Enhancing English Listening Skills Through Engaging Video-Based Tasks for Pre-Intermediate EFL Students at an Online School in Yangon, Myanmar

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Abstract

Despite the importance of English listening comprehension in EFL education, pre-intermediate learners in online environments face significant challenges in understanding authentic spoken English. This study aimed: 1) To study the current level and fundamental challenges of English listening comprehension skills of pre-intermediate EFL students at an online school in Yangon; 2) To develop students' listening comprehension skills through video-based tasks within the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework; and 3) To evaluate the effectiveness of video-based tasks and students' satisfaction with the instructional approach.

The study employed a quantitative pre-experimental design using a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The sample consisted of 15 pre-intermediate EFL students (CEFR A2 level), selected through purposive sampling from an online school in Yangon during the second semester of the 2025-2026 academic year. The research instruments included: 1) six-week lesson plans integrating video-based tasks, 2) a 30-item multiple-choice English listening comprehension test, and 3) a five-point Likert scale satisfaction questionnaire. All instruments were validated by three experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and dependent t-test.

The findings revealed that: 1) students' initial listening comprehension skills were at a low level, with major difficulties in identifying main ideas and understanding rapid speech; 2) students' post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores at the .05 level after the implementation of video-based tasks; and 3) students' satisfaction with the instructional approach was at a high level.

This study contributes to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) by proposing an effective instructional framework integrating Task-Based Language Teaching and Multimedia Learning Theory, offering practical implications for enhancing listening skills in online EFL contexts.

Keywords: English listening comprehension, video-based tasks, pre-intermediate EFL learners

Introduction

English has emerged as the dominant global language of communication, serving as the primary medium for international business, academic research, diplomacy, science, and technology (Crystal, 2003). For learners in non-English-speaking countries such as Myanmar, acquiring communicative competence in English is both a significant educational challenge and a critical professional aspiration. Listening is widely regarded as a foundational language skill because it provides learners with the essential input required to begin the process of language acquisition (Krashen, 1982), and it supports the continuous development of comprehension and communicative ability by exposing learners to authentic spoken input (Rost, 2011). In the EFL context, listening comprehension is widely considered the most difficult skill for learners to develop because of the speed and complexity of authentic spoken language, the diversity of accents and registers, and the cognitive demands of real-time processing (Field, 2008). According to Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), listening instruction in many EFL classrooms across Southeast Asia still relies heavily on scripted audio materials and teacher-centered practices that limit opportunities for learner autonomy and strategic listening development, creating a persistent gap between classroom materials and authentic language use.

Myanmar provides a significant context for examining these challenges. English is a compulsory subject from the primary level to higher education under the policies of the Ministry of Education, Myanmar (MoE, 2016), reflecting Myanmar's participation in ASEAN, where English functions as the official working language for diplomatic, economic, and educational communication (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Despite this policy emphasis, the listening proficiency of Myanmar EFL learners at the pre-intermediate (CEFR A2) level remains a persistent concern, and these difficulties are exacerbated in online learning environments by variable audio quality, connectivity issues, and the absence of face-to-face paralinguistic cues (Thein, 2021). Pre-intermediate students at Trio Online School in Yangon receive instruction mainly through Zoom, making listening comprehension the primary channel through which they receive instructional input and participate in learning activities. Preliminary classroom observations conducted by the researcher indicated that many students experienced considerable difficulty understanding the teacher's spoken explanations and interpreting task instructions delivered in English, highlighting the need for targeted instructional strategies.

Recent developments in language teaching have increasingly emphasized the instructional value of video-based materials, which integrate auditory and visual information to provide learners with authentic, contextualized, and engaging spoken-language input (Sherman, 2003; Mayer, 2009). Visual elements such as gestures, facial expressions, and situational cues assist learners in interpreting meaning and offer an additional contextual framework that supports comprehension. The use of video-based materials in combination with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a theoretically sound and pedagogically effective approach to listening instruction (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). Within this framework, video-based listening activities are organized into three key stages: pre-task, while-task, and post-task, which align with Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) view that effective listening instruction should incorporate preparation before listening, active processing during listening, and reflective activities after listening. Digital learning platforms further support the use of video materials, as videos can be paused, replayed, or annotated through screen-sharing tools, and the widespread availability of authentic content on platforms such as YouTube and BBC Learning English offers an extensive source of age and level-appropriate listening materials.

