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Effectiveness and Challenges of Task-Based Language Teaching on the Speaking Proficiency of Vietnamese ESL Learners

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Abstract: This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and explored the institutional and pedagogical variables that affect its implementation in improving the speaking skill of the learners of English as a second language in the Vietnamese context. The study looked at how TBLT can contribute towards fluency, accuracy, and overall holistic communicative competence in Vietnamese classrooms that are inherently oriented to teacher-centred pedagogy, and so overcome the long-standing gap between formal English instruction and the ability of learners to participate in real-life communicative purposes. The study also corresponds to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and 2040 targets of the Ambisyon Natin by supporting the presence of a learner-centered and dialogic pedagogical paradigm. To outline the connections between the degree of TBLT implementation and oral proficiency of the participants, a quantitative descriptive - correlational design was used. The information was gathered through performance assessment in the form of speaking, a written questionnaire, and a classroom evaluation rubric. The statistical processes involved frequency distributions, percentage, means, standard deviations, and inferential tests including the Mann Whitney U and Friedman tests to question the correlation between the TBLT exposure and speaking performance including fluency, cohesion, and phonological accuracy. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant correlation between TBLT exposure and speaking proficiency and thus ensuring that increased involvement in task-based undertakings produce better oral communicative performance. However, the research found the presence of salient limitations, such as the insufficient teaching time, large enrolments, and teacher preparation, and they are all relevant to emphasize the need to support teaching and professional development with institutional support.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, Speaking Proficiency, Vietnamese ESL Learners, Speaking Proficiency, Communicative Competence, Pedagogical Challenges

Citation: Rufo A. J. C. Effectiveness and Challenges of Task-Based Language Teaching on the Speaking Proficiency of Vietnamese ESL Learners. International Journal on Integrated Education (IJIE) 2026, 9(1), 182-195.

Received: 16th Dec 2025Revised: 31st Dec 2025Accepted: 20th Jan 2026Published: 27th Jan 2026

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1. Introduction

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a paradigm of learner-centered teaching in modern English language teaching that gives more weight to meaningful communication based on real-life activities that are engaging in form of tasks as opposed to studying grammar as an isolated entity and rote memorisation. TBLT also replicates the process of natural language use through activities like role-plays, problems solving activities, group discussions and storytelling and promotes the acquisition of fluency, spontaneity and self-confidence in speaking [1]. Nonetheless, speaking proficiency continues to be the challenge of Vietnamese ESL learners, who still show better performance in reading and writing as opposed to oral fluency, pronunciation and spontaneity (Nguyen and Pham). Such challenges are tied to the teacher-centered tradition, where the focus is on the correctness

of things, examinations and textbook-based learning as opposed to communicating and engaging with each other, and they are compounded by the cultural contexts of fear of errors and unwillingness to speak publicly (Le and Doan).

Though studies conducted throughout the world have shown that TBLT is effective to develop speaking, increase the motivation of learners [2], [3], the empirical data in the context of educational and cultural background in Vietnam is limited. The implementation-based challenges that Vietnamese classrooms face include high-stakes test, lack of time to teach, large groups of students, and fear of being evaluated when speaking English (Phan). In order to fill in this gap, the current paper explores the quantifiable impacts of TBLT on speaking proficiency, in terms of the dimensions of fluency, accuracy and complexity, as well as the perceptions of learners on the dimensions of confidence, participation and motivation. The study also correlates with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by seeking to produce evidence-based advice regarding more inclusive, communicative and student-centered teaching, as well as a proposed Policy Recommendation Framework that would provide assistance in institutionalizing the TBLT practices.

This paper is based on two compatible theoretical premises which underpin the use of TBLT in the acquisition of speaking: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Theory and Vygotsky Sociocultural Theory of Learning. The pedagogical foundation of TBLT is the CLT method that assumes that learning a language is best achieved when learners can interact meaningfully and use the target language in the natural, practical situations (Ellis). In line with this view, TBLT considers significant tasks to be the central unit of teaching, and provides learners with a chance to train speaking, based on meaningful and purposeful activities, such as problem solving, giving instructions and experience sharing, therefore, prioritizing communicative fluency and negotiation of meaning in real life situations (Ellis).

