



TASK-BASED LEARNING: A MODERN APPROACH TO TESOL ON NINTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MTS MIFTAHUL MIDAD LUMAJANG

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Abstract : *This study explores the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) as a modern approach to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) for ninth grade students at MTs Miftahul Midad Lumajang. The research investigates the effectiveness of TBL in enhancing students' English language proficiency, particularly in the areas of speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Using a qualitative method. The data from student surveys, interviews, classroom observations, and teacher feedback. The findings reveal that TBL significantly improved students' language skills, with particular gains in speaking fluency and writing coherence. Students showed increased motivation and engagement in the learning process, as the task oriented activities provided meaningful, real world applications of language. However, challenges such as time management, classroom organization, and unequal participation were noted. Teachers also reported the need for further professional development to effectively implement TBL strategies. Overall, this research suggests that TBL can be an effective and engaging approach to TESOL in Indonesian secondary school contexts, offering a more student centered, communicative alternative to traditional grammar focused methods. The study provides recommendations for teachers and school administrators to integrate TBL more widely in the curriculum for enhanced language learning outcomes.*

Keywords: *Task-Based Learning; Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL)*

Abstrak : *Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi penerapan Task-Based Learning (TBL) sebagai pendekatan modern dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris kepada Penutur Bahasa Lain (TESOL) untuk siswa kelas sembilan di MTs Miftahul Midad Lumajang. Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas TBL dalam meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris siswa, khususnya di bidang berbicara, menulis, membaca, dan mendengarkan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode kualitatif. data kualitatif dari survei siswa, wawancara, observasi kelas, dan umpan balik guru. Temuannya mengungkapkan bahwa TBL secara signifikan meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa siswa, dengan peningkatan tertentu dalam kefasihan berbicara dan koherensi menulis. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan motivasi dan keterlibatan dalam proses pembelajaran, karena aktivitas berorientasi tugas memberikan penerapan bahasa yang bermakna dan nyata. Namun, terdapat tantangan seperti manajemen waktu, pengorganisasian kelas, dan partisipasi yang tidak setara. Guru juga melaporkan perlunya pengembangan profesional lebih lanjut untuk menerapkan strategi TBL secara efektif. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa TBL dapat menjadi pendekatan TESOL yang efektif dan menarik dalam konteks sekolah menengah di Indonesia, menawarkan alternatif yang lebih*

berpusat pada siswa dan komunikatif dibandingkan metode tradisional yang berfokus pada tata bahasa. Studi ini memberikan rekomendasi bagi guru dan administrator sekolah untuk mengintegrasikan TBL secara lebih luas ke dalam kurikulum guna meningkatkan hasil pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata Kunci : Pembelajaran Berbasis Tugas; Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris untuk Penutur Bahasa Lain

INTRODUCTION

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has emerged as an effective pedagogical approach in language teaching, particularly in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) (Alshuraiaan & Almefleh, 2023; Azizifard, 2024; Daga Remache, 2022; Lopes Jr, 2022; Molnar & Dániel, 2024). Unlike traditional methods that focus on grammar rules and vocabulary in isolation, TBL emphasizes the use of authentic, real world tasks to promote language acquisition. This research investigates the implementation of Task-Based Learning as a modern approach to TESOL in ninth grade students at MTs Miftahul Midad Lumajang. By engaging students in practical language tasks, this approach aims to enhance their communication skills, critical thinking, and problem solving abilities, while providing a more immersive and interactive learning environment. As Hidayat, Lutfiah & Akillah (2024) emphasize, project-based learning and task-oriented activities play a crucial role in improving students' writing skills, fostering creativity, and strengthening their ability to express ideas effectively in English. Through TBL, learners are encouraged to take a more active role in their language learning journey, developing not only linguistic competence but also collaboration and autonomy in the classroom. It also makes learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

In the context of English language teaching, the traditional grammar translation method often fails to engage students actively, resulting in a lack of fluency and practical language skills (Nisha, 2024). Task-Based Learning, however, has gained significant attention as a modern, communicative approach that focuses on task completion in real life contexts. This research examines the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning in improving the English language proficiency of ninth grade students at MTs Miftahul Midad Lumajang. The study aims to explore how task-based activities, such as collaborative projects, role-playing, and problem solving, contribute to the students' language development and foster a deeper understanding of the English language. Mahmawati & Setiawan (2024) highlight that structured guidance combined with active learning strategies can significantly enhance students' writing proficiency, indicating that a more interactive approach like TBL may provide a stronger foundation for language development. In addition, Novitaningrum et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of sustaining students' English skills through continuous exposure to meaningful tasks, especially in higher education, which reinforces the relevance of implementing TBL even at the secondary level to build long-term language competence.