This research presents the findings of a study that examined the current level and fundamental challenges of pre-intermediate EFL students' English listening comprehension skills, developed those skills through a six-week instructional intervention using engaging video-based tasks within the TBLT framework, and evaluated both the effectiveness of the intervention and students' satisfaction with the instructional approach. By generating evidence-based pedagogical insights, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective listening instruction not only in Myanmar but also in similar online EFL contexts across the ASEAN region.

Research Objectives

1 . To study the current level of English listening comprehension skills and fundamental challenges of pre-intermediate EFL students at an online school in Yangon before the implementation of engaging video-based tasks.

2 . To develop English listening comprehension skills by using video-based tasks within the TBLT framework for pre-intermediate EFL students at an online school in Yangon.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of video-based tasks and explore students' satisfaction with the instruction.

Literature Review

Listening comprehension has been defined from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Anderson and Lynch (1988) describe listening as an active, interactive process by which listeners draw on linguistic, world, and contextual knowledge to construct meaning, rather than a passive act of reception. Rost (2011) offers a multidimensional definition encompassing reception, construction, negotiation, and collaboration, while Buck (2001) highlights the dual-process nature of listening, involving both bottom-up decoding of phonological, lexical, and syntactic information and top-down use of prior knowledge and context. Vandergrift and Goh (2012), building on metacognitive theory, frame listening as a strategic, self-regulated process in which skilled listeners monitor their own comprehension and deploy appropriate strategies. For the purposes of this study, English listening comprehension skills are operationally defined as the ability to identify main ideas, understand specific details, make inferences, and recognize the speaker's tone and attitude.

The importance of listening is affirmed across the literature. Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis positions comprehensible input as the foundation from which vocabulary, grammar, and communicative norms are internalized, while Field (2008) notes that listening exposes learners to phonological features such as stress, rhythm, and connected speech that are not reliably conveyed through written text. Buck (2001) further notes that lower-proficiency learners tend to rely disproportionately on bottom-up decoding while lacking the strategic resources to exploit contextual cues, a pattern with direct relevance to the present study's pre-intermediate sample.

Video-based instruction refers to the systematic use of moving images accompanied by sound to provide contextualized, authentic, and visually enriched language input (Sherman, 2003). Within TBLT, a video-based task is a structured activity in which a video serves as the primary input, and learners use language purposefully to accomplish a communicative goal (Ellis, 2003). The design of the lesson plans used in this study draws on two converging frameworks: Willis's (1996) three-stage TBLT model, pre-task, task cycle

(while-task), and language focus (post-task); and Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML), which proposes that the human cognitive system processes visual and auditory information through separate channels of limited capacity and that meaningful learning requires the active integration of information from both. The CTML predicts that learners who receive information through both channels simultaneously will achieve deeper comprehension than those receiving input through a single channel, a prediction empirically supported by Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005), who found that EFL learners receiving combined visual and auditory input significantly outperformed those receiving audio-only input.

Implementing video-based tasks within TBLT reconstitutes the roles of teacher and students: the teacher shifts from primary information provider to facilitator, designer, and guide, while students become active meaning-makers who collaborate with peers and monitor their own comprehension. Advantages of video-based tasks include exposure to the full range of features of natural spoken English - contractions, reductions, and overlap - that are absent from textbook audio (Kim, 2020), although limitations such as buffering, poor audio quality, and unstable connectivity can disrupt the online viewing experience and must be addressed through careful instructional design.

Student satisfaction, as conceptualized in this study, refers to the degree to which students felt positively about and derived benefit from the instructional approach. Reeve (2012) links satisfaction to self-determination theory's three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while Likert's (1932) summated rating scale provides the methodological basis for measuring this construct. Mean scores are interpreted according to the five-level classification criteria of Best and Kahn (1986).

Empirical evidence from Myanmar, Thailand, and abroad supports the effectiveness of video-based and TBLT-informed listening instruction. In Myanmar, Htoo (2021) and Win and Maung (2019) found that listening comprehension remains a significant area of difficulty, with structured pre-while-post listening activities producing measurable improvement. In Thailand, Suwannatthachote and Tantrarungroj (2012), Charoenchai (2019), Wongdaeng and Hajihama (2018), and Rattanaphumma (2016) consistently report significant listening gains and higher motivation among learners receiving video-based or TBLT-informed instruction compared to conventional approaches. Internationally, Garza (1991) and Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005) provide foundational experimental evidence for the superiority of video over audio-only input, particularly for inference-based comprehension, while Kim (2020) reports findings from a one-group pretest-posttest study of pre-intermediate Korean EFL learners that closely parallel the design and expected outcomes of the present study.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the theoretical integration of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML). The independent variable is the engaging video-based tasks implemented through the TBLT framework, operationalized as a six-week instructional intervention delivered via Zoom using authentic short videos from BBC Learning English, organized into pre-task, while-task, and post-task phases following Willis (1996). The dependent variable is English listening comprehension skills, measured across four sub-skills: identifying the main idea, understanding specific details, making inferences, and recognizing tone and attitude. The framework hypothesizes that presenting authentic spoken language alongside supportive visual context, as supported by Mayer's CTML, reduces the cognitive load of bottom-up decoding for pre-intermediate learners and that structuring this multimodal input through the meaning-focused engagement of TBLT provides the optimal conditions for enhancing both objective listening comprehension and subjective learner satisfaction.