The Sociocultural Theory also explains the influence of interaction and scaffold on language development through the process of socially mediated learning [4]. The theory is based on the assumption that the acquisition of language and cognitive development is initially developed through social interaction and later internalised to the learner, which makes scaffolding and collaboration as a necessity in the development. Learning in TBLT is operationalised using peer collaboration, guided speaking exercises, teacher facilitation, peer modelling and feedback through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which allows learning at a level that learners cannot accomplish on their own. Combined, CLT and Sociocultural Theory offer a strong model of studying the ways of how TBLT can contribute to the fluency, accuracy and complexity of spoken English in young Vietnamese learners by promoting the application of interactive, task-based and learner-centered strategies to meet the developmental requirements of the learners.

1.1. Evidence on Task-Based Language Teaching for Young Learners' Speaking Development in Asian ESL/EFL Contexts

In the literature, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is always placed as a communicative approach, learner-centered that repositioned the concept of language as means of purposeful meaning-making, not mastering of isolated forms. TBLT supports the teaching process with real-life, goal-oriented activities, including interviews, storytelling, role-plays, and collaborative problem-solving instead of focusing on grammar exercises and memorization to enable learners to use English in a manner that reflects everyday communication [1]. It is also supported by the cycle of tasks (pre-task, task, and post-task reflection/feedback) which should facilitate language development along with any other learning behaviours (autonomy, collaboration, critical thinking) (Willis and Willis). All these conceptualisations make TBLT an instructional approach and a pedagogical philosophy based on meaningful interaction.

The theoretical rationale of these claims is founded on the basic third-second language acquisition views of interaction, mediation and use-based learning. The Vygotskian sociocultural theory predicts the realization of co-construction of learning through social interaction and the use of a scaffold, and the interactionist approaches emphasize the use of negotiation of meaning in the process of communication in learning [5]. In TBLT classrooms, pairing and group works offer the conditions of interaction where the input is taken, the output is generated, and all the gaps in the language are noticed which are repeatedly reported to be the key to successful development. So, this is how the literature narrows down to a major synthesis: TBLT is not merely an effective method of promoting speaking but a structured process that creates the conditions in which learners may stretch their means of communication and gradually develop them further.

The most common theme that has been observed when using the studies is that TBLT fits well with the developmental requirements of young learners as it focuses on concrete learning, engaging in learning, and social-based learning. The techniques that are mentioned as particularly effective in maintaining motivation and decreasing anxiety, thus motivating children to assume communicative risks, include games, picture sequencing, role-playing, and storytelling [6]. This congruency further is reinforced as work involves multimodal facilitation of meaning and memorization; the dual coding theory by Paivio (1986, as cited in Main, 2021) may be used to understand why using language and images, gestures, and objects may result in more effective understanding and recalling. Collectively, the available literature indicates that developmental suitability is not a marginal issue but a prime requirement towards effective TBLT application among young learners.

Farmers and Asian settings have found consistently positive impacts on TBLT on the speaking results, although the intensity of the outcome in most instances is determined by the design and provision of tasks. The studies provide evidence of fluency improvement and readiness to talk among elementary students who performed interactive activities including information gaps and interviews [7], and some of the studies also indicate better spoken fluency after long-term task-based learning with repetition, scaffolding, and visual aids [8]. Task-based classes have been attributed to higher confidence, independence, and oral engagement among school-aged learners (Phan), research in the classroom has shown that even the less vocal students have participated in their classes differently and have become more collaborative and vocal (Van den Branden). Similar results in China indicate a relationship between interactive games and scaffolded modelling and fluency, complexity, and motivation improvement [9]. Overall, the studies singly lead to a cross-context trend: TBLT will be more likely to boost performance (what learners are able to do) and disposition (their readiness to speak), in the case of interactive and meaning-oriented tasks.

The other critical synthesis relates to the role of TBLT in developing speaking, i.e., by providing the repeated, comprehensive, and extended output opportunities, negotiating, and practicing speaking over the time. Mechanisms such as task repetition and recycling are mentioned in the literature numerous times as those that decrease cognitive load and allow learners to shift their focus to the expression of more advanced forms and choices of lexicon [10]. (Bygate and Samuda). This conceptual development line is commonly talked about in terms of the triadic scheme of fluency, accuracy, and complexity, in which an emphasis on teaching should be equal so as not to cease the advancements throughout other dimensions (Skehan) [11]. In this respect, learners need to re-perform the tasks under supported means to enhance TBLT efficacy, since such performance can increase over time and across the three dimensions instead of a single task performance.

