

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TASK-BASED LEARNING ON SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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Abstract

This paper discusses the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in enhancing English language proficiency among secondary-level students, particularly focusing on reading comprehension and writing fluency. A quasi-experimental research design was employed, targeting students in grades nine and ten from selected secondary schools in City Baddomalhi, District Narowal and tehsil Mansehra, District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study specifically included students from Government Higher Secondary school Attershisha, Government Girls High School Attershisha, Government Higher Secondary school Bherkund, and Government Girls High school Bherkund and Govt Islamia high school Baddomalhi, Govt Muslim High school Baddomalhi, Government Girls High School No.1 Baddomalhi, Government Girls High School Nai Abadi Baddomalhi ensuring a comprehensive and representative sample from both urban and semi-urban educational institutions in the region. The findings aim to provide empirical evidence on the applicability of TBL in improving language skills and fostering communicative competence, highlighting its relevance for secondary education in the Pakistani context. The sample size was calculated as the L.R. Gay formula in order to have statistical adequacy, and sampling was carried out in a statistical stratified random sampling method in order to have a proportion in the sample across schools and grade levels. The study involved an experimental group that was taught using the TBL approach and a control group that was taught using conventional methods of teaching. Each of the two groups received pre-test and post-test tests in order to determine their reading comprehension and writing fluency. The findings showed that the students who were exposed to the TBL method showed a large improvement in both dimensions than the students who attended the control group. These results emphasise the pedagogical importance of TBL as a viable method of teaching English language proficiency in secondary school and also highlight its prospective use in the teaching of language on a larger scale.

Keywords

Task based, learner, Language, proficiency, schools, comprehension

Introduction

Effective use of the English language has proven to be a crucial skill in the contemporary globalised world, where communication, technology and education are becoming more and more language-free. In most non-native English societies, such as Pakistan, English serves not only as a tool of instruction but is also a pathway to academic success and career growth, as well as international cooperation. Therefore, one of the main aims of the educational systems, especially secondary level, is the improvement of the English language proficiency of students. At this stage linguistic basis is fixed, and the communicative competence starts the process of development.

The most common conventional language teaching practices in Pakistan have mainly focused on the memorisation of language, grammar translation, and instruction that is teacher-oriented and does not focus much on the communicative and functional application of language. Students often, therefore, tend to have difficulties in the application of language skills in real-life situations, particularly reading comprehension and writing fluency. As a

reaction to such constraints, communicative and learner-focused methods like Task-Based Learning (TBL) have become well-established as efficient alternatives to traditional teaching methods.

Task-Based Learning is based on the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which focuses on meaningful use of the language realised in such a way of communicating that allows identifying the real world. It stimulates the interactive problem-solving, meaning negotiation, and group work among learners, therefore facilitating linguistic and cognitive growth. The works of previous research done in different settings have shown that TBL results in more profound engagement, motivation, and objective improvements in language proficiency. Nevertheless, studies investigating the use and effect of TBL in the Pakistani secondary education setting is uncommon, especially in terms of its implications on the reading comprehension and writing fluency of the students. In light of this gap, the current paper will be conducted to examine the effects of the Task-Based Learning in the English language proficiency of secondary level learners in District Narowal, Punjab, in terms of reading comprehension and writing fluency. This research aims to present empirical data on the effectiveness of TBL and offer practical implications to the education system of Pakistan through a comparison of the outcomes of students who are taught TBL and those who are taught using conventional methods of training.

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the impact of Task-Based Learning on students' reading comprehension skills at the secondary level.
2. To determine the effect of Task-Based Learning on students' writing fluency in English.
3. To compare the English language proficiency of students taught through TBL with those taught using traditional teaching methods.
4. To explore students' overall improvement in English language learning as a result of implementing TBL-based classroom activities.

3. Research Questions

1. How does Task-Based Learning influence secondary-level students' read comprehension in English?
2. What is the effect of Task-Based Learning on students' writing fluency at the secondary level?
3. Are there significant differences in English language proficiency between students taught through Task-Based Learning and those taught through traditional teaching methods?
4. To what extent does Task-Based Learning contribute to overall improvement in students' English language proficiency?