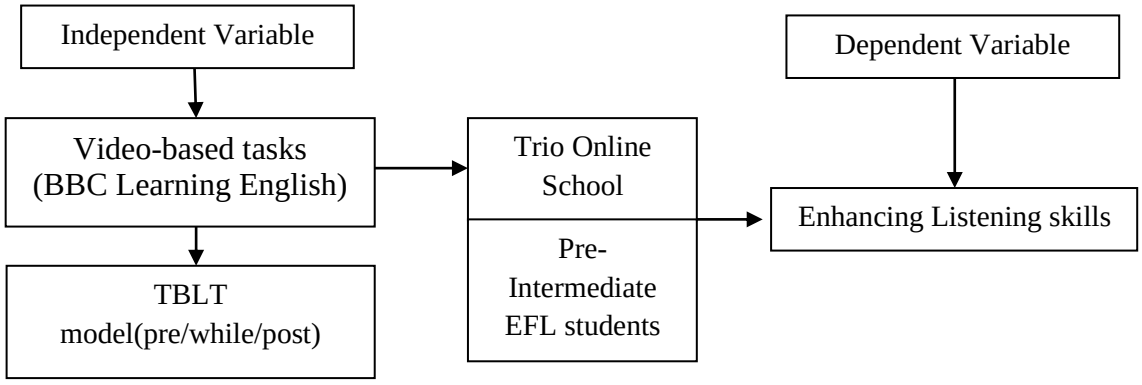


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental research design, specifically the one-group pretest-posttest design (Ary et al., 2019), in which an English listening comprehension test was administered before and after a six-week instructional intervention using engaging video-based tasks within the TBLT Pre-While-Post framework, with a dependent samples t-test used to determine the statistical significance of any difference at the .05 level. The population consisted of 90 pre-intermediate EFL students (CEFR A2) enrolled at Trio Online School in Yangon, Myanmar, during the second semester of 2025-2026, from which 15 students were selected through purposive sampling (Creswell, 2014) based on current enrollment, consistent attendance (at least 80%), reliable internet access, and willingness to participate. The independent variable was the implementation of video-based tasks delivered via Zoom using BBC Learning English videos structured around the pre-task, while-task, and post-task sequence; the dependent variable was students' listening comprehension skills, operationalized as scores on a 30-item multiple-choice test measuring four sub-skills: identifying main ideas, understanding specific details, making inferences, and recognizing tone and attitude. The intervention spanned six weeks (18 instructional hours, two 90-minute sessions per week) from December 2025 to January 2026. Three research instruments were used: six-week lesson plans following the TBLT structure, the 30-item listening test, and a 25-item five-point Likert-scale satisfaction questionnaire covering five thematic dimensions. All instruments were validated by three experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC = ?R/N), with items achieving IOC ? 0.67 retained. The finalized test was administered as the pre-test on December 6, 2025, and as the post-test on January 10, 2026, followed immediately by the satisfaction questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage) and a dependent samples t-test, supplemented by the researcher's observational field notes documenting attendance, participation, comprehension difficulties, and technical issues throughout the intervention.

Research Results

Objective 1. The results showed that students' baseline listening comprehension was at a low level prior to the instructional intervention.

The overall pre-test mean score of the 15 students was 13.20 out of 30 (44.00%, SD = 1.86), confirming that the sample group's baseline listening comprehension skills were below

the expected competency threshold for the A2 level. Disaggregated by sub-skill, performance was low across all four areas: identifying main idea (M = 3.20, 40.00%); understanding specific details (M = 4.33, 43.33%), making inferences (M = 3.27, 46.67%), and recognizing tone/attitude (M = 2.40, 48.00%), the last of which, although the highest percentage among the sub-skills, remained below the 50% threshold. Five fundamental challenges were identified from the pre-test data and the researcher's field notes: difficulty identifying the central message of authentic spoken discourse; inability to retain sufficient specific detail under real-time processing conditions; weak inferential reasoning skills; limited familiarity with natural speech rate and connected speech phenomena; and over-reliance on individual word recognition rather than schema-based, top-down processing.

