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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TASK-BASED LEARNING IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY SKILLS: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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Annotation: This article explores the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition at the beginner (A1–A1+) level. The study is based on an action research approach conducted during teaching practice. The main objective of the research is to identify how the implementation of TBL influences students' engagement, motivation, and vocabulary development. Various data collection methods were employed, including classroom observation, student interviews, questionnaires, as well as pre-test and post-test assessments. The findings reveal that students initially demonstrated limited vocabulary knowledge and low participation. However, after the application of task-based activities, a significant improvement was observed in both their performance and classroom involvement.

Keywords: Task-Based Learning, Vocabulary Acquisition, Action Research, Pre-test, Post-test, Student Engagement, Language Learning.

Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition plays a fundamental role in learning English as a foreign language, as it directly affects learners' ability to communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners often struggle to express their ideas, understand texts, and participate actively in classroom activities. Therefore, developing students' vocabulary competence is considered one of the most important aspects of language teaching, especially at beginner levels such as A1–A1+.In traditional language teaching approaches, vocabulary is often taught through memorization and repetition. However, such methods do not always lead to long-term retention or meaningful use of language. Students may remember words temporarily but fail to apply them in real communication. This creates a gap between knowledge and practical language use, which negatively affects learners' motivation and confidence. In contrast, Task-Based Learning (TBL) has emerged as an effective and modern approach to language teaching that emphasizes learning through meaningful tasks. TBL focuses on engaging students in real-life communication activities where language is used as a tool to complete specific tasks. These tasks may include problem-solving activities, role-plays, group discussions, information gap activities, and other interactive exercises. The main principle of TBL is that language is best learned when learners are actively involved in using it for meaningful purposes rather than only studying it as a system of rules. This approach shifts the focus from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered interaction, allowing students to take an active role in their learning process. As a result, students become more engaged, motivated, and confident in using the target language. Moreover, TBL is strongly supported by second language acquisition theories, which emphasize the importance of interaction, input, and output in language learning. When students participate in tasks, they are exposed to comprehensible input and are also required to produce output, which helps to develop fluency and accuracy simultaneously. Despite its advantages, many classrooms still rely on traditional teaching methods, and students often face difficulties in using vocabulary effectively in real

communication. This situation highlights the need for more interactive and student-centered approaches such as TBL. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning in improving students' vocabulary acquisition. The study also seeks to explore how TBL influences students' motivation, engagement, and overall learning performance. This research is conducted through an action research approach using pre-test and post-test assessments, as well as qualitative data collection methods such as observation and interviews.

Theoretical and Empirical Background.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) is a student-centered approach in language teaching that emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks to promote real communication. It is grounded in communicative language teaching and focuses on engaging learners in authentic language use rather than isolated grammar practice. According to leading scholars, TBL enables learners to develop language skills through interaction, problem-solving, and the completion of purposeful activities. From a theoretical perspective, TBL is closely connected with constructivist learning theory, which suggests that learners actively construct knowledge through experience and social interaction. In this approach, students are not passive recipients of information; instead, they become active participants in the learning process. Tasks such as role-plays, discussions, and problem-solving activities allow learners to use language in real-life contexts, which enhances both understanding and retention. Furthermore, TBL aligns with the principles of second language acquisition, particularly the importance of meaningful input and output. When learners are involved in task completion, they are exposed to comprehensible input and are encouraged to produce language, which supports their linguistic development. This process also helps to improve fluency, accuracy, and confidence. Empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of TBL in various educational settings. Research findings indicate that students who learn through task-based activities show higher levels of motivation, engagement, and participation compared to those taught through traditional methods. In addition, several studies have reported significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition, as learners are able to understand and apply new words in context rather than memorizing them in isolation. Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that TBL fosters collaborative learning. Students often work in pairs or groups to complete tasks, which enhances communication skills and encourages peer learning. This interaction not only improves language competence but also develops critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. However, some challenges related to TBL have also been identified. For instance, students may initially feel confused when introduced to task-based activities, especially if they are accustomed to teacher-centered instruction. Time management can also be a concern, as tasks may require more classroom time. Despite these challenges, the overall findings strongly support the effectiveness of TBL as a powerful approach in language teaching. In conclusion, both theoretical foundations and empirical evidence confirm that Task-Based Learning is an effective method for enhancing students' vocabulary and overall language proficiency. Its focus on meaningful communication, active participation, and real-life application makes it particularly suitable for beginner-level learners.