MTs Miftahul Midad in Lumajang serves as an ideal setting for exploring innovative teaching methods like Task-Based Learning in TESOL. With the growing need for students to develop strong English language skills to succeed in a globalized world, educational institutions are seeking more dynamic and engaging ways to teach English. This study focuses on the impact of Task-Based Learning on ninth grade students at MTs Miftahul Midad Lumajang, aiming to assess whether task-based activities enhance language acquisition, motivation, and overall academic performance. As Nahidin & Faroid (2024) suggest, integrating cultural and literary elements into language instruction can provide students with

deeper contextual understanding and engagement, which aligns with the principles of TBL in fostering meaningful communication. The findings from this research will offer valuable insights into the potential benefits of Task-Based Learning in a local Indonesian context, as well as its relevance to modern TESOL practices.

The teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) has evolved significantly over the years, with a shift toward more student-centered and communicative approaches (Alshraah, Aly & Alqasem, 2023; Pastini & Lilasari, 2023; AlShareef, 2024; Alqahtani & Alhamami, 2024; Nazim, Alzubi & Fakhri, 2024). One such approach is Task-Based Learning (TBL), which encourages learners to use language in realistic and meaningful ways. This research focuses on examining the adoption of TBL in the ninth grade English curriculum at MTs Miftahul Midad, Lumajang. Through the implementation of task-based activities, the study seeks to understand how TBL influences student engagement, language retention, and overall academic achievement in TESOL. Yusuf (2024) underscores the importance of engaging students through interactive and media-based learning tools, such as video conversations, which can complement TBL by fostering greater participation and real world language application. Additionally, Novitaningrum, Imaniar & Aulia (2024) emphasize that collaborative learning strategies enhance students' ability to interpret and creatively express ideas, which further supports the potential of TBL in improving language learning outcomes. By exploring this modern approach, the research aims to provide valuable insights into how TBL can be effectively integrated into Indonesian classrooms.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design, focusing on understanding the experiences and perceptions of ninth grade students at MTs Miftahul Midad in Lumajang regarding the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in their English lessons. The research aims to explore the effects of TBL on student engagement, language development, and motivation in the context of TESOL. Through a qualitative approach, the study will gather detailed, descriptive data on how students interact with task-based activities, as well as the benefits and challenges they face. The participants in this study will be ninth grade students (approximately 10 students) from MTs Miftahul Midad in Lumajang. These students will be selected based on their involvement in English language learning activities using TBL in their curriculum. A purposive sampling method will be used to select a diverse group of students, including those with varying levels of language proficiency and participation in TBL tasks.

The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative analysis technique that allows for the identification of common themes or patterns within the data. The steps will include:

- a. Data Transcription: Transcribing the interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations for detailed analysis.
- b. Coding: Breaking down the data into smaller units (codes) that represent specific ideas or patterns, such as "student engagement," "peer interaction," or "language improvement."
- c. Theme Development: Grouping the codes into themes that emerge across the interviews, observations, and journal entries. For example, themes might include "Improved Communication Skills," "Increased Motivation," and "Challenges in Task Completion."
- d. Interpretation: Analyzing the identified themes to understand the broader implications of Task-Based Learning on TESOL for ninth-grade students.

Focus Group Discussions: A focus group discussion has been held with a small group of students (about 10 participants). This method allowed the researcher to capture a range of opinions and experiences, facilitating discussion and exploration of shared views. Topics included how TBL affects their learning, motivation, and social interaction within language tasks.

Classroom Observations: Classroom observations has been conducted during English lessons that incorporate TBL. The researcher observed how students engage with the tasks, how they interact with peers, and how the teacher facilitates the learning process. Observation focused on: The level of student engagement during task-based activities, The type of tasks being used (e.g., problem solving, roleplays, project work) and Student interaction, collaboration, and communication during the tasks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result section is provided before the discussion section. Each section stands alone as a subtitle.

1. Result

In this research, the researcher employed semi-structured interviewed and it were conducted with a subset students approximately 10 students. The interviews will focus on understanding their experiences with Task-Based Learning, how they feel using the approach in their learning process and the perceived challenges and advantages. Here are some questions that has been given:

Table 1. Interview Questions on Students' Experiences with Task-Based Learning

Questions	Purpose
How do you feel about using task-based activities in your English lessons?	To know about the student's perception after using Task-Based learning approach
Can you describe a task-based activity that helped you learn English?	To know about Suggestions for improving the implementation of TBL in the classroom.
What do you think is the most helpful aspect of Task-Based Learning for your language skills?	To know about the Insights into how TBL enhances students' communicative skills, motivation, and engagement.
What challenges do you face when completing task-based activities	To know about the students' challenges when using Task-Based Learning approach

