice speaking English in class. Most classroom activities were oriented toward textbook exercises, grammar drills, and teacher-led explanations, leading to passive learning. Students often felt shy or anxious about speaking up, and their pronunciation and fluency were weak due to lack of practice. Many students could construct written sentences but struggled with oral communication, pronunciation of unfamiliar words, and spontaneous dialogue. These issues pointed to the necessity of adopting a more interactive approach to teaching speaking.

Integrating CLT and TBL offers a promising solution to enhance students' conversation skills in this context. By combining CLT's emphasis on meaningful communication with TBL's task-oriented practice, the integrated method aims to create a more student-centered classroom that encourages active participation. This approach aligns with sociocultural theory, which posits that social interaction is fundamental to cognitive and language development (Vygotsky, 1978). Group work, peer discussions, and task collaboration provide social contexts in which students can practice and develop their English skills together, reflecting Vygotsky's idea that learning is mediated through interaction. Moreover, an integrated CLT-TBL method is expected to address various aspects of speaking competence: fluency through regular speaking practice, accuracy through feedback during tasks, pronunciation through communicative activities that require clear speaking, and confidence through supportive group dynamics and real-life simulation. The approach also draws on the principles of the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), which argues that language production tasks push learners to process language more deeply and notice gaps in their knowledge. By frequently engaging students in speaking tasks, the integrated method should stimulate improvements in grammar usage and vocabulary as students strive to express themselves and be understood.

In summary, the integration of Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning is a strategic response to the needs of Grade 9 learners at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School. It represents a shift from a teacher-centered model to a more dynamic, learner-centered model of language teaching. This study not only seeks to improve the students' English conversation skills in the short term, but also to provide a scalable model for English teaching in other monastic and conventional schools across Myanmar. If successful, the CLT-TBL integrated teaching method could inform curriculum development and teacher training programs, contributing to educational reform that bridges traditional practices with innovative, evidence-based strategies for language acquisition. The following sections detail the objectives of the study, the theoretical and empirical foundations that underpin the integrated approach, the methodology employed, and the results and implications of this research.

Research Objectives

1. To study the existing problems and challenges in English conversation skills among Grade 9 students at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School in Mandalay, Myanmar. This includes diagnosing the current level of students' conversational proficiency and identifying limitations of the traditional teaching methods in use.

2. To develop and implement an integrated CLT and TBL teaching method to enhance English conversational skills for Grade 9 students. This involves designing a set of lesson plans and learning activities that combine Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning principles, and then carrying out this intervention in the actual classroom.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the integrated CLT-TBL teaching method in improving the students' English conversation skills, and to refine the method based on the findings. The evaluation is to be done through comparing pre-intervention and post-intervention performance, as well as gathering feedback from students and teachers to assess satisfaction and areas for further improvement.

Literature Review

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to language instruction that emerged in the 1970s as a response to more traditional, form-focused methods. CLT prioritizes the ability to communicate ideas, feelings, and information in the target language over the rote memorization of rules. Theoretical underpinnings of CLT can be traced to the concept of communicative competence introduced by Hymes (1972), which broadened the definition of language proficiency to include not just grammatical mastery but also the appropriate use of language in social contexts. In CLT, the classroom activities are characterized by interaction and meaningful communication. Richards and Rodgers (2001) note that CLT often uses authentic materials and real-life scenarios to engage learners in using language genuinely. Typical techniques include group discussions, role-playing real-world situations (such as ordering in a restaurant or asking for directions), interviews, information gap activities, and problem-solving tasks. These activities require learners to negotiate meaning, formulate their thoughts in English, and listen to others, thereby practicing both speaking and listening in context. A key principle of CLT is that errors are a natural part of language learning; instead of immediate correction of every mistake, teachers using CLT provide feedback in a way that encourages students to keep communicating and self-correct over time. Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of CLT in various contexts. For example, Littlewood (2007) found that even in East Asian classrooms, where teacher-centered education

had been dominant, implementing CLT led to increased student engagement and improved oral proficiency. However, CLT also faces challenges, especially in contexts like Myanmar: large class sizes, limited resources, and teachers' unfamiliarity with communicative techniques can hinder its implementation (Khin Su Su Win, 2021). Despite these challenges, CLT remains widely regarded as a cornerstone of modern language pedagogy due to its focus on using language as communication.

Task-Based Learning (TBL). Task-Based Learning, also known as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), is a pedagogical approach that organizes learning around tasks or projects that students must complete using the target language. A "task" in this context is generally defined as any activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose to achieve an outcome (Willis, 1996). Unlike traditional exercises that focus on practicing a specific grammar point, TBL tasks resemble real-life activities and engage learners in meaningful language use. Examples of tasks include solving a problem as a group, planning a trip using English resources, conducting a survey and presenting results, or creating a short video/role-play. The theoretical rationale for TBL draws on constructivist learning theory and second language acquisition research. Prabhu's Bangalore Project in the 1980s was one of the pioneering implementations of task-based instruction, suggesting that students can learn effectively when focusing on meaning and task completion rather than explicit language forms. Furthermore, Ellis (2003) has articulated that tasks provide an ideal context for language acquisition because they require learners to negotiate meaning and use linguistic resources in a goal-directed manner. Research evidence supports the benefits of TBL: a meta-analysis by Lee (2019) showed that task-based language teaching had significant positive effects on language learners' fluency and overall communicative competence. TBL emphasizes an outcome evaluation — success is measured by whether the task is completed, which inherently encourages students to use whatever language they can muster to communicate effectively. One important aspect of designing tasks is ensuring they are appropriate to the learners' proficiency level and interests, so that students find them engaging and achievable (Robinson, 2022). In contexts like Myanmar, TBL can be highly relevant, as it ties language learning to practical skills and content. For instance, a task for Grade 9 students might involve discussing a community issue or simulating a real-world transaction, which not only practices English but also builds confidence in using the language outside the classroom. Challenges in TBL implementation may include the need for careful scaffolding of language support (vocabulary, phrases, etc.) so students can perform the task, and training teachers to manage active classrooms where multiple groups might be doing different activities simultaneously.

Integrated CLT and TBL Approach. Integrating Communicative Language Teaching with Task-Based Learning combines the strengths of both approaches to create a comprehensive communicative curriculum. In such an integrated approach, each lesson or unit is likely structured around a meaningful task (as in TBL) and employs communicative techniques and interaction patterns (as in CLT) to carry it out. The integration is natural: CLT provides the interactive climate and emphasis on real communication, while TBL provides the purposeful, goal-oriented structure for that communication. Content in an integrated CLT-TBL classroom is often organized in cycles: for example, a lesson may start with an introduction to a real-life scenario and necessary vocabulary (briefly), then move to students working on a task in pairs or groups (the main communicative stage), and conclude with a reflection or presentation where students use English to report their results and the teacher provides feedback. Theoretical support for integrating these methods comes from multiple angles. Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) argues that pushing learners to produce language (speak or write) is as important as input; tasks within a communicative context naturally push output, which can lead to improved accuracy as learners notice their own gaps. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) emphasizes that learning is a social act, and cognitive development (including language development) occurs through social interaction; CLT-TBL integration inherently creates social learning moments, such as collaborative problem-solving and peer discussions, aligning with this theory. In addition, motivational theories like Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985) suggest that learners become more motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The integrated approach fosters autonomy by allowing students to make choices during tasks, builds competence by giving immediate, practical success in communication, and enhances relatedness through group work and meaningful communication with peers. Empirical studies indicate that using tasks with communicative focus leads to improvements not only in linguistic skills but also in student attitudes. For instance, an experimental study by Nguyen (2019) comparing traditional teaching and output-focused teaching in a Southeast Asian context found that the latter group had higher gains in speaking ability and reported greater enjoyment and confidence. Similarly, Johnson (2021) observed that combining content or tasks with

communication practice yielded more sustained language use by students even after class, as they felt the language was truly useful beyond exams.