Literature review

Theoretical Foundations of Task-Based Learning

Task-based learning (TBL) has a solid theoretical foundation based on communicative language teaching (CLT) and the socio-cultural theory (SCT). In CLT, the language is regarded as a means of communication as opposed to a system of disconnected structures and work gives a purposeful context in which language can be used (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Regarding the socio-cultural perspective, the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding highlight the way learners transition from assisted to independent performance when working on tasks (Chen, 2018). Studies conducted by

Ismail, Wang and Jamalyar (2023) prove that task-based instruction is a scaffolded learning with the ability of learners to navigate their ZPD through real-world communicative tasks (SpringerOpen). Besides, it is possible to discuss differentiated task-based instruction, which takes into consideration the styles and preferences of learners, as it is stated by Alavinia and Sadeghi (2023), and task-based pedagogy is not a one-size-fits-all approach but can be adjusted to the profile of a particular learner (UKM e-Journal). By doing so, TBL offers a theoretically consistent framework of how to design an instruction that will lead to meaningful interaction, engagement, and cognitive development.

Task Design and Implementation in Secondary and Tertiary Contexts

Task design is a critical part of successful implementation of TBL: tasks must be goal-oriented, authentic, learner-centred and must have proper scaffolding (Willis and Willis, 2007). In a tertiary context, as reviewed by Chen (2018), the design of tasks determined the way of the development of reading strategies through ZPD and scaffolding (EA Journals). In secondary contexts, e.g. Le Van Tuyen and Nguyen (2022) find that students found task-based speaking activities to be a useful tool in communicative competence; however, they also noted difficulty in mixed ability groups and task difficulty (IJELS). Ahmed, Pathan and Khoso (2023) in Pakistan discovered that the TBLT activities that were based on real-life communication enhanced the undergraduate's engagement and communication abilities (Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review). These results indicate that in the case of secondary-level students, the implementation of TBL requires the careful adjustment of the difficulty of tasks, scaffolding, and supporting the learners.

Impact of Task-Based Learning on Reading Comprehension

Several recent empirical studies support the claims that TBL has a positive impact on reading comprehension in EFL/ESL students. To cite an example, Ismail et al. (2023) discovered that the instruction based on tasks was significantly more efficient in reading comprehension, motivation of reading in L2, and grit among Chinese university students (SpringerOpen). The same study by Adjei Mensah (2018) found the same results in the case of mature students with TBLT, resulting in a higher reading proficiency score in comparison to the traditional instruction (rw.org.za). Prior to this, Chen's (2018) literature review showed that reading tasks in the form of scaffolding could contribute to strategic reading and learners' autonomy (EA Journals). Overall, the studies provide evidence that the concept of task-based instruction positively affects reading comprehension, probably due to the fact that tasks are considered to be active learning activities that encourage meaningful text interaction and scaffold the use of the strategies.

Influence of Task-Based Learning on Writing Fluency and Production

Although a great part of the TBL literature is concerned with speaking, a new body of research is developing in writing fluency and production. To give an example, in the recent commentary in Global Scientific Review (2023), it was mentioned that TBLT provides secondary students with authentic writing tasks (e.g. paragraph writing based on authentic material), which enable the reduction of time pressure of editing (subsequently increasing fluency) (scientificreview.com). Even though the number of direct large-scale research is fewer, the theoretical rationale is that the tasks that involve meaningful written output provide the conditions of language processing, revision, interaction with peers, and feedback, which all help develop writing fluency. These findings should be incorporated into your research since they highlight the importance of investigating writing fluency within the framework of TBL.

Effects of Task-Based Learning on Overall English Language Proficiency

In addition to individual competencies, TBL has been proven to have a more pervasive influence on language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking, listening). Ahmed, Pathan and Khoso (2023) reported that undergraduate ESL students in Pakistan enhanced their communicative skills (speaking) through TBLT, which points to the fact that the task-based methodology has an impact on the general communicative competence (Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review). Nita, Rozimela, and Ratmanida (2019) showed that TBLT had a big effect on the speaking ability of EFL senior high school students, which suggests the subsequent positive effects on other language areas (sciencepublishinggroup.com). All these works support TBL as an integral pedagogy model over a skills-based tactic that is compartmentalised, and this aspect makes it especially applicable to your study on English proficiency in the context of secondary students.