The review is also convergent to a cohort of facilitating classroom circumstances to mediate results, specifically, the quality of scaffolding, the influence of affective safety, and facilitative teacher. In line with the zone of proximal development, scaffolding is

repeatedly mentioned as a key to assisting learners to produce a hesitant and formulaic speech to more spontaneous and complex speech, particularly in situations where the support is progressively removed to create independence [12]. The affective variables, which include speaking anxiety, fear of error, and shyness, are also set as decisive, especially in the environment that follows a teacher-centered norm (Omar). It is possible to alleviate pressure by working on tasks together and normalise experimentation; constructive and non-punitive feedback strategies (e.g., rephrasing/expansion) can help a learner identify the gaps without causing harm to their confidence [13]. Moreover, social collaboration is not just presented as lingual assistance but also as a path to autonomy and self-regulation and the effect of TBLT spreads beyond the results in languages to the agency of the learners [7].

Lastly, the literature is a synthesis of an impending tension between what TBLT would have done and the realities that the structure hinders implementation, particularly in Vietnam and other examinations-based systems in Asia. The mediation of perceptions takes place: the engagement is facilitated by the perceived meaningfulness and achievability of tasks, whereas abstractness and perceived difficulty of tasks may lead to anxiety and a lack of engagement (Rahimpour). Nevertheless, despite all these positive reactions by learners, teachers are often hindered by insufficient training and confidence in facilitating tasks (Littlewood, Tran), the inability to find culturally relevant and age-appropriate resources (Carless) big classes, and inflexible curricula that are linked to high-stakes assessment. Vietnamese studies highlight this discrepancy: students could pass grammar and vocabulary tests but fail to speak fluently because of the lack of oral practice (Nguyen and Pham), and the classroom activity is still dominated by controlled exercises that are statistically oriented towards tests (Le and Doan). However, it has been proven that even with limitations TBLT in adapted or partial forms, with the support of visuals, regulated task cycles, and topical issues, can enhance participation and oral output (Tran and Le, n. d.; Phan, n. d.). In general, the literature produced suggests that TBLT can be successful under certain conditions, namely, the authenticity of the task, the support provided by scaffolds, the positive classroom atmosphere, pedagogical experience, and the congruence between the evaluation and communicative objectives on the systemic level.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching and the speaking proficiency of Vietnamese ESL learners. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. sex;
 - 1.3. access to English materials or media at home;
 - 1.4. level of familiarity with English-speaking tasks; and
 - 1.5. novelty of exposure to TBLT activities?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the overall speaking proficiency of Vietnamese ESL learners in terms of
 - 2.1. fluency;
 - 2.2. accuracy; and
 - 2.3. complexity of language use?
3. What is the level of perception of Vietnamese ESL learners regarding the use of TBLT in developing their speaking skills?
4. What is the extent of challenges learners encounter in the implementation of TBLT in a Vietnamese primary school's ESL classrooms?

5. Is there significant difference between the level of effectiveness and level of perception when grouped according to their profile?
6. Is there significant relationship between Task-Based Language Teaching and the extent of challenges learners encounter in the implementation of TBLT?
7. What policy recommendation framework can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The research design of this investigation was a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to evaluate how the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) affected the speaking proficiency of eight through nine-year-old Vietnamese students of the English language as a second language. The research provides a demographic profile of the sample, specifies the areas of speaking proficiency, that is, fluency, accuracy, and complexity, analyzes the perceptions of TBLT held by the learners, and finds the problems of its implementation, but also examines the relationships and group differences between these variables.

The speech performance was measured using in-class performance in the form of the execution of the tasks that were evaluated by two trained raters using a standardized rubric based on the IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors and the CEFR-aligned criteria of young learners. The perceptions and difficulties were measured through a four-point Likert-type questionnaire that was created by a researcher, and teacher insights were used to add insider information.

The analysis of data consisted of descriptive data (means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (t -tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation) to explore patterns, inequalities, and relationships, which aligns with the views of [14]. according to which descriptive correlational designs are appropriate to describe phenomena and investigate naturally occurring relationships and inequalities in real learning settings, without artificial manipulation.

2.2. Respondents and Sampling Technique

The study population was a group of Vietnamese ESL learners in a Vietnamese-based private primary school during the 2025 2026 academic year, that is, Grade-3 students aged between 8 and 9 years, studying the school English curriculum and considered developmentally competent in working on structured language tasks.

A sample group of 250 students was chosen, which was based on the factors of accessibility, administrative approval, and the practice of utilizing classroom-based tests.

The participants were sampled through purposive sampling, which is a non-probability approach that chooses respondents who have characteristics that are relevant to the study purposes [15].

The inclusion criteria required that the participants had to be aged between 8 and 9 years old, and to have had at least one year of formal English education and have parental or guardian consent.