Monastic School Context and Language Learning. The context of a monastic school like Phaung Daw Oo brings unique cultural and educational considerations. Monastic schools in Myanmar are typically community-supported and provide free or low-cost education, often to children from underprivileged backgrounds. The teaching staff may include monks, nuns, or lay teachers, and the schools operate with limited resources. Historically, monastic education prioritized religious studies and character development, using teacher-centered approaches such as lecturing and chorus responses. Transitioning to a communicative, student-centered approach in such settings requires sensitivity to cultural norms. For example, students are accustomed to showing great respect and deference to teachers (who are often monks in robes), so they may initially be hesitant to speak freely or engage in open discussion, seeing it as too informal or disrespectful. Teachers, on the other hand, might be unsure about managing an active, talkative classroom which looks very different from the silent rows of meditative learners they expect. Literature on educational change in Myanmar (Hays, n.d.) suggests that any new teaching methodology in a traditional setting needs clear demonstration of benefits and often the endorsement of respected figures to be accepted. Additionally, large class sizes (sometimes 40-50 students per class in monastic schools) mean that group work can become noisy and challenging to supervise. These factors underscore why research into CLT and TBL in a monastic school is significant: it tests whether modern pedagogical approaches can be adapted to and effective in a more conservative educational environment. Encouragingly, studies such as Khin Su Su Win (2021) have reported that, despite initial resistance, Myanmar teachers who received training in communicative teaching acknowledged the positive impact on student engagement and learning. Moreover, monastic students themselves, when given the chance, have shown enthusiasm for interactive activities, as it breaks the monotony of rote learning and allows them to actively use English. By reviewing these aspects of the literature—on CLT, TBL, integrated communicative approaches, and the specific context—we establish a foundation for the present study. It is clear that a gap exists in applying these well-researched language teaching methods within Myanmar's monastic school system. The present study will contribute to filling that gap by providing empirical evidence on whether and how an integrated CLT and TBL method can enhance English speaking skills in such a context.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework was designed to address the three objectives through a systematic combination of research and development phases. The framework is informed by relevant theories of language learning and provides a step-by-step process for developing and evaluating the integrated teaching method. Figure 1 illustrates the overall conceptual framework of the study, comprising the research and development phases and the theoretical foundations that guide each phase. In summary, the framework can be described as follows:

Phase 1 – Research (R1): Analysis of Current Situation. In the first phase, the researcher studied the existing state of English conversational skills and teaching methods in the Grade 9 class (Objective 1). This involved identifying problems such as students' common mistakes in speaking, their levels of fluency and confidence, and the limitations of the current teacher-centered approach. Data were gathered through initial observations, a diagnostic pretest of speaking skills, and a survey on students' attitudes toward English speaking. This analysis phase aligns with the *Analysis (A)* step of the R&D process, providing a needs assessment to inform the subsequent development.

Phase 2 – Development (D1): Design of the Integrated CLT-TBL Method. In the second phase, an integrated teaching method was developed (Objective 2). This included designing a set of lesson plans that incorporate Communicative Language Teaching activities (like role-plays, group discussions, games, and simulations) along with Task-Based Learning activities (like problem-solving tasks, projects, and interactive exercises) into the Grade 9 English curriculum. The development also encompassed creating appropriate instructional materials (conversation prompts, task worksheets, evaluation rubrics) and teacher guides. These materials were then validated by experts in English teaching for content and alignment with objectives, using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) technique. Phase 2 corresponds to *Design and Development (D&D)* in the R&D cycle. The output of this phase was a ready-to-implement CLT-TBL integrated lesson plan series and associated assessment tools.

Phase 3 – Research (R2): Implementation and Experimentation. The third phase put the newly developed teaching method into practice. The researcher (who was also the teacher for this study) implemented the integrated CLT-TBL lessons in the Grade 9 class over a specified period (e.g., one school term). During this implementation, data were

collected to test the effectiveness of the method (Objective 3, part one). A posttest was administered at the end of the intervention to measure improvement in students' conversational skills compared to the pretest. Additionally, throughout the intervention, the researcher kept logs of class activities and observed student engagement, while also collecting student feedback through questionnaires and informal interviews. This phase is the *Implementation (I)* step of the R&D process, essentially an experimental phase to try out the developed method in a real classroom and gather evidence of its impact.

Phase 4 – Development (D2): Evaluation and Refinement. In the final phase, the results from the implementation were analyzed to evaluate how effective the integrated method was, and the method was refined accordingly. This evaluation covered both the learning outcomes (improvement in speaking skills, based on test scores and skill assessments) and the process outcomes (student motivation, participation, and any practical issues in using CLT and TBL in the classroom). The researcher conducted statistical analyses (paired *t*-test, effect size calculations) on the quantitative data and thematic analysis on the qualitative feedback. The integrated teaching method was then revised to address any shortcomings identified—for example, adjusting the difficulty of certain tasks, adding more scaffolding for speaking activities, or providing additional training for the teacher on classroom management during group work. Phase 4 corresponds to *Evaluation (E)* in the R&D cycle, completing the loop by feeding back into the design improvements of the teaching method.

Underpinning this four-phase process are several theoretical frameworks that guided the study's approach and expectations:

Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972): Emphasizes that language ability involves not just grammar but the knowledge of how to use language appropriately in social contexts. This theory underlies the CLT aspect of the framework, predicting that students need interactive practice to develop true communicative competence.

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978): Posits that social interaction is fundamental to learning. It supports the use of group work, peer support, and teacher scaffolding in this study. The integrated approach leverages collaboration and dialogue among students, reflecting Vygotsky's idea that learners can achieve more in cooperation (within the Zone of Proximal Development) than alone.

Task-Based Language Teaching (Ellis, 2003): Provides principles for designing effective pedagogical tasks. It suggests that language is best learned by engaging in tasks that require meaningful language use. This theory informed how tasks were structured in the lesson plans (with clear goals, relevance to students' lives, and appropriate linguistic demands) and predicts that task completion will drive language acquisition.

Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985): Argues that producing language (speaking or writing) is a crucial part of learning because it forces learners to process language deeply and notice their linguistic gaps. This hypothesis underlies the expectation that students' frequent speaking in English during CLT activities and TBL tasks will lead to improved accuracy and fluency. By having to express themselves, students become aware of what they can and cannot say, which encourages learning new forms and self-correcting errors.

These theories collectively form the conceptual backbone of the study. They were used to design the intervention and also to interpret the results. The conceptual framework (summarized in Figure 1) thus integrates the project's phases with its theoretical foundations, illustrating how the study progresses from identifying the problem to implementing a solution and evaluating its success, all guided by established principles of language learning.

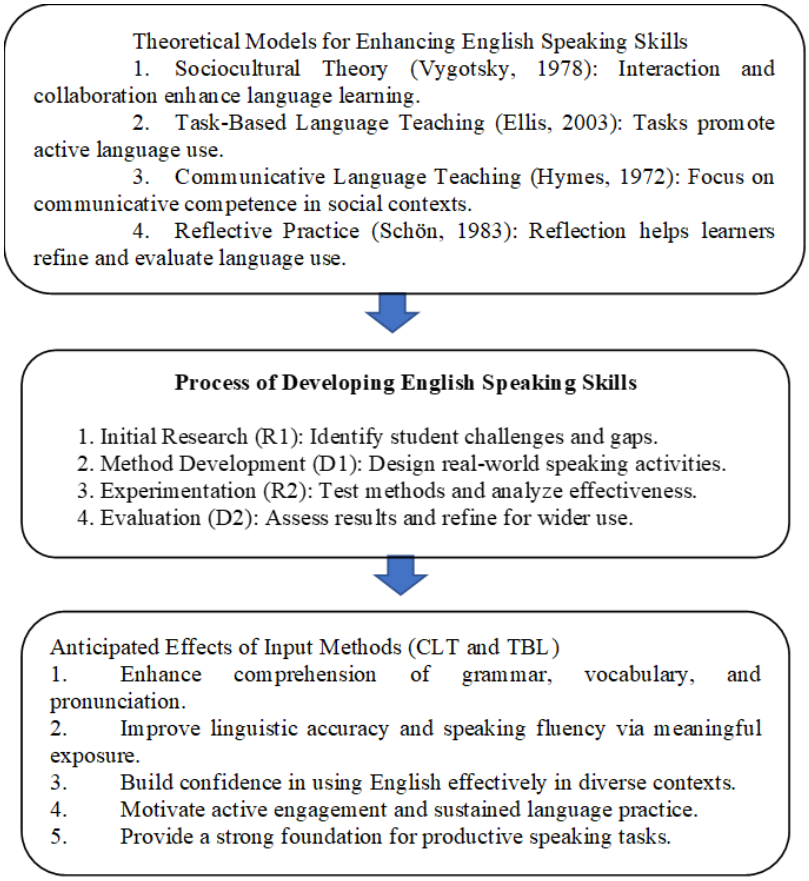

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

(Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework – showing the R1-D1-R2-D2 research & development cycle and key theoretical underpinnings at each stage.)

