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## Effectiveness of Using Task-Based Language Teaching to Enhance Speaking Performance among Malaysian Polytechnic ESL Students

(Keberkesanan Penggunaan Pengajaran Bahasa Berasaskan Tugas untuk Meningkatkan Kemahiran Bertutur dalam Kalangan Pelajar ESL Politeknik Malaysia)

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### Abstract

Speaking is generally considered the most fundamental skill that needs to be acquired by learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) to communicate their ideas, opinions, feelings, thoughts and emotions to others. However, many Malaysian polytechnic ESL students still find speaking very difficult to master and tend to demonstrate low performance in speaking ability. To overcome this problem, English language lecturers must provide students with opportunities to communicate and use the language in authentic situations. An approach that has been receiving significant attention in the field of language pedagogy and second language acquisition in the past decade is task-based language teaching (TBLT). Despite receiving sustained academic attention from scholars, there has been very little research on the implementation of TBLT in the Malaysian polytechnic context. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using task-based language teaching to enhance speaking performance among Malaysian polytechnic ESL students. This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design. Two intact classes of thirty students each enrolled in the Communicative English II course participated in the study. The students of the treatment group received the proposed TBLT instructions for three weeks while students in the control group received Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) instructions. A pre-oral presentation test and a post-oral presentation test were administered to measure students' speaking performance in both groups. Paired sample t-test was employed to analyse the data collected. The findings of the study showed that students in the treatment group who received task-based language teaching instructions performed significantly better than students in the control group who received the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) instruction in their oral presentation test. The findings of the study have practical implications for improving teaching practices and provide insights into the use of TBLT for teaching speaking skills.

Keywords: Task-based language teaching, English language learning, speaking performance

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important skills that learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) should acquire to effectively communicate their ideas, opinions, feelings, thoughts, and emotions to others is speaking. Speaking is also a crucial skill that is fundamental for communication in many sectors of our society, including academics, business, industry and others. According to Harmer (2001), every aspect of human life, including science and technology, education, health, entertainment and others, is interconnected with English. He further states that many learners aspire to become fluent in English for their advancement and a better life because they believe that having a good command of the language will help them land a better job in their lives. It is no surprise that speaking proficiency is often used as a measure of a learner's success in second language learning (Nunan, 1991, p.39). Due to its importance and use in communication, developing speaking skills among second language learners has always been the main goal of second language teaching and learning.

To raise the English language proficiency of Malaysian students, the Ministry of Education has adopted and implemented the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) into language curricula. This serves as a benchmark for developing students' communication competency as they progress from preschool to tertiary level and beyond (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). By the time students finish their tertiary-level education, they will be fully prepared to handle the demands of the twenty-first century when it comes to using English as a communication tool in a variety of contexts. To make sure that Malaysian students' competence in speaking English continues to improve, a variety of strategies and approaches are implemented, including improving the English proficiency of in-service English teachers, introducing a teacher guide for implementing the CEFR-aligned curriculum, modifying the curriculum and syllabus of School Based Assessments (SBA) to align with the CEFR, and choosing international CEFR-oriented reference materials and resources.

Despite the efforts and increased emphasis on the English language, Malaysian ESL learners still struggle greatly to become proficient speakers and exhibit low performance in speaking (Bokhari, Rashid, & Chan, 2015; Azlan, Zakaria & Yunus, 2019). Persuading ESL students to speak in English was found to be challenging by Vellayan et al. (2020), who noted a reduction in English language proficiency among ESL students in Malaysia. Similarly, speaking skills were identified as the most difficult area for ESL undergraduates at a local public university in Malaysia, according to a study by David, Thang and Azman (2015).

Malaysian polytechnic students are not an exception in this sense. Studies have revealed that students frequently hesitate to actively speak and participate in classroom activities when they are expected to speak or present in Communicative English classes (Abdullah & Majid, 2013; Radzi & Embi, 2018). Students often opt for a passive approach to learning, rather than attempting to express their ideas and opinions in speaking activities or discussions (Radzi & Embi, 2018). A few of the factors that contribute to this problem include students' low level of English proficiency and command (Abdullah & Majid, 2013; Radzi & Embi, 2018), speaking anxiety (Uzairah Mohd Ali, 2020), and communication anxiety (Kho & Ting, 2021; 2023). Students' speaking performance, especially in oral presentation assessments, and their interest in acquiring the language in the classroom are thought to have been impacted by these problems. This will obliquely impede the Department of Polytechnic Education's efforts to produce graduates or students who are proficient in the English language.