Research Methodology

This study employed an action research design to examine the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition. Action research was selected as the most appropriate method because it enables the teacher-researcher to systematically investigate classroom problems, implement pedagogical changes, and evaluate their impact in a real educational context. This approach is particularly useful for improving teaching practices and promoting reflective teaching.

Participants: The participants of this study were A1–A1+ level learners studying English as a foreign language. The group consisted of students with relatively low vocabulary knowledge and limited ability to communicate in English. Most of the students demonstrated passive learning behavior at the beginning of the study and relied heavily on teacher-centered instruction. The selection of participants was based on their need for improvement in vocabulary skills, which made them suitable for this research. Their progress throughout the study provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of TBL for beginner-level learners.

Data Collection Methods

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, multiple data collection tools were used. The use of both pre test and post test allowed for a comprehensive analysis of students' learning outcomes. We can see interviews with students and teacher.

Data Collection

Interview with teacher:

My interview consisted of five questions designed for the teacher. Through this interview, I aimed to explore the teacher's understanding and awareness of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) method, as well as to find out whether she applies it regularly in her teaching practice or has limited familiarity with it. When I invited the teacher to participate, she responded positively and showed willingness to cooperate. She kindly requested to review the interview questions in advance, which I provided. After that, we arranged a suitable time to conduct the interview. The session was recorded, and we also captured it on video for accuracy and further analysis. Throughout the interview, the teacher answered all questions confidently in English and shared her experiences related to the TBL method. I found the collaboration very productive and appreciated her openness and supportive attitude during the process.

Interview with students:

I administered a test to my students, and they responded honestly. The test consisted of five questions, all in a yes/no format. At first, the students seemed a bit surprised, but after reading and understanding the questions carefully, they realized they needed to provide their answers. Each student then thoughtfully gave their response.

Pre test:

Before delivering my lesson to the target group of 5th-grade learners, it was essential to identify their prior knowledge related to the topic of housework activities. Understanding what learners already know helps in planning more effective and level-appropriate tasks. The results of the pre-assessment play a crucial role not only in predicting the possible outcomes of the lesson but also in providing a clear basis for comparison with the post-lesson results.For this purpose, I designed a pre test consisting of 10 questions aimed at evaluating the learners' general understanding of household chores. The questions were intentionally kept simple and accessible, ensuring that students could respond without feeling overwhelmed. They focused on basic vocabulary related to housework (such as cleaning, cooking, washing dishes), along with fundamental grammar elements like the use of the verb to be, simple present tense, and forming basic questions. Additionally, a few items encouraged students to connect housework activities with their daily routines, which helped me gain deeper insight into both their language level and real-life experiences.

Post test:

After completing the lessons with my A2-level learners, it was important to evaluate how effective the teaching process had been and to identify both its strengths and weaker aspects. For this reason, I conducted a post-assessment following two lessons based on the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach. This allowed me to measure learners' progress and

determine how successfully the lesson objectives were achieved. The post-test was designed in alignment with the topic of housework activities and the language points covered during the lessons. It included tasks related to key vocabulary such as daily household chores, as well as the use of the present simple tense in describing routines and responsibilities. The test consisted of 10 questions that assessed learners' overall understanding, their ability to use newly learned vocabulary in context, and their grammatical accuracy. Moreover, some questions required students to apply the language in short, meaningful sentences, which helped to evaluate not only their knowledge but also their practical usage skills. These observations indicate that TBL promotes both comprehension and functional usage of vocabulary.