Research Methodology

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) methodology incorporating a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design to develop and evaluate the integrated CLT and TBL teaching method. The methodology was structured to align with the four phases outlined in the conceptual framework, ensuring a logical progression from development to evaluation. The following are the key components of the research methodology:

Research Design: The overall design is an R&D approach consisting of iterative research and development phases (R1, D1, R2, D2). In practical terms, the core experimental aspect was a one-group pretest-posttest design. The Grade 9 students' English conversational skills were measured before the intervention (pretest), the class was then taught using the new CLT-TBL integrated method (intervention), and finally their skills were measured again after the intervention (posttest). This design allowed the researcher to compare students' performance before and after the introduction of the new teaching method, thereby attributing any significant changes to the intervention itself. While a control group was not available due to the nature of the school setting (all Grade 9 students were included in the innovation for ethical and practical reasons), the study took steps to bolster validity through expert validations and mixed-method data triangulation.

Participants: The participants were 30 Grade 9 students (approximately 14–15 years old) at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School in Mandalay. These students were from the monastic education system and included both boys and girls. The selection of this particular class was purposive: it was identified by school administrators as needing improvement in English speaking skills. All students in the class participated in the study, and informed consent was obtained from the school and verbally from the students (with the assurance that participation in activities was part of normal class improvement efforts). The English proficiency level of the students, based on preliminary assessment, ranged from beginner to low-intermediate. Many students had basic knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary but had limited experience with speaking English in full sentences or engaging in conversation. The class size of 30 is typical for

the school and was suitable for implementing group tasks and communicative activities, as it could be divided into smaller groups or pairs.

Instruments and Materials: Several research instruments and instructional materials were developed for data collection and intervention purposes:

Pretest and Posttest: The pretest and posttest were designed as oral proficiency tests focusing on conversational English. Each student participated in a structured speaking test where they responded to questions, described pictures or situations, and engaged in a short dialogue. The test assessed five key skill areas: fluency, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, listening comprehension, and confidence. A scoring rubric (on a scale, e.g., 1–5 for each area) was used by the researcher and a co-evaluator to rate student performance. The same format was used in both pretest and posttest for consistency. The tests were piloted with a similar group and refined for clarity and difficulty.

Lesson Plans and Teaching Materials: A set of 13 lesson plans was developed for the intervention (the number is based on fitting roughly one lesson per week over a school term, similar to the approach in the senior study by Nyana (2024)). These lesson plans integrated content and activities for CLT and TBL. For example, one lesson focused on "Shopping for Supplies" where students learned useful phrases (CLT aspect) and then performed a role-play task of bargaining in a market (TBL aspect). Another lesson might focus on "Describing Experiences" with students practicing how to tell a story (CLT) and then conducting interviews and presenting a partner's experience to the class (TBL task). Each lesson plan included objectives, language content (vocabulary and grammar relevant to the task), materials needed, step-by-step procedures, and assessment methods. Supplementary materials such as dialogue cue cards, flashcards, realia (objects for role-play), and worksheets were prepared to facilitate interactive activities.

Questionnaires: Two types of questionnaires were used. One was a Student Perception Questionnaire administered after the intervention to gather students' opinions on the new teaching method. It contained Likert-scale items (rating statements from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") on aspects like "I felt more confident speaking English in class," "The tasks were interesting," "I had enough opportunity to speak English," and "I prefer this teaching method over our previous lessons." It also included a few open-ended questions for students to comment on what they liked best and what challenges they faced. The second was a Teacher Observation Checklist/Journal (used by the researcher) to systematically note each lesson's flow: how engaged were the students, how effectively did they perform the tasks, what difficulties arose, and how the timing and class management worked out.

Interviews: After the posttest, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of students (6 students: 3 high performers and 3 who struggled) to delve deeper into their experiences. The interview questions invited students to reflect on differences they felt in their ability to speak English, aspects of the CLT-TBL lessons that helped them learn, and any suggestions for improvement. An informal interview was also held with the English teacher or a senior monk observing the class to get an external perspective on changes in student behavior and language use over the term.

Validation Forms: To ensure content validity of the instruments, expert validation forms were used. Three experts in English language teaching (including one university lecturer and two experienced high school English teachers) were asked to review the pretest/posttest items, the questionnaires, and a sample of the lesson plans. They provided ratings and comments on each item's alignment with the research objectives and the Grade 9 curriculum. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) Index was calculated for each item to quantify validity: items with IOC ≥ 0.67 were retained, those between 0.50–0.66 were revised, and any below 0.50 were removed. This process led to minor revisions in wording for a few test prompts and questionnaire statements before use in the actual study.

Data Collection Procedure: The procedure unfolded over an academic term as follows:

Baseline Data Collection (R1 phase): During the first week, the pretest was conducted. Each student's speaking performance was recorded (audio) for later scoring. Simultaneously, initial observations of the normal English lessons (before introducing the new method) were noted to understand typical student behavior and interaction patterns. The Student Perception Questionnaire (Part 1, focusing on attitudes toward English speaking and class participation) was given to gauge initial attitudes.

Intervention (D1 and R2 phases): Over approximately 8–10 weeks, the researcher implemented the integrated CLT and TBL lesson plans during the regularly scheduled English period (for example, 2–3 periods per week). The researcher, acting as the teacher, followed each lesson plan but also remained flexible to adjust to the class's pace. Students were grouped differently depending on the task (pairs, small groups of 4-5, or whole-class for certain activities).

The Teacher Observation Checklist was filled out after each lesson to capture immediate reflections and any issues (e.g., "students struggled with the instructions of Task X, had to provide an example and do a demonstration," or "very lively participation in the role-play, even shy students spoke up"). The classroom atmosphere evolved over this period, with students gradually becoming more comfortable with active participation. Occasionally, brief reviews were held at the start of a class to reinforce vocabulary or phrases from the previous task if it was observed that students needed more practice. No other major changes were made to the curriculum during this time; the integrated method essentially replaced the way the speaking and listening portions of the Grade 9 English syllabus were taught, while the reading/writing lessons continued in a more traditional way by the regular teacher (this was beyond the scope of the study but helped not to disrupt the entire curriculum).

Post-Intervention Data Collection (R2 and D2 phases): At the end of the term, the posttest was conducted using the same format as the pretest. Different content was used (to avoid exact repetition), but the structure and difficulty level were equivalent. Two raters (the researcher and an assistant teacher) independently scored the recordings of the pretest and posttest, then compared and discussed any scoring discrepancies to reach a consensus score for each student in each skill area. After the posttest, students completed the Student Perception Questionnaire (Part 2, focusing on their experience of the new method). Then the semi-structured interviews with selected students were carried out in a quiet area outside class time, each interview lasting about 10-15 minutes, conducted in a mix of English and Myanmar (to ensure students could express nuanced opinions; their responses were later translated to English for analysis). The qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire responses, interviews, and observation notes were compiled for thematic analysis. Key themes such as "increased confidence," "enjoyment of group work," "difficulty with vocabulary," or "want more feedback on pronunciation" were identified and coded.

Data Analysis: The analysis was organized by the type of data:

Quantitative Analysis: The primary quantitative data were the pretest and posttest scores. These were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) to summarize the overall performance of the class before and after the intervention. A paired sample *t*-test was then performed to determine if the improvement in scores was statistically significant. The significance level was set at 0.05. Given the sample size (n = 30), the *t*-test was appropriate to detect medium to large effect sizes. Additionally, Cohen's *d* was calculated to measure the effect size (the magnitude of the difference between pretest and posttest means). For interpretation, we used the common benchmarks: $d \approx 0.2$ as small, 0.5 as medium, and 0.8 or above as large effect. The analysis was done for the overall test score and also separately for each of the five skill areas (fluency, pronunciation, accuracy, comprehension, confidence) to see which areas showed the most improvement. Results were tabulated; for example, the mean fluency rating might have increased from 2.8 (pre) to 4.1 (post) on the 5-point scale. The questionnaire Likert-scale items were also treated quantitatively: the responses were converted to numerical values 1–5 and averaged to measure general trends (e.g., average agreement that "I feel more confident now" might be 4.5 out of 5). These averages provided supplementary evidence of student-perceived changes.