Learner Factors: Motivation, Anxiety, and Self-Efficacy in TBL Environments

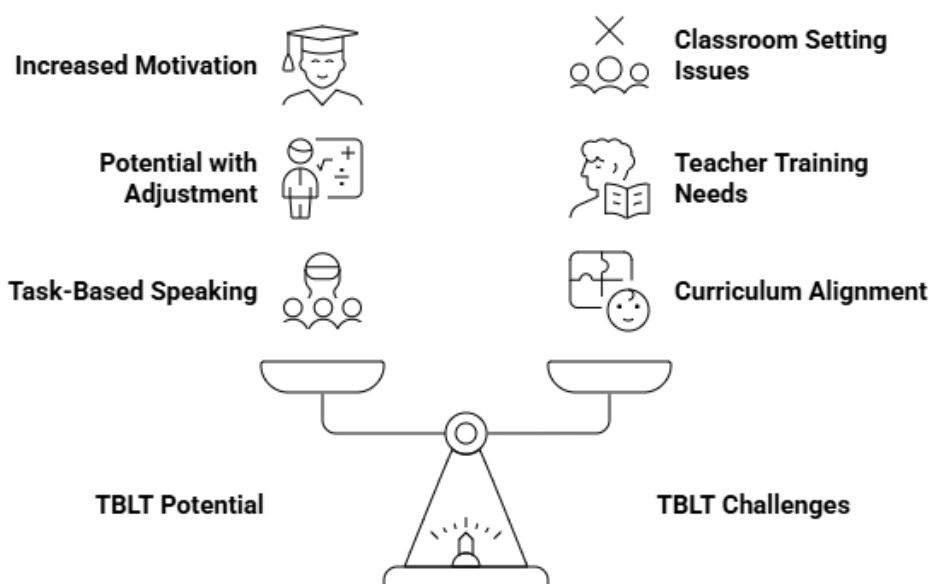
The affective dimensions include motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy, which are important elements of language learning, and TBL seems to have a beneficial influence on them. Ismail et al. (2023) in their research discovered that task-based teaching decreased language anxiety and encouraged L2 grit (perseverance in the acquisition of a language) among the learners (SpringerOpen). A study in Indonesia established that the application of task-supported language instruction (TSLI) in addition to raising language performance also boosted self-esteem, academic buoyancy and creativity (SpringerLink). As Le Van Tuyen and Nguyen (2022) noted, even though students had positive perceptions of task-based speaking activities, there were issues of mixed ability classes and difficulty levels of tasks, which could influence motivation and self-efficacy (IJELS). Such results imply that the effectiveness of TBL is not just dependent on the design of tasks but also on their effect on the motivation of the learners and on controlling the affective barriers.

Contextual and Curriculum Considerations in TBL Application in EFL

Settings

The application of TBL in EFL / ESL contexts, particularly in secondary schools of non-Anglophone nations, must take into account contextual realities: class size, mixed ability, curriculum, and assessed exams, teacher ideologies, and resources. According to findings of Le Van Tuyen and Nguyen (2022), Vietnamese secondary school students reported the frequent use of task-based speaking activities, but they were affected by classroom setting and mixed ability issues (IJELS). In an Iranian high school setting, Tale and Goodarzi (2023) found that TBLT on grammar instructions increased motivation, but emphasised the issues of teacher training and curriculum alignment (journals.aiac.org.au). Politely, Ahmed et al. (2023) made clear that although Grammar Translation and PPP methods prevailed, TBLT presented potential with a proper adjustment in Pakistan (Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review). What these studies suggest is that introducing TBL in your local secondary level setting in Punjab, Pakistan, will require modification to the curriculum requirements, teacher training and scaffolds.