The main goal of English language lecturers at Polytechnic Malaysia has always been to improve their students' speaking skills. In light of the aforementioned issues, the study aims to improve students' speaking proficiency through the TBLT approach in

Communicative English classes. The TBLT approach is chosen in this study because it provides learners with opportunities to communicate and use the language in real-world contexts through the completion of a variety of task-based instruction tasks. As pinpointed by Nunan (2004), the focus of task-based language teaching is for learners to share their ideas and use the language naturally in pairs or group work. Hence, the objective of this study is to determine the effectiveness of using task-based language teaching to enhance speaking performance among Malaysian polytechnic ESL students. Specifically, the objective of the study is to determine whether there is a significant difference between the control and treatment groups on the pre- and post-oral presentation tests before and after the treatment.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that attempts to apply principles of second language learning to language teaching. TBLT, according to Ellis & Shintani (2014, p.135), is an approach that attempts to develop the communicative competence of learners by engaging them in meaning-focused communication through the performance of tasks. They further assert that TBLT is not only aimed to develop fluency in the communicative process but also to develop learners' linguistic competence and interactional competence. A fundamental principle of TBLT is that language is treated primarily as a tool for communication rather than a subject to be studied or manipulated in TBLT (Ellis, 2003). Therefore, tasks should be considered the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 223).

TBLT approach is considered a learner-centred approach to language teaching as the learners are typically characterised as active agents. Through task performance, learners acquire their implicit and explicit second language knowledge and gradually become more proficient in comprehending and producing the target language for meaningful purposes (Van den Branden, 2016). In addition to the central role that is taken by the learners, tasks are considered a central component of TBLT because they provide suitable conditions or environments for effective language learning (Ellis, 2003; Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Willis, 1996).

According to Brown (1994), task-based language teaching views the learning process as a series of communicative activities connected to the curricular goals. Task-based language teaching enables learners to use the target language forms they believe will best help them achieve their communication target (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). As can be seen, the priority of task-based language teaching is placed on the completion of the tasks, which are assessed in terms of the outcome (Willis and Willis, 2007). Thus, the tasks and outcomes should have some kind of practical significance and application.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

The study draws on the framework of TBLT developed by Willis (1996) mainly consists of three instructional stages. There are pre-task, task cycle, and language focus, which are shown in Figure 1.

In the first stage of the framework, pre-task is aimed to get learners ready to perform the task in a way that will help them to acquire the language. Pre-task, according to Willis (1996), can provide learners with the language they require. In this stage, the teacher introduces the topic, task and objectives to learners. The teacher will explore the topic with the learners to activate topic-related words and phrases. Here, learners are responsible for selecting the appropriate language for any given context themselves.

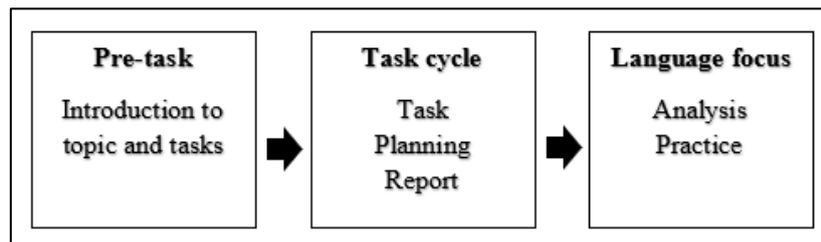


Figure 1. Task-based Learning Framework (Willis, 1996)

In the task cycle stage, depending on the nature of the task assigned, learners will usually be allowed to perform the task in pairs or small groups during the task phase aiming to achieve the objectives of the task. During this stage, the teacher's roles are to guide, monitor and encourage communication among learners using the language resources they already have at their disposal during the planning phase. The teacher will provide feedback and guidance to learners to complete the task. Then, learners present reports to the class, with the teacher acting as a chairperson during the report phase.

The language focus is the last stage in this framework. In the analysis phase, language issues are reviewed to raise awareness of task-related words or phrases among the learners. At this phase, learners have already grasped the meaning of the new language and they need to focus on form. In the practice phase, learners will be provided with the chance to practice and drill the language that has emerged from the task.

#### TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

There have been a lot of experimental studies conducted on task-based language teaching across different educational contexts, ranging from primary level to tertiary level. Studies from countries such as Thailand (Beding & Inthapthim, 2019), Vietnam (Xuyen & Trang, 2021), Iran (Darrashiri & Mazdayasna, 2021; Hashemifardnia et al., 2019), India (Masuram & Sripada, 2020), and Pakistan (Anjum et al., 2019; Majeed & Memon, 2022) have shown that task-based language teaching has been observed as useful in developing the speaking performance and fluency of ESL learners.

Beding and Inthapthim (2019) conducted a study at a university in Thailand which aimed to find out the impact of task-based language teaching on Thai EFL learners' oral performance. This study employed a mixed method by including 36 first-year students enrolling in the English for Communication Course as participants in the study. Three TBLT lesson plans were implemented in the study. Pre and post-speaking test scores, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insights into the effects of using the TBLT approach on speaking skills and students' perceptions of the use of TBLT in the classroom. The findings of the study discovered that there was an improvement in the students' speaking performance level after they were exposed to task-based language teaching and students generally perceived the use of TBLT in the classroom positively. In another study by Xuyen and Trang (2021), task-based speaking activities' effects on oral performance were investigated at a university in Vietnam. Using 13 task-based speaking lessons, which consisted of listing, sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences and creative tasks, EFL learners who received task-based speaking activities were found to demonstrate more significant improvement in oral performance, specifically in vocabulary, grammar and interactive communication than their peers who received traditional instruction intervention.

A study conducted in the local context of Pakistan by Anjum et al. (2019) investigated the effect of task-based language learning on the learners' speaking skills. Data from the secondary level learners in Pakistan was gathered for the study using quasi-

experiment and the learners were taught through the TBLT approach on four units of the textbook. After 45 days of interventions, the findings of the study revealed that students in the experimental group outperformed students in the control group in their speaking test. The results of this study also showed that students in the control group showed no significant improvement in their speaking skill performance as the scores in their pre-test and post-test were relatively similar.

Furthermore, Majeed and Memon (2022) aimed to investigate the efficacy of task-based language teaching on 32 ESL students' speaking skills and fluency in Pakistan. By using a pre-test and post-test, Majeed and Memon (2022) found that students' speaking skills, especially their grammatical competence such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation improved significantly after 18 hours of task-based language teaching intervention. In addition, TBLT is also found to be a significant method in developing students' speaking fluency. According to Majeed and Memon (2022), TBLT not only made students confident but also allowed students to experience a supportive and cooperative environment as they engaged in discussions with classmates, shared ideas and had ample opportunity to speak more.

Hashemifardnia, Rasooyar and Sepehri (2019) conducted a study to examine the effects of task-based activities on 50 intermediate Iranian EFL learners' speaking fluency. The finding of the study showed that the use of task-based speaking activities in teaching and learning had a significant effect on the speaking fluency of Iranian EFL learners. After the treatment, learners in the experimental group who received task-based instruction were found to speak more fluently than learners who received traditional instruction in the control group. The same was also confirmed by Darrashiri & Mazdayasna (2021) who investigated the impact of task-based language teaching on the development of undergraduate students' productive skills. The findings revealed that students' fluency and accuracy were significantly improved and the results of the oral presentations also showed that students improved their accuracy in the use of proper lexical grammatical structures, content, and organisation.

These findings are similar to those reported by Masuram & Sripada (2020). In their study, the effectiveness of task-based teaching on learners' speaking skills was examined at the undergraduate level in India. A pre-test and post-test were used to evaluate learners' competence in speaking skills. After a 3-week task-based language teaching intervention, the findings of the study indicated a significant improvement in learners' oral fluency. The study also found that the tasks were able to increase learners' oral communication in the classroom and stimulate their interest in speaking classes. As a result, learners were able to acquire certain language functions and improve their speaking in English in terms of task performance, sentence structures, grammar and sustainability in speech.