Qualitative Analysis: The qualitative data from the open-ended responses, interviews, and observations were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The researcher transcribed the student interview recordings and translated key remarks into English. All textual data were read multiple times to identify recurring ideas. An inductive coding process was used: initial codes such as "confidence," "participation," "group support," "initial shyness," "teacher role," "task enjoyment," "language difficulty" were assigned to segments of data. These codes were then reviewed and clustered into broader themes. For instance, codes related to students helping each other, enjoying group competition, or learning from peers fell under a theme "Peer Interaction Benefits." Comments about being nervous at first but then feeling proud after speaking formed a theme "Gains in Confidence." Negative feedback, like "still hard to speak because of lack of vocabulary" or "some tasks were confusing," were noted under a theme "Challenges/Areas for Improvement." The teacher's observation notes were particularly useful to triangulate with student feedback; for example, if students said they liked role-play, the observation notes often reflected high engagement during those sessions. The qualitative findings helped explain *why* certain quantitative outcomes occurred. For instance, if a student's speaking score improved substantially, interview data might reveal that practicing in a group reduced their fear of mistakes, leading to more practice and improvement.

Triangulation: To enhance the validity of conclusions, the study triangulated across multiple data sources. Improvement in test scores (quantitative) was cross-checked with student self-reports of improvement and teacher

observations (qualitative). In cases where the quantitative and qualitative data diverged, the discrepancy was analyzed. For example, if a student's test score did not improve much but they reported feeling more confident, it could suggest the need for a longer intervention or more focus on certain language aspects. Generally, however, the data sources converged to show a positive trend.

This mixed-method approach (QUAN + QUAL) provided a rich understanding of the impact of the integrated teaching method. The rigorous validation of instruments and systematic data collection procedures contributed to the reliability of the findings. Ethical considerations were observed throughout: confidentiality of student responses was maintained (pseudonymous referencing in analysis), and the study was conducted with the school's approval and in line with educational objectives.

In summary, the research methodology was carefully crafted to develop the new teaching method and evaluate its effectiveness in a real classroom setting. By combining quantitative measures of language improvement with qualitative insights into the learning process, the methodology yields both measurable outcomes and contextual understanding. The following section will present the results obtained from this research process, organized by the research objectives.

Research Results

The results of the study are presented in accordance with the research objectives, covering the initial analysis of the problem, the development and implementation of the integrated CLT-TBL method, and the evaluation of its effectiveness. Both quantitative outcomes (test scores, statistical analyses) and qualitative findings (feedback from students and teacher observations) are reported to provide a comprehensive view of the results.

Objective 1: Current Challenges in English Conversation Skills

The first objective was to identify the existing challenges and limitations in English conversational skills among the Grade 9 students before the intervention. The findings from the pretest and initial observations revealed several key issues:

Low Conversational Proficiency: The average pretest score was relatively low. On a 20-point scale (summing the ratings of five skills each out of 5), the mean pretest score was 8.3 (approximately 41.5%). This indicates that, on average, students could answer only the simplest of questions and struggled with extended speaking. The median score was 8.0, confirming that most students were clustered around this low proficiency level.

Fluency and Confidence Issues: Students spoke very hesitantly during the pretest. Many paused frequently, searching for words, and some switched to Burmese when they couldn't express themselves in English. The average fluency rating was 2.8 out of 5, and the average confidence rating (as perceived by examiners) was 2.7 out of 5. Qualitative observations noted that a majority of students gave one-word or very short answers. For example, when asked "What did you do last weekend?", typical answers were just "playing" or silence followed by a shy laugh. This suggests they were not accustomed to elaborating or speaking in full sentences.

Pronunciation and Accuracy: Pronunciation was another weakness. The mean pronunciation rating was 2.6 out of 5. Common issues included difficulty with certain consonant sounds (e.g., /θ/ and /ð/, so "thank" sounded like "tank"), and misplaced word stress. In terms of accuracy, students made frequent grammatical errors even in simple sentences. The mean accuracy rating was only 2.5 out of 5. For instance, some students responded to questions using single words or incorrect structures ("Yesterday... go market." instead of "I went to the market yesterday."). These errors reflect both limited practice in speaking and possibly over-reliance on memorized phrases that didn't come to mind during spontaneous conversation.

Listening Comprehension: While not a primary focus of the speaking test, it was noted that some students did not understand the questions or prompts given in English without repetition or simplification. The comprehension component's average was about 2.3 out of 5, the lowest among the five skill areas. This implies that the students' exposure to spoken English was minimal, affecting their ability to follow a conversation.

Classroom Interaction Patterns: Observations of regular English classes prior to the intervention showed that the typical pattern was teacher lecture -> student repetition -> individual students reading from the textbook. There was minimal interactive activity. Students rarely asked questions or spoke English beyond choral repetition. A significant challenge identified was the lack of opportunities for students to speak English during class. This was both a cause and

effect of their low speaking proficiency. Students appeared fearful of making mistakes and thus stayed silent unless called upon, creating a vicious cycle where they got even less practice.

Student Attitudes and Motivation: From the initial survey, it emerged that while almost all students recognized English as important, many felt "nervous" or "not good" when speaking English. On a question asking how they feel when asked to speak English in class, 60% chose negative descriptors (nervous, scared, embarrassed). However, there was also a strong desire to improve: over 75% agreed with the statement "I want to speak English better but I don't know how to practice." Students' main motivation for learning English, as they indicated, was for future study and career opportunities (some explicitly mentioned wanting to become tour guides or work in NGOs where English is needed), aligning with the national trend of valuing English for advancement.

In summary, Objective 1 results highlighted that Grade 9 students at Phaung Daw Oo had low baseline proficiency in conversational English, largely due to lack of practice and communicative exposure. They faced issues in all facets of speaking: generating content to say (fluency), pronouncing words correctly, constructing grammatically correct sentences, and understanding spoken questions. The classroom environment prior to the study was not conducive to improving these skills, as it offered few chances for active use of English. These findings reinforced the need for a pedagogical shift, justifying the development of an integrated CLT and TBL method to address these gaps.

Objective 2: Development and Implementation of the Integrated CLT-TBL Method

The second objective was to develop and implement a teaching method that integrates Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning to enhance students' speaking skills. The results pertaining to this objective include the successful creation of the lesson plans/materials and observations on how the implementation proceeded in practice.

Development of Lesson Plans: A total of 12 detailed lesson plans (plus one review session plan) were developed, covering a range of communicative situations relevant to Grade 9 students. Table 1 summarizes the content of the developed lessons and their focus:

Lesson Topic	CLT Activities	TBL Task
Greetings & Introductions	Pair dialogue practice (introduce a friend)	*Task:* Find someone in class with the same hobby (students must converse to discover hobbies).
Daily Routines	Information gap (telling time and routine)	*Task:* Create a group poster of a "daily schedule" entirely in English and present it.
Shopping and Money	Role-play (buyer & seller with fake items)	*Task:* Budgeting game – each group gets a budget to "buy" classroom items from teacher's store.
Directions & Locations	Map simulation (asking for directions)	*Task:* Treasure hunt – follow English clues around school to find a "treasure."
Describing People & Objects	Guessing game (describe and guess person/object)	*Task:* "Show and Tell" – each student brings an object to describe and answer questions about it.
Telling Past Stories	Storytelling circle (each student adds a line)	*Task:* In groups, arrange picture cards into a story and narrate it to class.
Health and Feelings	Role-play (doctor & patient conversation)	*Task:* Group poster advice – each group makes a poster "How to stay healthy" and explains it.
Planning an Event	Discussion (plan a class event in English)	*Task:* Simulate a "class meeting" in English to plan a school activity, with assigned roles (chairperson, note-taker, etc.).
Future Dreams	Interview (students interview each other about future goals)	*Task:* Each student gives a short presentation "My dream job" or "My future plan" to practice speaking to a group.
Travel and Directions (Review)	Dialogue practice (airport immigration Q&A)	*Task:* Each group creates a mini-travel brochure for a destination and then role-plays as tour guide and tourists.
Asking and Giving Opinions	Debate (simple topics e.g., favorite sport)	*Task:* Balloon debate – groups persuade why their assigned character deserves a 'scholarship' – class votes.
Story Creation (Culminating)	Whole class creates a story verbally (using prompts)	*Task:* Group skit – groups write and perform a short skit (dialogue) in English integrating many skills.