This strategy ensured that participants had some minimum levels of proficiency and classroom familiarization to participate in task-based activities significantly and in ways that provided reliable responses to the instruments though it was acknowledged that the results might have limited generalizability out of the studied milieu.

2.3. Instrumentation

Two quantitative tools were used in the current study to produce empirically verifiable findings that are in line with the research questions on speaking proficiency, perceptions of learners, challenges that are encountered and the use of task-based

strategies in relation to the context of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). These tools included (1) a generalized speaking-proficiency rubric and (2) a questionnaire designed by researchers and structured. The speaking rubric was based on the IELTS Speaking in Bands Descriptors and aligning with the CEFR-based indicators [16]. (Cambridge English) and then adjusted to the cognitive and linguistic capabilities of Vietnamese primary students aged between 8 and 9, thus allowing the systematic evaluation of the speaking performance in terms of the tasks.

The modified rubric considered three aspects of speaking including fluency, accuracy and complexity, based on age-related descriptors on a scale of 4 points. The performance of learners in the process of TBLT based activities was rated by two raters who were trained to understand the performance of learners. Before the actual data collection, the raters participated in a calibration session and inter-rater agreement was assessed using Kenneth Cohens kappa. It is recommended that 0.75 or more would be a strong agreement (McHugh), and more recent studies still support Cohen's use of kappa as a reasonable reliability index when categorical ratings are assessed in research [17]. The score of rubric scoring in this study was 0.76 which means there was significant agreement between the raters.

The questionnaire developed by the researcher included four sections, including demographic profile, perceived effectiveness of TBLT (fluency, accuracy, complexity), perceived prevalence of challenges, and ratings of task-based strategies that are commonly used. The Likert scale (1- Not effective to 4-Highly effective) was used to make the statistical analysis easier. In order to make the instrument comprehensible, it was translated into Vietnamese, written in plain English, content-validated by three experts in the field of language-education, and piloted. Small pilot samples can be useful in the early stages of instrument development, whereas larger pilot samples are likely to enhance the reliability estimation [18]. Internal consistency was measured through the Cronbach alpha, the meaning of which was compared to the traditional values and the excessively high values was interpreted as a sign of redundancy [19], [20]. TBLT effectiveness, learner perception, and challenge alpha values were 0.774, 0.762, and 0.962, respectively, which is an acceptable to excellent consistency degree, and which is in line with the opinion that an alpha in this range indicates a stable measure of survey constructs [14].

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process was logically organized and followed the ethical principles to provide the maximum accuracy and consistency. I obtained authorization at the institutional level and informed consent of the parents or guardians at the beginning, which was followed by the orientation of the participants on the objectives of the study, their duties of confidentiality, and guidelines. The data collection occurred in two different stages: (1) speaking proficiency test, where learners completed short, age-related, TBLT-oriented tasks, including picture description, short storytelling, or classroom problem-solving in English, after which the verbal feedback was audio-recorded and later scored using a standardized rubric that focused on fluency, accuracy, and complexity; two independent raters scored each performance, which established the inter-rater reliability, and any case of negative deviation discussed and agreement achieved. All through, the participants were assured that their participation would not have an impact on their grades and that their identities would be kept confidential, and all responses were coded, tabulated and ready to be subjected to descriptive and correlational statistical analyses.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents.

Profile	Description	Frequency	Percent
Age	8	112	44.8%
	9	138	55.2%

	Total	250	100.0%
Sex	Male	115	45.8%
	Female	135	54.2%
	Total	250	100.0%
English Material	Cartoons	129	73.30%
	Storybooks	119	67.61%
	YouTube Videos	98	55.68%
	Mobile	65	36.93%
	Games/Apps	24	13.64%
	TV Shows	24	13.64%
Level of Familiarity with English-Speaking Tasks	Never	26	10.4%
	Rarely	12	4.8%
	Sometimes	166	66.4%
	Always	46	18.4%
	Total	250	100.0%
Novelty of Exposure to TBLT Activities	Not very familiar	47	18.8%
	Very familiar	203	81.2%
	Total	250	100.0%

Table 2. Level of effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the overall speaking proficiency of Vietnamese ESL learners in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity of language use.

