

Task-Based Language Approach in Oral Communication Instruction: Practices of Public Elementary School Teachers In Rizal District, Kalinga

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Abstract

This study explored the implementation of the Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) in teaching oral communication skills to public elementary school teachers in the Rizal District of Kalinga, Philippines. This study specifically focused on examining the task-based and learner-centered strategies employed by teachers, the contributions of these strategies to learners' oral communication development, the challenges encountered in implementing TBLA, and the coping mechanisms adopted by teachers in a post-pandemic learning environment. A qualitative descriptive research design was utilized, with public elementary school English teachers participating in the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and were analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that teachers employed various task-based strategies, including discussions, debates, oral presentations, dialogues, role-playing, and vlog-making activities, to encourage active participation and authentic communication among learners. These activities were found to enhance learners' confidence, fluency, vocabulary, participation, and communication skills. Additionally, the findings suggest that authentic interaction and collaborative learning positively contribute to learners' oral communication development. However, teachers face several challenges, such as limited Internet connectivity, lack of technological resources, limited teacher training, grammar-focused assessment practices, and learners' preference for using their mother tongue. To address these challenges, teachers employed coping mechanisms and instructional adjustments, such as simplifying tasks, using localized examples, encouraging peer support, and creating supportive learning environments. Overall, the study concluded that TBLA is an effective approach for enhancing learners' oral communication skills, although successful implementation requires adequate teacher preparation, instructional support, and sufficient resources to be effective.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Approach, Oral Communication Skills, Learner-Centered Strategies, Elementary Education, Public School Teachers

1. Introduction

In today's world, good communication is very important, especially in education. Being able to speak well helps people work together and perform well in schools. English is a global language that helps people connect in different countries. Therefore, teaching methods such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) are popular worldwide. TBLT involves learners in real-life tasks, helping them actively use the language. Studies have shown that TBLT improves learners' fluency, confidence, interaction, and motivation in learning English (Chunliu & Guangsheng, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2022). Moreover, with more technology and online learning after COVID-19, teaching speaking skills has become increasingly interactive (Belda-Medina, 2021; Gong et al., 2025). Ellorin et al. (2024) noted that new teaching methods and technologies make learning engaging and interactive. These changes highlight the importance of new ways of teaching speaking skills.

In the Philippines, English is a significant part of the K–12 curriculum because it is widely used in schools, workplaces, and globally. The Department of Education is pushing for teaching methods that focus on students and encourage effective communication. However, despite these efforts, many Filipino students still find it tough to speak English confidently and do not participate in speaking activities. The COVID-19 pandemic shook things up quite a bit, leading to blended and flexible learning approaches in higher education. This shift has made it even more important to develop effective and creative teaching strategies to help students improve their speaking skills, despite the challenges of this new learning setup (Ramalingam et al., 2022; Zhangli et al., 2024).

In the vibrant tapestry of education, where Task-Based Language Teaching is increasingly woven into the fabric, the spotlight in the Philippines often shines on secondary and tertiary education, leaving the elementary stage in the shadows. In the bustling classrooms of Rizal District, Kalinga, public elementary school teachers navigate a rich linguistic landscape where students often cling to their mother tongues like cherished heirlooms, leaving English as a distant echo in their lives. These educators face a myriad of challenges, from the scarcity of teaching resources to the fickle nature of Internet connectivity and the quiet whispers of disengaged learners, particularly in the post-pandemic era. These realities underscore the need to delve into how teachers breathe life into task-based strategies, adapting their methods to nurture the budding oral communication skills of their young charges (Basañes & Dagol, 2021; Reyes, 2024).

While the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching has been a well-trodden path in research, the journey into the heart of public elementary schools, especially in rural and multilingual realms like the Rizal District, Kalinga, remains unexplored. Existing studies often focus on learner outcomes, leaving the rich tapestry of teachers' instructional practices, experiences, and coping mechanisms unexamined. Moreover, the challenges teachers face in weaving the Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) into post-pandemic oral communication instruction remain unclear. This study seeks to illuminate these uncharted territories by exploring the practices, effectiveness, and hurdles encountered by public elementary school teachers implementing TBLA in oral communication classrooms in the Rizal District, Kalinga.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the experiences and practices of public elementary school teachers in implementing the Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) in oral communication. The qualitative approach was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gather detailed information about the teachers' strategies, experiences and challenges in the classroom. This study focused on understanding how teachers apply task-based activities to improve learners' oral communication skills in a post-pandemic learning environment in the Philippines.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Rizal District of Kalinga, particularly in selected public elementary schools that offer English instruction. The Rizal District was chosen because schools in the area have adopted learner-centered and task-based teaching strategies to respond to the challenges of blended and post-pandemic learning. The locale provided a suitable setting for examining teachers' practices in implementing TBLA in oral communication instruction in the Philippines.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were public elementary school English teachers in the Rizal District of Kalinga, Philippines. These teachers were selected because they were directly involved in teaching oral communication skills using task-based strategies in the study. Their experiences and insights were important for understanding the effectiveness, challenges, and implementation of TBLA in classrooms.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants. Teachers who were actively teaching English and using task-based activities in oral communication instruction were chosen as respondents. This sampling technique was used because the selected participants possessed the knowledge and experience needed to provide relevant information for the study.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide prepared by the researcher. The interview questions focused on the teachers' practices, experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding the use of TBLA in oral communication. Open-ended questions were used to allow the participants to freely express their ideas and provide detailed responses.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researcher secured permission from the school authorities and informed the participants of the purpose of the research. After obtaining consent, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants either face-to-face or through online platforms. The interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed for further analysis. Field notes were also taken to support the data gathered during the interviews.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The responses were transcribed, organized, and coded to identify common themes and patterns related to teachers' TBLA implementation. The themes were interpreted based on the study objectives to provide a clear understanding of teachers' practices, challenges, and experiences with oral communication instruction.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were followed throughout this study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not disclosing the participants' identities. All information gathered was used strictly for academic research purposes. Respect, honesty, and professionalism were observed throughout the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Theme 1: Interactive and Learner-Centered Strategies

