
**“POTENCY OF THE TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING
METHOD IN AMELIORATING THE SPEAKING SKILLS RELATED
TO SECOND LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY: AN EXPERIMENTAL
RESEARCH”**

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT) in improving speaking skills in second language acquisition. Conducted at the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE), this experimental study involved 100 undergraduates, divided into an experimental group and a control group. The study aimed to compare the impact of TBLT and traditional teacher-centered methods on students' speaking proficiency. Through pre-tests and post-tests, the study assessed improvements in fluency, accuracy, and overall speaking ability. Additionally, a questionnaire was administered to evaluate students' attitudes toward TBLT. The findings reveal that students in the experimental group demonstrated a significant improvement in their speaking skills, particularly in fluency and accuracy, compared to the control group. Furthermore, the majority of students expressed positive attitudes towards TBLT, appreciating its interactive and practical approach to language learning. The results suggest that TBLT can be a more effective method for enhancing speaking proficiency in second language learners. The study recommends the integration of TBLT into second language curricula and further exploration of its long-term benefits.

KEYWORDS: Task-Based Language Learning, speaking skills, second language acquisition, communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, language pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The acquisition of speaking competence in a second language has become a vital field in modern language teaching because of the need to communicate effectively in the academic, professional and social worlds. English is an international language used as a communication tool in the world, the medium of higher learning, in technology and in job opportunities. English language proficiency is in fact deemed as a prerequisite in educational advancement and development of career in countries like Sri Lanka. Even after years and years of formal English education, many Sri Lankan learners have low levels of oral competence and are not confident in speaking English (Perera and Canagarajah, 2010). This is a significant issue in second language (L2) pedagogy, especially in the school and tertiary education settings.

In Sri Lanka, the traditional English language teaching methods have tended to be teacher centred and examination-oriented with an emphasis on grammar translation, memorization and rote learning (Wijetunge, 2012). While these approaches can be helpful in acquiring grammatical knowledge and understanding, they tend to offer little room for real communication and spontaneous language. However, students are often exposed to anxiety, hesitation and low participation in speaking activities (Herath, 2015). It has been suggested that conventional methods do not provide communicative contexts that afford students the opportunity to engage in language use under realistic conditions (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Given these drawbacks, communicative methods of language instruction have become popular and are known worldwide. Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is one of the emerging pedagogical methods that centers around the accomplishment of meaningful tasks through interaction and communication. TBLT focuses on the learner's engagement, on collaborative learning and on the use of language in real life situations, not on the memorization of grammatical structures (Ellis, 2003). Nunan (2004) argued that TBLT tasks will make learners use the language purposefully for specific purposes, which will lead to their fluency, confidence, and communicative competence. Likewise, Willis and Willis (2007) argued that TBLT is learner-centered in which learners can negotiate meaning, solve problems, and communicate in authentic language, which has a significant impact on the development of speaking skills.

A number of international studies have shown that TBLT is an effective approach for second language (L2) speaking development for L2 learners. For example, task-based instruction is

shown to be more effective than traditional instruction in improving levels of fluency, interactional competence, and learner motivation (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2017). Moreover, Carless (2007) did a study and the result of the research showed that students exposed to task-based activities were more active and had higher self-confidence when they were given the task. The results suggest that TBLT is effective at helping to improve the speaking skills of learners as it offers meaningful language practices.

In Sri Lanka, communicative language teaching approach is not widely adopted even though the emphasis has been on learner-centred education in the curriculum reforms. The examination pressure, inadequate teacher training, cramped classrooms, and low exposure to communicative activities are some of the reasons why many classrooms in schools are still employing passive teaching methods (Gunesekera, 2015). As a result, pupils can be very knowledgeable about English, but unable to use it in the real world. While some local studies have addressed the issues of teaching the English language in Sri Lanka, little experimental studies have focused on the effectiveness of TBLT on the speaking proficiency of the non-native speakers of English (L2) in Sri Lanka.

This lack of research outlines the need for more empirical research of the effectiveness of TBLT in the local education system. The ability to speak another language is crucial to academic success, employment, and international interaction, making it of great educational value to determine effective teaching methods. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Task Based Language Learning (TBL) in improving L2 speaking skills in the context of second language teaching and learning using experimental research design. The study will compare the TBLT group with the traditional method group to offer meaningful information about the current teaching approaches and offer proof-based suggestions for enhancing second language teaching in Sri Lanka.

1.2 Research Problem

Among the English learners in Sri Lanka, speaking proficiency is one of the most difficult skills to learn as a second language. Although many students have studied English in formal education systems for years, they still struggle with speaking English with low accuracy, low fluency, poor pronunciation and low confidence in oral communication (Herath, 2015). This problem has been growing more and more serious, as communicative competence in English is an indispensable requirement for higher education, to succeed in the labor market, and to survive in the world of today and the future.

