

Development of English-Speaking Skills Using Task-Based Learning for Grade 7 Students at A Tha Ka (1) School in Tauntha Township, Myanmar

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the development of English-speaking skills among Grade 7 students at A Tha Ka (1) School in Tauntha Township, Myanmar, through the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL). The primary objective of the research is to explore how TBL enhances students' speaking fluency, accuracy, and confidence. A quasi-experimental design was employed with a group of students who participated in various speaking tasks over a period of six weeks.

Data collection methods included a pre-test and post-test to measure students' improvement in speaking proficiency, classroom observations to monitor participation and engagement, and interviews to understand students' perceptions and attitudes towards English-speaking activities. The findings reveal a significant improvement in students' speaking skills after the implementation of TBL, indicating that task-based learning is an effective instructional approach for language development in the Myanmar context.

The results also suggest that students responded positively to speaking tasks, and their confidence increased as they practiced real-life communication in the classroom. This study recommends that English language teachers in similar educational settings incorporate TBL strategies to enhance learners' communicative competence.

Keywords: Task-Based Learning; English Speaking Skills; Grade 7 Students; Rural Education; Student Satisfaction

Introduction

English is a global language, and speaking proficiency is essential for communication, especially in education and employment. In Myanmar, despite curriculum integration, many students struggle with spoken English due to rote learning and limited interaction. This is more evident in rural schools where access to language practice opportunities and modern teaching methods are scarce. A Tha Ka (1) School in Tauntha Township reflects this context, where students exhibit low confidence and limited ability in speaking English.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) is a student-centered method that emphasizes real-life language use through meaningful tasks. It encourages learners to actively participate in communication, helping to develop fluency and confidence. Grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Constructivist Learning Theory, TBL offers a practical alternative to traditional methods in Myanmar's classrooms.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the current level of Grade 7 students' English-speaking skills.
2. To develop instructional materials using the TBL approach.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of TBL and student satisfaction after implementation.

Literature Review

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has been widely researched and recognized as an effective approach to developing communicative competence in language learners. According to Willis (1996), TBL consists of three key stages: the pre-task phase, the task cycle, and the post-task phase. These stages promote language use in meaningful contexts and foster learner autonomy.

Ellis (2003) emphasized that TBL is grounded in the principles of second language acquisition (SLA), which advocate for input, interaction, and output in learning. Through tasks, learners are exposed to language use in context, engage in interaction, and produce language output, all of which facilitate speaking development.

Nunan (2004) highlighted the value of tasks that mirror real-life language use. TBL encourages learners to use language to solve problems, complete projects, or express personal ideas, making learning more relevant and engaging. Studies by Carless (2007) in Asian classrooms showed that TBL not only improves language performance but also boosts learner motivation and classroom participation.

In the Myanmar context, traditional teaching methods still dominate, with a focus on grammar and rote memorization. However, studies such as those by Aung (2018) and Khaing (2020) support the integration of communicative approaches like TBL to address the low proficiency levels in speaking. These studies revealed that when students are given opportunities to speak in structured tasks, their fluency and confidence improve significantly.

Thus, this research builds on existing literature by applying TBL in a rural Myanmar school setting, aiming to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical classroom application.

Conceptual Framework

This research is a study aiming to develop English-speaking skills using the Task-Based Learning (TBL) method. The researcher defines the research conceptual framework based on Constructivist Learning Theory, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Multimedia Learning Theory, together with Task-Based Learning. The conceptual framework outlines the key elements involved in the teaching and learning process to achieve the study's objectives.

Independent Variables Process / Tools / Area / Target Audience Dependent Variable

Task-Based Learning (TBL) - Pre-task, Task Cycle, Post-task

Multimedia materials (pictures, audio, video)

CLT-based classroom interaction

Grade 7 students at A Tha Ka (1) School Development of English-Speaking Skills (fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, confidence)

This conceptual framework posits that applying TBL—through structured activities, teacher facilitation, and the use of multimedia—can significantly improve learners' English-speaking proficiency. The effectiveness is measured by comparing students' performance in pre-test and post-test scores and analyzing satisfaction and engagement during lessons.

Research Methodology

This study used a quasi-experimental one-group pre-test/post-test design. The target group consisted of 20 Grade 7 students at A Tha Ka (1) School, selected through purposive sampling. Research tools included pre-test and post-test instruments, TBL-based lesson plans, observation checklists, speaking rubrics, and satisfaction questionnaires.