The findings indicate that educators employ various task-based and learner-centered strategies to enhance students' oral communication skills. The strategies included online discussions, debates, oral presentations, dialogues, role-playing, and vlog-making activities. Educators reported that these activities encouraged students to actively engage in classroom interactions and utilize English in meaningful and authentic contexts. This aligns with the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching, which prioritizes meaningful communication and active learner participation (Wang, 2023). Chunliu and Guangsheng (2025) also asserted that task-based activities contribute to improving learners' confidence, fluency, and communicative competence. Among the most frequently employed activities were online discussions and debates, where students articulated their opinions, defended their ideas and interacted with peers. Educators noted that these activities enhanced learners' confidence and critical thinking skills. Similarly, Basireddi et al. (2025) found that communicative and task-based activities improved speaking fluency and learner participation. Oral presentations helped learners organize and articulate their ideas clearly. Dialogues and role-playing activities provide students with opportunities to practice real-life communication scenarios, thereby increasing their engagement and activity levels in class. Belda-Medina (2021) explained that interactive and collaborative activities enhance communicative competence and learner participation in the learning process, and that vlog-making activities fostered learners' creativity and speaking skills through the use of digital platforms. Widiastuti et al. (2022) also found that technology-based tasks boost learners' motivation and oral communication performance. Overall, the findings demonstrate that learner-centered and task-based strategies significantly enhance learners' confidence, participation, engagement, and oral communication skills in English.

3.2 Theme 2: Development of Communication Skills Through Authentic Interaction

The findings highlight that task-based strategies play a significant role in enhancing learners' oral communication skills through authentic interactions. Teachers kindly observed that students appeared to become more confident, participative, and expressive during oral communication activities. These activities provided learners with opportunities to listen, respond, share ideas and interact meaningfully in English. Teachers emphasized that authentic and meaningful tasks help learners connect classroom learning to real-life communication. Through collaborative activities, the students improved their fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension. This finding supports the study of Chunliu and Guangsheng (2025), who stated that task-based activities enhance learners' communicative competence and confidence in English speaking. Similarly, Belda-Medina (2021) explained that interactive and communicative tasks improve learners' communication skills through collaboration and meaningful language use. Teachers also noted that learners who were usually shy became more willing to participate because the activities were enjoyable and interactive. This supports the findings of Du et al. (2025), who showed that communicative classroom activities reduce students' speaking anxiety and encourage active learner participation. In addition, feedback from teachers and classmates helped learners recognize their mistakes and improve their oral communication skills. Widiastuti et al. (2022) further emphasized that task-based activities using technology increase learners' motivation and speaking performance. Overall, the findings indicate that authentic interaction through task-based activities helps improve learners' confidence, fluency, participation, and oral communication skills in English language.

3.2 Theme 3: Pedagogical and Contextual Challenges

The findings indicate that teachers face several pedagogical and contextual challenges when implementing the Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) in oral communication instruction. One significant challenge identified was limited Internet connectivity and a lack of technological resources, particularly during online and blended learning sessions. Teachers mentioned that some learners experienced difficulties in participating in activities because of unstable Internet connections and limited access to gadgets. This observation aligns with Gong et al. (2025), who noted that technological limitations can impact the effective implementation of task-based and online language learning activities. Additionally, teachers encountered challenges due to their limited training and understanding of TBLA. Some participants shared that they found it challenging to design appropriate tasks and assess learners' oral communication performance. Lam et al. (2021) highlighted that limited teacher preparation and understanding of TBLT can influence effective classroom implementation. Another challenge is the conflict between communicative teaching approaches and traditional, grammar-focused assessment practices. Teachers expressed concerns about balancing fluency and accuracy, particularly among learners with weaker English skills. Liu and Ren (2021) also observed that traditional teaching practices can sometimes restrict the full implementation of communicative and learner-centered instruction. Furthermore, learners' preference for using their mother tongue instead of English during classroom interactions reduced opportunities for authentic communication in English. Despite these challenges, teachers continued to adapt and implement strategies that support learners' oral communication development in the classroom.