The failure to resolve this issue is one of the major causes of the problem because the traditional teacher-centered instructional methods are still dominating Sri Lankan classrooms. First, these approaches focus more on grammar instruction, the use of textbooks, memorization, and preparing for examinations, which is not meaningful communication (Wijetunge, 2012). This means that learners are given scant opportunities to practice real-world or interactive speech. Communicative educational strategies like Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) are widely used and acclaimed across the world to boost the language learning ability of learners, but there is not much application of these approaches in SLS classrooms in Sri Lanka.

In addition, there has been limited experimental research in Sri Lankan context to date investigating the direct effect of TBLT on the oral language proficiency and attitude towards language learning of the students, most of the international studies have focused on speaking development and its effectiveness on that. However, the lack of empirical evidence from the classroom level makes it unclear whether and how TBLT can be used with second language learners in Sri Lanka. Hence, the main question of this work is whether the Task Based Language Learning (TBL) is a better pedagogical approach than traditional task-based approach in developing learner's speaking proficiency and learner's involvement in second language learning.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1 How does Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT) impact speaking skills in second language learners?
- 2 What differences are observed in speaking proficiency between students taught with TBLT and those taught with traditional methods?
- 3 What are the students' attitudes toward TBLT in language learning?

3.1 Research Objectives

- 1 To evaluate the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing speaking proficiency.
- 2 To compare the improvement in speaking skills between students taught using TBLT and those taught using traditional methods.
- 3 To assess students' attitudes toward TBLT.

2. Literature Review

3.1 Origins and Theoretical Foundations of TBLT

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged as a learner-centered alternative to traditional grammar-oriented teaching methods, prioritizing meaningful communication and practical www.ijarp.com

language use. Grounded in the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), TBLT shifts the focus from theoretical language rules to real-life interaction. Prabhu's (1987) Bangalore Project demonstrated the effectiveness of task-oriented instruction, showing that activities requiring practical communication and problem-solving significantly enhanced learners' fluency and comprehension compared to rote memorization of grammatical structures.

The theoretical foundation of TBLT is strongly influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning. Within this framework, TBLT tasks encourage learners to collaborate, negotiate meaning, and refine their linguistic performance with the guidance of peers and instructors. This aligns with Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that meaningful interactions promote language acquisition through processes such as input, output, and feedback.

Ellis (2003) defines a task as an activity requiring learners to use their existing linguistic knowledge to achieve a specific objective. Tasks can be classified as either focused, which target particular language structures, or unfocused, which aim to develop broader communicative competence. Both types foster engagement in realistic contexts, facilitating practical language application.

2.2 Characteristics and Principles of TBLT

TBLT centers on real-world tasks as the primary mechanism for instruction. Nunan (2004) outlines that tasks should have clear communicative goals, emphasize meaning-focused activities, and mirror authentic language use. Examples include conducting interviews, planning events, and solving problems—tasks that require learners to apply language pragmatically in pursuit of specific outcomes.

Willis (1996) introduced a structured framework for implementing TBLT, which includes the following stages:

- Pre-task: Preparing learners by introducing the topic and task context.
- Task Cycle: Facilitating task completion and reporting on findings.
- Post-task: Encouraging reflection on performance, language analysis, and refining linguistic accuracy.

This approach allows learners to engage in fluency-building activities while incorporating opportunities for critical reflection and feedback, promoting incremental improvements in both fluency and accuracy. Additionally, Skehan (1998) emphasizes the need for cognitively

challenging tasks that encourage linguistic complexity while maintaining a focus on effective communication.

2.3 Importance of Speaking Skills in Second Language Acquisition

Speaking is one of the most essential and complex skills in second language acquisition, involving the integration of multiple competencies, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. According to Brown and Yule (1983), speaking serves both transactional purposes, such as conveying information, and interactional purposes, which involve building social relationships. Both are crucial for achieving communicative competence.

Bygate (1987) highlights that effective speaking requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to apply this knowledge dynamically in real-time interactions. In contexts like Sri Lanka, learners often excel in grammar but struggle with oral communication due to limited practice opportunities and insufficient exposure to real-world scenarios. TBLT addresses this gap by creating task-driven opportunities for authentic language use, fostering confidence and the ability to communicate effectively in practical contexts.

2.4 The Role of TBLT in Developing Speaking Skills

TBLT has proven to be particularly effective in enhancing speaking proficiency by prioritizing authentic communication, interactive learning, and task engagement. Through real-life tasks, learners develop essential skills, including fluency, accuracy, and sociolinguistic competence, which are critical for effective verbal communication.

2.4.1 Fluency and Accuracy

Fluency, defined as the ability to produce speech effortlessly and fluidly, is a key objective of TBLT. Willis (1996) suggests that prioritizing fluency in the initial stages of learning helps learners overcome inhibitions and build confidence. Through task-based activities, learners focus on meaning rather than grammatical precision, enabling natural language use. Over time, feedback and task repetition help refine accuracy by addressing errors in grammar and pronunciation without undermining fluency.