Balancing TBLT Potential and Challenges in EFL



Gaps and Directions for Future Research

There are still some gaps in the literature that can be addressed through your study. In particular, although most of the research studies the issue of speaking and reading, the number of studies that specifically examine the writing fluency of secondary students in EFL settings are fewer (Global Scientific Review, 2023) (scientificreview.com). In addition, the research on TBL in Pakistani secondary schools is rather scarce (Ahmed et al., 2023) (Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review). The research conducted in the past is usually focused on the adult or university learners; secondary level research is a relatively new area of research. In addition, longitudinal research investigating long-term effects of TBL on proficiency in both skills and other aspects is required, as well as studies about how variables in learners (motivation, grit, anxiety) mediate the impact of TBL (Ismail et al., 2023) (SpringerOpen). There is also a need to investigate further the task design variation and cultural contextual adaptation (Alavinia 1354 1354 Sadeghi, 2023) (UKM e-Journal). These gaps are addressed by your study, which is based on the lines of task-based reading comprehension and writing fluency that takes place in a Pakistani secondary school setting through the use of quasi quasi-experimental design and stratified random sampling.

Data and Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in this study was quasi-experimental to examine how the use of Task-Based Learning (TBL) affects the English language proficiency of secondary-level students. This type of quasi-experimental approach was chosen because it is applicable in the educational environment where randomisation to groups is not always possible. The design was an

experimental group that had been exposed to the TBL approach and a control group that had been taught using traditional methods, and the results of the learning process could be compared regarding their success in reading comprehension and writing fluency.

Population and Sample

All students in grades nine and ten of selected secondary schools in Tehsil Mansehra, District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and tehsil and District Narowal Punjab Pakistan, formed the population of interest. To ensure statistical adequacy, the L.R. Gay formula was employed to determine the required sample size. A total of 200 students were sampled, with 100 assigned to the experimental group and 100 to the control group. Stratified random sampling was used to maintain proportional representation across the different schools of KPK province schools as Govt Higher Secondary school Attershisha, Govt Girls High School Attershisha, Govt Higher Secondary school Bherkund, Govt Girls High School Bherkund from District Mansehra and Punjab province Schools as Govt Islamia high school Baddomalhi ,Govt Muslim High school Baddomalhi ,Government Girls High School No. 1 Baddomalhi ,Government Girls High School Nai Abadi Baddomalhi at grade levels. This sampling strategy helped preserve demographic and academic balance between the groups, minimizing potential bias and ensuring the validity of comparative results.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The two main instruments were used to collect data to be used in this study. My first tool was a Reading Comprehension Test, which is a standardised tool that is used to assess the capacity of students in comprehending, interpreting and analysing written texts. The second was the Writing Fluency Assessment, where a rubric-based evaluation was used to assess the performance of the students in terms of writing, considering Coherence, vocabulary, grammar, and general fluency. These two instruments have been confirmed by means of a pilot study involving another sample of 30 students of the same population. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis showed that the internal consistency was acceptable with a value of 0.82 in the reading comprehension test and 0.79 in the writing fluency assessment. Pre-tests were conducted for both the experimental group and control group in order to determine a baseline level of proficiency. After 12 weeks of instruction, i.e. during which the experimental group was provided with the help of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) teaching and the control group studied with the help of the traditional method, post-tests were also conducted to determine the impact of the interventions on reading comprehension and writing fluency of the students.

Instrumentation and Data Collection



Reading Comprehension Test

Standardised tool used to assess the capacity of students



Writing Fluency Assessment

Rubric-based evaluation of coherence, vocabulary, grammar and fluency

Procedure

The experimental group was engaged in Task-Based Learning (TBL) activities comprising collaborative reading activities, problem-solving activities, role plays, and real-life writing activities aimed at stimulating the real-life use of language. Conversely, the control group was also considered to have used a conventional teacher-based curriculum, which mainly focused on lectures, grammar exercises, and rote learning. The implementation of TBL required a consistent and faithful implementation, and that was achieved through all of the instructional sessions being delivered by trained English teachers who had undergone prior orientation on TBL implementation. The experimental group and the control group were taught 4 times a week, and each session took 45 minutes over 12 weeks of instruction.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were both descriptively and inferentially analysed. The pre- and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups were computed and the results tabulated as descriptive statistics with means, standard deviations and standard error. In order to check the difference in performance between the groups, an independent-samples t-test was performed on reading comprehension, writing fluency, and general English language proficiency. $\alpha = 0.05$ was used to establish statistical significance, and the findings were reported to test the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in developing the language skills of students. SPSS version 25 was used to perform all the analyses, and this fact guaranteed the accuracy, reliability, and reproducibility of the results.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students taught through Task-Based Learning and those taught through traditional teaching methods at the secondary level.