From the table 1 above, most of the students have positive sentiments related Task-Based Learning activities in their English Lesson. They mentioned that it made learning more interactive and enjoyable. Common Responses, some of them enjoy learning English by using Task-Based learning because it is more fun than just listening to the teacher, it can help them to understand how to use English in real life and they can work with their classmates because they learn together and help each other. Overall Perception, the students generally feel that Task-Based Learning makes the learning process more engaging and practical, providing a sense of accomplishment when completing tasks. One of the most prominent outcomes from

the data collected was the increased engagement of students in the learning process. Observations from classroom settings revealed that students were more actively involved in task-based activities compared to traditional English lessons. In interviews, students consistently expressed a preference for interactive tasks over rote memorization exercises. In focus group discussions, students emphasized the hands on, real life applications of language that task-based activities offered. They noted that activities such as problem solving scenarios and collaborative discussions motivated them to participate more actively and feel a sense of purpose in their learning. The tasks allowed them to apply language skills in contexts they could relate to, making learning feel more relevant and enjoyable.

Besides, Task-Based Learning is the most helpful activities because it can be done by doing group projects and role playing activities. Several students mentioned that group projects where they had to create presentations in English helped them improve their speaking and collaborative skills. Some students found that role playing scenarios, such as simulating real life situations (ordering food at a restaurant, traveling), helped them use English in context. Most of them said that Role play was the best because they could practice what they would actually say they went to an English speaking country. A few students suggested that more time should be given for complex tasks. Others recommended that simpler tasks should be given to lower level students to ensure everyone can participate effectively. The role of the teacher in facilitating task-based learning was also a significant theme. Data from the focus groups and interviews indicated that students appreciated the teacher's supportive role in guiding them through tasks rather than simply delivering content. Students reported that the teacher's encouragement and provision of clear instructions were crucial in helping them navigate challenges during tasks.

A key theme that emerged from the data was the significant improvement in communication skills among students. Both interviews and observations highlighted how task-based learning fostered authentic communication in English. Tasks that encouraged students to work in pairs or small groups provided ample opportunities for them to use English for real communication, not just theoretical exercises. Focus group discussions further revealed that students were not only more confident in speaking but also developed better listening skills. The collaborative nature of task-based activities required them to understand and respond to peers, promoting more effective communication skills. The majority of students emphasized that Task-Based Learning activities greatly helped them improve their speaking skills. Tasks that required them to speak with peers or present in front of the class made them feel more confident. Some students mentioned that Task-Based Learning made English lessons more interesting, boosting their motivation to learn. They appreciated that the tasks felt more relevant to real-life situations, which kept them engaged. Several students expressed that the collaborative nature of tasks allowed them to feel less afraid of making mistakes, which contributed to their increased confidence in using English. Another notable result was the increased motivation and self confidence in English language use. Students reported that task-based learning encouraged them to be more proactive in their learning. A common response in the interviews was that Task-Based Learning made English feel less like a traditional subject and more like a skill they could use in daily life. The focus groups revealed that students who were initially shy or hesitant to speak English in front of the class became more open and willing to participate in group tasks. The collaborative nature of Task-Based Learning seemed to lower the pressure students often felt in traditional settings, thereby boosting their confidence.

The challenges that is faced by the students when they learn by using Task-Based Learning is a few students mentioned that they sometimes found it challenging to understand the instructions for more complex tasks. Sometimes they did not understand what they need to do for the task, because teacher did not explain clearly. Some students noted that the time allocated for certain tasks was insufficient, particularly when the tasks were more complex or required detailed collaboration. Students with lower English proficiency felt that they struggled more during group tasks because of the language gap, which made them feel left behind. Some students pointed out that working with peers who have different levels of English proficiency sometimes led to frustration, as they could not contribute as much to the task. Because their English is not as good as their friends. While the overall feedback was positive, students also identified challenges they encountered during task-based activities. One issue that surfaced repeatedly in both interviews and classroom observations was that some students struggled with the complexity of certain tasks, especially those that required higher-level thinking or teamwork. Another challenge that emerged was the time constraints. Some students expressed that they needed more time to complete tasks thoroughly, especially when working in groups. However, despite these challenges, students generally acknowledged that the difficulty of tasks provided valuable learning experiences, pushing them to improve their language skills.

2. Discussion

This section discusses the findings from the responses of the ninth-grade students at MTs Miftahul Midad, Lumajang, regarding their perceptions of Task-Based Learning (TBL) and its effectiveness in improving their English skills. The responses from the students were analyzed to address the following key areas: their feelings toward using Task-Based Learning activities, specific task-based activities that helped them learn English, the aspects of TBL they found most helpful, and the challenges they faced while completing these tasks.