Skehan (1998) argues that cognitively engaging tasks, such as storytelling or group discussions, assist learners in organizing their thoughts, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and structuring speech coherently. This dual focus on fluency and precision ensures balanced linguistic development.

2.4.2 Interaction and Negotiation of Meaning

Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis underscores the role of interaction in language learning, particularly through negotiation of meaning during communication challenges. Tasks like information-gap activities and decision-making scenarios require learners to exchange information, clarify misunderstandings, and adjust their output based on feedback, enhancing conversational competence.

Ellis (2003) notes that group-based tasks foster collaboration, enabling learners to develop sociolinguistic competence and adapt their speech to different contexts. This skill is particularly valuable in multilingual settings, such as Sri Lanka, where learners must navigate diverse linguistic and cultural norms.

2.4.3 Confidence and Motivation

TBLT also addresses psychological barriers, such as anxiety and lack of confidence, which often impede speaking development. Horwitz et al. (1986) found that speaking anxiety can significantly hinder learner performance. By providing a supportive and engaging environment, TBLT encourages learners to experiment with language and take risks in meaningful contexts. Sholihah (2013) demonstrated that task-based instruction significantly enhanced students' confidence and motivation, leading to greater enthusiasm for language learning.

2.5 Empirical Evidence of TBLT's Effectiveness

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been a subject of much research concerning second language acquisition because it is effective to enhance learners' communicative competence, especially their speaking skills. Many empirical studies have shown the effectiveness of TBLT in providing meaningful opportunities for authentic interaction, increasing learner motivation, and increasing oral fluency, accuracy and confidence in all educational contexts. Research consistently supports the effectiveness of TBLT in developing speaking skills. Farahani (2001) observed significant improvements in learners' fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary use following task-based instruction. Similarly, Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) found that narrative tasks enhanced learners' coherence and spontaneity in speech. In Sri Lanka, Wijeratne (2018) reported that task-based approaches improved not only linguistic performance but also learners' confidence in handling real-world communication scenarios. These findings highlight the adaptability and efficacy of TBLT across diverse learning contexts.

One of the most influential studies that focused on TBLT was conducted by Ellis (2003) who

said that task-based activities require students to focus on meaning and promote communicative competence. According to Ellis, students who are involved in meaningful activities are more fluent and willing to communicate than students who are taught traditional grammar. Likewise, Skehan (1998) concluded that TBLT facilitates students' speaking proficiency through the process of real-time language processing and interactional communication. Repeating tasks and communicating with students promotes good fluency and accuracy in their spoken language production, his study showed.

There is also empirical evidence to support TBLT as provided by Nunan (2004) who found that task-based language learning activates students in language classes and decreases students' anxiety in language classes. Students who were exposed to communicative tasks were more confident in expressing their ideas and participating in classroom discussion and more, his findings showed. Similarly, Willis and Willis (2007) reported that task-based instruction provides authentic communicative contexts in which learners negotiate meaning and solve problems together, which plays an important role in the acquisition of speaking skills.

In addition, several experimental studies also support the effectiveness of TBLT in the improvement of speaking skills. Aside from that, several experimental studies are also found supporting the effectiveness of TBLT in the improvement of speaking skills. Panduwangi (2021) conducted a laboratory experiment with the subjects who were college students from Indonesia and found that students who learned by using TBLT speaking accuracy and fluency were improved significantly than students who learned by using conventional learning. The research further showed that the students' self-confidence and positive attitudes on speaking activity increased following the task-based lessons.

In the same way, Lume and Hisbullah (2022) examined the effectiveness of TBLT applied to students of Vocational school, with quasi-experimental design. The result of their study showed that the experimental group using TBLT scored higher in speaking (Mean Score = 66.38) than the control group (Mean Score = 60.3) which taught by direct instruction. The results obtained from the statistical analysis showed that the difference was significant, indicating that the use of TBLT has a positive influence in students' speaking performance.

Sabil (2020) was an important contributor to secondary students' speaking ability through the application of TBLT. The study showed that the post-test speaking scores were higher for the learners in the task-based classroom than for the learners in the traditional classroom which was based on the discussion approach. Additionally, students showed high interest and motivation in task based speaking activities and it was found that TBLT also has positive impact on the learners' attitude and motivation.

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In addition, Azizifard (2024) explored the effect of task-based group oral presentations on university students' speaking skills. The results showed that students had positive attitudes towards collaborative speaking task and were involved in communicative activities. Based on the results of this research, it is concluded that TBLT increases the students' interaction, confidence, and speaking competencies because of the process of authentic communication.

It is also proved that TBLT is effective based on the meta-analytical evidence. In her systematic research synthesis and meta-analysis of 61 published studies, Medina Fernández (2021) found that TBLT interventions had a positive effect on oral production. The results showed medium to large effect size ($d = 0.78$) on TBLT's improvement on speaking skills. This investigation also found that the repetition of tasks and pre-task planning significantly enhanced learners' fluency, complexity and accuracy at spoken interaction.