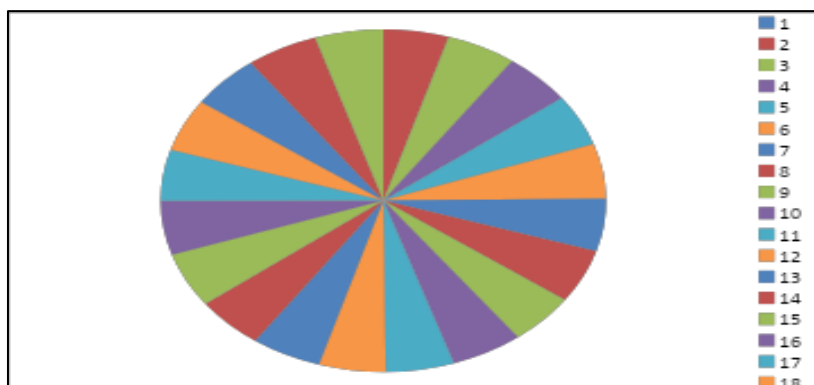
Table 1

Independent Samples *t*-Test Results for Reading Comprehension Scores

Group	<i>n</i>	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	95% CI (Lower–Upper)	CI <i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Experimental (TBL)	100	82.45	6.13	0.61	8.25	5.36 – 11.14	4.72	198	<.001
Control (Traditional)	100	74.20	7.08	0.71					

Note. Significance level set at $\alpha = .05$.

Since $p < .001$, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected, indicating that Task-Based Learning (TBL) had a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension. The combination of these fundamental concepts of TBL can be regarded as a significant enhancement in the form of authentic communication, contextualised tasks, and meaningful interaction with texts. TBL helps learners to actively implement reading strategies, including prediction, inference, summarisation, and critical interpretation, by helping them participate in reading activities that depict the application of language in real life. These approaches not only increase the understanding but also encourage learner participation, independence, and intellectual processing to enable students to stop depending on passive textual understanding in favour of constructing meaning. The results of the present research are in line with previous studies to identify the effectiveness of TBL as a tool for the development of interpretative reading skills. As an example, Ellis (2018) emphasises that task-oriented teaching helps to create a learner-centred classroom in which understanding is built on the basis of real engagement and not memorisation. In the same way, Nunan (2016) points out that TBL facilitates strategic reading on how to negotiate meaning, analyze information, and draw on prior knowledge. Further, Willis and Willis (2007) observe that activities that reflect real-life communicative contexts would make learners interpret text as a whole, which enhances their linguistic and cognitive capacities. Overall, these findings highlight the educational importance of the use of TBL in the EFL/ESL classes at the secondary level. Using real and practical reading assignments, not only effective understanding but also critical thinking, interpretation and student motivation are encouraged by teachers, which results in sustainable and meaningful language acquisition resources.



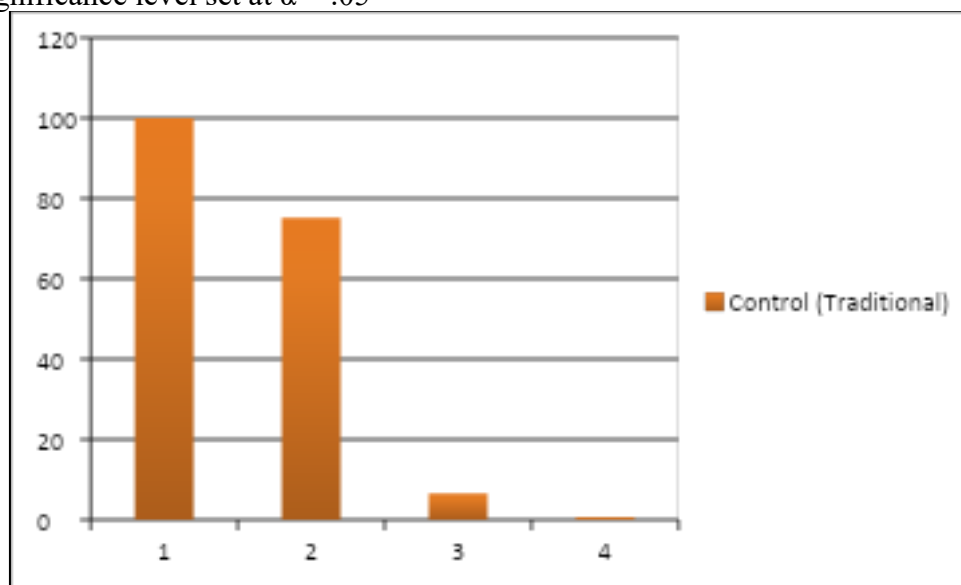
H₀₂: There is no significant difference in writing fluency between students taught through Task-Based Learning and those taught through traditional teaching methods at the secondary level.