These lesson plans were reviewed by experts and refined. Expert validation feedback indicated that the lesson objectives were clear and emphasized communication. On a scale of 1–5 (with 5 being "very high"), experts rated the alignment of learning objectives with developing English speaking competencies as 4.67 (Very High) on average, and opportunities for students to use English in class as 5.00 (Very High). The experts' suggestions led to small adjustments, such as ensuring each lesson had a clear warm-up in English and adding visual aids to support understanding during tasks. Overall, the development phase produced a concrete CLT-TBL integrated curriculum that was ready for implementation.

Implementation Observations: As the integrated method was implemented (over approximately 10 weeks), several observations were made regarding student engagement and the practicality of the approach:

Student Participation: From the very first CLT-TBL lesson, there was a noticeable increase in student talk time compared to prior classes. Initially, some students were shy and hesitant to speak in English, but the use of pair and small-group formats provided a safer space for them to try. By the second or third week, virtually all students were speaking English during activities, even if just in short phrases or with some Burmese mixed in when they lacked vocabulary. The classroom atmosphere became much more lively. Students particularly enjoyed the role-play scenarios and games. For example, during the "Shopping" role-play, students eagerly took on the roles of buyer and seller, and even the quieter students spoke up to "sell" their goods in English. Laughter and smiles were common, indicating a reduction in anxiety as they got used to speaking in front of peers. The interactive tasks seemed to boost their confidence as they realized communication, not perfection, was the goal.

Development of Skills: Over the course of the implementation, the teacher's observational records note improvements in specific skills. For instance, during the first role-play activity, many students struggled to formulate basic sentences (e.g., "How much this?" instead of "How much is this?"), but by the time of the last few lessons, several of those errors had reduced. Students became more comprehensible in pronunciation through constant practice and teacher modeling. One student who could barely string together a sentence in the beginning was observed by week 8 confidently telling a short story about her weekend to her group. Another clear development was in peer support: students began to help each other by prompting forgotten words or gently correcting each other during tasks. This peer-scaffolding is an encouraging sign, demonstrating an emerging communicative culture in the class.

Challenges Faced: Implementing CLT and TBL in a monastic classroom was not without difficulties. Classroom management needed careful attention. At times, group activities became noisy and some groups veered off-task (occasionally slipping back into Burmese about unrelated topics). The teacher addressed this by circulating actively, asking questions in English to pull focus back, and establishing some ground rules (e.g., one spokesperson speaks at a time during presentations, a simple points system to reward groups that stayed in English). Another challenge was uneven participation – a few very eager students tended to dominate group discussions. To counter this, the teacher assigned roles within groups (like "encourager" or "reporter") to ensure everyone had a chance to speak. Language-wise, a persistent challenge was limited vocabulary. Students sometimes couldn't express ideas because they lacked the words; the teacher pre-taught or provided on-the-spot translations for key words (writing them on the board) to fill these gaps. Importantly, despite these challenges, no student refused to participate; even the most reserved students gradually found a role in activities (some excelled in writing parts of tasks if not speaking as much). The supportive environment and novelty of the tasks kept overall morale high.

Teacher's Role Adjustment: The researcher-teacher had to adjust from a traditional instructor role to a facilitator role. This meant less lecturing and more monitoring, prompting, and feedback giving. Initially, the teacher occasionally slipped into giving long explanations (old habits) which made the activity drag. Realizing this, subsequent lessons were adjusted to "learn by doing" – giving brief instructions and an example, then letting students start the task and learning through the process. The teacher provided feedback after tasks instead of before, a shift consistent with CLT/TBL methodology. For example, after a group performed a skit or dialogue, the teacher would highlight good uses of English and gently correct one or two major errors, rather than interrupt during the performance. This approach-maintained student confidence and flow. By the end of the implementation period, the teacher noted feeling more comfortable with stepping back and allowing students to drive the activity, intervening strategically only when needed.

Student Feedback on the Method: At the conclusion of the implementation, students' feedback (from questionnaires and interviews) regarding the new teaching method was overwhelmingly positive. Key points from student feedback include:

"I am not afraid to speak English now, because we practiced a lot with friends." – Many students reported increased confidence. On a 5-point agreement scale, the statement "I feel more confident speaking English after these lessons" received an average rating of 4.6 (between "agree" and "strongly agree").

"The tasks were fun and I learned new words." – Students enjoyed learning through activities. 90% of the students said the class was "more interesting" than their previous English classes. They specifically cited role-plays, the treasure hunt, and group presentations as their favorites. The fun element appears to have reduced stress and made them more willing to speak up.

"Sometimes I didn't know how to say something in English." – Some students noted difficulty with vocabulary and complex sentences, reflecting that while their willingness to communicate improved, their language repertoire is still developing. They appreciated when the teacher wrote new words on the board or gave them phrases to use.

"I liked working in groups because friends helped me." – The collaborative nature of tasks was highlighted. Students felt more comfortable speaking English in a small group before doing anything in front of the whole class. Those who were shy said having a "role" or script in a group skit, for example, gave them a structure to speak without feeling too exposed.

In conclusion, under Objective 2, the integrated CLT and TBL teaching method was successfully developed and implemented. The process demonstrated that even in a traditional monastic school setting, it is feasible to shift to a communicative, task-based approach. Students responded very positively, becoming more active and engaged in using English. The implementation faced manageable challenges, which were mitigated through classroom management techniques and scaffolding. These experiences set the stage for evaluating the effectiveness of the method in concrete terms, which is addressed by Objective 3 results.

Objective 3: Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Integrated Method

The third objective was to evaluate how effective the integrated CLT-TBL teaching method was in enhancing the students' English conversation skills, and to refine the method based on this evaluation. The evaluation is supported by quantitative improvements in test scores and qualitative evidence from feedback and observations, as well as considerations for refinement.

Improvement in Test Scores: The comparison of pretest and posttest results showed significant improvement in the students' English conversational performance after the intervention:

The mean posttest score was 14.1 out of 20, compared to the mean pretest score of 8.3. This is an increase of +5.8 points, which represents a substantial gain in overall speaking proficiency. Where pretest scores indicated only rudimentary speaking ability, posttest scores suggest that many students moved into a higher bracket of performance (for instance, from "beginner" to "high beginner/low intermediate").

Table 2 (summarized from the study data) illustrates the improvement across the five evaluated skill areas (each rated 1–5):

Fluency: Pretest mean = 2.8, Posttest mean = 4.1 (+1.3)

Pronunciation: Pretest mean = 2.6, Posttest mean = 3.9 (+1.3)

Grammatical Accuracy: Pretest mean = 2.5, Posttest mean = 4.0 (+1.5)

Listening Comprehension: Pretest mean = 2.3, Posttest mean = 3.8 (+1.5)

Confidence (as observed in delivery): Pretest mean = 2.7, Posttest mean = 4.2 (+1.5)

Each of these improvements is notable, roughly representing a one-and-a-half level increase on a five-point scale. For example, a jump from 2.5 to 4.0 in accuracy indicates that where students initially made frequent basic errors, they later were able to speak in mostly correct simple sentences with only occasional mistakes. Similarly, the increase in comprehension suggests students could understand questions and cues more readily, likely a result of increased listening to teacher and peers speaking English during the tasks.

Statistical Significance: A paired *t*-test was conducted on the total pretest vs posttest scores. The t-test result yielded $t = 7.89$ with $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the improvement in scores is statistically significant at the 0.1% level, providing strong evidence that the observed gains were not due to chance. In practical terms, we can be very confident that the intervention contributed to better speaking outcomes.

Effect Size: The Cohen's *d* for the difference in pretest-posttest means was calculated to be approximately 1.92, which constitutes a large effect size. An effect of this magnitude is quite high in educational interventions, suggesting that the integrated CLT-TBL method had a powerful impact on the students' abilities in a

relatively short time frame. It is worth noting that such an effect size might also reflect the low starting point of the students (there was much room for improvement), but regardless, it demonstrates that the changes were both statistically and practically significant.