The findings of the aforementioned studies also concur with the study conducted by Mohammadipour and Rashid (2015) on the impact of a task-based instruction programme on fostering the speaking proficiency of undergraduate students in Malaysia. The findings revealed that students who were exposed to a three-month proposed programme demonstrated a significant improvement in overall speaking proficiency. Mohammadipour and Rashid (2015) add that students were able to focus on form and actual communication through the three stages (pre-task, task cycle and language focus). In their study, direct instructions and conscious raising exercises were proven to be effective in helping students draw their attention to appropriate words related to the task before attempting, planning and reporting the task in the task cycle stage. In the language focus stage, Mohammadipour and Rashid (2015) highlight that remedy activities on students' common errors and the teachers' supportive feedback on students' speaking performance can help students to integrate more complicated structures into their current language system, and hence increase students' speaking proficiency.

As can be seen from the findings of these studies, task-based language teaching is considered an effective approach to language teaching and learning because it positively influences and enhances learners' learning and significantly improves their speaking performance. Despite receiving sustained academic attention from scholars, little has been done to investigate how Malaysian polytechnic students respond to TBLT in this respect. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the influence it may have on language learning, especially students' speaking performance in ESL classrooms. Moreover, this study is expected to supplement the existing knowledge which would help researchers or language instructors to better understand task-based language teaching in the Malaysian polytechnic context. Therefore, these are the gaps that have encouraged the researcher to conduct the current study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design using a quantitative method. By using the data collected through oral presentation scores, the effectiveness of task-based language teaching on speaking performance among Malaysian polytechnic ESL students was determined. The non-equivalent group design was preferred in this study for two practical reasons. Firstly, it is not possible to randomly assign subjects to groups in an educational setting (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). Randomisation of subjects is often difficult and might disrupt subjects' class schedules. Therefore, the researcher had to resolve to keep the existing classes intact. Secondly, since the selection of the established classes in the study is not randomised, possible effects from the reactive arrangement are thus minimised (Gay et al., 2006).

### PARTICIPANTS

Two intact classes of the Communicative English 2 course in Politeknik Kuching Sarawak were chosen as the participants of the study. One class was assigned as the treatment group (male=11, female=19) while another class was given the role of the control group (male=17, female=13). Each group consisted of about 30 students, thus the total size of the sample for this study was 60 students. The age range of the students was between 17 and 20 years old. Both the treatment and control groups were taught by an English language lecturer involved in the Communicative English 2 course. The lecturer has a degree in Bachelor of Education in TESL with twenty-one years of teaching experience.

### INSTRUMENTS

An oral presentation test, oral presentation rubric and task-based language lesson plans were used as instruments of the study. The oral presentation test was employed as the primary data collection instrument in this study. The oral presentation test was used to evaluate students' speaking abilities after the implementation of a TBLT approach. As the oral presentation in the course is tailored for individual presentation, it was deemed ideal to be used as the instrument to gauge students' speaking performance. The oral presentation rubric was used to evaluate students' speaking abilities. The rubric used in this study was taken from the rubric circulated by the Curriculum Development Division of the Polytechnic Education Department for the Communicative English 2 course. The criteria on the rubric were validated by a panel of experienced lecturers who went through several processes to make sure that its criteria were appropriate for measuring students' language proficiency and the learning outcome of the topic. The rubric was divided into three marking criteria, namely language, task fulfilment and delivery. Each criterion carries marks of 20%. The total scores obtained were then converted to 30%. To help students achieve the learning outcomes of Topic 1: Products

and Services” as per the requirement of the syllabus of the Communicative English II course, a total of three task-based language teaching lesson plans were constructed for the treatment group. The lesson plans were created based on Willis’s (1996) framework, which consists of three instructional stages, namely pre-task, task cycle and language focus.

#### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Before the initiation of the study, a pre-oral presentation test was administered to both control and treatment groups. All students from both groups were required to deliver an individual oral presentation to describe a product or service of a company. Before preparation for the pre-oral presentation, students in both the treatment and control groups were given preliminary information on the aspects to focus on when describing the product or service. Students were then required to choose a product or service of their choice and research the necessary information needed for the pre-oral presentation. Each student was given four to five minutes to deliver his or her presentation. Students’ oral presentations were evaluated and graded individually based on the oral presentation rubric.