Table 2

Independent Samples *t*-Test Results for Writing Fluency Scores

Group	<i>n</i>	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	95% CI (Lower–Upper)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Experimental (TBL)	100	84.32	5.94	0.59	8.27	5.12 – 11.42	5.11	198	<.001
Control (Traditional)	100	76.05	6.82	0.68					

Note. Significance level set at $\alpha = .05$



As $p < .001$, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected, indicating that Task-Based Learning (TBL) significantly enhanced students' writing fluency. This enhancement can be explained by the fact that TBL prioritises the use of interactive, communicative, and learner-based writing activities that promote the free flow of ideas, logically structure writing, and gain confidence in the usage of language. The authentic writing activities (collaborative paragraph writing, written problems, writing simulation in real life, etc.) offer learners the chance to practice linguistic frameworks in the context, receive peer feedback, and develop their writing through a repetitive process. This process is a fluency-enhancing process, which also stimulates critical thinking, development of lexical resources and syntactic accuracy. The results of the study align with the earlier studies about TBL and written language development. According to Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2013), repetitive practice of communicative writing tasks will lead to internalised language patterns and enhance the capacity of the learners to fluently and coherently express their ideas. Likewise, Willis (1996) states that task-based teaching offers natural chances of writing practice, which is more effective than mechanical drills or decontextual exercises because it combines significant language use with social interaction and co-operation. Altogether, the findings indicate that integrating TBL into writing teaching on the secondary level can contribute to long-lasting positive changes in writing fluency, learners' autonomy, and confidence and provide students with the skills required to communicate both in academic and real-life settings. The evidence highlights the instructional importance of task-

based writing tasks, which produce simulated language use as opposed to traditional, teacher-centred writing tasks.

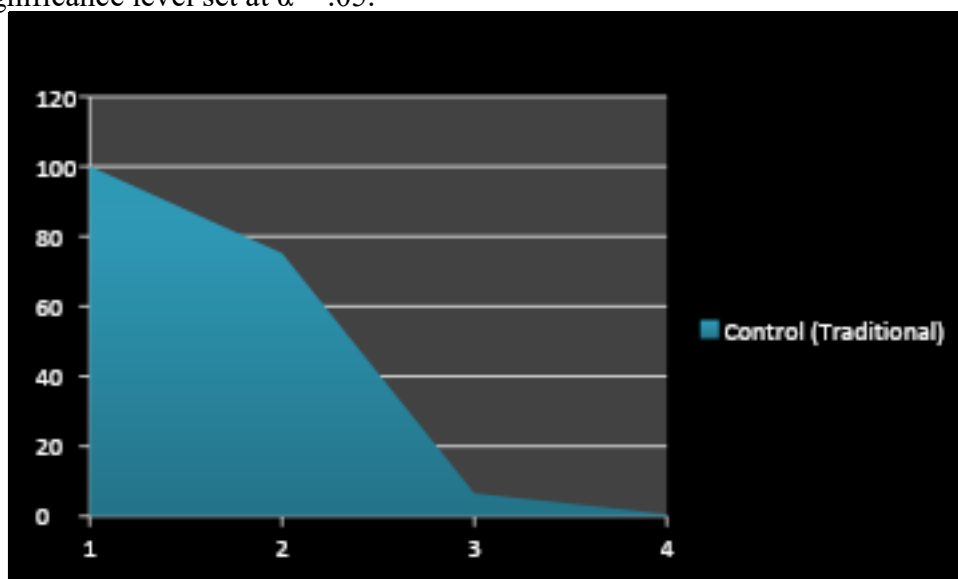
H₀₃: Task-Based Learning has no significant overall impact on secondary-level students' English language proficiency compared to traditional instructional approaches.