INDICATORS		MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
<i>The TBLT tasks/activities are effective on the speaking proficiency in terms of my fluency when I :</i>			
A. Fluency			
1.	I can continuously speak without long pauses.	3.66	Highly Effective
2.	I speak at a natural speed.	3.41	Highly Effective
3.	I can speak smoother with less fillers such uhm, ah....	3.29	Highly Effective
4.	I can speak confidently	3.51	Highly Effective
5.	I express myself with clear understanding of what I am saying and hearing.	3.60	Highly Effective
B. Accuracy			
1.	I use correct grammar.	3.59	Highly Effective
2.	Improves my ability to choose the right words for different situations.	3.65	Highly Effective
3.	I can construct correct sentences correctly during speaking activities.	3.46	Highly Effective
4.	I reduce my mistakes when speak English.	3.27	Highly Effective
5.	I use correct enunciation and pronunciation	3.54	Highly Effective
C. Complexity			
1.	I use varied vocabulary.	3.31	Highly Effective
2.	I use more complex sentence structures.	3.30	Highly Effective
3.	I explain ideas in detail.	3.63	Highly Effective
4.	I can connect sentences smoothly when expressing ideas.	3.54	Highly Effective
5.	I can express myself spontaneously using the English language.	3.38	Highly Effective
WEIGHTED MEAN		3.48	Highly Effective

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Highly Effective/Perceived; 2.50 – 3.24 Moderately Effective/Perceived; 1.75 – 2.49 Slightly Effective/ Perceived; 1.00 – 1.74 Not Effective/ Perceived

The results of the survey suggest that the participants found Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to be very effective (WM=3.48) in developing speaking proficiency with regard to the dimensions of fluency, accuracy and complexity. Fluency was rated especially high, as the respondents noted that they were better able to conduct themselves in a flowing manner without long pauses (WM 3.66) and in a way that was as understandable to them (WM 3.60). This trend supports the perception that meaningful engagement in task-based activity enhances spontaneous smoother speech and by coincidence agrees with the theoretical standpoint of the development of fluency as a result of task-based activity that involves negotiation and not rote recitation [1]. Also, the repetition of the speaking tasks seems to encourage automaticity and reduce hesitation (Tavakoli & Uchihara).

Accuracy (WM = 3.50) and complexity (WM = 3.43) were rated by respondents as highly effective by TBLT, which implies they felt that they gained in precise language use and enriched output. The accuracy measure that is rated highest, the enhanced capacity to choose the correct lexicon in different contexts (WM = 3.65), indicates the significance of lexical control, which is also supported by the fact that task-based instruction has the potential to strengthen grammatical accuracy and lexical specificity when form-related feedback is included in the communicative environment (Pham). Similarly, the high score on the detailing the ideas (WM = 3.63) suggests that the tasks promoted elaboration and the diversification of language use, which is consistent with the literature that problem-solving and storytelling tasks prompt the learners to use more complicated form of structures and vocabulary (ygate and can induce increased length of speech in young Vietnamese learners (Nguyen). On the whole, the presence of high ratings in all the dimensions helps to conclude that TBLT makes a balanced contribution to the development of communicative practice and language form, which justifies its use with young learners in the context of speaking development [2].

Table 3. Level of perception of Vietnamese ESL learners regarding the use of TBLT in developing their speaking skills.

LEVEL OF PERCEPTION	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
1. TBLT makes speaking activities more interesting and enjoyable.	3.58	Highly Perceived
2. TBLT gives me more opportunities to speak English in class.	3.85	Highly Perceived
3. TBLT helps me feel more confident when speaking English.	3.66	Highly Perceived
4. TBLT makes speaking lessons more interactive and engaging.	3.42	Highly Perceived
5. TBLT allows me to practice speaking in real-life situations.	3.34	Highly Perceived
6. TBLT helps me express my ideas more clearly in English.	3.74	Highly Perceived
7. TBLT improves my motivation to participate in speaking activities.	3.41	Highly Perceived
8. TBLT encourages me to collaborate and communicate with my classmates.	3.09	Moderately Perceived
9. TBLT makes learning English speaking skills more practical and useful.	3.66	Highly Perceived
10. TBLT helps me overcome my fear or shyness in speaking English.	3.28	Highly Perceived
WEIGHTED MEAN	3.50	Highly Perceived

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Highly Effective/Perceived; 2.50 – 3.24 Moderately Effective/Perceived; 1.75 – 2.49 Slightly Effective/ Perceived; 1.00 – 1.74 Not Effective/ Perceived

The results indicate that the respondents had very positive attitudes towards Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the development of the English-speaking skills with a total weighted mean of 3.50 that is interpreted by the research as Highly Perceived. The strongest agreement was observed among learners who perceived that TBLT can provide them with greater opportunities to express themselves in English at the classroom (Mean = 3.85) which is why they appreciate its learner-focused nature emphasizing interaction and communication in the classroom opposed to teacher-centred teaching. This finding supports the previous research suggesting that TBLT opens the possibilities of genuine language use and enhances active engagement with the help of tasks, including problem solving, storytelling, role-play [3] (Nguyen). Students also gave an affirmation that TBLT helps them express themselves in English with greater clarity (Mean = 3.74), which can also be traced back to the fact that meaning-driven activities that require negotiation and modification of outputs allow learners to process the information more thoroughly and precisely convey it when engaging in spontaneous communication [1].

