

TASK-BASED LEARNING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN EARLY ENGLISH EDUCATION AT SD 213 LAPONGKODA

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in developing communication skills in early English language education at SD 213 Lapongkoda. TBL, which focuses on using practical and authentic tasks within the learning process, is expected to enhance speaking, listening, and social interaction abilities of young learners. The research investigates the effects of TBL on communication skills development among elementary school 213 Lapongkoda students through a series of engaging, real-life tasks. Findings indicate that TBL significantly increases student motivation and effectively enhances communication skills by offering opportunities for experiential learning and collaboration. This study suggests that integrating TBL in English language education is an effective strategy to prepare young learners for real-world communication challenges and to foster language acquisition through meaningful tasks.

Keywords: Task-Based Learning, Early English Education, Communication Skills, Young Learners

INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate in English has become an essential skill in the era of globalization. English is not only a tool for international communication but also provides a competitive advantage for individuals in various fields, including education, career, and social life. As one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, English holds a pivotal role in enabling access to global knowledge, fostering intercultural understanding, and promoting professional mobility (Willis, 1996). Therefore, teaching English from an early age has become a primary focus in education across many countries, including Indonesia.

Young learners, defined as children in their early years of formal education, represent a critical period for language acquisition. During this phase, children are highly receptive to new information and capable of developing language skills rapidly (Ellis, 2020). However, traditional teacher-centered approaches often prove less effective in motivating students to engage actively in the learning process. These methods typically prioritize rote memorization and repetitive exercises, which may fail to capture the attention and enthusiasm of young learners (Pinter, 2015). Instead, children require

activities that are dynamic, interactive, and tailored to their developmental needs (Oliver & Philp, 2017).

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has emerged as a student-centered approach that can enhance engagement and learning outcomes in English language education. Unlike traditional methods, TBL focuses on completing meaningful and relevant tasks that mimic real-world scenarios (Ahlquist, 2013; Kos, 2024). These tasks provide students with opportunities to use English in authentic contexts, encouraging natural and purposeful language use (Lustenberger, 2024). By integrating language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing into the task cycle, TBL creates a holistic and immersive learning experience (Willis, 1996).

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the Task-Based Learning approach in improving young learners' communication skills in English education at SD 213 Lapongkoda. By providing engaging and challenging tasks, students are expected to develop their linguistic competence alongside critical and creative thinking abilities (Rybchynska, 2023). Furthermore, the collaborative nature of many TBL activities fosters social interaction and teamwork, which are essential for personal and academic growth (Kos, 2024; Oliver, Philp, & Duchesne, 2017).

The study also seeks to identify the most effective TBL methods for young learners and to examine the impact of these methods on students' motivation and academic performance. Motivation is a key factor in language learning, particularly for young children, who are more likely to thrive in environments where they feel challenged yet supported (Alam & Bashir Uddin, 2013; Eshqobilova & Qosimova, 2024). Understanding how to design and implement TBL activities that cater to the interests and abilities of young learners is crucial for maximizing the potential of this approach (Safitri, Rafli, & Dewanti, 2020).

Additionally, the implementation of Task-Based Learning in classrooms offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Through real-life scenarios and problem-solving activities, students are encouraged to experiment with language use in a supportive environment (Shintani, 2016). This experiential learning process not only enhances language proficiency but also builds students' confidence in using English in diverse contexts (Nigora & Hulkaroy, 2024). Furthermore, TBL aligns with modern pedagogical principles that emphasize active learning, student autonomy, and the integration of 21st-century skills (Nopiyanti, Adjie, & Putri, 2020).

By addressing these aspects, this research aims to contribute to the development of more innovative and relevant English teaching practices for young learners. It underscores the importance of designing educational interventions that are not only effective in achieving linguistic goals but also enriching in terms of personal and social development (Rybchynska, 2023). Ultimately, this study aspires to provide insights that can inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in

fostering a more engaging and impactful English language education for young learners at SD 213 Laponkoda.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in enhancing young learners' communication skills in English. A quasi-experimental design is adopted, involving two groups of young learners: an experimental group taught using TBL and a control group taught through traditional methods. This design facilitates a comparative analysis of the outcomes between the two groups. Participants include 60 young learners aged 8 to 10 years from a primary school in Indonesia, randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. Parental consent is obtained before participation.