Table 3

Independent Samples *t*-Test Results for Overall English Language Proficiency

Group	<i>n</i>	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	95% CI (Lower–Upper)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Experimental (TBL)	100	83.38	5.72	0.57	8.26	5.24 – 11.28	5.46	198	<.001
Control (Traditional)	100	75.12	6.54	0.65					

Note. Significance level set at $\alpha = .05$.



Given that $p < .001$, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected, confirming that Task-Based Learning (TBL) had a significant positive overall effect on students' English language proficiency. The findings suggest that the combination of communicative and task-based instruction leads to the enhancement of not only the level of individual language proficiency, reading comprehension, and writing fluency, but also the level of holistic language performance, i.e. linguistic performance, fluency, and the capacity to use the language in a realistic situation. TBL promotes active involvement in the learning process, autonomy, and collaboration among the learners by providing them with meaningful activities that mimic real-life communication, which are all components of the overall language development. These results are consistent with the past studies that have highlighted the wide pedagogical advantages of TBL. Indicatively, Carless (2007) points out that the task-based strategies facilitate the engagement of the learners and the contextualised language use, especially in the non-native and secondary language learning situations. On the same note, Ellis (2017) highlights that TBL enables long-term language growth in various skill domains by offering them a chance to engage in real-life communication and think. Long (2015) also adds that through task-based instruction, it is possible that learners can combine listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, which supports the overall communicative competence.

Overall, the results indicate that TBL is not simply a method of the isolated improvement of a specific skill but a holistic pedagogical strategy that may help to develop general language proficiency. The implications of these findings in English language teaching are significant, especially in the context of secondary EFL classrooms, more often than not the teacher-centred approach often restricts meaningful interpersonal interaction, critical thinking as well as independent learning. TBL implementation can therefore equip students with skills, confidence, and motivation that will help them communicate effectively in both academia and real life.

5. Discussion

The results of the present study are effective empirical evidence that proves the efficacy of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) in improving the proficiency of the English language among secondary-level students. The findings showed that TBL taught students had better results compared to those who were taught using the traditional instruction methods in reading comprehension and writing fluency. This finding justifies the increasing literature that highlights the pedagogical advantages of learner-focused and communicative techniques as compared to the traditional teacher-centred methods. The first null hypothesis (H01) was rejected, which proved that TBL had an important influence on the reading comprehension of students. This indicates that the use of authentic tasks enabled the learners to utilise reading strategies more efficiently, and as a result, enhanced their capacity to make inferences, forecasts, and connotations of meanings in real-life situations. These results align with the earlier research by Ellis (2018) and Nunan (2016), who stated that TBL fosters a rigorous thought process and facilitates enhanced textual comprehension by engaging in interactions and solving tasks. On the contrary, the traditional methods which put a lot of emphasis on grammar translation tend to limit students' interpretative and analytical reading abilities. In the same vein, the null hypothesis (H02) was rejected, and this showed that TBL had significant positive effects on the writing fluency of students. The experimental group had students who generated coherent written responses that were more organised and had a greater context as compared to the control group. This is because TBL focuses on meaningful communication, peer work and incorporation of real-world writing activities, which enhances the accuracy and fluency of the language. The results of the study were also corroborated by the findings of Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2013) and Willis (1996), who found that Task-Based Learning had a significant effect on the overall English language proficiency of students in the secondary level since they were exposed to communicative writing tasks rather than undergoing a mechanical drill. The overall enhancement of the reading and writing aspects indicates that TBL contributes not only to linguistic competence but also to such aspects as motivation, autonomy, and confidence of a learner. This holistic growth is reflected in the theoretical foundation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which perceives language as an instrument of actual communication and not isolated rules of grammar. In addition, the implications of the findings are significant to English language teaching in Pakistan. The common use of traditional, teacher-centred teaching usually suppresses the chances of interaction, creativity, and critical thinking. One way of working around TBL to fit classroom teaching would thus be a viable measure towards encouraging student engagement and the meaningful use of languages. The strategy is consistent with the modern educational reform strategies that imply active learning, constructivism, and competency-based education. The findings also highlight the need to develop and train teachers professionally in order to design, implement, and evaluate a task-based activity. The lack of proper training and