Data Analysis

A) Quantitative Analysis is a research method that focuses on using numbers and measurable data. It helps researchers understand results clearly by collecting information that can be counted and calculated. This type of analysis is useful when we want to know how much improvement has been made or how many learners achieved certain results. For example, tests, questionnaires, and surveys are commonly used in quantitative analysis.

B) Qualitative Analysis is a method that is based on understanding ideas, opinions, and experiences rather than numbers. It allows the researcher to explore learners' attitudes, feelings, and behaviors in depth. This type of analysis helps answer questions like how and why something happens. Interviews, observations, and open-ended questions are often used in qualitative research.

C) Comparative Analysis is a method that involves comparing two or more sets of data to find similarities and differences. It is especially useful in educational research to measure learners' progress. In this study, comparative analysis was used to compare pre test and post-test results. This helped to clearly see the level of improvement in learners' knowledge, vocabulary, and grammar after the lesson.

In this section, I examined and interpreted all the data gathered throughout my teaching practice. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, I applied a variety of research instruments, including classroom observation, interviews, student questionnaires, as well as pre-tests and post-tests. These methods allowed me to evaluate not only students' academic progress but also the effectiveness of my instructional strategies, particularly the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach.

To begin with, I focused on analyzing the observation data. At the initial stage of my teaching practice, I designed my own observation checklist. However, after using it in real classroom situations, I realized that it did not fully reflect the key components of the TBL methodology. Specifically, it lacked important criteria such as the different stages of a task (pre-task, task cycle, and language focus), the level of student interaction, and communicative engagement. As a result, it was challenging to assess the lesson objectively. In order to improve the quality of my observations, I revised the checklist with the assistance of digital tools. The updated version became more aligned with TBL principles and enabled me to monitor classroom dynamics more accurately. Through this improved observation process, I noticed that learners were significantly more involved during task-based activities. Pair work and group discussions encouraged them to actively use English and collaborate with their peers. Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were also identified. For instance, during interactive tasks, the classroom environment sometimes became noisy, making it difficult to maintain full control over all students. This highlighted the importance of strong classroom management skills when implementing student-centered approaches like TBL. Therefore, I understood that while TBL enhances engagement, it also requires careful

planning and discipline strategies. Secondly, I analyzed the interview data. Initially, I had planned to conduct the interview with the main classroom teacher, and we had already discussed the structure of the questions. Unfortunately, due to unexpected health issues, she was unable to continue teaching. Consequently, her brother replaced her, and I had to carry out the interview with him instead. Since he was not familiar with the TBL approach, the responses I received were rather limited and lacked methodological depth. Although the interview did not provide detailed professional insights, it still offered valuable perspectives. This experience made me realize that not all educators are aware of or trained in modern teaching methodologies. Moreover, it taught me the importance of flexibility and adaptability in research, as unforeseen circumstances can influence the data collection process. Thirdly, I evaluated the results of the student questionnaire. Before distributing the questionnaire, I felt slightly anxious, as I was unsure about how students would perceive my teaching. I was concerned that they might provide negative feedback. However, the responses turned out to be largely positive. The majority of students reported that they found the lessons enjoyable, interactive, and easy to follow. Many learners specifically mentioned that they appreciated group work, games, and communicative activities. This indicates that TBL-based lessons can significantly increase student motivation and participation. The feedback not only confirmed the effectiveness of my teaching approach but also boosted my confidence as a prospective teacher. In addition to classroom activities, I also incorporated homework tasks into the learning process. During this stage, I assigned students vocabulary exercises and asked them to memorize new words related to the lesson topics. To reinforce their learning, I conducted short tests based on these vocabulary items. The results showed that students were able to retain and recall the words more effectively when they practiced them regularly at home. Pre-test and Post-test Discussion The analysis of the pre-test and post-test results provides clear evidence of students' progress in vocabulary acquisition. The pre-test results indicated that the majority of students had limited vocabulary knowledge. Many students struggled to understand basic words and were unable to use them correctly in context. Their performance showed low confidence and minimal engagement. After the implementation of Task-Based Learning, a post-test was conducted to measure improvement. The results demonstrated a significant increase in students' scores. Most students were able to recognize and use new vocabulary more accurately. Their confidence level also improved, and they participated more actively during the lessons. Furthermore, the comparison between pre-test and post-test results highlights the effectiveness of TBL. The increase in mean scores shows that students benefited from interactive and meaningful tasks. The normalized gain score also indicates a moderate to high level of improvement, which confirms that TBL had a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. In addition, students' errors decreased noticeably in the post-test. They were able to apply vocabulary in appropriate contexts rather than simply memorizing words. This suggests that TBL supports deeper learning and better retention. Overall, the pre-test and post-test analysis proves that Task-Based Learning is more effective than traditional teaching methods in developing vocabulary skills.