Similarly, Bryfonski and McKay (2019) found in their meta-analysis of TBLT implementation that task-based instruction is a consistent positive practice in authentic language learning classrooms. Their research highlighted the fact that, TBLT is more effective than traditional pedagogical approach as it encourages interaction, real communication and engagement of the learner.

Overall, empirical literature confirms that TBLT is a good pedagogical method for the development of language abilities, particularly the speaking ability, in L2 classroom. The results are found consistently to show that task-based teaching leads to higher levels of fluency, communicative confidence, interactional competence and motivation than traditional teaching. But, there is a lack of experimental study to explore the effectiveness of TBLT in the Sri Lankan educational context in spite of vast amount of international evidence. It therefore requires further localized studies to establish if the above positive results can be achieved in Sri Lanka's second language learners.

2.6 Challenges and Solutions in Implementing TBLT

Despite its advantages, implementing TBLT can be challenging due to a lack of trained educators, insufficient resources, and resistance to innovation in traditional, exam-oriented education systems. Carless (2004) observed that some educators perceive TBLT as incompatible with standardized curriculum objectives.

To overcome these challenges, Ellis (2006) recommends a blended approach that combines task-based activities with traditional methods to balance communicative and academic goals. Furthermore, targeted teacher training programs and gradual curriculum reforms can facilitate the effective integration of TBLT into educational systems.

4. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to describe the research methodology adopted to explore the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing speaking skills in the relation to second language pedagogy. The study was conducted using a quantitative experimental method with qualitative aspects, which aimed at analyzing both the improvement of students' speaking skills and students' attitudes towards TBLT in the process of learning English.

4.1 Research Design

The study employed an experimental research design with pre-test and post-test control group experimental approach. Experimental research is appropriate when the researcher wants to measure the impact of a specific intervention or treatment on the subjects or participants in the study (Creswell, 2014). The treatment was the use of Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) activities in English speaking class.

The subjects used in the research were two groups, one experimental and one control. The two groups received different instruction; the experimental group was given instruction in speaking skills using Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) strategies while the control group was given instruction in speaking skills through the traditional teacher-centered method used in the English language classroom. The pre-test and post-test for both groups was a speaking test. A comparison between the two groups enabled the researcher to find out if there was a significant effect of TBLT on the students' speaking proficiency.

Along with the quantitative analysis, a qualitative analysis was incorporated by using a student attitude questionnaire for experimental group. Using this blended method enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights into students' experiences, perceptions and attitudes on TBLT.

4.2 Population and Sample

This study's target population was students of the first-year undergraduate of the Department of English at the Advanced Technological Institute. They were chosen because they were enrolled in the second language learning program and because they were learners who often have difficulties with the English language and in speaking English fluently and with confidence. The student population in the study was 100. 50 students were randomly divided into 2 groups of 50 students. A total of 50 students who learned through Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) activities were the experimental subjects, and 50 students who learned using conventional method were the control subjects. The use of equal group sizes supported balanced comparison and increased the reliability of the findings.

4.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed a simple random sampling technique to select participants and assign them to the two groups. Random sampling was used to minimize selection bias and ensure that each participant had an equal opportunity to be included in either the experimental or control group (Etikan and Bala, 2017). This technique enhanced the validity and objectivity of the research findings.

The number of students in the sample was considered as adequate in experimental comparison and statistical analysis for the number of 100 students. The relatively large sample size made the study more representative and the quantitative data results generated by the statistical testing procedures (paired samples t-tests, independent samples t-tests) more reliable.

4.4 Data Collection Instruments

Two general data collection instruments were used in the study: Speaking Proficiency Tests and Student Attitude Questionnaires.

4.4.1 Speaking Pre-Test and Post-Test

The speaking performance of the students was measured by giving a speaking proficiency test before and after the intervention period. The pre-test was administered to determine the pre-test level of the two groups' speaking proficiency before the implementation of the TBLT activities. The post-test was conducted following the instructional treatment to assess gains in spoken skills.

The speaking tests evaluated the following: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and confidence in speaking. Students were expected to engage in speaking activities including discussions, short presentations and interactive communication activities. The criteria for the scoring system was derived from a communicative language assessment that is frequently used in second language pedagogy.

The sample size of 100 students was considered adequate for experimental comparison and statistical analysis. The relatively large sample size improved the representativeness of the study and increased the reliability of the quantitative findings obtained through statistical testing procedures such as paired sample t-tests and independent t-tests.

4.4.2 Questionnaire on Students' Attitudes toward TBLT

Students in the experimental group were asked to fill out a structured questionnaire to gain insight into their attitudes on Task Based Language Teaching. Questions in the questionnaire were close ended and open-ended, which were split into several sections such as engagement and motivation, confidence in speaking, fluency and accuracy, overall satisfaction and

challenges encountered during TBLT activities.