TBLT was also rated by the respondents as fun (Mean = 3.58) and utilitarian (Mean = 3.66), which corroborates the fact that, as interacting with minimal anxiety, engagement and motivation are highest when the activities in the classroom reflect real-life communicative situations and offer repeated, meaningful chances to speak (Bygate & Samuda, Tavakoli and Uchiyara). In contrast, the peer cooperation was viewed as a mid-ground (Mean = 3.09), which is why some young learners may still need extra support and instructions to engage in group speaking activities (Rahmawati). Overall, the information points to the fact that Vietnamese ESL students consider TBLT to be supportive and encouraging, which bolsters confidence and engagement and makes speaking practice more communicative and relevant. This conclusion is in line with empirical evidence that TBLT can supplement not only linguistic achievements but also positive emotional attachment of learners to the acquisition of languages [2].

Table 4. Challenges learners encounter in the implementation of TBLT in a Vietnamese primary school's ESL classrooms.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
1. I have difficulty understanding instructions for TBLT activities.	1.83	Slightly Difficult
2. I feel shy or nervous when speaking English in front of others.	1.76	Slightly Difficult
3. I find it difficult to express my ideas during TBLT tasks due to my limited vocabulary	1.47	Not Difficult
4. I find it hard to pronounce English words correctly during activities.	2.00	Slightly Difficult
5. I struggle with working in group or pair tasks due to lack of self- confidence.	1.78	Slightly Difficult
6. I cannot think of what to what to say during speaking activities.	1.93	Slightly Difficult
7. I get distracted or lose focus during TBLT lessons.	1.72	Slightly Difficult
8. I feel that the speaking tasks are too difficult for my level.	1.82	Slightly Difficult
9. I have trouble remembering grammar rules while speaking in TBLT activities.	1.88	Slightly Difficult
10. I need more time to preparing before doing speaking tasks.	1.48	Not Difficult
WEIGHTED MEAN	1.77	Slightly Difficult

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Highly Effective/Perceived; 2.50 – 3.24 Moderately Effective/Perceived; 1.75 – 2.49 Slightly Effective/ Perceived; 1.00 – 1.74 Not Effective/ Perceived

The quantitative analysis indicates that Vietnamese ESL students did not face significant challenges in adoption of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the weighted mean of the collective challenges was 1.77 which was interpreted by the rating scale as Slightly Difficult. This finding means that most students were able to adapt to task-based activities somewhat easily. The biggest obstacle was considered to be pronunciation (Mean = 2.00), which has been an issue many times reported among young students with limited contact with the real English phonemes. This observation aligns with the rest of the literature which recognizes pronunciation as a central obstacle to learners whose first language does not have similar phonetic contrasts (Gilakjani) and is also resonant with Vietnamese empirical data that pronunciation problems are maintained by poor listening input and feedback (Nguyen & Dang). Affective and interactional obstacles, such as feeling shy or nervous when speaking English (Mean=1.76) or lack of confidence in the process of working in pairs and groups (Mean=1.78), also exhibited by learners, are also consistent with the existing research that highlights that anxiety and fear of making mistakes may slightly hinder participation in communicative activities (Phan, Rahmawati).

Cognitive demands were found to be minimal; the learners reported low levels in the terms of limited lexical resources to use in expressing ideas (Mean=1.47) and additional preparation time (Mean=1.48). This type of data suggests that task demands were not too high and the reason is probably good scaffolding and relevancy of the tasks to the context. This fact confirms the idea that learning in the form of tasks can reduce the cognitive load among young learners by allowing them to experience systematic repetition and non-insignificant self-expression [1]. In addition, the stated low distraction rates during classes (Mean=.72) are indicative of full engagement, which can be arguably attributed to the interactive, visually stimulated, and goal-oriented character of TBLT activities, which support attention and motivation in children (Pinter).

Altogether, the findings support the existing literature that suggests that despite the fact that learners might face the first communicative and confidence-related challenges, motivation and involvement is likely to increase as they get more accustomed to TBLT. The trend highlights the developmental suitability of task-based teaching to young students and is consistent with the expanding body of literature to promote its effectiveness in early language education [2], [3].