Another important insight from this research is the score of the post and pre test. I identified the pupils` minimum score. By observing each lesson and analyzing students' performance, I was able to adjust my teaching strategies and improve the effectiveness of subsequent lessons.

1. Mean Score (Average)

Formula:\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} Pre-test :

- 3 × 10 = 30
- 2 × 4 = 8

• 2 × 7 = 14
• 2 × 9 = 18
• 1 × 5 = 5
• 1 × 11 = 11

Overall (∑X) = 112 Students (N) = 13 Pre-test mean: 112 ÷ 13 = 8.62

Post-test

• 3 × 13 = 39
• 2 × 11 = 22
• 2 × 10 = 20
• 2 × 12 = 24
• 3 × 9 = 27
• 3 × 8 = 24

Overall: (∑X) = 156

Students; (N) = 15 Post-test mean: 156 ÷ 15 = 10.4 Gain Score (Improvement) Formula: Gain = Post - Pre Gain: 10.4 − 8.62 = 1.78 Normalized Gain (Hake Gain) (Max score = 13) Formula: g = \frac{Post - Pre}{Max - Pre}

Calculate: g = (10.4 − 8.62) / (13 − 8.62)

g = 1.78 / 4.38 ≈ 0.41 Interpretation

• g = 0.41 Medium improvement

Conclusion:

• Pre-test mean: 8.62
• Post-test mean: 10.4
• Gain: 1.78

Finally, I analyzed the results of the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was administered before the lesson in order to assess students' prior knowledge. It included questions appropriate for A1-level learners and focused on previously covered material. After completing the teaching intervention, I conducted a post-test to measure students' improvement. A comparison of the two sets of results clearly demonstrated progress. Most students achieved higher scores in the post-test, particularly in areas such as grammar usage and vocabulary acquisition. While some learners showed rapid improvement, others developed their skills gradually. This variation highlights the individual differences in learning pace but still confirms overall academic growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that Task-Based Learning (TBL) is an effective approach for improving students' vocabulary acquisition at the beginner level. The findings of the action research indicate that the implementation of task-based activities significantly enhanced students' engagement, motivation, and overall learning performance. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results clearly shows that students made noticeable progress in their vocabulary knowledge. They not only increased their ability to recognize new words but also improved their capacity to use them appropriately in context. This suggests that TBL promotes deeper understanding rather than simple memorization. Furthermore, the study revealed that students became more active and confident during lessons. The use of meaningful and interactive tasks encouraged participation and fostered a collaborative learning environment. As a result, students developed not only their vocabulary but also their communication and problem-solving skills. Despite some initial challenges, such as students' unfamiliarity with task-based activities and time management issues, the overall impact of TBL was highly positive. These challenges decreased over time as students adapted to the new learning approach. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Task-

Based Learning is a practical and effective method for language teaching, particularly for developing vocabulary skills among beginner-level learners. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers integrate. TBL into their classroom practices to create a more engaging, student-centered, and productive learning environment.

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