Close-ended questions were adopted to obtain quantitative measure of students' perceptions while open-ended questions were adopted to elicit students' detailed opinion and suggestions concerning their learning experiences. This was used to get the researcher to understand the students' views on the effectiveness and applicability of the TBLT in enhancing speaking ability.

4.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done in a systematic manner over different stages. The study was first approved by the proper academic authorities of institute. The purpose of the study was explained and their consent volunteered before data collection began.

The initial speaking proficiency of the experimental and control groups was determined by performing the pre-test with speaking skills at the beginning of the study. After pre-testing, the experimental group was given speaking training based on Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the control group was given traditional teacher-centered speaking training.

The TBLT lessons incorporated communicative tasks like group discussion, presentation, interview, problem solving, collaborative speaking, etc. The lessons used the typical TBLT phases of pre-task, task cycle and post-task activities. In Appendix C, one lesson plan for the intervention is provided.

After a set period of instruction, the two groups took part in the intervention and afterward both groups took the speaking post test. Lastly, students' attitudes toward TBLT were measured by giving the questionnaire to the experimental group to obtain qualitative and quantitative data about their learning experiences.

4.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for quantitative data analysis for pre-test and post-test scores. Students' performance levels were summarized using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means and averages.

Paired sample t-tests were run to see if there was a statistically significant difference within each group between pre-test and post-test scores. Additionally, an independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean improvement between the experimental and control groups.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data derived from the open-ended responses to the questionnaires. The feedback from the students was systematically analyzed and classified around the major themes of engagement, confidence, improvement of fluency, motivation, and challenges faced in the TBLT activities.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles were adhered to during the study to safeguard participants' rights and confidentiality. The students' consent was sought and they were told about the aim and procedures of the study prior to participation. The participants were made to understand that their answers would not be disclosed to anyone and would be used for academic research only. In addition, participants were also told that they had the freedom to drop out of the study at anytime without any consequences. The researcher also provided security in data collection and ensured that they are used responsibly in accordance with academic research ethics.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of the data collected in the study, focusing on the improvements in speaking proficiency between the experimental and control groups. The analysis includes both quantitative data (pre-test and post-test scores) and qualitative data (student attitudes towards Task-Based Language Teaching, TBLT). Statistical methods were used to assess the efficacy of TBLT in improving speaking skills, while thematic analysis was conducted to explore students' perceptions of TBLT.

5.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test Results: Experimental vs. Control Groups

5.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to compare the pre-test and post-test scores across both groups. The analysis involved three different speaking proficiency areas, as indicated by the three questionnaire items (Q1, Q2, and Q3). The following table summarizes the average scores for each group:

Group	Pre-test Average	Post-test Average	Improvement (%)
Experimental	72.3%	87.2%	20.5%
Control	71.8%	74.8%	4.2%

The experimental group demonstrated a notable improvement in speaking proficiency, with an average increase of 20.5%, compared to a smaller 4.2% improvement in the control group.

Pre- and post-test speaking proficiency of the students in the experimental and control groups was compared by descriptive statistical analysis. The results showed that the speaking proficiency of both groups was approximately the same at the start of the study. The pre-test mean score of the experimental group was 72.3% as compared to the mean score of 71.8% of the control group, which was very close. The small difference in the initial scores suggests that the two groups had very similar starting speaking skills before receiving the teaching

interventions. The similarity in pretest performance then further added to the validity of the experimental design because any differences found in the post-test results could be even more confidently explained as due to instructional technique instead of differences in pre-existing proficiency of the participants.

There was a significant difference observed between the two groups with respect to improvement in speaking performance after intervention. The experimental group who were taught using Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) had an average of 87.2% or a great improvement of 20.5% on the post test. The control group learning the same content using traditional teacher-centered teaching methods only made a small improvement from 71.8% to 74.8%, making an improvement of 4.2%. The results indicated that TBLT approach has significantly higher effect on students' speaking proficiency than the conventional teaching methodology. The communicative and interactive approach to the tasks might have been one of the reasons for the significant improvement that was seen in the experimental group as they were given frequent opportunities to use authentic language and take an active role in the discussion and interaction, thus allowing them to participate in meaningful communication. In addition, the research showed that the TBLT technique was able to help learners develop in terms of fluency and accuracy, and to raise the confidence and motivation of the learners to communicate with English. Thus, the outcomes of descriptive statistics indicate that Task Based Language Teaching is very effective to be used as an innovative pedagogical approach in the context of second language learning particularly in speaking.

5.1.2 Paired Sample t-Test

To assess the statistical significance of the improvement in speaking proficiency within each group, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The results indicated that the experimental group exhibited a significant improvement in their post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores ($t = -6.13, p < 0.05$). In contrast, the control group's improvement was modest and not statistically significant ($t = -1.42, p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that TBLT was significantly more effective in enhancing speaking proficiency compared to traditional teaching methods used in the control group.