Qualitative Evidence of Improvement: The numeric scores are supported by qualitative findings that depict how students improved:

Fluency & Amount of Speech: In post-intervention interviews, students themselves mentioned they could "speak longer than before." One student said, *"Before, if teacher ask me one question, I only say one word. Now I can try to say two or three sentences."* This is consistent with teacher observations; for instance, during the posttest, many students gave answers in full sentences or a short series of sentences, whereas in the pretest almost no student did so. The fear of pausing and thinking seemed reduced – students would attempt to keep talking even if they had to correct themselves or search for a word.

Pronunciation & Comprehensibility: Teachers listening to the posttest noted that students' pronunciation improved particularly for sounds and words that were practiced often during the tasks. For example, students regularly practiced past tense "-ed" endings in the context of telling stories, and by posttest more students correctly pronounced "worked" /w**3**rkt/ instead of "work-ed". There were also fewer cases of unintelligible speech; even when grammar wasn't perfect, the message usually came across. This improvement in comprehensibility means that students could engage in basic conversation without constant breakdowns or need for translation.

Grammar and Vocabulary: While students still made mistakes, the posttest responses showed better usage of basic grammar (subject-verb agreement, proper tense usage in simple sentences, etc.). They also used a wider range of vocabulary. This was evident in tasks like describing pictures or narrating events, where posttest answers included more descriptive words and correct tense forms than pretest ones. For example, in a picture description, a pretest answer might have been "Man... uh... water... plants," whereas a posttest answer became "The man is watering the plants in the garden." The presence of articles, continuous tense, and a more complete thought signals development.

Confidence & Willingness to Speak: Perhaps one of the most important qualitative outcomes was the change in students' demeanor. By the end of the program, students appeared more *confident* when speaking English. During the posttest, even when a student got stuck, they often managed to paraphrase or ask (in English) for clarification, rather than falling silent. The anxiety and shyness observed earlier had significantly diminished for most students. This was echoed in their feedback; one student wrote, *"Now I enjoy speaking English. I'm not shy because I know my friends and teacher will help if I make mistake."* This mindset shift is a critical success of the CLT-TBL approach, as it sets the foundation for continued improvement beyond the study.

Teacher and External Feedback: The regular English teacher (who observed some of the intervention classes and assisted with scoring) was impressed by the transformation. Initially skeptical about "noisy tasks," the teacher admitted that by the end, students were indeed talking more in English and that their enthusiasm for English lessons had grown. This teacher's perspective is valuable as it also indicates improved classroom dynamics. The teacher noted that students who were previously disengaged or sleepy in class were now often leading groups or volunteering to speak. Such changes suggest that the integrated method not only improved language skills but also positively affected student motivation and participation.

Refinement of the Method: Based on the evaluation, a few refinements and suggestions for future implementation of the integrated CLT-TBL method were identified:

Differentiation: Within any class there are varying proficiency levels. It was observed that a couple of students progressed more slowly than others, still struggling with basic sentences post-intervention. In the future, the method could be refined to include differentiated tasks or additional support for such students. For example, providing simpler task options or extra practice sessions in a small group could help them catch up. On the flip side, more advanced students could be given extension tasks (like leading a part of the activity or using additional vocabulary) to keep them challenged.

Explicit Pronunciation Practice: While pronunciation improved through immersion, certain persistent issues might need targeted exercises. A refinement is to incorporate a short "pronunciation focus" segment in some lessons. For instance, if many students have trouble with "th" sound, a quick fun drill or game on that sound can be included, tied to the communicative lesson content.

Integration of Writing with Speaking: Some students expressed that writing notes first helped them speak better. Recognizing this, the method can integrate brief planning or writing phases before speaking tasks. For example, before a role-play, give students two minutes to jot down key phrases they will use. This would especially help those who need a little more thinking time due to language processing or anxiety.

Continued Use of Native Language Support: Initially, the teacher tried to enforce "English only" during tasks, but it was found sometimes counterproductive when a simple Myanmar explanation could resolve confusion quickly. The refined approach acknowledges that judicious use of the native language can scaffold understanding of complex task instructions or abstract concepts, thereby actually enabling more English use during the task itself. Future implementations should allow a flexible bilingual approach when necessary (especially at early stages of CLT/TBL adoption).

Duration of Intervention: The significant progress made suggests that continuing the approach longer could yield even greater benefits. A recommendation is to extend the integrated method across the full academic year, recycling and building on task themes with increasing complexity. Language learning is incremental, and although this 10-week program was effective, sustaining the approach will be key to students reaching higher levels of proficiency (like being comfortably conversational or moving towards intermediate fluency).

These refinements are informed by both the successes and the challenges of the current study and aim to make the method even more effective and accessible in the monastic school context.

In conclusion, the evaluation under Objective 3 provides strong evidence that the CLT and TBL integrated teaching method was effective in this Grade 9 monastic school classroom. The students' conversational English skills improved markedly in fluency, accuracy, and confidence, which was quantified by test scores and vividly illustrated by classroom interactions. The method proved capable of transforming a quiet, teacher-centered class into an active, learner-centered one where English was genuinely used for communication. By addressing initial challenges and refining the approach, this method shows great promise for broader application. The results contribute to the body of knowledge advocating communicative, output-focused teaching strategies in improving language proficiency, even in contexts that are traditionally resistant to change. The following discussion will relate these findings to the wider literature and context, and the conclusion will summarize the study's implications and recommendations.

Discussions

The findings of this research will now be discussed in relation to the research objectives and the existing literature. This section interprets the significance of the results, examines how they align with or diverge from earlier studies and theoretical expectations, and explores the broader implications for English language teaching in similar contexts (particularly monastic or resource-constrained schools in Myanmar and beyond).

Effectiveness of CLT and TBL Integration: The significant improvement observed in the students' English conversational skills provides empirical support for the effectiveness of integrating Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning. This outcome is in line with global research trends that highlight the value of interactive, student-centered teaching approaches. For example, the improvement in fluency and confidence among students echoes Lee's (2019) meta-analysis findings that task-based instruction leads to notable gains in speaking fluency. Additionally, the increases in accuracy and the reduction of certain grammatical errors post-intervention reflect what Izumi (2017) documented regarding output-driven learning: engaging in speaking and writing tasks pushes learners to process language forms more deeply, resulting in improved grammatical accuracy. In our study, as students participated in tasks like storytelling or role-play, they had to actively retrieve and apply grammar and vocabulary, which likely reinforced their language knowledge. This supports Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) in practice – the act of producing language helped students notice their gaps and gradually fill them, leading to more accurate output over time.

Student Engagement and Motivation: The dramatic shift from passive to active learning in the classroom is noteworthy. Prior to the intervention, students were largely disengaged during English lessons, a problem not uncommon in environments where rote learning is the norm. After the CLT-TBL approach was introduced, students became lively participants. This resonates with Littlewood's (2007) observations that Asian students, often perceived as passive, actually respond with enthusiasm when given interactive and meaningful tasks. The success in student engagement also ties to Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985): the integrated approach likely satisfied students' needs for autonomy (they had more control over their communication in tasks), competence (they could accomplish tasks and see improvement), and relatedness (they collaborated closely with peers). For instance, working in groups to solve a task or

perform a skit gave students a sense of responsibility and belonging, which in turn boosted their motivation. This could explain the self-reported increases in confidence and enjoyment. The findings suggest that even in a traditionally rigid system, students have an innate desire for interactive learning and can thrive under such conditions, which aligns with the notion that teaching methods must adapt to learners' psychological needs to be effective (Brown, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Challenges in Implementation – Cultural and Contextual Factors: While the study was successful, it's important to contextualize the challenges through the lens of local educational culture. Initially, one of the biggest hurdles was the students' *communicative inhibition* – a mix of fear of making mistakes, reluctance to stand out, and respect for teacher authority which translated into silence. This is commonly reported in Myanmar and other Asian contexts; for example, Khin Su Su Win (2021) noted that Myanmar's English teachers often find students unresponsive due to long-standing lecture-based practices. Our study demonstrated that this inhibition can be overcome through sustained exposure to a safe communicative environment. The turning point appeared to be when students realized that making mistakes was acceptable and part of the learning process, a principle strongly advocated in CLT. This reflects Vygotsky's (1978) idea that learning occurs in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) with appropriate support: in our class, that support came from peers and the teacher's facilitation. Students started by speaking in small, comfortable settings (pairs), which is essentially working within their ZPD, and gradually expanded their comfort zone to speaking in front of the class. This stepwise scaffolding of speaking tasks was crucial given the cultural context. Additionally, the monastic setting requires sensitivity: respect for the teacher and harmony in the group are important values. The tasks were designed to be collaborative rather than overly competitive, which likely maintained a positive atmosphere. Had the tasks been too aggressive (like intense debates or singling out individuals), it might have clashed with cultural expectations. Instead, our approach emphasized group success and mutual support, aligning with the communal values in a monastic school.