Table 1. Pre-Test Performance by Listening Sub-Skill

Sub-Skill	Mean Score	SD	Percentage (%)	Level
Identifying Main Idea (8 items)	3.20	0.77	40.00	Low
Understanding Specific Details (10 items)	4.33	0.98	43.33	Low
Making Inferences (7 items)	3.27	0.88	46.67	Low
Recognizing Tone/Attitude (5 items)	2.40	0.74	48.00	Low

Objective 2. The results showed that video-based tasks within the TBLT framework produced a statistically significant improvement in listening comprehension.

Following the six-week intervention, the group mean increased from 13.20 (44.00%) on the pre-test to 22.53 out of 30 (75.10%, SD = 1.55) on the post-test, a mean gain of 9.33 points (+31.10 percentage points). All 15 students recorded higher post-test than pre-test scores. A dependent samples t-test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant at the .05 level, $t(14) = 40.16$, $p < .001$, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis and confirmation of Research Hypothesis 1.5.2.

Table 2. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Descriptive Statistics

Test	Mean (/30)	SD	Percentage (%)	Level
Pre-Test	13.20	1.86	44.00	Low
Post-Test	22.53	1.55	75.10	"High"
Mean Difference	9.33	—	31.10	—

Gains were observed across all four sub-skills. Identifying the main idea showed the largest gain (+33.33 percentage points, from 40.00% to 73.33%), followed by understanding specific details (+31.33 points, to 74.67%), making inferences (+29.52 points, to 76.19%), and recognizing tone/attitude (+29.33 points, to 77.33%). The pronounced gain in main idea identification suggests that the pre-task schema activation and purpose-setting activities embedded in the lesson plans were particularly effective in supporting global discourse comprehension, while the substantial gains in inference-making and tone recognition are consistent with Mayer's (2009) CTML prediction that dual-channel video input reduces the cognitive load of bottom-up decoding and frees resources for higher-order meaning construction.

Table 3. Results of the Dependent Samples t-Test (Pre-Test vs. Post-Test)

Variable	N	Pre-Test M	Post-Test M	Mean Diff.	t-value	Sig. (p)
Listening Comprehension	15	13.20	22.53	9.33	40.16	< .001*

*Statistically significant at $p < .05$ (two-tailed); df = 14

Objective 3 . The results showed that students' satisfaction toward the video-based instructional approach was at a high level overall.

The overall mean satisfaction score across all 25 items and five sections was 4.38 (SD = 0.51), within the 3.50-4.49 range and classified as High according to the criteria of Best and Kahn (1986), confirming Research Hypothesis 1.5.3. The highest satisfaction was recorded for Learner Engagement and Motivation (M = 4.52, Highest level), followed by Video Content Quality and Relevance (M = 4.45, High), Effectiveness of the Three-Stage Task Structure (M = 4.38, High), Overall Learning Experience (M = 4.37, High), and Perceived Improvement in Listening Skills (M = 4.20, High), which received the lowest, though still high, score among the five sections.

Table 4. Satisfaction Questionnaire Results by Section

Section	Mean	SD	Level
1. Video Content Quality and Relevance	4.45	0.51	High
2. Effectiveness of the Three-Stage Task Structure	4.38	0.49	High
3. Learner Engagement and Motivation	4.52	0.52	Highest
4. Perceived improvement in listening skills	4.20	0.56	High
5. Overall Learning Experience	4.37	0.48	High
Overall	4.38	0.51	High

The comparatively lower, though still high, score for perceived improvement in listening Skills may reflect the documented difficulty of introspective self-assessment of listening ability (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012) and does not contradict the statistically significant objective improvement documented in the pre-test/post-test comparison.

Discussions

Students' low initial listening proficiency (44.00%) is consistent with the literature identifying authentic spoken English processing as one of the most challenging tasks for lower-proficiency EFL learners (Field, 2008; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). The particular weakness in main idea identification and inferential reasoning supports Buck's (2001) framework, which posits that lower-proficiency learners operate predominantly in bottom-up decoding mode, devoting the majority of processing resources to word-level recognition at the expense of higher-order meaning construction. The students' specific difficulty with natural speech rate and connected speech phenomena aligns with Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) observation that pre-intermediate learners are frequently overwhelmed by reduced

forms, assimilation, and elision that are absent from the artificially clear, slow recordings typical of textbook-based instruction.