After the pre-oral presentation test, a three-week intervention (3 hours a week) was administered to the treatment group. Students in the treatment group were taught based on the three-stage task-based instruction by Willis (1996). The three stages of task-based instruction are pre-task, task cycle and language focus. In the pre-task stage, the English lecturer introduced the topic and tasks to the students, activating relevant topic-related words and phrases. In the task cycle stage, students worked through several tasks preparing them for their oral presentation. Tasks like using adjectives to describe features of a product or service, describing functions of a product or service, using phrases for describing different parts of a presentation (for example, introduction, body and conclusion), and using signposting phrases to structure ideas. Students were given the chance to use the language they already knew by carrying out the tasks individually and in pairs. Under the English lecturer’s guidance, students prepared the task reports and presented them to the class in spoken form. In the language focus stage, the English lecturer reviewed what happened in the task reports and highlighted important language forms for the students to analyse. Then, the students practised the language forms to extend their confidence.

As for the control group, Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) lesson plans were used to teach the same topic and content. The main activities in the PPP lesson plans were mainly conducted as whole-class activities. Thus, it was considered lecturer-centred and fewer lecturer-student interactions were involved. In the presentation stage, the English lecturer introduced the topic and highlighted important features of the language that were relevant to the topic such as form, meaning and use. In the practice stage, students practised the new language learned by doing grammar and language practices to check their comprehension of the language. In the production stage, students used the target language to produce new information in spoken forms.

After completing the intervention, a post-oral presentation test was administered to both control and treatment groups. All students were required to carry out a similar oral presentation but on a different product or service. Students were then required to choose another product or service of their choice and research the necessary information needed for the post-oral presentation. Students from both groups were required to give a four-minute to five-minute individual oral presentation. Students’ oral presentations were evaluated by using the same oral presentation rubric.

## DATA ANALYSIS

For the data analysis, descriptive analysis and inferential statistics were employed in the study. Paired sample t-test was employed in the study to answer the objective of the study.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

To answer the research question, a paired sample t-test was employed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the control and treatment groups on the pre and post-oral presentation tests before and after the treatment. Table 1 shows the findings of paired sample t-test analysis in terms of the mean scores of pre-oral presentation test scores and post-oral presentation test scores for both groups.

Table 1. Paired sample T-test for pre- and post-oral presentation test within the group

Groups	Tests	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	Significance level
Control	Pre-test	36.37	5.321	-	29	<.001
	Post-test	39.93	5.126	17.690		
Treatment	Pre-test	37.17	4.609	-	29	<.001
	Post-test	44.10	4.302	14.538		

As depicted in Table 1, the result for the control group revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-oral presentation test ( $M = 36.37$ ,  $SD = 5.321$ ) and the post-oral presentation test ( $M = 39.93$ ,  $SD = 5.126$ ;  $t(29) = -17.690$ ,  $p = .001 < .05$ ). The result indicates that students in the control group significantly improved their oral presentation scores after receiving the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) instruction. On the other hand, the result for the treatment group also revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-oral presentation test ( $M = 37.17$ ,  $SD = 4.609$ ) and the post-oral presentation test ( $M = 44.10$ ,  $SD = 4.302$ ;  $t(29) = -14.538$ ,  $p = .001 < .05$ ). The result suggests that students in the treatment group also significantly improved their oral presentation scores after receiving task-based language teaching instruction.

Overall, these results suggest that students in both the control and the treatment groups improved their speaking performance in oral presentation after undertaking their respective three-week interventions. However, it should be highlighted that students who received task-based language teaching instructions performed considerably better compared to their peers who received the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) instructions in terms of speaking performance. These results are likely to be related to the central role of tasks taken by the students in task-based language teaching. In the present study, the tasks that resembled academic and real-life speaking provided students with a suitable condition or environment for effective language learning and students had more opportunities to practice the target language and improve their speaking ability more naturally. These results are in line with several studies which investigated the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in developing learners' speaking or oral performance (Mohammadipour and Rashid, 2015; Anjum et al., 2019; Xuyen & Trang, 2021; Majeed and Memon., 2022; Sumarsono et al., 2020; Beding & Inthapthim, 2019; Masuram & Sripada, 2020).