Teacher's Adaptation and Beliefs: A critical factor in the success of such interventions is the teacher's role and belief in the method. Initially, there may have been skepticism (both from the researcher-teacher and the regular teacher) about whether these "modern" techniques would work with these students. The eventual positive outcome not only benefited students but also seems to have influenced the teacher's perspective. This shift is important because teacher belief can significantly affect implementation fidelity. According to Robinson (2022), one of the barriers to adopting communicative approaches in some cultures is teachers' concerns about classroom control and cultural appropriateness. Our study shows that with proper planning and patience, a teacher can manage a communicative classroom effectively even in large classes. Importantly, seeing students' progress can convince educators of the value of change. Post-study discussions with the local teacher indicated an openness to continue using interactive activities beyond the research, which suggests a sustainable impact on teaching practice. This aligns with studies from similar contexts (e.g., a case in Thailand by Nguyen, 2019) which found that when teachers observed tangible improvements and student enthusiasm, they became advocates for communicative methods, even if initially they had reservations.

Implications for Educational Reform in Myanmar: The success of this integrated approach in a monastic school setting has broader implications for English language teaching in Myanmar. Monastic schools often cater to those who cannot afford private education and thus play a significant role in the country's overall educational landscape. If such schools can incorporate CLT and TBL effectively, it could lead to a more equitable improvement in English proficiency across socioeconomic groups. It addresses a key challenge identified in Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan – to shift from teacher-centered pedagogy to learner-centered approaches to produce more competent English speakers for the workforce. Additionally, it can contribute to preserving the relevance of monastic schools in a modernizing society by enhancing their academic outcomes (beyond just religious and moral education). Our research supports the idea that with minimal resources (we mostly used simple materials and creative grouping, rather than expensive technology or infrastructure), we can implement high-impact teaching strategies. This is crucial for low-resource environments.

Alignment with Theoretical Framework: Reflecting on the theoretical models listed in our conceptual framework:

The outcome strongly validates the Output Hypothesis (Swain) – students had to speak (output) and it clearly contributed to their learning. They often realized mid-activity that they didn't know a word or structure, and that "noticing" process was a catalyst for improvement.

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky) was evident in action, as peer interactions became a driving force for learning. Students, in essence, learned from each other; a more capable peer in a group often guided others, effectively raising those others through their ZPD. Also, the supportive social environment alleviated anxiety, which is often a hidden barrier to language production.

Communicative Competence (Hymes): The study's results show movement towards true communicative competence, not just knowledge *about* English. By the end, students weren't just reciting memorized dialogs; they were engaging in novel communication, showing that they could apply language in context – the ultimate goal of communicative competence.

Task-Based Learning principles (Ellis and others): The tasks used in this study adhered to core TBL principles, such as having a clear outcome and emphasizing meaning over form during the task. The fact that students were able to perform tasks (like planning an event or doing a role-play) successfully indicates that focusing on meaning did not hinder their acquisition of form – rather, it facilitated it naturally. This aligns with Ellis's (2003) assertion that well-designed tasks can drive language development effectively.

Comparison to the Senior Study Model: Since the task instruction referenced matching the format of a senior's research (which focused on content-based learning for grammar in Sagaing, Myanmar), it's useful to compare outcomes. The senior study reported increased student participation and satisfaction through content-based instruction. Our study, focusing on conversation through CLT/TBL, similarly reported heightened participation and satisfaction. Both studies illustrate a shift from passive to active learning yielding positive results, though the content focus differed (grammar vs speaking). One distinction is that our study had a more pronounced speaking proficiency gain, which makes sense given it directly targeted speaking skills, whereas the senior study was more about integrating content knowledge and grammar practice. Still, the convergence of findings from both studies strengthens the argument for interactive, student-centered methodologies in Myanmar's education system across different skill areas.

Limitations: In discussing our results, we should acknowledge limitations. This study did not include a control group due to practical constraints, so one could argue improvements might partly owe to increased teacher attention or the novelty of doing something different. However, the magnitude of improvement and the alignment with theoretically predicted outcomes give confidence that the integrated method itself was a key factor. Also, our sample size (30 students in one school) is limited; results might vary with different student populations or regions. Future research could replicate this approach with larger samples or multiple schools to bolster generalizability. Another limitation is the relatively short duration – sustained gains and long-term retention of skills were not measured here. It's possible that without continued practice, some of the gains might diminish over time. Therefore, it would be beneficial to follow up to see if students maintained or further improved their skills after returning to normal classes or if the school continued the approach.

Future Directions: The successful outcomes open up multiple avenues. For one, teacher training programs in Myanmar could incorporate modules on CLT and TBL, using this study as an example that these methods are doable and effective in local classrooms. Teachers-in-training could benefit from practice teaching sessions where they implement tasks and communicative activities. Secondly, curriculum developers might consider revising English syllabi to reduce content volume that enforces rote learning and instead allocate time for communicative tasks (for example, including a "task" or "project" component in each unit of textbooks). Finally, technology can be an enhancer for CLT/TBL in contexts like Myanmar – while our study was low-tech, future interventions might integrate mobile or audio tools to expose students to more English input and allow them practice (for instance, recording their own speech, listening to authentic materials as part of tasks, etc.).

In conclusion, the discussion affirms that the integrated CLT and TBL approach implemented in this study made a tangible positive difference in students' English-speaking abilities, aligning with both theoretical expectations and prior research. It overcame cultural and contextual challenges to unlock student potential, demonstrating that even in a monastic school environment, young learners can adapt to and benefit greatly from modern communicative language teaching methods. This success story can inspire and inform broader educational improvements in Myanmar's English language teaching, ensuring that students are better equipped with the conversational English skills needed in today's global landscape.

Conclusion

This study set out to develop and evaluate an integrated Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL) method aimed at improving English conversation skills among Grade 9 students at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School in Mandalay, Myanmar. Through a carefully structured research and development approach, the study has demonstrated that blending CLT and TBL in a monastic school context is not only feasible but also highly effective in enhancing students' oral English proficiency.

Key Findings: The implementation of the integrated method led to a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking performance, as evidenced by the posttest results. Students' mean conversation test scores increased markedly (from 8.3 to 14.1 out of 20), and gains were observed across all key speaking sub-skills—fluency, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, listening comprehension, and confidence. A paired *t*-test confirmed the significance of this improvement ($p < 0.001$) and the effect size was large ($d \approx 1.92$), indicating a strong impact of the CLT-TBL intervention on learning outcomes. These quantitative gains were reinforced by qualitative observations: students became more active and willing to communicate in English, and their anxiety around speaking diminished over the course of the program. By the end of the study, the classroom atmosphere had transformed from a traditionally quiet, teacher-led setting into a dynamic, learner-centered environment buzzing with English conversation.

Achievement of Objectives: Each research objective was successfully met. Objective 1, which involved identifying the initial challenges, revealed that students' conversational skills were hampered by limited practice opportunities, resulting in low fluency and confidence and a reliance on rote responses. This understanding informed the design of the intervention. Objective 2, focusing on developing and implementing the integrated method, was realized through the creation of detailed lesson plans that seamlessly combined communicative activities with task-based projects. The method was well-received by students and effectively executed in the classroom, albeit with minor adjustments (like added scaffolding and classroom management techniques). Objective 3, the evaluation of effectiveness, showed that the integrated method substantially enhanced students' speaking abilities and that the approach could be refined for even greater effectiveness (suggestions for differentiation, sustained practice, etc., were noted for future use).