The statistically significant improvement in post-test scores provides strong empirical support for the effectiveness of engaging video-based tasks within the TBLT framework, extending the findings of comparable studies in both Thai and international EFL contexts (Charoenchai, 2019; Kim, 2020; Wongdaeng & Hajihama, 2018). The pronounced gain in main idea identification can be attributed to the pre-task schema-activation activities, topic brainstorming, vocabulary pre-teaching, and prediction tasks that are integral to the TBLT pre-task stage and that Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) metacognitive pedagogical sequence identifies as a critical scaffold for top-down processing. The gains in inference-making and tone/attitude recognition are consistent with Mayer's (2009) CTML and directly parallel the experimental findings of Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005), who demonstrated that multimodal visual-and-auditory input significantly outperforms audio-only input on inference-based comprehension measures.

The high overall satisfaction score (M = 4.38) is theoretically coherent from the perspective of self-determination theory (Reeve, 2012): the authentic, unscripted BBC Learning English content supported learners' sense of autonomy and relatedness, while the structured TBLT task framework provided clear, achievable goals and feedback that supported their sense of competence. The high rating for the three-stage task structure (M = 4.38) further echoes Charoenchai's (2019) finding that Thai secondary students prefer structured, staged listening tasks, which help manage cognitive demands and reduce listening anxiety, a significant affective barrier among lower-proficiency learners.

Knowledge from Research

This study generates a practical, replicable instructional model integrating two complementary theoretical frameworks: Willis' (1996) TBLT pre-while-post sequence, which structures the learning episode, and Mayer's (2009) CTML, which explains the cognitive mechanism through which dual-channel video input reduces processing load and supports higher-order comprehension. The synthesized model can be summarized as follows: (1) authentic, level-appropriate video input from sources such as BBC Learning English supplies the linguistic and visual richness needed for genuine comprehension practice; (2) the three-stage pre-task / while-task / post-task sequence scaffolds learners' cognitive engagement at each phase of the listening process; and (3) the combination of objective skill measurement and subjective satisfaction evaluation provides a comprehensive basis for evaluating instructional effectiveness in online EFL contexts. This model offers teachers and curriculum designers in Myanmar and across the ASEAN region a concise, evidence-based framework that can be adapted to other proficiency levels, content areas, and delivery modes.

Conclusion

This study addressed the persistently low English listening comprehension skills of pre-intermediate EFL students learning in an online environment in Myanmar. The pre-test results confirmed that students' baseline listening skills were low across all four targeted sub-skills (M = 13.20/30, 44.00%). Following a six-week instructional intervention using engaging video-based tasks within the TBLT Pre-While-Post framework, students achieved a significantly higher post-test mean of 22.53 out of 30 (75.10%), $t(14) = 40.16$, $p < .001$, with improvements documented across all four sub-skills and the largest gain in identifying the

main idea. Students' overall satisfaction with the instructional approach was high (M = 4.38), with the highest satisfaction reported for learner engagement and motivation. These results contribute empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of video-based instruction, TBLT, and multimodal learning materials for EFL listening development and demonstrate that integrating authentic BBC Learning English content with a structured, three-stage task framework is both pedagogically effective and highly acceptable to pre-intermediate EFL learners in online instructional contexts.

Suggestions

Recommendations for Implementation

1. Video Selection: Teachers should select authentic short videos (approximately 2-4 minutes) from reliable sources such as BBC Learning English, ensuring clear pronunciation, moderate speech rate, and predominantly high-frequency vocabulary appropriate for A2-level learners, with rich visual context such as subtitles and gestures.

2. Consistent Application of the Three-Stage Framework: Teachers should ensure faithful implementation of the pre-task, while-task, and post-task stages in each lesson without abbreviating the pre-task schema-activation phase, and should incorporate at least two viewings with distinct purposes during the while-task stage.

3. Technical Preparation for Online Delivery: Teachers should verify audio and video quality before each session, prepare downloadable versions of videos for students with unstable connections, and conduct a brief technical check at the start of each lesson.

Recommendations for Future Research

4. Future studies should employ larger sample sizes and, where feasible, a control group design (at least 30 students per group) to strengthen internal validity and generalizability.

5. Future research should examine long-term retention of listening skill gains through a delayed post-test administered several weeks or months after the intervention.

6. Future studies should investigate the effectiveness of video-based TBLT tasks across different CEFR proficiency levels (A1 to B2) and in face-to-face, hybrid, and fully asynchronous contexts.

7. Future research could investigate the added value of explicitly embedding Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) Metacognitive Pedagogical Sequence within the video-based TBLT framework to combine motivational and cognitive benefits.

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