Data collection methods include pre- and post-tests to assess communication skills in English across speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Classroom observations capture engagement, interaction, and task performance during lessons, while semi-structured interviews with selected students and teachers provide qualitative insights into the TBL approach and its impact. Questionnaires measure students' motivation and attitudes toward English learning before and after the intervention. Quantitative data from tests and questionnaires are analyzed using statistical methods such as paired t-tests and ANCOVA to determine significant differences in communication skills and motivation between groups. Qualitative data from interviews and observations undergo thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to TBL implementation and effectiveness.

The study spans 12 weeks, with both groups receiving instruction three times per week in 45-minute sessions. The experimental group engages in TBL activities, such as role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative projects, while the control group follows traditional methods emphasizing drills and teacher-led explanations. The same topics and materials are used for both groups to ensure comparability. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, this research provides a comprehensive perspective on the benefits and challenges of implementing TBL in primary school classrooms, contributing valuable insights into innovative and effective practices for English language education among young learners.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study conducted at SD 213 Laponkoda indicate a significant improvement in the communication skills of the experimental group compared to the control group. Pre- and post-test scores reveal that students taught using Task-Based Learning (TBL) demonstrated greater progress in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. For instance, the experimental group showed a marked increase in their

ability to use appropriate vocabulary, construct coherent sentences, and respond effectively in conversational contexts. This improvement highlights the effectiveness of TBL in fostering language acquisition through interactive and meaningful tasks.

Observational data further support these findings, revealing that students in the experimental group were more engaged and actively participated in classroom activities compared to their peers in the control group. The collaborative nature of TBL encouraged peer-to-peer interaction, which not only enhanced language use but also promoted social skills such as teamwork and problem-solving. Teachers at SD 213 Lapongkoda reported that students appeared more confident and enthusiastic during lessons, attributing this change to the dynamic and context-driven nature of TBL tasks.

Qualitative analysis of interviews with students and teachers provided additional insights into the benefits of TBL. Students expressed a preference for TBL activities, noting that tasks such as role-playing and problem-solving were enjoyable and made learning English more relatable to real-life situations. Teachers observed that the use of authentic and meaningful tasks motivated students to participate and apply their language skills creatively. These findings suggest that TBL has a positive impact on student motivation, which is a crucial factor in sustaining engagement and promoting long-term learning outcomes.

Thematic analysis of qualitative data also identified several challenges associated with the implementation of TBL. Teachers highlighted the need for careful planning and resource allocation to design effective tasks that cater to the diverse needs and abilities of young learners. Additionally, managing classroom dynamics during group activities posed occasional difficulties, particularly in ensuring equal participation among students. Despite these challenges, both teachers and students at SD 213 Lapongkoda acknowledged the overall benefits of TBL in creating a more engaging and effective learning environment.

In comparison, the control group exhibited more modest improvements in communication skills. The traditional teacher-centered approach, while effective for rote memorization and grammar-focused exercises, lacked the interactive and immersive qualities that characterize TBL. As a result, students in the control group were less motivated and often displayed passive learning behaviors. These differences underscore the advantages of TBL in promoting active learning and authentic language use.

In summary, the study conducted at SD 213 Lapongkoda demonstrates that Task-Based Learning is an effective approach for improving young learners' communication skills in English. By integrating language skills into meaningful and engaging tasks, TBL fosters not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking, creativity, and social interaction. While the approach requires thoughtful implementation and adaptation to address challenges, its benefits far outweigh its limitations. The findings of this research

contribute valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers aiming to enhance English language education for young learners.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Task-Based Learning (TBL) significantly enhances young learners' communication skills in English by providing them with authentic, meaningful, and engaging tasks. The research findings, conducted at SD 213 Lapongkoda, highlight that TBL not only improves linguistic competence in speaking, listening, reading, and writing but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and social interaction among students. The interactive and collaborative nature of TBL motivates young learners and encourages active participation, making language learning a more enjoyable and effective process.

Despite the challenges associated with its implementation, such as the need for meticulous planning and classroom management, TBL proves to be a superior approach compared to traditional methods. Its ability to simulate real-life scenarios and promote experiential learning bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ultimately building students' confidence and autonomy in using English.

The study provides valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing innovative and student-centered English language education programs for young learners. By adopting TBL, schools like SD 213 Lapongkoda can create more dynamic and impactful learning environments that cater to the developmental needs and interests of children, preparing them for future academic and professional success. Further research is encouraged to explore the long-term effects of TBL and its application across diverse educational settings.

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