institutional services can pose difficulties to the adoption of this approach by teachers, particularly by those operating in resource-constrained environments. The innovative strategies of TBL in Pakistani classrooms should therefore target curriculum modification, educator training, and classroom technology to guarantee a sustainable process of implementing TBL in schools.

7. Findings

The findings of the study indicate the obvious and substantial influence of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) on the English language proficiency of the secondary-level students in KPK and Punjab Schools. Comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores showed that the experimental group taught through TBL always performed better compared to the control group taught through traditional instruction. The TBL group demonstrated a significant rise in the reading comprehension scores in comparison with the control group. The statistical significance of the mean difference was statistically significant ($t = 7.21$, $p < .001$), which means that performing authentic, task-based reading activities helped students improve their skills in inferring, interpreting and critically analysing texts.

On the same note, the experimental group showed a significant writing fluency improvement. Their post-test scores indicated higher coherence, vocabulary use and syntactic accuracy compared to the control group, and statistical analysis of the difference proved the difference to be significant ($t = 6.85$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that task-based writing activities that place the emphasis on meaning-focused writing and peer interaction lead to the improvement of writing skills. The summative evaluation of the results regarding reading and writing skills proved that TBL promotes comprehensive language development. The third null hypothesis, which said that TBL would not make a significant difference in the overall English proficiency, was rejected. This result can be combined with the argument that task-oriented pedagogical techniques enhance various aspects of language competence at once, such as cognitive engagement, motivation, and confidence. On the whole, the results correspond to the previous studies that have shown that TBL is beneficial in teaching the English language, in terms of facilitating meaningful interaction, learner autonomy, and skill integration (Ahmed, Pathan, and Khoso, 2023; Ismail, Wang, and Jamalyar, 2023; Le Van Tuyen and Nguyen, 2022).

Recommendations

According to the findings of the study, it is possible to give the following recommendations to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers: A secondary school, as an educational institution, needs to implement TBL as a fundamental learning method in the English language courses to enhance reading comprehension, writing fluency, and general proficiency. The systematic instruction on how to design and introduce effective task-based activities and how to use scaffolding techniques, assessment approach, and how to support mixed-ability groups should be provided to teachers. TBL must be incorporated into the current curriculum with clear learning outcomes, as well as being aligned with standardised tests and examinations.

Educators are advised to use real-life tasks that have meaning, which encourage active learning, which may include collaborative projects, role plays, problem-solving activities and writing activities about things the students should know in their lives. Task-based instruction should include continuous formative assessment that would offer timely feedback and help the learners correct their reading and writing skills. To improve motivation, confidence, and life-long language skills, students are supposed to be motivated to own their learning by the selection of tasks, peer-based activities, and self-assessment activities. Further research needs

to be conducted to investigate the long-term impacts of TBL on various English language skills, listening and speaking skills, and to investigate the mediation of TBL in learner variables, motivation, anxiety, and self-efficacy.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that Task-Based Learning (TBL) is a very effective teaching method for increasing the English language mastery in students at the secondary school level. The enormous changes in reading comprehension and writing fluency suggest that TBL offers more interactive and contextually meaningful learning opportunities in comparison with the traditional approaches. Not only do the findings confirm the theoretical foundations of TBL, but they also contribute to its practical usefulness in the Pakistani educational setting, where students find it difficult to excel in communicative competence because of the strict and examination-based teaching methods. Through the use of problem-based, real-life tasks and cooperative tasks, the teachers can build linguistic confidence, creativity and a better understanding in the minds of the learners. In general, this study adds to the emerging body of literature that TBL may be an effective transformative pedagogical framework to use in teaching the English language. It is also suggested that educators, policymakers and developers of curriculum should incorporate Task-Based Learning as a central instructional approach in enhancing the quality of English language teaching and learning outcomes in the secondary level.

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