The paired sample t-test analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving students' speaking proficiency. The statistically significant result obtained for the experimental group ($t = -6.13, p < 0.05$) indicates that the improvement observed between the pre-test and post-test scores was not due to chance, but rather the direct impact of the TBLT intervention. This finding aligns closely with the primary objective of the study, which aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing speaking skills among

second language learners. The task-based activities provided students with opportunities to engage in authentic communication, collaborative interaction, and spontaneous language use, which may have contributed to the significant improvement in fluency, confidence, and accuracy. In contrast, the control group did not demonstrate statistically significant progress, suggesting that traditional teacher-centered instruction offered limited support for meaningful speaking development. Therefore, the t-test findings provide strong statistical evidence that TBLT is a more effective pedagogical approach for improving speaking proficiency in second language learning contexts.

5.1.3 Independent t-Test

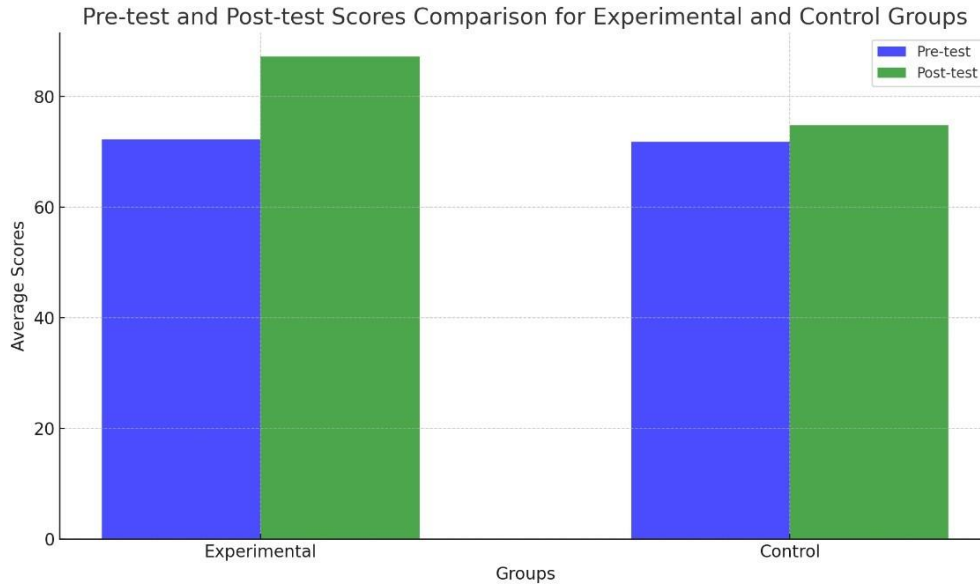
An independent t-test was performed to compare the mean improvement in speaking proficiency between the experimental and control groups. The t-test revealed a statistically significant difference ($t = -4.98, p < 0.05$), indicating that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of improvement in speaking skills.

So, the independent sample t-test was used to see if there was a statistically significant difference in how much speaking proficiency improved between the experimental group and the control group after the whole instructional intervention. In the end, the results did show a significant difference for both groups ($t = -4.98, p < 0.05$), and it's pretty clear that the students taught via Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) had much more improvement in speaking than the ones who got the more usual teacher-centered instruction. This outcome also gives additional real world(ish) evidence that TBLT works as an instructional approach for second language pedagogy.

The findings match the study objectives pretty tightly, especially the objective that is basically about comparing the improvement in speaking proficiency for learners taught using TBLT versus conventional methods. The experimental group scoring higher suggests that those task-based activities helped create a more interactive and communicative learning atmosphere that sort of pushed students to use English in a meaningful way, and with more confidence too. For instance, learners took part in discussions, presentations, and group work, so they could rehearse real-life conversation skills more regularly than students in the control group. Meanwhile, the comparatively smaller improvement in the control group implies that traditional approaches might not give enough chances for genuine spoken interaction. All in all, the independent t-test outcomes show that TBLT had a clearly stronger effect on students' speaking proficiency and it can be seen as a highly effective way to develop oral communication skills among second language learners.

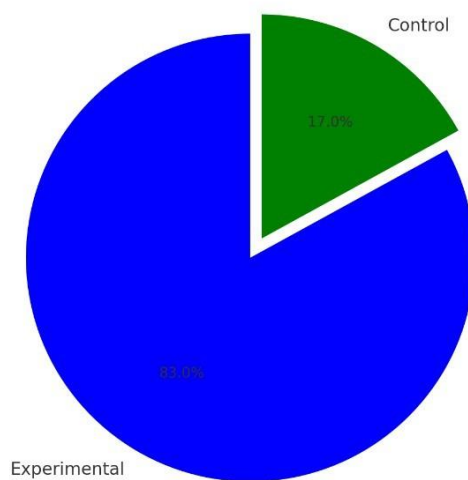
5.1.4 Visual Representation

Bar graphs were used to illustrate the pre-test and post-test results, visually emphasizing the significant difference in improvement between the two groups.