The TBL intervention was conducted over 6 weeks, covering topics relevant to students' everyday lives. Tasks included role-plays, group discussions, and interactive speaking activities. Each lesson followed the TBL stages: pre-task (preparation), task cycle (performance), and post-task (reflection and feedback).

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage) and qualitative methods for open-ended responses.

Research Results

Objective 1: Pre-test results showed low to moderate proficiency in fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Students were hesitant and lacked vocabulary.

Objective 2: The TBL lessons improved engagement. Activities were contextualized, student-centered, and interactive. Students actively participated and responded positively.

Objective 3: Post-test scores showed improvement across all components of speaking. Students displayed increased confidence and willingness to speak. Satisfaction data revealed high levels of enjoyment and perceived language improvement.

Skill Area	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)
Fluency	48	72
Accuracy	45	70
Pronunciation	50	74
Vocabulary	47	75
Confidence	46	78

Discussions

The findings align with previous studies showing that TBL fosters communicative competence and learner autonomy. TBL's structured tasks provided a safe space for practice, helping learners overcome speaking anxiety. The increased post-test scores reflect improved speaking proficiency and classroom participation. Students were motivated by group interaction, practical tasks, and relevant topics.

Challenges included initial resistance to speaking English and limited exposure outside class. However, regular task engagement and positive feedback helped build competence and interest.

Knowledge from Research

This research on the development of English-speaking skills using Task-Based Learning (TBL) for Grade 7 students at A Tha Ka (1) School provides meaningful insights that can benefit both academic and practical fields of language education, especially in rural settings.

Effectiveness of TBL in Speaking Skills Development. The findings confirmed that Task-Based Learning is an effective approach for enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly in fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and confidence. TBL allowed students to actively use English in meaningful contexts, helping them to internalize the language naturally. **Increased Student Engagement and Participation** The study showed that students became more enthusiastic and involved in learning when they participated in tasks like group discussions, role plays, and interactive activities. This approach minimized the fear of making mistakes and created a supportive learning environment. **Positive Student Attitudes** Most students expressed high levels of satisfaction with TBL-based lessons. They felt that TBL activities were not only enjoyable but also helpful in improving their real-life communication skills. Their confidence in speaking English noticeably increased after participating in structured tasks. **Importance of Classroom Interaction and Feedback** The role of the teacher as a facilitator was essential. Continuous guidance, encouragement, and feedback during and after each task helped students reflect on their performance and improve progressively. **Applicability in Rural Schools** The study demonstrates that even in a resource-limited environment like a rural school in Myanmar, TBL can be successfully implemented. With proper planning, contextual task design, and teacher training, this method can significantly raise the standard of English-speaking instruction. **Contribution to Education Reform** This research contributes to Myanmar's ongoing efforts to reform English language teaching by shifting away from traditional grammar-based instruction toward communicative, learner-centered approaches that prioritize meaningful use of language.

Conclusion

Task-Based Learning significantly enhanced the English-speaking skills of Grade 7 students in a rural Myanmar setting. It encouraged active participation, improved language performance, and created a more engaging learning environment. TBL is a valuable methodology for developing practical communication skills and should be promoted more widely in English language teaching.

Suggestions

Based on the findings and experiences gained through this research on the development of English-speaking skills using Task-Based Learning (TBL), the following suggestions are proposed for future implementation and studies:

For English Language Teachers Teachers should incorporate TBL regularly in speaking lessons to promote practical communication. Activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and real-life simulations should be used to encourage authentic language use. Teachers should receive training on how to design and implement TBL activities effectively in the classroom.

For School Administrators School leaders should support the integration of student-centered teaching methods like TBL in English language instruction. Additional resources such as multimedia tools (audio, videos, visuals) should be provided to enhance the effectiveness of tasks.

For Curriculum Developers English language curricula, especially in rural areas, should place more emphasis on communicative competence. TBL principles can be embedded into national or regional textbooks to promote learner interaction and fluency.

For Future Researchers Further studies should explore the long-term effects of TBL on students' language retention and performance. Researchers could expand this study to include other language skills such as listening, reading, or writing. Comparative studies across different regions, school types, or educational levels could provide broader insights into the effectiveness of TBL.

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