However, there is a rather counterintuitive result emerges from the data. Even though the mean score difference between the pre and post-oral presentation test was lower than the

treatment group, the finding still indicates that students in the control group significantly improved their oral presentation scores after receiving the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) instructions. This finding is contrary to studies conducted by Anjum et al. (2019) and Hashemifardnia et al. (2019) which have suggested that traditional teaching approaches such as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP), did not have a significant or positive effect on students' speaking performance. Such findings may be explained by the fact that students' speaking or language proficiency level in the control group was higher than the expected level or students might already have had a certain extent of experience in giving oral presentations in the previous semester, thus the oral presentation test was not considered as difficult or challenging for them. As a result, students in the control group were still able to improve their oral presentation scores significantly after the intervention.

## **CONCLUSION**

Taken together, the findings of the present study can conclude that task-based language teaching is effective in enhancing Malaysian polytechnic students' speaking skills. The findings of the present study can lead to several implications for instruction and practice, policy and curriculum in the Malaysian polytechnic context. The findings provide significant insight into how task-based language teaching helped polytechnic students improve their oral presentation scores. In this regard, English lecturers are recommended to adopt task-based language teaching in their lesson plans as task-based language teaching can be of great assistance in providing students with more authentic speaking opportunities that would help them to prepare for their oral presentation and achieve more progress in speaking assessment. Hence, English lecturers should consider modifying the current coursebook materials to include more speaking activities that would provide students with more opportunities to use the target language and improve their speaking ability. Most of the tasks or activities in the current coursebooks are not designed using a task-based approach. This has limited the opportunities for students to practice their speaking skills. English lecturers may also need to create different speaking tasks that resemble academic and real-life speaking to help students acquire the language more naturally.

Not only that, additional tasks or activities that focus on the linguistic form should be provided to students. Some of the tasks used in English classrooms, to some extent, might not be sufficient for students to acquire the correct linguistic form. In some situations, lecturers might place an undue emphasis on task fluency and communicating meaning which could affect students' efforts in using the correct language form. Sometimes the accuracy of linguistic form is viewed as secondary to nonverbal speech which includes body language, tone, and eye contact. Thus, it may prevent students from using well-formed sentences to complete the speaking tasks. It is recommended that the linguistic-form-based activities are conducted in the pre-task stage instead of the post-task stage to scaffold students and to help them acquire new or basic speech forms or grammatical structures before attempting the main tasks in the task cycle stage. Linguistic form and language meaning are equally important, and a combination of tasks that primarily emphasise meaning and form at the early stage of teaching can provide opportunities for students to perform the tasks with a focus on meaning without impeding the acquisition of linguistic form, especially for students who lack linguistic resources.

The research findings also provide important implications towards policy and curriculum in the Malaysian polytechnic context. The present study provides evidence that task-based language teaching can be adopted at the polytechnic level for teaching speaking to polytechnic students. The findings of the present study can inform the Communicative English course syllabus designer and material or coursebook writers of the importance of using task-based activities in teaching speaking skills. The syllabus designer should

take into account the needs and interests of students by adding some task components to the current course syllabus. Specifying the task components in the teaching method and proposed teaching and learning activities sections in the course syllabus will compel English lecturers to integrate task-based activities in their classrooms to aid students in acquiring speaking skills that match the course learning outcomes. In order to align with the course syllabus, the emphasis on improving students' speaking abilities in polytechnics must be considered when designing the current teaching and learning materials and coursebooks. Material or coursebook writers should develop materials or coursebooks or include various task-based activities or real-life driven tasks in the current Communicative English materials or coursebooks to support the task-based language teaching.

In consideration of the results and the limitations of the present study, it is recommended that a larger sample size be considered in future research to better examine and comprehend the effectiveness of using task-based language teaching to enhance speaking performance among Malaysian polytechnic ESL students. Given that experiences might vary across campuses, future research would benefit from the examination of a broader range of contexts, which includes polytechnics from the east and west Malaysia region, or a larger sample population so that future research can provide a sound foundation for increasing the generalizability of a study. In addition, the present study only incorporated task-based language teaching in one of the topics in the Communicative English 2 course, therefore, the intervention of the study only lasted for three weeks. Such a short intervention period may not be enough to significantly enhance students' oral presentation performance. It is recommended that the use of task-based language teaching be expanded to other topics in the Communicative English 2 course with a longer period of intervention. A longer intervention may help to yield different or more significant findings that could prove useful in examining the effectiveness of using task-based language teaching to enhance speaking performance among Malaysian Polytechnic ESL students.

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