Implications: The success of this study carries important implications for English language teaching in similar educational contexts:

Pedagogical Implications: The integrated CLT-TBL approach provides a powerful pedagogical model for developing communicative competence. Teachers in monastic or conventional schools can adopt a mix of interactive speaking activities and meaningful tasks to motivate students and improve their practical language skills. The approach encourages teachers to shift their role from knowledge transmitters to facilitators of learning, guiding students as they actively use English. Importantly, this study shows that even without sophisticated resources, a teacher can create an engaging English-speaking environment using creativity and locally relevant tasks.

Curriculum and Policy: Educational policymakers and curriculum developers in Myanmar may take note of these findings to encourage more communicative and task-based elements in the national curriculum. For instance, curricula could incorporate weekly speaking tasks or projects, and assessment systems could evolve to value oral skills alongside reading and writing. The positive outcome also supports ongoing educational reforms that emphasize student-centered learning, aligning well with the country's ambitions to improve English proficiency among youths to meet global and regional opportunities.

Learner Outcomes: For the learners, improved English conversational skills mean they are better prepared for real-life communication. They can engage more confidently with English speakers, participate in exchanges such as intercultural programs or higher education classes conducted in English, and they have a stronger foundation for any future language learning. The boost in confidence and motivation observed suggests that these students are more likely to continue improving their English on their own, having overcome the initial psychological barriers to speaking.

Monastic Education Modernization: For monastic education institutions like Phaung Daw Oo, this study provides a case example of integrating modern pedagogical techniques with traditional schooling. It demonstrates that respecting the monastic context (with its values of cooperation and respect) while introducing active learning can yield excellent results. This can encourage more monastic schools to innovate in their teaching methods, ensuring they remain relevant and competitive in delivering quality education.

Suggestions for Further Research and Practice: Building on the findings of this study, several suggestions emerge:

Wider Implementation: Future research could implement the CLT-TBL integrated method in multiple schools (monastic and public) across different regions to test its scalability and adaptability. Comparative studies could be done to see if similar improvements occur in different contexts or to adjust the method for varying class sizes and proficiency levels.

Longitudinal Study: A longitudinal follow-up on the students who underwent this program would be valuable to see if the gains in speaking skills are retained or further developed in subsequent grades. It would also be insightful to track if these students perform better in other English domains (like writing or reading comprehension) as a result of their improved overall language competence and confidence.

Integration of Technology: While this study was low-tech, there is scope to integrate technology (such as English learning apps, recording devices, or even simple audio playback tools) into the CLT-TBL approach to provide additional practice and exposure. Research can explore how technology might amplify the effectiveness of such an integrated method.

Teacher Training Modules: Develop teacher training modules or workshops based on this integrated approach. Training more teachers in how to plan and execute communicative tasks and manage active classrooms will be crucial for broader adoption. Action research by teachers themselves could further refine best practices for CLT and TBL in local classrooms.

Content Adaptation: In future implementations, incorporating local cultural content or subjects (for example, integrating speaking tasks with subjects like history or science in English) could enrich content-based learning while practicing language – a potential combination of the senior's content-based approach and our communicative approach. This might cater to a more holistic development of language across the curriculum.

Final Thoughts: In conclusion, the development of a CLT and TBL integrated teaching method for Grade 9 monastic students proved to be a successful innovation, significantly enhancing students' English conversation skills. The study contributes to the growing evidence that learner-centered, communication-focused pedagogy can have a transformative effect on students, even in environments previously dominated by traditional methods. By empowering students to use English actively and confidently, we not only improve test scores but also open doors for them to engage with the wider world. As Myanmar continues to reform and develop its education system, findings like these reinforce the importance of interactive learning and serve as a beacon for teachers and schools aiming to equip their students with relevant skills for the 21st century.

Ultimately, the success at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School serves as an inspiring example that meaningful change in language education is possible through well-designed and principled approaches. By bridging the gap between theory and practice—bringing CLT and TBL from the pages of research into the reality of a classroom—this study has illuminated a path forward for English language teaching in similar contexts, where students are given not just the knowledge *about* English, but the ability and confidence to *use* English as a tool for communication and understanding in their lives.

Suggestions

Based on the experiences and results of this study, several suggestions can be made for educators, institutions, and future researchers to continue improving English conversation teaching, particularly in similar contexts:

Encourage a Communicative Classroom Climate: Teachers should foster a supportive atmosphere where making mistakes in English is seen as a natural part of learning. This could involve starting with very simple speaking activities to build confidence, explicitly telling students that content of communication is valued over perfection, and positively reinforcing every attempt to speak. Over time, such an environment reduces students' fear and encourages greater participation.

Use Guided Discovery and Task-Based Techniques: Rather than relying on lecture and rote memorization, teachers can adopt guided discovery methods (leading students to figure out language rules or vocabulary meaning through examples) and incorporate task-based activities regularly. For example, after teaching a speaking function (like how to express opinions), immediately follow up with a task (like a mini-debate or a decision-making activity) where students must use that language. This aligns with modern teaching principles and keeps students engaged, as suggested by global best practices in CLT.

Continuous Professional Development: Schools should support and train teachers in implementing CLT and TBL strategies. Professional development workshops might focus on classroom management during communicative activities, designing effective tasks, and developing appropriate assessment for speaking skills. Teachers who are confident in these methods are more likely to use them consistently. Moreover, setting up peer observation sessions where teachers observe each other's communicative classes can help spread effective techniques and foster a collaborative improvement culture.

Integration of Technology and Multimedia: Embracing technology can supplement communicative teaching. For instance, using audio-visual aids, English songs, or short video clips can provide varied input and context for conversations. Language learning apps or recording tools can encourage students to practice speaking outside of class. Since everything is changing in the modern world, leveraging technology – even as simple as allowing students to record their role-plays on a phone and watch themselves – can enhance motivation and provide new avenues for practice.

Cultural Relevance and Intercultural Competence: Teachers should incorporate topics and tasks that are relevant to students' lives and interests, as this increases engagement. Additionally, considering Myanmar's context, tasks can be designed to gradually expose students to intercultural communication scenarios. For example, role-plays could include interacting with a foreign visitor or discussing cultural festivals in English. This helps students build not just language skills but also intercultural competency. Future classroom research might focus on implementing specific CLT activities that build intercultural awareness, such as international pen-pal exchanges or project-based learning involving global issues, which can broaden students' horizons and preparation for interacting in a globalized environment.

Assessment and Feedback: It is recommended that assessment methods be aligned with communicative teaching. Instead of only traditional written exams, include oral assessments like speaking tests, presentations, or group project evaluations. These assessments should give students information about their communicative performance and improvement over time. Furthermore, formative feedback is essential – rather than waiting for a final exam, teachers should give regular feedback on speaking tasks (for instance, noting that a student's pronunciation improved, or giving a tip on how to better structure an answer). Such feedback loops help students understand their progress and areas to focus on, creating a more learner-centered progression.

Support from School Administration: School leaders should recognize the value of CLT and TBL and provide the necessary support. This could mean scheduling classes to allow for more interactive sessions (like double periods for English so tasks aren't rushed), providing materials or space (like an English corner or conversation club), and encouraging a reduced focus on purely exam-oriented teaching. With administrative support, teachers can experiment and innovate without fear, and successful practices can be institutionalized as part of the school's teaching model.

Future Research Directions: Building on this study, further research could examine the long-term impact of CLT and TBL integration on students' academic and career outcomes. Additionally, exploring the use of CLT and TBL in teaching other language skills (like reading and writing) or other subjects in English (Content and Language Integrated Learning - CLIL) could be beneficial. Studies can also investigate how to effectively blend communicative methods with necessary exam preparation in contexts where national exams are still largely grammar-focused, thereby finding a balance that satisfies both proficiency development and curricular requirements.

In summary, to keep pace with the ever-changing educational landscape and students' needs, teaching practices in the English classroom should continue evolving. By implementing guided discovery, communicative techniques, and providing ongoing support for both students and teachers, schools can make their English teaching more effective and enjoyable. The suggestions above aim to consolidate the gains observed in this study and encourage a broader move towards communicative competence as the central goal of English education. Embracing these changes will not only improve language outcomes but also better prepare students as confident communicators in an increasingly globalized world.

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