Bar Graph 1: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Experimental and Control Groups. (This graph clearly shows the greater improvement in the experimental group.)

Percentage Improvement in Speaking Proficiency



Bar Graph 2: Percentage Improvement in Speaking Proficiency. (This graph highlights the larger gain observed in the experimental group.)

5.2 Thematic Analysis of Student Attitudes Toward TBLT

In addition to quantitative analysis, a thematic analysis of the students' attitudes towards Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) was conducted based on responses to a questionnaire administered to the experimental group. The questionnaire assessed students' perceptions of the effectiveness of TBLT and its impact on their learning experience.

5.2.1 Themes Identified

Thematic analysis of the responses identified the following key themes:

Engagement and Motivation:

A majority of students (80%) reported that TBLT made the learning process more interactive and engaging. Students appreciated the opportunity to participate actively in lessons, particularly through tasks that mirrored real-life scenarios.

Example Response: "TBLT helped me to speak more confidently because I was learning by doing real tasks like interviews and discussions."

Increased Confidence:

Most students expressed that they felt more confident in speaking English after participating in TBLT lessons. They attributed this increased confidence to the hands-on nature of TBLT, which provided more opportunities for practice in a supportive environment.

Example Response: "After each task, I felt like I could speak better without worrying about making mistakes."

Improved Fluency and Accuracy:

Several students noted significant improvements in both fluency and accuracy due to the repeated practice of spontaneous communication during TBLT tasks. These improvements were consistent with the quantitative findings from the pre-test and post-test results.

Example Response: "I've noticed that I can speak faster now without pausing to think too much about my grammar."

Challenges in Task Complexity:

Some students indicated that certain tasks, particularly those requiring more advanced language skills, were initially challenging. However, they viewed these challenges as valuable learning experiences that contributed to their language development.

Example Response: "Some tasks were hard at first, but I think they helped me learn better. They pushed me to improve."

5.3 Summary of Data Analysis

The data analysis indicates that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) had a significant positive impact on students' speaking proficiency. The experimental group demonstrated substantial improvements in fluency and accuracy, with an average increase of 20.5%, compared to only a 4.2% improvement in the control group. Statistical tests, including paired and independent t-tests, confirmed the significance of these differences.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis of student attitudes revealed that the majority of students had positive perceptions of TBLT, citing increased engagement, motivation, and improved speaking skills. Many students reported feeling more confident in their ability to communicate effectively in English.

These findings suggest that TBLT is an effective method for enhancing speaking skills in second language learners, particularly in contexts where real-world communication is prioritized. Future research could explore the long-term effects of TBLT and its application in different educational contexts.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Discussion on the Findings

According to this research, it is evident that Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is very effective in developing L2 learners' speaking skills. The quantitative and qualitative results altogether confirmed the major purposes of the study, which were to test the effectiveness of TBLT, to compare its effectiveness with traditional approach, and to analyze students' attitudes towards TBLT. The results showed that the students who received the TBLT intervention made significant gains in speaking skills while the students who received the teacher-centered style of instruction made no significant gains.

The descriptive statistical analysis showed that the difference between the pretest and post-test average was significant with the post-test average of 87.2%, which is a great improvement from the pre-test average of 72.3% in the experimental group. The control group's increase was minimal at just 4.2%, however. The results of the above showed that TBLT had a significant impact on learning environments to improve the skills of oral communication learning. The improvement that was found for the experimental group could be due to task-based activities' communicative and interactive mode, which allowed the learners to use English in meaningful and authentic contexts. This result is in line with Ellis (2003) who claims that communicative competence can be improved through TBLT rather than grammar-centered teaching because it encourages students to use language for meaningful purpose. Likewise, Willis and Willis

(2007) stressed that task-based activities provide opportunities for active participation and natural communication, adding that these are significant in the area of language development. The paired sample t-test also indicated that TBLT was effective as it found the experimental group significantly improved ($t = -6.13, p < 0.05$), whereas the control group was not significantly improved. This is evidence that the gains seen were not coincidental but attributable to the teaching intervention. The results also are in line with the results obtained by Skehan (1998) which stated that task-based interaction has a positive effect on fluency, accuracy and spontaneous language production in communicative language learning. Furthermore, the independent sample t-test revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = -4.98, p < 0.05$), suggesting that the TBLT was significantly superior to conventional English teaching in terms of improving students' speaking ability.