3.4 Theme 4: Coping Mechanisms and Instructional Adjustments

The findings highlight that teachers employed various coping mechanisms and instructional adjustments to thoughtfully address the challenges encountered in implementing TBLA. Teachers kindly simplified activities, provided clear

instructions, used localized examples, and encouraged peer support to assist learners in participating more actively in the oral communication. They also motivated students to practice speaking English regularly and created supportive classroom environments in which the learners felt comfortable expressing themselves. This finding aligns with Bryfonski (2021), who explained that teachers adapt task-based instruction through reflective practice, collaboration, and flexible teaching strategies. Teachers also creatively utilized technology and digital platforms to maintain learner engagement, despite limitations in resources and Internet connectivity. Widiastuti et al. (2022) emphasized that technology-supported task-based activities can enhance learner motivation and communication performance when implemented with care. In multilingual classrooms, some teachers allowed the controlled use of the mother tongue to help learners understand instructions and participate more confidently in activities. Chunliu and Guangsheng (2025) explained that supportive and flexible classroom practices help reduce learners' anxiety and improve their participation in communication activities. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers' adaptability, creativity, and positive classroom support play significant roles in the successful implementation of TBLA in oral communication instruction.

This study highlights how the Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) can enhance students' speaking skills in public elementary schools in the Rizal District, Kalinga. It identifies four key areas: Interactive and Learner-Centered Strategies, Development of Communication Skills Through Real Interaction, Teaching and Contextual Challenges, and Ways to Cope and Adjust Teaching Methods. Teachers employed various activities, such as discussions, debates, presentations, dialogues, role-playing, and vlog-making to encourage students to engage and communicate in English. These activities not only boosted students' confidence but also increased their participation and improved their speaking abilities. This aligns with the findings of Wang (2023) and Chunliu and Guangsheng (2025), who noted that task-based activities enhance speaking skills, student involvement and confidence in English. The study also observed that real interaction through these activities made students more expressive, cooperative, and comfortable when speaking English in classes. Feedback from teachers and classmates further enhanced students' fluency, vocabulary, and speaking skills. These results are consistent with those of Belda-Medina (2021) and Widiastuti et al. (2022), who found that communication and technology-supported activities improved speaking performance and motivation. However, teachers encountered challenges such as poor Internet, lack of technology, limited teacher training, grammar-focused tests, and students' preference for their native language. These issues are in line with the findings of Gong et al. (2025), Lam et al. (2021), and Liu and Ren (2021), who pointed out that technological limitations, lack of teacher preparation, and traditional teaching methods hinder task-based teaching. To address these challenges, teachers have adapted by simplifying activities, using local examples, encouraging peer support, and creating supportive classrooms to motivate their students. Overall, the study suggests that while TBLA is effective in improving speaking skills, it requires adequate teacher preparation, sufficient teaching support, and learning resources to be successful.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study found that the Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) is effective in improving the oral communication skills of learners in public elementary schools in the Rizal District, Kalinga. Teachers used different learner-centered activities, such as discussions, role-playing, oral presentations, debates, and vlog-making, to encourage students to participate and communicate in English. These activities helped improve the learners' confidence, fluency, participation, vocabulary, and communication skills. However, teachers also experienced challenges such as poor Internet connection, lack of resources, limited training, and learners' preference for using their mother tongue. Despite these challenges, teachers used different strategies and adjustments to support learners' communication development in the classroom.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers continue using task-based and interactive activities to teach oral communication skills. Schools and educational leaders should provide more training, learning materials, technological resources, and Internet access to support the effective implementation of TBLA in the future. Teachers should also create supportive and motivating classroom environments where learners feel confident speaking English. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other schools or include learners' perspectives to gain more information on the effectiveness of TBLA.

This study had some limitations. The study only involved selected public elementary school teachers in the Rizal District, Kalinga, which may limit the generalization of the findings. The study also focused only on teachers' experiences and did not include learners' perspectives or classroom observations. In addition, limited resources and post-pandemic learning conditions may have affected the study's findings. Despite these limitations, this study provides useful information about the implementation of TBLA in oral communication instruction.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards and guidelines for research. Permission was obtained from the concerned school authorities before conducting the study. Participation of the respondents was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were strictly observed, and all information gathered was used solely for academic and research purposes. The researchers ensured that no harm or

risk was caused to the participants during the study. This study also observed honesty, transparency, and respect throughout the research process. The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this study and acknowledge all sources and contributions. Furthermore, the authors affirm that this work is original, complies with copyright and academic integrity standards, and accepts full responsibility for the study's content.

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