Perceptions of Task-Based Activities in English Lessons

The students expressed positive perceptions of using task-based activities in their English lessons. Their responses revealed a clear preference for more interactive, practical forms of learning over traditional grammar focused methods. Many students highlighted that TBL made the lessons feel less like a routine, grammar-heavy class and more engaging and fun. This positive sentiment aligns with the core principles of TBL, which emphasize real-world application and communication in language learning (Choi & Chung, 2021; Song, Shin & Shin, 2023). The preference for TBL is rooted in the fact that it offers authentic learning experiences. By engaging with tasks that simulate real-life scenarios, students feel more connected to the material. This could be attributed to the active involvement that TBL encourages, as opposed to the more passive nature of traditional learning approaches. When students engage in tasks like group projects or role playing, they are able to apply their English skills in practical contexts, which makes the learning process more meaningful.

Task-Based Activities that Helped Students Learn English

When asked to describe task-based activities that helped them learn English, the students provided specific examples of activities that were particularly effective. Group projects, role playing, and problem-solving tasks stood out as the most beneficial. These activities encouraged collaboration, critical thinking, and real time language use, all of which

are key components of TBL. Additionally, role-playing activities were praised for their ability to simulate real life situations, where students could use English in practical conversations, such as ordering food or navigating travel related scenarios (Alvarez, 2021; Kanakalingam, Sreeneyasan & Ahmad, 2023; Carrêlo, 2022; Prakash, 2024; Wirentake & Arfani, 2024). This was seen as particularly useful for developing speaking and listening skills, as it provided a safe space to practice conversational English. However, students also provided suggestions for improvement. Several students mentioned that more time should be allocated to complete tasks, especially more complex ones. This reflects the idea that TBL can be demanding in terms of preparation and execution. Some students also suggested breaking down tasks into simpler steps to make them more manageable for lower level learners. These insights highlight the importance of adaptability in TBL to meet students' diverse proficiency levels and learning needs.

Most Helpful Aspects of Task-Based Learning

The most commonly mentioned aspect of TBL that enhanced students' language skills was its emphasis on communication. Students felt that TBL made them more confident in speaking English, as the tasks required them to use English actively and creatively. As one student pointed out, by engaging in real life tasks, such as collaborating with peers or presenting information, students reported significant improvements in their speaking and listening skills. Moreover, the motivation to learn English seemed to increase because TBL tasks often involved enjoyable and interactive activities, as opposed to traditional drills. The incorporation of critical thinking and problem solving tasks further contributed to the development of the students' cognitive and language abilities. The authenticity of the tasks also played a crucial role in making the language learning process more relevant to students' everyday lives. This can be linked to the theory of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the need for learners to use language in functional, real world situations (Rambe, 2017; Alamri, 2018).

Challenges Faced When Completing Task-Based Activities

Despite the positive responses, the students also shared challenges they faced when completing task-based activities. One of the most common issues was difficulty in understanding the instructions for some tasks. This was particularly true for tasks that were more complex or required higher-level thinking. Some students reported that they struggled to comprehend the task requirements, especially if the teacher's explanation was brief or unclear. Additionally, time constraints emerged as a significant challenge. Students mentioned that some tasks, especially group projects, required more time than was allotted in class. This was particularly problematic when students were working on more intricate tasks that involved collaboration, research, and presentation. One student mentioned, "Sometimes, the tasks are rushed, and I feel I don't have enough time to finish properly."

Another challenge was the diverse proficiency levels within groups. Students with higher levels of English proficiency sometimes felt they were carrying the workload for their peers, while students with lower proficiency struggled to contribute meaningfully. This created a frustrating dynamic for some, as they felt limited in their ability to participate effectively. As one student shared, "When we work in groups, sometimes I feel like I'm not contributing enough because my English isn't as good as theirs." These challenges highlight the need for better scaffolding in Task-Based Learning tasks, such as more time for complex

tasks, clearer instructions, and differentiated tasks to cater to students' diverse needs (Tomlinson, 2017; Lankara, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This research examines students' experiences of using Task-Based Learning as a modern approach to TESOL. The researcher identified the effectiveness of this teaching method. The results of the interviews show that the students' experiences with Task-Based Learning at MTs Miftahul Midad indicate that this approach significantly enhances their engagement, motivation, and communicative skills. The hands on, interactive nature of TBL provides students with opportunities to apply language in real-life contexts, which they find both enjoyable and effective for language acquisition. However, challenges related to task complexity, time limitations, and varying proficiency levels suggest that further adjustments are necessary for the approach to be fully optimized for diverse learners. To improve the implementation of Task-Based Learning, it is essential to consider providing clearer task instructions, allocating more time for complex tasks, and differentiating the difficulty level of tasks according to students' language proficiency. Therefore, the results show that they are important to facilitate the understanding of complex concepts by using Task-Based Learning.

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The researcher would like to propose some suggestions about this research that have both theoretical and practical implications: From a theoretical perspective, this study is expected to be bench marking and idea generation. related to the Task-Based Learning approach, especially in relation to the learning of the English language in a certain group of studied participants.

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