Table 5. Significant difference between the level of effectiveness and level of perception when grouped according to their profile.

Grouping Variable	Test Statistics	p-Value	Interpretation	Decision
Age	$t(246.26) = 1.25$	$p = .212$	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Sex	$t(128.10) = -0.88,$	$p = .382$	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Access to English Materials or Media at Home	$\chi^2(2, N = 250) = 6.90$	$p = .032$	Significant	Reject Ho
Frequency of Using English Language at Home	$\chi^2(2, N = 250) = 7.02,$	$p = .030$	Significant	Reject Ho
Familiarity in Speaking English	$t(248) = -0.56$	$p = .578$	Not Significant	Accept Ho

The results indicate that learners' reported levels of effectiveness and perception of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) did not significantly differ by age, sex, or initial familiarity with speaking English. Independent-samples t-tests showed no significant differences between 8-year-olds and 9-year-olds in their ratings despite unequal variances ($t(246.26) = 1.25, p = .212$), suggesting that TBLT was similarly effective and positively perceived within this narrow developmental range; this is consistent with the view that

early primary learners often progress through relatively similar developmental stages and can benefit equally from age-appropriate tasks (Cameron, Pinter, Nguyen). Likewise, no significant differences were found between males and females ($t(128.10) = -0.88$, $p = .382$), supporting claims that TBLT outcomes are more strongly shaped by task design and learner engagement than by demographic variables such as sex, and aligning with evidence of comparable gains across genders in task-based interventions [1], [2], Ghorbani & Khosravi Lai). Similarly, familiarity with speaking English did not yield significant differences ($t(248) = -0.56$, $p = .578$), reinforcing the idea that TBLT can accommodate learners with varying starting points through adaptable task demands, interactional support, and repetition [1].

In contrast, learners' home language environment significantly influenced perceived effectiveness and perception of TBLT. Friedman test results showed significant group differences based on access to English materials/media at home ($\chi^2(2, N = 250) = 6.90$, $p = .032$) and on frequency of using English at home ($\chi^2(2, N = 250) = 7.02$, $p = .030$), with higher mean ranks for learners who had more resources and used English more frequently. Such trends indicate that a more complex and more frequent immersion into the home language context can significantly increase the willingness of learners to undertake communicative activities and result in the easier involvement in task-based language instruction (TBLT). This fact correlates with the recent empirical results that informal linguistic exposure and multimodal resources promote speaking and listening readiness at the same time, thus supporting the classroom teaching (Nguyen and Le, Richards, Lee and Hsu, Trinh). It resonates with the assumptions of the Input Hypothesis that highlights the vital role played by sustained and understandable linguistic input in language learning (Krashen).

The fact that home language use is so strong also speaks in favor of sociocultural understanding of language development, when linguistic development is mediated by meaningful interaction embedded in the daily milieu of learners (Vygotsky, as cited in Lantolf, Chou, Hu, and Gao, Le, and Tran). In this view, the rationalization of the pedagogic advantages of TBLT can require not only the prudent design of tasks in the classroom but also the active promotion of free exposure to English and contact with it beyond the four walls [21].

Table 6. Significant relationship between Task-Based Language Teaching and the extent of challenges learners encounter in the implementation of TBLT.

Variable Correlated	Pearson r	p - Value	Interpretation	Decision
Effectiveness vs. Challenges	-0.039	.538	Very weak negative correlation; Not Significant	Accept H_0 (No significant relationship)
Perception vs. Challenges	0.020	.756	Very weak positive correlation; Not Significant	Accept H_0 (No significant relationship)

The results indicate that learners viewed Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) positively and as effective, while reporting relatively low levels of difficulty during implementation. Descriptively, learners rated TBLT effectiveness at a moderately high level ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.19$) and their perception was similarly positive ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.07$), whereas reported challenges were low ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 0.22$). However, Pearson correlation analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between effectiveness and challenges, $r(248) = -.04$, $p = .538$, and likewise no significant relationship between perception and challenges, $r(248) = .02$, $p = .756$. These findings suggest that the extent of challenges learners encounter is independent of how effective they believe TBLT is or how positively they perceive it, meaning learners can experience minor difficulties while still recognizing strong instructional value.

The given pattern fits the current literature where Vietnamese primary learners were observed to be able to stay engaged and report improving speaking proficiency even with occasional problems with comprehending tasks or being limited by lexical resources (Nguyen and Pham). Additionally, the contextual preliminary procedural or linguistic barriers also fail to degrade the overall positive assessments of the learners when communicative benefits of TBLT are realized [3].