Thematic analysis also afforded valuable insights regarding the students' perceptions on TBLT. The majority of the participants mentioned that the task-based lessons were interesting, interactive and motivational. Discussions, interviews and presentations, which were reflective of real-life communication situations, were appreciated by the students. Many of the participants also revealed that they became more confident when they were using English, stating that they were able to improve their confidence because they had quite a few opportunities to practice using English during the project. The results agree with Nunan's (2004) view that the use of learner-centered communicative tasks is effective in decreasing speaking anxiety and stimulating student participation. Moreover, the findings are supported by Panduwangi (2021) which showed that the implementation of TBLT techniques was able to improve the students' speaking confidence and motivation.

The other significant result was that students in the experimental group reported improvements in fluency and accuracy. The learners' repeated exposure to communicative tasks helped them to develop into more spontaneous and natural speakers without relying too much on memorized grammatical structures. This is in line with the concept of communicative language teaching which emphasizes that teaching language learning should be achieved through meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Some students faced difficulties in certain tasks, but as the students got along in the tasks they perceived the difficulty as a help for them to develop their language skills. This implies that, with a proper design of tasks, learners may be encouraged to step out of their comfort zones to build up their communicative competence.

The results of this study provide strong support to the previous empirical studies on the

effectiveness of TBLT in L2 teaching. The study provides useful information for the Sri Lankan context in which many English language classrooms continue to rely on the traditional teaching methods. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the use of task-based instructional strategies in English language teaching has a significant effect on students' speaking skills, confidence, motivation, and engagement. Thus, the use of TBLT can be viewed as an effective pedagogical method that can be used to develop communicative competence in second language learners.

6.2 CONCLUSION OF THE FINDINGS

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of TBLT on L2 speaking ability development in second language learners of Advanced Technological Institute (ATI). The results of this study clearly showed that the application of TBLT had a significant positive effect on students' speaking skills. Overall, the students in the experimental group exhibited significant improvement in fluency, accuracy, confidence, and communicative competence compared to the students in the control group who exhibited limited improvement.

The statistical analyses such as descriptive statistics, paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test confirmed that the improvements noted in the experimental group were statistically significant. Furthermore, the thematic analysis showed that students' attitudes toward TBLT were positive, as they considered the TBLT lessons engaging, motivating and supportive for speaking development. Learners especially appreciated the chance to engage in communicative tasks which involved them in actual contexts and activities in which they could use language in real-life situations.

Therefore, the study concludes that Task Based Language Teaching (TBTL) is one of the good instruction in the field of second language teaching and learning since it improves speaking skills. The results indicated the significance of implementing learner-centered and communicative approach in the classroom of English language to enhance the language learning environment especially in Sri Lankan educational context. The long-term effectiveness of TBLT could be discussed in future research, as well as the applicability of the method for various groups of learners and educational environments.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study led to several recommendations for the improvement of second language teaching and in order for the successful implementation of Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in educational contexts.

1. Firstly, TBLT must be integrated systematically into English language teaching and learning, especially in the context of English language course that focuses on the production of oral language. The findings revealed that learners' communicable competence, their fluency and confidence improved significantly and this indicates that curriculum developers should incorporate more communicative and more real life task-based activities in language syllabus including discussions, presentations, interviews, and problem solving tasks.
2. Secondly, it is recommended that teacher training and professional development courses should give more attention to TBLT methodologies. There are many language teachers still using traditional grammar-based teaching methods because they have not acquired the communicative teaching methods. As such, workshops, seminars and in-service training programs should be planned to provide teachers with practical knowledge and techniques in regard to TBL instruction.
3. Thirdly, educational institutions (schools, higher education institutions, universities, and colleges) should develop conducive learning environments within the classrooms that enable active involvement of learners in learning and interaction. Group activities of small size, co-operative learning and student-centered learning exercises can be used to lessen the feeling of speaking anxiety and to build the confidence of learners in using English communicatively.
4. Fourthly assessment methods in second language classrooms kinda need a shift, because they should be revised to put more weight on communicative performance and speaking proficiency, not just written examinations and grammatical accuracy. In other words, performance-based assessments like oral presentations, and also interactive speaking tasks may do a better job reflecting learners' communicative abilities, rather than relying on only what they can write.
5. Finally, future researchers really should run longitudinal and large-scale studies, to check the long-term effectiveness of TBLT across various educational levels, different learner groups, and also regional contexts throughout Sri Lanka. At the same time, further qualitative investigations could offer more nuanced understanding about teachers' and students' experiences, in terms of how TBLT gets implemented in second language pedagogy.

5.1 Future Research

Future research should keep looking into how well Task-Based Language Teaching, or TBLT,

works over the long haul for boosting second language speaking proficiency across all kinds of classrooms. In this study the researcher mainly dealt with first-year students at the Advanced Technological Institute, so later work might check what happens with school students, university undergraduates, and also with learners who sit at different proficiency levels. On top of that, researchers can investigate how TBLT may affect other language abilities like listening, reading, and writing, not just speaking. It could also be really useful to run comparison studies that look at digital, or technology-assisted, TBLT settings, since those environments might reveal fresh angles on current methods in second language teaching and communicative language learning.

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