Moreover, the challenges that are generally associated with TBLT such as the lack of understanding of instructions and the need to organize group interaction can be used as productive learning experiences that can contribute to the development of meaning negotiation, more intensive cognitive functions, and effective problem-solving instead of hindering the learning process [1] (Bygate). Thus, in the context of the Vietnamese ESL environment that tends to be less grammar-oriented in its pedagogy, the evidence shows that given appropriate scaffolds, visuals, and clear instructions, the learners can adjust to TBLT and continue to express positive attitudes and achievable results despite the presence of rather limited obstacles.

4. Conclusion

- a. The largest group of the respondents was nine-year-old girls, as they reported the highest level of exposure to cartoons and occasional participation in such activities; furthermore, they showed a strong sense of awareness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) praxis.
- b. Participants concurred that TBLT was an effective methodological framework that positively influences fluency, accuracy and lexical complexity in oral proficiency.
- c. The general attitude of the learners towards TBLT was significantly positive, as it confirms that the tool is useful to enhance communicative competence.
- d. The Vietnamese primary ESL students indicated that they had minimal barriers as they operationalized TBLT.
- e. There was no statistically significant difference between the two age group and gender identity, as compared to the perceived efficacy and appraisal of TBLT.
- f. The availing of English-language resources and media in the domestic setting had a strong impact on the effectiveness of TBLT and perceptions of the learners.
- g. The ability in spoken English had no significant impact on the perceived effectiveness of TBLT among the learners.
- h. The results of the analysis showed that there was no significant correlation between TBLT effectiveness and challenges met, as well as between perception and challenges.
- i. There was a promotion of a doctrinal framework that would integrate Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) into the national primary English curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the researcher offers the following recommendation:

- a. For Curriculum Developers. Introduce task-based language teaching (TBLT) into primary English classes with age related tasks (e.g., storytelling, role-play, problem solving) that encourage the use of natural language. Arrange tasks in a sequence of simple to more complex and promote interaction and teamwork. Since home exposure to English improves performance, incorporate activities that relate classroom work with the use of English at home.
- b. For School Administrators. Encourage the use of TBLT, train teachers on how to design and facilitate the tasks, and provide them with more English materials (books, multimedia, and digital tools). Make sure timetables and classroom routines give a chance to do speaking in collaboration and set up monitoring mechanisms to monitor the advancements in the speaking proficiency of learners.
- c. For Teacher Educators. Enhance TBLT coverage in pre-service and in-service programs including developing valuable tasks and effective group work. Train

educators to stimulate the use of English by the learners outside the classroom and monitor and evaluate speaking performance during tasks-based activities to build up instructional improvement continuously.

- d. For Policymakers. Suggest and foster the inclusion of TBLT within English programs and budget learning materials and online materials that increase the exposure of learners to English. Develop teacher professional growth in the field of TBLT and offer implementation instructions on collaborative instruction based on tasks with the assistance of evaluation schemes aimed at observing the results on speaking proficiency.
- e. For Classroom Teachers. Use TBLT on a regular basis through the use of engaging and age-related speaking activities (e.g., storytelling, role-play, problem-solving, games) and help developing supportive peer interactions. Provide home practice by having English materials that they can access easily and giving them continuous feedback in the process of doing the tasks to enhance fluency, accuracy, and complexity.
- f. To Parents and the Learning Community. Enhance home exposure of children to English in the form of storybooks, videos, cartoons, and learning applications and promote the practice of simple speaking (conversations, storytelling, role-play). Collaborate with the teachers to instill the confidence, encourage motivation, and regular use of English outside the school.
- g. For Future Researchers. Study the long-term TBLT effects on fluency, accuracy and complexity and considering the effects of home exposure. Research TBLT in various age groups and settings, investigate how to find solutions to issues (e.g., shyness, limited vocabulary, pronunciation), and use mixed-methodology or experimental research to learn more about the problem.

5. Acknowledgement

I am obligated to express my deepest appreciation to the university graduate school faculty and university leadership who was able to offer a sense of direction, professional acumen and unrelenting support during the entire period of this research project. I would also like to recognize the priceless service of the examination panel and my academic advisor, whose critical comments, course of action, and support have helped to improve the academic value of this work greatly. I still take this opportunity to express my utmost gratitude to the academic community and colleagues that provided institutional support, cooperation, and assistance in the process of conducting the study. I still owe a lot of my friends and loved ones, and most importantly, I would like to be thankful to God who gave me the wisdom, grace and direction that helped me through the whole academic process.

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